

**ESL Articulation Steering Committee Meeting
Minutes of May 22-23, 2008-05-22
2700 College Way, Cranbrook BC
College of the Rockies**

Present:

Emma Bourasa (TRU)	Cheryl Howrigan (VCC)
Valerie Hodge (Malaspina ~ VIU)	Shana Rablah (Selkirk College)
Erin Aasland Hall (COR)	Erica Winter (Columbia College)
Janet Zlotnik (VCC)	Laurie O'Dowd (Camosun College)
Jacquie Harrison (VCC)	Norman Bendle (NIC)
Bonnie Wai (AVED)	Nora Ready (VCC)
Karen Jane Hills (VCC)	Jonathan Baylis (Douglas College)
Kata Niksic (VCC)	Nargis Abraham (BCIT)
Izabela Moldovan (BCIT)	Harkit Dhillon (Langara College)
Vicki Vogel (Langara College)	Susan Peake (Capilano University)
Melinda Workfolk (College of New Caledonia)	Tanis Sawkins (VCC)
Brian Bouthillier (TRU)	Charlotte Sheldrake (UVic)
Joel Murray (Kwantlen Polytechnic)	Lisa Robertson (Camosun College)
Maria Bos-Chan (University of Fraser Valley)	Elizabeth West (Camosun)
John Borass (Camosun)	

Regrets: Robert Clark, UCW Academy of Languages; Judy Cooke; Kate Gilcrest, Okanagan College; Bob Hodgins, Coquitlam College; Daniel Levangie; Marv Westrom, Alexander College

Day One: Thursday, May 24

I. Approval of the Agenda

The proposed agenda, which had been previously circulated via email, was approved with the following modifications: addition of Portal discussion, lower mainland schools to discuss Olympics plans and/or initiatives and discussion of assessment tools for exit/entry (included in roundtable discussions).

II. Approval of Minutes from May 24-25, 2007

A motion to approve the 2007 minutes was moved by Lisa Robertson and seconded by Maria Bos-Chan (UFV) for approval.

III. Housekeeping:

- Orientation
- Attendance
- Articulation Guide updates: representative and institutional names
- Dinner plans

IV. Welcome, introductions, roundtable – Summary of New Initiatives.

The chair invited each member to briefly share information about their institution, with emphasis on new initiatives, assessment and evaluation - practices and platforms, as well as on-line delivery courses (mixed-mode, hybrid or full models).

V. Ministry Update: (Bonnie Wai – Education officer for ESL and ABE)

Bonnie acknowledged the hardships involved in balancing the budget and updated the committee on funding information.

Developmental Programs

- **English as a Second Language Student Outcomes Survey** summary report to be available on the AVED and BC Stats websites (completion spring 2008).
- **Adult Special Education Student Cohort Study** is available at http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Publications/collegereports/ASE_Omnibus_Report.pdf
- **Merged ABE/ESL Outcomes Survey** is underway.
- The Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) will receive continued funding projected at \$5.7 million in 2008/09.
- Bonnie also spoke about tuition-free adult basic education offered in public post secondary institutions, effective January 2008.

Adult Literacy

- AVED, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, has developed an Adult Opportunities Action Plan. The plan is available on the ministry website: <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/actionplan.htm>
- AVED continues to be guided by the strategic directions as per Campus 2020: <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/campus2020/campus2020-thinkingahead-report.pdf>

Community Adult Literacy

- Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) receives \$2.4 million annually. In 2007/08, it funded 62 community-based adult literacy training programs. \$500,000 is aimed at Aboriginal Literacy initiatives.
- English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program (ESLSAP) will receive up to \$3 million over the next two years in federal settlement funding through the Ministry of Attorney General. In 2007/08, 30 rural and remote communities were funded to deliver English language settlement-focused training.
- Starting in 2008-09, the Ministry will provide \$1.6 million for 16 full time Regional Literacy Coordinators, attached to public institutions delivering fundamental ABE. RLC's will work with regional education partners for a coordinated approach to deliver adult literacy services that meet unique community needs.

Essential Skills

- Workplace Essential Skills (Skills Plus) strategy (Oct. 07 Ministry hosted conference) to be implemented in two phases: Phase I (April 2008) will generate

a comprehensive picture of the state of workplace essential skills training across BC through needs assessments in each of the key economic sectors. This project will fund the creation of sector-specific essential skills training tools, resources, service delivery & assessment designed to increase worker skill levels.

The Labour Market Agreement (LMA) Devolution to Province resulted in \$66.4 million to BC. AVED secured a share and funding will be directed to a number of program areas, including workplace essential skills and student financial assistance.

Research, Ensuring Quality

Assessment and Monitoring Project

Population Assessment Projects will monitor provincial literacy rates between international assessments and obtain baseline literacy rates for key populations. Goals are to establish a micro simulation model to project future literacy needs based on demographic projections, which will help to determine the cost and economic benefits of improving literacy; and to conduct targeted literacy assessments that will allow BC to monitor provincial literacy rates between international assessments.

Individual Assessment Projects are a phased-in approach to identify learning outcomes and articulate standards in order to identify learner pathways, and increase the accountability of service providers to learners and government. This involves:

- Working with the sectors to identify learning outcomes and cross-over points between each sectors' benchmarks. Allows for the identification of equivalencies across various systems and makes it possible for learners to more easily navigate through various adult literacy programs in BC. A draft alignment of various frameworks based on the learning outcomes and benchmarks developed by each sector has already been established. The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) tool, ECHO, will be used to confirm the alignments.
- Building a community of practice through the sharing of individual assessments on ECHO, thereby creating a database for practitioners and helping to validate assessments.

Campus 2020 update: The Ministry has acted on several recommendations – including tuition-free ABE, independent reviews, appointing new members to training, forums for students and institution board chairs, and a commission to accredit private institutions. However, a recommendation for the re-regulation of private ESL has not been taken up.

Q & A - In response to funding questions:

- January-February is a good time for project funding requests; currently there is support for web-based projects; support from Deans & Directors is helpful.
- Tuition free ESL (for domestic students) was rejected last year, but will be put forward again next year for consideration.
- The use of CLB is not linked to base funding.

- To offset the difficulty in predicting student numbers for course planning, access demographic information through the Ministry of the Attorney General (Bonnie will pass along that information).

VI. Report on Phase 2 of the ESL-English Articulation Project: Benchmarking First Year English (4 participating institutions: Camosun, Langara, Capilano and UVic, with consultation from University of Fraser Valley) - funded by BCCAT and Ministry of Attorney General. Focus of research was to benchmark the entry language skills necessary for first-year English composition courses. Presentation summarized findings and outlined recommendations. Final report will be available on BCCAT website soon.

Implications and Recommendations - attest that EAP IV outcomes are a strong preparatory scaffold for ESL students.

VII. Phase 3 ESL Articulation Project: Exploration of Assessment in Relation to CLB

Focus of Phase 3 is on ESL in general (not specifically EAP). First stage is identifying project participants and defining scope of the project. Interested participants - Maria Bos-Chan (UFV), Lisa Robertson (Camosun), Kita Niksic (VCC), Karen Jane Hills (VCC), Laurie O'Dowd (Camosun), Janet Zlotnik (VCC), Valerie Hodge (Malaspina ~ VIU) and Joel Murray (Kwantlen) - conducted first brainstorming session. Bonnie Wai will send out examples of exit tests at level 7, provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General.

VIII. Report on the Access and Working Group Project

The working group - Lisa Robertson (Camosun), Cheryl Howrigan (VCC), Norman Bendle (NIC), Tanis Sawkins (VCC) – outlined the project goal: to align Access/Work levels and descriptors with the CLB descriptors, and reported on the project background, rationale, challenges, and process. The Working Document was circulated to the committee. The project has been approved for funding and is scheduled for completion May 09, with timeline of rearticulating all Access/Work courses expected to continue until 2010.

Motions:

Lisa Robertson (Camosun) put forth the following motion, seconded by Joel Murray (Kwantlen). The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 1 –

- That the ESL articulation committee approve, in principle, adoption of the Working Document, effective May 22, 2008 for the purpose of re-articulation of existing and new Access/Work courses and programs.
 - At the May 2009 Articulation Meeting, the revised Final Document will be submitted for inclusion in the 2009/2010 version of the ESL Articulation Guide.
-

Lisa Robertson put forth the following motion, seconded by Maria Bos-Chan. The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 2 –

- That Access/Work equivalency grid and descriptors as of May 22, 2008, be labelled as archived and under revision for the 2008/2009 version of Guide.
-

Process issues of re-articulation of Access/Work courses:

- Changes are expected to be relatively minor so should not lead to complications if courses are articulated prior to the final document completion.
- The EAP guideline of 80% course activities/assignments aligned with benchmarked learning outcomes is applicable for Access/Work as well.

IX. Impact of Tuition Free ABE on ESL Programming

- The impact varies depending on institutional practices and policies. Discussion focused on how ESL students' needs can best be met and how they can be equitably funded within the ESL learning pathway.
- **Recommendation** that this concern be readdressed, as was introduced at the 2007 Articulation Committee meeting. The distinctions between ESL, ABE and Literacy funding needs to be more clearly defined.
- **Recommendations** included writing a letter to the Ministry outlining concerns regarding the inequities between tuition-free ABE and fee seeking ESL programs, as well as proposing another motion for the Deans and Directors, including the 2007 outlined caveat. See 2007 Minutes for background. A motion will be drafted by a working group, headed by Norman Bendle, and presented to John Boraas on Friday May 23, 2008.

X. Use of TOEFL IBT or IELTS as admission

Some committee members have been approached by administrators to use these external exams as internal placement or assessment indicators, as well as indicators of how long it will take students to complete their English preparation course work.

Action: Create a document outlining the committee's views of this practice, using VCC's (Janet Zlotnic) rationale against the use of these tests for admission to ESL courses and information re which ESL institutions (if any) use the exams for placement or admission.

Day 2 - Friday May 23, 2008

XIII. Report from Deans and Directors (John Boraas, System Liaison Person update & discussion of Articulation Committee items for John to report back to the Deans & Directors).

- System Liaison role in identifying issues / challenges from the larger system, listening and addressing committee concerns and questions, and ensuring that institutions do send representatives to Articulation
- Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) network in Ontario is an ideal model of federal / provincial relations and useful for BC when considering different policies to create rational ways and cohesive paths in helping immigrants access work through the college systems. The Project reveals gaps or overlaps of services and resources and creates a transparent and effective provincial government system of project delivery and benchmarking programs etc. The Federal government has stepped in to fill in the gaps in the system.
- Association of BC Colleges – Centres of Excellence for Immigrants project (work of Naomi Albine) looking at best practices for delivery of immigrant services. It is being presented to the ACCC in Prince George amid hopes that this will propel the model forward in involving the Federal Government.
- The Canadian Council on Learning, established federally, was created to define a national vision of education and act as advocate to solve social problems through education; has had great success in creating an index - featuring how education builds and strengthens communities, and working cooperatively with Aboriginal Communities.
- The Deans & Directors looked at the Access benchmarking and found the project and draft documents very informative and exciting. They are looking forward to creating models of consistent support – as the emphasis looks at Access transition to employment
- ABE student mobility survey– with the focus on how students fare moving from ABE or K-12 systems into college or university models or post-secondary employment. Comparable study regarding immigrant success in this transition is expected to evolve in the near future. The Ministry wants to track and cross reference data on the transfer of ABE students into the workplace, post secondary systems etc.
- Essential Skills initiatives are well supported at this time, ie project funding. John recommended that Benchmarking and institutional marketing materials should include an essential skills component as the terminology directly relates to government goals and support (\$).

Committee Issues & Questions presented to John include:

- The increasing trend or shift of immigrant students working while in school
- Current funding (FTE) creating timetabling problems and important instructional work not being counted and/or supported. John suggests that curriculum development plays a role in this, as course outlines and descriptors directly impact Ministry funding.

- **Action:** Next year John will provide a workshop around these issues and funding access for the Articulation Committee.
- ASE (Adult Special Education) faculty were identified as good contact support regarding funding (FTE) issues.
- Conversations still continuing about policies regarding students who are not eligible for student loans – namely ESL and ABE.
- Granting ESL credit was presented as a potential solution (by Maria Bos Chan) for retaining ESL immigrant students. Credit is an institutional issue and requires a full discussion regarding transfer, GPA etc. There is a pro-argument when making comparisons with Modern Languages; Kwantlen is looking into it.

Motion

Norm Bendle (NIU) put forth the following motion, seconded by Jonathon Bayliss. The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 3

Whereas both ESL and ABE are pathways to literacy, which, as stated in the Campus 2020 document, is a priority of the provincial government; and

Whereas ESL is the appropriate post-secondary path for ESL learners to achieve the literacy, Essential Skills and English language levels required to reach their educational employment and life goals; and

Whereas the limited earning ability of citizens and immigrants with insufficient English and literacy skills makes tuition fees a significant barrier;

The ESL Articulation Committee strongly recommends that the provincial government fully fund institutions to provide tuition-free ESL.

XIV. Reports from the Working Groups

Access & Work: Tanis Sawkins (VCC) reports that:

- The bulk of the breakout work focussed on following through with new descriptors; one new course was already successfully placed on the grid.
- Autumn meeting set for Friday Oct 24th, 2008 at VCC (funding available for out of town reps); Committee chair (Lisa Robertson) was elected
- Version 4 of the Working Document will be available for the Oct meeting.
- Dale Hunter (VCC) statement, read into the minutes by Cheryl Howrigan, re: adopting the new Access & Work framework: “This is a more outward-looking approach than Access has had – one that looks at where the other provinces are going. It also has the potential to strengthen collaboration with other colleges and institutes. Provincially, we don’t worry if there are gaps, or even inconsistencies, we adopt the CLB Access framework, then do whatever we need to do internally and collectively among institutions to address gaps or add dimension or specificity [sic]. There are some challenges and we will need to work with them.”

EAP: Charlotte Sheldrake (UVic)

As there were no EAP courses to articulate, the breakout group focused on the following items/activities:

- Course name changes for Douglas College (reading & writing courses previously at 3 credits each now integrated into blended courses at 6 credits (new course numbers)
- Recommendations from the English first-year Benchmarking Report with specifics for ESL, English first-year and transfer system in general
- The report and revised recommendations will be submitted to BCCAT by June 30th and all members will receive the report via email
- John Boraas explained the use of the BC student tracking system – PEN (personal education number) – however, it is unknown whether this will apply to International students at this juncture.

XV. Other Business:

- a) Lower Mainland Institutions' plans during Olympics
 - Langara Ed Co suspending classes
 - VCC is renting out several of its facilities / campuses, schools will be closed and faculty will opt for 1 or 2 weeks of ProD
 - Douglas has no announcement as they are waiting to see what others do
 - Kwantlen intends to close classes and extend the term by 2 weeks, faculty wondering whether this is accountable time
 - Capilano is closed and will extend Spring term
 - BCIT is closed

- b) Web-based Portal for students and educators (forwarder Janet Zlotnic -VCC):
 - To address needs of students who fall between the tracks with regard to transfer issues, transcripts, questions about Articulation, etc
 - To provide access to an Online advisor (e.g. Library Ask a Librarian model) with an online librarian for after hours help...discussion included in Site
 - Recommendation for a BCCAAT webpage with links to funding, AVED, Ask a Librarian, and to include an on-line articulation advisor who could address teacher and student concerns.
 - Action: Need for a sub-committee discussed (where is the funding coming from? Where would it be located?) as further clarity for vision/proposal is required to determine the path for support
 - Action: the committee chairs (Elisabeth and Charlotte) would take the sub committee's proposal forward to the appropriate parties

- c) Question: is there a time frame (shelf life) regarding ESL course completion for any Articulated courses, reinforces the validity of an Archive of courses (Lisa Robertson)

- d) Member responsibility: committee members are responsible for presenting Articulation documents to their institutions (e.g. registrars, department heads).

John Boraas suggests that members also present the English First-Year Benchmarking document to registrars as well as other appropriate institutional departments.

e) Committee responsibility to maintain an archive (e.g. 'Purple Document' Report to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology on the Development of an Adult ESL Provincial Framework (1990), which could be used as a historical origin reference.

Action: Lisa Robertson (Camosun) to amend 'background' section in Guide to include an historical context.

f) Discussion teacher evaluation processes across institutions (Charlotte Sheldrake UVic)

- Contractual issue (UVic is CUPE)
- TRU is piloting a new evaluation document; 2 peer reviews part of process
- Performance review process is under review at Kwantlen (FPSE: faculty union) currently use a 3 prong approach: peer, self & dean (or student) evaluation
- CoR: has a professional portfolio which includes a collaborative peer review
- UFV – sessionals use portfolios and are evaluated every term by students and 2 per year by committee (2 ESL faculty and one external faculty member) – acknowledges issue of ESL student comprehension of evaluation questions

XVI. 2009 Articulation Committee Meeting

- North Island College, Courtenay campus on Vancouver Island.
- May 21-22, 2009

XVII. Election for Co-chair. Maria Bos Chan nominates Elizabeth West, seconded by Lisa Robertson. Elizabeth West is elected via acclamation.