

IRCC's Settlement Program

Perspectives on language program policy

2019 TESL Ontario Conference
Panel Discussion
December 6, 2019



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Language skills matter...

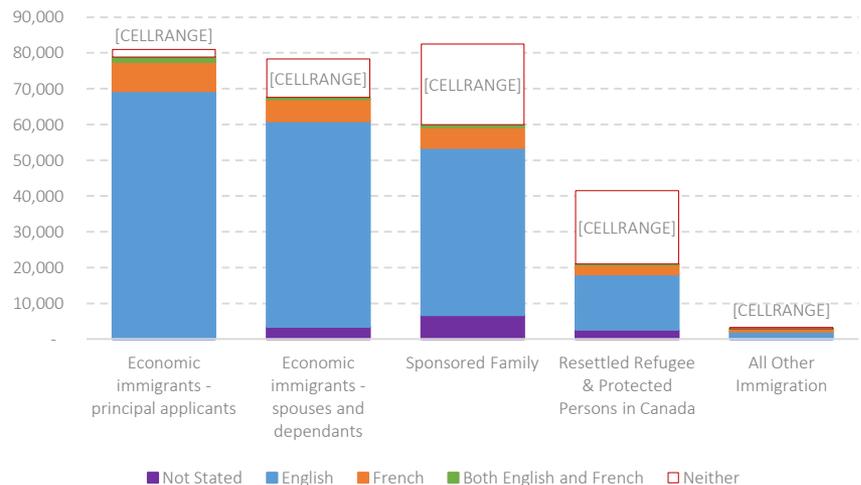
- Critical for successful settlement, economic and social integration, and inclusion in Canada

- Immediate and lifetime links between language ability and employment outcomes
- Minimum requirements for economic class principal applicants
- No requirements for economic spouses and dependants, sponsored family, or refugees

- No threshold to participate in Canadian society, but needed for:

- Basic social interactions, application for citizenship
- Levels demanded for labour market entry, retention, and career advancement often higher than minimum levels for selection
- Pursuing further education

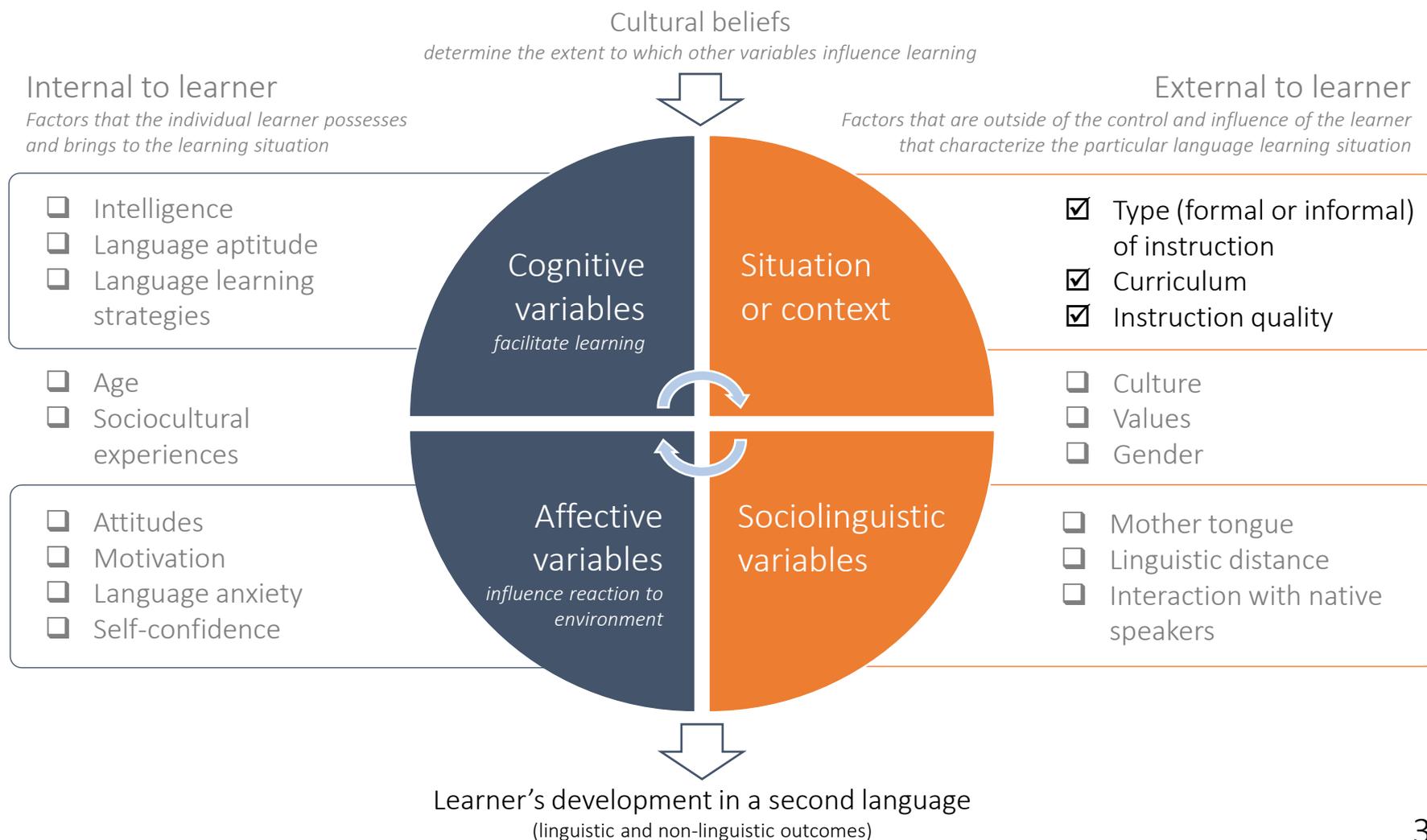
Permanent residents by category and self-reported knowledge of official languages, 2017



Source: 2018 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration

But second language learning is complex...

- Need to account for contributions made by the learner and their environment, limited area of direct influence by programs



What do we know? Generally, we know that...

- Age is most important predictor, older learners may progress more slowly and struggle with pronunciation and intonation
- Higher educational achievement helps, but diminishing returns beyond post-secondary

Cognitive variables



- The quality of curriculum and instruction matters – teacher training and professional development are critical
- Individuals trade off costs (e.g. time, resources, opportunity cost of foregone wages) with expected benefits

Situation or context

- Social and cultural differences affect quality of exposure to a language, willingness to communicate, and perceived efficacy of training
- Attitude, anxiety, and motivation can significantly impact likelihood of success

Affective variables

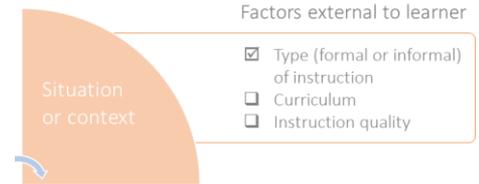


- Mother tongue and language differences affect proficiency and fluency
- It takes time to learn a language, skills may improve with time spent in Canada through exposure and learning by doing
- Pre-migratory hardships such trauma may make learning more complex

Sociolinguistic variables

IRCC's Settlement Program offers various types of language training...

- Newcomers can access a unique combination of settlement content-based instruction for adult second language learners and informal opportunities – and select programming best suited to their needs and preferences



Formal language training Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada and Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada	Employment-related language training	Informal learning (Community Connections)
Settlement content-based instruction Placement assessments Basic to intermediate, all skills Standardized (based on Canadian Language Benchmarks/Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens) Structured, formal instruction, portfolio-based language assessment In classrooms, online, distance	Language instruction contextualized for workplace Focused on improving communication skills for work Customized curriculum or modules Partnerships with employers Workplace-based instruction	Emphasis on social interaction, e.g. conversation circles Topics are chosen by participants No levels, unstructured Outside of classroom or workplace

- Language training and assessment services are complemented by:
 - Employment services, needs assessments and referrals, information and orientation services, and other community connections services
 - Support services (e.g. child minding and transportation assistance) to reduce barriers to participation

The context is changing and the Settlement Program is evolving

- Delivered through IRCC's Settlement Program, the foundational end of Canada's managed migration system
 - Canada's settlement model is globally recognized, and public support is holding steady
- The program is evolving with a new foundation...
 - The 2019 Call for Proposals established new priorities identified through extensive engagement and consultations
- ... and the introduction of new tools and approaches such as:
 - The **Service Delivery Improvement Fund**, over 100 projects to test innovative delivery approaches
 - **Atlantic and Rural and Northern Immigration Pilots**, working with new partners to fill regional labour shortages
 - The **Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot**, supporting employment and career advancement
 - The **Welcoming Francophone Communities Initiative**, community-based funding by and for Francophone newcomers
 - A new stream of **language training that supports the Francophone integration pathway**

Program delivery continues to improve through various initiatives...

By funding...

CLB online self-assessment
NCLC Autoévaluation en ligne



Informal assessments of language proficiency in reading and listening, available to anyone with access to the internet

CLB Literacy Placement Test



A new streamlined test aligned to the revised ESL literacy framework (2014) – development completed, implementation underway

CLB Placement Assessment



A national placement assessment tool (to replace CLBA, CLBPT) and training – development completed, to be rolled out in 2020-21

Remote assessments



An alternative to in-person administration of placement assessments – currently 13 sites offering CLBPT-remote, 5 sites offering BTC

EduLINC, LearnIT2teach,
and Tutela



Online courseware for learners, training and professional development for instructors, and a repository/community of practice for ESL/FSL professionals

LINC Home Study
CLIC en ligne



Continued expansion of distance learning options for learners who are unable to attend classes – available across Canada

Support for portfolio-based
language assessment (PBLA)



Training, ongoing professional development, and resources for instructors – 10 regional coaches, over 400 lead teachers, 2,500 instructors using PBLA

Milestones test

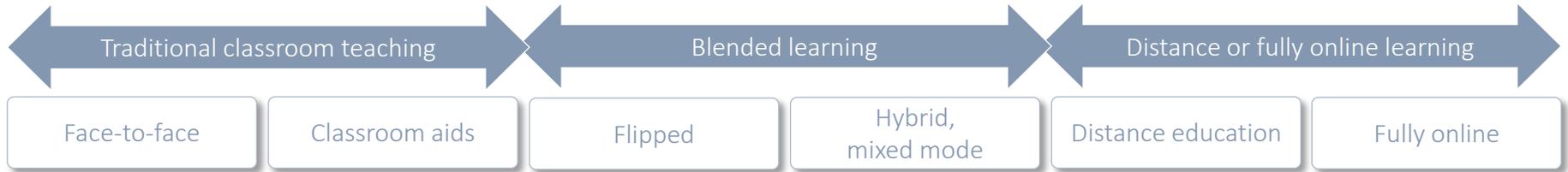
Batterie de test de rendement



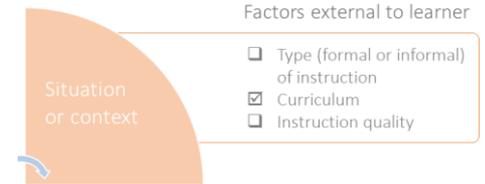
A rigorous, CLB/NCLC-based test validated for high-stakes contexts – recently piloted to inform the settlement language training evaluation

What's missing? What else is needed?

And key national projects are underway to advance e-learning...



- A national open-source online **learning management system** to support the delivery of online and blended programming
 - A new Moodle LMS site (Avenue.ca) integrated with the Tutela repository featuring e-portfolios, a courseware builder, teacher file storage, etc.
- A framework for adapted **national curriculum guidelines**
 - To improve national consistency and incorporate best practices
- Development and improvements to Tutela
 - To enhance performance (e.g. caching, interactive resources, and webinar system), improve quality through processes for resource vetting, and integrate with the national learning management system
- Support for **portfolio-based language assessment**
 - Additional tools and resources, training, and ongoing professional development for instructors to support sustainability



What are some of the challenges and opportunities that emerge through these development projects?

The 2019 Settlement Program call for proposals confirmed priorities...

- Priorities for the next funding cycle:

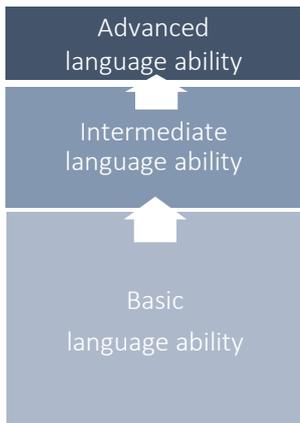
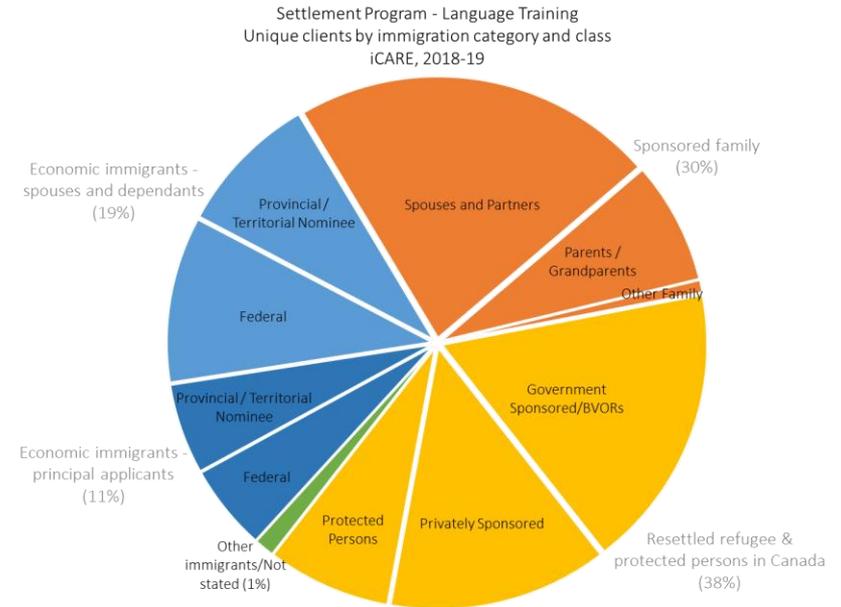
<p>Flexible, accessible training up to CLB/NCLC level 4 to help newcomers acquire the basic language skills they need to settle in Canada</p>
<p>Opportunities to improve employability with training up to CLB/NCLC level 8 focused on Canadian workplace language, culture, and practices</p>
<p>Expansion of workplace-based language training so newcomers can improve communication skills in line with employers' needs while fostering welcoming and diverse workplaces</p>

- The need for national projects to:
 - Strengthen sector capacity through professional development in critical areas, e.g. CLB/NCLC framework , portfolio-based language assessment, and ESL/FSL literacy
 - Provide training and tools to support timely and appropriate assessments and referrals, assessor qualification and calibration
 - Develop tools, content and resources support program delivery

And we know who is accessing formal language training services

- Close to 103,000 unique clients across Canada (outside of Quebec) in 2018-19

- Almost two-thirds (64%) aged 25 to 44 years, two-thirds (66%) women
- One quarter have a university degree, almost half (49%) have secondary or less
- Arabic (21%), Chinese (17%), and Spanish (6%) top three mother tongues
- Over half stated that they had knowledge of English, French, or both
- China is top country of birth (19%), Syria (14%)
- Clients with literacy and special learning needs emerging



- Less than half of clients are at **CLB level 5 and higher**, very few at **CLB 9 and above**
 - Almost 60% are economic immigrants
 - Faster progression, more likely to take blended and online courses
-
- More than half of clients are at **CLB 4 or below (including ESL/FSL literacy)**, mainly refugees and family class
 - Slower progression, particularly for refugees and older adults, additional complexities for literacy learners

... but additional analysis and research is needed to better understand their outcomes

A program evaluation is underway...

- An evaluation of settlement program language training is well underway (anticipated in 2020), with a very comprehensive methodology and using multiple lines of evidence
- Builds on and responds to the 2017 Evaluation of the Settlement Program, which
 - (1) found that language training works in different ways, to varying degrees, for different populations, and
 - (2) recommended an in-depth evaluation and thorough analysis, to allow the Department to further improve language training effectiveness

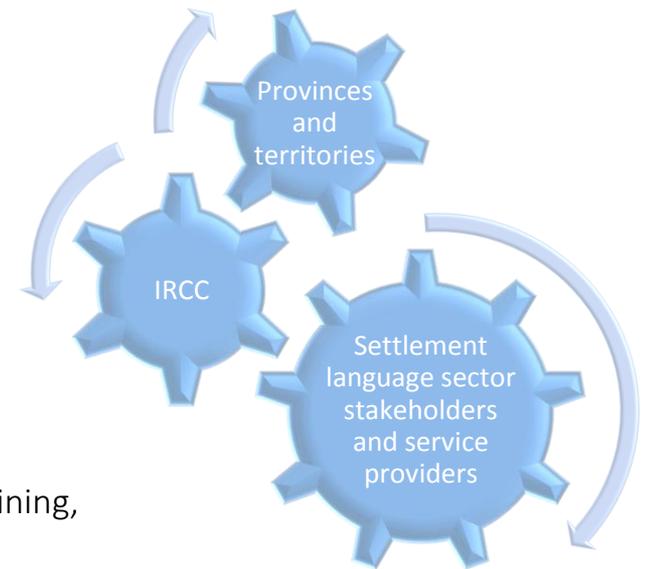
... and studies have been conducted, for example

- Public opinion research (Leger, 2019)
 - Attitudes towards lifelong official language learning and the preferred role of government (details in Annex A)
- Professional standards for teachers of English as a second language (TESL Canada, 2019)
 - Literature review on standards, their purpose, and how they are used in other professions, and a survey of instructors and other professionals (details in Annex B)

... but more data, analysis, and research are still needed to support investment decisions, to deepen our knowledge of program outcomes, and inform a national outcomes framework

Effective collaboration with provinces remains critical for success

- Key bilateral agreements with provinces and territories facilitate coordination, e.g. Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement
 - Canada-Ontario Settlement Memorandum of Understanding signed in December 2017
 - Includes agreement to work together to explore the development and implementation of alternative service delivery models for language training, including online learning and training in the workplace
 - Annex on French-Speaking Immigrants 2018
- Working groups facilitate multilateral efforts
 - Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Language Forum, working group of the Forum of FPT Ministers Responsible for Immigration
 - To improve coordination in the design and delivery of second language programming for adult immigrants and newcomers
 - Areas of common interest include employment language training, e-learning, ESL/FSL literacy, and mental health
- Bilateral work with Ontario
 - Service mapping/co-planning, improving program outcomes and efficiency (e.g. by streamlining referrals, co-funding where possible)



And as policy work advances, opportunities for stakeholders to engage

- Various forms of engagement with experts, sector stakeholders and service providers domestically...
 - Critical to informing program efficiency issues, challenges, lessons learned and best practices
 - The Newcomer Language Advisory Body is a national forum of experts to inform IRCC policy development through sharing of information and perspectives, strategic advice, research, and promising practices
 - Through meetings, conferences and events (e.g. TESL Canada and affiliates, TESL Ontario, BC TEAL, CESBA in Ontario, Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, Languages Canada) with program managers, administrators, and instructors
 - The National Settlement and Integration Council, umbrella organizations and other stakeholder groups
 - New opportunities – teacher trainers and programs
- Internationally, with other countries and organizations
 - To learn how Canada fares, share practices, and identify opportunities for improvement
 - Bilaterally and multilaterally, e.g. through the intergovernmental consultations on migration, asylum and refugees (IGC), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Spotlight on:

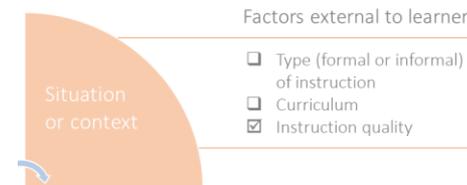
Comparative frameworks

- ✓ Essential Skills/Canadian Language Benchmarks (working document, NorQuest College)
- ✓ Aligning the Canadian Language Benchmarks to the Common European Framework of Reference (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2018)

Who is missing? How else can or should we engage?

Priority policy area – how else can instruction quality be improved?

- Formal language training delivered through IRCC's Settlement Program taught by qualified instructors
 - Educated – most have at least one undergraduate degree, many have advanced degrees, experienced – most have experience teaching English as a second language, trained – in TESL, TESOL
- No program standard for qualification, significant diversity, varying and complex needs, many opportunities for professional development but accessibility varies across Canada
- Continuing to building the evidence base, e.g.
 - The extent to which professional standards impact learner outcomes, supply and demand of ongoing professional development, core versus secondary needs, how context influences needs, and the role of TESLs, teacher training programs, and other stakeholders
- ... to support the development of a national professional development strategy for the settlement language sector
 - Informed by studies (e.g. TESL Canada study of professional standards for teachers of English as a second language), surveys, and program evaluation
 - Guided by a framework to set out a common vision, objectives, thematic areas of focus – to be refined (e.g. pre-service, onboarding, special needs, operational considerations, etc.)



Together we can make a difference for newcomers to Canada

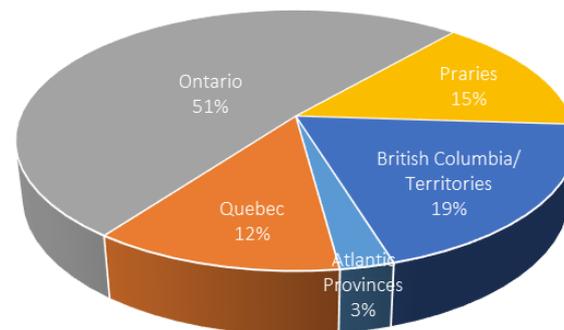
- Discussion questions
 - Program delivery improvement projects and initiatives – What’s missing? What else is needed?
 - National e-learning projects – What are some of the challenges and opportunities that emerge through these development projects?
 - Engagement of stakeholders – Who is missing? How else can or should we engage?
- Joint Program Administrators’ Session (2:00-4:30 pm)
 - Program Administrators’ perspectives on best practices and lessons learned in the management and administration of portfolio-based language assessment
 - National and provincial development projects – Considerations for future implementation

Check out our two new videos released in June 2019 (available in English and in French on IRCC’s web site and YouTube channel):

- ✓ **Language training options for newcomers to Canada** describes the training and learning opportunities offered through the Settlement Program
- ✓ **Understanding the Canadian Language Benchmarks** provides an overview of the national standards framework and its value for adult second language professionals and learners

Annex A – Public Opinion Research (Leger, 2019)

- Leger Marketing Inc. commissioned to conduct a survey on perceptions, experiences, life-long learning intentions, and the preferred role for government
 - In March 2019, 1,366 online surveys with foreign-born Canadians in official languages and in non-official languages (Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi and Arabic)
- Knowledge of official languages
 - 75% of respondents knew that Canada’s official languages were English and French before they moved to Canada and of these,
 - 42% agreed that this made them want to immigrate to Canada (Francophones 76%, Anglophones 38%)
 - 26% were aware that free language training was available (and almost half agree that this made them want to move to Canada)
 - Almost all respondents (93%) agreed that learning English or French was an important part of moving to Canada
- Life-long learning intentions
 - 56% strongly agreed that learning is a lifelong process, 48% strongly agreed that it should not be confined to the classroom
- Preferred role for government (respondents outside of Quebec)
 - More than half (58%) of recent immigrants felt that government should pay for language training, and (51%) believed that government should set standards and requirements



Geographic distribution of respondents

Annex B1 – Professional standards for the teachers of English as a second language sector in Canada (TESL Canada, 2019): Literature Review

Key findings from the literature review

- ✓ Canada is a global leader in creating an interwoven, nationally cohesive set of TESL programs, frameworks, and standards
 - ✓ There are distinctions between content, performance and operational standards and these are inextricably intertwined with professional development
 - ✓ Contextual factors require standards to be flexible and adaptable
-
- Defined key terms (profession, regulated and unregulated professions, designated titles, certification, accreditation), sets of standards (language teaching, language teacher education, language program), and standard types:
 - **Content standards** define the body of knowledge and skills required within the domain or profession
 - **Performance standards** define the minimum level of competency with respect to the application of the body of knowledge and skills within the context of the domain or profession
 - **Operational standards** set out the process and tools through which evidence is collected and evaluated to determine if content and performance standards are met
 - Contextual factors affecting standards in English language teaching:
 - Perspectives – industry and/or profession
 - Jurisdictions – in Canada, adult teaching is unregulated profession and K-12 is provincially regulated, and internationally multi-jurisdictional depending on context of program delivery
 - Funding models – grant and contributions, cost recovery, fee for service
 - Educational institutions – school boards, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, private schools
 - Program types – general, standardized test preparation, workplace, academic purposes
 - Overview of English language teaching standards and organizations
 - In Canada – TESL Canada professional certification system, TESL Ontario professional certification system, and TESL Saskatchewan accreditation system
 - In other countries – United States, United Kingdom, Australia

Annex B2 – Professional standards for the teachers of English as a second language sector in Canada (TESL Canada, 2019): Survey

Key findings from the survey

- ✓ More than 90% of respondents felt that teacher professional standards were important for English language teaching in Canada
 - ✓ Most respondents (80%) felt that teacher professional standards would provide national consistency and coherence in English language teaching practices and proficiencies
 - ✓ The vast majority (97%) of respondents agreed that teacher professional standards have an impact on student learning outcomes
-
- 24 survey questions, 298 respondents
 - Majority (76%) TESL Canada members, 75% also members of provincial associations (including TESL Ontario)
 - 58% had TESL Canada teacher professional certification, 37% had provincial professional certification
 - 72% of respondents were teachers, 37% in federally funded programs (18% provincially funded)
 - Survey findings:
 - 64% were familiar with TESL Canada teacher professional standards (26% a bit familiar, 10% no familiarity)
 - 94% felt that there was at least some alignment between TESL Canada teacher professional standards with current demands of adult English language teaching contexts in Canada (8% very aligned, 44% aligned, 42% somewhat aligned, 6% felt there was no alignment)
 - Areas for greater alignment *included*: reflection of classroom reality, provincial variations, use of technology, diversity, PBLA and language assessment, literacy, special needs, ongoing professional development
 - More than 90% of respondents felt that teacher professional standards were important for English language teaching in Canada (58% very important, 35% important)

Annex B2 (continued)

- Survey findings (continued):
 - When asked their perception of the purpose of teacher professional standards, they indicated
 - To provide **national consistency and coherence** in English language teaching practices and proficiencies (80%)
 - To enhance the **professionalism** of those working in the profession (76%)
 - To ensure accountability in the profession (71%)
 - To support program directors/managers in terms of reviewing and hiring English language teachers (67%)
 - To promote English language teaching as a profession both within the field and to the wider public (60%)
 - To guide the professional development of those working in the profession (60%)
 - To provide a framework for curriculum development for English language teacher training programs (55%)
 - ... while some respondents voiced negative perceptions and/or no understanding of the purpose
 - 77% felt that teacher professional standards provide direction for new practitioners, and 58% felt that they provide direction for their ongoing professional learning
 - A strong majority of respondents (97%) indicated that **standards have an impact on student learning outcomes** (46% indicated a strong impact, 40% some impact, 11% little impact, and 3% no impact)
 - When asked whether respondents' employers required them to have teacher professional certification from any professional association, the majority of respondents (65%) indicated it was an employer requirement
 - But no consistency on the requirements for employment even with the same type of program
 - Wide range of employment conditions regardless of certification
 - When asked rate their perception of the impact of teacher professional standards on their employment opportunities, an 86% of respondents indicated some or strong impact (excluding those who were in positions not governed by teacher professional standards, e.g. manager or employer)

- ✓ Diversity in the profession
- ✓ Tensions, polarities, and contradictions (especially in the qualitative data)
- ✓ Importance of stakeholders