Main Street Pilot Test Project wraps up

After three months of intense work, the Main Street Pilot Test has wrapped up with glowing comments from the participants.

Five teachers from three programs in the City of Winchester, Patrick County, and Prince William County used the Main Street websites as classroom enhancements to help students improve their English language skills and learn about their communities.

“Students thoroughly enjoyed all aspects (of the project) and learned much about the community resources,” said Phyllis Eastridge from Patrick County Public Schools Adult Education. “We will definitely continue the Main Street website and will expand into other areas.”

Her partner in the project, Paula Drady, added that she and Eastridge are putting all of their materials – lesson plans, student work, photos, press releases, and articles – into a three-ring binder. “This will be available to others in the school system and the community,” she said. “Hopefully, this project will give credit to the students who participated as well as help recruit other learners to our ESL classes.”

“I found the ESoL Main Street site very useful in my class,” teacher Cynthia Sullivan said. “We had access to computers which made the concept fairly easy for students to understand after a few lessons.”

The Prince William County ESoL teacher split her class into four groups to write stories. “It encouraged teamwork and required them to get up in front of the class and speak,” she said. “The downfall I ran into was that this was an ongoing project and many students did not attend regularly. Some of the students were disappointed when the student who had all their work stopped coming to class.”

She recommended introducing the project early on and stressing the importance of attending class for whomever took work home.

Sullivan also suggested adding pop-up menus to the buildings on the homepage so visitors to the site could see right away what the content was and to offer modifications to lesson plans to address the issue of varying knowledge levels within the classroom.

Karen Brill, teacher with the ESoL component of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Adult (See PILOT TEST, page 2)

Main Street featured at two conferences

The Main Street project is the subject of presentations at two area conferences in March.

At the VAACE (Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education) conference, held March 13-15, Pamela Brown, project coordinator, led panel discussion by Helen Franchois and Cynthia Sullivan, ESL teachers with Prince William County Public Schools Adult Education, on using ESoL Main Street and Main Street Virginia in the classroom. Franchois and Sullivan related their experiences as Pilot Test partners and share tips and techniques for incorporating the Main Street websites into the curriculum.

Brown will participate in the Internet Fair at the TESOL conference in Baltimore, March 26-29. She will demonstrate how to use ESoL Main Street in the classroom regardless of location.
PILOT TEST ...

Education Program in collaboration with the 21st-Century Grant Program of the Winchester City Schools, began planning how to use the Main Street sites for the Spring semester before the pilot project had officially concluded. “I am already developing a unit on education that will incorporate the ‘School’ site,” she said. “We began that unit in early January.”

Brill found her Pilot Test Project experience to be generally positive. “One of the difficulties with using this site, or any site, is being able to get onto it at the time you want to,” she said. “A teacher needs a back-up plan. I always made copies of the websites for the students in the event that we couldn’t access the information on the web.”

Our favorite links

While searching for resources to include on ESol-Main Street, we’ve found many fun and educational websites. Here are a few of our favorites:

**American Cultural History: The Twentieth Century** covers the decades of the 20th century. Find out what happened worldwide as well as in movies, television, and literature. (http://www.nhmccd.edu/contracts/lrc/kc/decades.html)

**The Federal Citizen Information Center** website provides a variety of resources on everything from housing to health. Read the brochures online or order directly from FCIC. (http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/)

**The Job Search Manual** reviews the job hunting process from start to finish. Find out where to look for jobs, brush up on interview skills, and learn how to write an effective resume all at one website. (http://www.sunraye.com/job_net/)

**Easy-to-Read Publications** from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration contains links to a number of easy to read brochures. Topics include how to give medicine to children, keeping children safe from poison, coping with menopause, and food safety. Pamphlets can be read online or printed out. (http://www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/englow.html)

Brill considers the best segments to be the school, healthcare services, and government services. “These were especially effective as they have links to local Virginia sites,” she said. “Thus, the research becomes more relevant to the students as they are able to access their own community.”

Lack of computer access didn’t stop Helen Franchois, also from Prince William County, from using Main Street as a curriculum enhancer with her students. “My students had no computer access, so sometimes I would provide them with printouts from ESol Main Street,” she said. “In other cases, I based the lessons on ideas I obtained from Main Street.”

Franchois, who taught a low beginning class, said that she looks forward to using Main Street again in the future. She added that she sees Main Street as a “valuable tool” for higher level students. “Main Street could be used for additional work, either in class, with a teacher’s supervision, or for additional practice at home,” she said.

All of the teachers submitted lesson plans and student projects at the end of the pilot test. There are stories on a trip to the grocery store and how to fill out a medical history form among others. The teachers sent in the corresponding lesson plans, making it easy for teachers anywhere to replicate these projects with their own students. These stories and lesson plans will be posted to the Main Street websites within a few weeks.

What’s new on Main Street?

If you’ve visited ESOL Main Street lately, you’ve probably noticed a couple of new features. First, there’s a new pop-up screen on the homepage. Here you can find all the information you need on getting around Main Street and using it in the classroom. In addition, you’ll find direct links to the newsletter and to Main Street email.

Most exciting though is that more student-written stories are now appearing on the website. The first is the PowerPoint presentation developed by ESol students in Patrick County. Join them as they learn to shop smart at a local grocery store.

Also, the handout *Incorporating ESOL Main Street into the Classroom No Matter Where You Live*, which features lesson plans and activities, will be posted to the website later this month.
Using ESoL Main Street and Main Street Virginia in the Classroom

Lesson plans for and by ESoL teachers

Using the Public Library

Level: low to high intermediate
Time: 1 hour plus field trip to library

Language skills used: speaking, listening, reading, writing

Main Street segment used: Library

Objectives: Students will be able to:
- list requirements to get a library card
- explain what a person can do at the library
- locate library or library branch nearest to them.

Warm-up activity

Introduce the subject with these discussion questions:
Who knows what a library is?
Have you been to the library here?
Was there a library where you used to live?
Did you ever go there?
Does anyone have a library card?
How do you get one?
How much does it cost?
What can you do at a library?

Write out the student’s answers on a large note pad.

Materials needed: large note pad to write down students’ answers

Presentation
1. Go to ESoL Main Street (http://web.jmu.edu/esol) and introduce site to students.
2. Go to the Library segment and review the information that can be found on Massanutten Regional Library.

Materials needed: Internet access

Practice
Have students find the information to these three questions:
- What can you do at a library?
- Where are the branches located?
- How can you get a library card?

Share answers in class

Materials needed: paper; Internet access

Application

Ask students if they know where their local library is located and what they would like to know about it. (If students hesitate, ask them what they learned about Massanutten Regional Library, such as street address, phone number, hours, etc.) Brainstorm how they could get this information (phone book, library website, library brochures). Have students write out the questions and then research the answers.

Arrange for a field trip to library, with students to come prepared to sign up for library card.

Optional Main Street connection

Bring a camera on field trip and have students create a picture tour of their visit to the library. Submit to Main Street.

ESoL Main Street
Main Street Virginia

Workforce Improvement Network
James Madison University
MSC 9003/Blue Ridge
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

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1-888-637-8494
(FAX) 540-568-2933
E-mail: brownpg@jmu.edu

On the Internet:
ESoL Main Street
http://www.jmu.edu/esol

Main Street Virginia
http://www.jmu.edu/mainstva
ESoL Main Street and Main Street Virginia are partners of

- Workforce Improvement Network
- James Madison University
- Virginia Department of Education

And these community partners

- American Red Cross Harrisonburg Rockingham
- Blue Ridge AHEC
- Career Enhancement Program at JMU
- Dayton Learning Center
- Harrisonburg Public Schools
- Harrisonburg Rockingham Chamber of Commerce
- Harrisonburg Rockingham Office of Economic Development
- Massanutten Regional Library
- JMU Adult Education/Human Resource Development Program
- New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center
- Skyline Literacy Coalition
- Shenandoah Valley Migrant Education Program
- United Way of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County
- Virginian Council of Churches Refugee Resettlement Program