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***EVALUATION OF THE LAW RELATED  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR ADULTS  
PROJECT***

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**Final Report**

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**Submitted to:**

**Kathryn Platt  
Dispute Resolution Office  
Ministry of Attorney General**

**Submitted by:**

**Catherine Tait  
Catherine Tait Consulting**



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## ***CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION***

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The Law Related English Language Services for Adults (LR-ELSA) is a unique project designed to convey information about Canadian law to immigrants who are learning English. In this project, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who are knowledgeable about a variety of legal topics attend ESL classes as guest lecturers to deliver content about Canadian law and the justice system to the students.

The project is delivered by the People's Law School throughout the lower mainland and in some Vancouver Island and interior communities. To deliver this project the People's Law School works primarily with ESL programs affiliated with the umbrella organization English Language Services for Adults Net (ELSA Net).

The project has been in operation in different forms for many years but has been operating in its current form since 2004. Between 2004 and 2008 it was funded by the Law Foundation of BC. Since 2008, it has been funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development (RESO). RESO receives funding from CIC to support settlement and integration services for permanent residents in B.C. and transfers a portion of this funding to the Ministry of Attorney General to support the LR-ELSA project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two ministries sets out the funding arrangement and requires that the Ministry of Attorney General obtain a final evaluation of the outcomes of the project. The Ministry of Attorney General has contracted with Catherine Tait Consulting to conduct an evaluation of the LR-ELSA project. This report presents the results of the evaluation.

### **About the Law Related ELSA Project**

The project description for the LR-ELSA appended to its Transfer Under Agreement<sup>1</sup> states that the project will contribute to the Ministry of Attorney General's goal of improving "PLEI services for newcomers by:

- Helping newcomers enrolled as ELSA students to better understand their legal rights and responsibilities under the law in British Columbia, Canada.
- Providing orientation to ELSA students that enables them to develop understanding and confidence in the justice system: this orientation also facilitates their willingness and

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<sup>1</sup> Funding agreement between the Ministry of Attorney General and the People's Law School for the LR-ELSA program.

ability to engage the justice system, including both court and non-court options for dispute resolution.

- Providing new immigrants enrolled as ELSA students with practical information about justice related services, processes and options, including self-help options.
- Assisting newcomers with the cultural orientation necessary to understanding key justice system concepts and/or processes. Cultural orientation is also important in areas in which newcomers may have a different understanding of issues or behaviours (e.g. violence) and where an understanding of Canadian laws and legal values can help prevent law-related problems (e.g. child protection, abuse, etc.)”

The project will also contribute to the RESD goal set out in the MOU with the Ministry of Attorney General:

“Immigrants gain social and labour market skills to contribute, reach their full potential, and understand and practice Canadian values related to multiculturalism and human rights.”

To achieve these objectives, the LR-ELSA has hired two ESL teachers and provided them with training in a variety of legal topics. The teachers work with ELSA agencies to develop schedules for class visits, where selected and agreed to LR-ELSA topics will be taught. (ELSA agencies are schools or service providers that teach ELSA programs to students who meet eligibility criteria, at various levels of English proficiency<sup>2</sup>. ELSA programs operate on a continuous intake model, where new students can join classes at any time and students are usually enrolled at a given ESL level for a few to several months before they progress.) One LR-ELSA teacher serves as the project Coordinator; he is responsible for compiling project statistics and writing funding reports.

When the LR-ELSA teachers come to ELSA classrooms, they teach 2.5 to 3 hour lessons and use The People’s Law School’s “Learning About the Law” booklet and other materials as teaching resources. The LR-ELSA teachers ask students and the regular teachers of the classes they are visiting to complete feedback forms to assess the value of the lesson, at the end of each class that they teach.

### **About the Evaluation**

This evaluation was undertaken to assess the degree to which the LR-ELSA is achieving key intended outcomes and to investigate related evaluation issues. These issues relate to the project’s reach and ability to serve its intended audience, the features that contribute to its success and any ways in which the LR-ELSA could be improved. As the project has been operating in its current form since 2004, the evaluation has not dwelt on questions of implementation but rather focussed on the current operation and delivery of the project. The evaluation provides information regarding the benefits of the LR-ELSA, and confirms that the project funding was used as set out in the Transfer Under Agreement. The evaluation identifies

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<sup>2</sup> ESL levels 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest level.

“best practices” developed in the LR-ELSA that could be applied in other programs and/or jurisdictions. It also provides recommendations for improving the project, for the consideration of funders and the People’s Law School.

### **Evaluation Framework, Methodology and Data sources**

#### i. Framework

During Phase One of the evaluation, a framework was designed to guide the evaluation<sup>3</sup>. The framework identified six high level evaluation issues, a number of related evaluation questions, indicators to address the questions, and data sources. The evaluation issues and associated questions addressed by the evaluation are:

- Has the LR-ELSA delivered the anticipated activities and outputs?
  - a. Have the proposed number of students been reached and classes delivered?
  - b. How has the project been promoted?
  - c. Have appropriate law booklets and materials been provided?
  - d. Are appropriate staff hired and trained?
- To what extent have selected immediate outcomes been achieved?
  - a. Does the LR-ELSA have ELSA agency cooperation and support?
  - b. Do students gain knowledge about legal rights and responsibilities and justice services, processes and options?
- To what extent have selected intermediate outcomes been achieved?
  - a. Do students have a greater understanding of and confidence in the justice system?
  - b. Are students more willing to engage the justice system when they have a legal problem?
- To what extent is LR-ELSA delivering service to its target audience?
  - a. Do students in the classes taught have immigrant status<sup>4</sup>?
  - b. Are classes delivered to higher level ESL students?
  - c. What is the reach of the program?
- What features of the LR-ELSA contribute to its success?
  - a. Does the project reach students from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds?
  - b. Does the model of a visiting teacher with “expert” knowledge work?
  - c. What other features contribute to the project’s success?
- How could the LR-ELSA be improved?
  - a. Do key stakeholders have suggestions for improvements?

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<sup>3</sup>“Evaluation Framework for Law Related English Language Services For Adults”, Catherine Tait Consulting, July 5, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Immigrant is defined as a person who is a permanent resident of Canada and excludes temporary foreign workers, international students, Canadian citizens and refugee claimants. As of August 1, 2010 the definition was expanded to include Live-In Caregivers who are in Canada with a work permit under the Live-In Caregiver Program.

## ii. Methodology and Data Sources

To obtain information needed to address the evaluation questions, data from the following sources were collected and analyzed:

- **Program materials** including program reports to its funders, and project publications were reviewed.
- **LR-ELSA Coordinator Spreadsheets.** The LR-ELSA Coordinator maintains spreadsheets containing information about each LR-ELSA class taught, including the ELSA school, level and topic, and number of students in the class. Data from this spreadsheet that covers the period from October 2009 to September 2010 were reviewed for this evaluation.
- **Telephone Interviews with ESLA School Coordinators** where the Law Related ELSA is delivered. Interviews were completed with 10 coordinators; one interview was conducted with a coordinator of a school that provides English classes to immigrants, but is not part of ELSA Net. The coordinators interviewed work at schools in Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, Abbotsford, Penticton, Nanaimo, and Victoria.
- **Telephone interviews with 20 ELSA teachers**, who work at schools located in Nanaimo, Abbotsford, Burnaby, Richmond, North Vancouver, Vancouver, Coquitlam, Langley and Chilliwack. Most teachers interviewed had worked in their ELSA schools for more than three years, ranging from 2 years to 29 years. Most had worked with the LR-ELSA teachers for at least three to five years.
- **In person interview with the LR-ELSA Project Coordinator**, was conducted at the People's Law School.
- **Quantitative data reported on student and teacher feedback forms.** The feedback forms are completed at the end of each LR-ELSA class. The quantitative elements are subsequently entered into a spreadsheet by the LR-ELSA Coordinator. These spreadsheets were reviewed as a data source for this evaluation. For the purposes of the evaluation, new questions were added to both student and teacher feedback forms. The feedback forms with the new questions were implemented June 14, 2010, and data from these feedback forms were reviewed for the period of June 14 to September 30, 2010. During this period 1,530 student and 116 teachers feedback forms were submitted.
- **Open ended questions on student feedback forms** were reviewed to obtain qualitative information regarding the value of the project to students. Comments recorded on 349

- **Results of knowledge gain quizzes** were analyzed. Short “before” and “after” quizzes were administered by the LR-ELSA teachers at their morning and afternoon classes between June 18, 2010 and September 24, 2010. Each quiz consisted of four true / false questions related to the topic that was being taught during that lesson. The teachers distributed the quiz before the class, had the students complete and return them; the same quiz was then distributed to students again at the end of the lesson, completed and returned to the teacher. In total, 586 “before” quizzes and 624 “after” quizzes were administered to students in 41 different classes<sup>5</sup>.

The quizzes were administered to classes where selected topics were taught. These topics were selected for administration of the quizzes because they are popular and cover the range of ELSA English Levels that the LR-ELSA works with. The topics where quizzes were administered are:

**Exhibit 1.1**  
**Number of Quizzes Administered**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Number of Classes</b>	<b>Number of “Before” Quizzes</b>	<b>Number of “After” Quizzes</b>
Scams	12	188	188
Family Law	11	185	203
Working 1	7	76	88
Working 2	11	137	145
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>624</b>

During the period when the quizzes were used, the LR-ELSA teachers taught other classes (where the quizzes were not used) as well. A total of 95 classes covering ten topics were delivered to 1,237 students during this period. Therefore, the classes where the quizzes were administered represent 43% of the total classes delivered during this period. Approximately 47% of the total students taught during this period completed the “before” quiz and 50% completed the “after” quiz”.

<sup>5</sup> Because some students arrive at the class late, or leave a class early, not all students completed both a “before” and an “after” quiz. Students were not asked to record their names on the quizzes and the “before” and “after” quizzes for individuals were not matched. Instead, the change in scores for the sample as a whole, and classes as a whole, were analyzed to assess improvements in knowledge.

### iii. Reliability of ELSA Teacher Views Regarding Student Impacts

To answer some evaluation questions about the impacts of the LR-ELSA on student attitudes, the evaluation has relied largely on the views of the ELSA classroom teachers. For example, teachers were asked whether their students gained an increased understanding of and confidence in the justice system, and whether the students would be more willing to engage that system if they had a legal problem.

It is not ideal to ask third parties to assess the impact of a service on clients; however, several factors made it very difficult to conduct a client survey to obtain this information from the clients (students) themselves. First, by definition, ELSA students have limited English ability and concepts such as “confidence” and “engage the system” would be difficult to convey reliably in a written or telephone survey. Secondly, because of the continuous intake feature of ELSA programs, students do not stay in a particular class for a set period of time. Finding a sample of students who had participated in a LR-ELSA class, obtaining their contact information and consent to participate in a survey, and contacting them for the survey, would be more difficult for this project than is usual in an evaluation. Given these difficulties, and given limited resources for the evaluation, the decision was made to forgo a client survey. However, this decision does mean that for certain indicators, conclusions about the impacts of the LR-ELSA on students are being inferred from the comments of teachers rather than from the students themselves. This limits the reliability of these conclusions.

The next six chapters present results of the evaluation and the answers to the evaluation questions posed in the framework. The final chapter presents a summary of conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation.

I would like to extend my thanks to those who contributed their time and effort to this evaluation, including all of the ELSA teachers and school coordinators interviewed, LR-ELSA staff who administered before and after quizzes during the evaluation period, and especially the project Coordinator, who provided project statistics, contact information for ELSA teachers and school coordinators and general assistance throughout the evaluation period. Finally, I would also like to thank Kathryn Platt of the Ministry of Attorney General and Beverly Clark of the Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development, for their guidance, feedback and support.

## ***CHAPTER TWO: HAS LR-ELSA DELIVERED THE ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS?***

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This Chapter examines the activities and outputs of the LR-ELSA in relation to its contractual targets, focussing on the number of students taught and classes delivered. It also examines the activities that enable the LR-ELSA to meet its project delivery goals, including how the project is promoted to ELSA schools, the development of appropriate teaching materials and the hiring and training of staff.

The People's Law School funding proposals indicate targets for numbers of students reached and classes delivered. This section addresses the degree to which the project has met those targets. In addition, it looks at two key inputs (instructional materials and trained staff) and the activity of promoting the project.

### **2a. Have the proposed number of students been reached and classes delivered?**

People's Law School funding proposal and the ensuing funding agreements outline targets for the number of students to be taught and classes to be delivered. For the period of August, 2008 to March 31, 2010, the contracted targets translate to the delivery of 35 classes per month to an average class of 14 students, for 490 students taught per month. Beginning in April 2010 the targets increased to an average of 45 classes delivered and 630 students taught per month. Targets were increased to reflect the fact that the part time LR-ELSA teacher began full time in February 2010, providing an additional 10 LR-ELSA classes per month.

#### **Results:**

The data sources reviewed for this question are the funding reports prepared by the People's Law School, as well as spreadsheets maintained by the LR-ELSA Coordinator. These sources confirm that the LR-ELSA has succeeded in meeting its earlier targets for classes and students taught, and is likely to meet its targets for the 2010/2011 year.

Between August 2008 and the end of September 2010 the LR-ELSA delivered 879 classes, with a total of 12,359 students taught.

People's Law School funding reports for the LR-ELSA covering August 2008 to the end of September 2009 (12 working months<sup>6</sup>), indicate that a total of 424 classes were delivered and 6,155 students were taught, translating to a monthly average of 35.3 classes delivered and 513 students taught.

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<sup>6</sup> Note that the LR-ELSA does not operate during the month of August when ELSA schools close for a summer break.

More recent information obtained from the Coordinator's spreadsheets indicates that the LR-ELSA continues to meet its target averages. Exhibit 2.1 shows the classes delivered and students taught in each month from October 2009 to September 2010.

From October 2009 to March 2010 the LR-ELSA was contracted to deliver an average of 35 classes to 490 students per month. The project exceeded these targets by delivering an average of 38.2 classes to 542 students, per month. Note that December is typically a shorter teaching month because ELSA schools close for the holiday season. Fewer classes than average were taught in February 2010 due to the Olympics, which ran in Greater Vancouver that month.

Beginning in April 2010 targets increased to 45 classes delivered and 630 students taught per month, on average. Exhibit 2.1 shows that although the target for classes has been met, the number of students taught is slightly below target. This may be due in part to lower than usual attendance at ELSA classes during July, and may well be rectified over the full term of the contract which concludes March 31, 2011. Note that, through the scheduling of classes the LR-ELSA is able to control the number of classes it delivers per month, but does not control the number of students that enrol in, or attend, each class.

**Exhibit 2.1**  
**Classes Delivered and Students Taught**

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<b>Classes Delivered and Students Taught by Month</b>		
October 2009 - September 2010		
	<b>Classes</b>	<b>Students</b>
October 2009	44	600
November 2009	46	699
December 2009	23	286
January 2010	39	599
February 2010	31	459
March 2010	46	608
Average per month	38.2	541.8
April 2010	44	580
May 2010	45	587
June 2010	49	637
July 2010	44	555
September 2010	44	594
Average per month	45.2	590.6

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## **2b. How has the project been promoted?**

To be successful, the LR-ELSA must be known to schools and agencies delivering the ELSA program. Data sources for this question are a review of promotional materials as well as interviews with the LR-ELSA Coordinator regarding promotional activities.

### **Results:**

The interview with the Program Coordinator indicated that the program was originally promoted through mail outs to every provider that belonged to ELSA-Net. This practice continued for three years, and was then considered to have become unnecessary as working relationships were well established between the providers and the LR-ELSA project.

The Coordinator and People's Law School do not promote the project through advertising. The project is described on the People's Law School website<sup>7</sup>, and the Coordinator networks with the ELSA schools to schedule visits and provide information about changes to the project offerings (e.g. new topics). When a new ELSA provider joins ELSA-Net, the LR-ELSA Coordinator proactively contacts the provider to introduce the project and offer services.

Interviews conducted with ELSA School Coordinators indicate that the informal promotion of LR-ELSA is working to meet their needs. Most indicated that most have a well established relationship with the project, and already know of its existence and what it offers. They communicate directly with the LR-ELSA Coordinator to arrange a schedule of visits and topics to be taught. Three School Coordinators also indicated that they promote the LR-ELSA within their schools by sending emails to their teachers or putting a notice in their school newsletter. Two also mentioned that they receive updates from the People's Law School via email, and that they access the People's Law School website and brochures.

## **2c. Have appropriate law booklets and materials been provided?**

The LR-ELSA has developed a booklet entitled Learning About the Law, written in simple English, as a resource for this project. In addition, a Teacher's Guide for the booklet, and three or four special topic handouts (for topics not in the booklet) have been developed. The booklet or handouts are typically provided to the students in class, and used as an integral part of the lesson. Students keep the booklet or handout at the end of the class. This evaluation question asks whether the booklet and related materials are appropriate for the classes.

The first indicator for this evaluation question is that the process to develop the law booklets ensures both legal accuracy and a reading level appropriate for these ESL students. The second indicator is the number of booklets produced and distributed.

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<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/section.asp?catid=138&pageid=74> .

Data sources reviewed for this evaluation question include the results of interviews conducted with the LR-ELSA Coordinator and ELSA teachers. As well, student feedback form results for the period June 14, 2010 to September 30, 2010, and data on the number of booklets distributed, were reviewed.

### **Results:**

The information reviewed indicates that appropriate law booklets and materials have been provided, that they add value to the LR-ELSA classes, and to students and teachers after the classes.

In the last twelve months, over 4,400 Learning About the Law booklets were printed and distributed by the LR-ELSA instructors. In addition, 1,000 Wills booklets, 1,200 Scams to Avoid booklets and 1,780 Working in the BC booklets were distributed. These publications are also available on the People's Law School website.

The LR-ELSA Coordinator described the process to develop and maintain the booklets. The Learning about the Law booklet, which covers eight topics, was developed originally as a resource for ESL teachers and people with limited English reading skills. A revised and updated edition was published in 2008. The 2008 edition was considerably shorter than earlier editions, due to the level of funding available for developing and printing the booklet. An accompanying Teacher's Guide was first produced in 2003, but has not been revised or updated since 2005; it still reflects the longer content of the original Learning About the Law booklet.

The other handouts (Working in BC, Scams to Avoid, and Writing Your Will) were written in plain language, but not specifically for an ESL audience. Although the language level in these handouts is higher than in the Learning About the Law booklet, they are used only in the higher level ELSA classes (levels 4 and 5) and the LR-ELSA Coordinator feels that having some material at a more challenging level of English is not a bad thing for higher level students. Both the Writing Your Will and the Working in BC handouts were updated and republished in 2009. Scams to Avoid was first produced in 2005 and has not yet been revised; the LR-ELSA Coordinator comments that it is due for an update. All public legal information materials published by the People's Law School undergo a legal review to ensure accuracy.

Materials for three new topics are currently in development and will be written for an ESL audience. The LR-ELSA Coordinator works with the writers to ensure that the content and reading level is appropriate for the LR-ELSA learners.

Students who completed the LR-ELSA feedback forms indicated that they use the booklets after the lessons. Of 559 students who answered the question “After the lesson<sup>8</sup>, did you read more topics in the Learning about the Law booklet?”, 73% said “yes”.

During interviews conducted with ELSA teachers, many commented on the value that the booklets add to the LR-ELSA. Benefits of the booklet include:

- It is written in simple English so that students are able to understand the content. Material written about the law is often expressed in complicated language but the booklet is simple and easy for an English learner to understand. The vocabulary is good and the content is condensed to an appropriate level (9 responses).
- The booklet serves as resource for the ELSA teachers, who use it to look up information and as a tool in the classroom (6 responses). One also commented that the booklet is used as a reference by settlement workers at her agency.
- Because the students are given a copy to take home they can read other topics that were not covered directly in the class, and use it as a reference in the future. (6 responses). The LR-ELSA teacher also shows the students how to read the booklet and where important content can be found.
- The layout, format and graphics make the booklet user friendly (2 responses).
- The booklet reinforces the lesson content; it is helpful for English learners to receive the information verbally through the lesson and in writing through the booklet (2 responses).

Four out of ten ELSA School Coordinators interviewed specifically mentioned the Learning About the Law Booklet as a feature of the LR-ELSA that contributes to the project’s success.

Only a few teachers had any reservations about the booklet; one was not sure that the students do read it at home, another thought the quality was simply adequate; and another wished that the most recent version of the booklet had not been shortened to cover fewer topics. A few teachers commented that they would like to see the Teacher’s Guide updated to reflect the content of the current version of the Learning About the Law Booklet.

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<sup>8</sup> The question refers to earlier LR-ELSA lessons, taught prior to the current lesson, that the student may have attended.

## **2d. Are appropriate staff hired and trained?**

The LR-ELSA project model relies on teachers that have skills as ESL instructors and knowledge of the legal content in the LR-ESLA curriculum. The question asks whether the LR-ELSA project has processes in place to ensure that staff with the required skill sets are hired and/or trained.

### **Results:**

The data source reviewed to answer this evaluation question were the results of the interview conducted with the LR-ELSA Coordinator. Both the LR-ELSA Coordinator and the other LR-ELSA instructor were trained and experienced ESL instructors when they were hired. The Coordinator has recently earned a Master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language and linguistics and has experience coordinating other programs. To gain the legal knowledge required to deliver the program, staff read the People's Law School publications, and other legal information available through the internet and publications of other agencies such as the Legal Services Society. When he began as the project's first instructor, the Coordinator compiled a binder of reference materials that he would take with him to classes, as a resource in case a question arose that he didn't know the answer to.

Staff keep up to date by reviewing changes in the law that come to their attention, and by checking the internet regularly. For things that are known to change regularly (for example, Employment Insurance rate) they check monthly to ensure that the information they provide is up to date. The People's Law School identifies staff training and professional development plans at the time of annual staff performance reviews.

While both LR-ELSA staff have strong ESL qualifications, they came to the job with limited legal background. They are essentially self-taught in this area, and have not taken any formal law courses. This is one area where, in the view of the Coordinator, improvements to the project could be made, by providing the additional time and resources for staff training in the legal topics that they teach.

In conclusion, the LR-ELSA has an informal promotion approach that works well for the project and its partners. It has also provided appropriate booklets and materials that are written for English learners and are valuable resources for the project, ELSA teachers and the students themselves. Staff with strong ESL skills gain knowledge of the legal topics they teach through reading and research; further training has been suggested by the project Coordinator.

## ***CHAPTER THREE: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE SELECTED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES BEEN ACHIEVED?***

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This Chapter examines the degree to which the LR-ELSA has achieved two of its immediate outcomes: that the LR-ELSA has ELSA agency cooperation and support, and that immigrants enrolled as ELSA students gain information and knowledge about key legal topics that impact their lives.

### **3a. Does the LR-ELSA project have ELSA agency cooperation and support?**

ELSA agencies and schools are those that deliver the ELSA program to immigrants, and it is through these agencies and schools that the LR-ELSA project gains access to classes as guest lecturers. The cooperation and support of ELSA agencies and schools is therefore critical to the project's ability to reach its target audience. Information and opinions about this issue were obtained through interviews conducted with the LR-ELSA Project Coordinator and ELSA agency School Coordinators and teachers.

#### **Results:**

Interviews conducted with the LR-ELSA Project Coordinator and ELSA agency school coordinators and teachers demonstrate that the project does have ELSA agency cooperation and support.

All of the ELSA School Coordinators interviewed indicated that their school or agency fully supports the LR-ELSA project in principle. The primary way that they support the project in a practical sense is by working with the project Coordinator to establish a schedule of the dates and the LR-ELSA topics to be taught. One mentioned that his agency also prominently displays the materials that the LR-ESLA teachers bring to their agency.

None of the ELSA School Coordinators interviewed have a working relationship with the Director of the People's Law School<sup>9</sup>. One respondent expressed an interest in connecting with the Director in order to learn more of the overall future direction of the LR-ELSA, as this would help her agency assess the need to connect with other legal resources in the community. The remaining nine ELSA Coordinators had no concerns about the lack of such a relationship – they feel that they get everything they need through working with the project Coordinator.

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<sup>9</sup> The LR-ELSA Coordinator reports to the Director of the People's Law School. As of September 1, 2010, the People's Law School has a new Executive Director. During the evaluation period she acquainted herself with the program, LR\_ELSA instructors, immigrant-serving agency managers and attended a LR-ELSA class.

ELSA School Coordinators and teachers interviewed were unanimous in describing their working relationship with the LR-ELSA Coordinator and teacher in positive terms, usually as “very satisfied” or “completely satisfied”. Both were described as easy to work with, reliable, congenial and responsive.

The twenty ELSA teachers interviewed described the practical assistance that they provide to the LR-ELSA project:

- 11 out of 20 schedule the LR-ELSA dates or topics with the LR-ELSA Coordinator and/or ensure that the topic to be taught is in keeping with the ELSA theme<sup>10</sup> they are teaching at the same time.
- Some teachers review relevant vocabulary with their class in advance of the LR-ELSA lecture (7 responses). One suggested that this helps the lower level learners in her class to absorb more of the LR-ELSA lesson while another suggested that less time is needed in the LR-ELSA class reviewing vocabulary if it is pre-taught.
- Some teachers introduce the coming LR-ELSA topic in a general way to their students in advance, though not in detail (6 responses). As one teacher described it, she does her best to teach the concrete aspects (e.g. vocabulary) in advance, but leaves the teaching of the legal concepts to the LR-ELSA teacher. Another said that she likes to set some basic context for the lesson and whet the students’ appetite for the coming topic.
- Five out of twenty teachers mentioned that they follow up on the LR-ELSA topic in subsequent classes, reviewing and reinforcing what was taught.
- Many (11) indicated that they will photocopy materials for the LR-ELSA teachers if necessary, but that this was seldom needed as they usually come completely prepared.
- The regular ELSA teachers usually sit in during the LR-ELSA class itself. Some said that they will facilitate or help out if needed (5 responses) and some circulate throughout the classroom when the students are working on written exercises (5 responses). However, four said that they leave the class to the LR-ELSA teacher, and do not assist during the class at all; they felt that the LR-ELSA teachers are able to handle the classes competently and do not need any help.

For his part the LR-ELSA Coordinator feels that the project does have the support of the schools and agencies they work with. Since the program began five years ago, the LR-ELSA has developed solid working relationships with the teachers and ELSA schools. In addition to direct contact regarding scheduling, the LR-ELSA Coordinator consults teachers regarding topics to be taught, and their interest in new topics. He has also

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<sup>10</sup> The ELSA curriculum is organized into themes, such as Housing, Work, and Family.

supported the schools in other ways, for example, by writing letters of support for their funding applications.

### **3b. Do students gain knowledge about legal rights and responsibilities and justice services, processes and options?**

Knowledge gains on the part of students is a fundamental objective for the project, and underpins the project's intended intermediate and final outcomes. A number of data sources were reviewed to answer this evaluation question including a review of project materials, student and teacher feedback forms completed at the end of the lectures, results of the knowledge gains quizzes, and interviews conducted with ELSA teachers.

#### **Results:**

Results from all data sources reviewed for this question indicate that student do gain knowledge through the LR-ELSA classes.

#### **i. Project Materials**

Project materials for the LR-ELSA include the Learning about the Law booklet that covers eight legal topics, an accompanying Teacher's Guide, and three single topic booklets that cover additional topics not included in Learning About the Law. The booklets are used in the LR-ELSA classes as a learning resource and students keep the booklets at the end of the class. All of these materials include information about the legal rights and responsibilities of Canadians, as well as information on justice services, processes and options. For example:

- The Fundamentals of the Law in Canada chapter in the Learning About the Law booklet highlights key rights and freedoms contained in the Charter and under the common law. It also explains that Canadians have a responsibility to respect the rights of other people.
- The chapter on Renting a Home outlines tenants' obligations to pay rent, to pay for damages and give notice when moving out; it also covers the landlords' responsibilities to make repairs and not discriminate when renting a house or apartment.
- The Working in BC chapter covers topics such as the minimum wage, and laws regarding hours of work, overtime pay, and maternity leave.

**"I like class about our responsibilities in this new place"**

Student feedback comment;  
Fundamentals of Canadian Law, ELSA  
Level 3

- The chapter on Family Law covers the rights and responsibilities of spouses after separation and divorce, such as the obligation to support children and the division of family property.
- The chapter on Talking to the Police outlines legal processes such as arrests and going to court. It also explains the principle of “innocent until proven guilty” as it operates in Canada.
- The Resources section includes location and contact information of courts, the Court Information Program for Immigrants, and the CBA’s Lawyer Referral service.
- The Teacher’s Guide includes student exercises that reinforce the key concepts in each chapter and lists additional publications and websites for each topic.

The review of these materials indicates that the LR-ELSA provides information about students’ legal rights and responsibilities, which is an important first step for students to actually acquire this knowledge.

ii. ELSA teacher interviews and feedback forms

That students do gain knowledge is supported by the ELSA class teachers interviewed for this evaluation. The ELSA teachers sit in during the LR-ELSA classes and therefore have an understanding of what is taught. Teachers were asked how familiar their students were with the LR-ELSA content before the class was given, that is, whether some students were already quite knowledgeable about the topic. Their responses indicate that prior knowledge varies, but is usually quite limited:

- Nearly half of the teachers commented that some students may have little, or at best a limited, knowledge of the topic before the LR-ELSA lesson is given.
- Seven commented that they may introduce the topic in a general way before the class or pre-teach relevant vocabulary and three commented that it could be possible for a student to hear the same lesson twice depending on their progress through the ELSA levels and the timing of the LR-ELSA visits.
- Prior knowledge may depend on the topic (6 responses) or may be influenced by a student’s personal experience and the length of time they have been in Canada (6 responses).
- Over half of the teachers interviewed said that students do sometimes ask questions before the LR-ELSA instructor visits, indicating students’ general interest in learning more about legal topics.

Most felt that a student's English level was not a good indicator of their prior knowledge of Canadian laws, as students may have had English classes in their home country but limited time in Canada to gain an understanding of the laws. In general, all felt that the students definitely lack a detailed knowledge of the lecture contents before the lesson is given.

One question in the ELSA teacher interview prompted teachers to explain the ways in which the LR-ELSA project provides value to students. Teacher comments related specifically to improved knowledge that results from the program fell into three themes:

- Students gain new (and accurate) information that they would not get elsewhere (4 responses);
- Students gain important information about what is expected of them in Canada, that is, what is legal and illegal (4 responses), and
- The new vocabulary learned through the lessons equips students if they should have a legal problem in the future (2 responses).

Teachers also complete a feedback form at the end of each class. One question on the form asks them to rate the amount that their students learned about Canadian Law during the lesson, on a four point scale where 1 = "a lot" and 4 = "not much". Eighty percent of teachers selected "1" and a further 19% selected "2"<sup>11</sup>, confirming that teachers do feel that their students gain knowledge through the lessons.

### iii. Knowledge Quizzes

The conclusion that students gain knowledge as a result of the LR-ELSA classes is also supported by the results of a knowledge quiz administered as part of this evaluation. The quizzes – short "true / false" quizzes -- were distributed at the start and end of classes where the topics Family Law, Working I, Working II, and Scams were taught. The same questions were posed on the "before" and "after" quizzes.

The quizzes were administered to 41 classes between June 18, 2010 and September 24, 2010; 587 "before" and 623 "after" quizzes were returned to the LR-ESLA teachers, and forwarded to the evaluator for marking and analysis<sup>12</sup>.

Results of the quiz clearly demonstrated that students gained knowledge as the result of the classes:

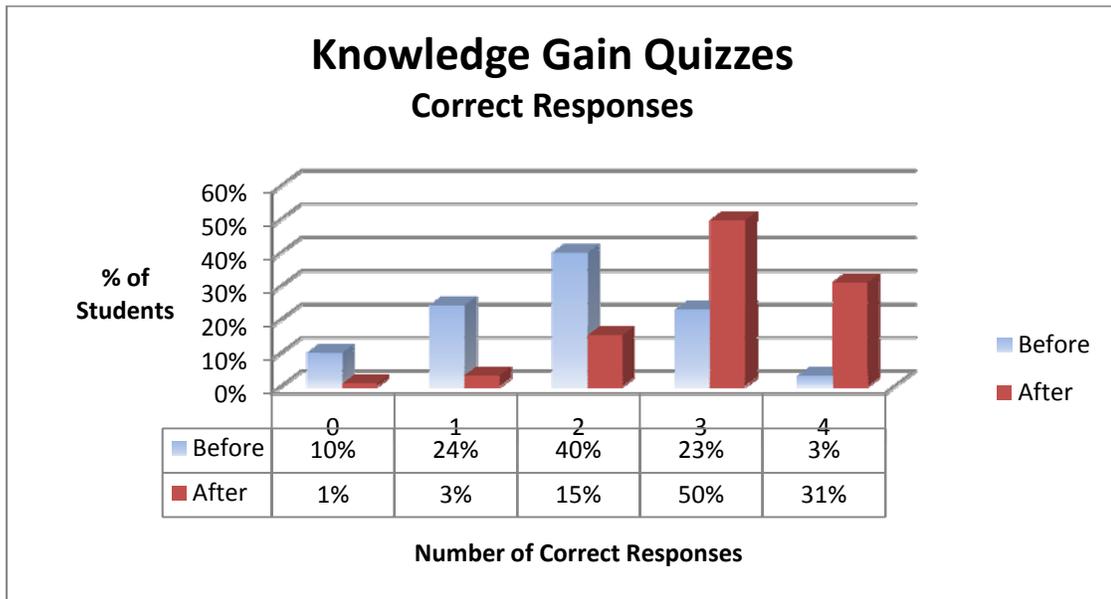
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<sup>11</sup> For the period April 1, 2010 – September 30, 2010. n=115.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter One for more information about the quiz administration.

- Across the sample as a whole, students scored an average of 1.85 out of 4.0 on “before” quizzes (n=587) and improved to an average score of 3.07 out of 4.0 on the “after” quizzes (n=623). Results at the class level were similar, with an average class score of 1.79 for “before” quizzes and 3.07 for “after” quizzes (n=41). The difference in class averages was statistically significant<sup>13</sup>.
- The likelihood of answering most or all questions correctly was quite small when students completed the “before” quizzes (only 26% had a correct score of 3 or 4 out of 4). However, students were much more likely to answer all items correctly on the “after” quizzes, (81% with a score of 3 or 4). This is illustrated by the following chart:

**Exhibit 3.1**  
**Correct Responses on Before and After Quizzes**

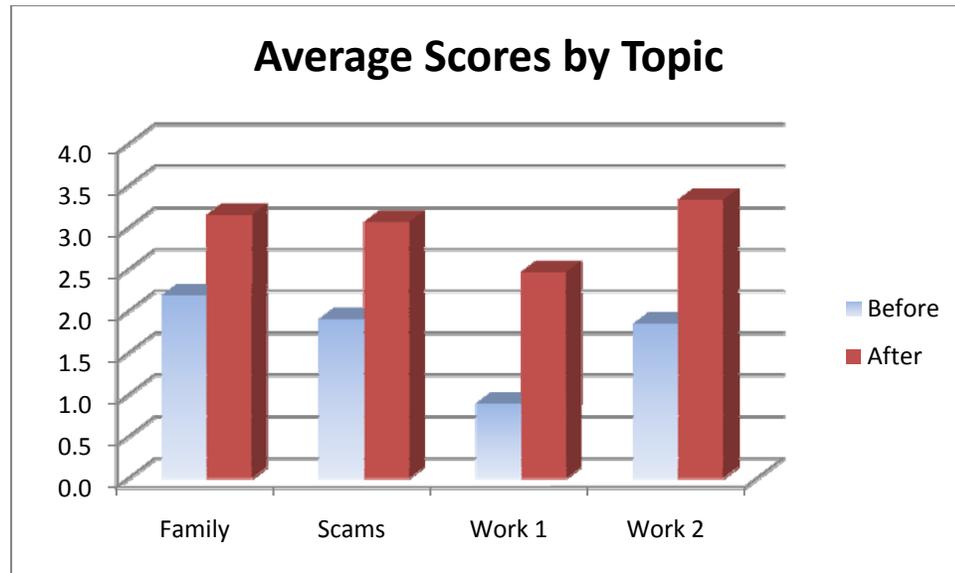


Student scores on the “before” quiz tended to be highest for the Family Law topic (see Exhibit 3.2). As might be expected, the improvement for this topic was less than for the topics where students had lower scores on the “before” quizzes to begin with. ELSA teachers commented in interviews that students’ degree of prior knowledge for the legal topics might vary by topic and be related to their personal experience.

<sup>13</sup>  $t(40) = -16.9284, p > .001$ . Because before and after results were not recorded on an individual student basis, statistical significance of improved scores was tested at a class average level.

**Exhibit 3.2**  
**Before and After Scores by Topic**

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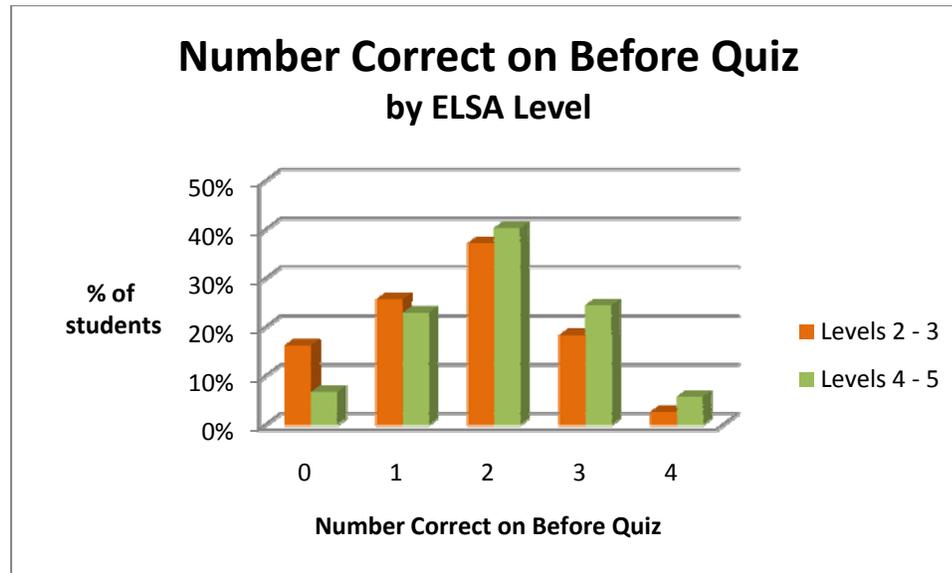
In contrast, students did not necessarily have a higher score on the “before” quiz simply because they were enrolled in a higher level ELSA class. Again, teachers indicated that students with a higher level of English would not necessarily have a higher level of legal knowledge than students with less or weaker English skills; the students’ level of legal knowledge was more likely to depend on the length of time that the student had been in Canada and/or their own experiences related to a given legal topic. Some relative newcomers may have relatively good English ability if they studied English in their home country, but have limited understanding of Canadian laws and justice system. The following chart indicates that higher level classes tended to perform slightly better than the lower level classes on the “before” quiz. This difference however, was not found to be statistically significant<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup>  $r = 0.278, n=41, p>0.05$

**Exhibit 3.3**  
**Before Scores by ELSA Level**

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iv. Student feedback forms

On the feedback forms completed at the end of every LR-ELSA class, students indicated:

- That they didn't know very much of the lesson's information beforehand. On a 4-point scale where 1 = "not much" and 4 = "a lot", 61% selected either 1 or 2 in response to the question "How much information from the lesson did you know before today?" (n=1,509).
- That they did learn about Canadian law. On a 4-point scale where 1 = "a lot" and 4 = "not much", 93% selected 1 or 2 in response to the question "how much did you learn about Canadian law today?" (n=1,530).

In conclusion, the LR-ELSA has the strong support of and good cooperation with the ELSA schools and teachers. Project materials contain information on the rights and responsibilities of Canadians as well as other relevant legal information. Students of the LR-ELSA classes improve their knowledge in these areas through the project lessons; this is confirmed by ELSA teachers, the student feedback forms, and improvements shown on the knowledge gain quizzes.

## ***CHAPTER FOUR: TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE SELECTED INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES BEEN ACHIEVED?***

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This Chapter examines the degree to which the LR-ELSA contributes to two intermediate outcomes, that immigrants enrolled as ELSA students gain understanding of and confidence in the justice system and that these students are more willing to engage the system if they have a legal problem. As intermediate outcomes, the LR-ELSA could be expected to make a contribution to these outcomes for students.

### **4a. Do students have a greater understanding of and confidence in the justice system?**

This question examines whether students have an increased understanding of the Canadian justice system as a result of the LR-ELSA classes, and if they have gained increased confidence in the justice system as well. In this context, emphasis is not simply on Canadian law, but the wider justice system including police, courts, lawyers and services.

#### **Results:**

Interviews conducted with ELSA teachers indicate that the students do have a greater understanding of the justice system after the LR-ELSA lessons:

- Fifteen out of twenty teachers answered “yes” or “definitely yes” to the question “Do students gain a better understanding of the Canadian justice system through the lessons?”.
- Another four indicated that the lessons are a good start, and that they follow up with additional instruction.
- Four also indicated that they have other guest speakers who augment this learning, for example, lawyers or police, or that they take the class on a court tour after the LR-ELSA class.

**“I learned about crime, court, how to talk to the police. It is very useful for me.”**

Student feedback form comment,  
Criminal Law, ELSA level 3

Teachers were asked how they know that the students have an increased understanding, and most indicated the students give her or him feedback about the class, or ask questions either during or after the class that indicates an increased understanding.

In addition to learning about Canada’s laws and justice system, a number of ELSA teachers and school coordinators also commented that students gain an increased

understanding of Canadian cultural values through the classes (5 responses) and that this knowledge helps to feel comfortable and settle into Canadian society (4 responses).

Teachers also expressed the views that their students are likely to gain confidence in the Canadian justice system as the result of the classes. Eleven out of twenty were quite certain that students' confidence increases. The fact that the Canadian justice system can be trusted is often new information for the students because often in their home country the justice system is very different to Canada's.

**“Students are amazed to learn that the police in Canada can be approached. This is something they would not do in their home country.”**

ELSA Teacher, interview response

Seven teachers were hopeful that confidence increased but either couldn't say for certain, or expressed some doubts that students completely believed the LR-ELSA teachers when they say, for example, that Canadian police cannot be bribed. One commented that a three hour class is a good start, but cannot be expected on its own to create confidence in the system.

One teacher thought that students already have confidence in Canada's justice system, and another commented the classes increase students' confidence, but also introduce a necessary element of caution, because Canada is not a perfect place where scams and crimes do not occur.

Teachers are also asked about students' confidence in the justice system on the feedback forms they complete after sitting in on the LR-ELSA classes. Teachers who have previously seen another LR-ELSA lesson are asked: “Do students have more confidence in Canada's justice system because of the lesson?”. Only 49 teachers answered this question<sup>15</sup>; 41 (84%) selected “yes” and 9 (16%) selected “some [students] but not others”.

#### **4b. Are students more willing to engage the justice system when they have a legal problem?**

According to the logic of the LR-ELSA project, providing students with information about the laws and justice system in Canada should lead to increased knowledge and confidence in that system. Ultimately, these factors should also lead students to take action if they have a legal problem and engage with the justice system if the need arises. This question therefore, speaks to the relevance of the topics taught and the ability and willingness of students to use their new knowledge to resolve legal problems.

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<sup>15</sup> This question was added to the teacher feedback form for the evaluation. Data is for the period June 14, 2010 to September 30, 2010.

## Results:

Information and opinions obtained through the ELSA teacher and school coordinator interviews, and teacher and student feedback forms, address this question.

### i. ELSA Teacher and School Coordinator Interviews

When asked “Do you think that, as a result of the classes, students will be more willing to engage the justice system if they have a legal problem?”:

- Fourteen out of 20 ELSA teachers said “yes”. Two qualified their “yes” responses by saying that the LR-ELSA contributes to students’ willingness to engage the system but that other speakers or court tours also contributed, as do settlement services in general;
- Two said students’ willingness to engage the system depended on the nature of issue and/or the student’s own personality; and
- Two were not certain that the classes do result in an increased willingness to engage the justice system.

Five examples of where students had taken action to resolve an issue were known by the teachers. In three examples the students had engaged the legal system by calling the police, seeking legal advice or by going to court. In two, the students used knowledge of their rights to resolve workplace or tenancy issues without engaging the justice system per se.

ELSA teachers and school coordinators provided comments on the value of the classes to students that suggest why students might be more willing to engage the justice system after the classes<sup>16</sup>:

- Students learn where they can get help with legal issues (3 responses);
- The topics taught (employment, tenancy, and family law especially) are directly relevant to students’ everyday lives (5 responses);
- Knowledge of their rights is empowering for students (6 responses);
- The information taught makes students less vulnerable to exploitation, particularly in work and tenancy situations (4 responses); and
- The classes give the students the vocabulary they would need to address an issue if one arises (2 responses).

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<sup>16</sup> Responses from 30 people (20 teachers and 10 coordinators) were included in this section.

In short, a common theme that “knowledge is empowering” leads many teachers to the view that the LR-ELSA classes help students to address legal problems that they may have.

ii. Teacher and Student Feedback Forms

Two questions on the ELSA teacher feedback form address this question as well. Teachers who had seen a previous LR-ELSA lesson are asked “Are students more willing to use the justice system because of the lesson?”<sup>17</sup>. Thirty five out of 45 (78%) who answered this question said “yes” and 10 (22%) said “some do but not others”. Another question asked “Have students used information from the previous topic?” Thirty-two out of 40 (80%) said “yes”, while 8 (20%) said “no”.

**“I like today's lesson very much. I want to write a tenancy agreement at once.”**

Student comment, LR-ELSA feedback form

On their feedback form students are asked how useful the information they learned in the class is to them, with potential responses on a scale where 1=“very useful” and 4= “not very useful”. Of the 1,530 students who answered this question<sup>18</sup>, 95% selected 1 or 2, and only 4% selected 3 or 4. Despite the belief that the information is useful for them students were less certain that they would use the information in the immediate future. Another question asks “When will you use the information from today’s lesson?” 25% selected “this week”, 11% said “this month”, 20% said “this year” and 41% said “other”.

Students who had attended another LR-ELSA lecture previously are also asked about the use they had made of the information that had been presented. As is illustrated in Exhibit 4.1, about half had made use of the information, some to avoid or solve a legal problem. Use of specific phone numbers or websites was less common.

**Exhibit 4.1**  
**Students’ use of information from previous LR-ELSA class**

<b>Feedback Form Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>n</b>
Did you use the information for the previous class?	48%	52%	535
Did the information help you solve or avoid a legal problem?	44%	56%	512
Did you use any phone numbers or websites that you learned from the lesson?	21%	78%	503

<sup>17</sup> This question was added to the teacher feedback form for the evaluation. Data are for the period June 14, 2010 to September 30, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Data presented in this section are for the period June 14, 2010 and September 30, 2010

In conclusion, it is likely that the LR-ELSA contributes to an increase in students' confidence in, and willingness to engage, the justice system. This view is supported by most ELSA teachers, who feel that the knowledge imparted is both relevant and empowering for their students.

## ***CHAPTER FIVE: TO WHAT EXTENT IS LR-ELSA DELIVERING SERVICE TO ITS TARGET AUDIENCE?***

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The target audience for the LR-ELSA is immigrants who are enrolled in higher level ESL classes (ELSA levels 3–5). This Chapter examines the degree to which the students taught by LR-ELSA instructors meet the definition of “immigrant” as set out in its funding agreement. It also looks at the class levels where the LR-ELSA is taught and the geographic reach of the project in BC.

### **5a. Do students in the classes visited by LR-ELSA instructors have immigrant status?**

The terms of Annex B of the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia on Co-operation on Immigration (“the Agreement”) signed on April 5, 2004 require that settlement services be provided to “immigrants” in order to qualify for funding under the Agreement. Immigrant is defined as a person who is a permanent resident of Canada and **excludes** temporary foreign workers, international students, Canadian citizens and refugee claimants. On August 1, 2010 the definition was expanded to include Live-In Caregivers who are in Canada with a work permit under the Live-In Caregiver Program.

### **Results:**

Interviews conducted with the LR-ESLA Coordinator, and ELSA school coordinators support the conclusion that a very high proportion of students taught have the required eligibility status.

Staff of the LR-ELSA do not check the immigrant status of the students they teach. Instead, the LR-ELSA relies on the ELSA agencies and schools where the project is delivered to ensure that students are eligible to receive LR-ELSA classes. This approach works because both the LR-ELSA and ELSA programs are funded under the same agreement between the province and Canada, and both must ensure that the students they teach meet the definition of “immigrant” outlined above.

ELSA School coordinators interviewed indicated that they either screen potential students themselves, or use an ELSA assessment service to screen the students, or both. The assessment service reviews the students’ original immigration documents, such as their Permanent Resident cards, to confirm that the student meets the definition of an eligible immigrant. They also assess the student’s level of English in order to identify which ELSA level they should be placed in. Once approved as eligible, and with an ELSA level assigned, students may approach any ELSA school in which they wish to enrol. Because most of the classes taught by the LR-ELSA consist of students screened in this way, it is safe to conclude that most LR-ELSA students meet the required definition of “immigrant”.

The LR-ELSA does teach at a limited number of non-ELSA schools<sup>19</sup>. The LR-ELSA Coordinator commented that he focuses on the actual ELSA schools and programs, but if a non-ELSA program that meets the same mandate (teaching ESL to newcomers to Canada) it can be included. Between October 2009 and September 2010, the LR-ELSA delivered 23 classes to non-ELSA schools or programs, out of a total of 455 classes delivered in the year (5%).

The Coordinator of one non-ELSA school was interviewed for this evaluation, and indicated that at his school, they follow the same requirements as the ELSA schools, that is, that students are immigrants. They conduct their own screening of potential students by reviewing the student's immigration documents at an intake interview.

Coordinators for ELSA schools outside Greater Vancouver commented that in their case, the funding agreement permits them to have some Canadian citizens as ELSA students. In schools where this is the case, the Coordinators estimated that the proportion of students who are citizens is small, between 10% and 25%. These are also schools where the LR-ELSA delivers relatively few classes, as considerable travel is required to reach them. Therefore it is very likely that the proportion of LR-ELSA students who are citizens is really quite small, probably less than 2% of all LR-ELSA students taught.

#### **5b. Are classes delivered to higher level ESL classes?**

People's Law School has determined that the LR-ELSA is best delivered to students who have some English ability, as beginner ESL students lack the basic English vocabulary and comprehension needed to grasp the legal concepts discussed in the LR-ELSA classes.

#### **Results:**

The data sources reviewed for this indicator are the LR-ESLA program reports and data from teacher and student feedback forms. Program reports submitted by the People's Law School indicate that 455 LR-ELSA classes were taught between October 2009 and September 2010. Of these classes, 38% were categorized as ELSA levels 1 -3, and 56% as ELSA levels 4, 5 or 4 & 5, with 5% described as "other". Although these reports seem to indicate that the LR-ELSA is sometimes taught to the lowest ELSA level, the teacher and student evaluation forms indicate that in reality, the lowest level classes taught are classes that combine Level 2 and 3 students and that these constitute only 3% of the classes taught.

In the interviews conducted with ELSA teachers, a number commented that students are more likely to have prior knowledge of the LR-ELSA content the longer they have been in Canada. Students are asked how long they have lived in Canada on their feedback

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<sup>19</sup> Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society, Langley Christian Life Association, Burnaby Continuing Education - Foundations Program, Burnaby Public Library, Pacific Immigrant Resources Society and Vancouver Community College – Outreach Program.

forms. Of the students completing the forms between June 14 and September 30, 2010<sup>20</sup>, 35% had been in Canada for less than a year, 42% for one to three years, and 23% for more than 3 years. This information, combined with the result that the LR-ELSA is teaching classes at higher ELSA levels, indicates that it is reaching its target group – those with enough English to understand the classes taught, the majority of whom are relatively new to Canada.

### **5c. What is the reach of the project?**

The LR-ELSA works primarily with ELSA schools and agencies based in the Lower Mainland and provides some service to schools on Vancouver Island and in the interior. The evaluation question examines the geographic reach of the project and factors that limit or enhance the project's reach.

#### **Results:**

Data sources reviewed for this question include the LR-ELSA Coordinator records of classes taught, interviews with the LR-ELSA Coordinator and the ELSA.net website.

ELSA Net is a society of schools and agencies that deliver the ELSA program in BC. Member schools are located in Greater Vancouver<sup>21</sup>, the Fraser Valley<sup>22</sup>, Vancouver Island<sup>23</sup>, South and East Central BC<sup>24</sup> and the North and North Central BC<sup>25</sup>. The LR-ELSA delivers classes in all regions except North and North Central BC. Between October 2009 and September 2010 the project delivered 455 classes, with at least one class delivered in each community in all regions, except for Courtney and Campbell River on Vancouver Island and communities in North and North Central BC. Service is heavily concentrated in Greater Vancouver:

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<sup>20</sup> n = 1,503

<sup>21</sup> This ELSA Net region includes Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, New Westminister, Surrey, Delta, North Vancouver and Coquitlam.

<sup>22</sup> This region includes Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Langley.

<sup>23</sup> This region includes Nanaimo, Duncan, Victoria, Courtney and Campbell River. The LR-ELSA is not delivered in Courtney and Campbell River.

<sup>24</sup> This region includes Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon.

<sup>25</sup> This region includes Prince George, Williams Lake and Prince Rupert. The LR-ELSA is not delivered in this region.

**Exhibit 5.1**  
**LR-ELSA Classes by Region, Oct. 2009 – Sept. 2010**

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<b>Region</b>	<b>Classes</b>	<b>% of Total Classes</b>
Greater Vancouver	402	88.3%
Fraser Valley	31	6.8%
Vancouver Island	16	3.5%
South & East Central BC	6	1.3%
North & North Central BC	0	0.0%
Total	455	100.0%

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In the regions where it does deliver classes the LR-ELSA visited almost all ELSA schools and agencies at least once between October 2009 and September 2010<sup>26</sup>. In addition, the LR-ELSA project visited three or four non-ELSA schools.

The LR-ELSA attempts to schedule classes to minimize the travel between locations (for example, by booking both morning and afternoon classes at the same school). The two instructors have also broken the service area into two districts to minimize the amount of travel that each of them does. Because the LR-ELSA is delivered on site at individual schools, nearly every class delivered requires some amount of travel time. The LR-ELSA Coordinator estimates that travel time at 40 minutes per class for classes provided in the lower mainland. This estimate varies considerably, however, depending on the actual location of the school and the time of day that the travel is required.

Travel time for classes provided on Vancouver Island and the Interior are much greater, both because they require travel to these regions and because the distances between the schools are much greater. Due to the time and cost involved in travelling to these locations has meant that the LR-ESLA has reduced visits to these locations from twice per year to once per year.

In total during this period the LR-ELSA project delivered classes at 34 different schools and agencies in approximately 48 locations. A number of schools receive multiple LR-ELSA classes throughout the year while others receive a limited number. For example, taken together the following schools and agencies received more than half of the total number of classes delivered during this period:

- Burnaby Continuing Education (61 classes at 6 locations)
- SUCCESS (53 classes at 6 locations)
- Immigrant Services Society of BC (48 classes at 4 locations)
- MOSAIC (47 classes at 2 locations)
- Vancouver Community College (39 classes)
- EXCEL education (39 classes)

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<sup>26</sup> Schools not visited include 1 in Greater Vancouver, one in Vancouver Island (2 sites) and 1 in the Fraser Valley.

In contrast, ten schools and agencies received only 1 or 2 classes during this period, including all four schools in the South and East Central BC region. The remaining schools each received between 3 and 28 classes over the 12 months. This difference in the frequency of LR-ELSA visits reflects a number of factors including the size and number of ELSA classes offered at each school or agency, the ELSA levels taught at the school or agency, and how much time is needed to travel to the school.

A number of teachers interviewed for the evaluation volunteered that they were satisfied with the number of visits that they received (usually 3 or 4 per year) while others who received fewer visits expressed the strong desire to have more frequent visits. Some of these teachers expressed a concern that students might not receive lectures on all of the LR-ELSA topics. At present, the LR-ELSA instructors strive to return to each class in the lower mainland at least once every three months.

Another element of the project's reach is the time of day when the LR-ELSA teachers provide classes. Many ELSA schools and agencies offer classes both during the day and in the evening. Accordingly, the LR-ELSA provides classes (usually 3 hours in length) in morning, afternoon or evening time periods. Between October 2009 and September 2010, most classes were provided in the morning or evening:

**Exhibit 5.2**  
**LR-ESLA Classes by Time of Day Offered, Oct. 2009 – Sept. 2010**

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	<b>Number of Classes</b>	<b>% of Classes</b>
Morning	249	55%
Afternoon	86	19%
Evening	120	26%
Total	455	100%

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A number of teachers interviewed for the evaluation commented that they especially appreciated the fact that the LR-ELSA offers evening visits as they usually find it difficult to find guest speakers who are willing to come to an evening class. One of the LR-ELSA instructors is responsible for all of the evening classes, and is able to return to each class only once every five months. There are currently 20 requests for an evening LR-ELSA lesson on a waitlist.

Classes are scheduled well in advance. The next LR-ELSA lesson is often booked by a teacher when the LR-ELSA teacher visits. In other cases, the LR-ELSA instructor offers a block of dates to a particular school and the school's coordinator manages the scheduling of the individual classes. For other schools, the LR-ELSA instructors send an email to individual teachers to offer them booking dates. Presently, the instructors are fully booked until the end of March 2010, and are only accepting requests beyond that

date on a waitlist basis, as the project's funding has not been confirmed beyond March 31, 2010.

In conclusion, the LR-ESLA is reaching its target audience. Nearly all of the students are immigrants and are at a level where they have enough English to comprehend the lessons taught. The project provides a large number of classes in the lower mainland, and is able to provide a limited number of classes to Vancouver Island and Interior communities. The LR-ELSA is not able to visit evening classes as often as those offered in the daytime.

## ***CHAPTER SIX: WHAT FEATURES OF THE LR-ELSA CONTRIBUTE TO ITS SUCCESS?***

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Two features of the LR-ELSA design have been suggested as potential “best practices” and the evaluation has elicited other features of the project that are viewed favourably. This Chapter discusses the ability of the LR-ELSA project to reach students of different linguistic backgrounds and the use of the “expert guest lecture” model, both of which are considered to contribute to the success of the LR-ELSA. It concludes with discussion of other design features identified by those interviewed that contribute to the success of LR-ELSA.

### **6a. Does the project reach students from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds?**

Many Public Legal Education (PLE) services aimed at immigrants provide services and materials in the immigrants’ first languages. While this approach overcomes the language barriers faced by immigrants, PLE agencies are usually only able to provide service to a limited number of linguistic groups. Staff may speak (and materials are translated into) the most common languages spoken by immigrants to the area which does ensure that service is accessible for a great number of immigrants. However, it also means that newcomers who belong to small linguistic communities may be under served.

ELSA classes attract students from most or all linguistic backgrounds represented in the local immigrant population. Therefore, by visiting ELSA classes to access its target audience, the LR-ELSA is expected to reach immigrants from smaller linguistic communities, as well as those from larger groups.

### **Results:**

A review of the first languages spoken by LR-ELSA students indicates that the LR-ELSA project is reaching a very wide range of language groups through its classes. The student feedback form was modified for this evaluation to include the question “What is your first language?” During the period from June 14, 2010 when the revised form was implemented, to September 30, 2010, the LR-ELSA classes reached students speaking at approximately 60 different languages<sup>27</sup>; see Exhibit 6.1.

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<sup>27</sup> 1,499 students answered this item. There is some overlap among responses given, for example, some students identified their first language as Mandarin or Cantonese, while others simply stated “Chinese”.

**Exhibit 6.1****First Languages of LR-ELSA Students, June 14 – September 30, 2010**

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<b>Language</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Students</b>
Chinese	459	Filipino	3
Mandarin	327	Greek	3
Korean	119	Armenian	3
Farsi	86	Burmese	2
Spanish	63	Serbian	2
Punjabi	56	Malay	2
Russian	52	Mongolian	2
Arabic	47	German	2
Vietnamese	44	Czech	2
Cantonese	40	Urdu	2
Japanese	27	Khmer	2
Romanian	19	Mard	1
Tagalog	15	Hebrew	1
Dhari	11	Ilonggo	1
Bengali	10	Hungarian	1
Thai	9	Ma	1
Portuguese	7	Wolof	1
Amharic	6	Italian	1
Turkish	6	Bahasa	1
French	6	Lithuanian	1
Kurdish	6	Nepali	1
Taiwanese	5	Jarai	1
Uyghur	5	Oromo	1
Hindi	4	Ukrainian	1
Tigrinia	4	Azerbaijani	1
Indonesian	4	Swahili	1
Albanian	4	Berber	1
Polish	4	Malayalam	1
Tamil	3	Bulgarian	1
Uzbek	3	Kirundi	1
Karen	3	Pushto	1

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To put this result into perspective it is useful to consider the availability of materials on legal topics translated for newcomers in BC. Major PLE providers and websites in BC provide materials translated from English into 8 to 23 languages; most publications are not available in every one of these languages. The following are examples of agencies that provide PLE materials in languages other than English:

- The People’s Law School provides materials in 10 different languages, though not all materials are available in all languages.<sup>28</sup>
- MOSIAC hosts the MultiLingoLegal.ca website<sup>29</sup>, where a great number of PLE publications are available in up to 8 different languages.
- Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre offers publications in up to 17 languages.<sup>30</sup>
- ImmigrantLegal.ca, the website of the Immigrant PLEI Consortium provides links to many translated publications which are available in up to 23 languages.<sup>31</sup>
- Clicklaw.ca lists resources available in 16 different languages.<sup>32</sup>
- Legal Services Society provides materials in 14 languages (including traditional and simplified Chinese).<sup>33</sup>

The LR-ELSA model of visiting classes where English is taught to newcomers allows the project to reach students from a very wide range linguistic backgrounds. By teaching in English, rather than in the first language of the newcomers, the LR-ELSA is able to reach students from any linguistic group.

**6b. Does the model of a visiting ESL teacher with “expert” knowledge (related to law) work well?**

An alternative way to deliver law related information to ELSA students could be for the regular ELSA teachers to deliver this content themselves. However, it is thought that the material is somewhat specialized, and the visiting “expert” ensures greater accuracy and consistency in delivery of this information. Having the “expert” also trained as an ESL teacher is thought to ensure that teachers have the skills needed to convey information to students with limited English abilities. The interviews with ELSA Coordinators and teachers were used to explore the support for this model.

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<sup>28</sup> See <http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/section.asp?catid=139>

<sup>29</sup> See <http://www.mosaicbc.com/multilingual-legal-publications>

<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.tenants.bc.ca/main/?languages>

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.immigrantlegal.ca/main>

<sup>32</sup> See <http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/content/languages>

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.lss.bc.ca/publications/default.aspx>

## Results:

The ELSA School Coordinators and teachers interviewed (30 people in total) for the evaluation all agreed that the guest lecturer model is good for teaching students about the Canadian law. The most common reasons this model is seen as valuable are:

- Students view the LR-ELSA teachers as experts, and therefore take the material presented seriously and ask more questions (7 responses).
- The LR-ELSA teachers know more than the regular ELSA teachers about the legal topics (7 responses) and are better able to answer students questions (5 responses).
- A guest speaker gives student a chance to hear another English speaker (6 responses) and experience another teaching style (5 responses).
- The LR-ELSA teachers know their materials well and keep up to date on changes in the law (4 responses).
- As trained ESL instructors, the LR-ELSA teachers know how to speak clearly, avoid the use of idioms and generally gear the level of their delivery to the English level of the students in the class. This means that the students can understand what is said and increases the likelihood that the students will absorb what is taught (5 responses).

**“The [LR-ELSA] instructor is seen as an expert. In the cultures that the students are from expertise counts for a lot, more than in Canadian society”**

ELSA teacher, interview response

On the last point, a number of teachers volunteered that the ELSA program encourages the use of guest speakers generally but that most guests do not know how to present to a class of English learners. The fact that the LR-ELSA teachers are able to convey information to the students makes these instructors popular with the ELSA students and teachers alike.

**“The speaker is very clear, I could understand everything”**

Student comment, LR-ELSA feedback form

An alternative to having a guest speaker present information about the Canadian Law would be for the regular ELSA teachers to cover the materials with their classes. ELSA School Coordinators and teachers were asked for their views on this idea as well. Teachers and Coordinators were asked if teachers had taken courses or training in Canadian law. Fifteen out of 18 teachers who answered this question had not taken training, and three had had some relevant courses in the past. However, a number of the ELSA teachers do teach other sections or material from the Learning About the Law Booklet (13 out of 20). Some are quite comfortable teaching this material (7 responses), while others are careful about what they say, stick closely to the booklet and

teach less comprehensively than the LR-ELSA teachers do (6 responses). Three stated that they are not comfortable teaching this material at all, and five said that they feel it would be better taught by the LR-ELSA teachers.

Coordinators agreed that ELSA teachers are not expected to have training in the law but that there is a general comfort level with their teachers teaching from the Learning about the Law booklet. One Coordinator commented that she prefers the materials to be taught by the LR-ELSA instructors but because of their limited availability, her own teachers do teach some of the topics.

### **6c. What other features contribute to the project's success?**

This question explores other program features that might be considered to be best practices. Data sources are interviews with the 30 ELSA teachers and School Coordinators. An open ended question in the interview asked what other features (in addition to guest lecture model) the ELSA teacher or School Coordinator liked about the LR-ELSA.

#### **Results:**

Many of those interviewed identified a number of project features that they like and appreciate. Most responses fell into a few consistent themes:

Teachers and teaching method:

- The class is delivered as a workshop with many activities and interactions between students and the instructor; the students find this very engaging and they learn more (7 responses);
- The LR-ELSA uses trained educators who can teach well (7 responses);
- The LR-ELSA teaching methods work equally well to convey the course content *and* teach English as a Second Language. The class involves all 4 of the skills needed to acquire a new language: speaking, listening, reading, writing (1 response).

**"I loved your lesson!! The examples you explained to us were very easy to understand and imagine, they were fascinating. I have a wonderful time. Thank you very much."**

Student comment,  
LR-ELSA feedback form

Good fit with ELSA:

- LR-ELSA topics fit well with the ELSA themes, for example the LR-ELSA lesson on Renting a Home fits well with the ESLA theme on Housing. (4 responses);

- Some ELSA teachers teach legal topics covered in the Learning About the Law Booklet that are not delivered by the LR-ELSA instructor so students have greater opportunity to learn the legal content;
- Most ELSA teachers sit in on the LR-ELSA classes – they learn a lot themselves and are better able to answer students’ questions. (2 responses);
- The LR-ELSA instructors are familiar with the level of English competency at different the ELSA levels and deliver their classes at an appropriate level for the students (8 responses).

Project materials:

- The teacher’s guide and worksheets are useful teaching resources (1 response);
- The booklet is useful because it reinforces the verbal lesson given and is easy to understand (5 responses).

Other features, each mentioned by one respondent:

- The LR-ELSA imparts accurate, impartial information;
- It has a multiplier effect – students tell their friends and family members what they have learned which helps to dispel myths and misunderstandings;
- The LR-ELSA covers some sensitive topics -- it provides students with the information without the need for them to ask about it;
- The 3 hour class length allows teachers to get into the material in some depth;
- Repeated visits by the same instructors allows the instructor to build rapport with students;
- LR-ELSA offers a variety of topics to choose from allowing the teacher to pick the best topic for the particular mix of students in a given class;
- The in-person delivery is better than, for example, delivery by way of video or dvd because it allows students to ask questions;
- LR-ELSA is available for evening classes;
- The lessons includes information on where students can go to get help with legal issues;
- The project is consistently available so that teachers can plan to include a LR-ELSA guest lecturer each term or ELSA theme;
- The frequency of visits has improved.

In conclusion, the LR-ELSA design contributes to its success. Because it delivers content in English it is able to reach students from a very wide range of linguistic backgrounds, improving its reach. The model of using an “expert” guest lecturer is a good one for teaching immigrants about the law because the instructors are knowledgeable in this area and are respected as experts by the students. The project also succeeds because its instructors are skilled ESL teachers who are able to convey information to English learners, and the project is designed to fit well with ELSA. The project materials are also useful and help reinforce the lessons taught.

## ***CHAPTER SEVEN: HOW COULD THE LR-ELSA BE IMPROVED?***

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This Chapter examines ideas for improving the LR-ELSA put forward by project staff and ESLA teachers and school coordinators.

### **7a. Do key stakeholders have suggestions for improvements?**

Data sources used to obtain information to address this question are interviews with ELSA agency coordinators and teachers, and the ER-ELSA Coordinator. Those interviewed were asked about any gaps in the program as currently delivered, as well as any challenges faced by the LR-ELSA staff in the delivery of the project. Finally, respondents were asked for suggestions to improve the LR-ELSA project.

#### **Results:**

Those interviewed had a number of suggestions for the LR-ELSA to consider, including suggestions for new legal topics and ways to increase the reach of the project.

The LR-ELSA offers lectures on the following topics: Fundamentals of the Law in Canada, Renting a Home, Working in BC (Levels I and II), Family Law, Young People and the Law, Criminal Law, Courts, Scams to Avoid, Writing Your Will. ELSA Teachers and School Coordinators were asked if there were additional topics that their students could benefit from. The most frequently mentioned topics were:

- Driving in BC (9 responses);
- Taxes (3 responses); and
- Consumer law, credit cards and cell phone contracts (3 responses).

The following ideas were mentioned by 1 respondent each:

- Personal safety;
- Computer safety;
- Laws about young people (including things such as age when children can be left alone, age when children can babysit, or work; what happens when children are taken into care);
- Buying a home;
- Small claims court;
- Personal injury law;
- Canadian licencing laws for professionals;
- Marriage laws (and who is allowed to marry whom);
- Bylaws (e.g. Littering, noise levels, tree cutting and shovelling sidewalks);

- Importing and exporting laws;
- Laws related to health (services covered by MSP, medical malpractice and complaints against a doctor); and
- Immigration law.

In fact, the LR-ELSA is in the process of developing three new units on the most frequently requested topics listed above: Driving in BC, Taxes and Consumer problems, so this gap is being addressed.

ELSA teachers and coordinators interviewed were asked also if there were any challenges for the LR-ELSA project or its instructors. The challenges mentioned include:

- Teaching to classes comprised of students with varying levels of English ability (4 responses);
- Responding to unexpected questions or student reactions, and handling sensitive topics (4 responses);
- Scheduling classes and travelling to all the locations the project serves (5 responses);
- Providing the service with limited resources: (3 responses);
- Some students will have seen the LR-ELSA previously (1 responses); and
- Teaching to large classes (1 response).

Despite these challenges, the interview respondents indicated that the LR-ELSA did a good job of responding to the situations that arose, particularly those in the classroom.

When asked for suggestions on how the LR-ELSA could be improved, the most frequently mentioned idea was to increase the staff levels so that the instructors could provide more frequent LR-ELSA classes. This was mentioned by 24 out of 30 people interviewed. The second most frequent suggestion was for the LR-ELSA to develop some simple lessons that could be delivered to Level 2 classes (7 responses).

Other suggestions included:

- Increase the number of topics available (4 responses);
- Find a better or easier process to schedule classes with teachers (2 responses);
- Create or find videos that would dramatize scenarios, such as interacting with the police (2 responses);
- Update teacher's guide to match the new Learning About the Law booklet, and create a list of Frequently Asked Questions for ELSA teachers to use when they teach topics from the booklet (1 response each);
- Update the Learning About the Law booklet as law changes (1 response);
- Develop lessons for higher ELSA levels (1 response);

- Provide different written exercises for topics that are taught to more than one ELSA level and have different versions of exercises so that if students have heard a topic before, they can at least do a different exercise (1 response each);
- Take student questions in writing and provide answers by email (1 response), and
- Incorporate use of computers into classes (1 response).

In conclusion, several stakeholders suggest that the LR-ELSA could be improved by increasing the availability of the school visits and broadening the number of topics offered. A number of other suggestions were also offered.

## ***CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS***

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The LR-ELSA is a very successful project that enjoys the enthusiastic support of the ELSA agencies it partners with. ELSA school coordinators and teachers speak very highly of the LR-ELSA staff and of the value of the project lessons to lives of their immigrant students. The review and analysis conducted for this evaluation demonstrates that the project is achieving the activities, outputs and outcomes examined. This Chapter reviews the conclusions of the evaluation and outlines recommendations for the LR-ELSA in the future.

### **Conclusions**

The LR-ELSA succeeds in delivering the anticipated activities and outputs for the project:

- **Class and student targets:** The LR-ELSA has succeeded in meeting its earlier targets for the number of classes and students taught, and is likely to meet its targets for the current year. In 2008/09 the project delivered 424 classes to 6,155 students.
- **Project promotion:** The Coordinator and People's Law School do not promote the project through advertising as working relationships between ELSA providers and the LR-ELSA are well established. ELSA school coordinators indicate that the informal promotion of LR-ELSA is working to meet their needs. When a new ELSA provider joins ELSA-Net, the LR-ELSA Coordinator proactively contacts the provider to introduce the project and offer services.
- **Teaching materials:** Appropriate law booklets and materials have been developed that add value to the LR-ELSA classes. The materials are written at a level that is suitable for English learners, and have undergone a legal review.
- **Staff skills:** Both LR-ELSA staff have strong ESL qualifications and experience. They have developed knowledge of the legal content required through reading and research. They are able to answer student questions, or refer them to other resources, if they happen to not know an answer.

The LR-ELSA has achieved key immediate outcomes. The activities undertaken by staff have resulted in ELSA agency cooperation and support, and the students taught through the project gain information and knowledge about legal topics that are relevant in their lives:

- **ELSA agency support:** ELSA school coordinators all indicated that they fully support the LR-ELSA project in principle and in practice and they and teachers were unanimous in describing their relationship with LR-ELSA staff positively.

- **Knowledge gains:** Students of the LR-ELSA classes gain knowledge of the legal rights and responsibilities of Canadians and of the justice system and laws through the classes. The project materials contain appropriate information on a variety of legal topics relevant to the lives of new immigrants, such as renting a home and the fundamentals of Canadian law. ELSA teachers indicate that students gain valuable information from the LR-ELSA lectures. During the evaluation period, student knowledge gains were also demonstrated by the statistically significant improvements shown on knowledge gain (“before” and “after”) quiz scores.

The LR-ELSA also contributes to the achievement of key intermediate outcomes for the project, including student’s increased understanding of and confidence in, and willingness to engage, the justice system:

- **Greater understanding and confidence:** Three quarters of the ELSA teachers interviewed indicated that students have greater understanding of the justice system after the lessons. Over half also indicated that student’s confidence in the Canadian system increases as a result of the classes; some others were hopeful that this would occur but couldn’t say for certain that it does.
- **Willingness to engage the justice system:** Seventy per cent of ELSA teachers indicated that as a result of the classes students would be more willing to engage the justice system if they have a legal problem. A common theme expressed by teachers in support of this view is that “knowledge is empowering” and that the materials taught have direct relevance to the lives of immigrants. Nearly all of the students completing feedback forms indicated that the information provided in the lesson is useful for them and over half indicated that they expected to use the information within a year.

The LR-ELSA is delivering service to its target audience of immigrants and higher level ESL students. While most service is provided in Greater Vancouver, some service is also provided to Vancouver Island and Interior communities:

- **Students are immigrants:** The ELSA schools that the LR-ELSA works with rely on the ELSA assessment service to ensure that students meet the eligibility requirements (i.e. that students are immigrants) for the funding that both they and the LR-ELSA receive. The LR-ELSA does serve a limited number of schools with different eligibility requirements; however it is likely that at least 95% of all students taught are immigrants as defined by the Agreement for Canada-British Columbia on Co-operation on Immigration.
- **Higher level ESL students:** Over 50% of the classes taught between October 2009 and September 2010 were delivered to ELSA level 4 or 5 students. The remainder were taught to level 3 students, and a small number to classes without an ELSA level assigned (“other”). Teaching to higher level ELSA classes ensures that students have enough English to comprehend the lessons and materials.

- **Project reach:** The LR-ELSA delivered classes to 34 different schools in 48 locations between October 2009 and September 2010. Nearly 90% of classes taught were delivered in Greater Vancouver, but at least one class was delivered in each BC community where an ELSA program is available, except in North and North Central BC and in Courtney and Campbell River. The LR-ELSA aims to return to each class once every three months but is not able to achieve this for classes offered outside the lower mainland, or for evening classes.

Several features of the LR-ELSA project contribute to its success, including its ability to reach students from a wide range of linguistic backgrounds and the use of the “expert guest speaker” model:

- **Linguistic backgrounds of students:** Because the ELSA program accepts students from any linguistic background, the LR-ELSA reaches students from both large and small linguistic communities in BC’s immigrant population. The LR-ELSA classes delivered between June and September 2010 reached students with approximately 60 different first languages.
- **Expert guest speaker:** ELSA teachers and school coordinators all agreed that the guest lecture model is a good way to teach their students about Canadian law. This approach is valuable because students view the LR-ELSA teachers as experts and take the lessons seriously, and the LR-ELSA teachers have better knowledge of the legal material than the regular ELSA class teachers.
- **Other successful features:** Those interviewed identified a number of other features that make the LR-ELSA a success. Key among these was the use of trained ESL instructors who know how to deliver the material in a way that English learners can comprehend. Among many features identified, a number of those interviewed like the way that the LR-ELSA fits well with the ELSA themes and appreciated the written materials for the way that they reinforce the verbal presentation and serve as a resource for students.

Those interviewed for the evaluation are generally very satisfied with the LR-ELSA project as it is delivered now. The suggestions for how the project could be improved focused on increasing the range of topics taught and increasing the availability of the classes.

- **Topics requested:** ELSA teachers and coordinators identified a number of other legal topics that the LR-ELSA could offer. The three most frequently mentioned topics were: driving in BC, taxes, and consumer law. In fact, the LR-ELSA is currently developing three new units on these topics.
- **Availability of the LR-ELSA:** Eighty per cent of those interviewed indicated a desire for more frequent visits by the LR-ELSA instructors. This sentiment was expressed even by those who are satisfied with the three visits per year that they receive, and was expressed quite strongly by those who receive fewer visits per year.

- **Lower level classes:** Among the other suggestions for improvements, a desire for LR-ELSA classes for ELSA level 2 students was expressed by nearly a quarter of those interviewed. While the challenges of conveying content to students with more limited English ability was acknowledged, there was still a view that some simple materials and lessons could be developed for teaching at this level. Behind this suggestion was a concern that some students may not progress beyond level 2 in the ELSA program.
- **Scheduling:** A very limited number of those interviewed expressed some frustration with the way that scheduling of the LR-ELSA classes occurs; they suggested adding a staff person specifically for the scheduling task.

## **Recommendations**

The evaluation conclusions outlined above indicate that the LR-ELSA is a very successful project. The following recommendations are offered for the consideration by the project funders and the People's Law School as potential ways to make this project even stronger and better.

- **Increase staffing:** To improve the project's reach, it is recommended that the funding for the LR-ELSA be increased to support additional instructional staff and associated travel costs. The focus of additional resources should be on areas where service does not currently meet demand: evening classes and classes for outlying areas. Classes in outlying areas have limited access to resources such as the LR-ELSA and would benefit from additional visits per year. Students often enrol in evening ELSA classes because they are working, and already engaged in Canadian society in a direct way – these students have a great need to learn about employment laws and other legal topics to ensure that they know their rights and responsibilities.
- **Enhance staff training:** It is recommended that funding and staff time be made available to provide professional development opportunities for the instructors to strengthen their legal knowledge. At present, staff approach their acquisition of legal information on an ad hoc basis and it is possible that gaps in their knowledge may exist, or that in some areas they are not fully up to date. Courses offered by the Continuing Legal Education Society and the Justice Institute should be investigated as potential training opportunities; many are available on-line. In addition, presentations made by lawyers on relevant topics offered through the People's Law School could be attended. A training plan should also be developed for new hires.
- **Ensure that all materials are current:** It is recommended that all the LR-ELSA materials be reviewed for currency at least once per year. Such a review could be undertaken by lawyers who practice in the areas covered by the LR-ELSA, and would likely take a limited amount of time to complete. If materials are found to be out of date,

corrected information could be distributed with the booklets or handouts until such time as a revised edition is produced. This review would also alert the LR-ESLA staff to changes in the law and improve their ability to keep their own knowledge current.

- **Consider support provided to ELSA teachers:** A number of ELSA teachers interviewed indicated that they do teach materials from the Learning About the Law booklet for topics that their students have not received directly from the LR-ELSA instructor. Most teachers do not have any training or background in the legal topics they choose to teach, but approach this like any other topic that they teach to students. Their efforts mean that more students are exposed to the LR-ELSA information, even though the teachers do not have the depth of knowledge of the LR-ELSA teachers. While it would be preferable for the LR-ELSA teachers to deliver this content, they cannot do so for all locations and for all targeted ELSA levels with current project resources. It is therefore recommended that the LR-ELSA review the ways that it supports ELSA teachers in the delivery of the law related content, and consider updating the Teacher's Guide and providing additional materials, such as Frequently Asked Questions to assist teachers. Such materials and support may be particularly valuable if the LR-ELSA is not able to increase its visits to ELSA evening classes and programs in outlying communities.