

WigWag



A Publication for Hanen Certified Speech-Language Pathologists

St. Clair College Students are Learning Language and Loving It™

Cathy Coppens

Hanen Certified SLP, Educational Coordinator for Talk 2 Me, Windsor, Ontario

Thanks to a partnership between St. Clair College in Windsor, Ontario, and Talk 2 Me – Essex Preschool Speech and Language Services, content from *Learning Language and Loving It* has been successfully presented to six graduating classes of Early Childhood Education students. In the past, St. Clair College had invited us to do a two-hour presentation to their students on the speech/language services in the community and general strategies for ECE teachers. The students always asked for more information on strategies for the preschool classroom.

In response to a proposal by the Talk 2 Me program, Professor Rosemary Heenan enthusiastically offered six two-hour classes to present content from *Learning Language and Loving It*. The classes were first offered in February and March of 2002 to 84 students (three graduating classes). The sheer number of students required that the content be adapted for large groups. The students were expected to videotape themselves implementing the newly learned strategies with a small group of children and present the tapes to the class.

In January and February of 2003, we offered the classes again at St. Clair College, having adapted the content to meet the needs of a larger group of 100 graduating ECE students. The content of the six classes (12 hours) followed the order of *Learning Language and Loving It*.

The students loved the guidebook. Unfortunately, we had to sacrifice the individual

videotapes, as it was not logistically possible to include them. The students analyzed the Teaching Tape examples, and worked in small groups to plan how they would use the strategies in their work with preschoolers. They benefited tremendously from the information on special needs children and the clips of teachers using the strategies with this population.

Overall, the classes were very positively received. We are now meeting with three professors who audited the classes, to see how we can make content from *Learning Language and Loving It* fit even better into the two-year ECE program. The professors wholeheartedly agreed that the content presented from *Learning Language and Loving It* matched beautifully with the curriculum they teach, and took language development, stimulation and enrichment to a whole new level. One student summed up her impressions: "This was so different from what we expected. We thought you were going to teach us 'speech stuff.' Instead, you made us realize what an awesome responsibility we have, and how much influence we can have on preschoolers' language development. We learned so much more than we could have hoped for. I know we will be using the textbook as a reference for years to come!"

We encourage any SLP interested in offering material from *Learning Language and Loving It* to their local college ECE program to give us a call and then give it a try. It's an exhausting but rewarding experience! **WW**

