

## The Association for New Canadians: Evolution of a Language Program

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### Abstract

Much research on immigrants and refugees in Canada has focused on immigration policy and settlement sector developments, with a dearth of studies on settlement service agencies. Originating from a larger project that focused on the evolution of one settlement agency, this case study explores the efforts of the Association for New Canadians to assist immigrants and refugees with settlement and integration. This article provides insight into the effectiveness of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program in one settlement agency in Newfoundland and Labrador. Findings highlight instructor and administrator perceptions of LINC learners as a very diverse group with myriad needs. Findings further suggest the importance of LINC instructors having autonomy in order to adapt and modify the program to meet learners' needs at the local level. These findings have important implications for similar organizations, as well as for policymakers, educators and researchers. Provision of language programs is a matter of equity and social justice and, as such, flexible instructional models and approaches (as suggested by my findings) could lead to greater learning outcomes and integration for these new Canadians. Further studies into this teaching/learning context could provide information as to how to more adequately meet the needs of this diverse group of learners.

### Introduction

Canada has a long history of providing settlement services for immigrants and refugees (Vineberg, 2012). The Association for New Canadians (ANC) is a non-profit, community-based service providing organization (SPO) for immigrants and refugees in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Developed in conjunction with and in response to developments in the national settlement sector, the ANC provides settlement and integration services for Government Assisted Refugees (GAR), Privately Sponsored Refugees, and other Permanent Residents (PR). Throughout this paper I use the term immigrant to refer to people who migrate to Canada, and a newcomer is an immigrant who has been in Canada for three to five years. The ANC is the only federally funded organization providing these services for newcomers in NL. However, the following groups offer various types of support as well: The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council Incorporated (RIAC), Newfoundland and Labrador Multicultural Folk Arts Council, Coalition on Richer Diversity (CORD), Congregation of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland Sikh Society and the Philippine Association (Clarke, 2009). It has developed programs, services, and initiatives in response to the changing needs of its clientele over the past 32 years.

In recent years, the ANC has offered programs for Canadian citizens to increase cross-cultural awareness and understanding of newcomers to St. John's, NL. The current services include settlement information and orientation, language training, skills development and employment readiness programs. In 1992, Canada's federal government introduced the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, which was designed to facilitate

the integration and settlement of immigrants and refugees. New Canadians may have difficulties accessing services and integrating into Canadian society if they speak languages other than one of Canada's two official languages—English or French. Learning one of these languages expedites cultural, economic, and social integration (CIC, 2004). Therefore, language programming that facilitates learning English or French is an important aspect of settlement. Recent investigations have examined the complexities of settlement programming in NL (e.g., Bassler, 1990; Clarke, 2009; Gien & Law, 2010; Meaney, 2008) and explored the strengths and weaknesses of language programs offered for refugees. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of recent research on the effectiveness of language programs for immigrants and refugees in NL, which indicates a need for further study. The experiences of individuals in the local context of St. John's might offer additional insight for similar organizations and language schools across Canada. The majority of immigrants to NL live in St. John's. In 2011, of a total of 2220 immigrants living in the province (Statistics Canada, 2013a), 1350 resided in St. John's (Statistics Canada, 2013b)—63 percent. There has been extensive research on the modern settlement sector, but investigation into the response and development of individual organizations is lacking (Vineberg, 2012), particularly in Atlantic Canada. With this in mind, this study addresses two specific questions:

1. What precipitated the changes that occurred in LINC programming at the ANC?
2. How do instructors and administrators of the LINC program believe these changes address the needs of newcomers?

### *The LINC Program: An Overview*

The introduction of federally funded English language programming began in 1947 (Cleghorn, 2000). Burnaby (1996) noted that “Canadian ESL delivery has made slow but steady progress from practically nothing in the early 1960's to a large and complex undertaking” (p. 159). In 1990, only 28 percent of immigrants were receiving language training; this lack of accessibility was seen as a major problem (Cray, 1997). Most of the funding for language programs was targeted to help immigrants enter the labour market; consequently, those who were not intending to enter the workforce had limited access to language training. However, as Gormley and Gill (2007) have argued, language is fundamental to being able to participate in a new culture. The establishment of the LINC program, which offers free language instruction in English or French, was an essential part of the Canadian Federal Immigration Plan for 1991-1995 (CIC, 2012; Hajer, Robinson & Witol, 2002). Importantly, individuals cannot participate in the LINC program after they become Canadian citizens, as the program is only available to immigrants and refugees. Bettencourt, Canada, and Canada (2003) stated that in an attempt to better meet the needs of its new permanent residents and refugees, the immigration plan reflected the government's prioritization of the provision of settlement services at all stages of the settlement process: In French, the program is Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC) (CIC, 2012), and the standard on which it is based is Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (NCLC) (Kayed, 2011).

LINC has become a major part of adult ESL instruction in Canada since its implementation (Gormley & Gill, 2007) and accounts “for the largest part of settlement funding” (CIC, 2011, Relevance and Design section, para. 1). LINC is federally funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), but through partnerships with the provinces the development and administration is a provincial responsibility (Cleghorn, 2000). This allows for the administration of services by individuals and groups who have a connection to the communities that provide the services (CIC, 1996c as cited in Cleghorn, 2000; Morgan, 2002).

One of the main goals of the LINC program is to aid the integration of immigrants and refugees into Canadian society. However, Cleghorn (2000) suggests “the symbolic values associated with learning ‘a language’ are weighty. The path that leads to ‘integration’ through ESL instruction is littered with issues of identity, race and ethnicity and assimilation that makes becoming ‘integrated’ [complicated]” (p. 53). Previously, Rockhill and Tomic (1995) argued that integration means that individuals become part of the mainstream through the process of language learning as opposed to “integrating English into the lives of this diverse population” (p. 219). Successful integration does not mean losing one language and culture for another, but it means maintaining two identities—both equally important (Nepal, 2008). Culture and identity are inseparable from language (Corbett, 2010; Crystal, 2010; Rockhill & Tomic, 1995; Willinsky, 1998). Here, the research is clear that language maintenance is crucial to maintaining one's identity.

### *Local Context*

In 2012, when the data for this study was collected, the ANC had 60 full-time employees and more than 100 volunteers. It continues to provide a variety of programs and services for children, youth, and adults (ANC, 2010). Available both on a full and part-time basis, the ANC offers LINC classes, ranging from levels one to five, based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) (CCLB, 2012). The CLBs are a standard for describing, measuring, and recognizing proficiency in English of adult immigrants in Canada (CCLB, 2012). Also, classes are offered at pre-benchmark or literacy levels. There are a range of programs provided for those immigrants who are unable or ineligible to attend daytime classes. The following groups are eligible to enroll in the LINC program: “permanent residents of Canada; protected persons; persons determined by the Immigration and Refugee Board (Refugee Protection Division) to be a Convention Refugee; and persons in Canada applying to become a Permanent Resident and who have been informed, by letter, of the initial approval of the application, subject to an admissibility assessment” (CIC, 2004). These programs include the Itinerant Program, Outreach Tutor Program, LINC Home Study, ESL evening classes, and evening pronunciation classes (ANC, 2010). However, language instruction was not part of the ANC’s initial mandate as similar programs were offered through other agencies. For example, in Bassler’s (1990) interview with the Department of Immigration’s Chief of Settlement for Newfoundland, the Chief stated that since 1986, the ANC has offered language programming through various federally funded programs. Since 1992, the primary language program offered by the ANC has been the LINC program. The ANC offered levels one to three of the LINC program shortly after its introduction in 1992. The program has expanded substantially since this time. At the time of this study the ANC was providing services to 155 clients with classes ranging from levels one to five, with two classes at level two. Each level had approximately 20 students in a class and all of the instructors were full-time, permanent employees. One instructor was TESL certified and the others had university degrees with a specialization in education.

### *Developments in Second Language Teaching and Learning*

The LINC program focuses on improving communication skills and taking an approach to language teaching that would include new developments in curricula, teacher orientation, and methodologies (Bettencourt, 2003; Cray, 1997; Pinet, 2006). The theoretical framework that guides the LINC program is communicative competence (the ability to effectively function in society). Within the framework of communicative competence (see for example, Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Hinkel, 1999; Hymes 1967; 1971; 1972; 1974), the focus is on the functions that the new language must serve for the learner rather than focusing merely on the vocabulary and structure of the language (Nunan, 2004; Piper, 2000). Here, it is shown that language teaching is more than learning vocabulary and grammatical rules, but language is taught and learned in particular contexts. According to Cray (1997), many applied linguists suggest that the “social, economic, political and cultural context must be taken into account and studied if we are to understand second language teaching and learning” (p. 1). As well, Seelye (1974) and Lafayette (1975) emphasize the role of context and culture in both second and foreign language curriculum (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Culture is essential to language, as it is people within a community interacting and involved in a world of social interaction (Berns, 1984; Duranti, 2001). Through the framework of communicative competence, language learning is not only about learning grammatical knowledge and skills but also the cultural and social use of the language in context. Recently, there has been an emphasis on language learning as a social process, which moves away from language that relies exclusively on cognitive theories and includes sociocultural theories as well (Nunan, 2004). Building upon the groundwork of these studies, I now move on to the methodological process that I employed in this study.

### Methodology

This article employs a case study methodology (Yin, 2003) to examine the changes and adaptation of the LINC program at the ANC. This methodology is often used when the researcher is interested in gaining knowledge about individuals, groups, organizations, political realities, or related phenomena (Yin, 2003). Case study data analysis is iterative and cyclical throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data in order to get a general sense of emerging themes and patterns to move on to the specific (Creswell, 2008; Palys, 1997; Silverman, 2000). Central to this study was examining how programs were adapted to meet the needs of learners within the ANC’s local context.

Of note is the work of Whitt (1992) who suggests that the context in which an institution operates has considerable influence on the experience individuals may have in that institution. Between December 2011 and January 2012, I explored the experiences of ten individuals from the ANC who were involved in the implementation and delivery of the LINC program and, consequently, could offer information on their experiences and understanding of the program. I worked with these participants to come to an understanding of how the LINC program has evolved in the local context.

### *Sampling*

For this study, the participants included five instructors (including one from each of levels one to five of the LINC program) and three former instructors from the ANC language school (one of whom is currently an administrator), as well as two administrators with the ANC's settlement agency. I used non-random, purposeful sampling to recruit participants in order to learn about and understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). Through snowball sampling, other participants were asked to identify individuals who were able to make a significant contribution to the research (Creswell, 2008). Two participants were born in other countries and settled in Canada, two were from other provinces within Canada, and the remaining six participants came from the Newfoundland and Labrador area. Participants also included staff members whose longevity with the organization allowed them to provide rich and detailed information about the genesis and evolution of the organization. Maria and Maureen, for example, worked in administrative roles. Rosanna was a current administrator and former instructor. Dale, Mary, Pat, Sherry, and Joanne were current instructors, and Layla and Gillian were former instructors. All names used here are pseudonyms. Participants were not contacted and data collection did not begin prior to ethical approval.

### *Data Collection*

I received ethical approval from the Memorial University of Newfoundland Research Ethics Board. I conducted interviews one-on-one using a semi-structured format with open-ended questions to allow for more depth probing (Creswell, 2008). An interview protocol was designed to give the interview structure and for note taking purposes (Creswell, 2008). Questions were wide ranging, but my focus was on participants' perceptions of how and why the LINC program changed within the local context and how it addressed the needs of a diverse group of learners. Interviews generally took from sixty to ninety minutes to complete. They took place in an instructor's classroom or in an office at the ANC. All interviews were transcribed and hard copies were given to participants to read to ensure accuracy. After member checking, changes were made as requested by participants. Each participant was interviewed once. However, two follow-up interviews were conducted to seek clarification and obtain additional information. All other follow-up questions to seek clarification were answered via email.

I worked as an instructor at the Association for New Canadians ESL Adult Training Centre for ten years and therefore had intimate knowledge of and connection to the research site. I am acutely aware that my own subjectivity and involvement with the organization could influence my interpretation of the research. However, self-reflection allowed me to examine the data in multiple ways. Here I note that I viewed the research site through my lens as a white, Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, Canadian-born woman. I am aware that I am limited in what I can and cannot see by my background and my socio-cultural position. My experience is reflective of who I am and how I am positioned. Thus, I am committed to cross-cultural dialogue and have studied in this area, and I work to be aware of how social position both enables and inhibits dialogue and insight.

### *Data Analysis*

When all written material was gathered, I began analyzing the data by reviewing the material, coding it, and looking at emerging themes (Creswell, 2008). I analyzed the interview data by coding it using "text segments" (Creswell, 2008, p. 251) whereby sections of text were labelled with particular codes that emerged from the data. The initial coding was descriptive, and was used to summarize and learn from the data (Punch, 2005). Pattern coding is a higher level of coding, which "pulls the data together into smaller and more meaningful units" (Punch, 2005, p. 200) and allows the researcher to move beyond description to interpretation of the data. Therefore, the analysis moved beyond describing and looking for patterns in the interview data to interpreting and looking for meaning in order to provide a more advanced analysis (Punch, 2005). I collapsed the codes into broad themes, and used an inductive

approach; thus, the data analysis moved from general to specific whereby the data was narrowed into a few themes (Creswell, 2008). Throughout the data analysis, I used memo writing as an additional source of ongoing reflection and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2008). I completed the analysis of the ten interview transcripts and the two follow-up interviews (Creswell, 2008).

Triangulation was achieved by interviewing various individuals (Creswell, 2008). The individuals in my study were stakeholders at the ANC. These stakeholders included administrative and non-administrative personnel, current and former instructors, and employees from both the language school and the settlement agency of the ANC. I engaged in member checking by asking participants to ensure descriptions, themes, and interpretations were accurate and to ensure validity of claims (Creswell, 2008; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Merriam, 1998).

### Findings

Four key themes emerged from this study. The first major theme was that the LINC program must be developed and modified locally in response to learners' needs. Related to this the findings indicate that instructors need to feel they have autonomy. Instructors valued this autonomy as it enabled them to adapt the LINC program to better meet the needs of their learners. Participants also noted the significance of community context in the delivery of the LINC program. Finally, a key issue that arose is the necessity to understand and recognize the diversity of learners' educational, social, and cultural backgrounds in a LINC classroom.

#### *Development and Modification of the LINC Program: Local context*

Seven participants noted that since the implementation of the LINC program, it has developed into a more formal, structured, and professional program. One participant, Layla, suggested that in the beginning the delivery of the LINC program was somewhat "amorphous", and Gillian remarked that she "did not remember anything very structured. The [textbooks] kind of helped with the structure". All ten participants suggested that any change undertaken locally had been based on client need. Maria believed that client need determined programming changes in the past and would likely determine future directions within the ANC. According to Bettencourt (2003) the expansion of the LINC program nationally was a response to the needs of a changing clientele, which was determined in part by changes in "immigration patterns" (p. 27). Similarly, all ten participants noted that an important change was that many clients were coming to Canada from source countries where they had experienced very difficult circumstances and many had spent a significant amount of time in refugee camps. Consequently, many of the students at the ANC had their education interrupted, while others had little or no formal schooling. Maureen stated, "right now the greatest need in our population is for the literacy levels. So that's where we have focused our attention in recent years". Building from local needs, there was an increase in the number of foundation level classes offered. However, foundation level classes were subdivided into levels A, B, and C, with foundation A as the beginning level class. All informants indicated that these changes were made as it was obvious that simply grouping all foundational level learners together did not adequately meet the diversity of needs at this level. Other factors, including age, background, and level of formal schooling had to be considered in placing students in the best level to suit their needs. For example, participants indicated that there was a huge gap between an individual with secondary or post-secondary education as opposed to those without a history of formal schooling. Two participants noted that other organizations in Canada have looked at this model and believe it might be a better approach. Clearly the learners' needs were different, and instructors could not adequately meet the needs of such diverse groups of learners within one classroom.

Another challenge that participants reported was that some students were spending a long period of time at the foundation level with no obvious progress. Joanne reflected that "by diversifying the classes and letting [students] move on when they had actually reached a milestone in their literacy training, [it] helped them to [see] they were progressing and gave them some increased self-esteem or sense of achievement". At the time of writing the original research two temporary foundation classes were added to accommodate new arrivals to St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Participants also indicated that the changes were made to adjust the program to meet student need at the classroom level. Dale indicated that at the local level the program is continually adjusted and is "[expanded]

down to meet the language needs of the people and up in the same way”. Similarly, Sherry indicated that “now because we have a large group of level twos we have two classes to meet the needs of the clients”. At the time of writing the original research two temporary foundation classes were added to accommodate new arrivals to St. John’s, NL. Undoubtedly, teachers expressed that having autonomy helps to address the diversity of needs of LINC learners.

#### *Importance of Teacher Autonomy in the LINC Classroom*

Five out of the eight language instructors who were interviewed remarked that they had a degree of autonomy and indicated they often made modifications and adaptations. As Pat remarked, “I think there are certain things we have to cover but how you cover that is entirely up to you”. Similarly Gillian noted, “I think teachers pretty much [do] their own thing”. Mary indicated that it was important for teachers to have flexibility as she stressed that she felt “there is a real need for teachers to have that autonomy”. Sherry indicated that autonomy was paramount as “the guidelines are there but the teacher must use their professional judgments to assist the students they are working with”. Therefore, one particular method or approach is not important, but rather student success should be the instructor’s main priority. As Dale stated, “how you achieve what you do, that is up to you, as long as [students] end up being able to do a particular task”. The participants’ discussions aligned with other recent studies, which indicate that LINC instructors have no explicit directives to follow a curriculum, and they do not feel obliged to defer to an external curriculum (Cleghorn, 2000; Fleming, 1998).

#### *Responding to the Diversity of Needs in a LINC Classroom*

According to the participants in this study, independence and flexibility is key to meeting the needs of the learners in a LINC classroom. Teacher autonomy, therefore, is not simply allowing teachers the freedom to make modifications. As Mary noted, teacher autonomy “is really necessary considering the diversity of learners, so it is...it is mostly directed by the needs of the students”. Similarly, Pat stated, “I think we have to be able to talk to them about their real needs, [such as] what are they thinking about?” Rosanna continued, stating that, “there is quite a continuum of needs and that has really broadened”, and that LINC learners are “adults [and as such] they need flexibility”. All ten participants indicated that changes have been and must be made in response to the needs of the learners. Importantly, it is clearly stated in the LINC Curriculum Guidelines that topics should be chosen in response to the learner’s needs, thus aligning with the participants’ own sense of best practices (Hajer et al., 2002).

At the ANC, the instructors were aware of the diverse needs of the individuals in the LINC classroom, and three participants, in particular, recognized the difficulties of meeting all their needs. As Gillian remarked, “like any school if there is only one program you aren’t going to reach everybody”. She continued, “I don’t know how you accommodate all those different learning styles and people with different histories”. Similarly, Dale suggested “I don’t think we’ll ever get to the full needs of the people”. However, Maureen felt that despite the fact that “there are gaps...there are tremendous supports in place”. In their reflections, participants were aware that despite their best efforts it was still a challenge to make the changes necessary to meet the diversity of needs.

#### *Community Context and Delivery of the LINC Program*

Eight participants noted the importance of community context. As Maureen indicated “because it is a settlement language program...you are supporting your objectives [and] your outcomes that you have to meet with materials, resources, local information...so... it has to adapt to the local environment”. Similarly, Maria noted that because it is a settlement language program “there has been an effort to familiarize people within the context of the province not just [a focus on] on reading, writing and so on”. Here, too, many participants noted the importance of newcomers being involved in and having the knowledge of the local community. It is not only a learning opportunity, but also an important experience as newcomers make contact with local people, and as a result, they may feel more a part of the community. Joanne illustrates the importance of community connections:

if our province is spending the money to bring these people here we should be trying to integrate them into the local community, showing them what they can do here to make their life worth living here. Unless we actually take them many of them won't go to any of these places. If you don't have that connection to the local community it is very easy just to leave.

If newcomers are planning to stay in Newfoundland and Labrador, then, as many participants have suggested, it is essential to make them feel a part of the community. One way to foster a sense of inclusion is to encourage learners to engage with learning about the local context. This is important as language and expressions are very locally situated. If individuals are going to settle in a particular location, it is important to become aware of the local dialect. As Pat stated, "being an island for so long, we have different ways of doing things and a way of speaking from other major centers in Canada. And we have to address [local language practices] if students are going to live here". Newfoundland and Labrador is composed of the island portion of the province (Newfoundland) and the mainland (Labrador).

The community is a rich resource that provides opportunities for more interaction with members of the community thereby resulting in more authentic learning experiences. Gillian suggested:

classroom stuff might not be the best for some...[w]ell they might learn some paper stuff. [But] they are still really intimidated by listening to English if it comes at them too fast. They can get used to listening to the teachers so I guess [it would help] if there is more community involvement in the school.

Similarly, Joanne remarked "I think that was an important part of [learners'] education, to go to these places." It is important for LINC learners to get to know the community, but it is equally important that the local community is encouraged to learn about the newcomers to the community. As Rosanna noted, "we had to do a lot of... building awareness to let the community know our clients were here". The number of community excursions can be limited due to the costs incurred as a result of transportation, insurance, and other issues. Therefore, as Dale noted, "resources can somewhat limit what you can do outside the classroom". Five participants noted that funding issues have resulted in fewer opportunities for community involvement for LINC learners at the ANC. Clearly, participants noted that sufficient funding is necessary to support these initiatives.

## Discussion

The movement of people from various countries to Canada has resulted in a culturally and linguistically diverse population. This type of diversity increases the challenge faced by curriculum developers and planners of educational programs to meet the myriad needs and expectations of this group (Cope & Kalantzis 2000; Cummins, 2001; Ludwig 2003; Luke & Carrington, 2004). The experiences of individuals who are part of the implementation and delivery of the LINC program in St. John's, NL indicated some of the challenges and complexities of planning a language program for a diverse population. With the introduction of more culturally diverse populations, literacy and language education programs must be designed in response to these changes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Cummins, 2001; Ludwig 2003; Luke and Carrington, Programs are needed to build on the resources that people bring to this country. Cummins (2001) suggested that newcomers have "linguistic, cultural and intellectual resources" (p. 20) to bring to the classroom. As reflected in the participants' ideas about diversity at the ANC, learners have cultural resources to capitalize on rather than to ignore. Participants in the present study indicated that instructors must be cognizant of the diversity of learners within the LINC classroom. Instructors need to respond to the individuals within the classroom and adjust programming accordingly. Consequently, changes were made within the language program to accommodate literacy level students. Clearly, Gormley and Gill (2007) suggested that LINC learners can be viewed as a "generic group of people" (p. 9), but it is not an accurate reflection of the individuals they are with their unique needs, goals, and personalities.

If these assumptions about learners as one group are made, then the diversity of their resources and lived experiences are overlooked. Participants lamented the inability of the LINC program to meet everyone's needs. A one size fits all approach to education is often part of the design of institutional curricula and programs. However, according to Gillian, the LINC program "felt like a bureaucratic, federal, standardized thing [where] everybody had to tick boxes". Certainly, accountability is necessary; however, standardization of the curriculum ignores the

diversity within a classroom. When the focus is on measuring the outcomes and outputs, important human aspects can be overlooked and any chance of responding to or recognizing diversity is easily lost.

The expansion and professionalization of the LINC program has been reflected at the local level at the ANC in St. John's. All participants in this study noted the growth and expansion of this program on both a national and local level. One question I asked was what precipitated changes in the LINC program at the ANC. I found that the LINC program has developed in conjunction with changes nationally. But, more importantly, it was also modified and adapted within the local context to meet the needs of the population it serves. Therefore, there is an ongoing process of change to respond to changing demographics. Furthermore, I asked how instructors believed these changes addressed the needs of newcomers and discovered that teacher autonomy allows for modification and adaptation of the LINC program to help meet the diversity of the needs of the learners. However, despite having this flexibility, teachers may be limited in what they can do, and there are gaps that need to be addressed with regard to the delivery of the LINC program. Concerns were raised as to whether the needs of particular groups were being appropriately met.

Further research into how women and seniors fare from this program might be useful as concerns were expressed as to whether their needs were being adequately met. A consideration of alternative approaches and programs may be required to effectively respond to all students' needs. It is also necessary to further investigate the delivery of programs and services from the point of view of immigrants and refugees, particularly in the context of Atlantic Canada. It would be worthwhile exploring this from the perspective of LINC learners who avail themselves of the program. Such studies would document the effectiveness of programs and provide valuable evidence for future directions for programs and services.

Because this study was conducted with one organization, the findings may only be relevant to this local context. The sample size was relatively small, so the findings of this research are not generalizable; however, the findings have the potential to offer insight and enhance teachers' understanding of learners' issues with people working in similar organizations across Canada. Interviews with LINC learners might ensure more depth and breadth in the research and may offer a better understanding of their issues and concerns.

### Conclusion

This study focused on the delivery of language programming at the ANC in St. John's, NL. The experiences of those involved in the implementation and delivery of the LINC program in this particular context may provide insight for those involved in the delivery of the program in other Canadian provinces. The research also documents the history of the ANC and recognizes the contribution it has made in the lives of newcomers to the province. This study forefronts some of the issues that may assist in the provision of programs and services that adequately and appropriately meet the needs of immigrants and help ease the transition to life in Canada. While settlement programs are primarily the responsibility of the federal government, responsibility for the design and delivery of settlement services lies with the settlement service provider (CCR, 2000; CIC, 2011). Service provider organizations need to respond to the changing demographic they serve, and, consequently, organizations evolve and changes are made at the local level. The ANC has introduced a stratified model at the foundation level that has been considered by other organizations in Canada who offer language programs for immigrants. What is clear from the results of the present study is that programs that help with integration are critical for newcomers to Canada. What is less clear is how to provide a language program that addresses all the needs of such a diverse group of learners. This study is one of many that is needed in order to potentially improve language learning opportunities for all newcomers. Although language acquisition is only one part of the settlement process, it is a key piece that can facilitate integration into a new country. Therefore, provision of an effective language program that ensures successful educational outcomes for all learners is not only a matter of equity and social justice for new Canadians but also an important one for all Canadians.

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