LIBRARY SETTLEMENT PARTNERSHIPS: A NEW AND UNIQUE PROGRAM LAUNCHES

By Laura Heller, LSP Provincial Coordinator

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA (CIC) IS LAUNCHING A UNIQUE AND NEW SETTLEMENT PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ELEVEN PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS AND OVER TWENTY SETTLEMENT AGENCIES IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN ONTARIO. LIBRARY SETTLEMENT PARTNERSHIPS (LSP) BUILDS ON SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF NEWCOMER SERVICE DELIVERY DEVELOPED AND SUPPORTED BY CIC ALREADY, BUT ADDS NEW POSSIBILITIES BASED ON THE ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE AND MANDATE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE COMMUNITY.

The program will be formally launched in October 2008 to coincide with Canadian Public Library Month, the theme of which is Your Library, Your World.

LSP provides settlement workers, employed by settlement agencies and funded by ISAP to work in local public library branches. The workers assist newcomers by providing one-on-one settlement information and referral as well as group information sessions. In addition, they also engage in community outreach, building bridges between the library and newcomers, thereby helping to make the wealth of resources and services of public libraries more accessible.

This program arose from the highly successful Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program which over a number of years placed school-based settlement workers in libraries during the summer months to provide continuing employment. The success of the summer program led to the creation of a year-round pilot that took place in three

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LSP Program Development: Pilot Dual Language Book Club, Waterloo Public Library, 2008
communities – Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa with a total of nineteen branches participating. As of the end of August 2008, LSP has served over 17,000 newcomers.

The pilot was evaluated in the summer of 2007 and CIC made a decision to expand the program to an additional eight communities as well as expanding the number of branches in Toronto and making these part of the provincial program implementation.

This process of full program implementation has been underway over the past year, including a CIC-issued call for proposals for agencies to deliver the expanded service. Program development took a major step forward when Toronto Public Library developed a program model in the summer of 2007 to help define the expansion requirements. LSP is already piloting new programs such as the Dual Language Book Club run this past summer with Waterloo Public Library and looks forward to others that this special partnership can foster.

The cities of Windsor, London, Kitchener, Waterloo, Brampton, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham are now in the process of establishing the programs for their respective communities. This process is guided by local steering committees which are established in each participating community with representatives of all three partners: the agency or agencies, the library, and CIC. The steering committees develop local operational guidelines, based on a program template as well as work plans and local outreach strategies.

Other program supports are also being put into place including the hiring of a Provincial Coordinator and establishing a program advisory committee. The Provincial Coordinator is responsible for program-wide infrastructure, training and outreach. In some larger communities, CIC has also supported the hiring of an Outreach Librarian who is based in the library and works to make the partnership successful.

There are many resources already developed for the pilot sites that are now in the process of being continued on page 8
The projects will develop and publish a series of resource books and CDs comprised of reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities appropriate for Ontario-based English language classes. Separate sections in the classroom-activities resource books will address the specific needs of women, youth, and seniors as identified in the Consultation on the Settlement and Language Training Services Needs of Newcomers in Support of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (www.settlement.org).

An exciting feature of the resources is the interactive activities which will be published in HTML and JavaScript, and packaged as SCORM learning objects so they can be re-used in various learning management systems (including www.Settlement.org and other CIC funded websites). Mavis Spencer, project coordinator for the Algonquin College LINC 1–4 activities, is enthusiastic about the on-line component that they will develop for LINC 3–4, something that doesn’t currently exist. “This won’t just be links to existing web sites,” she explains, “but rather interactive on-line activities LINC providers can access.” Teachers will be able to use the on-line activities to show their students that the Web provides a wealth of resources for increasing language skills.

The writing teams will ensure that the activities are learner-focused, task-driven, and contextualized to the real world in order to ensure that they meet the target learners’ settlement and linguistic needs. Sharon Rajabi, program consultant at Toronto Catholic District School Board, notes that the LINC 5–7 activities will address Essential Skills. “We introduced the Essential Skills in the LINC 5–7 curriculum,” she explains, “and it’s logical to provide tasks and ideas that will help instructors incorporate them. The idea is that at this level, learners should be ready to transition to post-secondary education or employment. The Essential Skills are fundamental to both.”

Besides a project team experienced in designing and delivering LINC, each project will have an advisory committee composed of persons with expertise in LINC, ESL, the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and in settlement issues.

The resource books, which will be available in August 2009, will include material and exercises that can be photocopied for use in LINC and ESL classes in Ontario as well as teacher’s notes and answer keys.
A pilot program may make a difference for children in the middle grades (grades 6 – 8). Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN) is a one-day orientation program for newcomer students and their parents. The pilot, which took place on August 28, 2008, was organized by the school settlement workers and teachers at Camilla Public School in Mississauga. The settlement workers are part of the Multicultural Settlement and Education Partnership (MSEP) and are employed by Inter-cultural Neighbourhood Social Services (ICNSS). The initiative was funded by Citizenship & Immigration Canada through the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program.

WIN follows on the success of Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW), a 4-day program for high school students...
students that was first piloted last year and ran this summer in 40 schools from Windsor to Ottawa. WIN takes place in the week before school starts and gives students and their parents a head start on getting to know the school they’ll be attending the following week – the layout, the rules and procedures, and generally how schools work. Perhaps even more importantly, it gives new students a chance to meet fellow students so that there are friendly and familiar faces on that intimidating first day.

Like NOW, WIN uses peer leaders. Peer leaders are students from the school who help lead and run the activities. For the most part, these peer leaders were also newcomers to Canada at one time, and therefore understand the experience of moving to a new country and starting a new school. There were 17 peer leaders involved in the program at Camilla Senior Public School, and they did a marvellous job.

In the morning, the entire group was welcomed with muffins, croissants and other goodies. Everyone stood for the national anthem and then the group was divided into two separate rooms – parents in one and students in the other.

Parents were given information about the settlement worker at the school and the types of services available to them. They also received important information about Camilla Senior Public School – the school schedule and calendar for the year, the activities fee and what it covers, the student’s agenda and how to use it, what to do in the case of bad weather, and what their child will need for school in terms of supplies, gym clothes and lunch.

Much of this information was cleverly and entertainingly acted out through skits prepared by the peer leaders. Students were also given information about how to understand the class timetable (through a game of BINGO), how combination locks and lockers

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OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TRAINING AT ONTARIO COLLEGES

OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TRAINING IS A KEY STRATEGY NOT ONLY IN ADDRESSING THE EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACING NEWCOMERS, BUT IN SUPPLYING ONTARIO’S INDUSTRIES WITH SKILLED, EXPERIENCED WORKERS. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA IS FUNDING A MAJOR INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE, CLIENT-CENTRED, OCCUPATION-SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TRAINING IN ONTARIO COLLEGES TO HELP IMMIGRANTS ACQUIRE THE LANGUAGE SKILLS THEY NEED TO OBTAIN AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE.

LINKING LANGUAGE AND EMPLOYMENT
Between June 2008 and June 2009, 14 Ontario colleges will undertake OSLT curriculum development and delivery pilot projects intended for immigrants who have language proficiency at Canadian Language Benchmark levels 6 to 8 in at least one language skill area, and who require occupation-specific language training. Three of these pilot projects will be in French.

These pilot projects will integrate the linguistic, occupational and socio-cultural aspects of occupation-specific language training for immigrants into generic curriculum for each of the five priority industry sectors and curriculum modules for specific occupations within each sector. Canadian Language Benchmarks will be used to anchor the curriculum in common descriptors of language proficiency.

The OSLT curriculum will cover the essential components for becoming eligible for, finding and retaining employment in an occupation or industry sector. These include the language required to work in or undertake training for an occupation, the context of communication in workplaces in Ontario, a review of Canadian workplace legislation, and job search techniques appropriate to the industry or occupation.

These pilot projects will be an important foundation for developing a framework for occupation-specific language training in Ontario colleges that will complement existing federal and provincial language training programs for immigrants while directly meeting the needs of immigrants and employers.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECTS
Fully-developed generic sector curriculum will cover the Health Sciences, Business, Human Services, Technology and Skilled Trades sectors which have been identified as high priority because of their capacity.

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for employment growth. The generic sector curriculum will include material common to all sectors as well as material specific to a particular sector. These will be complemented by modules that will address the language needs of specific occupations in each sector. Colleges undertaking curriculum development will review existing OSLT curriculum and determine whether it can be adapted for the pilot projects.

A team of experienced curriculum developers will work with content experts and language experts from the colleges to develop the OSLT curriculum and accompanying teaching resources and learning activities, using authentic materials to address the occupation-related language needs of participants.

**DELIVERY PILOT PROJECTS**

Several colleges are undertaking ready-to-go pilot projects that provide a unique opportunity to quickly deliver occupation-specific language training to immigrants in priority occupations or industry sectors. These delivery pilot projects will allow programs to gather information about factors that affect program delivery. These factors may include the lead time needed to market a program and recruit participants, or the need for different delivery locations, timeframes or modes to accommodate participants’ work schedules or family responsibilities. They offer opportunities to include online-based components, directly involve employers through workplace-based delivery, and facilitate cross-college delivery, or combine participants from different regions into a common program.

**FEASIBILITY REVIEW**

In addition to several pilot projects, several colleges are undertaking a feasibility review to examine how a digital repository of occupation-specific language training could work. They will assess the feasibility of a centralized resource that program participants, faculty, and curriculum designers could use at Ontario colleges.

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**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PILOT PROJECTS**

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<td>General Carpentry Curriculum Module (includes Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing, Brick laying, Steam-fitting)</td>
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<td>La Cité</td>
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For further information on the OSLT Project, please email sheffield@collegesontario.org.
CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LANGUAGES

TESL ONTARIO CONFERENCE 2008

TESL Ontario’s 36th Annual Conference: “Celebrating the International Year of Languages” has been officially recognized by UNESCO as an International Year of Languages project. Conference delegates attending this three-day event will enjoy a new, larger venue and packed conference schedule.

Topics for this year’s research symposium are:

- Immigrants and Mental Health Issues
- Role of L1 in L2 Learning or Teaching
- Strategies for Language Learning and Teaching
- Standardized Tests – State of the Art

Once again, we will offer our popular Technology Fair and host our third annual Panel Discussion on the theme of “Emerging Issues in Language Learning”.

Where? Sheraton Centre Hotel, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto.

WELCOME AND INFORMATION FOR NEWCOMERS

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work, and about school supplies and extra-curricular activities.

Meanwhile students were busy preparing their own “All About Me” profiles complete with photos to get to know each other better. These profiles were later posted in the staff room so that teachers could get to know new students as well.

Parents and students then reunited for lunch. They watched a short video about the school and heard from the school principal and a representative from the Peel Board of Health who spoke about immunizations. A representative of the Mississauga Public Library encouraged students and their families to visit their local library.

The last item of the day was an activity in which students and parents were given school passports. Each page represented a different area of the school that they had to find. Once there, they learned something about that part of the school, recorded it in their passport and got their passports stamped.

By the end of the day, it seemed students were quite comfortable and eager to start school the following week. Parents and students were very grateful for the program. One parent said that not only did he feel very welcome at the school, he and his family had also learned a lot of useful information. In the end, 38 out of 40 students who registered attended WIN. All in all, it was a very worthwhile day for everyone involved.

PARENTS AND STUDENTS WERE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE PROGRAM.

updated and modified for the full program. These include a multilingual video on using the library, posters, book marks and other promotional materials, as well as program templates, checklists, and others to assist in the start up, outreach, and training of those managing or delivering the service. Modifications have already been made to the statistical database, OTIS, to make it more appropriate for LSP and other evaluation tools are under development.

While this program builds on and has many points of intersection with SWIS, it is also a unique model in the public library world. Joining together as partners opens up the door to creating many new programs and to ensuring the long term integration of newcomers as fully engaged citizens and life-long public library patrons and contributors.

LIBRARY SETTLEMENT PARTNERSHIPS:

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