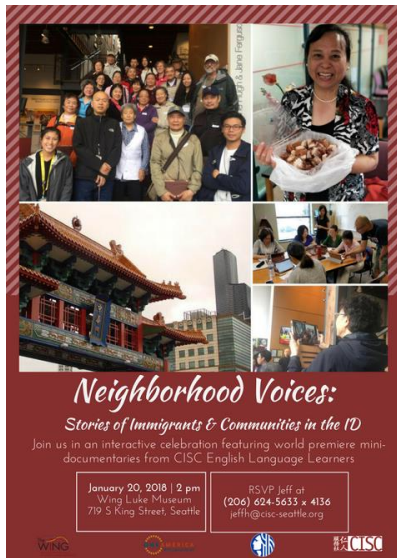


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Welcome to the English Innovations Team Newsletter!

This is the inaugural mailing of the newly imagined internal newsletter, created by and for English Innovations. Read on!



## **Neighborhood Voices: Stories of Immigration & Community in the ID**

Interactive celebration featuring world premiere mini-documentaries from CISC English Language Learners

### **What?**

OneAmerica and Chinese Information and Services Center (CISC) are celebrating the International District's immigrant stories this January 20th at the Wing Luke Museum. English-language students will be presenting short videos about their experiences as immigrants, their family histories, and neighborhood stories.

### **Why?**

This event is the culmination of a year-long project called English Innovations, which equips adult immigrants in the ID with the English skills and community connections to express themselves confidently and with creativity.

### **Want to get involved or learn more?**

Nearly 70% of Chinatown International District households are considered "linguistically isolated," meaning that no adults in the household speak English or have limited English skills. Over the course of an English Innovations class, students will strengthen their language skills, their digital literacy and their community engagement.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Welcome to our "Meet the Coach" feature! In each newsletter, a different site of English Innovations will be highlighted. This week, meet Ivan! This picture was taken on the first day of Cycle 4. Ivan and his Technology Expert, Branden, are reviewing the different parts of a tablet.



### **SEVEN QUESTIONS WITH IVAN**

#### **What is your favorite part of the curriculum?**

My favorite part of the curriculum is the BioPoem activity. This exercise opens my students up to telling stories that are personal and resonate with them on an emotional level.

#### **How long have you been with CISC?**

I am originally from Macau, China and I have been working for 2 cycles where I started as a volunteer before becoming the English Innovations coach.

#### **What are your top three favorite (non-work) activities?**

I like to play video games with my friends, playing basketball and window shopping!

#### **What is an interesting or unique aspect of CISC site?**

My students! They are older in age who are mostly retired and looking for a new way to pass the time. With that being said, they are engaged and full of enthusiasm. Learning a new language requires the willingness to make mistakes, which is fundamental to learning. Further, my students are from all over Washington, traveling upwards of 1-2 hours by bus! The commitment is apparent among my classes and reflected in our graduation rates.

**What is one little known skill/talent of yours?**

A skill that I practice on a regular basis is building my empathy through exercising patience. I find this skill particularly useful in the classroom, but I also find it essential to navigating my friendships and relationships. It is a skill I hope others appreciate or notice, so then they might practice empathy or patience as well.

**What are some successes you would like to highlight while teaching at CISC?**

The graduation rate. Each cycle we have graduated more than 50% of our students. Another success would be our digital storytelling and more specifically our BioPoems. This activity has allowed our students to really open up about their personal lives as well as engage with technology.

**What is one of your guiding principles as an individual?**

Practice makes perfect. In order to get to where you want to go in a successful manner, you must try. The first step is often the most important because it creates opportunities otherwise unattainable.

**EXPERT INSIGHT WITH HEIDE!****What is BioPoems?**

BioPoems is an activity and opportunity for students to be creative as well as improve the complexity of their vocabulary. Each student is provided with a template which prompts students to describe themselves with three different adjectives. A second layer is added where students describe the relationships in their life where they can talk about their family and friends. The third layer gives students a space to talk about hobbies or activities they enjoy. It is a wonderful prompt for students to get to know each other and teachers to get to know each other.

**Why did you decide to include BioPoems in the curriculum?**

Building on reasons already mentioned above, BioPoems offer students an open ended activity where they may talk about their fears and through those vulnerable conversations they can connect with

other students. The activity essentially builds relationships between students as well as between students and coaches. If a student has a fear regarding their rights then coaches can build on this by teaching a lesson on what to do when ICE comes knocking on the door. Furthermore, it gives students the chance to express what their families are concerned about, which connects back to the reality of our learners lives.

### **In what ways has it been effective in the classroom?**

BioPoems provides a creative outlet for students and teachers to collaborate on. Students integrate a piece of themselves into their poems through technology. Videos are created by our learners and power point presentations are used as well. Through this activity we want to showcase our students their stories are important, and that their production is professional. Even when a mistake happens it is charming because it shows a vulnerability in learning English, it shows the courage it takes and it is nothing to be ashamed of. Because we are providing access to technology it allows students to immediately share their creative and interesting stories in the tech community.

[Here is a link to a BioPoem by Elaine Kee](#), a former learner of Ivan's English Innovations class at CISC:

### **Get to know Heide!**

#### **What is a hidden talent most people don't know you have?**

I went to a classical high school in Germany where it was important to know the traditional art and craft that represent the traditions of the country. One of those traditions is knowing how to knit. It was really important to knit well and because of that I can knit woolen winter socks! The heel of the socks need four needles. It is really tricky, but I can still do it!