

# EnglishOnline

MANITOBA'S ADULT EAL LEARNING NETWORK

## Annual General Report

**2008 - 2009**

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## Message from the Board Chair...



Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The Board of Directors of English Online is proud to present its first annual general report. The fact that we are able to issue such a report marks an important milestone in English Online's history and in its efforts to take up full membership in the Manitoba EAL learning community. At the same time, the successes detailed in the following pages give us a chance to reflect on the journey and to appreciate the magnitude of what has been accomplished in just a few short months.

English Online's success has been achieved through hard work. Without the tireless efforts of our Executive Director, simply, we would not be here today. Day by day she shapes the organization in a way that creates legitimacy often without benefit of the familiar touchstones available to others in similar circumstances. Her skill and commitment speak to a future of possibility, one grounded in the belief that technology can be made to serve educational goals and that learner success is important.

English Online's success is also a testament to commitment. Our inaugural board of directors has embraced the English Online mission and has worked in unison to lay a solid foundation for success, often in the face of great uncertainty. Their intelligence and patience throughout and their willingness to keep the goal clear and in view has helped to make the successes real.

We must also recognize the commitment of our funding partner. Their support has given English Online the time to establish itself and to begin to deliver on the vision described almost three years ago. It is indeed gratifying to see a learning technology solution built for Manitobans... by Manitobans.

In this past year the Board has witnessed tremendous growth at English Online as you will see. From working to enhance our new online platform, to registering English Online's first learner, to engaging partner organizations in the transition to the new technology platform, this has truly been a year of firsts. There is no denying that English Online's message is spreading. What is, perhaps, more gratifying is that the message is resonating with our most important audience, language learners.

While the Board is strengthened by the many successes, it is also focused on the future, a future characterized by community, by learners, teachers and stakeholders coming together to build a learning environment and reach learning goals. The board of directors and I look forward to the challenges to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Nagle', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brendan Nagle  
Board Chair  
April, 2009

## Message from the Executive Director...



Dear Board Members, Funder and Colleagues,

I am excited by everything that has been achieved this year at English Online. It has been a wonderful opportunity to implement the vision of the Board in the areas of program delivery, service delivery and the resourceful use of funding. English Online, in its first year, has faced many challenges but also succeeded in developing the technological tools to deliver valued services to our critical user groups: EAL learners, EAL teachers and EAL administrators. I want to personally thank the ALT Branch and its staff for their funding, and all the EAL professionals with whom I have communicated over the past year for being so receptive to the launch of English Online. Your continued online participation ensures that English Online will continue to improve the quality of online delivery, technological capacity and learner support in the year to come. This has definitely been a year of 'firsts' for English Online. As we continue to develop our Online Learning Platform, English Online looks forward to your collaborative feedback to build better EAL learning experience for newcomers to Manitoba.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Briar Jamieson'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Briar Jamieson  
Executive Director

► **Board Members**

*Brendan Nagle, Chair*

*Kathy Knight, Vice Chair*

*Roberta Everson, Secretary*

*Amanda Kletke-Neufeld*

*Shannon MacFarlane*

*Margery Soloman*

*Allan Wise*

Message from the Board

Message from the Executive Director

Mission..... 1

Our First Year..... 2

Core Activities..... 3

Online Learning Platform (OLP)..... 4

Learners..... 5

Looking Forward to 2010..... 6

## English Online's Mission

*To develop an online EAL learning system that serves the English learning needs of immigrants across Manitoba, linking learners with new and existing online EAL learning resources, EAL institutions, Immigrant Service Organizations and community groups to improve access to effective EAL learning.*

English Online will help to connect people to each other – both online and in person. It will bring the best Manitoba language learning materials, people, resources and technology together to address learners' unique needs. Through English Online, personalized learning will be accessible to everyone, regardless of circumstance – at home, at work, in the community and at every level of learning required.



Immigrants to Manitoba and language learners in Manitoba will benefit from the wider range of learning opportunities provided by English Online including:

- Learning that is accessible anytime and anywhere;
- Resources that are developed to meet the needs of a wide range of language learners;
- Schedules that are flexible to accommodate work and family demands;
- Models of learning that are mindful of the need for online support and in-person support from other learners, community members, and EAL teachers.

English Online celebrated its first full fiscal year as of March 31, 2009. English Online has become established as an English as an Additional Language (EAL) service provider in the province of Manitoba. A focus on core organizational planning, the development of the Online Learning Platform (OLP) and the referral of learners from the Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre (WELARC) have been significant accomplishments.



Website



Postcard



Learner Login

### Our successes this year include:

- English Online's stewardship of the Canadian English for Foreign-Trained Professionals (CEFP).
- Training, support and maintenance of CEFP website.
- Acquisition of the Web domain name [www.myenglishonline.ca](http://www.myenglishonline.ca).
- Launch of initial self-directed EAL modules.
- Recruitment of an Executive Director.
- Inaugural monthly board meeting in November 2008.
- Budget amendment increase of \$80,000 from ALT and approval for current fiscal year.
- Stakeholder presentations to WELARC and the ALT Curriculum Branch and in the communities of McLeod, Stevenson-Britannia, and Winkler.
- Creation of communication materials targeted at EAL service providers and end-users.
- Website development of content, design and online usage protocols.
- Commencement of phase one of the Online Learning Platform construction.
- Roundtable discussions with CEFP users to aid transition to the new Online Learning Platform.
- Formation of a learner referral process with WELARC.
- Completed stakeholder research to ascertain needs of EAL teachers and learners.

## Staffing

The recruitment of an Executive Director for English Online was a priority at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Board and the Funder (ALT) both stipulated that the candidate should possess a Teaching English as a Second Language qualification, executive management skills and a technology background. The candidate, Briar Jamieson, was successfully hired into the position in October 2008.

## Operations

English Online co-locates its office space at the offices of Technologies for Learning Groups (TLG). The Executive Director established the initial program development, organized the inaugural board meeting, outsourced the technological needs, negotiated the staff insurance and benefits package and partnered with a contractor to develop English Online's promotional materials.

## Communications

English Online's online presence is a defining measure of our service capabilities for end-users. The website [www.myenglishonline.ca](http://www.myenglishonline.ca) went live in June 2008 housing the EAL content for CLB stage two learners. English Online has invested in a visually enhanced online presentation that demonstrates English Online's commitment to cultural inclusivity and accessible online learning.



## EAL Community

The Executive Director promoted English Online, as a new Manitoban nonprofit organization, to the EAL community. Introductory presentations were made to language assessors and teachers at WELARC, the McLeod Adult Learning Centre, Stevenson and Britannia, the Winnipeg School Division and in the community of Winkler. The Executive Director also delivered two successful introductory presentations at the Adult Language and Training (ALT) curriculum launch in February 2009.

Briar Jamieson,  
*Executive Director, English Online*

Briar Jamieson began her career working in human resources after completing a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Toronto. Working for Fraser Milner Casgrain, as a Human Resources Generalist, Briar excelled in the recruitment and orientation of new workers. Combining her strong communication skills with her passion for education, she completed both a TESL certificate and a Bachelor of Education program. Briar has had experience teaching adult EAL students in both the Toronto Catholic District School Board and at George Brown College. She has also taught remedial English at the secondary level to Inuktitut-speaking students in Iqaluit, Nunavut and pioneered an Aboriginal Entrepreneurship team that received national recognition by the Business Development Bank of Canada. Her strong involvement in the voluntary sector has included being a Human Resources advisor on the Japanese Social Services board in Toronto. In addition, Briar has served on the Iqaluit Literacy Council to promote Inuktitut as an indigenous language. Briar currently sits on the boards of two other non-profit organizations, the Manitoba Federation of Non-Profit Organizations and MOSAIC.

In Briar's current role as Executive Director of English Online, she envisions creating a Learner Support System that will actively engage all stakeholders including EAL teachers, Adult Education and Immigration Service program directors and most importantly newcomers to Manitoba who will benefit from increased access to EAL resources.

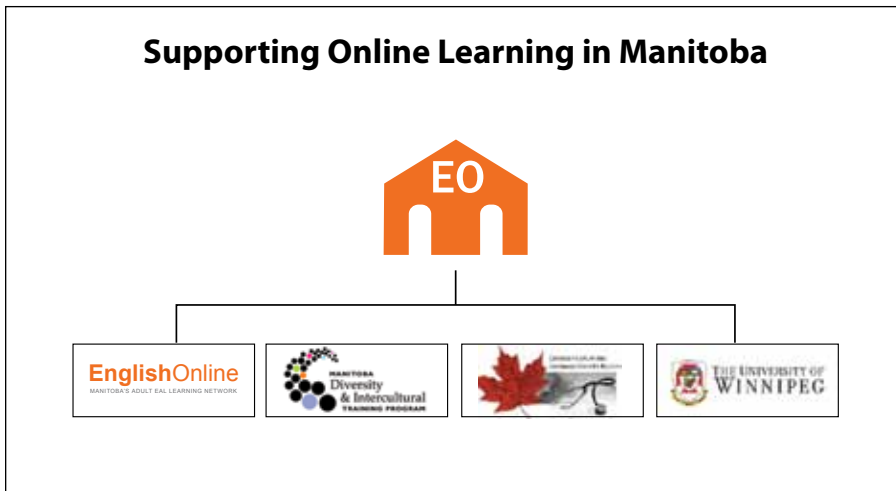
The OLP was a significant project for English Online this year. The Adult Language and Training (ALT) Branch, a department of Labour and Immigration Manitoba, approved additional funding to replace the legacy technology housed at www.cefp.ca with English Online’s OLP. English Online undertook this change to better respond to user needs and maintain the technology within Manitoba. The customization of the OLP is built on core technology generously contributed by Technologies for Learning Group.



The aim of Phase One of the OLP was to ensure the same functionalities of the legacy technology. These functionalities, or capabilities of English Online’s OLP, included the ability of instructors to upload lessons and post selection-type tests on the system. In addition, English Online can now post audience-specific announcements notices and discussions through customized login and navigation tools for three different EAL user groups: administrators, teachers and learners. The OLP, as a data measurement tool, will help EAL administrators seamlessly integrate their client data into ALT’s reporting requirements for the Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

### Supporting Online Learning in Manitoba

English Online’s mission has been strengthened through its collaboration with partners at the Manitoba Nurses Union, the University of Winnipeg and the Manitoba Diversity and Intercultural Trainers. English Online, through its knowledge sharing with other Manitoba learning service providers, is working to set the standard for online language learning in Manitoba.



### Teacher quotes

“[English Online] connects the learning process with the wider technology of the world.”

*EAL Instructor, English Online Survey, February 2009*

“Many people have difficult work/home schedules, and English Online addresses these needs.”

*EAL Instructor, English Online Survey, February 2009*

“True language learning takes place with real people in real situations, with feedback that is individualized to each student’s needs. Teacher led online courses make the most sense, in order to provide the best of all possible learning opportunities.”

*EAL Instructor, English Online Survey, February 2009*



English Online benefits newcomers to Manitoba who have limited access to classroom-based EAL services. English Online provides a unique benefit to learners who are able to learn from any location in the province, at any time.

## Current Content

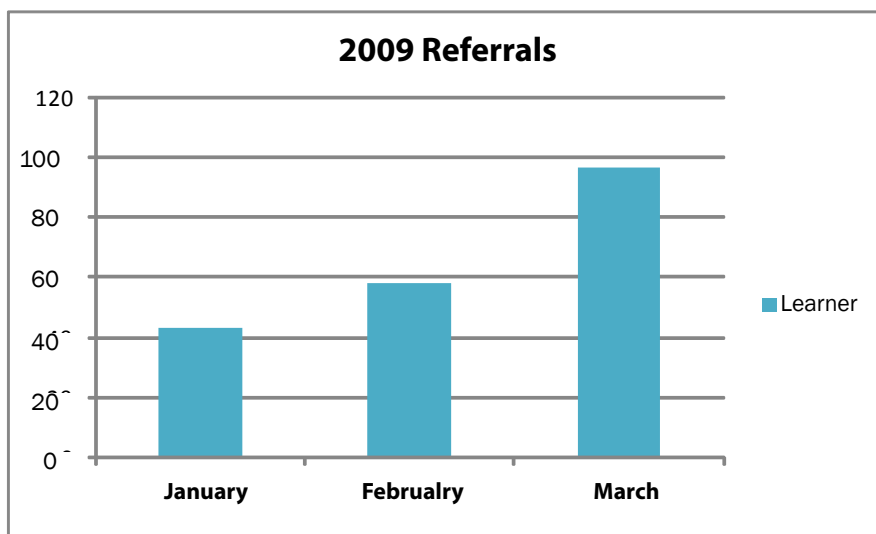
English Online uses the nationally recognized Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) curriculum in developing content materials. The learning content for CLB Stage Two learners was introduced to EAL learners at English Online's website launch in June 2008. Content in the self-direct lessons include:

- Answering the Telephone Promptly and Professionally in the Workplace
- Using Back Safety in the Workplace
- Staying Safe at Work: Dealing with a Safety Concern
- Explorer Acts 5-8

## Referrals

WELARC started referring students to the English Online website in January 2009.

The Executive Director individually contacted all of the referrals to inform them about the learning content. This referral process highlighted the need to enrich the current content delivery and online support for learners, and to create a user tracking system to tabulate real-time activity on the OLP.



## Learner voice

"I already started to work on "Answering the Telephone" lesson. I like it. In my opinion it can help me to develop skills that I need on my work place. Thank you for your time. I am looking forward to our cooperation. Thanks a lot."

*Denis,  
Email, January 25, 2009*

"Thank you for your email. I am working on the lessons. It's really helping me to improve my English."

*Sincerely, Fatima,  
Email, February 2, 2009*

English Online will continue to grow and develop strategic learning services to help newcomers to Manitoba develop their English language skills to build their employability in the marketplace and their democratic participation in their new home, Manitoba.

Planning and activities in the coming year will be focused in the following areas:

### **Program Development**

- Integration of new online learning modules for CLB Stage I learners.
- Participation in national conferences on EAL and Literacy to share best practices and work with other EAL online providers.



### **Service Delivery**

- Continued enhancement of the Online Learning Platform to support different user groups.
- Hiring of additional staff to support administrative and learning development needs.
- Presentations at SAG to publicize and promote English Online to EAL providers in public school divisions across Manitoba.
- Development of a Learner Support System.

### **Funding**

- Exploration of additional funding opportunities in the private sector and foundations.