



"I was born in Quebec City and have always lived there. After studying geography at the Université Laval, I worked for several years developing a business with my husband. I then spent a few years at home with my daughter, who is now twelve years old.

"When I joined the workforce again in 1984, I worked for the Quebec Ministry of Tourism and then for Alcan's government relations office. During this period, I completed a degree in French linguistics.

"I enjoy meeting people from all over. I like the dynamics of teamwork and, most of all, I love to travel. I joined the foreign service for these reasons, and to act on my belief that Canada has a role to play in building the global village of tomorrow. It is time for me to acquire the knowledge and work skills necessary for my future tasks. I think I know how our society works but I need to understand life in other countries so that I can help their people appreciate Canada.

"I feel ready for this new experience, and I know it will be enriching."

*Andrée Blouin
Social Affairs officer*

TO FOSTER A LIFELONG LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Canadian Foreign Service Institute supplements its intensive career training with programs designed to address the specific needs of individuals or small groups. Such ongoing training helps establish the lifelong learning environment necessary to maintaining and enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of employees. For example, the Institute, in conjunction with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), co-operates with the Political and International Security Affairs Branch of EAITC to offer a three-day course on human rights and democratic development.

The Institute manages specific courses for limited numbers of participants and provides funding for management training seminars, courses taken outside working hours and education leave. For example, the Institute offers at least two sessions every year of a week-long leadership colloquium, which develops the leadership, people-management and team-building skills of senior managers.

All Institute courses are designed to emphasize interaction and participation, with opportunities provided to apply classroom lessons in case studies, exercises and simulations. The hands-on nature of these learning experiences ensures that the courses are not only relevant and practical, but also interesting and stimulating.

MORE EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE IMMERSION

Spanish is one of the main foreign languages taught by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute. The Institute recently developed an innovative immersion program in co-operation with a school in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

The Institute analyzed the needs of its students and determined that an advanced level of Spanish ability is necessary for Canadian representatives to do their jobs effectively. Examples of tasks for which such linguistic skills are essential include negotiation, speech making, interviewing, summarizing speeches and news reports, and explaining Canadian policy. The Cuernavaca language training is designed to relate directly to these specific needs.

Because an understanding of the other person's culture and background is essential to communication, language training is supplemented by instruction in the history, sociology, geography and culture of Spanish-speaking countries. For example, one component of the program helps participants understand how Latin Americans do business. During the two- to six-week program, students are housed with Mexican families, giving them an indispensable opportunity to learn about the culture of the country.