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CFSI NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 1999

Signet 2000 *Shining Evaluations*

The Signet 2000+ training blitz is winding up and the last instructor in the field is on her way back to Ottawa from Damascus.

Since December 1998, most employees have taken an average of four courses. This means that 9,287 training days were given at headquarters and 24,671 at posts. Two-thirds of the clients are abroad, and of these, half are locally-engaged staff.

"Course evaluations have been glowing," says Lise Martel, Senior Learning Specialist with CFSS. She says that the client evaluations were instrumental in keeping the spirit of the training team sky high. Statistics compiled from evaluations show that 90 percent of the time

the course objectives were met. Respondents rated their general satisfaction at over 91 percent. Six to eight weeks after the courses, the respondents to the follow-up evaluation indicated that almost all the learning (86 percent) was directly related to the jobs they were doing.

What's next? The instructional designers are already at work preparing learning events that will respond specifically to needs expressed in the follow-up evaluations, while focusing more on self-paced approaches. "Feedback will be more valuable than ever," says Ms. Martel.

People behind the scenes include: Lise Sanderson who took care of scheduling at headquarters, Marie-Hélène de l'Étoile who handled travel arrangements, Lise Ménard who took care of scheduling for missions, and Murray Pinchuk who compiled the evaluations.

The Growing Interest *in Foreign Languages*

Communicating well and functioning optimally in a foreign language are skills that set Canadian Foreign Service personnel apart from their Public Service colleagues. Under the chairmanship of Joseph Caron, the newly established Foreign Language Board is meeting to promote foreign language training and staffing strategies. The members of the Foreign Language Board are: Susan Cartwright, Paul Durand, Roger Ferland, Margaret Huber, John Klassen, Michael Mace, John McNee, James Wright, Guy Saint-Jacques, Adriaan de Hoog and Gerald Redmond. One of the Board's earliest objectives was to increase investment in the maintenance of individuals' foreign language proficiencies.

In launching this year's Foreign Language Maintenance Program, CFSL expanded training options (programs during and after working hours as well as distance courses), increased training duration by 50 percent, offered beginner courses and improved options to individuals and missions abroad. Over 120 employees and their spouses have begun nine-month maintenance programs in Arabic, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese and Russian. The Spanish program, with over 60 participants, is the largest and demonstrates the strong personal commitment many DFAIT personnel are making to the future of Canada's partnerships in Latin America.



The Signet 2000 blitz is almost over. Some of the people at CFSS who made it happen are, left to right: Lise Sanderson, Marie-Hélène de l'Étoile, Lise Ménard, and Murray Pinchuk.