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**Be an
ESL PSA
Conference Presenter**



**“The New Reality:
English Language Learners in
Every Classroom”**

See pages 1 & 1 for
Call for Presenters

News from TESOL 2008

11 000 registrants came to TESOL 2008 in New York City! It was crowded but fun to be learning, working and playing in this vibrant and diverse city.

Some Hot Topics:

- Teacher Mentorship/Qualifications
- World English (who owns the language these days?)
- Building and Accessing Content Knowledge
- Classroom Communities
- Adolescent ELL Literacy & Struggling Readers at Secondary
- Action Research is assuming an increasingly prominent role in policies, programs and practices in English Language teaching
- Scaffolding Literacy
- Home Learning & Refugee Families
- Supporting ELLs in Meeting Graduation Literacy Standards
- Designing ESL Instruction for ELLs with Special Needs
- Building Oral Language (K-12)
- Enhancing vocabulary (K-12)
- Later-to Literacy Learners

Your ESL PSA Executive

President

Sydney Dean

SD#40, New Westminster

Tel: 604.517.6220

sdean@sd40.bc.ca

Vice-President

Karen Beatty

SD#35, Langley School Board

Tel: 604.532.1181

kbeatty@sd35.bc.ca

Secretary

Betty Kosel

SD#39, Vancouver School Board

Tel: 604.713.5251

bkosel@gmail.com

Treasurer

Analisa Feuz

SD#36, Surrey School Board

Tel: 604.596.9325

Feuz_a@sd36.bc.ca

Newsletter Editor

Verena Foxx

DS#39, Vancouver School Board

Tel: 604.713.5233

vfoxx@vsb.bc.ca

BCTF Liaison

Anita Chapman

achapman@bctf.ca

Members – at – Large

Kristi Clifton

SD#52, Prince Rupert

Tel: 250.624.0942

kclifton@sd52.bc.ca

Marlene Eccles

SD#27, Williams Lake

Tel: 250.398.7192

marlene.eccles@sd27.bc.ca

Kristin Housez

SD#39, Vancouver School Board

Tel: 604.713.5878

eslpsa-khousez@sharv.ca

Susan Little

SD#45, West Vancouver

Tel: 604.

slittle@sd45.bc.ca

Charlotte Roderman

SD#36, Surrey School Board

lottaroderman@hotmail.com

Dale Shea

SD#43, Coquitlam

dshea@sd43.bc.ca

Past President

Joy Wild

SD#39, Vancouver School Board

Tel: 604.713.4666

joywild@hotmail.com

President's Message

This message will greet you as you are clearing up your classrooms and preparing for other activities that fulfill teachers' lives. For me, I am in that time of my life when I am focusing on preparing for that luxury that greets us when we reach the "magic number" of "90". That preparation has included: trips down nostalgia lane, curiosity about what the world holds for me, and ultimately the realization that whatever will happen is up to me.

During these ruminations I have thought of the first day I met **Joy Wild**. She was preparing for maternity leave from John Robson Elementary School in New Westminster. I had just been hired to replace her. She had created huge footsteps for me to fill. New Westminster was one of only three districts including Burnaby and Richmond which valued the teaching of "New Canadian" classes. Joy, **Maureen Seesahai** (Burnaby) and **Yonnie Yonemoto** (Richmond) met for half a day the first Friday per month to discuss common ESL issues. I suppose this was the beginning of the first Metro group. Joy insisted that the replacing teacher must have qualifications. I had graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Linguistics and English, but I would have the job if I agreed to take Mary Ashworth's course. I found my niche.

The highlights have been many over the 34 years. I will never forget **Jennifer, Jeffrey and Francis Chan**, my very first students waiting for the

and their families have we met the same way? I am sure we were all a bit frightened at the beginning, but thanks to them and their families we all made it through. I learned so much from them. I won't forget Rosie and her fabulously generous family who invited me for tea when I wanted to talk to them about her attending the Outdoor camp. They were very nervous about letting her go. Now she visits me at Parent Teacher interviews of her children. I have attended weddings, had my baggage checked at YVR by ex-students, seen the births of next generations and am teaching with past students who have become dear friends.

I know that it is cliché, but I couldn't have remained in this business if it weren't for fabulous past and present colleagues who encouraged me to fight for class size limits for sheltered ESL classes, for inclusion of ESL students in mainstream classes. I couldn't have done my job without administrators who had a clear vision, colleagues who were willing to work with me and union leaders who advocated for the rights of our invited citizens with many government leaders.

And most recently, I couldn't have felt as privileged as I do now without your incredible executive which has encouraged me to take on positions I would never have dreamt I had the skills to. I have a dear friend who asked me to help her with registration several years ago. It was from this adventure that I began my advocacy on the provincial scene.

Joy Wild and **Sylvia Helmer** suggested that I should run for a position on the executive and I am not known for saying “No.” They were very kind and encouraging. I thank them very much for putting up with my mistakes and never making me feel that I couldn’t do the job.

I know that it is dangerous to mention people by name, but I feel I need to say very special thanks to the executive of the past two years. Joy Wild’s global view of the education of those who are unable to advocate for themselves has enabled me to see that I can continue to work in the field long after I leave the public school system. On short notice, Joy was able to organize Vision Day. **Marlene Eccles** managed to contact members from throughout the province to attend Vision Day. Although I am still in awe and admiration of Sylvia Helmer’s ability to explain all sides of an issue with incredible insight, I am very proud to call her a friend and she will be there for me. **Jo-Anne Preston** impressed on me the issues of the rural teachers with her quiet and considered words. **Kristi Clifton**’s strong advocacy for Second Dialect students has provided me with a clearer lens through which to see these students and their families. **Catherine Eddy**’s grace as she transitioned into her new life, has given me a great roadmap.

Kristin Housez has always been there as a team player. When I needed someone to help with registration, she was right there offering to do anything. **Charlotte Roderman** has been a stalwart member and came to the fore last year when we needed a registrar for the conference. **Betty Kosel** has been an enthusiastic champion for our October

Conference at David Thompson. It is going to be FANTASTIC!

Verena Foxx took on the job of newsletter editor and it flourishes under her amazing stewardship. She also got our new website off the ground.

Marlene Eccles took up the gauntlet to learn how to master the website and has made it her own. Thank you both so much.

It was the new website that opened a professional connection with teachers from Colorado. It was **Dale Shea, Karen Beatty, Joy Wild** and **Sylvia Helmer** who came to my aid and showed them how we “do” ESL and ESD in the Lower Mainland. What an amazing team!

Analisa Feuz has been remarkable at taking the reins of the treasury. This is a huge feat in times of declining membership. **Susan Little**’s voice is always considered and appreciated on all topics.

Anita Chapman has made sure that our views are heard at the BCTF level and helped us navigate the waters of advocacy in the media. Thank you, Anita.

To all, I thank you for making my participation in the ESL PSA a wonderfully fulfilling experience. This has given me the opportunity to construct my future.

Sydney Dean
ESL PSA President
May 2008

Celebrating Linguistic Diversity in Toronto –

May 1st and 2nd, 2008

The **Toronto School Board** hosted its annual conference, co-sponsored by the Modern Language Centre, **Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto**, in early May.

Educators and Ministry representatives from **Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta** and **BC** attended this excellent two-day conference in Toronto.

Keynote speakers included **Dr. Donna Ogle** (who developed the K-W-L chart in 1986), and is currently a professor at the National-Louis University, Chicago. Ogle opened the conference by presenting results of Project ALL (Advancing Literacy for Learning). She stressed the importance of getting students to talk, of supporting them in their vocabulary development, and of the value of partner reading.

Dr. Jim Cummins (who coined the acronyms BICS & CALP*), opened his presentation by stressing: *“It is crucial to take a whole school approach to ELL.”*

Dr. Cummins delivered key ideas around *entire school communities taking ownership of ELL support*

Some of his main starting points in supporting teachers and learners are:

- Informed Leadership
- Awareness of Relevant Research
- Awareness of Scaffolding Strategies
- Awareness of Possible Alternate Assessments

“ELL is everyone’s business.”

For more information about Dr. Cummins work:
<http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/>

***BICS** – *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (conversational language – takes 1-2 years); CALP* – *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (understanding meaning, making connections, synthesizing information – takes about 5-7 years)*

Dr. Hetty Roessingh, University of Calgary, in her 2-hour presentation at emphasized the importance of building vocabulary with ELLs.

*“Our work, as well as that of our colleagues who conduct second language acquisition research increasingly points to **vocabulary** as the key variable that links to reading comprehension (August & Carlo, 2005); which in turn links to academic achievement; and in turn to academic success and the opportunities to access post secondary educational opportunities commensurate with our students' potential. We were struck by Hart and Risley's (2003) recent study in first language acquisition about the centrality of vocabulary in cognitive development and a child's future academic success.*

Their conclusion? It's all about how many words a child knows. And sadly, they find that the gap that exists at only age 3 is very hard to close for those who lag behind ... ever!!”

Dr. Roessingh’s other research has found that the optimal age of learning an additional language is age 13!

More from the website above:

“ESL learners, especially young arrivals, are remarkably quick in acquiring communicative competence (‘sounding good’) as well as the skills and concepts that are the precursors to early literacy development

(D’Angiulli, Siegel & Maggi, 2004).

Phonemic awareness, phonics, and general decoding skills are not problematic for young ESL learners. Indeed, studies suggest they can outperform their NS counterparts on these measures (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003).

*This may confound their teachers into thinking they no longer need any ESL support by grade 3. It is in **vocabulary measures**, however, that ESL learners fall farther and farther behind.*

By grade 4, this may place them at great educational risk – also known as ‘the grade 4 slump’. We discuss this in a separate section. The grade 4 slump.”

Check out Dr. Roessingh’s website for more information on her studies:

www.apollo.ucalgary.ca/eslrw

Contributed by Verena Foxx, ESL PSA Newsletter Editor and ESL Consultant at the Vancouver School Board, SD#39.

Foxx presented two workshops at the 2008 Toronto conference, and has been invited to present at the 2009 conference as well.

Supporting Our Students: Success for ESL and ESD Learners

The Campbell River ESL/ESD mini-conference was very successful. 63 people attended "Supporting our Students: Success for ESL and ESD Students", held at the beautiful Maritime Heritage Centre.

This turned out to be very much a regional conference. One third of those attending were from the Campbell River School District, but the other two thirds were from farther afield - from Port Hardy and Gold River to the north, Port Alberni and Kyuquot to the west, Nanaimo, Cowichan, Victoria and Sooke to the south, and the Sunshine Coast, Coquitlam and Chilliwack to the east.

An inspiring keynote speech by **Krisi Clifton** was followed by workshops by **Kristi, Verena Foxx, Lisa Johnson, Jane Monchak, Pauline Falck** and **Clarke Graves**.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Preston, Campbell River Conference Chair, and former member of the ESL PSA Executive.

Watch the ESL PSA website in the new school year for information about the 2009 Toronto conference:

Celebrating Linguistic Diversity

April 30 and May 1st, 2009

It’s an affordable national conference that provides a stimulating venue for professionals working with English Language Learners.

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

Top Ten Ways to Support ESL/ESD Learners in Schools

1. **W**elcome all language offerings with an open spirit – *always remember that ba'wis and mouse do rhyme!****
2. **P**lan daily opportunities for collaborative work between students that requires talk – *authentic tasks, curricular language, oral rehearsal*
3. **D**on't assume that you are understood – aim for comprehensible input and dig deeper to confirm student understanding
4. **D**evelop 'cultural radar' when it comes to text – *try to figure out what background/cultural knowledge the text assumes students have*
5. **S**eek out opportunities to host *authentic* cultural events
6. **W**elcome students to your building with images that reflect who they are
7. **E**ncourage the use of key visuals and pictures in all classrooms
8. **S**eek out the 'magic strategies' that have the power of inclusion built in like PWIM, word sorting, literature circles
9. **B**e conscious of the opportunities to teach language in all subjects all day long!
10. **A** little bit of linguistic knowledge goes along way – *learn about semantics, phonology, morphology, pragmatics, grammar, syntax, dialect, etc.*

*** *ba'wis is the Ts'msyen/Sm'algyax word for monkey. This word was offered as a rhyme for mouse by a Kindergarten student in SD 52 (Prince Rupert) and is a phonetic match for rhyming with mouse.*



Thanks to Kristi Clifton, SD # 52, Prince Rupert, for this addition to the newsletter. Kristi is a Member-at-Large of the ESL PSA Executive.

Durango, Colorado Teachers Visit

Four teachers from Durango Colorado recently came to visit Coquitlam schools, after being in Bellevue, Washington. They were looking for ways to better serve their students.

At present, four full time and three part time ESL teachers serve students in a district which is 500 sq miles in size.

Their schedules are so tight that they don't have time to collaborate with classroom teachers.

In addition, they are burdened under many layers of state and federal accountability. What this looks like is days of testing, piles of paperwork and the frustration of being asked to pull ESL students up to a bar that was never intended for them.

The US "No Child Left Behind" initiative has also led to classroom teachers looking for quick fixes and administrators looking for ways to move students who are bringing school results down. If that's not enough, many Durango secondary students lack the motivation to use the ESL services being offered to them. They are accustomed to working for \$5 per day, so working for minimum wage in Colorado is enticing.

The plan for changes to the Durango service delivery includes the creation of an intake centre, a new arrival centre, bussing students from outlying areas into centralized schools, more flexible

schedules and a move towards more of a facilitator model in order to collaborate more with classroom teachers.

I was left feeling fortunate to belong to the Coquitlam Teachers Association, the BCTF and to be working in School District 43.

I also feel fortunate for the advocacy that comes from the ESL PSA, the ESL Metro Group, the ESL Consortium and from the close relationships I have with ESL teachers in other districts.

Dale Shea is a Member-at-Large of the ESL PSA Executive, and is the ESL Coordinator in Coquitlam, SD #43.

Check it out!

The new, updated ESL PSA webpage

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

What you'll find

- ✓ Conference Information
- ✓ Latest News
- ✓ Scholarship Applications
- ✓ Call for Presenters
- ✓ Links to other related websites

... it's all on the new ESL PSA website!

A Song and an Activity

I AM A PIZZA (Charlotte Diamond)

I am a pizza,
With extra cheese
From tomatoes
Sauce is squeezed
Onions and mushrooms
Oregano
I am a pizza, ready to go.

I am a pizza,
Pepperoni
No anchovies
Or phony bologna
I am a pizza
Order by phone
I am a pizza, please take me home.

I am a pizza,
Peppers on top
Out of the oven
Into the box
Into the car and
Upside down
I am a pizza, dropped on the ground.

I was a pizza,
I was the best
I was a pizza
Now I'm a mess!

What better way to end the year than to have a Pizza Party with your class or the groups that you give support to! Pizza seems to be thoroughly enjoyed by many students. Making a pizza, or a number of small pizzas, in class can provide a context for teaching some of the ingredients that can be used, the sequence of steps for making it, the language of evaluating if it was good and the language for choosing which kind of pizza one likes best.

Charlotte Diamond has given us a pizza song that students love to sing. It is available in both CD and tape format.

This song also provides an opportunity to teach the idioms "a phony bologna" and "I am a mess!" Because the song is an 'echo song', meaning that you sing a line and the students repeat what you sing, it supports students at a beginner level in their English language learning, but those at a more advanced level also enjoy it.

Demonstrating how to make a pizza with your students is easier than you think. If you don't want to make pizza crust, you can purchase it. Tomato sauce is easy to come by and then you can choose what toppings you want: onions, mushrooms, green and red peppers, pineapple, cheese and herbs such as oregano and basil. Be careful about using meat - some of your students may have religious restrictions regarding the kind of meat they eat, some may be vegetarian. After demonstrating how to make a pizza, have the students work in teams to make their own pizza. Then enjoy eating with them and singing about pizza!

Another activity that ties in with making pizza is to have students role play ordering a pizza by phone. This requires them to give their telephone number and address as well as their choice of pizza and the size. It can also lead into learning how to pay for something that one has ordered, including the money needed.

Hint: pre-cutting ingredients makes the job much easier and it helps to have little signs to identify the various ingredients.

Joy Wild is Past President of the ESL PSA, and a teacher in Vancouver.

Newcomers High School Visit – TESOL 2008

My visit to the **Newcomers High School in Queens**, New York was one of the most interesting experiences I had at the TESOL 2008 convention. I was curious about how a school could manage to teach curriculum in an environment where every student was an English Language Learner. I have to admit, I was apprehensive about the notion of a segregated school. During my visit I learned that at one point, Queens had over a 40% drop-out rate.

Newcomers High School was started in 1979 to give new immigrants better opportunities to manage curriculum and to not only graduate from secondary school but to also move on to post-secondary learning opportunities. In this respect Newcomers High School meets the needs of its students very well as it boasts a 90 to 95% post secondary rate for those students who do graduate.

Newcomers High School is in a very simple looking older building and there is no evidence of any of the bells and whistles that are available in some of our newer secondary schools. The first person we met was **Mary Burke**, the principal who had a variety of dedicated administrators and staff members come to the library and enthusiastically explain their program to our group of visiting teachers. Newcomers High School has a specific mission which is to service a population of 100% English Language Learners. All of the approximately 1000 students at the school are recent immigrants who came to the school with little or no English language abilities. A little over half of the students are Spanish speakers. As well, more than 30% of the students are

Asian. Although Spanish and Chinese are the main languages spoken, overall there is a wide range of languages with students coming from over 40 countries

The school services students in grades 9 through 12 and students who are more than 17 years old are not accepted at this school. Regardless of their age, all students are put into grade 9 when they arrive until they are able to take regular classes. On average, it takes a minimum of four years to graduate. Students are able to attend school until they are 22 and some take up to seven years to graduate. As well, there are no special education students at the school due to the school's specialized status. In addition, this school does not take refugee students who lack formal educational experiences. Many students attending the school have had interrupted schooling for various reasons; however, to attend Newcomers High School a student must have a reading level of grade 7 in their first language.

The school averages around 10 new students a week from different countries. All new students attend a three day orientation conducted in the library before going to classes. They learn survival language and necessary information. Two important topics they cover in orientation are how to use the subway and how to get around New York. There is also a cafeteria lesson and a building tour. As well, other survival topics are discussed, for example money. Every effort is made to pair up new students with a student with a common language who has more English.

New students are carefully screened and appropriately placed according to their ability in English, mathematics and other subject areas. There are also first language placement exams for Spanish speakers. The mathematics placement test is translated into numerous languages. After testing, the data is analyzed to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of each individual student and groups of students. Three blocks of ESL are offered for students with very low English language skills. Students and groups of students are then carefully followed throughout their time at the school to ensure that every opportunity is afforded them to accelerate their learning.

Every effort is made to scaffold learning for each student regardless of their academic ability upon entering the school. We were told that it is part of the normal expectation and practice of all teachers to differentiate their instruction to respond to the specific needs of their students. In addition, the school pays particular attention to providing enrichment activities and hands on lessons that effectively engage students in their studies. During our classroom visits, the first thing that was apparent was the wide use of visuals; many of which were made by the students themselves. Small group work is also widely used in classrooms that I visited. In fact, the use of second language methodology was very apparent throughout the school and second language strategies were embedded in all content area subjects.

Continued on next page

CATHERINE LOGAN EDDY SCHOLARSHIP

The ESL PSA is pleased to once again invite application for its scholarship for immigrant secondary graduates. This scholarship was created to honour one of the long-time ESL educators in BC, an advocate and scholar who has mentored ESL students and their teachers for over 25 years.

Purpose: To recognize a student graduating from a BC Secondary School who has combined hard work with school and community involvement, and who wishes to further her/his education/training at a tertiary institution in BC.

Amount of Scholarship: \$1,000.00

Tenure: Any BC post secondary institution/training facility.

Criteria:

Graduate of a BC high school who wishes to attend a tertiary institution to further her/his education or training for a specific type of employment;
Demonstrated consistent improvement in academic competence;
School or community involvement or service to others; and
ESL coursework at the secondary level.

Expectations:

The recipient of this award is expected to commence her/his post-secondary education within one year of receiving the scholarship.

Application Deadline: June 1

Application and detailed criteria available on line

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

One of the approaches used to ensure student success is the liberal use of their first language in content areas and in bilingual classes. Students continue to learn content in their first language as they gradually learn more English in transitional bilingual classes. Bilingual math, history and socials classes are offered in Spanish and Chinese. In one math class, I observed the teacher and students speaking mostly Spanish but the teacher wrote the explanations in English text as she spoke in Spanish. Many of the teachers are fluent in the languages of the newcomers themselves. In one of the literacy classes, a Japanese teacher asked for a Spanish speaking student to pronounce a cognate as in the teacher's words, their pronunciation would be better than hers. It was very apparent as I went from class to class that the teachers valued the first languages of all students.

In addition, strong support systems are in place for students. After school support and classes are provided for students who are struggling or not managing the curriculum well. In addition, free Saturday school is available by referral and runs during each semester. These classes also provide enrichment, content instruction, ESL, PE, Art. The classes are funded by the Federal Government. Teachers are encouraged but not required to teach Saturday classes and are compensated to do so. Apparently, no evening classes are offered in New York.

Student suspensions at Newcomers High School are a very rare occurrence because students feel they are being welcomed into a new society. One of the first questions asked by one of the visiting American teachers was how

does the school staff manage gang related problems. The answer was that they are challenged by gangs at this school just as in other schools but they manage it as proactively as possible. Counsellors are available at the school and there are very clear expectations for student behaviour. Attendance at the school is 92% which is much higher than other similar schools in New York. Many students ask to attend Newcomers High School but students also have the ability to transfer out of the school with some restrictions; they must be articulated out. After one year, 9th and 10th graders can transfer out to a different secondary school as long as they have adequate scores in ESL. However, many students prefer to stay at this school because the stigma of being an English Language Learner is greatly minimized.

As with all American schools, Newcomers High School is highly accountable for improving instruction. Teachers design their own examinations in teams to ensure that assessments are aligned with subject benchmarks. Students take regular exams; however, accommodations are made for language. Students can use dictionaries in exams. If they have been in the US less than three years, they may elect to take a bilingual exam if it is available. In most states, the five main language groups have bilingual exams. However, in order to graduate from grade 12, all students must pass a two day, six hour English exam from the state of New York. No accommodations are provided on this exam.

I was truly impressed by my visit to this New York high school. By the end of my visit, I was no longer apprehensive; however, it did challenge

many on the beliefs that I had held about second language learning. The most obvious of course was the belief that students could learn a language better when they were immersed in an environment with many first language speakers. Here was this older school that appeared quite lacking in new technology which was graduating fluent speakers who were academically proficient from a 100% immigrant student population. What was very apparent was the dedication of the staff and the administration to ensure student success on a case by case basis. In addition, this was my first experience with bilingual programs and I was able to witness the involvement of students who continued to learn content in their first language and to progress academically while learning a new language. As well, there was evidence that English as a Second Language methodology was utilized throughout all the content areas. Students had every opportunity to be successful which would explain why the stigma of being “ESL” was not considered a problem at this school.

The reality was that the teachers at Newcomers High School, many of whom were second language learners themselves, made it all look so simple. After some thought it occurred to me that maybe it was. Is it possible that in British Columbia that we underestimate the value of ESL methodology? Do we rely too much on the immersion principal and mistakenly believe that our English speaking environment alone will bring students along? Do we need to evaluate the benefits of students’ first language and learn to use it more advantageously?

I have walked through many secondary schools where there are Second language learners but where the only people speaking in the classrooms are the teachers. As well, in our content classes, the key visuals and adaptations that English Language Learners need to understand the curriculum are often lacking. As English language teachers we know that to manage content English Language Learners need comprehensible input and opportunities for comprehensible output and cognitive thinking strategies. Yet, in many instances in our schools there are unqualified teachers who are attempting to teach English Language Learners because they need a block. In closing, my trip to Newcomers High School was an experience which was thought provoking and it still has me thinking about our English Language Learners and how we might better meet their learning needs.

Karen Beatty is the Vice-President of the ESL PSA, and ESL Coordinator in SD # 35, Langley.

A Multifaceted Language Program

Reference: Michael Graves, University of Minnesota

http://www.apollo.ucalgary.ca/eslrw/files/eslrw/graves_on_vocabulary.pp

Four parts of a multifaceted vocabulary program as described in *The Vocabulary Book* by Michael Graves:

- Frequent, varied and extensive language experiences
- Teaching individual words
- Teaching word learning strategies
- Fostering word consciousness

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

ESL PSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE NEW REALITY:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
IN EVERY CLASSROOM

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2008

David Thompson Secondary School,
1755 E.55th Ave., Vancouver, BC V5P 1Z7

ESL PSA 2008

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION PROPOSAL

Application form now available on line at:

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

Please return your proposal to either of the conference co-chairs:

Sydney Dean (sdean@sd40.bc.ca), or

Marlene Eccles (meccles@shaw.ca)

You will be notified of receipt and approval by email.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS NOW.

The New Reality: English Language Learners in Every Classroom



18th Annual ESL PSA Conference

Friday, October 24th, 2008

Province-wide PSA Day

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Yaya de Andrade

David Thompson Secondary School in Vancouver

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