

THE INTEGRATION ADVANTAGE



How the LINC programs at Bow Valley College and NorQuest College are increasing newcomer success.

The LINC programs at Bow Valley College and NorQuest College are succeeding.

This report explores the experiences of adult immigrants enrolled in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs at Bow Valley College and NorQuest College.

In their own words, newcomers tell of their journey and how these programs at post-secondary institutions do more than help them learn English. The programs also boost integration into Canada by increasing newcomers' confidence, promoting inclusion, and helping them to prepare for employment.



The report reveals 4 key reasons why LINC students thrive in these post-secondary programs:

Integration success

The learners used the many support services and campus activities at the colleges to advance their learning and integrate with the larger college community.

Employment

The opportunity to be exposed to so many other career opportunities in the post-secondary institutions, as well as the career-oriented environment, gave them a clearer path to employment.

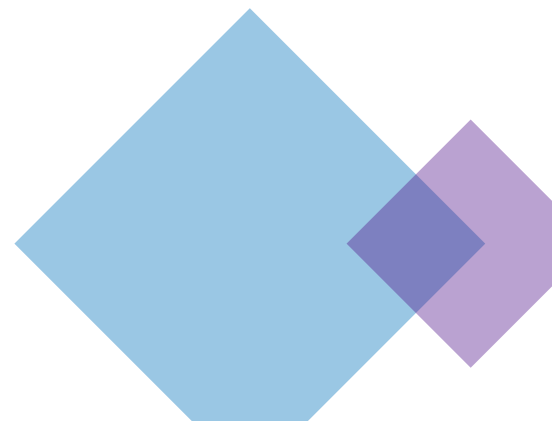
Top-level instruction

The excellent instruction carried out by highly qualified teachers at the post-secondary level made learning English much easier.

Confidence

They felt secure, supported and respected, gaining the confidence they need to succeed in their new home.

Canada is built on the successful integration of newcomers into society, and the LINC programs at Bow Valley College and NorQuest College are leading the way.



A photograph of two women, one with glasses and one without, looking down at a book together. The woman with glasses is on the left, wearing a teal shirt. The woman without glasses is on the right, wearing a yellow cardigan over a white top. They are both looking intently at the book. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves. A large, dark blue, semi-transparent geometric shape is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

Understanding LINC Learners' Experiences in College Settings

Bow Valley College

Centre for Excellence in Immigrant
and Intercultural Advancement

NorQuest College

Faculty of Foundational, Career,
and Intercultural Studies

Dean Wood PhD, Principal Researcher – September 2015

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Executive Summary

This report describes research that was undertaken at Bow Valley College (BVC) and NorQuest College (NQC) to understand the experiences and perceptions of adult immigrants enrolled in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs. In particular, it focused on students' perceptions of a college learning environment, utilization of learner support services and campus activities, informal and formal engagement with the college community, and perceptions of their college experiences in relation to settlement and integration. The study was initiated through discussions between Bow Valley College and Citizenship and Immigration Canada and funded by CIC. Although a body of research has reported on the settlement and integration experiences of newcomers to Canada, little research has focused on language learning from the perspective of adult learners.

Data were gathered at both colleges during May and June 2015. A total of 372 students enrolled in CLB 4–7—more than 90%—responded to a questionnaire that measured their utilization of 20 learner support services and campus activities at BVC and 23 services and activities at NQC. Ten students from each college who reported high utilization rates participated in semistructured interviews that focused on previous education, initial experiences in Calgary/Edmonton, choice of college and satisfaction with choice, first

experiences at the college, services and activities that the participants utilized, classroom instruction on the Canadian way of life, goals and plans, cultural diversity in the classroom and Canada, and the college experience in relation to settlement.

The findings reported in Chapters 4 and 5 clearly indicate that, from the students' perspective, the LINC programs at BVC and NQC are highly effective in meeting their language learning and settlement needs. Based on the questionnaire data, the participants from BVC had used an average of 7.7 services (out of 20), and those from NQC had used an average of 12 services (out of 23). The range of services and activities provided at each college include some (e.g., library and computer assistance) relevant to all learners and others that are specialized and needed by a limited number of students (e.g., accessibility services). For this reason, utilization rates for individual services and activities range from, for example, 92 percent to 25 percent. Interviewees talked about the services they valued and these included, among others, resume preparation, information about college career programs, tutorial support, specialized library resources, the computer commons, and individualized career and educational planning. They also identified specific benefits of the services related to career planning, job searches, computer skills, living successfully in Canada, and planning for career education after LINC.

The interview data indicate that the participants were very satisfied with their choice of BVC or NQC, their relationships with their instructors, the quality of instruction, the inclusive social environment in the classroom and the college, and the educational and settlement support provided by the services and activities. In terms of settlement and integration, they said they were developing the English proficiency needed for life in Canada and the workplace; learning practical, day-to-day living skills; planning for further education and the workforce; meeting and learning from students from other cultures; understanding Canadian values, cultural norms, laws and government; and appreciating multiculturalism as a value and Canadian way of life. All interviewees recognized their settlement related learning was very important to their present and future life in Canada.

Based on an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data reported in the findings chapters, the researcher identified eight themes:

1. Given the range of LINC providers in Calgary and Edmonton, the students' primary reason for choosing to study at BVC and NQC was **the reputation of the colleges**, which largely reflects the input of family and friends.
2. The students expressed a **high degree of satisfaction** with their LINC program at the colleges when the researcher asked them directly and when they discussed various aspects of their student experience.
3. The students **utilized learner support services and campus activities** to advance their learning, meet immediate needs, plan for their future, and connect with the college community.
4. The students **unequivocally endorsed their instructors** as persons and as instructors.
5. Although measures of socioemotional climate were not a part of the study, the students' comments consistently reveal that **they felt secure, supported, and respected**. They believed that the LINC program and the colleges are committed to their long-term success in Canada.
6. Despite the many challenges that permanent residents and refugees have encountered and the challenges that lie ahead, the students were **motivated, optimistic, and confident about their future**.
7. According to the data from interviews with the students, most are involved in what can be considered a **second phase of the settlement process**.
8. The students are gaining an **understanding of the Canadian way of life** generally and of cultural diversity and multiculturalism more specifically.

The report makes seven recommendations:

1. Students' strong satisfaction with LINC coupled with their belief that it is effective in meeting their needs, as the findings demonstrate, clearly indicate that BVC and NQC should continue their current LINC program delivery models.
2. Students' positive experiences with learner support services and activities, as the findings demonstrate, clearly indicate that BVC and NQC should continue to provide a broad range of services and activities and enhance those services and activities where feasible.
3. As public postsecondary institutions, BVC and NQC should continue to maximize the benefits of Alberta's integrated postsecondary learning system for LINC learners.
4. Although the current LINC model combined with postsecondary supports creates a strong foundation for all newcomers, additional learning opportunities would benefit immigrants who wish to return to their professions in Canada.

5. BVC and NQC should continue to leverage the opportunities of a postsecondary environment to foster interaction among LINC learners and mainstream students.
6. BVC and NQC should build upon their effective career pathway programming and services to enhance career exploration opportunities for LINC learners at the CLB 4–7 levels.
7. Further research should be undertaken to understand learners' progression from LINC to postsecondary education and careers as well as additional dimensions of their settlement and integration experiences.

Appendices A and D provide important complements to the research findings. Appendix A is made up of student life stories based on second interviews conducted with five of the original 20 interviewees. These stories provide very individual and very personal stories about the students' experiences as newcomers and college students. Appendix D outlines the quality assurance processes utilized by BVC and NQC to ensure their programs and services are providing effective learning opportunities for students.

Acknowledgments

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 - Dr. Lisa Rochman, Associate Dean, Faculty of Foundational and Intercultural Studies, NorQuest College
 - Ewa Dufrat, Program Manager, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, NorQuest College
 - Hana Taleb Imai, Coordinator, Innovation and Research, Bow Valley College
 - Dr. Augusto Legaspi, Applied Research and Evaluation Lead, Bow Valley College
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1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.1 Background

Across Canada each year, more than 60,000 adult newcomers enroll in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs that have been developed and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). LINC programming is designed to help “newcomers integrate into Canada and their communities,” recognizing that “the ability to communicate effectively in either French or English is a key factor in the success of newcomers to Canada” (CIC, 2013, para. 2). The importance of language acquisition is underscored in data that suggest that almost 90% of immigrants do not have English or French as their first language (Wayland, 2006b).

CIC profiled LINC learners in all provinces and territories except British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec in an evaluation report completed in 2010. Fourteen percent of the learners were in Alberta (p. 2). Across Canada, 71.4% of the learners were female, 65.6% were between the ages of 25 and 44, 51.8% had been in Canada for less than two years, and 63% had completed postsecondary education (p. 52). The five largest source countries were China, India, Colombia, Iraq, and Sri Lanka (p. 53). The learners’ two top self-reported reasons for enrolling in LINC included to improve English for daily life (47.1%) and to get a job (33.6%; p. 55).

In Alberta, Bow Valley College (BVC) and NorQuest College (NQC) are the two primary providers of LINC programming in the province. This program takes numerous forms: full-time day study, part-time evening study, home study, and community-based programming. Both colleges offer seven levels of LINC. In 2013–2014, LINC students made up about 20% of the total credit enrolment at each college. School districts, community organizations, settlement agencies, and private-sector trainers also offer LINC programming. Current CIC policy gives learners an opportunity to choose a training provider.

English-language education for newcomers has been a core component of the program mandate of both BVC and NQC since they were founded as Alberta Vocational Centres in 1965. Today they are comprehensive community colleges that serve Calgary and region (BVC) and Edmonton and region (NQC). Their current program mandate includes English language learning (ELL)/English as a Second Language (ESL); academic upgrading; and certificate and diploma programs in health, human services, and business.

1.2 Purpose

Acquisition of one of Canada's official languages is a central component of newcomers' successful settlement and integration into Canadian society (CIC, 2010). The settlement process for immigrants refers to their initial challenges of securing housing, finding a job, undertaking language training, enrolling children in school, making friends, meeting family needs, and obtaining information about services and community resources. Integration refers to a long-term process of achieving proficiency in one official language, developing a career path that reflects previous experience and education, establishing social and cultural connections within an ethnocultural community and the larger society, accessing needed programs and services, and participating in Canadian institutions. Within a pluralistic society, integration is a two-way process, with both newcomers and the receiving society engaged in a process of mutual adaptation (CIC, 2001). As immigrants become integrated, they create social capital for themselves and their communities. Social capital is defined "as the resources available to individuals and groups through their social connections to [individuals] and communities" (Morrow-Howell & Gehlert, 2012, p. 207). Research has demonstrated that "communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic associations will be in a stronger position to confront vulnerability, . . . resolve disputes, . . . and/or take advantage of new opportunities" (Woolcock, n.d., p. 3).

Although researchers have conducted numerous studies (e.g., Anisef, Sweet, & Adamuti-Trache, 2008; Couton, 2014; Kilbride & D'Arcangelo, 2002) on aspects of immigrants' settlement and integration in Canada, a limited number of researchers have investigated settlement and integration from the perspective of immigrants. More specifically, in the context of this study, there are few, if any, studies of adult immigrants' English language learning experiences that directly reflect their voices. The purpose of this research was

to develop an understanding of the experiences and perceptions of LINC learners in colleges, with particular attention to their

- ◆ perceptions of a college learning environment,
- ◆ utilization of learner support services and campus activities,
- ◆ informal and formal engagement with the college community, and
- ◆ perceptions of their college experiences in relation to settlement and integration.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions guided the research:

1. What are LINC learners' perceptions of their college experiences in relation to the reasons they chose to study English at a college?
2. How do LINC learners experience the learner support services and the campus activities provided by colleges? What are their perceptions of those experiences (e.g., counselling, admissions and registration, financial aid, career services, accessibility services, library, tutoring)?
3. How do LINC learners experience student life on campus outside the classroom? What are their perceptions of those experiences (e.g., interactions with other students, volunteer and student leadership activities, job fairs, and social activities)?
4. From the perspective of learners, how have their college experiences facilitated their settlement in and integration into Canada?

2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Participants

The study investigated the experiences and perceptions of students enrolled in full-time LINC Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 4–7 at BVC and CLB 4–6 at NQC during the spring term of 2014–2015 academic year. NQC did not offer LINC for CLB 7 students during the term when the researcher gathered the data because of low enrolment.

The research team chose CLB 4 or higher cohorts for this study because they expected that the learners at these levels would have sufficient language proficiency to participate in interviews and complete written questionnaires. The participants must have been enrolled in the college for two or more semesters to ensure that they had had an opportunity to engage with college services and activities.

2.2 Data Collection

The researcher gathered data at each college by using two methods: questionnaires and interviews. All of the participating learners completed the questionnaire, and 10 of them from each college participated in interviews.

2.2.1 Questionnaire

The research team developed and administered a questionnaire to all participating LINC 4–7 learners at both colleges. The purpose of the questionnaire was to capture a demographic profile of LINC

learners and a quantitative measure of their service and activity utilization. In addition, the researcher used the questionnaire data to identify possible interview participants. The researcher presented the participants with a list of activities and services and asked them to indicate (yes/no) whether they had used each of the services or taken part in the activities. Appendix B contains a list of services and activities for each college. At the end of the questionnaire the researcher asked the learners to indicate whether they were willing to participate in an interview about their experiences. If they checked “yes,” the researcher asked them to provide their contact information.

The project manager at each college explained the study in each classroom and provided the learners with project information. She encouraged them to visit a computer lab and complete the questionnaire within a one-week period. The project manager or a colleague at each college was present at each lab session to explain the instructions and ensure that the students understood the names of each service or activity. As an incentive, the students had an opportunity to enter their names in a draw at each college for an iPad mini. The participation rate was 96% at BVC and 91% at NQC.

2.2.2 Interviews

The interview component of this study falls within the qualitative research tradition of

seeking an in-depth understanding of the topic from the perspective of the participants (Merriam, 2009). For example, Lenton et al. (2014) described the qualitative component of their study of community service learning as developing “insight into the experiences of focus group participants” (p. 26), and Ross-Gordon and Brown-Haywood (2000) defined the goal of their study as hearing “first-hand the perceptions of African American adult students regarding . . . their student experience” (p. 20). With the goal of depth of understanding, qualitative interview research does not need to include all members of the population. Given the time involved in conducting interviews and analyzing the data, interview research often has to be limited to relatively small numbers. For these reasons, researchers must determine how many interviews they need to achieve the desired understanding and fit within the practical constraints of the research project.

The academic literature on qualitative interviewing suggested that interviewing continue until data saturation is reached; in other words, until no new information is being gathered. This is not always practical, so a number of scholars (e.g., Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000) have wrestled with the process of identifying a number. Guest et al. conducted a research study to determine at what point data saturation was reached and found that more than 90% of the themes reported in the findings had been identified after 12 interviews. Ross-Gordon and Brown-Haywood conducted a study somewhat similar to this one and interviewed 19 adults; they adhered to Patton’s (1990) guideline of 12–20 interviews. On this basis, the research team decided to interview 10 learners at each of the two colleges.

The researcher selected the interview participants by utilizing a purposeful sampling technique that involves identifying and selecting “information-rich” learners from whom we “can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 242). Scholars (e.g., Palinkas et al., 2013; Patton, 2002) have identified as many as 15 purposeful

sampling strategies. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used criterion sampling to identify and select learners who had had sufficient engagement with services and activities to be able to provide “information-rich” responses (Patton, 2002, p. 238). The researcher operationalized criterion sampling with this process:

- ◆ Based on the questionnaire responses, the applied research team at BVC ranked learners from the most yes responses to the fewest yes responses. The software generated a list of the first 60 names from that list, starting with the student who had used the most services and activities. The ranking did not include any individual or aggregate information about their questionnaire responses.
- ◆ Using an online random number generator, the project manager at each college drew names from the list and ensured a gender balance that reflected the CLB 4–7 population at BVC and the CLB 4–6 population at NQC. In addition, the selection process ensured a mix of countries of origin and CLB levels.
- ◆ The project managers contacted the interviewees and scheduled their appointments.

The interviewer conducted semistructured interviews with each participant in a private office at each college. This type of interview (Merriam, 2009) offers the advantages of ensuring the exploration of a consistent range of topics with each participant while giving the researcher an opportunity “to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 90).

The interview guide included questions designed to gather basic demographic data and elicit learners’ experiences and perceptions. The interviewer asked follow-up questions based on the participants’ responses. Each interview was about 60 minutes long and was recorded. At the end of each interview, the participants received a coffee gift card as an expression of thanks for their participation.

The interviewer identified the interview topics by analyzing the research questions, seeking input from project managers at each college, reviewing the colleges' existing questionnaires for learners, surveying the colleges' websites, and reviewing the limited relevant research. The topics included previous education, first experiences in Calgary/Edmonton, choice of college and satisfaction with the choice, initial experiences at the college, services and activities that participants utilized, classroom instruction on the Canadian way of life, goals and plans, cultural diversity in the classroom and in Canada, and the college experience in relation to settlement.

2.2.3 Pilot Study

The researcher reviewed drafts of the questionnaire and interview questions with the project managers and their faculty colleagues to ensure that the language was appropriate for LINC learners. He then administered the questionnaire to a total of 32 students at both colleges as a pilot study to assess the instructions, language appropriateness, organization, and presentation. For similar purposes, the interviewer conducted three pilot interviews at each college and recorded each one for review. He also offered the participants in the pilot study the same incentives.

The researcher made several changes on the basis of the pilot study. He decided to exclude CLB 4 students from the interviews because most did not have adequate language skills for an intensive interview; however, the researcher included them in the questionnaire. He then deleted several home-country questions from the interview protocol to allow time to complete the settlement and integration questions and made some wording changes in the questionnaire.

2.3 Data Analysis

The participants completed the questionnaires in the colleges' computer labs utilizing FluidSurveys software. The applied research team at BVC compiled the data for both colleges.



A professional transcriptionist transcribed the student interviews, and the researcher loaded the transcripts into MAXQDA, a software system designed for qualitative data analysis. He developed a coding system that incorporated two sources: the topics identified in the interview guide and topics that emerged from reading and rereading the transcripts. He coded—that is, identified—and labelled individual segments of the transcripts that each reflect one topic. As the process unfolded, the researcher continually reviewed and refined the coding system. During the coding process he modified the coding system and recoded some material during that process and the writing process. Once he completed the coding, he created categories, defined as themes or patterns (Merriam, 2009), which are clusters of codes that reflect topical unity. These categories became the basis for the reporting of the findings in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.4 Research Ethics

The researcher submitted a research ethics application to BVC's Research Ethics Board, consistent with college policies and procedures. The board offered feedback, and he submitted the needed revisions. The board granted approval on May 14, 2015. NQC approved the project based on the BVC approval. In order to ensure anonymity for the interviewees, students chose pseudonyms, and these are used in reporting the data.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

This chapter summarizes the literature review found in Appendix C. It examines the experiences and perceptions of adult immigrant language learners in college settings, specifically their backgrounds and goals, utilization of college programs and services, informal and formal engagement with the college community, and perceptions of experiences in relation to settlement and integration. Two broad categories of adult immigrant students access ESL courses to improve their language skills: those with basic literacy deficiencies and those who were well educated in their home countries. Many colleges offer programs for both types of students. In Canada, many of those programs are federally funded LINC programs. In addition, colleges provide pathways to academic and career postsecondary programs within colleges as well as at other postsecondary institutions and play a valuable role in the integration of newcomers.

The majority of adult immigrants improve their language skills in the first two years after arrival in Canada. However, adults with higher levels of education and language skills prior to migration have greater labour-force participation and higher earnings in Canada (Adamuti-Trache, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2005). Adults who immigrate with advanced degrees and active social lives, are well traveled, and have financial stability transition successfully to credit programs (Becker, 2011). Immigrant

learners who are older, less educated, and from low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to access formal education after migration. Adult immigrant students have noted that having to work and care for children has a negative effect on their learning (Lambert, 2009).

Adult immigrants register in ESL programs for practical concerns related to settlement, fuller participation in society, and improvement in their ability to communicate information (Lambert, 2009). These short-term goals move learners toward long-term goals of returning to work or to postsecondary education. Prior education has an impact on the ways in which a learner engages with the learning environment (Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2009). High literates have learning styles that enhance their engagement in learning toward a goal of postsecondary education. Learners with low literacy skills do not gain the same benefit from regular ESL classes because they often do not know how to take notes or write translations. These learners require different types of instruction to achieve the goal of improved language skills.

Community colleges often schedule classes to facilitate adult participation, because students tend to be older and, because of other commitments, require this type of support

(Bailey & Weininger, 2002). However, many community colleges do not provide the full spectrum of supports ESL students need for successful academic and linguistic transitions to higher levels of education (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009). A study of college structures that support the integration of immigrant students into Canadian society found successes in meeting students' needs for specific program and general education help; however, it also found a striking number of unmet needs (Kilbride & D'Arcangelo, 2002). Female students in particular reported a greater need for support than did males, particularly in finding shelter. College personnel need to be able to appropriately assess students and monitor their progress as they develop English proficiency. Programs that teach study skills, aid students' transition to other programs, and orient them to available resources help them to achieve success.

Departments that provide ESL instruction in community colleges must pay attention to the diversity of students, the employment and training of instructors, and ways in which students interact with instructors and other students (Blumenthal, 2002; Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000). Learners' sense of connectedness to the institution includes the physical proximity of their classes to the heart of the campus, instructors' acknowledgment and appreciation of diverse learning styles, and the inclusion of nontraditional students (Becker, 2011). The development of integration services, including access to information on orientations, classroom presentations, student newsletters, and career planning, would help these students to achieve successful transitions to credit programs.

Immigrant students often respond to cultural and language differences by viewing them as barriers to overcome (Ogbu, 1993). These learners might seek supports that aid them in developing strategies that help them to cross cultural boundaries. Faculty and

staff development opportunities focusing on diversity and equity can expand the numbers of faculty with cultural awareness who can provide support to these students (Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000). In Canada, recent immigration is characterized by the diversification of migration flows that shifts the composition of the newcomer population (Tolley, Biles, Vineburg, Burstein, & Frideres, 2011). Many visible minorities, including children of immigrants, have reported experiences of discrimination and exclusion. College programs that focus on diversity and equity can help to ease the transition for both immigrants and visible minority students.

The ways in which adult ESL students engage with the college community, both formally and informally, are shaped by who they are, where they fit in the cultural milieu, and with which social groups they associate. Family members who have completed advanced degrees are a mediating factor because they have a positive impact on adult ESL students' identities of themselves as learners (Janis, 2013). Those who engage in the college community tend to be open minded and self-confident. Being immersed in an English language environment is important to developing language skills as is the individual's inclination to seek out social interactions.

When ESL departments are dedicated to assisting students, accommodating schedules, and understanding students' lives, adult learners have more positive experiences (Becker, 2011). Learners who experience, evaluate, and utilize resources available to them tend to be the most successful college learners. Conversely, those with poor English language skills might face barriers to developing supporting relationships, miss important nuances in class, and find it difficult to complete assignments to the standards of their peers (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). ESL students might struggle with understanding which aspects of

their hidden identities are public and which are private (Vandrick, 1997). Hidden identities can mask fears and feelings of inadequacy. Because instructors have power, students might wonder how self-revelation will harm them; therefore, instructors need to actively shape safe classrooms.

Individual differences play out in ESL classrooms in complex ways, and students as well as instructors experience them (Waterhouse, 2011). Complexities in interactions suggest that learners should be engaged in more complex curriculum to enhance formal learning. One such difference is gender, which mediates both voice and opportunities to engage in ESL programs, as well as the experiences of those who are attending programs. Men and women might have different attitudes towards second languages and different opportunities to learn them.

Settlement in Canada has often been considered in terms of access to the labour market and the financial health of immigrants. Language acquisition for newcomers and longer term integration depend on informal social relations with family, friends, and community. Immigrants need skills in an official language to participate in activities such as voting and volunteering and in recreational activities (Derwing et al., 2009).

Recent immigrants have shared the experience of being outsiders looking in (Becker, 2011). This sense of marginality—the perception of detachment from the dominant culture—provokes anxiety and negatively affects the stamina and motivation necessary to reach desired goals. Adult immigrants with low cultural capital tend to remain on the borders as observers. Those with high cultural capital negotiate their way from the margins of their new social setting toward the centre by utilizing their preexisting knowledge. Engagement in the learning environment then leads to perceptions of mattering and of feeling connected and valued as members of a particular institution

or community. Immigrants often find that cultural challenges revolve around finding a place and a personal identity in both the new culture and their ethnic culture (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012).

Integration and settlement depend upon the ways in which newcomers are able to maintain their previous values while adapting to new surroundings. Individual agency helps immigrants to overcome barriers to labour-market access and to act upon structural barriers that exclude them from professions. As well, immigrants' occupations, their ability to network with local residents, and their perceived willingness to learn English and assimilate all shape the ways in which the mainstream receives them. Adult immigrants often begin their settlement journey in Canada by enrolling in ESL courses at community colleges, which tend to be accessible, offer a range of programming options, and provide pathways to future postsecondary programs or the workforce.



4 FINDINGS: BOW VALLEY COLLEGE

The researcher derived the findings for BVC presented in this chapter from a questionnaire survey and interviews; 201 individuals from CLB 4–7 completed all or some of the questionnaire. The applied research team at BVC ranked the participants from the most yes responses to the fewest yes responses. The project manager drew the 10 interview participants from the 60 students with the most yes responses according to the criteria identified in the methods section. Section 1 of this chapter presents the questionnaire data, followed by the interview data in section 2.

4.1 Questionnaire Data

As the methods section indicates, the research team did not include students enrolled in their first term of LINC in the study because they would not have had sufficient opportunity to become engaged with the services and activities. As a result, a total of 209 CLB 4–7 students were eligible to participate in the survey; 201 or 96% completed all or some of the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

Table 4.1 presents key demographic data about the 201 participants. The high rate of participation means that the demographic data provide a comprehensive portrait of CLB 4–7 students who had been enrolled in the college for at least one semester. The female-male ratio (67.8 %–32.2%) reflects current LINC enrolment patterns. Forty-nine percent of the participants were in the 18–29 age group with another 45.5% in the 30–49 age group. Almost eighty-three percent have at least a high school education. More than 50% hold a postsecondary credential. Almost 50% have lived in Canada two years or less. Eighty-one percent have been enrolled at the college for two to four terms. Forty-eight source countries are included in the participant group; the largest source countries are China, Iran, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Vietnam.

Table 4.1 Participants' Demographic Profile

| Variables | | n | Percentage* |
|--|--|-----|-------------|
| Sex | Female | 135 | 67.8 |
| | Male | 64 | 32.2 |
| Age group | 18–25 | 76 | 38.0 |
| | 26–29 | 22 | 11.0 |
| | 30–39 | 48 | 24.0 |
| | 40–49 | 43 | 21.5 |
| | 50–59 | 7 | 3.5 |
| | 60–69 | 3 | 1.5 |
| | 70 plus | 1 | 0.5 |
| Education at arrival (Yrs of education before Canada) | 1–6 years of school | 10 | 5.0 |
| | 7–11 years of school | 24 | 12.1 |
| | High school graduate | 58 | 29.1 |
| | College certificate, diploma, or technical qualification | 40 | 20.1 |
| | University graduate—Bachelor's | 51 | 25.6 |
| | University graduate—Master's, Doctorate | 8 | 4.0 |
| | Professional qualification | 8 | 4.0 |
| CLB level | CLB 4 | 71 | 35.5 |
| | CLB 5 | 54 | 27.0 |
| | CLB 6 | 34 | 17.0 |
| | CLB 7 | 41 | 20.5 |
| No. of terms at BVC | Second term | 93 | 46.5 |
| | Third term | 38 | 19.0 |
| | Fourth term | 31 | 15.5 |
| | Fifth term | 20 | 10.0 |
| | Sixth term | 10 | 5.0 |
| | Seventh term | 8 | 4.0 |
| Years lived in Canada | Less than 1 year | 45 | 22.6 |
| | 1–2 years | 94 | 47.2 |
| | 3–4 years | 35 | 17.6 |
| | 5–6 years | 9 | 4.5 |
| | 7 or more years | 16 | 8.0 |
| Home Country | China | 47 | 24.6 |
| | Iran | 22 | 11.5 |
| | Colombia | 15 | 7.9 |
| | Ethiopia | 11 | 5.8 |
| | Vietnam | 10 | 5.2 |
| | Sudan | 8 | 4.2 |
| | Afghanistan | 7 | 3.7 |
| | Haiti | 5 | 2.6 |
| | Democratic Republic of Congo | 4 | 2.1 |
| | Eritrea | 4 | 2.1 |
| | India | 4 | 2.1 |
| | Iraq | 4 | 2.1 |
| | Nepal | 4 | 2.1 |
| | Myanmar | 3 | 1.6 |
| | Venezuela | 3 | 1.6 |
| | Other (33 Countries) | 40 | 20.9 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

4.1.2 Utilization of Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

The services and activities provided at BVC are listed in Table 4.2 along with the utilization rates for each service or activity. The services are designed to support students' learning (e.g., Library and Learning Commons, tutor), educational and career pathways (e.g., Career Services), settlement and integration (e.g., Learner Success Officers), and well-being (e.g., Counselling Services). The activities offer students opportunities for further involvement in the life of the college and the community. Further information about the services and activities is provided in Appendix B.

Utilization rates range from a high of 73.9% to a low of 18.7%. Ten of the 20 services and activities were used by 40% or more of the participants. Various factors influenced the utilization rates. Not all of the students needed some of the services: accessibility and health. Some students recognized that they did not need a particular service—for example, transfer credit fair—at this time in their language education but would use it at some future time. Orientation and mentoring are part of the English Language Learning (ELL) programs, which means that students receive more information about these services and have easier access to them. As a general pattern, utilization is the highest for services that are core to students' current academic program and eventual success in the job market.

Table 4.2 Utilization Rates for Each Learner Support Service and Campus Activity

| Services or Activities | | n | Percentage* |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Services | Accessibility Services | 52 | 26.5 |
| | Career Services | 97 | 49.0 |
| | Conversation Club in the Library | 76 | 38.4 |
| | Counselling Services | 88 | 44.4 |
| | Financial Aid | 51 | 25.8 |
| | Health Services | 41 | 20.9 |
| | Writing Club in the Library | 52 | 26.5 |
| | Job Fair | 97 | 49.0 |
| | Learner Success Officers | 112 | 57.1 |
| | Orientation | 131 | 66.5 |
| | Registrar's Office | 112 | 56.9 |
| | Library and Learning Commons | 147 | 73.9 |
| | Scholarships and Awards | 54 | 27.6 |
| | Student Advisors | 91 | 46.2 |
| | Student Mentoring | 95 | 48.0 |
| | Transfer Credit Fair | 39 | 19.9 |
| | Tutor in Tutorial Centre | 103 | 52.3 |
| Activities | Intercultural Centre | 72 | 36.4 |
| | Students' Association | 37 | 18.7 |
| | Volunteer and Community Fair | 60 | 30.5 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

Table 4.3 summarizes the students' utilization of services and activities in four bands. Sixty-two percent of the participants utilized six or more services.

Table 4.3 Students' Engagement with Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

| Number of Services and Activities | n | Percentage* |
|-----------------------------------|----|-------------|
| 0–5 | 76 | 37.8 |
| 6–10 | 67 | 33.3 |
| 11–15 | 33 | 16.4 |
| 16–20 | 25 | 12.4 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

4.2 Interview Data

4.2.1 The Participants

Table 4.4 identifies the key demographic characteristics of the 10 participants. Six are female and four are male. The 10 participants come from seven different countries, and these students were chosen to reflect the major source countries of LINC students at BVC. They had lived in Canada for one to nine years, with eight having lived in Calgary for three years or less. Their ages ranged from 22 to 42 years. Their previous education ranges from high school to PhD, with six having two or more years of postsecondary education. Nine are at CLB levels 5 and higher. The researcher included one student at CLB level 3 to provide representation from a major source country. The length of the students' study at BVC ranges from two to six terms, with seven ranging from two to four terms. The student names used in this report are pseudonyms chosen by the interviewees.

Table 4.4 Interviewees

| Name | Gender | Age | Country of Origin | Previous Education | Residence in Canada (years) | CLB Levels Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing | Study at BVC (in terms, incl. current term) |
|-----------|--------|-----|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Aziza | F | 22 | Afghanistan | 2 years college | 1 | 6, 7, 7, 7 | 3 |
| Dahelok | M | 24 | Eritrea | High school | 2 | 6, 6, 7, 7 | 5 |
| Gabriela | F | 28 | Colombia | High school | 9 | 5, 5, 5, 4 | 6 |
| Idris | M | 24 | Sudan | 11 years | 1 | 3, 3, 3, 3 | 4 |
| Lavin | F | 42 | Iran | PhD | 1 | 6, 7, 6, 6 | 2 |
| Ling | F | 42 | China | College diploma | 9 | 5, 5, 7, 5 | 2 (plus 2 terms, 8 years ago) |
| May | F | 42 | China | Master's | 3 | 6, 6, 7, 6 | 4 |
| Mohamad | M | 40 | Syria | 2 years college | 3 | 6, 7, 6, 7 | 4 |
| Solmaz | F | 37 | Iran | Bachelor's | 1 | 7, 7, 7, 7 | 2 |
| Temesegen | M | 25 | Eritrea | High school | 2 | 5, 5, 5, 4 | 2 |

Although the participants' lives before Canada was not a focus of this research, the students provided some background information relevant to their experiences as adult learners. Lavin, Solmaz, and May had worked in professional roles as a research assistant, engineer, and university instructor, respectively. Four spoke about how conflicts in their home or previous countries had affected their lives. Mohamad fled Syria when the house next to his was blown up. Temesegen and Dahelok are of Eritrean ethnic origin, but they had fled to Sudan to escape indefinite, compulsory military service. They and Idris talked about the challenges of living as foreigners and non-Muslims in Sudan. Aziza had lived in Pakistan after having left Afghanistan.

Each participant had done research and planning for his/her educational and career path after LINC. Nine identified some form of postsecondary education ranging from police training to engineering. They recognized that further English study—the English for Academic Purposes program—would be necessary after LINC to qualify for postsecondary admission. Several of the nine would also have to do academic upgrading to meet the entrance requirements. Even though Solmaz had been a professional engineer in Iran, she believed that she should take a short course certification at SAIT to improve her job prospects. Ling had taken a college program in China, but she said, “I don’t think it is good [recognized] here, so I want to take something like day care or nursing.” May holds a master’s degree from China and was a university instructor. She said that it would take five or six years of study before she could continue as a professor, so she is considering taking a teacher assistant or some

other program at BVC. Mohamad had studied business in Syria, but he is planning to take the business administration diploma at BVC. Lavin holds a PhD and is hoping to enter the Calgary workforce at her previous professional level.

4.2.2 Choosing BVC

Since 2014 CIC has given LINC students an opportunity to choose where they would study English. Calgary has a range of providers, including community agencies such as the YMCA, settlement agencies, and private providers. One of the goals of this study was to understand students’ choice to study at BVC and their perceptions of the college in relation to their choice.

Each participant clearly explained why he/she chose BVC. The primary reason was reputational. Eight spoke about friends and family who had recommended the college, many of whom had attended ELL at BVC. In addition, some participants talked about facilities such as computer labs and the campus itself. Convenient access by CTrain or bus was the third reason. The students made the following reputational and facilities comments:

I had attended a part-time community LINC program. I chose the college because it has a full-time program, it has equipment, and it is more academic. Here I can improve my listening in listening lab and computer lab. You can learn about the computer, do research, and how to use computer. ~ *Mohamad*

When I came to Canada, my uncle and friend, they say Bow Valley is good. They say if you have to wait four months for Bow Valley, it is okay. ~ *Idris*

I chose this college because this college has a long history. I think I trust this college. And they are famous for teaching language. They have a good relationship with government. ~ *May*

My friend told me if you want to continue career goal, study here. I want to continue Nursing, so that's a good pathway to go. They have coordination with SAIT if you want to go to SAIT. ~ *Dabelok*

My aunt preferred us to come to Bow Valley and the Youth in Transition program. My cousins have already studied in this program, so they prefer us to go because the program is especially for the youth. ~ *Aziza*

The interviewer then asked the participants about their satisfaction with their experiences as LINC students. All of their responses were very positive, and they cited many different reasons that cannot easily be clustered into several topics. They paid particular attention to their instructors and their teaching strategies, with which the researcher deals later in this chapter. Solmaz spoke about the library, commuting by CTrain, and the day care for her daughter. She was pleased that "all the family, my husband, my daughter, and I are at Bow Valley every day." Mohamad was "happy because I improve my English," and he had learned "something new about the cultures of different countries over the world." Gabriela was very confident about her progress: "I see every day what I learn. Every day I see my goals. Before I say, 'When I gonna understand English?' But now I say 'Wow! What I learn is nice and helpful for me.'" Aziza explained that her LINC program is preparing her to meet her educational goals: "This program prepares

students to go to their career programs or go to English for Academic Purposes or upgrading. While we study LINC, they guide you what to do next. In other programs that my mom and dad are doing, they don't provide such opportunities." In addition, Aziza spoke positively of services such as the library that the college offers, as well as workshops and speakers from CIC and other organizations. She said that "immigrant people need more opportunities, more encouragement from teachers and other people, so the teachers arrange presentations to let us know about opportunities."

As another way of assessing the participants' satisfaction, the interviewer asked them if there was anything that they did not like about LINC at BVC. Two students talked about scheduling issues. One wished that her class would start at 9:00 instead of 8:00, and one wished that her level of LINC would be offered in the afternoon. The other students did not offer comments.

4.2.3 Life as a Student

First week

LINC students are newcomers to Canada, newcomers to a Canadian college environment, and older students who are returning to school or attending school for the first time. They are learning the language that they will need to work and live in their new country. To capture their experiences and perceptions, the interviewer asked them to think back to their first week as LINC students at BVC and talk about that week.

Most of the participants reported feelings of shyness or nervousness or stress, which disappeared quickly. As they talked about their first week, they conveyed an underlying spirit of optimism and excitement about learning English. This spirit was stronger than any of the early negative feelings:



I'm so old, why should I go to this class? Then I go to the class. I feel many of the people are older than me. Then I became more relaxed. ~ *Lavin*

I was nervous the first week. My husband was trying to find a job, and I had to take care of my little boy. A little bit pressure, I think. ~ *Ling*

Everything sound so weird. When I listen, I don't understand. I can't speak too much, and when I speak, I can't make a full sentence because I have no grammar and my vocabulary is not enough to make a sentence or to make a conversation. ~ *Mohamad*

I was happy because I study English. I like to speak English because outside it's hard if you don't speak English. ~ *Idris*

I felt scared and shy. Then the teacher make us feel comfortable by doing activities and involve us in conversation in a group. ~ *Aziza*

After they talked about their first week in LINC, the interviewer asked the participants to talk about their current comfort level to measure their satisfaction with LINC and BVC. The common themes in their responses are their increasing proficiency in English and their increasing confidence as students and newcomers. Mohamad said, "I'm so confident right now. I learn a lot of things like strategies, and the activities make me have the knowledge of everything. Like, I can start a conversation with people. And I can do everything." Aziza shared Mohamad's growing sense of confidence: "I feel confident. By talking to other students and participating with them, it's good to create your confidence level, and by being close to the teachers and being involved in class activities." Solmaz focused on her positive experiences with diversity: "I feel more comfortable in this college [compared to my experience in Iran], and I meet a lot of people. I make a lot of friends with different cultures, different countries, and I like the environment of this college."

Instructors

The participants gave detailed descriptions of their instructors and their approaches to teaching. All of them described their instructors as patient, friendly, and always helpful. In addition to providing instruction to the whole class, the instructors are very willing to offer individual instruction during class and outside class time. The students cited numerous specifics about their instructional strategies. The instructors use time effectively, are organized, and use a variety of teaching strategies. Several commented on what can be summarized as the instructors' systematic approach to teaching. Classes are well planned and organized, and the students could see their conscious effort in their carefully sequenced teaching and learning activities. Two also commented on instructors' emphasis on learning how to learn and using particular lesson content in their daily lives. One appreciated her instructor's use of small-group work and the reorganizing of the groups and partners on a regular basis. They valued the language lab as well as the instructors' emphasis on life skills in Canada and career planning.

The following student comments reflect the above summary:

The instructors are very serious. Their timing is perfect. They encourage students to speak, and they teach students how to learn. They teach a strategy. They teach us to learn by ourselves. ~ *May*

The instructors are very nice, and if I don't understand, they just try to explain again, again, and again. ~ *Ling*

In my back home the teachers are separate from the students. They put themselves in a very nice position, and the students are nothing for them. Our instructors come to you, they sit with you, and then they help you write. ~ *Temesegeen*

My teacher this term is so active. I never saw anyone like him. He never wastes time. He is always on time and then always using the time to teach students. ~ *Lavin*

Advice to college

To determine the participants' satisfaction with LINC and BVC in another way, the interviewer asked them what advice they would give the college. Several were uncomfortable with the question and could not offer any advice. Several echoed Aziza's statement: "I think they don't need advice. They are good."

Five participants made concrete suggestions. Lavin thought that the instructors should recognize the emotional stress that newcomers face. She felt pressure from her instructors at times. She also wanted the college to work with the government to ensure that other postsecondary institutions more widely accept CLB assessments. Solmaz arrived in Calgary as an independent immigrant. From her perspective, she thought the college should do marketing to newcomers like herself who do not have the support of settlement agencies and networks of family and friends. She suggested offering workshops to newcomers to attract them to the college. May thought that some students are lonely and suggested recreational activities to bring them together. Newcomers face the challenge of balancing the need for income with the need to learn English, according to Ling. She suggested more flexible scheduling to meet the needs of students who have to work but also want to study. Dahelok suggested more instructional variety at the lower levels of LINC.

Advice to a friend

To capture more of the participants' experiences and perceptions as students, the interviewer encouraged them to talk about the advice that they would give a friend from their home country who was enrolling in LINC at BVC. Their comments fall into two categories: general observations about the process of second-language learning and more specific observations about LINC at BVC.

Ling, Mohamad, and Dahelok would tell their friends to be very serious about their studies. Ling interrupted her studies by eight years, which she regretted. She emphasized, "Keep going until you get your goal. You will have the job you wanted." Dahelok cautioned against taking just any job to earn money: "It's better to sacrifice your time for five years; then you have a better job, and you can get money easily."

May would urge a friend from China to speak as much as possible, because in Canada "the teachers like to listen to students, like to listen to their opinions." She also emphasized being patient, because it takes time to learn a language; but as time passes, "you get great improvement." On a related topic Gabriela said, "Don't think in Spanish; only English. Find one friend who is speaking English, and watch TV in English."

Solmaz specifically referred to the college and would recommend LINC at BVC because of the library, career services, and bursary funding. She did not think that other LINC providers offered these services. Idris would tell a friend, "It is easy to learn English" because of the teachers, listening lab, computer lab, and the



websites that the teachers recommend. Aziza would recommend the Youth in Transition program because of the opportunities to learn about Canada.

4.2.4 Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

The questionnaire data tables in the first part of this chapter report service and activity utilization rates for all participants as well as utilization rates for individual services and activities. In this section of the chapter, the researcher utilizes the interview data to report on 10 students' utilization of those services and activities.

Table 4.5 presents the interviewees' utilization of each service or activity. Based on a reading of the transcripts, the researcher decided to cluster some of the services

because the students did not make clear distinctions among them because of the similarity of purpose or location. These clusters include career services and job fair, and Registrar's Office and student advisors.

The interviewer asked the students to indicate their utilization of each service or activity. If they said yes to utilization, he encouraged them to talk about the ways in which they had used the service or activity. Their comments are reported in Tables 4.6–4.11 for the six services and activities, including the two clusters identified above, which five or more students had used. A frequency count is provided for the number of students who mentioned each particular function or purpose.

Table 4.5 Interviewees' Utilization Rates for Each Learner Support Service and Campus Activity

| Services or Activities | | Aziza | Dahelok | Gabriela | Idris | Lavin | Ling | May | Mohamad | Solmaz | Temesegegn | Total |
|------------------------|---|-------|---------|----------|-------|-------|------|-----|---------|--------|------------|-------|
| Services | Accessibility Services | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | Career Services and Job Fair | Y | Y | Y | | | | Y | | Y | Y | 6 |
| | Conversation Club in the Library | Y | Y | | | | | Y | | Y | Y | 5 |
| | Counselling Services | | | Y | | | | | Y | Y | | 3 |
| | Financial Aid | | Y | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Health Services | Y | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | Learner Success | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | 8 |
| | Library and Learning Commons | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | 10 |
| | Orientation | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | 9 |
| | Registrar's Office and Student Advisors | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | 8 |
| | Scholarships and Awards | | Y | | | | | | | Y | | 2 |
| | Student Mentoring | | | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y | | 4 |
| | Transfer Credit Fair | | | | | | | | Y | | | 1 |
| | Tutoring Centre | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | Y | | Y | Y | 7 |
| | Writing Club in the Library | | Y | | | | | | | | Y | 2 |
| Activities | Intercultural Centre | Y | | | Y | | | | | Y | | 3 |
| | Students' Association | | | | | Y | | Y | | Y | | 3 |
| | Volunteer and Community Fair | | Y | | | Y | | Y | | | Y | 4 |

Table 4.6 Library and Learning Commons

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Books with varied reading levels for ELL learners | 5 |
| Variety of audios and videos | 1 |
| Study space | 4 |
| Computer commons | 3 |
| Staff help with finding information | 3 |
| Staff help with computer commons | 3 |
| Researching information for classes | 4 |

Table 4.7 Orientation

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Workshops with different topics (e.g., learning strategies and funding) | 2 |
| Locations on campus (e.g., library and prayer room) | 7 |
| Familiarization with college environment and expectations | 3 |
| Familiarization with services | 5 |
| BVC online account | 1 |
| Information handouts | 1 |

Table 4.8 Career Services and Job Fair

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Workshops (e.g., networking and professional registration) | 2 |
| Resume preparation | 2 |
| Information about specific careers | 1 |
| Career planning | 2 |
| Job search strategies | 1 |
| Job Fair | 9 |

Table 4.9 Learner Success Officers

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Information about funding and funding applications | 7 |
| Planning for education after LINC | 5 |

Table 4.10 Registrar's Office and Student Advisors

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Educational planning | 4 |
| Funding | 2 |
| Confirmation of student status | 1 |
| Career planning | 1 |
| Application and registration processes | 4 |

Table 4.11 Tutorial Centre, Conversation Club, Writing Club

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Reading | 2 |
| Writing | 4 |
| Speaking/conversation | 6 |
| Grammar | 1 |

Table 4.5 indicates that ten of the services and activities were used by one to four students. None of the students used Accessibility Services, although two had seen other students receive assistance with visual and hearing challenges. One student's mother, also a student, received assistance with mobility issues. Two students reported working with counselors. Mohamad worked on long-range educational planning. Gabriela sought help with family and financial problems. Solmaz had received a childcare bursary, and Dahelok had applied unsuccessfully for a bursary. Two students had used Health Services. Two students had been mentors, and two students had been mentees when they were at the lower levels of LINC. One student had participated in the Transfer Fair. Three students had participated in social activities sponsored by the Students' Association. Four students had been volunteers, including two who supported the college orientation program. One of the four was volunteering with an immigrant women's organization in the city. Three had participated in activities that the Intercultural Centre offered.

The following quotations are the participants' comments about individual services:

I didn't have any good information about APEGGA [engineering professional association] when I took part in this program. I understand how I have to apply for APEGGA, which steps I need to fill out the forms. It was very helpful. ~ *Solmaz*

For the percentage of students who are already educated persons, like PhD, they [Learner Success Officers] could not give enough information. ~ *Lavin*

When I started here, [I] was going to the Tutorial Centre for my reading. It was helpful. Everything is helpful when you are a newcomer. ~ *Dabelok*

The library is really good. My classmates and I do presentations together. We always stay at the library, search online. ~ *Ling*

I was a mentor with LINC practical students. They have very good listening and speaking, so I can improve my speaking and listening there. I can help them with reading and writing, but I can improve my speaking. ~ *Solmaz*

4.2.5 Settlement and Integration

This section presents the participants' perspectives on their settlement and integration. To draw out their experiences and perceptions, the interviewer first asked them to talk about their challenges and successes as newcomers to Calgary and then to talk about their goals for the year 2020 as a way of capturing the life that they were seeking in Calgary. In both cases, the participants spoke about themselves and their families, which presented a fuller picture of settlement and integration. Table 4.4 shows that seven of the interviewees had lived in Calgary for three years or less; two, Gabriela and Ling, had lived in Calgary for nine years.

The second part of this section explores the college's role in facilitating settlement and integration. The interviewer asked the participants about their classroom learning and college experiences in relation to their lives as newcomers to Calgary, as well as what they had learned about the Canadian way of life in LINC and at the college and their understanding of the cultural diversity at the college and in Calgary.

Challenges and successes

Six students identified language as their greatest challenge when they arrived in Calgary. None had had significant opportunity to learn English before they arrived in Canada. Mohamad found a job quickly with a landscaping firm. His co-workers spoke only English, and he was frustrated with his inability to communicate with them: "At break time I was alone. I can't understand. I can't speak. I got upset with that situation. And I decide to learn English." He also spoke about the challenges of dealing with official correspondence from the government or businesses: "If you don't understand, just sign, maybe you do something wrong."

Five students identified finding a job as a major challenge, largely because they lacked functional English. In addition, May talked about employers' unwillingness to accept her Chinese master's degree and university teaching experience. She said her experience is common. Lavin's husband had been a university professor, but his first job was at a gas bar. Temesegen said that finding a job was very difficult

because of cultural differences. Canadian expectations with regard to nonverbal communication in an interview were very new for him, and it was difficult to adopt new norms, for example, for eye contact. It took Dahelok four months to find a job because he arrived in the summer when students were in the labour market.

The participants identified a variety of other challenges, such as finding housing, daycare, and schooling. Ling talked about her loneliness and how quiet Calgary is compared to Shanghai. May had to wait much longer for surgery than she would have had to in China. Two people talked about having arrived in Calgary during the winter. Temesegen spoke about his lack of confidence as of result of his experience as a refugee in Sudan, because “everybody push you.” Two others mentioned the challenge of finding their way around a new city without language skills.

When the interviewer asked about their successes, the participants focused on learning English in relation to job opportunities and making a life for themselves in Calgary. Solmaz said she and her family had arrived in Calgary just as oil prices dropped, but she and her husband would focus on their English during the economic downturn so that they would be prepared for good jobs. Mohamad noted that when “I learned the language, I can go outside the house; I can live in the community.” When he arrived in Calgary, he wanted to talk to and help his neighbors, but he was unable to do so. He found that difficult, “but right now, I can go to anyone.” Initially, he depended on his brother and a friend for translation, but now “I can read, understand, and I can respond.” Ling, Temesegen, and Gabriela also spoke about their developing English proficiency.

Even though the interviewer asked about their successes as newcomers to Calgary, Dahelok and Aziza drew on experiences, perhaps understandably, from their homelands. Dahelok talked about the difficulties of escaping from Eritrea and being a refugee in the Sudan. Aziza identified “having a better life in Calgary in a safe country. There is no war. Nothing can happen to you like Afghanistan and Pakistan.”

Four students discussed their volunteer experience, their jobs, or their spouses’ jobs. Ling’s husband was successful as a journeyman although he had been an engineer in China. She was very satisfied with her experience as a volunteer at her son’s school. Lavin’s husband now had a teaching job that was somewhat comparable to his previous university position. She was very proud of her volunteer role with the Calgary Immigrant Women’s Association, which she described as respectful and as empowering women. Aziza, Temesegen, and Dahelok had jobs at McDonald’s, Superstore, and Tim Horton’s, respectively, which had helped them to master English.

Year 2020

The students’ comments about their goals for the year 2020 fall into three groups: English skills and additional education, jobs, and family. In terms of English, they all want to reach the level of proficiency that they need for their further educational and/or career goals. Nine of the 10 have additional educational goals at BVC or another Calgary institution. Some will have to do EAP after LINC and possibly academic upgrading.

All have relatively defined career goals. Solmaz, an engineer, hoped that she and her husband, also an engineer, would “find a good job relevant to our background, education, and work experience.” Ling wanted a professional job so that “I can do something for others and make myself happy.” After he completed a business administration diploma, Mohamad hoped to be an employee or open his own business. Other career goals include sonography, practical nursing or engineering, justice or nursing, and police studies or heavy equipment operations.

In terms of family life goals, the repeated reference to “good jobs” reflects a focus on family well-being. Solmaz wanted her family to have “a stable life.” Mohamad wanted he and his wife to complete postsecondary programs, and “we will build ourselves and our family.” Idris referred to Canada as “peace, peace, peace.” Dahelok, probably reflecting his refugee experience, said “a happy life in Calgary is family, have

your own house, build your own family and have a child." Aziza also wanted her family to have their own house as well as success in managing their finances.

The role of the college

The mandate of the LINC program is to ensure that newcomers learn the English or French needed for effective settlement in and integration into Canada. To capture the students' experiences with and perceptions of LINC in relation to its mandate, the interviewer asked them how their college experiences had assisted them as newcomers. In relation to English proficiency, career development, and citizenship broadly defined, they responded:

English proficiency

I was just shy. But now I can talk with you, and maybe it is not 100 percent, but I can talk. ~ *Lavin*

When I came to Calgary, I was zero English. Now if I want to speak to anyone in Calgary, they stop and speak to me. ~ *Idris*

When I came to Calgary, I was scared, and I don't have that much confidence. I didn't think that I can speak well. But, by taking these classes, it helped me a lot. ~ *Aziza*

Career development

All of our teachers encourage us to try and work hard to achieve our goals, and they give us some strategies how we can improve our life and improve our skills. ~ *Solmaz*

The teachers tell the students to push to get some good jobs. My teacher gave us some motivation and encouragement. ~ *Temesegeen*

The student advisor helps us to recognize our goals and what steps to take to reach those goals. ~ *Aziza*

Citizenship

I changed my mind when I came here because I received something new to me. I have to think about not only myself; I have to think about the community and the country where I live. I get this idea from my teachers. ~ *Mohamad*

I have learned a lot about Canadian culture, and I learned how to speak to another person, how to share with another person. ~ *Gabriela*

Canadian way of life

To further understand LINC's contribution to immigrants' settlement and integration, the interviewer asked the participants what they had learned in class about the Canadian way of life. The largest category of responses included cultural norms with regard to eye contact, greetings and hand shaking, social distance, and politeness. A second category included functional interactions such as school visits and visits to the doctor. A third grouping included newcomers' observations about these aspects of Canadian society:

- Young people's independence from their parents at 18
- The importance of outdoor recreation in the summer
- Environmental protection
- The emphasis on equality of treatment
- The importance of family vacations and recreation
- The expectation that children are under adult care
- An individual's responsibility for healthy nutrition

Several students mentioned learning about the Canadian government, the provinces, and Canadian landmarks.

One particularly reflective and candid student spoke about his changing understanding of the role of women based on his college experience:

In our country, there is no respect for women. Here, there is respect for women. Women are equal with men. In my home country, I didn't give her [my wife] the opportunity to grow and participate. But I have learned that a woman does everything to participate, to go to the community, go shopping, go to the doctor, do many things.

Cultural diversity

About 50 countries and cultures are reflected in BVC's LINC student population. Each classroom is a microcosm of the world's cultures. Most students come from relatively homogeneous societies, so the LINC classroom is an opportunity for them to learn about the diversity of Calgary and Canada. The interviewer asked the students what they were learning about other cultures, the instruction they were receiving about cultural diversity, and their developing understanding of diversity in the classroom and in Calgary society.

The participants were learning about other cultures from classroom activities and informal conversations. In terms of specifics, they talked about hearing about the foods, clothing, traditions, celebrations, and the norms of other cultures. One Islamic student said that she had learned about the similarities among Islamic cultures, and another Islamic student pointed to differences across such cultures that she had not encountered before. Another student acknowledged that she had heard about cultural practices regarding women's roles that were foreign to and uncomfortable for her.

The students had had a great deal of exposure to each other's cultures as part of the LINC classes. They were required to make presentations about their cultures. Sometimes an instructor would pose a general topic such as health and ask the students to talk about it from their cultural background. Certainly, the students had received and internalized messages from their instructors about mutual respect. Gabriela explained that the instructors focus on the principle that each culture has its definition of what is polite and impolite. Understanding cultural norms around politeness gives students a framework for interactions across cultures. Solmaz indicated that instructors also discourage the discussion of religion in class because it "brings some conflicts, and they avoid the things that bring conflict. Maybe some topics are not good for discussion." They also discuss culture shock.

On the whole, the students spoke very positively about their exposure to other cultures, and they were comfortable with diversity. Instructors have taught, according to Ling, “that Canadian culture is a lot of different cultures together because people come from different countries. Don’t forget your culture. That’s your culture. And try to understand another culture. Learn more about cultures from other countries.” The instructors’ emphasis on mutual respect has been very influential. Lavin said, “There are never little tensions in class, because all students respect each other.” Mohamad commented, “You have to respect everyone, and you have to have an open mind.” He added that he has to understand other people’s cultures so that he can communicate and work with them. Students understand that differences are culturally based and recognize that what is acceptable in one culture might not be acceptable in another. Solmaz said, “It’s surprising to me how this many different cultures can get together and get along and have a good relationship with each other.” All of the participants supported her statement about “a good relationship,” but no one else thought that it was surprising.

At the same time, Lavin talked about a disagreement with another student over conflicts between their home countries. She said to him, “We migrated to Canada. We are professional. We don’t have to fight anymore. I don’t want to talk about our countries.” Her student colleague accepted this. In addition, she discussed her friendship group from her country, which transcends religious conflicts at home.



5 FINDINGS: NORQUEST COLLEGE

The researcher derived the findings for NQC presented in this chapter from a questionnaire survey and interviews; 171 individuals from CLB 4–6 completed all or some of the questionnaire. The applied research team at BVC ranked the participants from the most yes responses to the fewest yes responses. The project manager at NQC then drew the 10 interview participants from the 60 students with the most yes responses according to the criteria identified in the methods section. Section 1 of this chapter presents the questionnaire data, followed by the interview data in section 2.

5.1 Questionnaire Data

As the methods section indicates, the research team did not include students enrolled in their first term of LINC in the study because they would not have had sufficient opportunity to become engaged with the services and activities. As a result, a total of 188 LINC 4–7 students were eligible to participate in the survey; 171 or 91% completed all or some of the questionnaire.

5.1.1 Demographic Profile

Table 5.1 presents key demographic data about the 171 participants. The high rate of participation means that the demographic data provide a comprehensive portrait of CLB 4–7 students who have been enrolled in the college for at least one semester. The female-male ratio (68.5 %–31.5%) broadly reflects current LINC enrolment patterns. Thirty-four percent of the participants were in the 18–29 age group, with another 56.8% in the 30–49 age group. Sixty-five percent had at least a high school education, and 40% hold a postsecondary credential. Fifty-four percent had lived in Canada two years or less. Seventy-five percent had been enrolled at the college for two to four terms. Fifty-one source countries were included in the participant group; the largest source countries are China, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Colombia.

Table 5.1 Participants' Demographic Profile

| Variables | | n | Percentage* |
|--|--|-----|-------------|
| Sex | Female | 115 | 68.5 |
| | Male | 53 | 31.5 |
| Age group | 18–25 | 30 | 17.8 |
| | 26–29 | 27 | 16.0 |
| | 30–39 | 60 | 35.5 |
| | 40–49 | 36 | 21.3 |
| | 50–59 | 11 | 6.5 |
| | 60–69 | 5 | 3.0 |
| | 70 plus | 0 | 0.0 |
| Education at arrival (Yrs of education before Canada) | 1–6 years of school | 30 | 17.6 |
| | 7–11 years of school | 29 | 17.1 |
| | High school graduate | 43 | 25.3 |
| | College certificate, diploma, or technical qualification | 28 | 16.5 |
| | University graduate—Bachelor's | 26 | 15.3 |
| | University graduate—Master's, Doctorate | 5 | 2.9 |
| | Professional qualification | 9 | 5.3 |
| CLB level Reading & writing | CLB 4 | 59 | 34.5 |
| | CLB 5 | 68 | 39.8 |
| | CLB 6 | 44 | 25.7 |
| | CLB 7 | 0 | 0.0 |
| CLB level Listening & speaking | CLB 4 | 47 | 28.3 |
| | CLB 5 | 71 | 42.8 |
| | CLB 6 | 47 | 28.3 |
| | CLB 7 | 1 | 0.6 |
| No. of terms at NQC | Second term | 48 | 28.1 |
| | Third term | 57 | 33.3 |
| | Fourth term | 23 | 13.5 |
| | Fifth term | 17 | 9.9 |
| | Sixth term | 12 | 7.0 |
| | Seventh term | 14 | 8.2 |
| Years lived in Canada | Less than 1 year | 25 | 14.7 |
| | 1–2 years | 67 | 39.4 |
| | 3–4 years | 45 | 26.5 |
| | 5 – 6 years | 19 | 11.2 |
| | 7 or more years | 14 | 8.2 |
| Home Country | China | 24 | 14.6 |
| | Somalia | 22 | 13.4 |
| | Ethiopia | 19 | 11.6 |
| | Eritrea | 15 | 9.1 |
| | Colombia | 9 | 5.5 |
| | Ukraine | 6 | 3.7 |
| | Guinea | 4 | 2.4 |
| | Haiti | 4 | 2.4 |
| | South Korea | 4 | 2.4 |
| | Congo | 3 | 1.8 |
| | Ivory Coast | 3 | 1.8 |
| | Nepal | 3 | 1.8 |
| | Turkey | 3 | 1.8 |
| | Other (38 Countries) | 45 | 27.4 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

5.1.2 Utilization of Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

The services and activities provided at NQC are listed in Table 5.2 along with the utilization rates for each service and activity. These services and activities are designed to support students' learning (e.g., computer assistance, library), educational and career pathways (e.g., Employment Advisor), settlement and integration (e.g., Coping in Canada workshops, Canada Day celebration), and well-being (e.g., Girl Talk, Counselling Services). Further information about the services and activities is provided in Appendix B.

Utilization rates range from a high of 92.3% to a low of 17.3%. Twelve of the 23 services and activities were

used by 40% or more of the participants. Various factors influence the utilization rates. Not all of the students needed some of the services: services for students with disabilities and health services. Some students recognized that they did not need a particular service—for example, job fairs—at this time in their language education but would use it at some future time. Some services such as computer assistance and employment advisor are part of the NQC's ESL Westmount campus, which means that students receive more information about them and have easier access to them. As a general pattern, utilization is highest for services that are core to students' current academic program and eventual success in the job market.

Table 5.2 Utilization Rates for Each Learner Support Service and Campus Activity

| Services or Activities | | n | Percentage* |
|------------------------|---|-----|-------------|
| Services | Academic Fairs | 58 | 35.2 |
| | Cafeteria and Student Centre | 143 | 84.6 |
| | Computer Assistance | 148 | 87.1 |
| | Coping in Canada Workshops | 42 | 25.0 |
| | Counselling Services | 42 | 25.1 |
| | Employment Advisor | 80 | 47.3 |
| | Health Services | 29 | 17.4 |
| | Inclusion Fusion | 97 | 59.1 |
| | Job Fairs | 63 | 38.0 |
| | Library | 156 | 92.3 |
| | LINC Administrative Office | 147 | 86.5 |
| | LINC Awards | 45 | 27.4 |
| | LINC Volunteer course | 45 | 27.1 |
| | Services for Students with Disabilities | 39 | 23.8 |
| | Settlement Advisor | 93 | 55.0 |
| | Student Navigators | 64 | 38.1 |
| Activities | After School Computer Tutoring | 67 | 39.6 |
| | Canada Day Celebration | 107 | 63.7 |
| | Christmas Concert | 81 | 48.2 |
| | Girl Talk | 68 | 40.2 |
| | Hallowe'en Celebration | 117 | 68.8 |
| | Quest Singers | 70 | 41.7 |
| | Students' Association | 29 | 17.3 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

Table 5.3 summarizes the students' utilization of services and activities, clustered into five bands. Almost 88% utilized six or more services and activities.

Table 5.3 Students' Engagement with Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

| Number of Services and Activities | n | Percentage* |
|-----------------------------------|----|-------------|
| 0–5 | 21 | 12.3 |
| 6–10 | 75 | 43.9 |
| 11–15 | 45 | 26.3 |
| 16–20 | 15 | 8.8 |
| 21–23 | 15 | 8.8 |

*Response percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal.

5.2 Interview Data

5.2.1 The Participants

Table 5.4 summarizes the interviewees' demographic characteristics. They are from nine different countries including three of the five major source countries of LINC students at NQC. They had lived in Canada for an average of 3.1 years, with eight falling in the one-to-five-year range. Their average age was 40.6, a range from 31 to 63. In terms of education, five have substantially less than high school completion, and three have bachelor's degrees or equivalent. Five had been enrolled in LINC for two to five terms, and five had been enrolled from six to nine terms. They were all in CLB 5 and 6 levels. The student names used in this report are pseudonyms chosen by the interviewees.

Van, Chaala, and Rozita are refugees from conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Iran, respectively. Ying Yu, a pharmacist, moved to Edmonton to be reunited with her daughter and family. Fong and Hien were teachers in their home countries. Esosa had lived in Montreal for seven years before relocating to Edmonton. Lisa and Mihaelo immigrated to Edmonton from Mauritius and Romania, respectively. All of the participants have family members in Edmonton. Eight have a spouse, eight have children, and three have parents or uncles in Edmonton.



Table 5.4 Interviewees

| Name | Gender | Age | Country of Origin | Previous Education | Residence in Canada (years) | CLB Levels Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing | Study at NQC (in terms, incl. current term) |
|---------|--------|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Chaalaa | M | 41 | Ethiopia | 8 years | 2 | 6,6,6,6 | 5 |
| Dania | F | 31 | Somalia | 3 years | 3 | 5,5,4,4 | 6 |
| Esosa | F | 40 | Nigeria | 6 years | 8 | 6,6,6,6 | 4 |
| Fong | M | 35 | China | Bachelor's | 1 | 5,5,5,5 | 3 |
| Hien | F | 39 | Vietnam | Bachelor's | 3 | 6,6,6,6 | 7 |
| Lisa | F | 36 | Mauritius | 6 years | 5 | 6,6,6,6 | 8 |
| Mihaelo | F | 43 | Romania | High school | 3 | 6,6,5,5 | 6 |
| Rozita | F | 44 | Iran | 5 years | 3 | 5,5,5,5 | 9 |
| Van | M | 34 | Democratic Republic of Congo | 3 years of university | 1 | 6,6,6,6 | 2 |
| Ying Yu | F | 63 | China | Professional qualifications | 2 | 6,6,5,5 | 3 |

In terms of their plans after LINC, six planned to take career programs up to two years in length. Some of these include health care aide, medical device reprocessing technician, practical nurse, and engineering technician. These would be new fields of study and careers for them. Fong wanted to work in coaching based on his teaching career and education in China. Ying Yu, a pharmacist, wanted to become a pharmacist assistant because she believed that Canadian licensing would be too difficult. Mihaelo planned to work after this term because “I need to improve my English offsite. I need to talk to people more.” Chaala would pursue ESL after LINC and then identify a career program.

5.2.2 Choosing NQC

Since 2014 CIC has given LINC students an opportunity to choose where they would study English. Edmonton has a range of providers, such as Edmonton Public Schools, settlement agencies, and private providers. One of the goals of this study was to understand students’ choice to study at NQC and their perceptions of the college in relation to their choice.

The 10 participants spoke about why they chose to attend NQC. They were aware that Edmonton has a number of providers, based on information that they received when they completed their LINC assessment with Edmonton Catholic Services, Immigration and Settlement Service. Their reasons can be summarized as reputational based on information that they received from current and former students, spouses, and friends. Van had conducted additional research on the Internet and visited the college. Dania’s family in the United States had researched NorQuest on the Internet. Ying Yu had attended another school and was not happy with the teachers. The quality of instruction was the most frequently mentioned feature of the college’s reputation. Several students talked about convenient access to the college on public transportation from their homes.

The students made the following comments:

“My friend studied here, and she told me it’s a very, very good school. She told me about the teacher, about the program. You can use the library; you can use the computer lab. She said, “I studied in this school, and I’m speaking very well.” ~ *Mihaelo*

“Friends told us, “If you want to have good English program, you must go to NorQuest. They offer the best program.” ~ *Van*

“My friend told me NorQuest push the student to improve and I want to improve quick. ~ *Ying Yu*

“If I have a certificate from NorQuest and I go for a job, when [the employer] looks at my certificate from NorQuest, they are going to hire me quickly. ~ *Lisa*

“Because I am new to this country, I don’t have any information about schools. My friend chose for me. He told me this school is better than other schools. ~ *Chaal*

“My wife, [a university student], knew something about LINC at NorQuest. And then I went to the Chinese community to confirm. ~ *Fong*

“When my husband came here, he study maybe one year or one-and-a-half years, and after that he speak very well and he get a job. That’s why he told me this school is very good. ~ *Hien*

The researcher asked the participants about their current satisfaction with LINC at NQC. All of their responses were positive. Two talked about “very nice” teachers and “many excellent teachers.” Ying Yu named several teachers who spend “lots of time teaching students in the lunch hour.” Chaala emphasized that NQC offers career programs that students can take after LINC. Esosa named a number of services such as the computer lab, student navigators, and field trips and stressed that they are free. Mihaelo said, “I am happy. I have friends. I am accumulating new information.” In addition, the interviewer asked the students if there was anything that they did not like about LINC at NQC to measure their satisfaction. Dania’s response was typical: “Everything’s good.”

5.2.3 Life as a Student

First week

The researcher asked the participants to recall their first week in LINC at NQC to capture their experiences and perceptions. Almost all reported a degree of anxiety or stress when they began the program. They talked about being in a new country, learning a new language, and learning about being a college student without knowledge of the language of instruction. These emotions were quickly replaced with a sense of comfort. The students talked about their instructors’ efforts to make them feel comfortable and help them understand what was expected of them. In addition, several students welcomed the opportunity to meet fellow students from around the world and described the “get-acquainted” activities that the instructors organized. They made the following comments on their experiences:

First of all, I felt like a foreigner because I didn't know anyone here. My classmates welcome me well and my teacher. And I like the style of teaching they offer me. I was very, very happy that first week. ~ *Van*

I come here very excited. Maybe the reason is my very excellent teacher. ~ *Ying Yu*

I met my new teacher. I am thinking I don't know if I will manage with this teacher or no. After that I was okay. And we meet lots of new students from different countries. ~ *Lisa*

For two weeks I'm very sad. After that I saw my teacher. Teacher talked to me: "No problem; you will have good English. You will understand." ~ *Rozita*

I was happy. We see different people, students coming from different countries, and talk with them. ~ *Dania*

My teacher tried to make me feel good in the class. She introduced me to the rest of the students. ~ *Esosa*

Sometimes I feel really excited in class with my classmates. But sometimes, because my English is not very good, so sometimes in the class I feel something difficult. ~ *Fong*

Also to capture the participants' experiences and perceptions, after they talked about their first week at NQC, the interviewer asked them to talk about their current comfort with their LINC program. The theme that best reflects their responses is Van's comment: "I'm very, very glad to be here because it helps me lots." Two students made specific comments about their progress with learning English, including Esosa, who talked about her increased ability to communicate in her daily life. Two others talked about their very positive motivation, and one gave the college credit for his "desire to learn." Another student commented on the personal support she received as a person new to Edmonton without family or friends. Hien said, "When I study here I know many cultures, and I have many friends from different countries." Although Hien was very positive about LINC and NQC, she said, "Sometime I'm very sad, because in my country I have a profession, I have family; but when I came to Canada, Canada is very good. [But I change everything.] It's challenging for me."

Instructors

The participants were very comfortable about speaking about their instructors and offered numerous comments that can be clustered into two topics: instructors' attributes and their instructional approaches. They described their instructors as friendly, which means they were approachable: "taking you [the student] on the same level," encouraging students to use their first names, providing help during the lunch hour and after class, offering emotional support, speaking slowly and clearly, talking informally with the students, telling jokes, and being patient. Mihaelo said, "They are very patient, and they want to do the best for the student." Esosa made particular reference to instructors who "give you your due respect" in contrast to adult education instructors in her home country, who act like kings and queens. Van echoed Esosa's view: "You are comfortable when you are in class with your teacher. This is the difference between back home and here, which means here is a good way, a good style of teaching. I like it."

In terms of instructional approaches, Van emphasized that his instructors “direct us how to learn more” by teaching the students how to do research to improve their English. He explained that the instructors give them choices about their learning. Esosa spoke about instructors who provide information about Edmonton and help students to find the address for a particular business or office: “If you don’t know the address, tell the teacher, and they are ready to help.” Lisa was impressed with the novel instructional strategies that introduced variety and interest into their learning. Hien commented on instructors who would walk around the room to help individual students.

In contrast, Hien also talked about an instructor in the previous semester who “always waste time” and would not help the students outside class time. She and her peers noticed that he was not at NQC that semester.

Advice to college

To capture further experiences and perceptions, the researcher asked the participants about advice that they would give the college and the LINC team. One important theme was that they should continue doing what they are doing:

“I don’t think I have any advice to give to them, because they are doing their work. ~ Esosa

“What they are doing, they can do it more again. They can help others like they help me. ~ Van

“The instructors are very nice. They teach me English, and they are good with the student. I would say, continue in that way. ~ Dania

Hien emphasized the importance of hiring instructors who are friendly and understanding, because newcomers can be “sad” or “scared.” Fong suggested that the college initiate more activities that bring students together, such as soccer games against other colleges.

Advice to a friend

Just as the researcher asked the participants what advice they would give the college, he also asked them what advice they would give a friend from their home country who was enrolling in LINC at NQC. Their observations were varied:

“LINC is not only about English. Also about life, because here we learn English. Also they give us how to live, how to do things, how to focus upon our goal. ~ Van

“Sometimes if you don’t know where you are going, they can give you some advice, because they have lots of [career] programs. ~ Lisa

“Canada is not like our country. If you go to any office, they give you a paper to fill out. If you don’t go to LINC, you can’t find a job. Also you can’t find a house. When you rent a house or apartment, you have to fill that form to get an apartment. ~ Chaala

“Focus on what she thinks she wants to do. You have to be strong and say, “I will do it.” You have to learn to study; you have to come to school every day. ~ Esosa

First, you need to go to school. Second, you need to listen [to English] on the computer, on TV. Third, you need to talk to others in English. ~ *Fong*

Finish your homework and talk with Canadian people. I talk to neighbors from our area, Canadians. ~ *Dania*

5.2.4 Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

The questionnaire data tables in the first part of this chapter report service and activity utilization rates for all participants as well as utilization rates for individual services and activities. In this section of the chapter, the researcher utilizes the interview data to report on 10 students' utilization of those services and activities in Table 5.5.

The researcher asked the students to indicate their utilization of each service or activity. If they said yes to utilization, he encouraged them to talk about the ways in which they had used the service or activity. Their comments are reported in Tables 5.6–5.16 for the 13 services and activities that five or more students had used. The researcher has grouped the Christmas concert, Hallowe'en celebration, and Quest singers together and included a frequency count for the number of students who mentioned each particular function or purpose.

Table 5.5 Interviewees' Utilization of Learner Support Services and Campus Activities

| Services or Activities | | Chaala | Dania | Esosa | Fong | Hien | Lisa | Mihaelo | Rosita | Van | Ying Yu | Total |
|------------------------|---|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|---------|--------|-----|---------|-------|
| Services | Academic Fairs | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | 9 |
| | Computer Assistance | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | 8 |
| | Coping in Canada Workshops | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | 8 |
| | Counseling Services | | | Y | | | Y | | | Y | | 3 |
| | Counseling Services | | | Y | | | Y | | | Y | | 3 |
| | Health Services | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | Job Fairs | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | | Y | | 5 |
| | Library | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | 10 |
| | LINC Administrative Office | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | | 6 |
| | LINC Awards | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | LINC Volunteer Course | | | | | | Y | Y | | | | 2 |
| | Services for Students with Disabilities | | | | | | | | | | | 0 |
| | Settlement Advisor | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | 9 |
| | Student Navigator | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | 8 |

| Services or Activities | | Chaala | Dania | Esosa | Fong | Hien | Lisa | Mihaelo | Rosita | Van | Ying Yu | Total |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|---------|--------|-----|---------|-------|
| Activities | After School Computer Tutoring | | | | | Y | Y | Y | | | | 3 |
| | Canada Day | | | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | 4 |
| | Christmas Concert | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | 7 |
| | Girl Talk | | Y | | | | Y | Y | Y | | | 4 |
| | Hallowe'en Celebration | | Y | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | 7 |
| | Inclusion Fusion | | | Y | | | Y | | | Y | | 3 |
| | Quest Singers | | Y | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | 7 |
| | Students' Association | | | | | | | | | Y | | 1 |

Table 5.6 Academic Fairs

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Information about NQC postsecondary programs | 7 |
| Language proficiency and academic requirements for postsecondary programs | 4 |

Table 5.10 Employment Advisor

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Resume preparation | 3 |
| Information about volunteering | 2 |
| The interview process | 3 |
| Job search | 1 |

Table 5.7 Cafeteria and Student Centre

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Discuss their LINC program | 1 |
| Speak English with other students | 4 |
| Meet friends | 4 |

Table 5.11 Job Fairs

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Talk with individual employers | 3 |
| Information about careers | 2 |

Table 5.8 Coping in Canada Workshops

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Learning about Canadian culture and diversity | 4 |
| Living successfully in Canada | 1 |
| The settlement process | 2 |

Table 5.12 Library

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Research for assignments | 3 |
| Computer stations and online learning resources | 2 |
| Book collection, book sign-out, and assistance with book selection | 6 |
| Specialized materials for ESL learners | 1 |
| Computer assistance | 3 |

Table 5.9 Computer Assistance

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Help with email, passwords, and usernames | 4 |
| Completing computerized learning activities | 1 |
| Assistance with PowerPoint | 2 |

Table 5.13 LINC Administrative Office

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Registration | 2 |
| Enrolment confirmation letters | 2 |
| Information about childcare | 1 |
| Applying for citizenship | 1 |

Table 5.14 Settlement Advisor

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| In-class presentations about family, financial, and landlord problems | 2 |
| Accessing Food Bank | 2 |
| Various applications and forms | 2 |
| Applying for citizenship | 1 |
| Confidential problem | 1 |

Table 5.15 Student Navigator

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Planning and funding for ESL after LINC | 4 |
| Planning and funding for post-secondary programs | 4 |

Table 5.16 Christmas Concert (CC), Hallowe'en (H), Quest Singers (QS)

| Students Identified | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| CC—Learning about Canadian culture | 3 |
| CC—A beautiful experience | 2 |
| H—Carving a pumpkin | 2 |
| H—Uncertain about meaning of Hallowe'en | 3 |
| H—A fun experience | 1 |
| H—A part of Canadian culture | 1 |
| QS—Helps with English | 2 |
| QS—Singing for Christmas and Canada Day | 1 |
| QS—Motivating and relaxing to listen | 2 |

Table 5.5 indicates seven of the services and activities were used by one to four students. None of the participants used Services for Students with Disabilities, Health Services, and LINC Awards. Two reported that they had seen students receiving assistance with visual and hearing challenges. Hien talked about participating in the After School Computer Assistance by helping with PowerPoint and learning about PowerPoint from the instructors who volunteered. Four students talked about Canada Day celebrations in relation to Canada's national day. As Lisa said, "Now we are here, we have to celebrate." Three students had done educational and career planning with counselling services. Four of the seven female students had taken part in Girl Talk at various times. They remembered topics such as how to care of children and healthy nutrition. Three students had volunteered at an Inclusion Fusion event. One student was familiar with the Volunteer Course, and Lisa had taken part in it. She said, "It helped me learn new vocabulary, pronunciation, communicate with people, and the environment."

The following quotations are the participants' comments about individual services and activities:

[The instructor for the Coping in Canada workshop] said that when we came here, we are not very settled. We go step by step to get settled. First is education. If you have a good education, anywhere you can find a job. And we have family, we have school, we have work. Sometime everything comes at the same time. We have to know how we can manage this. ~ Lisa

The LINC Administration Office helped me a lot. You know, when you come the first day to a new place, you are a foreigner or a stranger. But someone received me with joy, and I was happy to talk to her and take registration. ~ Van

Last week I have my citizenship ceremony. I have no family or friends here. I was there alone, all alone. I saw ——— and ——— [settlement advisors]. They paid me a surprise. They make me very happy. ~ Esosa

Most of the time in the cafeteria and student centre, I want to talk to students from other countries. I want to improve my English speaking skills. ~ Ying Yu

5.2.5 Settlement and Integration

This section presents the participants' perspectives on their settlement and integration. To draw out their experiences and perceptions, the researcher first asked them to talk about their challenges and successes as newcomers to Edmonton and then about their goals for the year 2020 to capture the life that they sought in Edmonton. In both cases the participants spoke about themselves and their families, which presented a fuller picture of their settlement and integration. Table 5.4 shows that eight of the interviewees had lived in Edmonton for three years or less. Lisa had lived in Edmonton for five years, and Esosa has lived in Canada for eight years, including six years in Montreal.

The second part of this section explores the college's role in facilitating settlement and integration. The researcher asked the participants about their classroom learning and college experiences in relation to their lives as newcomers to Edmonton. In addition, he asked them what they had learned about the Canadian way of life in LINC and at the college, as well as their understanding of the cultural diversity at the college and in Edmonton.

Challenges and successes

The participants identified a range of challenges that included language, housing, and jobs. Five talked about language barriers with regard to accessing health care, finding a job, and communicating in English. Van had learned some English while he lived in a refugee camp in Zimbabwe, but "the English they speak in Africa is very different." He had difficulty understanding Canadian English and making himself understood. Three talked about challenges finding housing. Two had received help from settlement agencies. Several mentioned difficulties in finding their way in Edmonton. Chaala reported having had to wait four months for LINC. They mentioned the weather as well.

The most important successes that the participants identified were related to learning English. Chaala emphasized pronunciation as the most important outcome of his LINC experience. Fong said, "Learning English is good. I think NorQuest has given me a lot of help." Lisa's "big success is my education. I can speak, I can communicate." She pointed out that she was at level 0 when she began LINC. Now she is at level 6. Ying Yu related an anecdote about taking her grandson to the pediatrician:

I told the doctor all my grandson's symptoms, and the Canadian doctor understand me. He prescribed medication and explained and gave me advice. I can understand. At the time, oh, I feel very successful. Learning English was a very good decision.

Esosa identified the opportunity to study again as a success, Chaala spoke of being able to find his way in Edmonton, and Fong has drawn on his experience as a badminton coach in China to become involved in a badminton club in Edmonton. He said, "I have made lots of friends, and they have given me lots of help."

Year 2020

The participants' future goals focused largely on developing English-language skills, finding jobs, and buying houses. The emphasis on English acquisition was tied to job opportunities. When the participants talked about jobs, it was with a focus on stable careers and sufficient income to meet their families' needs. Several spoke of improving their English and then taking a career program to meet their career goals.

The participants identified additional, more abstract goals related in various ways to life in Canada. Dania spoke of "living a happy and peaceful life in Canada with no more stress." Mihaelo spoke optimistically about "having a good future. My life will be very good. I will enjoy everything around me." Esosa's goal was "paying taxes, because I like to help Canada, because Canada help me lots." Van expressed his goals in cultural terms:

My family and I will be like Canadians in the way Canadians live, the way they talk, the way they think, the way they do things positively and they see far. I will choose what is good from my culture and take what is good from Canadian culture and put it together to be successful according to my goals.

The role of the college

The mandate of the LINC program is to ensure that newcomers learn the English or French language for effective settlement in and integration into Canada. To capture the students' experiences with and perceptions of LINC in relation to its mandate, the researcher asked them how their college experiences had assisted them as newcomers. Overall, the participants talked about English proficiency in relation to employment, careers, and their lives in Canada. Another significant benefit of LINC in their eyes included practical, day-to-day living skills, including shopping, telephone etiquette, bus schedules, and health care benefits. Several mentioned learning about Edmonton as a community, its opportunities, and its services. Hien had learned about the process of applying for citizenship, and Esosa had just been sworn in as a citizen.

In relation to their experiences as newcomers, the participants made the following comments about LINC:

At NorQuest I started to understand many, many things, especially English. This is a good thing for me, because in the future I need to have a job, and I need to speak English well. ~ Mihaelo

My LINC experience shows me where to go [in relation to my ESL and career goals.] ~ Esosa

I improve my language. That is the most important thing. In society, how you can face problems, they help us by teaching us how to do things. LINC helps me to see far. Helps me to work hard. Helps me to stand firm in what I'm doing. ~ Van

Teachers tell us, “If you have any problem about the letter [official correspondence], if you don’t understand, bring it. We can help you.” ~ *Lisa*

I don’t have family here. I don’t have friend from my country. Just sometimes I’m sad. I talk to my teachers. They tell me to “wait after school. I help you.” ~ *Rozita*

LINC teaches us English, about life in Canada. More English is good for living in Canada. Otherwise, you cannot do anything you really want to do. ~ *Dania*

When I go shopping, I can explain anything. Now I can do anything at the bank. I can go to the doctor [without my daughter’s help]. ~ *Ying Yu*

Canadian way of life

To further understand LINC’s contribution to immigrants’ settlement and integration, the researcher asked the participants what they had learned in class about the Canadian way of life. Most students spoke of cultural norms, legal requirements for childcare, and municipal bylaws such as noise disturbance. In terms of cultural norms, they cited politeness on the bus and in stores; accepted patterns of greeting, including handshaking; and punctuality. In the case of legal requirements, Lisa said, “We can’t leave the kids alone in the house.” Chaala talked about the need to limit loud music and not disturb neighbors. Other topics included the Canadian government, and Van described in detail Canada’s federal system and the monarchy. Two spoke about First Nations and aspects of Canada’s history. Esosa said she had passed her citizenship exam because of the relevant content she had learned in LINC. Hien stated that Canadians are equal and talked about elections in this country. Lisa had a good understanding of Canada Day and its significance to newcomers. Hien pointed out a number of significant cultural norms with regard to parents and their children. In Canada, she said,

young people make their own careers and educational decisions, and students attending university are independent from their parents.

Cultural diversity

About 50 countries are reflected in NQC’s LINC student population. Each classroom is a microcosm of the world’s cultures. Most students come from relatively homogeneous societies, so the LINC classroom is an opportunity for them to learn about the diversity of Edmonton and Canada. The researcher asked the students what they were learning about other cultures, the instruction they were receiving about cultural diversity, and their developing understanding of diversity in the classroom and in Edmonton society.

The participants were learning about other cultures through formal class activities and informal conversations. They were making group presentations in class about their countries and cultures. Based on these class activities, Ying Yu and Fong described different cultural traditions for greetings, eye contact, and expressions of respect. Van talked about sharing cultural traditions with his friends from other countries.

The students' comments below about respect and multiculturalism reflect the classroom curriculum and their emerging understanding of diversity in Canada. Esosa specifically referred to instruction that her class had received about fellow students who had to withdraw for daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan:

“If you respect another culture, the other one will respect your culture. The different religions at NorQuest respect each other. ~ *Chaala*

“Canadian people, they understand. They don't have any problem about how I dress, my religion, at school and at work. ~ *Dania*

“Multiculturalism means you can have your culture, but here we have to follow the rule of Canada. Your culture cannot break the law of Canada. ~ *Van*

“[There is more respect among the religions at NorQuest than in Nigeria], because the teacher teach us what we have to do. She said when we live together, we have to respect our cultures, even if we are not from the same country. ~ *Esosa*

“Multiculturalism means a lot of countries come together, like in this school. ~ *Chaala*

“Canada is multicultural because there are many cultures in Canada. ~ *Mihaelo*



6 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study has investigated LINC learners' experiences and perceptions as students at BVC and NQC, with a particular focus on their choice of training provider, utilization of learner support services and campus activities, and college experiences in relation to their lives as newcomers in Canada. The quantitative data in Chapters 4 and 5 present a demographic profile of more than 90% of LINC 4–7 learners at each college, students' rates of utilization of services and activities, and utilization rates for individual services and activities. The qualitative data in each chapter create an in-depth portrait of students' experiences and perceptions.

This chapter explores the meaning that can be drawn from the findings chapters. First, eight themes emerged from the data. The discussion of the themes remains as true to the students' voices as possible while the researcher minimized his interpretations. These themes arose from the researcher's consideration of the research questions and immersion in the data as researcher, coder, data analyst, and author of the findings

chapters. Second, the researcher explores a number of recommendations for LINC programming that reflect his interpretations of the data. Wherever possible, he relates the themes and recommendations to the literature. Third, a short conclusion is presented.

The findings, discussion, and recommendations are drawn from interviews with 10 participants from each college whom the researcher selected according to purposeful sampling. Although the findings and discussion lead to rich and in-depth understandings of the students' experiences and perceptions, they cannot necessarily be generalized to other settings. Readers must first make a judgment based on similarity of institutions, programs, and students before transferring these understandings to another setting (Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000).

6.1 Discussion

1. Given the range of LINC providers in Calgary and Edmonton, the students' primary reason for choosing to study at BVC and NQC was the reputation of the colleges, which largely reflects the input of family and friends.

CIC has given newcomers the opportunity to choose their LINC language provider since 2014. Nineteen of the 20 interviewees cited reputation as a major or sole reason for choosing BVC or NQC. Almost all had learned about the colleges through family and friends, many of whom had studied at the colleges. When they spoke about the colleges' reputations, they mentioned quality of instruction, learner support services, learner success, facilities, and pathways to postsecondary programs at their colleges or other postsecondary institutions.

2. The students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their LINC program at the colleges when the researcher asked them directly and when they discussed various aspects of their student experience.

LINC programming and the college experience in the eyes of the students were fostering their language development, facilitating their understanding of life in Canada, assisting them in planning educational and career pathways, and laying the groundwork for future labor-market success through preparation for career programs.

The students were future and goal oriented and recognized the role of college staff in areas such as career services, settlement services, and student navigation in helping them to meet their current needs and plan for their educational and career futures. They were confident that their progress in English would lead them to their goals, and, in addition, they recognized that classroom instruction on specific aspects of settlement and integration was relevant to their futures.

These findings parallel CIC's (2010) evaluation of LINC. Ninety-one percent of the LINC students surveyed rated instruction as good or excellent, and 92% rated instruction about Canada as good or excellent. Although it is not always possible to compare quantitative and qualitative findings, the CIC survey respondents gave "reaching learner goals" a "very helpful" rating (77%) that is lower than the comments from the BVC and NQC students would suggest (p. 57).

The students reported very positive experiences in interacting with students from other countries. They described friendships that they had made, some talked about learning about other cultures, and several talked about learning personally meaningful ideas from the other cultures. Several made a conscious choice to interact with students from other countries so that they would have more opportunity to use English.

3. The students effectively utilized learner support services and campus activities to advance their learning, meet immediate needs, plan for their future, and connect with the college community.

The students' utilization of services and participation in activities ranged from a high of 92.3% to a low of 17.3%. At BVC, 62% of the students utilized 6 or more of the 20 services and activities. At NQC, 87% of the students utilized 6 or more of the 23 services and activities. Participants talked about each of the services and activities they had used, and offered comments about the benefits each one provided. Comparisons between colleges are not meaningful because the services and activities vary in nature, organization, and delivery.

The interviewer asked the interviewees about their utilization of each service and activity. Tables 4.5 and 5.5 present the data. Almost all of the students indicated satisfaction with each service or activity. The libraries and services related to settlement and

educational planning received the most positive endorsements at both colleges. Two participants who were professionals in their home countries stated that they would appreciate more assistance with re-establishing their careers in Canada.

There are no established frameworks to guide the interpretation of the utilization rates reported in Tables 4.2 and 5.2. Not all students need some of the services—accessibility and health services. In all likelihood, some students recognized that they do not need a particular service—for example, transfer credit fair—at this point in their language education but would use it at a future time. Some students indicated that time constraints limited their utilization of services. Several services are part of the ELL programs at BVC, and students are more likely to have direct contact with them. As a general pattern, utilization is highest of the services and activities that are core to students' current LINC program and planning for future education and careers. Some services at NQC are offered at the downtown campus only. The students at both colleges are not members of the Students' Associations because CIC policy does not permit association fees to be charged to LINC students. Although they may participate in the associations' activities, their lack of membership status might reduce their involvement.

Lum and Grabke (2012) surveyed 426 "recent immigrant adult students" (p. 3) enrolled at five Ontario community colleges and universities and reported the utilization rates for 22 common services. They observed that "only the libraries have any measure of consistent use. . . . Tutoring, counseling and mentoring all ranked considerably lower, which might seem counterintuitive, given the challenges [that the survey respondents] identified" (p. 31). Again ready comparison is not possible because of variations in services; however, there appears to be a general pattern of lower utilization at the Ontario institutions than at BVC and NQC.

CIC's (2010) program evaluation of LINC revealed that the provision of services to learners varies significantly from provider to provider. Less than 70% provided settlement services, personal counselling, career counselling, and help with finding a job. Thirty-eight percent of the trainers offered accessibility services. The evaluation points out that providers do not necessarily offer these services to every class (p. 10).

4. The students unequivocally endorsed their instructors as persons and as instructors.

Although the researcher has partially addressed this theme in the others, it is important to recognize the students' endorsement of their instructors at both the interpersonal level and the pedagogical level. They described the instructors as highly professional, sincere, helpful, flexible, and willing to help with individual learning and personal needs. Students spoke about instructors using novel and varied teaching strategies, a systematic approach to instruction, and effective classroom organization and time management. In addition, they said instructors gave them choices in their learning and guided them in learning how to learn.

Several students compared LINC instructors with instructors in their home countries. By way of contrast, the students welcomed BVC and NQC instructors' inclusiveness, approachability, focus on individualization, informality balanced with professionalism, and dedication to instructional effectiveness.

Janis (2012) interviewed six adult ESL learners at a community college and found that "teachers were regarded with positive accolades and were assumed to have immense benefits for my participants' learning experience" (p. 31). Ross-Gordon and Brown-Haywood (2000) supported this finding in their study of adult African-American students enrolled at a university.

They found that the participants valued teaching effectiveness, relationships with their teachers, and faculty members' sensitivity to individual differences. In Lum and Grabke's (2012) study in Ontario, which was introduced earlier, they indicated that the "participants reported that their experiences in the classroom and with their professors varied in quality" (p. 34).

5. Although measures of socioemotional climate were not a part of the study, the students' comments consistently suggested that they felt secure, supported, and respected. They believed that the LINC program and the colleges are committed to their long-term success in Canada.

Some students described nervousness or confusion during their first week in the program, but those feelings were quickly replaced with feelings of comfort. They said that their instructors made them feel welcome, comfortable, and confident. They often described the instructors as "friendly," and the instructors utilized various instructional approaches to welcome new students and build a classroom community. They also consciously facilitated a classroom environment of mutual respect, with particular emphasis on cultural diversity. The availability of settlement-related services and the professional abilities of the services' staff helped students with both their immediate needs and their long-term planning. The students considered their peers welcoming.

6. Despite the many challenges that permanent residents and refugees have encountered and the challenges that lie ahead, the students were motivated, optimistic, and confident about their future.

All participants had left behind family and friends and immigrated to a country with a language new to them and a culture somewhat or substantially different from the culture of their home countries.

All faced the challenges of mastering English and establishing themselves in the Canadian labor market. Nine of the 20 participants are refugees, or they had experienced some dislocation in their home countries. Many expressed confidence that Canada would be a good home for them and their families because of the educational opportunities, job opportunities, various supports for newcomers, and social stability and peace. Similarly, many welcomed living in an inclusive society with increased personal freedom and choice. Two participants talked about the personal stress and anxiety that resulted from the challenges of finding a professional career opportunity in one case and the loss of profession, family ties, and professional identity in the other case.

The findings from several research studies suggest that the participants' satisfaction with life in Canada is common among immigrants. Drawing on data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, Houle and Schellenberg (2010) stated that "four years after landing, about three-quarters . . . [of the participants] were satisfied, or very satisfied, with life in Canada, and a comparable portion said their expectations had been met or exceeded" (p. 29). Drawing on the same data, Schellenberg and Maheux (2008) summarized what immigrants like about Canada into four categories: "social environment, opportunity, safety and security, and climate and physical environment" (Table 2). Some specific items within those four categories include "people's attitudes, cultural diversity, educational opportunities for self and family, employment opportunities, safety for self and family, peace, political stability." More recent data from the National Settlement Outcomes Survey point to "strong successes" with "satisfaction with life in Canada and attachment to Canada, language outcomes (for those in the labour force), meeting life essentials/basic needs, understanding rights and responsibilities" (Kumar & Wong, 2013, p. 7).

The participants' experiences as LINC students have contributed to their confidence and optimism despite the challenges. They saw themselves becoming proficient in English. They were very satisfied with the quality of their LINC experience. They learned student-success strategies. They worked with college staff to identify career goals and appropriate educational pathways. They made friends with fellow LINC students from other cultures. They were learning about the Canadian way of life.

7. According to the data from interviews with the students, most are involved in what can be considered a second phase of the settlement process.

Sixteen of the participants had lived in Canada from one to three years. Upon arrival, agencies such as Calgary Catholic Immigration Services in Calgary and Catholic Social Services in Edmonton, as well as family and friends, supported their initial settlement needs. They found housing and medical care and learned their way around the city. Their children were established in school and daycare, and they had made friends in their ethnic communities and neighborhoods. Some had worked at short-term or part-time jobs, but at job levels lower than their eventual goals. Six of the 20 had spouses who were established in careers or in university education.

The 16 participants are now focused on language acquisition for life and work in Canada and further study. Three hoped to return to their home-country professions once they acquired English proficiency. Eleven planned to undertake a postsecondary career program at their college or another institution in their city. Two of the 11 had chosen career programs at a lower level than their home-country professions. One of the 16 will retire or work as an assistant in her field, and a second person plans to work after this LINC term.

The participants' plans for further language training and career education reflect common patterns among

Canada's immigrants. Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2010), drawing on data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, reported that:

At time of arrival, approximately two-thirds of new immigrants had plans to take education or training, and 67% of intenders had actually started education within six months of arrival. Of those who participated, some 20% were enrolled in education leading to a degree or diploma, approximately 10% in job-related training, and over 70% in language courses (p. 4).

In addition to language acquisition and planning for educational and career pathways, the students talked about learning general life skills such as goal setting and learning about the Canadian way of life, which can be broken down into two components. The first is the cultural norms relevant to their day-to-day life and success in the labor market; the second can be described as more institutional, including Canadian government and history.

The National Settlement Outcomes Survey (Kumar & Wong, 2013) identified the following settlement outcomes:

- ◆ Understand life in Canada
- ◆ Know how to access public services and community resources
- ◆ Have the official language skills to function in Canadian society and the labour market
- ◆ Have knowledge of the Canadian work environment and are aware of local labour markets
- ◆ Have the skills to become employed in their chosen occupation
- ◆ Are connected to social and economic networks, as well as the broader community (p. 2).

The interview data give some indication of the participants' development in relation to these outcomes. Through LINC, they were learning about life in Canada, including public services and resources. All have developed the essential skills to manage shopping, housing, transportation, and schooling for their children as well as to acquire health services. Their coursework on topics such as financial management supported these experiences. They were developing language skills and an understanding of Canadian workplace culture. They all had plans for their future occupations. Almost all identified friendship networks within their ethnic communities and neighborhoods. Two attended Christian churches, and one attended his mosque. Two have done volunteer work. Nine have some Canadian work experience. At the same time, the participants' processes of becoming established in the labour market and participating in the political, cultural, and organizational life of the larger community are very much in progress.

The scholarly literature on Canadian immigration emphasizes newcomers' development of social capital, which is defined as "the resources available to individuals and groups through their social connections to [individuals] and communities" (Morrow-Howell & Gehlert, 2012, p. 207). Data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada indicate that 87% of the respondents indicated that they had relatives and friends "in Canada at the time of arrival, and this fact is reflected in their decision to choose to immigrate to Canada, their choice of place of residence in Canada, and their sources of settlement assistance" (Kunz, 2005, p. 54). Newcomers turn to friends and family when they need assistance to "access health services, find housing, further education, [and] find a job" (p. 55). Nineteen of the 20 participants talked about friends and family who had influenced their choice to attend BVC or NQC. Although housing was not a particular focus of the interviews, some participants mentioned that friends had helped them to find housing. A number of interviewees

spoke of college personnel who had assisted them with finding daycare placements, understanding government correspondence, and identifying and accessing services in the community. Most important, 19 participants had developed educational and career pathways with the support of college advisors.

8. The students are gaining an understanding of the Canadian way of life generally and of cultural diversity and multiculturalism more specifically.

The students talked about learning Canadian cultural norms with regard to, for example, greetings, eye contact, and punctuality, as well as functional areas such as interviewing, medical appointments, and school visits.

They reported being comfortable with diversity and welcoming the opportunity to learn about other cultures from their peers. They reported that their instructors emphasized mutual respect and perspectives that are best labeled cultural relativism. Several students said they were encouraged to understand cultural differences in the context of the culture rather than from their own cultural perspective. Several mentioned moving from discomfort to comfort with a particular behavior or practice once they saw it in that light.

Cultural diversity is particularly significant because some students came from culturally homogenous societies and some came from countries characterized by ethnic and religious conflict. Most were encountering widespread diversity for the first time in their classrooms and on campus. This topic is also important for newcomers in a society with a constitutional commitment to multiculturalism and equality.

In addition, the students' appreciation for cultural diversity reflects the colleges' commitment to intercultural competency as a core element of their college-wide learning outcomes. BVC's citizenship

and intercultural competence outcome is defined as “the ability to examine assumptions and connections among beliefs, decisions, actions, and consequences from a variety of perspectives” (2015, p. 38) and NQC’s inclusive culture outcome states that “Learners will appreciate the rich and diverse manner in which individuals from various backgrounds enhance our overall culture and environment” (n.d., n.p.).

6.2 Recommendations

The eight themes presented above capture the central ideas that emerged from the research data. This section turns to recommendations drawn from this research relevant to the design and delivery of LINC programming at BVC and NQC. They constitute an interpretation of the data.

1. Students’ strong satisfaction with LINC coupled with their belief that it is effective in meeting their needs, as the findings demonstrate, clearly indicate that BVC and NQC should continue their current LINC program delivery models.

The researcher asked the interviewees about their reasons for choosing to study LINC at BVC or NQC and then asked them about their satisfaction in relation to their choice. The students reported making their choice on the basis of the college’s reputation reflecting information they had received from family and friends. All interviewees reported a high level of satisfaction with their program and their college. Their individual comments can be summarized by the following indicators of program effectiveness: quality of instruction, development of English competency, relevance and accessibility of services, inclusiveness and welcoming campus climate, orientation to life in Canada, and assistance with long-term career and educational planning.

Several students had attended or their family members had attended LINC programs that other providers offered and volunteered comparisons

with those programs when they talked about their satisfaction with their college. They valued the quality of instruction, the more academic orientation of the college environment, the emphasis on educational and career pathways, and the availability of computer and language labs.

2. Students’ positive experiences with learner support services and activities, as the findings demonstrate, clearly indicate that BVC and NQC should continue to provide a broad range of services and activities and enhance those services and activities where feasible.

Each college provides 20 or more services and activities. The services are designed to support students’ learning (e.g., Computer Commons), educational and career pathways (e.g., Career Services), settlement and integration (e.g., Settlement Advisor), and well-being (e.g., Counseling Services). The activities offer students opportunities for further involvement in the life of the college and the community. The interaction of LINC programming with college-wide services and activities creates an integrated learning system for students.

Many of the services and activities identified are offered to all students at the colleges. Additionally, specializations have been added to the service to effectively meet the needs of English-language learners. For example, library staff at both colleges assist LINC learners with selecting materials appropriate to their language level. Some of the services and activities (e.g., learning success officers at BVC and Coping in Canada workshops at NQC) are specifically designed to assist LINC learners with education and career planning and settlement challenges. These value-added services have a strong impact on the overall student experience at the colleges.

Survey data presented in the findings indicate high utilization of services such as the library, career and

educational planning, computer commons, tutoring, and settlement advisors. The questionnaire data measured utilization rates, and the interview data provided learners' perceptions of the significance of the services and activities. They indicated that the services and activities helped them with, for example, personal and family issues, financial challenges, career choice, and language development. All of the services and activities directly support CIC's settlement outcomes.

A number of enhancements might be possible including partnerships with Students' Associations, student clubs, community agencies, and community organizations. These partnerships could enhance several services, identified below, among others. Although LINC students are not members of the students' associations because of CIC funding guidelines, greater involvement with activities sponsored by the associations would support learners' language development and cultural orientation. Newcomers could benefit from a variety of health education workshops sponsored by health services at the colleges or community agencies. Service clubs and professional organizations might be willing to host social or career-related events for students. The particular needs of immigrant professionals are addressed in a subsequent recommendation.

3. As public postsecondary institutions, BVC and NQC should continue to maximize the benefits of Alberta's integrated postsecondary learning system for LINC learners.

Postsecondary institutions offer numerous pathways to successful community and labour force participation for newcomers. LINC students at BVC and NQC can progress to more advanced ESL programs, occupation specific language training, academic upgrading, and one- and two-year career programs at their colleges. In addition, learners have access to a broad range of postsecondary programs at all credential levels at Alberta's colleges, polytechnics, and universities.

When newcomers choose to take LINC at BVC or NQC, they can access readily available information and supports as they plan their post-LINC steps to workforce integration. Counsellors and career planners at the colleges advise learners of the full spectrum of opportunities that are available to them in their cities and the province.

Sixteen interviewees had developed educational and a career paths beyond LINC with the assistance of college staff. They spoke of further English study after LINC, academic upgrading if needed, a postsecondary program, and then career entry. Two students without fully developed plans said they planned to return to their home-country professions, a third intended to work before further English study, and the fourth planned to work as an assistant rather than as a professional in her field.

This planning process supports the settlement and integration processes as CIC (2010) has defined them, and it is also consistent with the policy position of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology (2007; now Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education) that "the system must work to ensure that pathways are clearly understood by the learner, [and] there are opportunities for progression from certificate to diploma to degree programs" (p. 14).

The postsecondary system is one pathway to the labour market for newcomers with its diverse program and service offerings. Alberta Human Services offers a second pathway with funding support, labour market services, and vocational training programs. The colleges, reflecting their access mandate, offer employment-focused programs and services funded by the ministry. In addition, the ministry funds employment, training, and career services for newcomers. Alberta Works funding gives students access to further language training including occupation specific language training as well as career programming. While students are enrolled in LINC,

they are able to access support services to determine their eligibility for and plan the next steps required for workforce integration.

BVC and NQC, as members of a learning community that works to meet the priorities of the federal government and the provincial government, are uniquely positioned to foster dialogue among postsecondary institutions as well as Alberta Human Services, CIC, professional organizations, and community agencies regarding the best mix of services needed to support LINC learners' progression from language training to career preparation and workforce integration.

4. Although the current LINC model combined with postsecondary supports creates a strong foundation for all newcomers, additional learning opportunities would benefit immigrants who wish to return to their professions in Canada.

Internationally educated professionals face a major challenge in obtaining employment commensurate with their prior education and experience. BVC and NQC provide LINC students with services that assist them in identifying pathways to their professions. Nevertheless, additional supports are needed. Six of the participants had been professionals in their home countries. Three wanted to return to their professions in Canada. One of the three is an engineer who will pursue the Alberta engineering association's process for the licensure of internationally educated engineers. The other two are in professions without a clearly defined entry path. The fifth person expressed no interest in returning to her profession in Canada because of the time required to become a professor in Canada. She plans to take a one-year career program. The sixth person expressed an interest in working as an assistant in her field.

Research has shown that internationally educated professionals face significant difficulties in becoming

licensed in Canada (Wayland, 2006a, 2006b). The barriers include a lack of recognition of foreign credentials and experience, a lack of relevant Canadian experience, limited or no opportunities to obtain Canadian prelicensure practical experience, a lack of opportunities to learn English as the profession requires, and interprovincial variations in the licensure processes. Programs such as BVC's Corporate Readiness Training Program assist newcomers with preparing for several regulated professions and several unregulated professions and occupations. The LINC Volunteer course at NQC provides students with hands-on experience in the Canadian workforce.

Newcomers who are unable to re-enter their profession in a timely manner would benefit from the development of a new career path. Employment and Social Development Canada (2015) has advanced the concept of alternative careers for newcomers "who are unsuccessful in the licensing process" (p. 17). The panel recommends that licensing bodies be mandated to advise newcomers of "a related career that best fits their skills and experience, or refer them to an appropriate organization for this service" (p. 17).

As an example of newcomers who pursued alternative careers, Türegün (2013) studied 158 immigrants in Ontario who had not been able to enter their original professions and who, through a variety of processes, launched new careers as settlement workers, which gave them an opportunity to draw upon their postsecondary education and previous professional experience.

The four participants in this study without a clearly defined entry path to a professional career and others like them could benefit from individualized coaching, which would help them to plan for alternative careers in Canada that would utilize their previous learning and experience.

5. BVC and NQC should continue to leverage the opportunities of a postsecondary environment to foster interaction among LINC learners and mainstream students.

The interviewees spoke about their interactions with their fellow LINC students and welcomed opportunities to use English as a common language and learn about their cultures. Some of the services and activities (e.g., intercultural centre, job fairs) offer LINC learners opportunities to interact with mainstream students.

As comprehensive institutions with a broad program mandate and a large and diverse student population, BVC and NQC offer numerous opportunities for LINC students to develop social connections, advance their English skills, and learn about Canadian culture through interactions with other college students. The colleges can maximize this potential by developing structured activities that bring together LINC learners and college students from other program areas. Some possible activities include coffee club conversations or more structured weekly activities that have a topical focus and combine language development and cultural orientation. Overall, these types of activities will further develop and enhance the inclusive culture that students from both colleges reported.

The design and sponsorship of such activities could draw on the language development expertise of the LINC faculty and the expertise of the intercultural centres at both colleges. Volunteer students who have been screened and trained could serve as facilitators.

The mainstream students who participate can reap significant benefits. As facilitators they will receive valuable training and experience in facilitation. Participating mainstream students along with LINC students will develop cross-cultural understanding that will be an important resource for their citizenship and careers.

6. BVC and NQC should build upon their effective career pathway programming and services to enhance career exploration opportunities for LINC learners.

Both colleges offer LINC learners extensive career development services. These include resume preparation, training in interview skills, job search processes, job fairs, guest speakers, orientation to Canadian workplace culture, and planning for educational pathways in relation to career goals. These services are readily available to students; most are offered in class or small group settings. As a result, 16 of the 20 interviewees had developed educational and career pathways.

Although LINC students have utilized the existing services and developed career goals, they are selecting careers with only limited direct information about and exposure to careers in the Canadian environment and to Canadian workplace culture. To meet their needs, additional services would have to be targeted to individuals or small groups. These services should be offered outside of the LINC instructional day and be appropriate to the language level of the learners.

The initial approach to enhancing these services should include the identification of existing services from and possible partnerships with CIC, Alberta Human Services, and community agencies. Working from this initial process, the partners could develop innovative strategies to support newcomers' labour market integration beginning with pre-arrival information.

7. Further research should be undertaken to understand learners' progression from LINC to postsecondary education and careers as well as additional dimensions of their settlement and integration experiences.

The students who participated in this study face one or two major transitions before they become established in the workforce. Some will transition directly from English-language training to the workforce. Most plan to transition to a postsecondary program and then enter the workforce.

The overall purpose of further research should be to understand students' LINC and college experiences in relation to their subsequent settlement and integration transitions. As a first step, periodic follow-up research could be conducted with the 20 students who participated in this study. A larger longitudinal study could involve gathering baseline data from all participating LINC students at BVC and NQC with subsequent data collection for upwards of four years.

This study suggests further research related to cultural diversity and Canadian multiculturalism is required. Data reported in the findings chapters indicate that the LINC program at both colleges provided learners with substantial intercultural education and that the learners had internalized attitudes and values related to multiculturalism. Further research could explore learners' understanding of and experiences with cultural diversity in relation to their LINC program as they enter the workforce and become more engaged in the larger society.

6.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences and perceptions of LINC learners at BVC and NQC with particular focus on choice of college, life as a student, utilization of learner support services and campus activities, and settlement and integration. LINC learners at both colleges reported have chosen their

college based on its reputation as conveyed by family and friends. All expressed very positive satisfaction with their choice of college and cited reasons that included quality of instruction and the services provided. The participants from BVC had used an average of 7.7 services (out of 20), and those from NQC had used an average of 12 services (out of 23). Interviewees talked about the services they valued and these included, among others, resume preparation, information about college career programs, tutorial support, specialized library resources, the computer commons, and individualized career and educational planning. They said that their college experience of developing English proficiency, planning for education and careers, and learning about daily life in Calgary/Edmonton had assisted them as newcomers. The students articulated what they had learned in class about the Canadian way of life. Their responses included cultural norms, functional interactions such as school visits, and legal obligations. The interviewees spoke very positively about cultural diversity in their classrooms and reported having learned about other cultures. Their comments on diversity reflected classroom instruction on mutual respect and multiculturalism.

This study demonstrates the value of listening to the voice of learners and newcomers. Doing so can help ESL researchers and educators understand lived experiences that are not our own. We can learn about the personal transition that each individual undertakes as a part of the settlement process. We can understand how they perceive our postsecondary institutions and our society. We can appreciate their needs, priorities, and goals. When required, we can adapt programming and services to better respond to this learner population. In this case, the process of gaining an understanding validates both the worth of the LINC program for newcomers and the particular model of LINC that BVC and NQC deliver.

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A APPENDIX: FIVE STUDENT LIFE STORIES

This research project is committed to capturing and presenting the voices of LINC students at BVC and NQC about their experiences as college students and newcomers. Interview data from 20 participants are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 as a part of a topical presentation of findings reflecting established social science methods. This focus is very effective in exploring particular topics and themes central to the research, but the voices of individuals cannot be heard. At the same time, the Steering Committee wished to create an opportunity for the voices of individual students to be heard about their immigration to Canada, experiences as college students, and settlement and integration. For this reason, the researcher interviewed five students from the original 20 a second time. The five were selected by the researcher from the 20 on the basis of their fluency in English and their ability to be reflective about their experience. The selection does reflect the gender ratio of the LINC population, and it reflects five different source countries. One is a refugee and four are independent or sponsored immigrants. The student names are pseudonyms chosen by the students.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews utilizing an interview guide. The questions focused on topics such as life in the home country, the decision to immigrate to Canada, initial experiences in Calgary or Edmonton, current comfort with life in Canada, experiences as a college student, future goals and plans, and various aspects of settlement and integration. While the guide was used as a broad structure for the interview, the researcher and the participants did freely introduce new topics as a part of the conversation.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and condensed versions, for reasons of space, are presented below.

Each of the five student life stories is understandably unique reflecting the students' personalities, cultures, previous education, reasons for immigrating, and immigration experiences. At the same time, there are themes that can be identified in the five stories.

- ◆ Canadian organizations and services, individual Canadians, and the colleges are seen as welcoming, friendly, and helpful.
- ◆ Despite the stresses of immigration and settlement, the participants are resilient and optimistic about their futures.
- ◆ The five are very satisfied with their college experiences. They value the quality of instruction, friendly and supportive interactions with instructors and staff, access to services and activities, and their friendships with fellow students from other countries.
- ◆ The students are each self-consciously engaged in a process of cultural adaptation integrating their homeland cultures with their experience of Canadian culture. Their LINC programs are assisting with that process with direct instruction about Canadian cultural norms.
- ◆ They are developing an understanding of Canada as a multicultural society.
- ◆ Students welcome the opportunity to learn about other cultures through classroom activities and informal interactions.

Solmaz



I was born in Iran in a small family. I was educated in ——— University in electronic engineering. After that I worked in ball bearing company. And after that I found another job in south of Iran as instrumentation engineer at petrochemical, and after that I met my husband there.

When we arrived here, we landed in Montreal. And then we came into Calgary. We settled in a hotel, and we looked for renting apartment. It took one month to find a good apartment so it was very tough living in the hotel.

We had good jobs, good income in Iran, but the international sanctions in Iran have a very bad effect in people's lives in Iran. Prices double, triple in one year, two year. And the work situation is worse than the past. And we decided to come to Canada to have a better life and find a good job and for building a better future for our daughter. Because the Canada is a country that many people from different cultures can live with each other in a very good situation and they're free. In our country, there are some religious obligations and they apply to everything. For example, we have to have a scarf or special clothes everywhere. There are some limitations. We prefer to live in Canada. It is better for us and for our daughter. She didn't limit to have special clothes when she go to her school. We lost our job or our work situation there, but here is better for our daughter and for her future. She has a good opportunity for having education in high standard, education system.

My husband had a very good work experience, and unfortunately, when we arrived, the economic situation started going down. So everyone suggested go to college and continue to improve your language, and when the market is better, you can apply for a job.

Canadians are very friendly and talkative, and I think in the first meeting I love the Canadian people because they are very friendly, mannered. If we have a problem when we want to talk, sometimes we use the wrong word or grammar, lots of grammar errors. But they

encourage us, "No you can talk. You are very good. We can understand you." And actually, with my daughter, all the people met her and loved her.

When we arrive in Calgary it has been challenging for us. At first maybe we have a lot of stress. We research before we come here, but when you are facing a new place, it's more challenging. You find some things you didn't know before or some things is more challenging. For example, shopping. After we arrived here, the economic situation get down. It has a very bad effect at first for us. We think, oh, we lost our job. Maybe we couldn't find job very easy. But after we met some counselors or we talked with our friends, they said no. In Calgary, it's normal and after a while maybe it will go very up. We know the immigration is very difficult, but when we faced it, it was more than anticipated.

I decided to study English as a full-time student because I need to improve my English, and I think when it's full-time, we can concentrate only on improving our English. Better. And I can bring my daughter to day care. I participate in class. After class, I can do my homework in library. So it's better for me.

At first, I didn't know Bow Valley College. One of our family friends said, "I went to ——— and Bow Valley both, and I suggest you go to Bow Valley. It's better." And then I called one counselor in ILVARC [Immigrant Language and Vocational Assessment Referral Center], and I asked her which one do you think is better for me and she suggested Bow Valley College.

During my first week as a student I was a little confused, and because I think I couldn't manage

the time to do my homework with my daughter. But after I participate in the class, it is good. I can manage the time. It's a little difficult, but I can do it. And I love the environment in our class, our teacher, my classmates. It was very friendly and I feel comfortable and in meeting with my teacher and our classmate. And I think the topics are very good for us. For example, last semester we had something about community engagement. And we learn lot of things about things happen in Calgary, in Canada and learn about the Canadian culture. Lots of things. It's very, very useful for me.

My classmates are from different countries. We can learn about their culture. They can learn about our culture. We have a good relationship with each other. I enjoy being in class and meeting our friends.

But last semester we had a lot of talk about the difference between the culture. We learned a lot about the different cultures. Yeah, it's very good and I like to visit people from the other cultures and know about their cultures, their country. The instructors talk about, we have to respect the others people culture. And, yeah, it's not good to think now the other's culture is not good and our culture is better. No, everyone loves that culture and his or her background culture so it's important to respect each other and don't bother each other.

People from different cultures come to Canada and can live with each other in a very good environment and get along good with each other. I think here is very good place. People from different religions, from different cultures, from different backgrounds can live. In our apartment, for example, there are lots of people from different, many different, countries and all have a good relationship.

The instructors are very good, and I have two. One last semester and one now. And I love both of them. They are very friendly, very good teachers. They help the students. And the other thing, our relationship is very close—like friends. Not we afraid them. We can, if we have a problem or something, call them or send email. Or talk when we have interview. For example, for

midterm or final interview, we can solve our problem. Or we have a consultation time after class. If we have a problem, we can refer them.

There are lots of services for students. At first, we didn't know about a lot of them. But after we participate in some programs, they introduce the different service programs that we can use, and there are lots. There are lots of other services that we can use besides coming to learn English. For example, for career advice or different counsellor. And different financial aids, awards. I went to Bow Valley College day care, and I ask if there is any space for my daughter and they called me. They said they have a place so bring her here. It's very good place. My daughter loves here. She has good time, and her instructors are very good.

At first new students didn't know about the different services. Because there are lots of service, but if new student didn't know about this services. Sometimes when teachers suggest or and there are some presentations from, for example, Learner Services. If someone come and make a presentation about different services in Bow Valley, is very helpful. And I thinking every semester, it's good to have some presentations each term because in every semester, we have new other students in every class so it's not bad for the others. Maybe they can learn new things.

After LINC, I talked with some of friends that work in this field, and they suggested to me take some course in SAIT or in University of Calgary. So, I'm looking for this courses and I'm not sure about which course but I prefer to have a short-term course. Maybe some certificate from SAIT or university maybe help me to find a job. So I visited SAIT and I asked about some course. And I need to go to the university.

By the year 2020 I'm hopeful we find a good job and if we find a good job, we can settle very good and we didn't have any stress for financial issues. So maybe we can buy a house for ourselves and have a good job. And our daughter participate in a good school and we can provide good life for my daughter.

Van

I'm from Democratic Republic of Congo. When I grow up as a child my father give me a vision how to be responsible in life. In high school I took accountability administration and accounting. University also I took Economics. I have my vision to finish that, but I didn't because of the situation of our country. The war. And then the crash economics. I was able to run my country. I was in Zambia for one year. After that I go to Zimbabwe. Ten years in the camp of refugee where I married my wife. After ten years, I go to my resettlement from Zimbabwe to Canada. But when I was in my country, my vision was always to learn, to accomplish what I have in my mind.

Life in Zimbabwe was very, very difficult because I was in camp. You know there the government of Zimbabwe did not allow the refugee to work. So we were there waiting month after month. They give us food, no money, only foods. They don't give us a value because you are a refugee, you are nothing, you don't have a future. You don't have a hope. Only foods. You are there, you run from your country. You are there sitting, eating. You don't know how you can do your future. A lot of stress in the camp. The people suffer. The people of Zimbabwe don't take care about the refugees.

I was very happy first of all when I passed my interview with immigration of Canada. When I received re-settlement, I reach Edmonton, I was very, very happy. We hear about Canada through our brothers which came before us. They phone us, send us email to tell us how Canada is good. When you are waiting for a settlement, you pray God's help you to reach Canada because they tell you the style life of Canada was different from other countries.

Catholic Social Services came pick us up from the airport and brought us to their reception house. I was very happy because I saw the people thinking about me. Ask me if I need something.

Now my life, I think, is begin great. Because when I came, the problem of paying rent, how to live, go to school without working, I was worried about it. Right now, I'm comfortable because I have a goal, a vision. I made

friends. I'm coming to school. They teach me how to reach my goal, how to do things, how to see far. I see change in my life.

Here I have friend from Congo, friend from Zimbabwe, and friend from the people I met in school. I have friends. I have the friends that live here for four years, five years. And even the apartment where we live, we have the friend there. They tell us about the life of Canada. How to live, how to see far, how to focus. The goal you have, vision you have, the goal of your life.

I decide to come to NorQuest because first of all the reputation of this college. When we came to the receiving house, they told us the way you can go to learn English is NorQuest College. Because of reputation, how they teach. And those people told me, the friends we made here; they learn here, they study here.

The first week, before I came, I was afraid because I say, "I'm a new one. I don't know what to do to start my way in." But my first day and my first week when I came here, I found friends; my teacher put me in the table together with others. And they take me comfortable. They tell me what to do. I think after break time someone show me the computer lab. They showed me to the library. I was very comfortable. I feel like I was at home because they take me comfortable. And my teacher give me the rule of school: What to do. How to work, how to live with others. I was very, very happy and comfortable.

And I learn a lot with my teacher. First time when I came and this time also, they help me a lot. Not only about English. Also about life. Because even life involving what we are doing here at school. We have many people come from many different countries. We sit together, and I learn something good from them. Contributes to my life. They advise me, they teach me, they show me the good way is what I learn.

From the instructors I learned about life is we focus about goal. For example, we can be in the class and the teacher ask you a question, "What do you want to be? What do you want to do?" You explain according to your vision and she help you if you want to reach this level, you must do that.

What I love is when you come the first day in class, the instructor give me a menu to choose what me want. Last term my instructor give me something help me a lot. Give me a vocabulary. Says this is for your life. I don't have the time to teach you here because I have other things to teach you, but I give here for your benefit. You can do it.

The computer lab is very important. Every time I went there if I have a difficult, I called the man who works there. I can call on him. He is very humble man. He can come and show you what you want and teach you something.

The settlement officer helps me a lot. She give me the appointment to see her in the office. I tell her my desire, my goal, my vision and she told me if you want to do that, you must do that, you must go to ESL. After ESL, you can take a program. I want to go to university. Because I want to do engineering.

My advice to a friend from the Congo is to encourage them to come here because it is a good place to be. If you are here, you can't lose. They can give you light about your future. You can have something and they can add something to what you have for you to succeed in your life. And NorQuest College has a good reputation. If you finish your school at NorQuest College, you have that opportunity to have a job anywhere.

By the year 2020 I can say I will be good, good like a really Canadian. My style life will be like a Canadian. Because right now the way I am living, there is some difference. The difference is, for example, my income is very, very low. Secondly, the advantage I have, I don't have the same advantage like them. They are more than me. So in five years, three years when I will receive my citizenship, after that say I can finish my school, I have a good job and the way I think, do the things, I'll be like them. That's why I say in five years my life will be like really Canadian. Like others they came before me or others who were born here, is what I can say.

I can say Canada is the good place to live. I see a difference between my country, Zambia, Zimbabwe and here. Here, they help you to reach your goal which means they take care about you. Like there is some people behind you push you to succeed in life. They advise, they show you way. If you do something wrong, they can correct you. And they can show you the rule how to live to be important in society.

I do take part in some events and activities in French here in Edmonton. But I don't want it. Why because I want to improve my language English. If I still doing the things in French, my English will be poor. For me to do better, I must do English for improve talk with people in English. Even here in NorQuest College. When I meet my friends from back home or from Zimbabwe, I told them, "No, I don't want Swahili. I don't want French." Why? Because I know better French. I know better Swahili. So let's speak, talk in English. For us improve. Because four months is not good enough, so that four months we must focus to learn more.

Ling

We thought about Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. But Canada, I know Canada more. I understand Canada, and I have two friends here and they told me how Canada peaceful and life is so relaxed, they told us. And easy to find a job. And I thought maybe environment is close to American. My friends tell me Calgary is very nice place. They told me if you want to come over to Canada, English will be very important. If you go to Vancouver or Toronto, maybe you don't need speak more English because a lot of Chinese over there. And they told me for seeking job, for English listening, English study, all good in Calgary.

When I arrived in Calgary, be honest, feel not good. Because in Shanghai, that's so crowd bustling with noise and excitement. A lot of things you can do for have fun or something. But here, a little bit quiet and I feel just lonely, you know. And at that time I know first three months living here, I have no new friends, I have no job, I have no school. But one thing make me change my mind. My son go to school. After school, he told me, "Mom, I love my teacher. I love this school. They are so fun." Okay. I like stay. I just talk to his teacher. I feel so good, because teacher care for the children's feelings.

You know, in China, our careers, our jobs were very good. We earn a lot and the co-worker and environment are perfect for us because we were born there and we're living there. My husband was an engineer so he manage two departments in his company. But you know first job of him when we come over, he went to [work in] casino.

And I still remember the first day after work, he come back. He just threw his shoe to the ground. He said it was totally different from China. And I said, "Okay, if you don't like, maybe quit it. That's okay." He said, "No, let me just keep doing that. Let me see how, what can I do." But I still proud of him because he did that three

years. After half year, we bought a new house and my neighbors are very friendly. His wife and he help us a lot. Then my neighbor introduced my husband to his friend to get plumber job. He keep that job until now. Pipefitter right now.

We met very nice Canadians when we got here. We bought an old car. Once, we go to Superstore. After we shop, we can't start the car. And at the time a man just drive his truck and park beside us and he boost our car. I just talk to my husband, "Oh my God. That less happen in China because people always keep away with you." But this is first I love, that's the first reason I love, no not first, second reason I love Canadian. I love Canada because people really help you.

And I didn't try to look for Chinese group. Because I think I'm here, I already arrived Canada so I should be more in touch with the Canadian. So when I live in my community, two ladies come over. Tell me a lot of information. And I love that. It really helps.

Now that I have lived here for nine years, I think my emotion is totally different. Because the first time I'm nervous. I'm worry about my son doesn't like here, my husband can't get going. Maybe one day, we decide okay, let's go back China. We can't stay

here. But right now, everything is good. My son think like Canadian and he speak like Canadian and he do everything like Canadian. That's good, I think. He speaks Chinese at home.

My husband, I think, he's good. Because he work Fort McMurray. He told me, "I love this job because it made me body healthy, and I don't need to use a lot of my mind. Maybe I can have long life." He enjoy his life. I think that's good.

I have more friends here and not only Chinese friends. I compare my friends who live in China, who still live in China. I think my life kind of relaxed. Last night, I talked to my friend who still live in China. They talk about their kid, their daughter and their son. They work hard, really hard. They have a lot of test. They have to take program in summer break.

I have my plan to finish English study and go to a professional academic course and have a professional job. That's my future. I worked at a casino and then an insurance company. From a casino to insurance company. That's a big jump, I think.

My friends advised me to come to this college. I like the environment and the equipment such as the computer room, library, and listening lab. I visited my friends at another school. I compared. I still love this college. The teacher is very important. I love teacher. I think my instructors teach you very well. On instructor tell us after Level 6 you can go to EAP program, you can go to upgrading. They just try to explain carefully and let us understand that and make us have a better choice. That really helps.

I left my job to study because I want to boost my English, and I want to get more professional English study. Our skills, when I work, I can speak with my co-worker. I can improve my listening, but for writing and reading, nobody push me. And, you know, I just relax at home with Chinese Mandarin. Not English.

The college has more opportunities after English study. I can stay at the college, choose like nursing, something. And accounting. I think I can have more volunteer here and maybe I have opportunity for a job at the college. I like the college, the environment. I think, maybe I can work in Registrar's office. And the students' office, Student Services. I can help more students maybe.

I still remember the first week, my teacher told me don't call me teacher. Just call my name. I'm not only your teacher; I'm still your friend. That's very important, she told me. You have some question, you can ask me. And I feel they're so friendly. I love to stay with my teacher and students together study English. That's very important for me. And my friends, we tried to introduce each other, to try to let another classmate understand us. We talk about where we come from, how long have you been here. I'm excited to have a new environment. I like to understand others.

The college is clean and quiet. And teacher and staffs all nice. Friendly if you ask them questions. I think a lot of resource like listening lab and computer, library, and, a lot of office. That's one reason. Another reason is teacher. Eight, nine years ago I begin study at Bow Valley College. The teacher all nice. They give me a lot of information about Canada the first time I come to Canada. They tried to let us newcomers to understand Canada. Like the peoples, the area, like geography. The teachers gave us a lot of help, information about a job, about friends, about if you want buy something where should you go, like that. The services are really helpful, I can find information. I can ask them. They give me information or I can search online. All good. And all free. That's very important and a lot of choice over there.

The other students are good. Friendly and we love to talk each other. If we in class, if eyes connect, we always smile to each other. Everyone try to talk friendly, try to understand each other, and try to tell you something. If you ask them some question, they try to help you. Give you more information.

Canada is multicultural. A lot of people come from different country, different nation, different origins I think. I think that's good because the whole earth comes to one country so the people live together. I think that's good. It's a little bit hard for me to understand all the cultures because I think my age or maybe I think maybe my language limited. So I don't talk with them much more about the culture, so maybe I understand their culture just a little bit. Not deeply. But for my son, have no problem. He know everything.

Because I have been a student studying English, I have more confidence to face, to talk to others. To maybe to face more interview for work. This term we're learning a lot about healthy life, like nutrition food. Last term my teacher teach us how to do your interview, how to answer questions, in the future when you find a job. How to do your interview, how to answer question. I think that's really help.

I would tell a friend from China studying at the college, I just tell them just keep going. If you have goal, just try to catch that. Maybe you have some reasons to stop you continue studying problem like you want to go back to your home country because you miss your parents so much or you have family problems like you have to stay home and take care of your little kids. So you just try to keep going study English. Don't stop. If you stop like me when you come back, you pick it up from the first step, not in the middle step. So just keep going until you got your goal or something.



Hien

I studied chemistry in university. And I finished university and I taught chemistry in high school. When I have a job, I love my mother because my father die and my mother live with me. We live together, but my mother say, “If, after I die, maybe you live alone. You can get married.” That’s why I get married, and I came here.

When I first come to Canada, I’m very sad. Everything for me was very difficult. More challenges and you know because I can’t speak, I can’t go anywhere. Everything my husband support me. But now, I’m more comfortable. But now I know how to drive a car. I come to school and I want to buy something, I can go independent.

In my country I have a good job, I don’t want to come to Canada. I know because when you change the country [it can be] very difficult and challenging. But after that I listened to my mother. My mother say, “If you maybe live alone, very sad.” My husband really love me because my husband and I were neighbors. He knew me when I study high school, and he wait for me a long time. When I finish university, I have a job. I don’t want to come here.

The first two or three weeks in Edmonton were hard for me. Very difficult. I remember I can’t speak when I go outside. When I go shopping, my husband speak to. Canadians are very friendly. Sometime my pronunciation is not good, and she [the clerk] know maybe I newcomer. She speak again. I came in the winter. But I remember difficult for me because in my country, I’m very comfortable. But in the winter here, I take many clothes and boot and scarf. I don’t like. But after that maybe second year, I maybe I okay.

I remember the first time when I came here [to the college], I sit alone. I don’t have friends because I can speak Level 2, I remember. Now, I’m not good English, but some people talk, I understand. And the teacher, teach, I understand. I better than before.

I remember the first week I can’t study. I don’t know. They teach because some time teacher did only talk, talk, talk. And write some work. I don’t know, but I always use dictionary. But I very concentrated, you know. I think second week, in two weeks, I comfortable. The first week was very difficult for me.

I couldn’t listen. They say, “Hello, thank you.” I know what’s they speak very fast. I can’t understand. But maybe the teacher very good. They know me very. Sometime I am sad at school. She know and she advise me. Try, try, try every day.

The first week students were not friendly. You know, because some student they study before they come here. They know a little bit. For me, because I don’t study speaking, but my grammar very good. But they can speak. I can’t understand.

Now, I have many friends from many countries: China, Russia and Congo. In my country, when I work I have many friends. I’m very happy. But the first time when I came here, I don’t have any friends. But now when I come back, some people say, “Hello, Hi” and make me happy.

I think education is important. If I come to school, I have many experiences. I live in Canada. School teach me about when I newcomer, I need to learn English. And if English better and if you don’t have an education, you can apply a job, easy job. School teach me if you live here long time, if you have citizenship, there are benefits. I learn about independence. That’s why I independent now and maybe now something

my husband say, "You must do independent." And I go anywhere. I buy grocery, and if I want to buy something, I go alone.

I don't know anything when I arrived, but my husband, he apply me to study at NorQuest and when I study sometime I'm worrying, you know. Because some work difficult for me and I think I can't study, but my husband say, NorQuest the best school, you try to study. Maybe if you don't know to speak English, difficult for you to live in Canada.

Now I study CLB 6. I hope this school have CLB 7 and maybe my English very good, I apply for a program. Maybe five months or six months. I look something easy like payroll.

The instructors are very good. For me, the teacher are organized. They prepare everything when they come to class. Some teacher very friendly. They know student newcomer. They can speak, and they very patient. They speak slowly, slowly.

[But] I saw some teacher not friendly and not patient. You know, because newcomer come to Canada, they can't speak English and they listen not well. And you give more homework, they don't have time to do because they have to work or bedtime and after that when you come here, you didn't finish homework. And some student very sad, and they quit the school and I think not good.

At lunch time, we [students] eat together. Sometime we set our food together. And I know about different food in their country. And sometimes they teach a little bit about say hi or thank you. I make a lot of friends, and I study with my classmate. We talk about salaries in our countries, customs, and Happy New Year.

The services very good at NorQuest. When I study CLB 3 before when I have time, I went over to the library and I borrowed a book. [The staff person] was very

friendly and sometime I need a computer. I have much work now. But that's why I stop reading books. But sometime I went over there and use computer. They are very friendly and help students a lot. Lunch time if I have time, I go over there [to the computer lab] and read or study. The [staff person] is very good. When I studied CLB 5, the one of the staff come in my class. She talk about newcomers. Another person come to my class. She talk about job research, and she helps students with resumes.

Many people have different ideas about education. For me, education is important because now I can study higher. But my friends, some friends from Vietnam, they come here, they study maybe two terms or three terms. When they have Level 4, they apply citizenship and they stop. They work. They make money. Some my friends they like money more than education. For me, I'm very poor now, but I think education and English are more important in Canada if you live here. But you know some people don't like to study because they think if you came to Canada, every job you work maybe the boss Vietnamese, you don't need to speak English. Different for me. I think money necessary, not important. Because in Canada, if you have a lot of money, you spend a lot of money. My husband's uncles advise me, why do you go to school a long time because most people go to work. But they talk, talk. I never listen.

If I study very fast and I get a job, maybe in most five years, I have a job. If I study English very slowly, maybe five years I don't know I get a job yet. If I have a job, I can support my family. I help my husband a little bit.

Now, I hope I have a baby first. Second, I have a job. Citizenship important, but do you know some people decide it's very important. But for me, not important. It's okay for me to live in Canada. If I have time, enough time, I apply.

Lisa

I was born in Mauritius. I finished school Grade 6, elementary school. We have not enough money to go school. And I quit the school. And I went to one neighbor house. She have the baby and I babysit the baby and after when I get 17 years old, I went to work in the factory. I was checking the clothes. It's called Quality Control.

At that time, I was traveling by the bus and all the time I see my husband. My husband came, and asked my grandpa because we can't meet, before meet the parents. Ours is a very strict culture. My mom decide and say, "Okay. If he like you, tell him to bring his family." And he bring his whole family to my house and after three years, I got married.

My husband thinks moving to Canada is good for the kids. In my culture, when you married, you have to live together with mother-in-law, father-in-law, all the family, you know, in one house. I live like this and we get some problem, and my husband decide to leave.

My mom was worried when we left. She say, "You don't know how to read, how to write. What you going go, and what you going to go to do there?" I say, "I think, first when I came to Canada, I have to go to school." Because my friend tell me, "Don't worry, Lisa, you don't know how to read, how to write. But here, you don't feel shy. Not like Mauritius." Mauritius, when you get some age, you stop school, you have to marry. No opportunity to go school even though you get married, but here you have lots of opportunity. That's why when I came here, I just one week I stay home. I am still in school.

And when we came here, two months my husband didn't found a job. But he apply lots of place. He leave his resume lots of place, but he didn't get. He was disappointed. He was nervous and don't feel comfortable. We stay with friends, but we don't feel that comfortable. But we have to give them a little bit

money for food, for everything. He said, "Maybe I gonna go back home." I said, "No. Why not? You know when we came here, we have to start from the zero." He got a job at Walmart. He's a health care aide now.

Now I can say my life is coming very good, now. Because if you know how to communicate, how to speak, if you understand, this is a good thing. Like, for example, if somebody is talking with me, I don't understand, oh my God, this is terrible. But if you know how to speak, you understand, that is perfect.

For me, my experience as a newcomer has changed my life. Like when I came here, I can see how people are nice. I see the Canadian people, they are very friendly. They are helpful, and they are very friendly. Even though they don't know you. And if they have something, they don't just keep it, keep it. They give it. Like if you have extra table, you no want to use it, you put it outside, maybe you say free. You give it to someone, right. And how, if you need something, you go to the somewhere, they help you, right. For example, if you go to the bus, you don't know something, they help you. You don't know what time the bus going to come. You see the number, you call and they help you.

For my husband, always he tell me, "You know my dream was when my kids going to speak English. But I came here, my kids learn it. My dream is coming true."

NorQuest is a good place and full-time, you get everything. Reading, writing, speaking, listening.

Part-time is too short. I think part-time is good for the student is very smart. [I went to another LINC school.] At ——— they teach, but not strong teaching. Like here, we get to make some PowerPoint. We have different activity. We work with group. The instructors are doing good job because they have more experience. They have certificate. They know how to teach.

The first time when I came to NorQuest, I see lots of classmates, the teacher. I like the teacher. But the first day, no, I say no, maybe no. I don't feel comfortable with this teacher. And after two days, three days, I am okay. My instructor this term is good. Just, we have to focus what we are doing. My instructor is, if she is doing something, she send everyone the paper. We can take, we can see. If she explain something, she sends a page for everyone. She email everybody.

I was a volunteer as part of the LINC program. For me it was like I am working this time. I was on time, I was doing everything. When I feed the elderly people, I sit here. I take two people. [Volunteering helped] to communicate with different kind of people, you can know the environment. How they work.

Some of my classmates are nice. Some are not nice. So what's nice about them? Teamwork. Some work together. Some are selfish. If they know something, they don't want to share with you. Some think they are smart. For me, I think nobody is smart. If I am smart, I not be here. I might be at university.

All of the services and activities are good. We have computer lab, they give the tour after school. You stay here and they show you how to type. And the library here. You don't have to go to different library. You can take the book. The Canada Day celebration is good. We dress like Canadian. We wear white and red. We dance, we celebrate. ———[two staff] teach our class about interviews, how to sit, how to dress.

Living in Canada for, like, it's not same, like, from my country. I see the Canadian people when their kids is 15 years old, they have to go work. In my culture, 18 years old. Even when you get married, you have to live together. And here, the parents say if you get 15, 17, you can go found your place and you leave. But in my culture, not. You have to live together. My kids get some idea from friend maybe here. But always we talk and we watch TV. We say, "Okay, you no have to do like that. It's depend on you. If you want, you can do it, but in our culture, we don't live like that. We like to live together."

I went to the Heritage Days. Three days I was volunteer there. We went from the school. Different culture. Different activity. You can buy food. You can shop for clothes, everything. It show you how many country everybody's meet together. Everybody's showing what they do. What kind of food. What kind of music. What kind of dance.

Sometime, I went to watch movie with my kids, my husband. When he start work, we went there. And when have the Canada Day, I go to Churchill Square, have some, they sing, dance, I bring my kid there.

I am lost because I make my test for citizenship. I fail. Bad news. On Thursday, I have to go to make the test again. But I study very hard. Yesterday I went to bed 2 o'clock. I read the book. I practice on the computer.

After LINC I want to study health care aide. In five years I am working in the home for seniors. And I bring lots of money. I help my husband to first pay all the credit card. Because five years, he was working alone. First, I want to pay all this credit, and I going found a house. I can buy house, and I have my place for my kids to study. Their own bedroom. I have my own car. I can save a little bit money for my kids to send them college.

B APPENDIX: LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES AND CAMPUS ACTIVITIES



Table B1: Bow Valley College

| Services and Activities | | Description |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Services | Accessibility Services | Supports students with learning difficulties and disabilities |
| | Career Services | Jobs search skills, lists of job opportunities, and career planning workshops and more |
| | Conversation Club in the Library | Provides students with the opportunity to speak English in small groups |
| | Counselling Services | Support with personal and family issues and educational planning |
| | Financial Aid | Information about money management and loans and grants for students |
| | Health Services | Support with minor health issues and connections to other health services |
| | Job Fair | About 30 employers from across the city provide information about job opportunities and job requirements. An annual event |
| | Learner Success Officers | ELL staff help with goal setting and educational planning, referrals, funding, completing forms, and finding community services. Staff make presentations in classrooms about pathways |
| | Library and Learning Commons | Provides assistance with research and materials selection, books and audiovisual materials, computers for student use, and study space |
| | Orientation | Information sessions for learners new to LINC at the start of each term |
| | Registrar's Office | Helps students who want their foreign credentials recognized as they plan for study after LINC |
| | Scholarships and Awards | Information about scholarships and a bursary for a financial crisis |
| | Student Advisors (Registrar's Office) | Help students with educational goals and Alberta Works funding for future study |
| | Student Mentoring | LINC learners at higher levels mentor learners at lower levels in classrooms under the direction of instructors |
| | Transfer Credit Fair | 11 Alberta colleges and universities tell learners about opportunities to continue their studies at their institutions |
| | Tutor in Tutorial Centre | Helps with reading, writing, speaking, and pronunciation for ELL students |
| | Writing Club in the Library | Provides opportunities for learners to practice writing in small groups |
| Campus Activities | Intercultural Centre | Opportunities to volunteer on and off campus, to learn about many cultures, and to learn about leadership. Students act as hosts for workshops and presentations |
| | Students' Association | Provides campus and social activities. ELL students may participate, but they are not members of the SA |
| | Volunteer and Community Fair | 30 community organizations tell learners about the resources and the volunteer opportunities they provide |

Table B2: NorQuest College

| Services and Activities | | Description |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Services | Academic Fairs | Information sessions that promote NorQuest programs |
| | Computer Assistance | Computer stations, one-on-one help with software, passwords, student e-mail, student MyQuest |
| | Coping in Canada Workshops | Classroom curriculum enhancement workshops that support settlement and intercultural learning in relation to the neighborhood, community, and workplace |
| | Counselling Services | Personal counselling, crisis counselling, educational and career counselling |
| | Employment Advisor | Information about careers, job searches, job opportunities. Help with resumes and cover letters. Volunteer placements |
| | Health Services | Nurses provide care for injuries and illness, make referrals to health services, and support wellness and healthy lifestyles |
| | Job Fairs | Employers present job opportunities and requirements. |
| | Library | ESL books and magazines. Assistance with materials selection and research skills. Computer stations. WiFi. Printing. Internet access. Study space |
| | LINC Administrative Office | To apply and register for LINC. To get confirmation of student status letters |
| | LINC Awards | Scholarships and bursaries for LINC students |
| | LINC Volunteer Course | Students do volunteer work with community agencies |
| | Services for Students with Disabilities | Support for students with hearing, vision, or learning disabilities |
| | Settlement Advisor | Support for newcomers. Information about housing, food banks, social assistance, banking, drivers' licenses, health care, employment insurance, and financial supports |
| | Student Navigators | Planning for career and educational pathways. Funding information for study after LINC |
| Campus Activities | After School Computer Tutoring | Computer help provided by volunteer students and instructors |
| | Canada Day Celebration | Canada Day celebrations at the Westmount campus |
| | Cafeteria and Student Centre | Meeting and social space for students |
| | Christmas Concert | Christmas music and entertainment by students and staff |
| | Girl Talk | Weekly discussions for female students about life in Canada |
| | Hallowe'en Celebration | Westmount campus event and pumpkin carving contest |
| | Inclusion Fusion | Campus-wide activity in the Student Centre about racism and discrimination |
| | Quest Singers | Students and instructors meet at lunchtime to sing. They sing at major College and program events such as Canada Day, success ceremonies, etc. |
| | Students' Association | Food bank, emergency bus tickets, lost and found, health information |

C APPENDIX: LITERATURE REVIEW

Acquiring one of Canada's official languages is integral to the successful settlement and integration of adult immigrants into Canadian society. The need to focus on settlement and integration is urgent because 20% of Canada's population is foreign born, with 17% of that population considered recent immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2011). Research that Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) conducted indicated that language skills in either English or French indicate the economic performance of immigrants (Anisef, Sweet, & Adamuti-Trache, 2008). The employment prospects of immigrants are highly dependent on their levels of education as well as their "ability to communicate as needed in the host-country language" (McHugh & Challinor, 2011, para. 1). Immigrants with strong language skills demonstrate greater social participation outside their own ethnic group, which in turn increases social networks and social capital.

Settlement agencies, private providers, school boards, and community colleges all provide ESL programs in Canada. Community colleges can play a valuable role in the integration of ESL learners by providing access not only to instruction but also to a broad range of academic and personal supports and services, as well as formal and informal opportunities for ESL learners to become part of the mainstream college community (Hiebert & Sherrell, 2011). Community colleges also offer access to sophisticated technology and career and academic counselling, which enhances the success of immigrants in ESL programs and in

postsecondary programs. Colleges provide pathways to postsecondary programs within colleges as well as other postsecondary institutions, and they provide all learners with the education and skills needed to meet the needs of employers, which, in turn, enhances the long-term competitiveness of Canadian businesses (Colleges and Institutes Canada, n.d.).

In the United States, approximately one in four students attending community colleges is an immigrant, and ESL programs at colleges are rapidly expanding (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004). In Canada, "a very large number of recent immigrants are drawn to non-university educational programs or community colleges" (Anisef et al., 2008, p. 28). Two broad categories of adult immigrant students access ESL courses to improve their language skills: those with basic literacy deficiencies and those who were well educated in their home countries. Many colleges offer programs for both types of students. In Canada, many of those programs are federally funded Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs. An examination of the demographic characteristics of LINC learners in Canada reveals that the largest numbers of learners were well educated prior to arrival in Canada (Dempsey, Xue, & Kustec, 2009). High proportions of LINC clients are skilled workers, including the principal applicants, as well as spouses and dependents. About half of LINC clients are university educated, and three quarters are female.

Some ESL speakers access community college English as a Second Language programs to improve their language skills, whereas others participate in life skills courses, vocational training, and credit courses in mainstream postsecondary programs. Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2010) stated that two-thirds of immigrants to Canada between October 2000 and September 2001 planned to pursue education leading to credentials or job-related training. Many began their path to employment by enrolling in language courses. Adult ESL learners have a wide range of prior educational experiences and require adult ESL curriculum and learning approaches that include accurate assessment practices.

In Canada, Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) were developed as language assessment instruments that integrate learner-oriented performance assessment in a large-scale, nationwide language benchmark project (Norton & Stewart, 1999). The benchmarks, initially developed in the 1990s, were revised in 2008 (Singh & Blakely, 2012). Specifically, the CLB is a task-based assessment for adult newcomers to Canada, and its purpose is to place adult language learners across the country in instructional programs appropriate for their level of proficiency in English and to assess their progress. Language experts cite the CLB as having an important role in ESL learning (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010).

This review of the literature examines the experiences and perceptions of adult immigrants who are learning ESL in college settings. Specifically, the review looks at their backgrounds and goals, utilization of college programs and services, informal and formal engagement with the college community, and perceptions of experiences in relation to settlement and integration. There is an absence of scholarly research literature on the experiences of adult ESL learners in Canada and the other English-speaking countries. Although there is considerable research on the experience of ESL learners in community college postsecondary programs, little is known about the

experience of immigrants who participate in ESL programs in community colleges. For this reason, and where relevant, the review also refers to the experiences of ESL speakers in community college postsecondary programs.

Backgrounds and Goals of Adult ESL Learners

Adamuti-Trache (2012) highlighted the importance of pre-migration language skills in the economic, social, and civic integration of immigrants. The growth of language skills upon arrival in Canada is related to age and prior level of education. Immigrants most disadvantaged by backgrounds in home countries, predominantly those older and less educated, were less likely to access formal education and training. Immigrants with low language skills are more likely to engage in language training while those with high language skills tend to pursue post-secondary education. In general, the more education a person has prior to migration the better the results in terms of labour force participation, employment, and earnings in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2005). However, the majority of adult immigrants improve their language skills in the first two years of arriving in Canada.

Adult immigrants often turn to community colleges for ESL learning because of their open-door policies, low cost, proximity, and range of programs (Curry, 2004; Teranishi, Suarez-Orozco, & Suarez-Orozco, 2011). Kim and Diaz (2013) researched immigrants in the US to understand the role of community colleges in terms of both educating immigrants and providing supports to students. They found that community colleges' open-access policy created valuable opportunities for students who might not be eligible for entry to postsecondary programs without first learning English.

Becker (2011), in a study of community college students, examined the experiences of adult ESL learners and the ways in which socioeconomic,

educational, and ethnic backgrounds affect social mobility. The study participants who immigrated with advanced degrees and active social lives and who were well traveled and financially stable were able to transition to credit programs. Prior experiences provided them with the knowledge they needed to pursue new postsecondary pathways. Immigrants who came from low socioeconomic backgrounds that included financial hardship and poor working conditions had difficulty transitioning to credit programs, often because they held full-time jobs.

Kilbride and D'Arcangelo's (2002) research at an Ontario community college looked at differences in students' needs based on background characteristics. The study participants were immigrants enrolled in college technical programs. Female students were twice as likely as male students to need greater support, particularly in finding shelter. Geographical background was also a factor: All students from the Middle East needed help with their education generally, and students from the Middle East and the Americas needed help with math specifically. Students from the Middle East and China were most likely to want socioemotional support.

In a review of studies on the role of language integration in Canada, Derwing, Diepenbroek, and Foote (2009) found that prior education has an impact on the ways in which a learner engages with the learning environment and that the amount and type of education learners receive in their first language "profoundly influences how long they will need to study English" (p. 13). Learners with low literacy skills did not benefit from regular ESL classes because they did not know how to take notes or write translations. High literates reached an advanced level quicker, had different learning styles, and required different types of instruction. Postsecondary education remains a goal for those who engage in ESL programs in colleges. Immigrants with higher levels of educational attainment prior to immigration are more likely to participate in further education (Livingstone & Raykov, 2013).

Although all learners in Lambert's (2009) study of participation in credit courses at community colleges in the US showed improved written language skills, and all were able to advance to the next course level, immigrant students indicated that they faced greater difficulties than did international students who were planning to return home. Adult immigrant students noted the negative effect on their learning of having to work and care for children. The findings of this study underscore the importance of providing counselling and academic support to students with outside obligations, as well as recognizing that immigrant students' needs and challenges might differ from those of international students. Lambert reported that adult ESL students identified three goals for registering in ESL programs: practical concerns, participation in society, and communication of information. These short-term goals were intended to move learners toward the long-term goals of returning to work in their profession and/or earning a degree or certificate.

Immigrants are often underemployed or their skills are underutilized. To overcome employers' reservations regarding the recognition of their credentials, immigrants regularly choose to engage in further education in Canada (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). Initially this means improving language skills, which Brooker and Lawrence (2012) found to be a consistent challenge for bicultural adults in a study of immigrant students in Australia. Regardless of learning goals, all students must learn the specialized practices of academic reading, writing, and speaking that characterize college-level communication (Curry, 2004). These academic literacy practices represent particular views of the world, uses of language, and ways of constructing knowledge and tend to manifest the dominant cultures of those inside academia. Lambert (2009) added that those who were registered in credit courses, in addition to ESL courses, in a US study placed less importance on the goal of communicating information, which suggests that they

might have felt confident about their ability to express and understand information and might have moved on to other educational goals. English use at home tends to predict improvement in writing and might be a reflection of positive attitudes and beliefs about language learning. Learners who believe in their own abilities to learn the language are more willing to take risks in communicating with native speakers.

Utilization of College Programs and Services

Ogbu (1993) distinguished between the needs of students who are immigrants and those who are refugees, noting that immigrants tend to have higher levels of educational attainment prior to enrolment in ESL programs. Immigrants often display a cultural frame of reference that enhances academic striving and success and therefore tend not to have persistent basic academic difficulties. Minorities who have this frame of reference “perceive, define, and respond to cultural and language differences they encounter in school and society” (p. 500). Cultural and language differences are seen as barriers to overcome, and these learners work toward crossing cultural boundaries. Support that learners need in this context could include aiding in the development of strategies to adopt academic attitudes and work ethic.

Community colleges attract students who have commitments and responsibilities outside of classes, as Bailey and Weininger (2002) highlighted in a study of two-year college programs at City University of New York. Community colleges often schedule classes to facilitate adult participation, in part because community college students tend to be older and, because of other commitments, require this type of support. These students’ experiences in the college setting strengthen their language skills before they move on to other college programs. However, many community colleges do not provide the full spectrum of supports that ESL students need to transition

successfully to higher levels of education (Rodriguez & Cruz, 2009). Successful linguistic and academic transitions rely on the institution’s capacity to assess students appropriately as they enter the system and to monitor their progress. College personnel need to be able to provide the necessary supports to aid the development of English proficiency. Rodriguez and Cruz recommended enhanced research to support the needs of adult ESL learners and to improve the responsiveness of institutions in providing ongoing supports.

Kilbride and D’Arcangelo (2002) sought an understanding of which college structures support or fail to support the integration of immigrant students into Canadian society, a study that arose out of concerns of faculty that they were not meeting the needs of immigrant students. The study found partial successes, but a striking amount of unmet needs among immigrant community college students. The college was successful in helping with the students’ specific programs and with general education courses. Students who had refugee status needed more help, particularly with finances. Female students reported greater need of support than did males, particularly in finding shelter. Services provided by the community college included assistance with language and mathematics (provided by faculty and the Learning Resource Centre); basic needs (food bank, student affairs and counseling); emotional and moral support (provided by student association); financial support (student assistance, second-hand book sales); and information on issues and services (Student Affairs Office provides information on immigration, government and agency services, legal support).

Departments that provide ESL instruction in community colleges must pay attention to the diversity of students, the employment and training of instructors, and ways in which students interact with instructors and other students (Blumenthal, 2002; Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000). Additionally, funding for supports is essential. Becker (2011) added that learners’ sense of connectedness to the institution includes the physical proximity of their classes to the heart of the campus, the

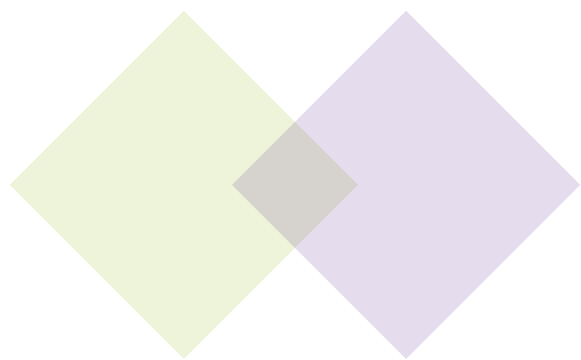
acknowledgment and appreciation of diverse learning styles by instructors, and the inclusion of non-traditional students. As well, many learners postpone their enrolment in credit courses because of intervening life circumstances. The development of integration services would help these students to transition successfully to credit programs. These services could include a variety of means of accessing information on orientations, classrooms presentations, student newsletters, and career planning.

Ross-Gordon and Brown-Haywood (2000) identified keys to college success for adult African American students, including curriculum integration to incorporate the historical experiences of African Americans and African American role models on campus. Faculty and staff development opportunities that focus on diversity and equity can expand the numbers of staff with cultural awareness who can provide support to these students. African American students in this study placed importance on their own efforts as significant contributors to their success. They set priorities, managed their time effectively, used good study strategies, and worked hard. The students cited programs that teach study skills, transition programs, and orientation to available resources as important in helping students to achieve success in their programs. In Canada, recent immigration is characterized by the diversification of migration flows, which leads to a shift in the composition of the newcomer population (Tolley, Biles, Vineburg, Burstein, & Frideres, 2011). Many visible minorities, including children of immigrants, report experiences of discrimination and exclusion. College programs that focus on diversity and equity can help to ease the transition for both immigrants and visible minority students.

Informal and Formal Engagement with the College Community

Students' engagement with the college learning environment is influenced by their perceptions of who they are, where they fit in the cultural milieu, and with which social groups they associate. Janis (2013) reported that students who studied ESL identified factors that affected their engagement with the college community, including family experiences and interactions with other students and teachers who helped to mediate the new environment. Family members who had completed advanced degrees are a positive mediating factor, because they have a positive impact on adult ESL students' identities as learners. Additionally, learners are able to pursue their studies when families provide financial support. Often these learners have high levels of cultural capital and display a strong sense of identity that they formed prior to immigrating and an awareness that a community college path could move them towards integration into their new community and help them to regain the class position they left behind (Becker, 2011).

Cultural capital refers to both linguistic and cultural understandings that individuals develop based on their social-class location (Rios-Ellis et al., 2015). Cultural capital theory suggests that all students take their cultural understandings and skills into the classroom environment, which has an impact on their individual academic performance. Rios-Ellis et al., in a study of Latino university students in the US, argued that, without an understanding of cultural capital, instructors will not be able to fully build the cultural strengths of students to enhance their academic success. Additionally, programs will continue to focus on students' deficits. This study found that students who engaged in culturally competent peer-mentoring programs reported positive educational experiences and achieved academic success. The program that was the focus of this study included tutoring and established linkages to academic and student services on campus.



Studies have shown that lack of help with childcare and lack of procedural knowledge such as how to complete forms are consistent challenges for learners with low cultural capital (Becker, 2011; Janis, 2013). Janis noted that the backgrounds of these students, in particular, the ways in which they connect their college experiences, and previous experiences can help adult ESL students to engage with their learning and the college community. A major finding of Becker's study is that noncredit ESL instruction and student support for ESL learners play a facilitative role within the academic setting and in their moving into the workplace. When ESL departments are dedicated to assisting students, accommodating schedules, and understanding the lives of students, adult learners have more positive experiences in the college learning environment. A critical component of student success is the dynamic of learners who experience, evaluate, and utilize resources available to them. Students who maximize available resources tend to be the most successful.

Considering both formal and informal engagement with the college community, it is important to pay attention to the diversity of students, including the role of identities in the adult ESL classroom (Curry, 2004; Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000; Vandrick, 1997). Some challenges that adult immigrant students in Australia face relate directly to their cultural experiences; for example, dealing with racism and discrimination (Brooker & Lawrence, 2012). Other challenges are poor housing, limited transportation, and crowded medical facilities. Brooker and Lawrence highlighted that students living in poverty often cannot afford fees or materials or miss out on services such as access to computers or libraries that could aid their study efforts. Additionally, those with poor English language skills can face barriers to developing supporting relationships, miss important nuances in class, and find it difficult to complete assignments to the standards of their peers. All of these challenges affect their engagement in both their educational experience and overall campus life.

Many identities are hidden or invisible, such as lesbian, gay, religious minorities, dyslexia, depression, and other illnesses. Hidden identities can also conceal affluent backgrounds or giftedness. Vandrick (1997) suggested that all hidden identities affect the ESL classroom in a variety of ways. For example, hidden identities can mask fears, secrets, subtexts, and feelings of inadequacy. ESL students often feel that they have been judged because of wanting and needing remedial work to reach the level of other students in the postsecondary environment. Vandrick noted that power, boundaries, and ideologies play into the perceptions of ESL students, who might struggle with understanding which aspects of their identity are public and which are private. Because instructors have power, students might wonder how self-revelation can harm them. Furthermore, ideologies shape students' perceptions of power relations. Because of this, instructors need to actively shape safe classrooms.

Nelson (2010), in a case study involving an immigrant student in the US, argued that some voices count more than others and that learners do not share equal speaking rights and opportunities in an ESL classroom. Some individuals and some groups have more legitimacy and more say with regard to what they can talk about and how. Within a given context, gauging what they can and cannot talk about involves assessing the social conditions of acceptability of their discourse. Those with higher levels of cultural capital have more of a voice. As well, teachers play a large part in determining allowable discourses, which are, in turn, allowable identities. For gay immigrant students, negotiating the context of the ESL classroom involves greater risks within the power of heteronormativity, or the notion that heterosexuality is the norm. People who identify as gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, or queer often have to develop sexual literacy about how dynamics in an ESL classroom control self-representations.

Gender as a social construct mediates both voice and opportunities in decisions to engage in ESL

programs as well as experiences in attending those programs (Menard-Warwick, 2004). In a study of Latino immigrants in California, Menard-Warwick's participants' gender constructs were connected to social practices and power relations within communities. Although the men and women had different attitudes towards second languages and unequal opportunities to learn them, human agency interacted with social roles. The immigrant women argued that language and literacy development is tied to their gender-mediated struggles to meet their personal goals. They believed that investment in learning English would help them acquire the symbolic and material resources they needed to adapt to their new environment.

Waterhouse (2011) considered the intersection of citizenship, power, multiple literacies, and curriculum in the context of a Canadian adult immigrant ESL program to better understand complexities and differences and how they play out in the classroom. To facilitate student engagement, ESL programs for adults need to explore complex issues that Canadians face, rather than focusing on preparing for the citizenship test. Waterhouse argued that LINC programs facilitate integration into a "homogenous nation-state citizenship" (p. 240), an identity built on a wider community. However, experiences of multiple literacies, such as written, oral, visual, and digital, have an impact on the way in which individuals interact with the world around them. This process leads to differences in ways of becoming Canadian that are fluid, complex, and ongoing. Students as well as teachers experience these individual differences in the classroom, which suggests complexities in the ways in which teachers and students interact. Engaging learners in more complex curriculum in ESL programs would enhance formal engagement with learning.

Perceptions of Experiences in Relation to Settlement and Integration

Settlement is defined as a process or series of activities in which an immigrant or refugee engages to meet immediate needs, acquire language instruction, and upgrade training and education with the goal of finding employment and, ultimately, to work long term to overcome barriers to participation in Canadian society (Wayland, 2006a). CIC (2010) further clarified this process by noting that settlement is the transitional issues that newcomers face, whereas integration can be seen as lifelong and experienced in relation to and in negotiations with individuals and society (p. v). Language acquisition for newcomers to Canada is key to successful integration, which can include involvement in government programs such as LINC, but also depends on informal social relations with family, friends, and community. The integration process extends beyond the settlement process and the work of settlement agencies and is, in fact, integrated into other sociopolitical institutions. Legal and policy barriers that newcomers face include eligibility requirements that need to be met to access services, inflexible requirements for acquiring licensure in their profession, and hiring procedures that discriminate against newcomers (Ricento, Cervatiuc, MacMillan, & Masoodi, 2008; Wayland, 2006b).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Canada's immigration policy allowed the recruitment of skilled workers to serve the needs of the economy. Since that time, immigrants have had increasing difficulty accessing the labour market, often because of failure to recognize foreign credentials. Canadian employers seem reluctant to recognize credentials given "recent changes in immigration source country" that reflect the higher numbers from South Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010, p. 2). As well, immigrants are now "often from countries with educational systems that do not share the cultural

origins of Canada's educational system, nor are the curricular structures of their post-secondary institutions similar" (p. 2).

The issue of the settlement of newcomers has been examined from a variety of perspectives. In recent years in Canada, settlement has often been considered in terms of access to the labour market and financial health of immigrants (Schellenberg & Maheux, 2008). Additionally, there has been a focus on social networks. Schellenberg and Maheux reported that most immigrants positively assess their quality of life in Canada even when they express dissatisfaction with their economic experiences. In the Canadian context, the LINC program, in addition to a goal of economic integration for newcomers, is designed to meet the need for social integration. Immigrants need skills in an official language to participate in activities such as voting, volunteering, and participating in recreational activities (Derwing et al., 2009).

Many studies that looked at language acquisition and the settlement of newcomers have used a human capital model to understand the role of education in both attaining a place in the workforce and gaining social and cultural capital (Anisef et al., 2008). Human capital includes Bourdieu's (1972/1977) "constructs of cultural capital, the exposure to and level of education and socioeconomic backgrounds of the learners," and habitus, which are behaviours and perceptions that affect decision-making processes (Becker, 2011, p. 16). Habitus is further defined as "the conscious and unconscious actions and perceptions of learners that impact academic and social mobility" and determine the ways in which people react to situations (p. 18). In a study at a California community college, Becker interpreted learner background through Bourdieu's construct of cultural capital and found that students' backgrounds reveal socially conditioned behaviours that affect adult ESL learners' decision-making processes and academic mobility. The examples highlighted in this study revealed that the cultural capital of adult immigrant learners helped them to maximize benefit for themselves and led to longer term social mobility.

Bourdieu's (1972/1977) cultural capital theory also supported the finding that the previous experiences of adult immigrant ESL learners helped to mediate their educational pursuit of academic goals and facilitated their active participation in Canadian society (Adamuti-Trache, 2012). In two US studies, individuals who immigrated with the high cultural capital of strong educational backgrounds and well-established careers were able to use the community college noncredit ESL program as leverage to gain social mobility and regain the position that they had held prior to immigration (Becker, 2011; Janis, 2013). Those who were marginalized in their country of origin had difficulty pursuing a pathway from noncredit to credit programs.

Adamuti-Trache and Sweet (2010) examined adult immigrants' reasons for participating in education and training within two years of arriving in Canada. They found that premigration factors of prior levels of education, language proficiency, entry class, and cultural differences play a role in the challenges that immigrants face when they mediate their new environment. Although the participants with low cultural capital gained self-confidence, they expressed their perceptions of the college learning environment as a sense of marginality. For most participants, the immigration process "causes significant emotional and financial stress largely because of the disruption of resettlement to the family and the loss of employment security" (p. 18). The amount of human capital that immigrants have when they arrive in Canada affects their ability to gain employment and their decision to engage in education and training.

Recent immigrants shared the experience of being outsiders looking in (Becker, 2011). This sense of marginality, the perception of detachment from the dominant culture, provokes anxiety and negatively affects the stamina and motivation necessary to reach desired goals, such as engagement and success in the college ESL program. Adult immigrants with low cultural capital tend to remain on the borders as observers. Those with high cultural capital negotiate their way from the margins of their new social setting

toward the center by utilizing their pre existing knowledge and cultural capital. Engagement in the learning environment then leads to perceptions of mattering and of feeling connected and valued as a member of a particular institution or community. A shift in self-identity and a sense of marginality in a new culture lead students to seek a noncredit ESL community college path as a means of readjusting and trying to regain the social-class status they left behind (Janis, 2013). Janis noted that the students' habitus, in particular, the behaviours and perceptions that they form from past experiences in their country of origin, led to the knowledge and desire to regain their former position in society.

Immigrant and refugee students often feel shut out from their ethnic or wider communities. They struggle to build social networks and support systems. Some students in Brooker and Lawrence's (2012) study addressed their challenges by developing a bicultural identity that helped them both to adapt to the new environment on campus and to manage discrimination in the wider community. For these students, language acquisition was the biggest challenge in negotiating the relationship between culture and education. In a multicultural environment, cultural challenges revolve around immigrants' finding a place and a personal identity in both the new culture and their ethnic culture. The immigrants in Brooker and Lawrence's study shaped their identity in daily interactions with both ethnic culture and mainstream Australian culture. Integration and settlement depends upon the ways in which newcomers are able to maintain previous values while adapting to new surroundings.

Couton's (2014) study added layers to a nuanced immigrant experience by highlighting the ways in which ethnocultural communities organize to assist immigrants with integration into Canadian society. Couton explored organizational capacity within the Korean-Canadian and Ukrainian-Canadian communities by analyzing a variety of organizations and the collective resources that were available to

their members. Couton demonstrated that, although communities are notable for the density of their organizational sectors and their extensive mobilization activities, the two communities studied have important differences. The Korean-Canadian community is formed mainly of people who have arrived in the past few decades, more than 60% of whom completed postsecondary education in their home country. The collective organizing within this community is closely linked to immigrants' entrepreneurship, which can be seen as a defensive approach that reflects the difficulties that many Korean-Canadians face in finding work within their fields. Although this approach might be effective in accessing employment, it might also distance them from mainstream economic and social life and move them away from integration into and settlement in other aspects of community life.

The Ukrainian-Canadian example in Couton's (2014) study "illustrates the significant long-term benefits associated with strong organizations" that, since the late 19th century, have strong cultural and political representation at all levels (p. 1). This well-established community is highly organized and has well-developed ethnocultural networks throughout Canada. As a model, it shows how cultural and political integration helps individual members to integrate. Many immigrant groups adopt organizational structuring around immigrant communities as a strategy. Often this approach slows the integration process; however, the Ukrainian-Canadian example shows how the strategy can be used effectively to long-term advantage.

Wayland (2006a), referring to RBC Financial's presentation at a Metropolis Conference, described an economic case for better integration of immigrants. Successful economies are defined by high living standards and high employment rates. Immigrants tend to be better educated and in better health than immigrants of two decades ago were, yet they have more difficulty reaching Canadian income levels than was true in the past. Addressing the integration issues

of newcomers would lead to the broader economic benefit of meeting future workforce challenges. Canada has cut back on programs that helped immigrants to integrate and adjust, and many highly skilled immigrants might decide to move elsewhere. A key finding of Wayland's study is that funding and government-imposed constraints on settlement services limit settlement-sector programming. Immigrant-serving agencies lack stable core funding, have increased accountability requirements, and often face little flexibility in program delivery.

Türegün (2013) drew on Bourdieu's (1972/1977) theory of human capital to explain how individuals gain access to professions in Canada. Immigrant status itself is a ground for exclusion from professions. The Canadian experiences that Türegün reported reveal various forms of exclusion from professions, including discouragement, the lack of a level playing field, and employers' outright refusal, yet the immigrants in this study used their agency to establish new professions in the settlement service sector. This was seen as a professional rebirth. Türegün's study draws attention to a nuanced immigrant experience and gives credit to human agency in overcoming barriers to labour market access. This population of foreign-born professionals in Ontario, rather than becoming deprofessionalized, reinvented themselves as practitioners of a new profession by making use of the resources at their disposal. They thus acted upon the structural or systemic barriers that they encountered.

Prins and Toso (2012) reported another element of a nuanced immigrant settlement experience in their study of the immigrants' perceptions of their receptivity by and integration into the community. According to ESL providers in rural Pennsylvania, national and local politics, labour-market conditions, and immigrants' occupations shaped the degree of community receptivity. As well, immigrants who were perceived as willing to assimilate in dress and adopt the lifestyles of mainstream Americans were more likely to be well

received. Social, political, economic, and cultural factors, including the labour market, shaped immigrants' integration. Immigrants' occupations, their ability to network with local residents, and their perceived willingness to learn English all shaped the local residents' impressions of the immigrants and contributed to how receptive they were to their integration.

Conclusion

This review of the literature has highlighted the perceptions and experiences of adult ESL learners, both in formal educational settings and in longer term integration into Canadian society. Language skills in either English or French are crucial for both economic performance and social participation. Adult immigrants often begin their settlement journey in Canada by enrolling in ESL courses at community colleges, which tend to be accessible, offer a range of programming options, and create pathways to future postsecondary programs or the workforce. Community colleges recognize a diversity of learner backgrounds, including cultural and language differences, and provide a number of services and supports to ESL students. Although some types of supports are meeting the needs of college students, some are not, particularly the need for assistance outside the classroom. Studies have shown that culturally diverse curriculum and teaching approaches facilitate language learning and college success. Connecting prior experiences to classroom experiences can help students to engage with their learning and with the college community. Language acquisition is a necessary first step and an ongoing part of the process of settlement and integration for newcomers.

D APPENDIX: QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The educational and social environments that postsecondary institutions create shape learners' experiences, the focus of this research project. Colleges and universities are committed to ensuring their programs and services are providing quality for learners; as a result, they establish numerous quality assurance processes. These include, among others, program approval, program review, student evaluation of instruction, instructor performance review, and professional development programs.

Finnie and Usher (2005) provide a definition of quality that is consistent with the focus of this research: it is "the value added of the educational experience, whereby 'higher quality experiences' are those that result in superior learning outcomes, and better final outcomes" (p. 19). Quality assurance processes monitor and evaluate elements of educational programming to ensure that they are meeting the defined purposes and standards for those elements (Skolnik, 2010). For example, instructor performance appraisal processes includes structured data gathering from a variety of sources about instructors' performance (e.g., classroom instruction, interactions with students) in order to assess that performance in relation to defined standards. These standards are derived from program goals, institutional values and goals, and codes of professional practice. Leyton-Brown (2005) argues that effective quality assurance processes have five characteristics:

1. Quality is assessed against the mission and objectives of the institution and the program. This ensures that the diversity of institutions and programs is respected.
2. The goal of the processes is to ensure that basic standards have been met as well as providing an impetus for quality improvement.
3. These processes are undertaken on a scheduled, cyclical basis.
4. Quality assessment processes demonstrate to stakeholders that institutions are accountable because they have made a commitment to formalized, periodic review and the utilization of defined standards and procedures.
5. Effective quality assurance focuses on the educational objectives of a program and students' learning outcomes along with inputs such as facilities and staff qualifications (pp. 238–239).

Tables D1 and D2 present the major quality assurance processes implemented by BVC and NQC. In summary, they include program approval and review; instructor and staff selection, development, and appraisal; educational goals; and functions and inputs directly linked to teaching effectiveness.

Table D1: Bow Valley College

| Process | Description |
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| Program approval | All new college credit programs and significant changes to existing programs must be approved through an internal academic governance process and then by the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. Within the college the Learning Services Team chaired by the Vice-President, Academic, Academic Council and the Board of Governors review the proposal. Each stage of the process includes feasibility and effectiveness criteria. Through the ministerial approval process, LINC is integrated into the Alberta postsecondary system. |
| Program review | All programs undergo a formal review every five years to ensure relevance and currency for learners and other stakeholders. The program areas conduct the reviews with support from the Applied Research and Evaluation team. The review draws upon numerous data sources from a range of stakeholders. Each review identifies areas for modification and improvement. |
| Instructor and staff recruitment and selection | LINC instructors are full-fledged members of the college's faculty; as a result, they have the responsibilities and opportunities characteristic of a postsecondary environment. The college has agreements with AUPE and the BVC Faculty Association and is held to collective agreements that focus primarily on roles, responsibilities, and wages. The college's HR processes ensure that transparent, equitable processes and standards are adhered to with regard to all positions, selections, terms of contract, and salary increases. These processes also ensure an equitable avenue to assess faculty and staff concerns. Bow Valley College adheres to the high standards of TESL accreditation. ELL programming is accredited through Languages Canada and these standards are maintained within the LINC program as well. |
| Instructor development plans | Each faculty member is required to complete a formal development plan that outlines development areas and priorities for professional development based on personal goals as well as supervisor, peer and student feedback. Instructor development is offered in-house through the Teaching and Learning Enhancement unit or through other professional development opportunities such as conferences and workshops. Some instructor development may be mandatory and others are self-selected. All plans are monitored and assessed annually by the faculty member's supervisor and included in the formal Performance Management document. |
| Instructor performance appraisal | Faculty have a one-year probation period. Classroom observations are conducted regularly, and student feedback is sought and shared with the faculty member each trimester. Formal lesson assessments are conducted annually and included in an Annual Performance Appraisal process conducted by the faculty member's supervisor. |
| Professional development | Professional development at the college is available to all staff and supported by policy and funding. It takes place in a variety of ways: college-wide PD days, in-house workshops and targeted training, and conference participation. Each centre and school has a Professional Development Committee that develops an annual PD plan for approval by the dean. These plans are linked to the current priority developments for the program. CIC supports specialized, priority driven PD for LINC instructors. |

| Process | Description |
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| Teaching and Learning Enhancement unit | A large staff provides services in seven areas: instructional skills, course and program development, educational technology, media development, the scholarship of teaching and learning, workplace essential skills, and copyright support. The Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement has its own instructional design and media development team as well as a cadre of trainers who offer methodology courses, workshops, and webinars to BVC staff and other organizations. |
| Student evaluation of program | Every term a Learner Experience instrument is administered to survey LINC students on class satisfaction and program effectiveness. The college evaluation team reviews the results and shares them with the faculty member and supervisor. At the completion of their program, the Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education Student Satisfaction methodology is used to survey the students. |
| Applied research | As a part of its government approved mandate, the college “pursues applied research activities to enhance teaching and learning and foster innovation in support of industry.” Several times a year faculty are invited to submit classroom-based applied research proposals that receive college funding. The college is also recognized by SSHRC and NSRC and conducts extensive research, most notably in the areas of workplace success, on-line learning, immigrant professionals, ESL literacy, and intercultural competence. |
| College-wide learning outcomes | All college curricula contain 10 college-wide outcomes that include, among others, lifelong learning, critical thinking, numeracy, technology skills, and citizenship and intercultural awareness. The Intercultural Centre at the College supports training and development for faculty, students and staff in the area of intercultural advancement. All ELL programs including LINC integrate college-wide outcomes. For example, students write, narrate and film digital stories and have an e-exchange with students from Ontario colleges as a means of developing critical thinking and digital literacy skills while also practicing all communication skills. |
| Educational technologies | Technology is ubiquitous in education and the educational technologies team supports the selection and implementation of appropriate technologies for teaching and learning. In addition to the college team that plays an important role in instructor development and support, the Centre for Excellence in Immigrant and Intercultural Advancement has its own team of designers, researchers and trainers who specialize in the integration of technology into language teaching and offer consultative advice to practitioners in the field. |
| College infrastructure | College services such as finance, human resources, information technology, and facilities are foundational to the instructional mission of the college. They provide the human, financial, physical, and technical resources needed for program and service delivery. Each has its own quality assurance and accountability processes. The college has new state-of-the-art facilities complete with smart classrooms, computer labs, language labs, an onsite medical clinic, and comprehensive student support services. |

Table D2: NorQuest College

| Process | Description |
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| Program approval | All new college credit programs and significant changes to existing programs must be approved through an internal academic governance process and then by the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. Within the college the Academic Advancement Committee, the Operations Committee, Academic Council, and the Board of Governors review the proposal. Each stage of the process includes feasibility and effectiveness criteria. Through the ministerial approval process LINC is integrated into the Alberta postsecondary system. |
| Program review | All programs undergo a formal review every three years to ensure relevance and currency for learners and other stakeholders. The program areas conduct the reviews with support from the program evaluation department and periodic external expertise. The review draws upon numerous data sources from a range of stakeholders. Each review identifies areas for modification and improvement. A mandatory visioning process that draws upon program review data, occurs every six years to determine future directions. |
| Instructor and staff recruitment and selection | LINC instructors are full-fledged members of the colleges' faculty; as a result, they have the responsibilities and opportunities characteristic of a postsecondary environment. NorQuest has agreements with AUPE and the NorQuest Academic Staff Association and is held to collective agreements that focus primarily on roles and responsibilities and wages. The college's human resources processes ensure that transparent equitable processes and standards are adhered to with regard to all positions, selections, terms of contract, and salary increases. These processes also ensure an equitable avenue to assess faculty and staff concerns. NorQuest adheres to the high standards of TESL accreditation. NorQuest's ESL program is accredited through Languages Canada and these standards are maintained within the LINC program as well. |
| Instructor development plans | Each faculty member is required to complete a self-evaluation document the outlines development areas and priorities for professional development based on supervisor, peer, and student feedback. Instructor development can be offered in-house through the College Learning & Teaching and Development Centre or through other professional development opportunities such as conferences and workshops. Some instructor development activities may be mandatory and others are self-selected. |
| Instructor performance appraisal | Faculty have a one-year probation period. Ongoing observations, student feedback, peer review, and self-assessments are conducted on a regular basis during the first year and subsequent years. All faculty are also observed in the classroom on an annual basis. Annual goals and development plans are completed with the immediate supervisor. |
| Professional development | Professional development at the college is available to all staff and supported by policy and funding. It takes place in a variety of ways: college-wide PD days, conference participation, and course completion. Each program area develops a PD plan for approval by the dean. These plans are linked to the current priority developments for the program. CIC also supports PD for LINC instructors. |

| Process | Description |
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| Teaching and Learning Centre | The Teaching and Learning Centre offers ongoing professional development in the areas of andragogy, technology, instructional skills, learner strategies, evaluation and assessment, and curriculum development to name a few. Faculty and staff are encouraged to participate in workshops as participants and to share their expertise with others. Technical skill development is also readily available. |
| Student evaluation of program | LINC students are surveyed every term on class satisfaction and program effectiveness and also complete individual self-assessments. The college's new evaluation plan will also include surveying LINC students who complete the program being surveyed six months, one year, and two years after program completion. Data will be gathered on satisfaction, further education, and employment. Findings are compared to defined performance indicators. |
| Applied research | As a part of its government approved mandate, the college "is committed to enhancing teaching and learning through applied research that informs its academic programming and builds capacity in the communities it serves." Projects are initiated by college personnel or in partnership with external organizations. The college has a research partnership with the TESL program at the University of Alberta. All research projects conducted at the college are presented to faculty. Online student experiences and the LINC rural delivery model are currently being researched. As well the college is hosting a comparative study between the Swedish integration educations in Finland (Helsinki, Mariehamn) and Canada's National Integration Program LINC at the college. |
| College-wide learning outcomes | Intercultural competency is a college-wide learning outcome for students and all staff. All employees must undertake intercultural training and have an assessed, identified level of intercultural competency. Workshops for students are integrated into program content. |
| Educational technologies | Technology is now ubiquitous in education and the educational technologies team supports the selection and implementation of appropriate technologies for teaching and learning. The team plays an important role in instructor development and support. |
| College infrastructure | College services such as finance, human resources, information technology, and facilities are foundational to the instructional mission of the college. They provide the human, financial, physical, and technical resources needed for program and service delivery. Each has its own quality assurance and accountability processes. |

