



Spotlight on Good Works: **The Law-Related ESL Program** at the *People's Law School*

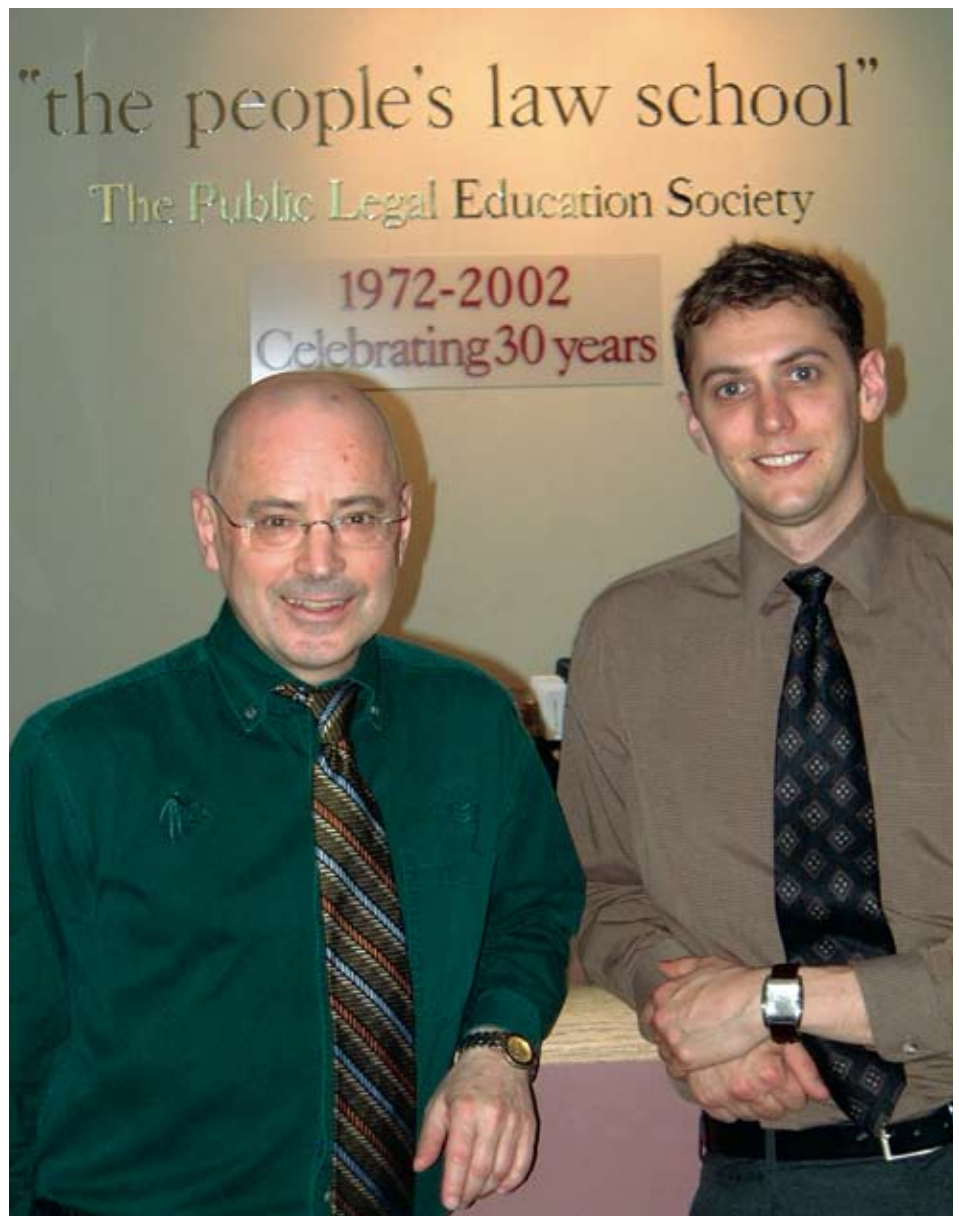
On any given day in BC, thousands of immigrants go to government-subsidized classes to learn English.

They learn the vocabulary and grammar necessary to go shopping, ask for directions, or understand the local news broadcast.

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By learning English, immigrants of all ages and from many countries learn how to successfully navigate the English-speaking world they now inhabit. Their English as Second Language (ESL) classes can also be a great opportunity for them to learn about the laws of their new country. Immigrants are keen to learn about Canadian law as it applies to their children, working, renting a home, or how to write a Will.

The People's Law School—with funding assistance from the Notary Foundation—recognizes the value



At left, Gordon Hardy, Executive Director of the People's Law School, with Tim Enders, Coordinator/Teacher of the Law-related ESL Program

of combining language learning with legal education in a formal learning setting. Through their new and unique Law-Related ESL Program, they provide immigrants enrolled as ESL students with an ESL teacher especially trained in legal education. They also publish a basic primer on Canadian laws, written at an ESL level, called *Learning About the Law*, which the ESL teacher uses as a textbook in his classes.

ESL teacher Tim Enders travels to ESL classes throughout BC's Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, and the Central Interior to engage intermediate and upper-level ESL students in highly interactive classes that combine language learning and legal education. Each class consists of an average of 15 students, an optimum number for an effective learning experience.

These free classes run about 3 hours; Tim involves the students in law-related role plays, poster-making, and other activities deemed best by

ESL teachers for teaching immigrants the rudiments of language and subject matter.

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Since the Program began in September 2005, Tim has been invited to conduct 150 classes, involving more than 2000 students. Response from both ESL students and their teachers has been very favourable. In written evaluations, more than 1500 ESL students gave Tim top marks for the usefulness of his classes, as well as for the value of the learning activities. More than 100 ESL teachers rated Tim's classes highly for their usefulness to their

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A typical comment from an ESL student is, "It was very interesting for me because I'm new in Canada and the laws are very different in my home country." A typical comment from an ESL teacher: "I like the fact that Tim is a trained ESL teacher and knows how to present the materials in a way my students can understand."

The most frequently requested topics are those immediately facing the students, such as working in BC, family law, and renting a home.

Tim's visit often sparks requests for other People's Law School free plain-language booklets, such as *Writing Your Will*, *Caring for Children*, and *Power of Attorney* (all available in English, French, and several immigrant languages). ▲

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