

ESL Articulation Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
May 20 – 21, 2010
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, BC

Co-Chairs:

Elizabeth West, Camosun College
Catherine Ostler, Capilano University

Minute Taker: Jacquie Harrison, Vancouver Community College

Maria Bos-Chan, University of the Fraser Valley
Karen J. Hills, Vancouver Community College
Cathy Aquart, University of Victoria
Marta Tejero, College of New Caledonia
Izabela Moldovan, BCIT
Jacquie Hebert, Douglas College
Vicki Vogel, Langara College
Robin Russell, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Wendy Royal, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Joan Silvey, Selkirk College
Susan Peake, Capilano University
Jackie Foster, Vancouver Island University
Kathleen Matheson, Vancouver Island University
Paul Pan, University of Northern BC
Harkit Dhillon, Langara College
Norman Bendle, North Island College
Laurel Mathew, Trinity Western University
Laurie O'Dowd, Camosun College
Brian Bouthillier, Thompson Rivers University
Fraser Thorburn, Vancouver Community College
Alex Ferguson, Coquitlam College
Tanis Sawkins, Vancouver Community College
Tori Laye, Alexander College
John Boraas, System Liaison, Camosun College

Jennifer Orum, BCCAT

Louis Chen, ESL Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Immigration and Welcome BC Branch
Dale Hunter, Vancouver Community College

I. Approval of the Agenda

The proposed agenda was approved with the following modifications: John Boraas, System Liaison Person, to give his report in the afternoon and Louis Chen, ESL Senior Policy Advisor in

the Immigration and Welcome BC Branch, to give the Ministry update as Shelley Gilmour was unable to attend.

Wendy Royal/Maria Bos-Chan. Carried unanimously.

II. Approval of the Minutes of May 21 – 22, 2009

Robyn Russell/Kathleen Matheson. Approved unanimously.

III. Welcomes, introductions, roundtable to briefly summarize new initiatives at institutions

A number of institutions reported program restructuring and name changes, as well as executive changes (new Deans, Vice Presidents, Presidents). Several mentioned that they were trying to accommodate the 35 hour/week requirement for Saudi students, while one reported that they were no longer going to work with the Saudi Bureau due to what they perceived as unreasonable requirements. A number of institutions reported higher enrollments overall, but some reported lower domestic student enrollments, perhaps due to high fees and Financial Aid shortages.

IV. Deans and Directors Update: moved to afternoon

V. Update from BCCAT – (Jennifer Orum, Special Projects Coordinator, BCCAT)

- Jennifer announced that there are a number of staff changes at BCCAT. Frank Gelin, Executive Director, and Finola Finlay, Associate Director, are retiring. Rob Fleming will take over as the new Executive Director. BCCAT oversees 68 articulation committees.
- Jennifer noted that a handbook, Articulation Committee Companion, is available on the website (www.bccat.bc.ca). This handbook includes useful information including details of the role of the Chairs, expectations of members, and the role of the System Liaison Person.
- Jennifer noted that the Ministry considers that transfer funds for ESL include funding to attend articulation meetings.
- There is a Joint Articulation Meeting (JAM) scheduled for November 5, 2010. This meeting includes articulation committee chairs, system liaison persons, institutional contact people (ICP) and transfer credit contact people (TCC). JAM deals with issues that are system wide. BCCAT covers costs of travel and hotel accommodation.
- Jennifer discussed changes that are being made to the BC transfer system. The BC transfer system in which institutions are listed either as a 'sender' or 'receiver' was set up in the 1960s and was modeled after a system in California. In the current BC context there is a need to expand the transfer system so that institutions can be both senders and receivers. BCCAT established policy two years ago that institutions that had been senders can become receivers as well. BCIT was the first institution to do this. BCCAT is also creating processes where colleges and universities in Alberta which have significant numbers of BC students can apply to be a part of the BC Transfer System. Athabasca was the first to apply and now has status as both a sender and receiver.

- Jennifer discussed three automated systems that deal with BC Transfer: the BC transfer guide, Transfer Credit Evaluation, and the Educational planning tool.

VI. Ministry Update - Louis Chen, ESL Senior Policy Advisor, Immigration and Welcome BC Branch.

*Speaking Notes used by Louis Chen are attached to the minutes.

The committee welcomed Louis Chen, who gave an update on behalf of Shelley Gilmour, Education Officer responsible for ESL, who was not able to attend.

Louis is new to the Ministry of Advanced Education and expressed his commitment to learning more about the issues concerning ESL in post secondary institutions in order to support the institutions and strengthen partnership and collaboration. Louis's background is in ESL: he worked as an ESL instructor in BC and overseas, in assessment and in curriculum development.

Louis's update included a description of the roles and responsibilities between the Immigration and Welcome BC (IWBC) and the Learning Programs Branch (LPB), which are both under the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, and an announcement of a number of staff changes in the Learning Programs Branch.

Louis also gave an update on the Learning Programs Branch.

- Developmental programs - Funding for ABE/ESL programs and financial aid (ABESAP) has been maintained, enrolment remains strong, and feedback from the student outcomes survey is positive.
- Adult education/literacy programs - Support has been maintained for community-based adult literacy programs (CALP): workplace-based essential skills programs (SkillsPlus) and community-based ESL and Settlement Assistance programs (ESLSAP). ESLSAP has been transferred to IWBC.
- The development of a provincial Adult Literacy Essential Skills Framework which uses HRSDC essential skills is ongoing.
- A report on the alignment of post secondary ESL courses to CLB Benchmarks. Louis thanked on behalf of Bonnie Wai those institutions which participated in a project to 'ball park' the alignment of their course outcomes with CLB levels. The next step in this initiative is to add the outcomes to the Central Data Warehouse.

Discussion

- North Island College has noticed a decline in enrolment due to ESLSAP.
- ABESAP funding ran out last year at several institutions and an increase in funding is needed to reflect increase in demand.

VII. Access and Work Committee Project Update

Tanis Sawkins gave an update on the work done to date.

VIII. Credit for ESL

Catherine Ostler reported on a presentation that she attended at a TEAL conference that supported the idea that ESL courses should be recognized for credit. Catherine presented highlights of the TEAL presentation including a rationale for granting credit for ESL, which included pragmatic reasons and issues of equity and social justice.

The presentation can provide arguments and strategies that committee members can use to take back to their institutions to get ESL recognized as credit. It will be put on the BCCAT website.

Discussion

- Concern about ESL credits being able to transfer.
- Concern that development credits would not be accepted in degree programs both within an institution and for transferability.
- Examples of institutions that already have ESL classes for credit in Canada and the US.

IV. Deans and Directors Update (John Boraas, System Liaison)

- In response to a question regarding tuition free ESL, John reported that the issue still continues and is discussed at Deans and Directors.
- John reported on a Welcome BC conference that was held during the past two days. The purpose of this conference was to get a sense of needs of immigrants and to begin to align policies from different ministries. Ministries involved in post secondary education, housing, settlement etc. were involved.
- John would like to see the ESL Articulation Committee drive policy for assessment for placement into colleges and universities.
- John noted that there are challenges for developmental education and that the Deans and Directors are trying to be strategic in thinking about the number of challenges in developmental issues, e.g. Tuition-free ESL.
- In response to a question regarding discussion around Internationally Trained Professionals at the meeting, John answered that training for ITPs was discussed briefly but no clear direction was given. He noted that a number of RFQs were out for language training for ITPs and that two institutions had been successful and three other RFQs were still not concluded. He also remarked that there are challenges around institutions submitting RFQs and RFPs as the process is lengthy.
- John expressed concern that some institutions may pull out of articulation due to financial restraints. He advised that in his role as System Liaison he would act as an advocate with institutions to send representatives to articulation meetings.

IX - BCCIE – Pilot Pathways project

The committee discussed a press release dated April 23, 2010 from BCCIE regarding a pilot pathways project where international students can study at private language schools and have direct entry to further study at two universities. Vancouver Island University and Thompson Rivers University are named in the press release. The press release was distributed to the

committee prior to the meeting. Douglas College also has an articulation agreement with five private schools. This arrangement exists in Ontario where there are many examples of private/public partnerships.

Concerns regarding this private/public partnership included

- Individual institutions setting own partnerships
- Private institutions using the larger public institutions' names in advertising to attract students who do not ultimately study at these institutions
- Creating a way to bypass the checks and balances of BCCAT
- Maintaining language standards for entrance to larger institutions.
- Private schools are not always accredited so cannot go through BCCAT articulation.

There will be a BCCIE Conference in Whistler in June. This issue will be discussed on Friday, June 25th. Articulation Committee members are encouraged to attend if interested.

John Boraas and Norman Bendle suggested that an articulation subcommittee be struck to track work on this that could be useful in providing best practices or acting as an advisory group as this initiative goes forward.

The discussion was tabled. Further discussion to be held through the list serve. A suggestion was made for everyone to be aware of this issue at their own institution.

Action: Co-chairs of articulation group to send memo to BCCIE that we are aware of this issue and would like to be kept informed.

Affinity Group

Dale Hunter will provide an update on immigration integration in BC to the Affinity group for integration on June 5th at the ACCC conference. Dale will focus not only on language services but all services that are provided or linked to immigrants. The Affinity group was formed four years ago to provide a national voice to advocate for consistent ESL practices and to push national initiatives. Dale asked committee members to send him information regarding any areas of concern or about anything that presents barriers to immigrants to include in his update (dhunter@vcc.ca).

X. ESL Assessment Project: Discussion of draft final report

Maria Bos-Chan, Karen Jane Hills, Catherine Ostler, Wendy Royal and Elizabeth West presented the results of their study on assessment practices in ESL in BC post secondary institutions funded by the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer. It is the third phase of a three-phase project. The first two phases were aligning the CLB to ESL outcomes and benchmarking first year English. The goal of this project was to gain knowledge of assessment practices to tighten articulation, to foster a transparent and accessible articulation process and to explore CLB in assessment.

As part of the project all post secondary institutions were surveyed and interviewed regarding their assessment practices.

After presenting the results of the study, the articulation committee broke into small groups to discuss the following topics.

- ESL placement tools
- In-house assessment
- Role of CLB
- Administration of program Assessment
- Role of the ESL articulation Guide
- Internal assessment for courses
- Integration of ESL students into non-ESL university and college courses

Committee members were also asked to check and update information that was gathered from their institutions.

Groups were asked to report on one issue that was discussed at their tables. These issues were

- Challenges of in house assessment
- Pressure on ESL programs by International Education Departments to identify a number on various assessment instruments for program entry
- Success of programs determined by registration
- Satisfaction of in-house assessment test
- Role of CLBs
- How articulation guide is used
- Improvement needed in IELTS

Friday, May 21, 2010

ACCESS Working Group reported:

- 26 courses were put forward to articulate some which were backlogged from last year.
- Five courses from Camosun were articulated. VCC and NIC courses were not reviewed due to lack of time.
- Other courses are pending approval for articulation but are waiting for further documentation.
- The Access Group discussed changes in process to expedite articulation including meeting more frequently, developing a training/guideline manual, revising descriptors for work and aligning descriptors to CLB, and developing an online collection of exemplars for each skill and level as well as examples of completed paperwork.

Recommendation: To support the access and work committee in seeking funding to revise the guidelines for articulation of access courses.

Norman Bendle/Paul Pan - Passed

Laurie O'Dowd moves that the articulation committee endorse a project to revise the English for Work Descriptors to align with the CLB.

Laurie O'Dowd/Joan Silvey – Passed

Action : Discussion of the link between Access and EAP to go on the agenda of next year

EAP Working Group reported:

- Name change made to course from Selkirk
- Three courses were articulated from UNBC

The ESL Articulation Committee endorses a full program proposal to BCCAT for Transfer Innovations funding to research existing ESL – for-credit programs and investigate and recommend best practices for awarding university-level credits for articulated EAP courses.
Kathleen Matheson/Paul Pan - Passed

The ESL Articulation Committee requests that the Deans and Directors of Developmental Education support a province-wide tracking study on the use of IELTS and TOEFL scores as placement measures into ESL courses. The purpose of the study is to determine the level of accuracy and validity of placement based on successful progression to the next level.
Wendy Royal/Fraser Thorburn - passed

Robin offered to work with institutions to develop a research plan to maintain consistency in this study.

Pearson Test of English has an online test. Committee members agreed to try online tests.

Elections

- Elizabeth West is stepping down as Co-Chair, and the committee thanked her for her hard work.
- Vicki Vogel was acclaimed as incoming Co-Chair for a two-year term. Catherine Ostler continues as Co-Chair to 2011.

Paul Pan was thanked for the hospitality shown by the University of Northern BC.

Vancouver Community College offered to host the 2011 Articulation Committee Meeting, which will be held May 12 and 13, 2010.

Adjournment

Laurie O'Dowd/Jackie Foster

Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
Immigration and WelcomeBC Branch/Learning Programs Branch Update
ESL Articulation Meeting
May 20, 2010

In previous years a representative from the Learning Programs Branch attended this meeting, but this year, the honor goes to Louis Chen, the new ESL senior policy advisor in the Immigration and WelcomeBC Branch. Louis is new to the Ministry, however, has a wealth of experience in ESL education ranging from teaching and curriculum development to national research, international conference presentations and refereed journal publications. A key responsibility for Louis is to gain a better understanding of the role of institutions in providing ESL and each institution's unique issues and concerns in an effort to support the institutions and strengthen the partnership.

The different roles/responsibilities between the two branches of the ministry that deal with ESL:

1. Immigration and Welcome BC (IWBC): IWBC is the ministry office responsible for providing settlement services for new comer immigrants. The ESL senior policy advisor is responsible for policy, program development, and planning related to language programs and services that support immigrants under the Canada/BC Immigration Agreement. The province and the federal government are committed to supporting the integration and success of immigrants and their children. A big part of this is ensuring people have access to English language training. IWBC partners with many service delivery partners, however a key partner for the delivery of ESL services for adult immigrants has always been the post secondary education system.

2. Learning Programs Branch (LPB): LPB is responsible for two major program areas: 'Aboriginal Education' and 'Developmental Programs and Adult Literacy". Developmental programs refers to Adult Basic Education; ESL and Adult Special Education programs *delivered to adults through public post secondary institutions*. The LPB is the ministry office responsible for: overseeing the allocation of funds to for the delivery of ESL programs by institutions for full range of adult learners (regardless of their immigration status); monitoring FTEs and course enrolments; conducting student outcome surveys; and ensuring the role and voice of post secondary institutions is represented in the overall provincial framework for ESL services and supports.

The two branches have always worked closely together to ensure BC has a cohesive, comprehensive ESL system to meet the needs of all ESL learners. This collaboration has been made easier now that the two branches are within the same ministry.

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Learning Programs Staff Changes:

There have been a number of staff changes in the LPB. Debbie Azaransky is the new Manager of Developmental Programs and Adult Literacy (replacing Susan Chandler and more recently Barb Bincyk) and Tegan Tang has also joined the Branch (replacing Bonnie Wai who is on maternity leave) as the new Education Officer responsible for Developmental programs and adult literacy.

Tegan comes to the branch with an extensive background in international education and she has worked both at the Ministry and at VIU when it was Malaspina University College.

Both Debbie and Tegan send their regrets - but wanted me to let you know that they are looking forward to getting to know the ESL file in detail and working with all of you.

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LPB Updates:

With respect to the Learning Programs Branch update-

1. On the developmental programs front:

- funding for developmental programs has been maintained;
- funding to provide financial support to developmental students (ABESAP) has been maintained;
- enrolments remain strong;
- feedback from student outcomes surveys remain positive.

NOTE: The 2010 Student Outcomes Survey is underway. Due to budget issues, the decision was made to survey ESL students annually (to fulfill federal reporting requirements) and ABE students every other year. For 2010, only ESL students will be surveyed. We expect the format and process for this survey to be the same as last year.

2. In addition to developmental programs, the LPB is also responsible for leading **adult education/literacy initiatives**, including community-based adult literacy programs (CALP); workplace-based essential skills programs (SkillsPlus) and community-based ESL and Settlement Assistance programs (ESLSAP).

- for 2009/10, support for all these programs have been maintained

NOTE: with respect to ESLSAP, this program was introduced in 2007 and completed the third year of its pilot this past year. Based on the positive results of a recent program evaluation, it has been decided that the program will be maintained for 2010/11 but will be transferred to IWBC for administrative purposes.

3. LPB continues to consult with its partners on the development of a provincial **Adult Literacy Essential Skills Framework**. Building upon the work of the 2007 Adult Opportunities Action Plan, this framework is exploring:

- potential for the increased use of HRSDC's Essential Skill framework and benchmarks as the provincial standard for aligning the outcomes across sectors and learning environments;
- ways and means of refining assessment and monitoring tools to improve our ability to report on the progress being made to improve provincial literacy levels;
- how to incorporate new immigration and labour market data into literacy/essential skill program planning, to enable a more focused sectoral and regional approach.

A Provincial Sponsorship Committee, and several subcommittees, have been struck to inform the development of this new framework. There are several representatives from the post secondary system participating.

4. Alignment of Post Secondary ESL Courses to CLB benchmarks:

Staff in LPB wants to thank the institutions who sent in information in response to Bonnie Wai's request last January for institutions to 'ballpark' the alignment of their course outcomes using CLB benchmarks.

Tegan will be following up with institutions by email in the coming months on next steps for this initiative, which includes adding this data to the Central Data Warehouse.

Thanks to all of you - please feel free to contact Debbie or Tegan with any questions or concerns.

Tegan will be following up with Elizabeth West (the co-chair of this committee who luckily works at Camosun in Victoria) for a face to face meeting in the near future to debrief from this meeting and discuss other ESL/post secondary issues of concern to the group.

HANDOUT - Ministry's Spring 2010 report.