

More language training for newcomers results in need for more staff

by Stella Shepard

Statistics Canada reports that PEI experienced the fastest population growth in the Atlantic provinces from April to June 2009. It was PEI's highest second-quarter growth rate since 1978. The 0.53 percent increase was partly due to an increase in the number of immigrants.

The following information gives a snap shot of the increased activities at a number of language training sites across the province as a result of more immigrants coming to PEI.

Helen Green is Vice-President of Marketing with **Study Abroad Canada**. She started the Charlottetown-based language school with one classroom in 1995. Over the years, she has actively recruited international students to PEI. Study Abroad Canada now has 14 classrooms and 18 full-time and part-time staff who are certified as Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL).

"International students and new Canadians want to improve their English for personal, academic or job-related purposes," says Helen. "There is a demand for more Teachers of English as a Second Language at Study Abroad Canada. We recently hired five full-time ESL teachers. We will continue to hire as needed."

TESL training

To apply for certification under the TESL Canada National Recognition Standards, applicants must compete a 100-hour theory course and a 20-hour practicum, including 10 hours of classroom observation and 10 hours of teaching.

"Study Abroad Canada offers TESL training," says Helen. "Applicants must have successfully completed their undergraduate degree from a recognized university to be eligible to apply for this training and certification with TESL Canada."

Services for newcomers at UPEI

English Academic Preparation (EAP) is an intensive language program that provides non-English-speaking students with the language skills and confidence to ensure their success at UPEI.

"UPEI actively recruits international students," says **Cathy Gillan**, Coordinator of English Academic program at UPEI. About 10 percent of the university population is from outside Canada.

"After international students arrive on campus, an English assessment determines what combination of English language courses and credit courses is right for them. EAP is a bridging program that allows individuals to begin working toward a degree while perfecting their English skills."



Having fun while learning English and Canadian culture is part of the daily classroom activity at Study Abroad Canada. From left: Lucky Wen of China, Victoria Bloom of Israel, Susan Hawkins, teacher, XiLin Li of China, Yu Ying Lee of Taiwan, Helen Green, Vice-President of Marketing with Study Abroad Canada, and Lilia Li of China.

"We recently hired 14 part-time EAP instructors," says Cathy. "This is up by about 30 percent over last year in response to the growing international and newcomer population at UPEI."

"A Bachelor of Education is required to teach English to international students. We have also been fortunate to hire teachers who have advanced degrees in combination with TESL certification and experience teaching international students."

Provincial language services for newcomer children

Janet Perry-Payne is the English as an Additional Language Program Administrator with the **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**. "Our mandate is to provide language assessment and language acquisition support for all newcomer children in the public education system who do not speak English or French in the home," says Janet.

"The **English as an Additional Language and French as an Additional Language (EAL and FAL)** Section of Child and Student Services was formed in 2007. Initial staff consisted of the Program Administrator, an Assessment Specialist and four EAL itinerant teachers. The section has grown because of the influx of immigrant families to PEI. This year, there are two Assessment Specialists, 21 itinerant EAL teachers, an EAL Counselling Specialist and a Cultural Awareness Specialist."

"A Bachelor of Education, a TESL certificate or some form of equivalent second language training, linguistics, or literacy are required to teach English to newcomers in the public education system," says Janet. "As well, EAL teachers should have experience working with students learning a new language. Teaching English to newcomers is very demanding and may require working with children at the same language proficiency level but from multiple grades.

EAL/FAL is a challenging but very rewarding field to be in right now. With the continuing trend of immigration to Prince Edward Island, it is our hope to maintain or perhaps even expand our current services."

LINC program at Holland College

The **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** program at Holland College helps newcomers develop communication skills through reading, speaking, listening and writing so that they can integrate into Canadian society. Language training is provided in levels one to eight, based on National Benchmark standards for adult immigrants who want to live and work in Canada.

"The LINC program has 17 classes and 18 instructors," says **Shawn MacDonald**, Coordinator of the LINC program. "In the last three years, there has been an increased number of newcomers enrolled in the LINC program. We have been able to meet the demand with highly qualified, experienced instructors. LINC instructors must be a graduate of the TESL program."

For more information about **Study Abroad Canada**, visit www.studyincanada.ca or contact **Helen Green** at 628-2379.

For more information about **English Academic Preparation (EAP)** at UPEI, contact **Cathy Gillan** at 894-2817.

For more information about teaching **English as an Additional Language** in the public education system, contact **Janet Perry-Payne** at 620-3735.

For more information about the **LINC** program, contact **Shawn MacDonald** at 629-4325.

For more information about **TESL Training**, visit www.tesl.ca

For more information about demographic growth on **Prince Edward Island**, visit www.statcan.gc.ca and click on **Population estimate**.

