



# A Busy Year!



The new school year is well underway and we are all very busy with our school programs. This past summer tow IHLA board members have had the opportunity to represent the association and present at the International Cultural Research Network Conference in Thessaloniki, Greece, in July. The theme of the conference was: Exploring Cultural Perspectives, and IHLA updated the organization and the international delegates on IHLA's mission and with a special focus on the ongoing support that our association provides to out teachers of second languages.

Two special professional development opportunities took place during this fall: the Intercultural and Second Language Council Annual Conference in Edmonton, and

the SAHLA Symposium, in Calgary.

This school year has kept the IHLA board busy planning a series of workshops and professional development opportunities for our member schools, beginning this December, which we invite you all to attend.

IHLA is also pleased to announce the release of a special DVD recording of a presentation that we hosted by Dr. Jim Cummins, on Multiliteracies, in Edmonton on May 13, 2006. IHLA current member schools will soon receive a complimentary copy of this presentation with a study guide. Those of you who are interested in obtaining a personal copy are invited to contact our office.

We are already planning for

our 4th Annual International Mother Language Day which will take place at City Hall on Saturday, February 24, 2007.

It is always a pleasure and honour to serve this enthusiastic and committed organization, and I wish you all the best this school year, and the upcoming festive season.

May all the teachers, students, parents and members of your international and heritage language communities spend the holiday season in peace, and in the spirit of celebration of diversity, harmony and joy.

Josephine Pallard

President



## 4th Annual International Mother Language Day

We are very happy to confirm that our association is already busy with the 4th Annual International Mother Language Day, which will take place at Edmonton City Hall on

**Saturday, February 24, 2007.**

Though the format of our celebration will remain the same as in the past years, the date will not coincide with any long weekend engagement.

We hope this change will ensure an even greater attendance by all member

schools.

Read more about how you can participate inside this issue.



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### Special points of interest:

- Register your school for the Leadership Program to qualify for funds for your school
- Register the new Professional Development Courses for the 2007 winter session. Call our office.
- The IHLA website has changed locations: now you can find us at [www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca)



2006-2007 IHLA executive board of Directors.

If you wish to contact any of our board members and office personnel please e-mail us at: [ihla@telus.net](mailto:ihla@telus.net).



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## IHLA Updates

*News and information on activities on international and heritage languages education locally, around the province, Canada and worldwide.*



- Connection—The Information for Teachers of Alberta has just issued its latest updates. Visit them at [www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection](http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/connection) and get “connected”.
- For more information on the Languages Initiative you can also visit the website: [www.education.gov.ab.ca/languages/](http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/languages/)
- The ISLC Annual Conference took place at the Westin Hotel in Edmonton, on October 27-28, 2006. The theme of this year’s conference was: “Language and Culture...Our Future”. IHLA delegates attended various sessions and IHLA presented a brief update on its activities at the conference as well. A great deal of information and networking took place at the conference and IHLA would be glad to share this information with any interested

member. Please contact the office if you wish to know more. We will be happy to provide you with further details.

- The Language Research Centre (LRC) of the University of Calgary is proud to announce the release of a new video on the advantage of learning a second language. The title of the video is : Advantage for Life. More information about this video can be retrieved at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/lrc/>
- SAHLA held its symposium in Calgary, on November 4, 2006.
- IHLA is proud to announce its second Annual Leadership Program for all its member schools. All schools have been contacted by the IHLA office about the program details and all who wish to participate are expected to attend the first meeting on December 12, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. at the IHLA office.
- Professional Development courses will run for the winter 2007 session. All schools have been contacted about these opportunities. If you want more information contact the IHLA office.
- The 4th Annual International Mother Language Day will be held at City Hall in Edmonton, on Saturday, February 24, 2007. mark your calendar and attend this important event.
- The IHLA website has been updated and has now a new home: [www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca) The old address will still be working for a while. Come and visit us and let us know what you think.
- Look out for a great professional development presentation by the staff of Gabriela Mistral on curriculum for Spanish language education. More info to come.





IHLA is proud to continue a very special series in its newsletter publication: Articles written for us by Dr. Olenka Bilash, Coordinator of Second Languages and International Education at the Faculty of Education, Secondary Education, University of Alberta, and a long-time supporter of IHLA.

## So you want to make a change in your school – your chances of success are based on your *Community of Practice*

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We all live, work and play in social settings or groups. We live in groups called families, we work in groups called crews, offices, sections, departments, staff, schools or classes and we play in groups called clubs, leagues or teams. Each of these groups can also be described as a 'community'. Each community has its own informal rules and practices. Some families rise at 6 am, others at 7. In some families parents make breakfast for their children. In others, children make breakfast for their parents. In some schools teachers are called by their family names, in other by their first name. In some schools children sit in rows, in others they sit in groups of four. In some dance groups dancers rent their costumes, in others they buy them, in still others they are allowed to use them free of charge.

By looking at our school or classroom as a community we can more easily see how it changes over time and who influences it. Communities are organized formally and informally and people within them have varying degrees of influence. Sometimes the person with the highest rank in the unit or community has the most influence in some matters while someone with a lower rank has more influence in other matters. For example, the school principal may have the responsibility for completing and submitting formal documents to funders but the teacher with the best sense of humour may have the most influence over all members of the school!

In the 1990's two researchers, Lave and Wenger, revealed important characteristics of communities.

Communities are a *joint enterprise* as understood and continually renegotiated by its members. People come together for a purpose. They express their purpose through goals, objectives, missions and constitutions. Over time the purpose changes to meet the needs and interests of the new members. Sometimes the change is radical and groups separate from one another and give themselves new names. Sometimes it is slow and subtle. There is a place for all types of change as long as it meets the needs of its members.

Communities function according to a *mutual engagement* that binds members together into a social entity. How people interact in order to meet the goals, purposes or missions of their group can be governed by formal and informal rules. Formal meetings may follow Roger's Rule of Orders, especially when it comes to matters of voting about how money will be spent or who will take on leadership positions. Informal meetings may be guided by the courtesy of not interrupting others when they speak and giving everyone equal opportunity to express their own ideas. Both formal and informal meetings may reserve a special place for those seen to add special insights to the community, such as former leaders or long time members with special skills or knowledge.

Communities create and produce based on a *shared repertoire* of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time. People fit into a community because they know how it operates and how to make the best of what is available. The school that says 'we have no money' and means 'therefore we can not do anything creative' has a shared sense of defeat. The school that says 'we have no money' and means 'but we can do THIS much' has a shared sense of optimism. To get anything done requires time, energy and reward. The reward may be personal satisfaction, renewed optimism or victory over the limited financial resources.

Members who are listened to or followed in a community such as a heritage language school or classroom can be described as being at the centre of influence. They have good connections with most members of the community, know the routines, traditions, resources and values of the community and already have a reputation of being successful. If they propose a change in direction they may be listened to.

Members who are new to the community and not yet able to influence it can be described as being at the peripheries of participation in the community. No matter what position they hold, they may not have the support of its members. When an authority imposes change from the top down that change may not be very popular or accepted. When ideas for change come from members of the community or the grassroots it may be more quickly accepted and adopted.

Because new people are always joining a community (whether by birth into a family or hiring of new staff or because of a promotion to a new responsibility) and leaving it (by retirement, relocation or lay off) it is always changing. We say that new members are apprentices in the community. They are learning to operate within the rules of the system. Because learning these practices takes time, only when one has the support of one's community does one gain the opportunity to have influence. That's at least one reason why change happens slowly. . . Without a community that shares values and practices an individual will have difficulty sustaining personal change and impacting others.

This long introduction of background information is designed to help you reflect on your community – your heritage language school, your place in it and the mechanisms that help it change. Every member of a community influences and changes it so the more active you are the better chance you have of impacting it. If, for various reasons, you have not been able to be so active, then you can still provide support to those who are by acknowledging their hard work and encouraging their creative contribution.

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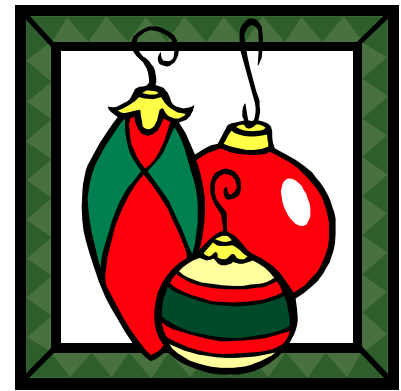
Lave, J. and E. Wenger

1991 *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



For more information about **COMMUNITY of PRACTICE**:

<http://www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lss.shtml>



# December 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Schedule of Events

- December 7 — A special Tribute to Sab Roncucci, IHLA founder
- December 11 — Oral Histories— Recollections of IHLA achievements
- December 12 - Leadership Program (all schools intersted ) at the IHLA office, 7:30 p.m.
- December 15 - IHLA Board Christmas Meeting.
- For the January dates refer to the school update insert available with this newsletter.



**DO NOT FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR THE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM!  
CALL THE IHLA OFFICE AND REGISTER TODAY.**



The IHLA website is now available at: [www.ihla.ca](http://www.ihla.ca).  
The old domain ([www.nahla.net](http://www.nahla.net)) will still take you to the right sight.



## INTERNATIONAL & HERITAGE LANGUAGES ASSOCIATION

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*Established in 1978 and formerly known as NAHLA, IHLA is a non-profit organization that actively promotes cross-cultural understanding through heritage/international language instruction and education. IHLA serves as the umbrella body for approximately 25 heritage schools involved in the teaching of international and heritage languages in Central and Northern Alberta. The Association represents all levels of language instruction and education for over 32 languages and 12,000+ students of international languages outside the public school system in Alberta.*

*IHLA's primary objectives include:*

*supporting and promoting international and heritage language education*

*assisting in the development of international and heritage language curriculum, teaching resources and materials*

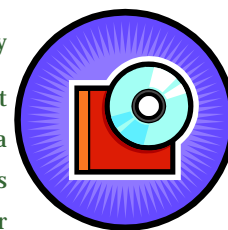
*supporting international and heritage language teacher training and skill development*

*IHLA supports the view that international language education increases the level and respect and appreciation for multiculturalism and the diversity of Canada's peoples.*

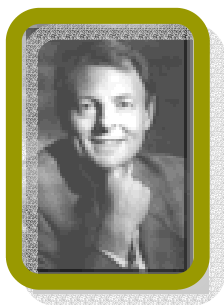


## A Special Presentation Available at IHLA

**We** wish to share with you a very important project that IHLA has been undertaken this summer. On May 13, 2006 IHLA hosted a very special presentation by Dr. Jim Cummins, on Multiliteracies, at the NorQuest College in Edmonton. IHLA received permission by Dr. Cummins to video tape the session and is releasing a DVD with a reading guide. All current active members of IHLA will receive a complimentary copy of this presentation (one per school). Additional copies are available at the office upon request (call or e-mail us for more information).



*Do not miss this opportunity to obtain your own copy* of this very interesting presentation and reflections of the current perspective on Multiliteracies in Canada.



Dr. Jim Cummins has written and presented many works on second language learning and literacy development. To find out more about Dr. Cummins, visit his website at:

<http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/>