



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
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Settlement Services, Literacy and Essential Skills

Yves Saint-Germain, Integration Branch
Citizenship and Immigration Canada

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BUILDING A STRONGER CANADA



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Overview of CIC Language Training and Employment-Related Programs

Objective: Support newcomers in developing communication skills that will enable them to better function in all aspects of Canadian society – social, cultural, civic and economic.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) / Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC)

- ❖ Couples language acquisition with improved knowledge of Canadian civics and culture
- ❖ Offered at L2 Literacy Level, and Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) levels 1 – 7
- ❖ CLIC provides the French equivalent of LINC, with training at levels 1 – 7

Enhanced Language Training (ELT) / Cours de langue de niveau avancé (CLNA)

- ❖ Job specific language training mainly at CLB levels 7-10
- ❖ Couples language training with mentoring and work placement

Occupation-Specific Language Training (OSLT)/ Formation linguistique axée sur les professions (FLAP)

- ❖ New program running only in Ontario colleges, providing occupation-specific language training from CLB levels 6-8



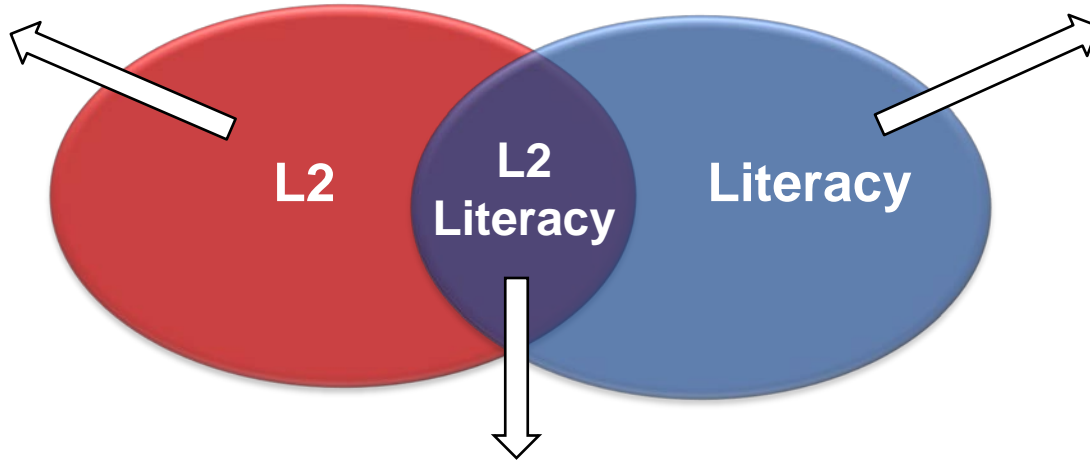
Language Training and Literacy



Three Types of Learners

Second Language (ESL/FSL)

- ❖ Newcomers literate in L1, learning L2
- ❖ Typically use L1 literacy skills to record, remember, and process information



Literacy

- ❖ Native English or French speakers with limited or no literacy skills
- ❖ Wish to improve their reading, writing and numeracy
- ❖ Not target group for settlement services

L2 Literacy

- ❖ Little or no literacy skills in L1, usually due to interrupted formal education
- ❖ Share many characteristics of typical first language **literacy learners**, with the added challenge of learning an additional language, as **L2 Learners**



Perceptions of Second Language Learners

- ❖ **The International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS), while rich in detail, occasionally invites unfair comparisons**
 - Comparing new immigrants with Canadians communicating in their first language (e.g. 60% of immigrants, compared to 37% of the Canadian-born, score at levels 1 and 2 in IALSS prose literacy)
- ❖ **TD Bank Financial Group Report : “Literacy Matters: Helping Newcomers Unlock Their Potential” (Sept.28, 2009)**
 - Compelling, but defines challenges and policy responses narrowly: “Newcomers may also not appreciate how stronger literacy skills can open doors and unlock their potential. The fact is that most individuals with weak literacy skills – immigrants and Canadian-born individuals alike – do not recognize their level of proficiency and the impact that it is having on their lives.”
- ❖ **National Post: “Immigrant Illiteracy Costs Canada Billions” (Sept. 28, 2009)**



Key Messages

- ❖ Many newcomers are selected on the basis of their human capital and bring valuable skills, knowledge, and experience to Canadian society
 - In 2007, 37% or 1.2 million immigrants of core working age (25 to 54) had a university degree, compared with only 22% of the core working-age Canadian born
- ❖ For many newcomers, English or French is a third or fourth language – this achievement should be recognized and celebrated
- ❖ Newcomers greatly contribute to and enhance the economic, social, and cultural fabric of Canada



CLB and Literacy

- ❖ *The CLB 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* lays out the progression of reading, writing and numeracy skills for ESL adult learners with little or no literacy skills in their first language.
- ❖ *The CLB 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* is also useful to inform programs for ESL learners who are literate in a non-Roman alphabet, and who need help learning reading and writing basics in English.
- ❖ It also organizes the ESL/Literacy Benchmarks into phases – including a Foundation Phase which covers pre-reading and writing, followed by Phases I- III.

CLB Benchmarks	CLB ESL/Literacy Benchmarks
Benchmark 5	Phase III
Benchmark 4	
Benchmark 3	
Benchmark 2	Phase II
Benchmark 1	Phase I
	Foundation Phase



LINC Literacy Classes

- ❖ CIC offers LINC ESL/Literacy classes specifically to second language learners with literacy needs identified through the Canadian Language Benchmarks Literacy Assessment (CLBLA) process.
- ❖ In 2008, 2,973 learners were enrolled in LINC ESL/Literacy programs across Canada
 - The proportion of literacy level learners in LINC is consistent with publicly-funded language programs across Canada, in which L2 literacy learners make up only about 5% of all learners
- ❖ LINC ESL/Literacy makes use of *The CLB 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners* as a guideline for teaching reading, writing and numeracy skills



Impact of LINC on Reading and Writing Ability

- ❖ 2009 evaluation of the LINC program found that, overall, LINC is most effective in improving the reading and writing abilities of newcomers
- ❖ LINC has improved the language abilities of students in the areas of reading (by about 1 benchmark level) and writing (by a little over half a benchmark level)
- ❖ However, by the time students reach 1000 hours of training, the gains likely ascribable to LINC across all skills areas are impressive: 1.2 benchmark for listening; 1.1 for speaking; **1.8 for reading and 2.7 for writing.**



Language Training and Essential Skills



CLB Framework Based on Theory of Communicative Competence

- ❖ CIC language training curriculum guidelines are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), which provide descriptions of communicative proficiency levels in four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- ❖ The CLB reflect the **communicative competence** view of language. Communicative competence involves all of the abilities and knowledge that enable language users to express themselves in spoken and written text.
- ❖ Assessing communicative competence means assessing a person's ability to accomplish authentic communication tasks (such as explaining health and safety warnings, writing an article, etc.)
- ❖ Learning a language involves developing both communicative performance (language use) and communicative knowledge (knowing about the language).

Essential Skills

Reading Text
Document Use
Numeracy
Writing
Oral Communication

} Language
Related

Working with Others
Continuous Learning
Thinking Skills
Computer Use

} Potential
in
Language
Training



Essential Skills and LINC

- ❖ 2005 CCLB study, “Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills” indicated that beginning of Essential Skills scale roughly accord with CLB level 5
- ❖ While majority of LINC learners are below CLB 5, the CLB’s communicative competence model means students undertake task-based approaches to language learning, involving the use of authentic language in a manner consistent with the Essential Skills approach
- ❖ It is important to recognize and highlight the ways in which LINC incorporates Essential Skills into language training **at all levels**
(Winnipeg School Division, EAL Lessons for Essential Skills project)

Task-based Approach

- ❖ The CLB is task-based, stressing community, study and employment related tasks
- ❖ Tasks are considered to be basic building blocks, which promote the integration of all aspects of communicative competence
- ❖ Each Benchmark for the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – includes examples of real life tasks that an L2 learner should be able to perform

Authentic Language

- ❖ Documents found in daily life are used as learning material, such as government forms, menus, telephone bills, etc. as well as examples of authentic oral language, such as social conversations, oral instructions or service transactions



Skills Development and Essential Skills



Skills Development under CIC's Settlement Program

- ❖ “Language Learning & Skills Development” is one of four settlement service streams under which our services are delivered.
 - ❖ Between April 1 2009 – March 31 2010, spending on Language/Skills activities was \$117M or 24% of the Settlement Program budget.
- ❖ Skills Development has been identified by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration as a key link to a newcomer's successful integration:
 - ❖ “...A lot of new immigrants have a lot of technical skills. However, most of them lack **soft skills** like business communication, **Canadian culture**, Canadian corporate culture, and so on. So I would suggest, if it's possible, for CIC to come up with programs like soft skills, business communication, how to talk, the way of doing business in Canada, and Canadian culture...” **Dec 3, 2010.**
 - ❖ “Our second suggestion is a focus on **soft skills** training. Through our experience we have learned that interpersonal and communication skills often make the difference for those competing for employment in Canada. We have seen first-hand that when professionals lack **soft skills**, entire families will suffer.” **Dec 10, 2010.**



Skills Development:

Priorities for Settlement Services

- ❖ Skills development programming under the Settlement Program will mean a greater emphasis on programs that teach skills that are outside the realm of language proficiency, credential recognition and technical competencies.
- ❖ The Skills Development stream has **4 settlement service priorities:**
 - ❖ Building civic literacy skills to enhance a newcomer's knowledge and participation in Canadian laws and public institutions, societal values and norms, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens and residents;
 - ❖ Enhancing interpersonal and communication skills for newcomers to develop social networks and integrate into the workplace and community;
 - ❖ Teaching employment-related skills for labour market entrants, including Canadian workplace culture skills for job retention and advancement; and
 - ❖ Supporting life skills for high-need government-assisted refugees.



Essential Skills and Skills Development

- ❖ 2005 CCLB study, “Relating Canadian Language Benchmarks to Essential Skills” indicated that beginning of Essential Skills scale roughly accord with CLB level 5. However, the Essentials Skills tools may be adapted at any CLB level.
- ❖ The majority of users of CIC’s settlement services are below CLB 5.
- ❖ Therefore, there is a gap in CIC’s ability to use the vast majority of HRSDC’s tools when service providers are delivering settlement services. However, a limited number of organizations have adapted these tools for CIC newcomer clients. For example:
 - ❖ Winnipeg School Division have taken the Essential Skills framework and developed tools for the CLB levels 1-5 (“Essential Skills Activities”, <http://www.eallessons4essentialskills.ca/Home/Welcome.html>)
 - ❖ Activity-based topics include: working with others, supervisor and worker feedback, workplace scenarios, and getting along with co-workers.



Skills Development

Next Steps: Experts Meeting

- ❖ To bridge this gap in tools and training available and meet the needs identified by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (for example, soft skills, Canadian culture, interpersonal skills), CIC will hold an Experts Meeting hosted by Metropolis in November 2010.
- ❖ Service provider organizations (SPOs), academics and policy-makers will gather to explore policy and program directions in the area of Skills Development to determine the current gaps in training and how best to meet these.
- ❖ The goal of the Experts Meeting is to examine how CIC can improve on available services and newcomer outcomes through specific program offerings in the area of soft skills and civic literacy training.



Essential Skills and CIC's Current Initiatives

- ❖ In addition to CIC language learning activities, Enhanced Language Training (ELT) is a labour market access initiative that operates mainly at CLB levels 7-10, and has Essential Skills directly embedded into the program. Program components include:
 - ❖ Job specific language training, mentoring, and internships; and
 - ❖ Modules on Canadian workplace culture.
- ❖ In ELT, Essential Skills is incorporated into employment themed lessons through:
 - ❖ Telephone etiquette & managing conversation
 - ❖ Social interaction at work and participating in meetings
 - ❖ Conflict resolution
 - ❖ Presentation skills
- ❖ Life Skills Program for High Needs Refugees (delivered by Refugees Branch)
 - ❖ Program to provide intensive and short term life skills help/enhanced orientation to high needs Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) after arrival. Life skills workers provide cultural appropriate help with basic life skills in the client's own language. Help may be provided for: housing, budgeting, Canadian cultural orientation, and other needs.



Avenues for Future Work

1. Improving Recognition

- ❖ Recognize and highlight existing literacy and Essential Skills components of CIC language training programs
- ❖ Explore incorporation of Essential Skills into new portfolio-based assessment system, including professional development supports

2. Improving Research

- ❖ Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey (successor to IALSS) – rethinking the interpretation of results concerning L2 and literacy

3. Improving Programs

- ❖ Improving training in the area of soft skills and other skills development priorities.





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