

IHLA NEWSLETTER



INTERNATIONAL AND HERITAGE LANGUAGES ASSOCIATION

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of IHLA February 22, 2008

Madam President, Distinguished guests, IHLA Board Members, Members of IHLA, Guests

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to stand before you to conclude the program for this 30th Anniversary Celebration. Together we can look back with a sense pride in our successes, and look forward to new challenges and accomplishments.

In particular on behalf of the Board of Directors of the International Heritage Languages Association and all of our Heritage Language Schools, I wish to express our deepest gratitude to you, our distinguished guests, for being here today and for offering your greetings and messages of inspiration. We are encouraged by your acknowledgement and support of the very important role that Community Language Schools play in promoting cross-cultural acceptance and understanding.

We are equally pleased that representatives of so many different Language Schools are in attendance today. The performers remind us again of the rich heritage we all so freely share, that the freedom to maintain our culture, our language and traditions does not divide us, but unites us in a society that values and understands diversity. We are all free to prosper and to contribute our skills and talents to a Canada that we love, and a Canadian society that fosters these wonderful opportunities.

In the words of Professor Olenka Bilash who during a recent IHLA workshop so eloquently stated, "The students

we teach today are the future leaders of our communities". They will be more effective, because in our language schools we are equipping them with the understandings, skills and tools that they will need to foster their own particular culture, while at the same time respecting, appreciating and understanding the culture of others. They will be role models in their respective communities. [...]

This is an exciting weekend for IHLA, for in addition to tonight's Gala event we are all looking forward to tomorrow's 5th Annual International Mother Language Day Celebrations at City Hall. We will be able to hear some special guests, visit the display tables of the various Community Schools and learn about their language and culture. We will also honor and acknowledge the award winners of the essay, slogan and poster contests. * As you may already know, the winning entry for this year's logo contest is "Words are colorful threads that seam the world together". [...]

And lastly, thanks to all of you for being such a good audience, and for this opportunity to speak to you. I bid you a Good Evening.

Nadia Kryschuk, Board of Directors

February 22, 2008

(This is part of a speech that Nadia gave at the conclusion of the 30th IHLA Anniversary Gala)



Gil Vicente students who performed the "Three Little Pigs" story in Portuguese during the 30th IHLA Anniversary Gala, on February 22, 2008 at the Italian Cultural



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5TH INTERNATIONAL M LANGUAGE DAY AT CITY HALL

On February 23, 2008 IHLA celebrated the 5th Annual International Mother Language Day at City Hall, in Edmonton.

A crowd of about 500 people gathered together to celebrate languages and cultures from all corners of the world that are represented by our member schools and communities. Here a sample of pictures of the event. Refer to the IHLA website for more pictures and the program information and details.

Mark February 21, 2009 as the next date for this wonderful event - we wish to see you all there next year!



Students dressed in their cultural attire in the audience



Students and their teacher from the Korean language school receive their certificates



Students from the Ivan Franco school perform a skit about speaking different languages.



Headway school students prepare to sing the Canadian national anthem in Punjabi.

On Leadership*

Honoured dignitaries, IHLA founders and members, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to be able to attend the thirtieth anniversary of IHLA. Having been present at the 10th, 15th, 20th, and 25th anniversaries I also hope that I will be able to celebrate IHLA's 40th, 50th, 60th and 70th celebrations as well!!

It is said that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. This evening we are here to honor a whole – an organization whose name has changed over the decades but whose whole - whose mission and *raison d'être* - have remained constant. The mission of the Alberta Ethnic Language Teachers Association - AELTA, the Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association – NAHLA, and now the International and Heritage Language Association - IHLA has been to serve a unique purpose in society – the maintenance and development of a nascent Canadian resource – language - and to contribute to the recognition of bilingualism, trilingualism and multilingualism in society and its development among our youth.

By partnering with numerous government and community organizations over the decades, AELTA - NAHLA - IHLA has lobbied and served heritage language teachers through professional development workshops, seminars, certificate programs and university courses for three decades. To do so has called for an unrelenting spirit and conviction and on the occasion of this anniversary beckoned me to pause and take stock. As I reflect on this whole, this organization known as IHLA, I must honour its founding fathers and mothers, many of whom have already been mentioned and several who are here with us today, as well as all who have continued to take on the responsibility for its mission. They embodied courage, foresight and conviction. As John Kenneth Galbraith states in *The Age of Uncertainty*:

All of the great leaders have one characteristic in common: it is the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of the people in their time.

The IHLA founding parents did indeed confront a need of the times – a need for heritage language communities to rally together and make the labour and love of each language community a legacy for all Canadians.

In pausing to take stock the question that comes to me is: to what can we attribute IHLA's success? what has it taken to lead? A quick perusal of leaders in the world offers us insight into why IHLA has succeeded. I have selected seven characteristics of leadership that match IHLA and the wise words of nine world class leaders.

The first and necessary characteristic is **vision**. In the words of Theodore M. Hesburgh, an American Roman Catholic priest and educator who was devoted to public service: "***The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet.***"

As I have already stated, the founding parents of AELTA-NAHLA-IHLA had vision. They knew that there was a need to unite as different ethnic communities to support one another's common cause. They also knew that this would mean double the work – everyone would still have to remain active in their own ethnic communities and keep them advancing forward as well as making a contribution to sharing with one another in order to move the unique role of heritage language schools forward on Canada's multicultural agenda.

Second, a leadership organization must have a **pioneering spirit**. Composed of pioneers – immigrants to Canada or children of immigrants, IHLA's founders and continued membership recognize that a new social and political landscape meant learning new ways to express values of freedom, justice, and



VISION

**PIONEERING
SPIRIT**

*This is the text of Dr. Olenka Bilash special address at the 30th Anniversary Gala for IHLA

On Leadership (cont.)

equality for which so many of them had worked so hard in their former homelands. They knew that there is much to learn and that only through courage could they succeed. In the words of the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

And we here today are both following that trail and creating new paths for our communities.

The third important characteristic of leading is **modeling**. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

We must become the change we want to see.

IHLA members know the significance of being the change they want to see, of modeling what they believe is important. They are themselves at least bilingual, raise their children to be at least bilingual and biliterate and nurture language learning, cultural understanding and intercultural dialogue among the youth in their own schools and communities.

The fourth characteristic that great leaders talk about and IHLA embodies is the **building of networks and communities**. In this room we see two layers of community. At each table people are joined by others from their own language background. As I walked around the room at the beginning of this evening I heard many of these language communities. The second layer of community is that which connects people from these tables – this organization known as IHLA. As the American civil rights activist and Baptist minister Reverend Jesse Jackson put it:

Leadership has a harder job to do than just choose sides. It must bring sides together.

The fifth characteristic of leadership is **hope**. IHLA is an organization that since its inception has brought hope to its membership communities. As heritage language instructors deal with more and more diversity – from children who do not speak the language of their parents at home to those who are fluent in oral and written language - and face the invisible pressure of becoming anglicized in mainstream daily life, heritage language instructors face the challenge of instilling in them a love of something they cherish. In this poorly paid 'giving' endeavour these teachers also need to 'receive'. From IHLA they receive inspiration and hope: the hope that their labours will yield a bountiful harvest of language, culture and spirit in the next generation.

Yes, IHLA has been a leader for many new immigrants, especially women, who brought teaching credentials and experience with them from their mother countries, and needed to translate them into Canadian credentials. Napoleon Bonaparte has said that ***A leader is a dealer in hope***. IHLA has dealt hope to these teachers – hope for the value of their language, their future careers and that the values that they have can be passed on to future generations.

Sixth, strength. Let us not forget the important leadership characteristic of **strength** in the face of adversity. Over IHLA's 30 year history it has undergone difficult times as well: reductions in government grants, sometimes unstable leadership, the passing of good friends and along with them knowledge and wisdom. . . And this that IHLA has endured has been described well by Max DePree, laureate of the American National Business Hall of Fame: "***Leaders don't***

MODELING

BUILDING NETWORKS AND COMMUNITIES

HOPE



STRENGTH

On Leadership (cont.)

inflict pain. They bear pain."

In bearing pain IHLA as a leadership organization has demonstrated that what **"we call 'failure' is not the falling down, but the staying down"**, to quote the Academy Award-winning Canadian motion picture star Mary Pickford. IHLA has never failed for it has never stayed down. It has been able to respond to change brought about by technology, economics and politics by transforming its name, its mandate, its partners and its programs.

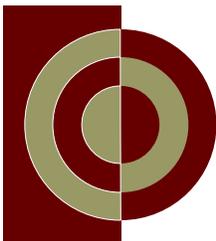
The final characteristic of leadership that I would like to mention today comes from the journalist and philosopher Walter Lippmann: a leader ***leaves behind him/her in other men [and women] the conviction and the will to carry on***. As we all know, IHLA's future is in this room and in our heritage language schools and it behooves us to carry on IHLA's mission – all of us, from politicians to advisors, from teachers to consultants, from school boards to governments. We must continue in the spirit of AELTA-NAHLA-IHLA's founding parents and demonstrate ongoing vision, pioneering spirit, modeling, networking across and between communities, hope, strength and courage. It is true, as writer and photographer James Baldwin has stated:

Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.

Thank you and once again, happy anniversary, IHLA!!

Dr. Olenka Bilash held special Leadership Sessions for IHLA schools during the 2007-08 school year, and she is a long-time supporter and friend of IHLA.

**DESIRE TO
CARRY ON**





Students performing a poem (left) and dancing a special cultural dance (above).



Students from the Korean language school read an excerpt from their essay, in Korean and in English.



Josephine Pallard, opens the day celebration with a special welcome to all gathered at City Hall.



Students from Polish language community schools receive their certificates.



Special dancers watch interested what goes on during the celebration.

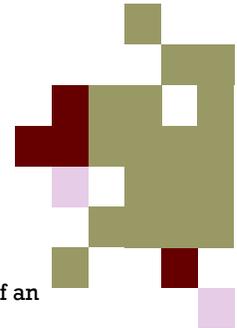


IHLA UPDATES

- **IHLA** offered the following sessions and **workshops** during the 2007-08 school year:
 - Leadership
 - TOEFL Preparation
 - Power Point session
 - Resource Building Session
 - Unit Building session
 - Foundation in the Learning and Teaching Languages
 - Evaluating and Assessing Learners
 - Theoretical Session on Heritage and Second Languages
 - Presentation on International and Heritage Language Education

These sessions were offered free of charge to all IHLA member teachers and also open to the general public (public school teachers) and were well received by participants.

- **IHLA schools** also participated in the 4th **annual leadership course**, which culminated in the presentation and organization of the 5th Annual International Mother Language Day celebration. School who participated in the program also
- applied and received funds to support their programs at the school level.
- **IHLA** is completing the submission of an **Interim Report to Alberta Education** for the IHLA Grant. Details of the report will be shared at the Annual General Meeting.
- **IHLA** continues to keep **updated** with national and international organizations for second language education (CLA; CASLT, ACTFL, ICRN) - contact the IHLA office for updates that we can share with you.
- **The Eritrean Language School of Edmonton** will be submitting its **locally developed program of studies** for the Tigrigna language and Eritrean culture, 15-25-35 to be approved and implemented for the 2008-09 school year. Good luck and congratulations to the school committee for their hard work!
- Two IHLA **Board of Directors** will be **attending the ICRN International Conference**, Exploring Cultural Perspectives in Antalya, Turkey, on June 11-15, 2008.



2008-09 IHLA SCHOOLS LEARNING FOCUS

Come to the IHLA AGM to learn more! :)

IHLA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All IHLA Member schools and IHLA members are invited to attend the
Annual General Meeting on Monday, May 26, 2008

At the IHLA office (3rd Floor - 10010 105 Street) in Edmonton

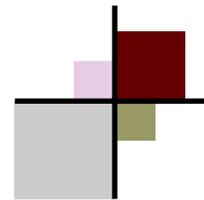
From 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Schools should be represented by at least two members, preferably an administrator and teacher.

RSVP

IHLA office by calling 780-428-5510 or e-mail: ihla@telus.net by
May 23, 2008.

Refreshments will be served during the meeting.



Did you know...?

Mandarin is the most spoken first language in the world, with over 870 million speakers, followed by **Spanish**, with 322 million speakers and by **English** with 309 million.

Check additional numbers on world languages at:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_languages_by_number_of_native_speakers#Top_20

To become an **IHLA member**, visit us at

www.ihla.ca

IHLA memberships provide a wide range of advantages and you can enhance your network of language educators at the community level.

IHLA members are also connected to provincial, national and international organizations to promote international and heritage language and culture education at all levels.

The Value of reading aloud in Heritage Language Development

Dr. Olenka Bilash



In many heritage language (HL) classes teachers strictly follow a textbook, often produced in a land where the HL is the majority language used for most oral and written communication. No matter how well organized and comprehensive such a textbook might be, its central place in a lesson can always be enhanced through supplemental resources. Children's literature or stories are an excellent example of supplemental resources which provide cultural content and increase variety and motivation in the classroom and can also be used in the home to enhance literacy development. This article will discuss the advantages of using children's literature in the HL classroom, especially in the form of read alouds, where such stories can be found and how they can be used.

Advantages of reading aloud

Listening to a story – the sounds of the language, the evolution of what happens to a character – and seeing the visuals – either in the book or in one's own mind – are worthwhile ends in and of themselves. However, listening to stories also has additional advantages: it

- Helps children become familiar with language patterns (grammar, phonics)
- Exposes children to stories that they might not be able to read on their own but are able to understand
- Exposes children to a broad range of vocabulary that they might not otherwise hear
- Helps children develop interest in reading
- Helps children with learning differences to engage in a story more easily
- Teaches children about life, values, and many different topics
- Shows children a variety of illustrations which makes the reading more engaging for children
- Builds family-child bonding
- Leads to reading success.

From this holistic and intimate experience with books and a significant caregiver (parent or teacher) many children seemed to learn much about reading in their mother tongue.



Holdaway (1979), an American researcher working in Australia, found that pre-schoolers who had favorite stories and had been read to daily in the first 5 years of their lives, more easily learned to read and write when they began school. These children had usually 'read' (looked at and heard, following each page along with the parent or teacher) from 180-300 stories and had some that they had heard over and over again. These favorite stories confirm the value of reading some stories to older children in a HL classroom context many times. Often children will listen the first time and then join in the next time the story is read. They enjoy the familiarity and may begin by completing the end of sentences after having heard it several times. . . and eventually, after having heard it many times, remember the entire story.

From this holistic and intimate experience with books and a significant caregiver (parent or teacher) many children seemed to learn much about reading in their mother tongue. When the HL is spoken in the home or when parents have a command of the HL then this same approach can easily be replicated. If the HL is not available in the home then teachers can still follow a similar approach in the classroom. By reading stories aloud and adding intonation, visuals, voice changes, gestures and short explanations the teacher can convey the meaning of a story that the children would not be able to read by themselves. If the students can see and hear the text being read they can also pick up or

The Value of reading aloud in Heritage Language Development (Cont.)

acquire phonetic clues, language patterns (especially of high frequency phrases), new vocabulary, and a sense of the values of the culture.

Building family relationships

Reading aloud at home also builds stronger relationships between all family members. Stories offer children opportunities to ask questions and thus help parents point them in the right direction. In reading aloud parents act as role models of fluent reading. Knowledge of stories contributes to deep cultural understanding as well as the development of logical thinking, especially if parents stop at times to talk about the story and ask questions such as "What do you think will happen next?", "Why do you think the character did that?", "How do you think (name of the character) feels about what happened?", "What would you do in this situation?" Comparing responses between family members opens children's minds to a multiplicity of viewpoints, too!

Selecting stories

Not every story written in the HL for a native speaker is appropriate for a HL class in Canada so select your stories carefully. Pattern stories (such as those of Eric Carle or Bill Martin Jr. have been translated into many languages) are particularly appropriate for young and beginner level students. The wordless picture book stories of Eric Carle, Mercer Mayer, or John Burningham can also appeal to young learners. These books will reflect the familiar North American world view of many HL learners. However, the latter requires someone to elicit language from the children, including words that many beginner HL learners have not yet learned.

Books from the HL culture are the obvious choice for most read alouds because the illustrations and story structure, dilemmas and resolutions reflect (and teach) the culture. However, such books can also be hard to find. Thus, as a HL teacher use your knowledge to help your school develop a collection of children's books for your own use as well as that of parents. Suggestions for developing a school collection include:

- ask community members to donate books
- contact libraries in countries where your language is spoken for lists of favorite children's books
- ask community members who will be traveling to places where the language is spoken to acquire books for the library (and reimburse them with pleasure).
- contact family members who live abroad and have children for their recommendations of favorite stories
- review books published by Multilingual Matters (<http://www.bilingualfamilynewsletter.com/>)
- ask businesses in your community to donate funds to purchase books organizing fundraising for book purchases.

How can stories be used

Any activity involving reading should be thought of in three parts: pre-reading, reading and post-reading. Pre-reading Before using a story decide what your purpose is and how the story can be used to elicit an output from your students (during the post-reading



Stories offer children opportunities to ask questions and thus help parents point them in the right direction.





The Value of reading aloud in Heritage Language Development (cont.)

stage). Stories read for pleasure can create **positive memories and attitudes** toward the HL. Students can record the titles of stories they have heard as well as how much they liked them. Please see Appendix A. By planning backwards and thinking about the story as a *catalyst* for some output or proving it activity, more language learning can be gained in the classroom.

Thus in the classroom context it is useful to have a fit between the story and an end task that will be connected to the story. For example, follow up projects that demonstrate comprehension include writing a diary entry about an experience in the story, writing a timeline about the events in a story, writing the next chapter or new ending to the story or drawing a picture of the setting in which the story is imagined to have taken place.

The greatest value of the pattern story is the number of times a story pattern can be adapted without feeling bored!

Pattern stories are also well received in HL classrooms and can be followed up by students' creative adaptation of the model. They provide a good model of new information, language, patterns and a model for a valuable output that children can emulate. The new story is a product, evidence or proof of what the children have learned. The greatest value of the pattern story is the number of times a story pattern can be adapted without feeling bored! Holdaway's research about favorite stories pointed to the significant role that pattern stories played in developing children's reading appetite.

An example of a pattern story based on Bill Martin Jr.'s *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* :

Brown Bear, Brown Bear

What do you see?

I see a purple horse

Looking at me.



Purple horse, Purple horse

What do you see?

I see a green fish

Looking at me.



A few tips to remember when reading aloud to your students:

There is no need to teach children to read every word in the HL in order to use stories in the classroom. Children can easily learn the patterns or parts of the story aurally. With good preparation by the teacher (using gestures, props, visuals and rhythm) children can understand stories and even repeat some parts of them.

It is important to be aware of the attention span of the children, and to expect a wide range of times that different children are willing to sit and listen. Just having learners sit and listen to the HL story may also be an output!

In order to help children develop the understanding that books are written and illustrated by real people (even though they cannot see them), always read the title of the book, author and illustrator before beginning to read the story to your students.

As you read the story use an interesting voice or voices to represent different characters. This will add fun to the experience for both the teacher and students.



The Value of reading aloud in Heritage Language Development (cont.)

Since some chapters or stories may need two readings to get through, read a manageable chunk in each sitting. If children enjoy the story they will look forward to the next part.

Pausing to ask and answer questions while reading a story can help a teacher check for comprehension. Questions may range from predicting what might happen next to the 5 Ws to more personalized referential questions that ask learners for their own response to the story.

The pleasure of predicting, especially if the 'guess' is accurate, serves to motivate children.

Over time choose a variety of genres of stories to read to your students: myths, legends, mystery, historical fiction, science fiction, classics, biographies, fairy tales, etc. This will whet children's appetites for the wealth of book genres that awaits them as they become more fluent and more mature.

Closing

HL teachers can help children develop literacy in the HL in two significant ways. First, by making read alouds a part of weekly lessons. Second, by informing and encouraging parents to read aloud to their children daily or as often as possible. By scouting for possible HL books that parents could read you will help parents (and their children) to begin this important habit. Don't forget to remind them of the Multilingual biblioservice with Alberta's public libraries! The more books that children and parents can choose from the better. For more information about reading aloud please check out the following websites:

<http://www.littleonesreadingresource.com/positive-effects-of-reading-aloud-to-children.html>

<http://www.helium.com/items/845614-reading-aloud-children-offer>

http://homeschooling.suite101.com/article.cfm/summer_reading_list

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Why-is-Reading-Aloud-So-Important-for-Dads?&id=992255>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/reading-value-of-reading-engagement-for-children>

Dr. Olenka Bilash is Professor of Second Language Education at the University of Alberta.

References

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Huck, C., Hepler, S., Hickman, J. and Kiefer, B (1993) *Children's Literature in the Elementary School*.

Trelease, J. (2001) *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. New York: Penguin Books.



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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 36 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.

Reading Corner

This section is dedicated to **Language Learning Tips** for all. Follow the links below and enjoy some suggestions on how to best learn and teach a language. The links in this issue focus on reading in second language classes.

- **Hooked on Phonics** - Learn to Read - <http://hooked-on-phonics.com/DisplayDemo.html>
- **Reading in a second language**, Author: H. Catherine Walter - <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/goodpractice.aspx?resourceid=1420>
- **Insights into Second Language Reading, A Cross-Linguistic Approach** - samples - <http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=052183662X&ss=exc>
- **The Canadian Modern Language Review** / La revue canadienne des langues vivantes, Volume 61, Number 1, September/septembre 2004 Special Issue / Numéro Spécial: **Research with Second Language Readers: New Directions** / La Recherche en lecture en langue seconde: nouvelles tendances Guest Editors / Rédactrices : Patricia M. Raymond and / et Claudette Cormaire
- **Development of Reading Efficiency in First and Second Language**, Esther Geva, Ontario Institute in Education-University of Toronto <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=95832955>

