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### **BCTF Teaching to Diversity Website**

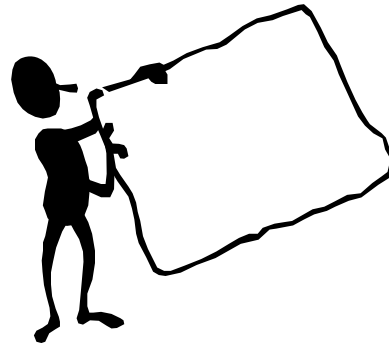
[www.bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=10564](http://www.bctf.ca/IssuesInEducation.aspx?id=10564)

This website has been designed to provide access to information, resources, and contacts for teachers and all those who support the needs of learners in the B.C. public school system.

**Check out the ESL PSA website**

<http://www.bctf.ca/eslpsa>

Be an  
ESL PSA  
Conference Presenter



At the 19<sup>th</sup>  
ESL PSA Conference  
On October 23  
At John Oliver Secondary  
School  
In Vancouver  
Info: [www.bctf.ca/eslpsa](http://www.bctf.ca/eslpsa)

# Your ESL PSA Executive

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# President's Message

Isn't it astonishing how quickly the months fly by? It seems only yesterday that I was sitting down - after a very successful ESL PSA conference - and writing this message for the November edition of the newsletter.

So, what have we, your executive, been up to since then?

In an effort to keep costs down we alternately meet face to face three times a year and hold evening teleconferences the same number of times. As your last newsletter was making its way to you we met and were delighted to hear that our membership was up and our coffers were no longer so close to the 'red' zone. One positive result of this could mean we are able to leap - at least tentatively - into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by offering online pre-registration for the conference in October.

The October conference has been confirmed, and thanks to the hard work and energy of the core planners [co-chairs Leah Moe and Joy Wild; registrar, Sylvia Helmer; Workshop Coordinator, Catherine Eddy] much is already in place and underway. You will find information about the conference elsewhere in this newsletter but here are the highlights:

Date - **October 23, 2009**  
Location - **John Oliver Secondary School, Vancouver**  
Theme - **Diversity: Expect, Respect and Celebrate**  
Keynote - **Dr. Hetty Roessingh**

There is also a logo contest for you and your students. We have already

received some submissions for this and are very excited about the potential.

While organizing and brainstorming for the conference occupied a great deal of our time, your PSA executive members and others continue to keep the needs of ESL learners and their teachers at the forefront in a variety of other ways.

- **ESL PSA Chapters** are coming back! Interest in and a revival of these support groups is underway in **Campbell River, Williams Lake, Coquitlam, Chilliwack, Delta and Vancouver Elementary**. We are fortunate to have willing executive members to facilitate such sessions and I do hope you remember that you, too, can start a chapter in your local area -with support from the ESL PSA.
- The **ESL PSA Website** is well established and looking for ongoing input and submissions. Please note the Swap Shop postings - great teaching ideas that you can use 'tomorrow'.
- A committee is working on revising the ESL PSA constitution as needed
- **Celebrating Diversity: Moving Forward**, the theme of our second mini-conference was scheduled for February 25 in Chilliwack. Unfortunately, this conference was cancelled *due to snow!* We have hopes of re-staging these sessions later in the year.
- We participated in the **BCTF's New Teachers' Conference** - a

wonderful opportunity for beginning teachers to learn more about us as an organization and to know there are both support and resources available to them.

There are several other projects “in the works” that I will report on at a later date. Meanwhile, if you have ideas or suggestions about what we should be considering, lobbying for, or otherwise engaging with, please email me with your thoughts and ideas. I look forward to input from you, our members. We are here to support your work with your learners.

*Marlene Eccles is the ESL PSA President*

## Message from the Newsletter Editor

It has been a great pleasure to create the ESL PSA's newsletter, on and off, between 2000 and 2009.

I have enjoyed the diverse and interesting executive members that I have shared the table with, and the numerous and inspiring conversations that the ESL PSA has had over as many years.

A big thanks to the BCTF Graphics, Printing & Shipping Departments, and most recently, to the Vancouver School Board printing shop for their excellent support in creating this publication!

Herewith I submit my final publication, with best wishes to all of you.  
*Verena Foxx, Editor*

## Review of Canadian Reader

By Catriona Misfeldt, Richmond

Canadian educational publisher LesPlan has rolled out the latest in its collection of high-quality classroom resources. Following in the successful footsteps of *What in the World?* a Canadian current events resource for grades 5-12, LesPlan introduces *The Canadian Reader* for younger audiences.

Available in English and in French, *The Canadian Reader* is a classroom-ready Language Arts and Social Studies resource for on-the-go teachers. (And who among us isn't?) Packed with excellent reading selections and activities to enhance student learning, *The Canadian Reader* combines current Canadian events and issues with geography in a kid-friendly way. In each issue, detailed literacy-based lesson plans complement three well-written news stories, expanding students' knowledge of Canada while enhancing their ability to read and make meaning from informational text.

Clear and informative pictures draw kids' interest to each news story – and they'll delight in following the adventures of three intrepid children in "The Net Trekkers" cartoon strip. Busy teachers will appreciate the ready-made graphic organizers, assessment rubrics and mapping assignments.

Presented in a contemporary, graphically-rich format that appeals to students of all ages, *The Canadian Reader's* versatility makes it suitable for use with students in learning support, or in ESL classes for middle and high school students.

The best part? Your kids are going to love it. To have a look at back issues or to order a complimentary sample copy, go to <<http://www.lesplan.com>> and follow the links to *The Canadian Reader*.

# Proposed ESL PSA 2008-09 Budget

This proposed budget was presented by ESL PSA Treasurer **Analisa Feuz** to the ESL PSA membership at the October 24, 2008 ESL PSA AGM at 12:00 noon at David Thompson Secondary School in Vancouver.

99950	Meetings - executive	\$9,000.00
99951	Meeting - table officers	
99952	Meeting - PSA council	
99953	Meeting - subcommittee	\$100.00
99954	Meeting - AGM	\$100.00
99958	TOC expenses	\$9,500.00
99959	Meeting - other	\$100.00
99960	Publication - journal	
99961	Publication - newsletter	\$4,500.00
99969	Publication - equipment                      other	\$100.00
99970	Operating	
99971	Furniture & equipment purchase	
99972	Affiliation fees and meetings	
99974	Curriculum development	
99978	Scholarship and Professional development	\$1,000.00
99979	Miscellaneous	
99980	Conference - operating	\$1,000.00
99981	Conference - facilities	
99982	Conference - catering	\$6,000.00
99983	Conference - printing	\$3,000.00
99984	Conference - promotions	
99985	Conference - committee costs	\$150.00
99986	Conference - entertainment	
99987	Conference - equipment rental	
99988	Conference - speakers	\$1,460.25
99989	Conference - start-up costs	
99998	Conference - hold, future conference expenses	
99999	Conference - miscellaneous	
99972	Chapter support	\$200.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$36,210.25</b>

# Chapter Reports

## SD #72: Campbell River

**Jo-Anne Preston** reported that the chapter has ten members, meets on a monthly basis, is doing a book study on oral language development and is planning a half-day workshop on using internet resources for ESL/D learners. Jo-Anne Preston has also joined the Island ESL group.

## SD # 37: Delta

**Sandra Chan** reported that Delta has recently 'revived' the local chapter. A new policy in Delta does not provide TOC coverage for the first day of ESL Teacher absences. The Local PSA Chapter is opposing this decision in a letter to the Board, Superintendent, Director of Special Programs, District Principal of International programs and DPAC.

## SD #39: Vancouver

**Verena Foxx** reported that the Vancouver Elementary ESL Section has re-scheduled a meeting to introduce the newly appointed VSB ESL District Principal on April 1<sup>st</sup> to its VESTA members.

## SD #33: Chilliwack

**Versha Oza** reported that the regular quarterly ESL department meeting was cancelled at the last minute due to illnesses and conflicts in schedules. The Chilliwack Chapter planned a Mini-Conference, which was cancelled last

minute due to a snow storm. Non-ESL teachers were encouraged to attend the mini-conference.

### How to form a local chapter?

Check out the

#### BCTF PSA Guidebook

[http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/PSAs/PSA\\_Guidebook/PSAGuideBook](http://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/PSAs/PSA_Guidebook/PSAGuideBook).

Pdf: pages 50 – 54

Interested in joining any of the listed ESL Chapters?

Please contact **Versha Oza:**

604.858.8358

[Versha\\_oza@sd33.bc.ca](mailto:Versha_oza@sd33.bc.ca)

### ESL PSA Membership

▪ Members	283
▪ Associate	1
▪ Subscriber	83
▪ Students	0
▪ Honorary	14
▪ TOC	5
▪ Retirees	0
TOTAL	386

*Thanks to Member-at-Large, Kristin Housez, for the update*

# In Memory of Mary Ashworth

## 1923-2009



It is with a great sense of loss that the ESL Community acknowledges the passing of **Mary Ashworth**, Professor Emerita in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia.

On January 20th she left us to mourn, and to carry on the magnificent work she has begun. She was known for being an eloquent and tireless educational activist who pioneered an English as a Second Language Teacher Training program in Western Canada. Perhaps no other Canadian educator has had as profound an influence in the field – locally, nationally, and

internationally.

Mary was known among her peers as the *grande dame* of ESL and indeed, her lifetime of achievement in this field is quite extraordinary.

She played a vital role in British Columbia, Canada, and internationally, in research, development, and instruction related to English as a Second Language, teacher training, and multicultural education. She wrote and published several books and spent her career championing for acceptance of and diversity in Canada's social and educational systems by helping to shape the attitudes of future ESL teachers.

She was an outspoken advocate for the language rights of immigrants and on Canadian language policy and pedagogy.

The list of awards and distinctions bestowed upon her is a long one indeed. However, what makes her most noteworthy to all those who had the great privilege to come in contact with her in one way or another, is not the list of books or awards, significant as that is, but rather it is the 'personal touch' she always managed to provide. Always encouraging yet practical, she was full of energy and ideas. How could anyone leave her classroom or office without being inspired? Those of us lucky enough to have had the opportunity to work and learn with her were only too pleased to be tugged along in her inspiring wake.

# PALS in Immigrant Communities

## What is PALS?

By Karen Beatty, Langley

**P**arents as Literacy Supporters (PALS) is a program where parents learn strategies to encourage increased learning in their pre-school and kindergarten-aged children while valuing and enhancing the language and literacy activities they already engage in with their children. It is important to note that one of the assumptions of the program is that most parents provide opportunities to learn literacy in the home and though these literacy experiences can be different from school experiences, they are not less important. As well, another assumption is that some parents want suggestions or more knowledge of how they can support their child's literacy development at home.

**PALS** was co-developed by **Dr. Jim Anderson**, Professor, Language and Literacy at UBC, and **Fiona Morrison**, who is now a director of Family Literacy and Early Learning for 2010 Legacies Now. PALS was developed in 1999 and first began in two schools in Langley and in the following year, in two in Vancouver. The developers were guided by needs identified through focus group sessions with parents and caregivers, early childhood educators, and administrators. PALS is currently active in 21 school districts and more than 220 sites throughout BC. It is a culturally responsive program which aims to meet the needs of families and the community.

**PALS** consists of 10 to 12, two and one-half hour sessions which occur over

the school year. Each session covers a different topic such as: "Print in Our Community," "ABCs and Learning," or "Learning to Read." To begin the session, the topic is introduced by the facilitator and parents share their knowledge of the topic and their own educational experiences. Ideally, for this portion of the session it works well to have some child care available so that the adults are able to fully interact. Then, the parents and children move into the Kindergarten or early childhood classroom where they work together at centers which are organized around the topic for the session. Afterwards, the parents discuss their observations about the session. Important to this program are the high quality materials that parents and children take home. This will often include a children's book and some other educational activity to be shared later.

More information about PALS can be obtained at:  
<http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/pals>

### What is PALS in Immigrant Communities?

**PALS** in Immigrant Communities is a three-year pilot program aimed at helping immigrant families support their preschool- and kindergarten-aged children's early literacy development through interactions which are in both English and their first language. This

pilot program is building on the already successful PALS program.

**PALS** in Immigrant Communities is currently underway at seven schools in five Lower Mainland communities: Abbotsford, Burnaby, Langley, North Vancouver and Surrey. Each site is able to host up to 25 families, including parents and/or other family members, for half-day sessions, 10 times a year for three years. A bilingual facilitator or an English speaking teacher with the aid of a multicultural worker, leads the discussions and activities in the appropriate language for the community (Farsi, Karen, Mandarin, Punjabi or Vietnamese). The Surrey program is conducting their sessions in English with some translation support in other languages. An important part of the pilot program is the research component and program evaluation which is being conducted by a research team led by Jim Anderson from UBC.

Further information about PALS in Immigrant Communities can be obtained at:  
[www.2010legaciesnow.com/ipals/](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/ipals/)  
and  
[www.lerc.educ.ubc.ca/fac/anderson/pals/](http://www.lerc.educ.ubc.ca/fac/anderson/pals/)

### **A Closer Look at PALS for Immigrant Communities in Langley**

Prior to the commencement of the pilot program, an innovative Langley teacher-librarian/vice-principal, Susan Perkins, looked for a program which would be culturally responsive to the unique needs of our Vietnamese population in the Aldergrove area. With the help of our Vietnamese, multi-cultural worker, Tammy Dao who is well known and respected in the

Vietnamese community and the support of Fiona Morrison and Jim Anderson, we began Vietnamese PALS sessions with an aim to building a stronger connection between the families and the school. Funding for the program was not easy to come by but with the help of different grants and the overwhelming support of school personal, we were able to pull it all together. The development and implementation of the program is documented in Susan Perkins' award winning paper titled, PALS in Vietnamese: Implementing a bilingual family literacy program.

Vietnamese PALS is now into its fourth year and one of the programs supported by the pilot project. Much of the continued success of this program can be attributed to the positive way the facilitators have embraced students' and caregivers' language and culture and the respectful way they have supported home literacy practices. Rather than imparting knowledge to parents in one-way communication, PALS in Immigrant Communities attempts to embrace open, two-way communication between family members and the program facilitators. As well, it attempts to be responsive to the needs of the participants allowing them to make suggestions. For example, one year Vietnamese parents asked for additional time in the computer lab so that they could better understand the technology used in schools. Just as in PALS, quality theme related resources are sent home but for these families the take-home package often includes a dual language book.

As part of the pilot, we are also running sessions in Karen for the new Sgaw Karen speaking population in Langley. The origin of this ethnic group is Burma, now known as Myanmar. The Karens were force to flee to refugee

camps in Thailand because of human rights abuses and ethnic oppression in Burma. The families had been in these camps for many years. Due to their circumstances many of the parents have had interrupted education or have not had opportunities to become literate in their first language.

As with our Vietnamese population, an important part of the success of the program for Karen speakers appears to be the strong connection between the parents and the Karen speaking multicultural worker, Zipporah Min. Our multicultural workers have been invaluable contributors who increase the understanding between cultures and facilitate the necessary feedback and conversations with parents. As each session progresses, I can see that these parents are feeling more welcomed into the school community. The reality is for this group of parents that without first language support, they would have been unlikely to participate in a school based activity. However, due to their involvement in PALS, more Karen speaking parents can be seen in the K classrooms and they are beginning to become more involved in the school.

Today it is becoming apparent that children who are proficient in neither their home language nor their second language are at an increased risk of school failure. When children lose their heritage language and their parents are not proficient in English, family relationships are also endangered. Studies in oral language development have informed us of the advantage of a strong first language base when learning a second language. Therefore, parents should be encouraged to have extended conversations and shared literacy

experiences in the language in which they are most proficient.

I must admit that supporting family literacy through programs such as Immigrant PALS can involve additional work. However, I feel privileged to have the opportunity to be participating in this program. I started off feeling that it was for the parents and the students but today I recognize how much I have gained from my participation and support of the program. With PALS now available in so many districts across B.C., as an ESL Teacher and Coordinator, I am very encouraged by the pilot targeting some of our different language communities.

Further, I look forward to reading the research and the valuable insights which will be gained from the program evaluation. I believe it is imperative that programs such as PALS in Immigrant Communities be implemented in all schools throughout BC. Programs such as PALS can help our schools to become more welcoming and inclusive places for immigrant and refugee families while helping them to increase their literacy skills.

*Karen Beatty is the ESL PSA Vice-President*

**Need more information about PALS?**

**[www.2010legaciesnow.com/pals](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/pals)**

More about **PALS in Immigrant Communities** at

**[www.2010legaciesnow.com/ipals/](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/ipals/) &**

**[www.lerc.educ.ubc.ca/fac/anderson/pals/](http://www.lerc.educ.ubc.ca/fac/anderson/pals/)**

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## ESL PSA Conference Keynote Speaker

Dr. Hetty Roessingh, University of Calgary



The ESL PSA is delighted to announce the 19<sup>th</sup> ESL PSA

Conference Keynote speaker: **Dr. Hetty Roessingh.**

The topic of the keynote speech is: **Creating the Perfect Storm: Flashpoints and Interventions in the Learning Trajectories of ESL Learners from K to College** is a reflection of Roessingh's current research into the particular points along the learning continuum where vocabulary development is most critical.

Suggested interventions will be offered.

After many years as an accomplished secondary level ESL teacher, Dr. Roessingh joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. Since then her research has focused on closing the gap between native English speakers and ESL learners with respect to academic learning in English. Her work has led to her current research in the area of vocabulary development as it has become increasingly clear that vocabulary development for ESL learners is a key element in their academic success.

From early childhood to post-secondary learning, Roessingh's keynote will serve to validate what we have noticed and will provide some steps towards honing in on appropriate vocabulary support structures for all ages.

**Hetty Roessingh**, BEd'74, MA'74, PhD'96, moved to Canada from Holland with her parents when she was just four years old, and she still remembers learning the language that she is now most comfortable in.

It was tough, despite the fact that most people think that the younger a child's age, the easier it is for her or him to pick up a language. Roessingh says that's not the case at all.

"Twelve - fifteen is actually the perfect age to immigrate and start learning a new language. At that point, someone has far better command of their first language and is able to translate more words. Small children are actually in a deficit position," Roessingh explains.

The key to learning language, any language, is repetition and exposure. It takes most children about five years to gain a solid control of their first language, adding another language at that point is complicated, says Roessingh. "Children mimic. Sure, they'll learn about 3,000 words of a new language quite quickly, but their ability to read or actually learn in another language at that point is rarely there."

Source: Leslie Strudwick,  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/alumni/stories/hroessingh>

**Call for Presentations  
for the  
ESL PSA's 19<sup>th</sup> Conference**

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**DIVERSITY: EXPECT,  
RESPECT, & CELEBRATE**

**Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009**

**John Oliver Secondary School in Vancouver**

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**To capture the notion of diversity in the organization of the ESL PSA 2009 Conference, the ESL PSA is trying something different.**

In addition to the on-going need for 'stand alone' presentations, the conference committee has created 'strands' on certain themes so that those who want to spend the day focusing on one topic area can do so.

The strands will include the following topics:

- English as a Second Dialect
- Cultural and Linguistic Support Services
- Working with Refugees
- New to ESL Support (Primary, Intermediate and Secondary)
- Writing/Grammar
- ESL Learners with Additional Learning Challenges/Needs
- Oral Language Development

As you think about your presentation, consider whether you want it to be listed as a 'stand alone' or as part of a strand, and please indicate this on the Call for Presentations.

We look forward to receiving your presentation ideas and information.

***Call for Presentations* forms are available on the ESL PSA webpage:**

**<http://www.bctf.ca/eslpsa/>**