

September 2009
Volume 1, Issue 1

ELT Newsletter

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning -- Bridging Cultures, Bridging Futures

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Transforming Lives for 30 years

Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning was founded in 1979 in Denver, Colorado. Over the years, Spring has worked with more than 3,000 people from all over the world, each year, providing programs focused on language and cross-cultural communication. On November 12, Spring Institute will celebrate 30 years of transforming lives.

New ORR Director Named

Secretary Sebelius of Health and Human Services has appointed Eskinder Negash to be Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the Administration for Children and Families. Mr. Negash has worked on behalf of refugees and immigrants for over 30 years. Prior to joining ORR, he served as Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

Prior to his leadership role at USCRI, Mr. Negash served for 15 years as the Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of the International Institute of Los Angeles, where he implemented a range of programs including child care, social services, and immigration and citizenship programs.

A graduate of California State University, Mr. Negash's expertise will strengthen ORR's efforts to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming integrated members of American society.

WIN Project Underway

The Worker Integration and Naturalization (WIN) Project is a national, pilot project designed to increase the availability of English language classes in the workplace. It is a collaborative effort between refugee resettlement agencies and their employer contacts within the local community.

The WIN Project aims to:

- Create a national model of workplace English as a Second Language (ESL) class opportunities;

- Improve access to ESL classes for immigrant workers;
- Increase workplace safety and retention of immigrant workers;
- Build stronger relationships between employers and local refugee resettlement agencies; and
- Increase employer investment in ESL and citizenship classes.

The WIN Project is led by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) with support from the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning and RefugeeWorks: The National Center for Refugee Employment and Self-Sufficiency.

The WIN Project is funded by New Horizons Fund and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

There are eight local partner agencies in this pilot program, which began in April, 2009.

- Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg, Florida
- Interfaith Refugee Ministry, New Burn, North Carolina
- International Rescue Committee, Phoenix, Arizona
- Jewish Vocational Service, Kansas City, Missouri
- Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, Sioux Falls
- Minnesota Council of Churches, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Nationalities Service Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- World Relief, Miami, Florida

Programs in the News

“My Big Fat Greek Wedding...coming to an English class near you.”

Using Film in ESL

The Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights (BCRHHR), based at Boston Medical Center, runs three English classes for survivors of torture and trauma as part of their holistic healthcare model.

These classes are, in part, meant to provide a safe environment in which students can develop their English language skills. In addition, classes provide an avenue through which people can develop their community as well as a forum to express themselves.

The goal of these classes is to promote emotional well-being among the students through a balance between safety and creative expression.

BCRHHR has had an ongoing discussion among staff and volunteer teachers about the use of film in the English classroom.

Mary Annas, the Writing, Literature and GED Preparation teacher, says, “Film should be read as literature.” However, BCRHHR has struggled to choose films that are appropriate for adult English Language Learners (i.e., avoid using children’s films) and have minimal scenes that could potentially trigger someone who has survived torture and may be consequently recovering from PTSD.

As many have noticed, most films – including comedies - are full of violence.

In order to address this concern, the staff has begun to pre-screen movies, using a Film Assessment Tool (© BCRHHR) to identify potential stressors (such as people in uniform or gun fighting) and positive moments (such as humor or love).

Nine movies have been pre-screened thus far, and information will be shared through the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning in the future.

Ideally, BCRHHR will also begin to develop lesson plans to complement each film. As a “sneak peak,” highly recommend “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

Corey Simon, Career Development Program Manager, Boston Center for Refugee Health & Human Rights. Corey.simon@bmc.org. (617) 414-4338. www.bcrhhr.org

Mark Ommerborn, ESOL Administrator Volunteer, Boston University School of Public Health

Employment ESL – Union Partnership

On August 1, 2009, Spring Institute began a three-year contract with Service Employees' International Union (SEIU) Local 105 in Denver, Colorado. Spring Institute will deliver seven ESL classes per year, from beginner to advanced levels. In the first term, there are 40 employees taking advantage of these classes being held at Local 105 on Saturdays.

In December, three classes will be offered, bringing the total number of students to 60. There are several hundred limited English employees (mostly Spanish speakers) in the Local 105 Union, and it is expected that the majority of these employees will take advantage of these classes to improve their English.

*Rose Schaefer, Spring Institute,
roseschaefer@sprainstitute.org*

Access Community through English

Access Community through English (ACE) is a unique ESL/Life Skills program for immigrants and refugees with mental illness. It has been delivered through Vancouver Community Mental Health Services, part of Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, for 10 years.

Sandra Slind, Coordinator, and Amea Wilbur, a doctoral student in the Department of Education at the University of British Columbia, have developed an ESL curriculum designed for vulnerable populations living with mental health disorders, including trauma disorders.

The curriculum utilizes teaching strategies designed to enhance the learning of people with cognitive impairment. Sandra and Amea have sought out, adapted, and developed resources appropriate to life situations in large part defined by mental health problems and, often, poverty.

They welcome the opportunity to share with ESL and Adult Education professionals what they have learned and believe that their store of expertise is particularly important to those who teach refugees and immigrants, given that this population is considered at risk for mental health problems. They also want to continue broadening their own knowledge through dialogue with other professionals about working with populations made vulnerable through trauma and mental disorder.

Sandra Slind, Coordinator of Access Community through English (ACE), Vancouver Community Mental Health Services, Vancouver, British Columbia, Sandra.Slind@vch.ca

ESL and Sheltered Employment

The Utah State Refugee Services Office, the Granite School District, and the LDS Humanitarian Center are teaming up to start an innovative new program for refugees. Certified, experienced Adult ESL teachers from Granite School District will be teaching 100 refugees who are employed in work training programs at the LDS Humanitarian Center in Salt Lake City. Refugees will be referred to the program by their resettlement agency case workers or by their Department of Workforce Services case worker. Preference will be given to refugees who are having difficulty obtaining employment due to a lack of English and basic work skills.

Each day, refugee participants in the program will receive 4 hours of ESL class work time and 4 hours of work training time. Refugees will earn an hourly wage for the entire 8 hours, supported by both the Humanitarian Center and TANF funding obtained by the State Refugee Services Office. Refugees will be able to acquire essential English and work skills while earning money to pay their basic monthly expenses.

Spring Institute, as part of its new TA funding, will be working with this team on this very exciting project and partnership.

Jennifer Christenson, Granite Schools

Other News

HR 3249 Proposes Increases in ELL Funding

Strengthen and Unite Communities with Civics Education and English Skills Act (HR 3249) was introduced in both the House and Senate (S. 1478) during the week of July 20 by Rep. Mike Honda (CA) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY). The legislation is designed to help new Americans become part of the social and economic fabric of the US through English language learning, civics instruction, and incentives for businesses to invest in the education of their non-English speaking employees. The bill would increase proposed funding for Department of Education programs serving all English language learners from \$70-\$200 million in FY2010.

GAO Report: English Language Learning Needs Coordination

The General Accounting Office (GAO) released its new report -- [English Language Learning: Diverse Federal and State Efforts to Support Adult English Language Learning Could Benefit from More Coordination](#). GAO is recommending that the departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, and other agencies develop coordinated approaches for sharing information on English language learning and cooperate in planning and conducting research.

The report calls the Adult Education State Grant Program "the key federal program for adult English language instruction" with enrollment of about 1.1 million English language learners in 2007.



Bridging Cultures • Building Futures

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We're on the Web!
 See us at:
www.springinstitute.org

Ask Rose

Do you have a burning question regarding a class?

We can be of assistance with questions pertaining to class dynamics, management, syllabus, curriculum, textbooks, grammar points, etc. Whatever it is, we have

the experience and/or can find the resources to help. Your question will be answered on this site on the "Ask Rose" page.

Please send your questions to Rose Schaefer, ESL Workplace Instructor.

Be sure to put in the subject line, "Ask Rose."

Questions will be included in the next newsletter to assist others with the same issues.

Spring Institute's ELT Dept will adopt electronic newsletter

After a brief absence, Spring Institute's ELT/TA Department has brought back the quarterly newsletter.

ELT newsletters will contain various articles and information related to the ever-changing area of English Language Training Technical Assistance.

Rose Schaefer, who has been at Spring since January of 2006, is now working along-side Burna Dunn, ELT/TA Program Director. Rose brings her Workplace ESL teaching experience to assist in ELT projects.

And in the interest of conservation, this will be the LAST printed ELT

newsletter. We will begin an electronic version. If you'd like to receive online versions, please send your email information to elt@springinstitute.org so we may update our database. If we do not receive your information, we will assume that you do not wish to receive the newsletter.

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