

CILS Annual Report

2010-2011

A report on the academic year's activities of CILS, an inter-faculty research and development centre at The University of British Columbia, dedicated to the promotion of language teaching and learning within and beyond the university community. Report prepared by Angelika Sellick.

The Centre for
Intercultural
Language
Studies (CILS)

Preface

The report submitted last year included activities and events up to March 31, 2010. The current report and budget will focus on activities from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011. For previous activities, please refer to our 2009-2010 annual report available on the CILS website at <http://www.cils.educ.ubc.ca/reports.html>

I. Mandate and Strategic Plan for the Past Year

Established in 1994, the UBC Centre for Intercultural Language Studies (CILS) is an interfaculty centre for research, outreach, and collaboration on issues broadly connected to language, culture, and education.

CILS is sponsored and supported by three major UBC bodies: the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education, and Continuing Studies. Over the past seventeen years, CILS has provided service to the language teaching and learning community not only at the University of British Columbia, but also in the broader professional field and amongst our sister postsecondary institutions in British Columbia. The Centre relies on the work of dedicated individuals who are the driving force behind the life of the organization. Unlike other similar centres at UBC, CILS receives no funding for release time of their Director. All Advisory Committee members generously volunteer their time and expertise. This reality means that CILS' accomplishments represent significant value for the modest investment made by the University in its work.

Looking back to the 2009-2010 Annual Report, CILS outlined its main goals for the 2010-2011 year as:

- Complete data collection, analyses, and publish results from CAUCE research project through reports, academic papers, and conference presentations.
- Continue to grow as a catalyst for research collaboration.
- Co-sponsor events with other UBC departments and centres, as well as external institutes.
- Increase inter-faculty representation on the CILS Advisory Committee and other CILS working committees.
- Introduce a \$10 registration fee per participant at the Annual Research Symposium.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Networks of Centres and Institutes in Education (NCIE) to promote CILS events.
- Investigate means to redevelop CILS website.
- Run CILS administrative operations and catered functions in the most environmentally responsible way possible.

II. Governance and Participation

CILS is led by a Director and an Advisory Committee. The Centre's membership is comprised of over four hundred individuals who participate as attendees and/or presenters during the various events and activities organised and (co-)sponsored by CILS. Last year, CILS relied on the work of a Graduate Assistant who was paid through a student appointment. This is the only paid position in the governance of CILS.

Director:

The Director is a member of either the Faculty of Arts, Education, or Continuing Studies. This is a volunteer position usually held for one or two years. Monique Bournot-Trites, Associate Professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, completed her two-year term as CILS Director in August 2010. Andrew Scales, Academic Director of the English Language Institute in Continuing Studies, took over directorship in September 2010 for a two-year term.

Graduate Assistant:

The person in this position assists the Director closely in organising the Advisory Committee meetings, as well as the events and activities of CILS. This position involves the organization and coordination of the CILS Annual Research Symposium, contacting CILS members by e-mail with announcements and invitations to various activities, seeking opportunities to co-sponsor events of interest with other departments, coordinating the activities of the CILS Advisory Committee, as well as updating the CILS website. Angelika Sellick, an MA student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, began working as the CILS Graduate Assistant in September 2009 and carried on in the role throughout 2010-2011. While still working with CILS, Angelika completed her MA degree successfully and in April 2011 moved to a newly-created position as the Literacy Outreach Coordinator in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside community.

Advisory Committee:

The Advisory Committee comprises individuals representing the three contributing units: Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Education, and Continuing Studies. Most of the current Advisory Committee members have been involved with CILS for a number of years and thus are familiar with the Centre's goals and regular activities. This has contributed to very fluid interactions and collaboration. CILS was pleased to welcome Samuel Navarro, Assistant Professor in the Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies, to the Advisory Committee in February 2011.

Members of the 2010-2011 Advisory Committee were:

Francis Andrew, Continuing Studies

Monique Bournot-Trites, Department of Language and Literacy Education

Rebecca Chau, Department of Asian Studies

Duanduan Li, Department of Asian Studies

Stefka Marinova-Todd, School of Audiology and Speech Sciences

Samuel Navarro, Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies

Ken Reeder, Department of Language and Literacy Education
Christine Rouget, Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies
Andrew Scales, Continuing Studies
Sandra Zappa-Hollman, Department of Language and Literacy Education

Members of Research Committee working on a research grant from the Canadian Association of University Continuing Education (CAUCE) 2009-2011 and UBC Continuing Education were:

Monique Bournot-Trites
Ken Reeder
Andrew Scales
Angelika Sellick (Research Assistant)
Mark Smith (UBC Learning Exchange Storefront, Community Programs Manager)
Sandra Zappa-Hollman

This year's activities included regular meetings by both the Advisory Committee and the Research Committee. In June 2010, the Advisory Committee met to plan the goals and events for the upcoming year, including the theme for the 2010-2011 year: *Oral Language Education*. In subsequent meetings, the Committee focused on organizing guest speakers, events, and the Annual Research Symposium. The Research Committee met several times to analyse collected data, identify the current study's findings, and to plan for future dissemination of the findings via presentations, reports, and academic journals (see section III for more details of this study).

Who accessed the Centre:

In the 2009-2010 Annual Report, CILS reported a membership of over 200 members. In 2010-2011, this number *doubled* to over 400 members. Such growth can be partly accounted for by the switch to an on-line RSVP system in February 2011 which required individuals to indicate whether or not they would like their name added to the CILS mailing list. Most people responded affirmatively to this inquiry.

The use of the on-line RSVP system also enabled CILS to document a significant diversification in its audience base. Events were attended by UBC graduate students (alumni and current), as well as UBC faculty and staff from a wide range of departments and units including the School of Nursing, Sauder School of Business, and the First Nations Language Program. Members of the CILS audience this year included teachers and settlement workers from the Vancouver School Board, as well as instructors and students from Simon Fraser University, Capilano University, Douglas College, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and Vancouver Community College. Teachers and personnel from the Italian Cultural Centre Society continued to attend CILS events and there was a small representation of individuals from government-sponsored language/community programs such as MOSAIC, ESLA, SUCCESS, and Little Mountain Neighbourhood House.

Yet the biggest growth in who accessed CILS events in 2010-2011 were participants from the ESL Conversation Program at the UBC Learning Exchange Storefront located at 612 Main St. East. At the Annual Research Symposium in 2010, 5 volunteer ESL conversation facilitators from the Learning Exchange were in attendance. In March 2011, the talk given by Dr. Murray

Munro from SFU (see Appendix B for abstract) was attended by 10 volunteer facilitators and ESL learners from the Learning Exchange. And while this report does not cover the time period past March 2011, it is noteworthy that this growth in participants from the Learning Exchange's ESL Conversation Program has only continued with over 30 volunteers, learners and staff attending the CILS 2011 Annual Research Symposium in May 2011. This new connection between CILS and the staff and participants of the Learning Exchange's ESL Conversation Program can best be accounted for by the relationships formed through the study (see next section) conducted by CILS at the Learning Exchange Storefront between September 2009 and June 2010.

The number of people in attendance at CILS events in 2010-2011 is summarized below (see Appendix B for abstracts):

- CILS 6th Annual Research Symposium (May 14, 2010): 120 people in attendance (including 15 graduate student volunteers)
- *Gender, Xenophobia, Cultural Stereotypes and the Teaching of Languages* presented by Dr. Caroline Rieger (October 1, 2010): 50 people in attendance
- *The Intelligibility Construct: Issues and Research Findings* presented by Dr. Murray Munro (March 4, 2011): 70 people in attendance

III. Research

CILS current research project is funded by the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) Research Award and UBC Continuing Studies. The title of the study is *Building Transformative Learning Communities: A Formative Evaluation of the UBC ESL Conversation Facilitators Program*.

Background

UBC's Learning Exchange ESL Conversation Facilitator Program is designed to develop the skills of English-speaking Vancouver residents of the Downtown Eastside to lead effective English language conversation classes with immigrants and refugees. Through training and support, the program enables volunteers to contribute to their community and gain greater self-confidence in the process. The program requires participants to attend a series of training workshops focused on facilitation skills and basic ESL conversation methodology and issues. The participants begin facilitating ESL conversation classes after the second workshop and are further supported through in-class observation and feedback. In 2007, the program was recognized with a CAUCE Program Award of Excellence.

Research Overview

This qualitative research is being conducted within the theoretical framework of Appreciative Inquiry put forth by Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987). By taking an Appreciative Inquiry approach, the Research Committee is seeking to work with members of UBC's Learning Exchange ESL Conversation Program to identify what is working well, as opposed to what is not, in order to provide support and direction for further positive growth. The Research Committee is also drawing on ideas around Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1992), and Asset-Based Community Development (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; McKnight, 1995) which UBC's Learning Exchange ESL Conversation Program was initially developed around. The concept of asset-based community development views meaningful community development (particularly within challenged communities) as occurring when members contribute their unique skills and talents to one another.

The research questions guiding the study are:

1. What are the strengths of the ESL facilitator training workshop?
2. How does the ESL facilitator training workshop work as a Community of Practice?

Progress of the Study During 2010-2011

Between April and June 2010, final focus groups and individual interview were conducted with participants. Transcription of the interviews and focus groups were completed during the summer months. From September 2010 to March 2011, a coding manual was created and the coding and preliminary analysis of data was conducted as a joint effort between the six members of the CILS research committee.

Preliminary Findings as of March 2011

1. A review of the literature suggests that the program's innovative nature stems partly from the intake of volunteers from a diverse range of socio-economic, educational, health, age, and language backgrounds

2. The program's approach to training was unique in that it emphasized a distinction between *facilitating* and *teaching*, and this was actively modeled during its peer-centered training workshops
3. Significant learning occurred through the volunteers' contributions of personal characteristics, skills, and life experiences
4. The sponsoring university had an integral role in maintaining the success of the program, but this role was not without its tensions

Reporting of Findings

In May 2010, the CILS Research Committee collaborated with two volunteers at the Learning Exchange (also participants in the study) to give a presentation of preliminary findings at the BC TEAL conference held in Vancouver, BC. The title of the presentation was *How Do We Equip Volunteers to Facilitate ESL Learning?* See Appendix C for the presentation abstract.

In March 2011, the CILS Research Committee's proposal to present findings on the first research question at the CAUCE 2011 Conference in Toronto, Ontario was accepted. The presentation is titled *Key Strengths of an Innovative Volunteer Training Program*. See Appendix C for the presentation abstract.

The CILS Research Committee also began preliminary work on outlining an academic article addressing the study's first research question.

IV. How Goals for 2010-2011 Were Achieved

Taking the lead from the UBC Sustainability Initiative (USI) which was established in January 2010 to “promote and unite UBC’s sustainability efforts in teaching and learning, research and campus operations” and to fulfill UBC’s “vision to become a global hub for sustainable education and innovation” (<http://www.sustain.ubc.ca/>), CILS’ goals for 2010-2011 can be considered from three perspectives of *sustainability*¹: environmental outcomes, economic outcomes, and social outcomes.

Goal 1: Environmental Outcomes

- Run CILS administrative operations and catered functions in the most environmentally responsible way possible.

CILS met this goal by advertising events primarily through e-mail and on the CILS website. At the 2010 Symposium, delegates were asked to bring their own travel cups so as to cut down on the usage of plastic cups. We also purchased large jugs of juice and used pitchers of water to once again reduce the use of plastic. Finally, the caterer that CILS primarily dealt with (Calhoun’s Catering) uses biodegradable plates and cutlery, as well as delivers its food in baskets as opposed to plastic containers.

Goal 2: Economic Outcomes

- Introduce a \$10 registration fee per participant at the Annual Research Symposium.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Network of Centres and Institutes in Education (NCIE) to promote CILS events.

We addressed this second goal by introducing a \$10 registration fee at the 2010 Annual Research Symposium (in previous years there had been no fee) which generated additional income to offset catering costs. Attendees expressed willingness to paying the new registration fee. CILS’ decision to implement the fee was motivated by the considerable expense involved in hosting an all-day Symposium attended by over 120 people, paired with the rising costs of food and supplies in general.

CILS also tapped into and utilized the in-kind contributions provided by the Network of Centres and Institutes in Education (NCIE). The mandate of NCIE is to provide support services for the various research and program activities of centres and institutes within its network. At no cost, NCIE worked with CILS’ Director and Graduate Assistant to manage the Centre’s financial accounts, re-develop its website and keep it updated, produce posters and programs for special events and Symposium, take pictures and video during events, and coordinate the registration for the Symposium. CILS would like to warmly thank and recognize Joanne O’Connor, Judy Paley, Carmen Radut, Shawna Riebling, and Carole Wallace and other staff members at NCIE for their incredible support and assistance.

¹ At the Continuing Studies Centre for Sustainability, sustainability is understood as “economic and social progress that protects and improves the natural environment, supports positive social and cultural outcomes, and enhances economic prosperity.” (http://www.estudies.ubc.ca/sustainability/defining_sustainability.html)

Goal 3: Social Outcomes

- Investigate means to redevelop CILS website.
- Increase inter-faculty representation on the CILS Advisory Committee and other CILS working committees.
- Co-sponsor events with other UBC departments and centres, as well as external institutes.
- Continue to grow as a catalyst for research collaboration
- Complete data collection, analyses, and publish results from CAUCE research project through reports, academic papers, and conference presentations.

The Centre's goal to generate positive social outcomes was addressed by re-developing the CILS website, thus allowing CILS to communicate more effectively with its growing community and other interested audiences. CILS worked closely with staff at the Network for Centre and Institutes in Education (NCIE) to develop a new website using UBC's "Place of Mind" template; the new site was launched in December of 2010.

This goal was also met by inviting and welcoming Samuel Navarro from the Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies to the CILS Advisory in March 2011. Mark Smith from the UBC Learning Exchange also continued to serve as an active member of the CILS Research Committee.

CILS continued to work collaboratively with other UBC departments, including co-sponsoring Dr. Caroline Rieger's presentation *Gender, Xenophobia, Cultural Stereotypes and the Teaching of Languages* (see Appendix B) with the Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Study (CENES). This event attracted an audience of over 50 people. CILS also supported the Department of French, Hispanic, and Italian Studies by promoting three talks as part of an exciting initiative to generate a Second Language Acquisition Research Cluster on campus across departments. The title of these talks were *Sharing Instructional Initiatives for the Romance Language Classroom* (January 2011), *Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Technology* (February 2011), and *What do we Expect Students to Learn in Second/Foreign Language Programs at UBC?* (March 2011).

CILS also provided in-kind support to a graduate student, Mary Leighton, from the Department of Language and Literacy Education in starting up the *Tandem Learning Project*. In this pilot language learning program, participants were paired based on their complementary languages and met once a week to converse in both their common languages. CILS supported the project through promotion on the CILS website and assisted Mary in securing a location to hold the information meeting. An overview of the program and its preliminary success was presented by Mary at the CILS 2011 Annual Research Symposium.

Throughout 2010-2011, a key partnership between CILS and the UBC Learning Exchange also continued to develop. As already highlighted in Section II, this partnership stemmed in part from collaboration on the CILS research project at the UBC Learning Exchange. In June 2011, Angelika Sellick (representing the CILS Research Committee), Mark Smith (UBC Learning Exchange), and two volunteers from the Learning Exchange co-presented at the BC TEAL Conference in Vancouver on May 1, 2010. The title of the presentation was *How Do We Equip*

Volunteers to Facilitate ESL Learning? The social outcome of this partnership was that several opportunities were created for members of UBC academia, staff and participants from the UBC Learning Exchange, and language practitioners in Vancouver to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Yet another noteworthy collaboration initiated by CILS was a meeting in November 2010 between the Advisory Committee and its three stake holders from the Faculty of Arts, Education, and Continuing Studies. During this meeting, Andrew Scales highlighted the connections between the goals of CILS and the goals outlined in UBC's strategic plan *Place and Promise* in terms of students learning, community engagement, research excellence, and budget. Beth Haverkamp, the Associate Dean of Education, commented that CILS is unique because it is the only cross-faculty centre in the Faculty of Education. Judith Plessis, Executive Director of Continuing Studies, acknowledged that the main key to CILS' success has been the investment from its community members (e.g. advisory committee, director, graduate students) and she also applauded and encouraged CILS movement towards a stronger research vision.

And indeed, in 2010-2011, CILS explored several different avenues for contributing to collaborative research efforts. This exploration included mentoring graduate students in writing funding applications and working with the English Language Institute (ELI) to generate research that would support international students. The CILS Research Committee made extensive progress in its study *Building Transformative Learning Communities: A Formative Evaluation of the UBC ESL Conversation Facilitators Program*. The data collection was completed, as well as the coding and analysis of the data. A presentation of preliminary findings was made at the BC TEAL conference in May 2010 and a proposal to present findings at the CAUCE 2011 conference in Toronto was accepted in March 2011 (see Appendix C for abstracts).

V. Future Planning

At the meeting between the CILS Advisory Committee and its three stakeholders in November 2010 (see p. 10), the Associate Dean of Education asked: “Where would you like CILS to be in five years?” In response to this important question, the Advisory Committee is developing a longer term vision and plan in expanding and developing CILS’ community engagement, student learning, research, and financial development. Specifically, our goals for 2011-2012, categorized in terms of *sustainability*, are:

Environmental Goals: Run operations in the ‘green’

- Promote events mainly through e-mail and the CILS website
- Foster further dialogues with CILS members/participants and service providers (e.g. caterers) about delivering CILS events with an environmental consciousness.

Economic Goals: Maximize on the minimum

- Continue to invite high-calibre local scholars to keep costs down, but also explore other funding possibilities to bring in international speakers. Indeed, the CILS community is growing and the Centre will need to respond in the future to their diverse interests and backgrounds with a wider scope of presenters.
- Explore additional research funding sources; the current research funding from Canadian Association of University Continuing Education and UBC Continuing Studies will expire in August 2011.

Social Goals: Build connections and facilitate new opportunities

- Further develop and foster collaboration with departments and centres across the UBC campus, as well as with sister postsecondary institutions, and external schools, organizations, and groups in the wider community.

Consult with Alden Habacon, Director of Intercultural Understanding Strategy Development at UBC, about working collaboratively on a research question that could support a new level of understanding of the intercultural life at UBC.

- Explore engaging graduate students in future research projects and consequently providing them with valuable research experience and mentorship.
- Transfer of knowledge and networks to new CILS Graduate Assistant beginning in September 2011, in turn contributing to his/her professional development. At the time of writing this report, Rachel Wang has agreed to begin work as CILS new Graduate Assistant beginning in September 2011. Rachel has just completed her role as Coordinator at the Centre for Research in Chinese Language and Literacy Education at UBC and will be starting her PhD in the fall in Language and Literacy Education.

- Encourage presentations to be given in languages other than English at future Annual Research Symposiums, thereby fostering a respect and appreciation for the multiculturalism and multilingualism of people working in language education.

Appendices

Appendix A:

Abstracts from CILS 6th Annual Research Symposium (May 14, 2010)

PRESENTER	DESCRIPTION
Adriana Lima Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia	A Functional Approach to the Canadian Language Benchmarks This study examines the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) functionality in a local English for Academic Purpose (EAP) program, focusing on dilemmas teachers face to achieve the program goals and also national demands of assessment.
Manya Wubbold French, Hispanic and Italian Studies, University of British Columbia	Use of <i>Ekphrasis</i> in the Teaching of Language and Literature <i>Ekphrastic</i> poetry—the verbal interpretation of visual art—compels readers to process images and emotion of visual art through language, making it an excellent medium for teaching language and culture.
Alma Krilic English Language & Culture Program, SFU Harbour Centre	Theories on the nature of language: What is language? This presentation will focus on the hermeneutical tradition and examine the theories of communication, the nature of language and the relationship between spoken and written word.
Paule Desgroseilliers Capilano University	A Study of BC Learners' Social Representations of French as a Second Language. The study is investigating the social representations of secondary students of Core French regarding bilingualism, the role of the school in second language acquisition and the role of students as language learners.
Alicia Logie French Immersion, Surrey School District	DELFL and other acronyms: Reflections on assessment and cultural context What is the effect of international language learning standards on Canadian language learners and classroom instruction? The DELFL (Diplome d'études de la langue française) pilot project raises questions around language instruction in French in BC.
John Donald Redmond Richmond Campus Learning Centre, Kwantlen Polytechnic University	iPodding to Autonomy: ESL Trials and Tribulations in an ESL Learning Centre This paper presents the challenges, frustrations and rewards of introducing podcasting as part of the armory of language-acquisition techniques employed in an ESL and modern language-focused self-access learning centre in an effort to assist students to become autonomous learners of language.
Irena Sharshakova English Language Institute, University of British Columbia	Spelling Solutions for Arabic Writers: One Vowel at a Time Many English texts written by Arabic speakers are characterized by spelling mistakes. An attempt was made to identify the root of the problem and to find effective solutions which will be shared during the presentation.
Reginald D'Silva Dennis Murphy Odo Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia	Investigating Asian Immigrant Students' Eligibility for College This paper presentation explores variables that impact on the academic achievement of Asian second language learners from various first language groups. Findings reveal some possible reasons why some groups do not achieve as well as others.

PRESENTER	DESCRIPTION
<p>Emily Kung</p> <p>Modern Languages Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Assessment of Writing in the Classroom</p> <p>This presentation explores the research on holistic, analytic, and primary-trait rating scales. Usefulness in terms of reliability and validity of these three types of scoring scales will be presented.</p>
<p>Elizabeth Wallace</p> <p>Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Recovering the Welsh Language through Writing: A Personal Reflection</p> <p>The presenter will share her personal reflections on the ways in which she uses writing to support the recovery of her lost first language, Welsh.</p>
<p>Joel Hartse</p> <p>Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>The Uniqueness of Written English in China: Problems of Definition</p> <p>This paper examines the recent emergence of studies of “China English” as a unique variety of English, and discusses dilemmas related to the definition and description of written China English.</p>
<p>Aaron Spouler</p> <p>Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Assessing Validity and Reliability in Computer Based Test TOEFL</p> <p>A critique of the TOEFL as an example of Computer Based Tests and Internet Based Tests. The presentation will assess validity, reliability, and the use of automated scoring programs.</p>
<p>Eva Ziltener</p> <p>Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Finding My Voice(s): A Personal SLA Narrative</p> <p>Eva grew up trilingual and now speaks five languages. Her new challenge is learning Turkish. This presentation is a personal reflection on language learning.</p>
<p>Roma Ilnyckyj</p> <p>Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Rethinking “Whiteness”: Privilege and the Acquisition of Chinese</p> <p>This presentation explores some experiences of white learners of Chinese in China. Through an analysis of one account of exclusion, alternatives to traditional conceptions of “whiteness” and “marginalization” are proposed.</p>
<p>Richard Hoogendoorn</p> <p>English Bridge Program, Simon Frasier University</p>	<p>Attending is Mandatory</p> <p>As students become aware of and implement the attending skills of a given culture, they will be more successful in interacting with the native speakers of that culture.</p>
<p>Ella Lester</p> <p>Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>Languages, Attachments and Identities: A Womyn’s Story of Taipei</p> <p>This study explores issues of multiple identities and attachments in learning Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) through the writing and analysis of an autobiographical narrative.</p>
<p>Dean Mellow</p> <p>Linguistics/First Nations Studies, Simon Frasier University</p>	<p>Fostering diversity: Toward a non-colonialist approach to Indigenous language education</p> <p>Emergentist and usage-based approaches to applied linguistics may be useful for a non-colonialist approach to Indigenous language education, as illustrated in learner language and materials development in Anihshiniimowin, Halkomelem, and Tsilhqut’in.</p>
<p>Kris Mirski</p> <p>English Language Institute, University of British Columbia</p>	<p>English for Academic Purposes in a Global, Multicultural World</p> <p>A new advanced level integrated skills course in English for Academic Purposes developed at the English Language Institute, UBC takes into consideration the changing student population, its multicultural and multilingual nature, the necessity for learner independence, and an interdisciplinary approach to learning.</p>

Appendix B:

Abstracts of Guest Speakers in 2010-2011

Raising and Challenging Myths of Intercultural Communication in Writing

May 14, 2010

Presented by Dr. Janet Giltrow (Department of English, UBC), Dr. Ryuko Kubota (Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC), Dr. Herbert Rosengarten (Writing Clinic, UBC), and Dr. Ling Shi (Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC).

Myths of understanding (Giltrow)

Bakhtin referred to the “myth of perfect understanding” in monolingual societies, pointing to the diversity of “spheres of activity” even within a culture. Confronting the myth with cross-cultural settings, this presentation briefly sketches three scenes of imperfect understanding—one historical, two contemporary—in cross-cultural communication. Without proposing any single ideal for mutual understanding, or for teaching and learning, this presentation identifies features which distinguish these scenes of activity from one another: different practices, attitudes, recognitions.

A critical approach to culture in cross-linguistic writing (Kubota)

Contrastive rhetoric is an area of research that investigates how culture might influence the ways in which written texts are structured. Although this inquiry has drawn teachers’ attention to cultural influence on students’ writing in a second language, it has tended to reinforce cultural stereotypes. Traditional assumptions of contrastive rhetoric are questioned by a postmodern view that regards culture as diverse, dynamic, and sociopolitically constructed especially in light of cultural, linguistic, and academic globalization.

Great expectations: Writing at the graduate level (Rosengarten)

How well should we expect international graduate students to read, write, and speak in English? Despite achieving the proficiency standards required for admission, many arrive at UBC with very limited English skills, unprepared for the various writing tasks that face them in the course of their degree programs and research. How should we best address these deficiencies? What kinds of writing should we expect them to master? What are the limits of the University’s responsibilities in such matters?

What is plagiarism? (Shi)

It is a myth that we know what constitutes plagiarism. Some students and scholars believe that words and ideas are shared. Comments from a group of students and instructors on an example of textual borrowing in student writing also illustrate conflicting views about appropriate and inappropriate textual borrowing. Writing pedagogy needs to adopt an explorative approach to negotiate various perceptions and practices.

Gender, Xenophobia, Cultural Stereotypes and the Teaching of Languages

October 1, 2010

Dr. Caroline Rieger (The Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies, UBC)

The rationalization of xenophobia, misogyny, or other hostile attitudes through stereotypes emphasizes how important it is to question stereotypes. Dr. Rieger will analyze some of the cultural stereotypes that we use or might be tempted to use in language classes and present learning activities that explore stereotypical views, question and discourage stereotyping and heighten cultural sensitivity.

The Intelligibility Construct: Issues and Research Findings

March 3, 2011

Dr. Murray Munro (Department of Linguistics, Simon Fraser University)

Although intelligibility is increasingly identified as a fundamental goal in L2 pronunciation teaching, application of this concept is not without controversy. Some recent commentary has even asserted that the term is nothing more than a buzzword with little practical significance. However, interest in this very central aspect of language communication has a long history. Over a century ago, Henry Sweet's guide to practical language study made numerous references to it, and ever since, it has been of interest not only to language teachers, but also to a wide range of researchers and practitioners in the speech and communication sciences. Intelligibility is almost always seen as a basic requirement in human interaction, while the costs of *unintelligibility* range from minor inconvenience to matters of life or death. Moreover, a focus on intelligibility has important repercussions for language teaching, social interaction, identity, and even human rights. Yet defining the concept and determining its underpinnings has posed major challenges for researchers. This talk will survey some of the key research findings on intelligibility and its relation to speech production and comprehension. It will highlight the difficulties in operationalizing and assessing intelligibility as we strive to establish the most effective ways of achieving it.

Appendix C:

Abstracts of Research Presentations

How do we equip volunteers to facilitate ESL learning?

BC TEAL 2010 Conference, Vancouver (May 1, 2010)

Presented by Denis Brisebois (UBC Learning Exchange), John Nevens (UBC Learning Exchange), Mark Smith (UBC Learning Exchange), and Angelika Sellick (on behalf of the CILS Research Committee)

Abstract: For the past six years, the UBC *Learning Exchange* ESL Conversation Facilitator Training Program has been training volunteers to facilitate free English conversation classes in Vancouver's downtown eastside. The program's approach to training is unique in that it makes a distinction between *facilitating* and *teaching*; in other words, it aims to be a model of a peer-facilitated (as opposed to teacher-led) learning environment. A review of the literature suggests that this program is made further unique through its acceptance of volunteers who come from a diverse range of socio-economic, educational, health, age, and language backgrounds, including individuals for whom English is not their first language. Data collected during a recent study (through group interviews, observations, and questionnaires) suggests that significant learning occurs during the training workshops through the organic and spontaneous sharing of personal characteristics, skills, and experiences amongst the volunteers. This finding will be explored using the lens of *communities of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991). During the presentation, volunteer facilitators will share some of their experiences during the training workshops, particularly in regards to the exchange of learning which occurred and how it has impacted them inside and outside the ESL conversation classroom.

Key Strengths of an Innovative Volunteer Training Program

Proposal Accepted in March 2011

CAUCE 2011 Conference, Toronto (June 2011)

Will be presented by Ken Reeder, Andrew Scales, and Angelika Sellick on behalf of the CILS research committee

Abstract: For the past six years, the UBC Learning Exchange has hosted the CAUCE award-winning ESL Conversation Facilitator Training Program which prepares volunteers to facilitate free English conversation classes in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. This case study explores some of the key components of the program's innovation and success. A review of the literature suggests that its innovative nature stems partly from the intake of volunteers from a diverse range of socio-economic, educational, health, age, and language backgrounds. Preliminary analysis of interview, focus group, and observation data collected during the ten-month study involving 17 participants yielded several key findings. First, the program's approach to training was unique in that it emphasized a distinction between *facilitating* and *teaching*, and this was actively modeled during its peer-centered training workshops. Second, significant learning occurred through the volunteers' organic contributions of personal characteristics, skills, and life experiences. Third, the sponsoring university had an integral role in maintaining the success of the program, but this role was not without its tensions. The findings will be interpreted by

drawing on an *appreciative inquiry* model (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) and the appropriation of *Asset Based Community Development* (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) as a research strategy.