

**To:** TESL Canada Board

**From:** Brenda Lohrenz, LISTN – TESL Canada SLNN Chair; NLAB (Newcomer Language Advisory Body) Sector Co-Chair, rep on NSC (National Settlement Council)

**Date:** NLAB/NSC Meetings held in Ottawa December 2014

**Report:** Settlement Language Related Priorities at the National Table

### **NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Various consultation mechanisms reported on to inform planning of the future shape of the Canadian settlement program and the 2015 CIC Call for Proposal for the next multiyear programming cycle.
- Citizenship Act Reforms, particularly related to the expanded age range requirement (currently 18 to 54; moving to 14 to 64 sometime in 2015). Demonstrated proficiency in one official language (Speaking/Listening CLB4) plus adequate knowledge of Canada and of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship (Citizenship Test).
- Anticipated settlement program evaluation targeted for 2016/17.
- Changing look of client as we move to Express Entry and a new immigrant intake system.
- Looking at new action plans through the FPTs (Federal Provincial Territorial government representatives).

### **2014 INTEGRATION SUMMIT COMPILATION FOR LANGUAGE**

CIC held Integration Summits across Canada in the fall of 2014. For discussion purposes, NLAB prepared a document that captured topic areas and participant feedback related to settlement language delivery. (<http://www.listn.info/site/wp-content/uploads/2014-Summit-Roll-Up-for-Language-FOR-DISCUSSION-PURPOSES.pdf>) Note that this NLAB facilitated compilation is an informal summary, and is not intended as a finalized reporting out of provincial or regional language priorities. Please refer to 2014 Integration Summit Reports by jurisdiction for more information on individual summits.

The below summarizes the key points of interest from language participants:

- 1. Language placement assessments and referrals (CLB/NCLC)**
  - Rural / regional providers need faster and more accommodating assessment mechanisms
  - Locale specific: challenges keeping up with assessment demand, lack of access to CELPIP for citizenship purposes; timely and affordable access to FSL assessment
- 2. Language training and resources for basic social interactions towards Canadian citizenship (from literacy to CLB/NCLC-4)**
  - Supports for instructors working with literacy and learners facing issues of trauma, depression, forced migration, etc.
  - Need for a variety of delivery models and the flexibility to be responsive in both urban and non-urban areas

- Use of technology to support access and provide options; teach digital as well as written literacy
- Consider hub model of services so that newcomers can have better understanding of services, locations, costs, availability

**Sub-category: language training for special populations**

- Youth: Seamless and successful transition
- Seniors: More specialized programming
- Refugees: Literacy support, language training, sensitivity to issues that may impinge on their learning (= tools for teachers to better support this group)
- Ineligible: Access to language services for Temporary Foreign Workers and their families

**3. Language training and resources targeted at labour market entry and pursuing education (up to CLB/NCLC-10)**

- Better understanding of Workplace LINC (foundational language and skill based training, essential skills, digital literacy, intercultural communication, etc.)
- Specialized or sector specific language options for various professions
- Encourage employer involvement (ESL training, mentorship, supported integration into the workplace, volunteer opportunities)

**4. Newcomers with special needs (e.g. hearing or visual impairments)**

- Critical to support clients (including children or youth) with a disability and/or special needs both in terms of testing (learning disabilities) and modality of instruction
- Special needs newcomers (including those with mental health issues) need better programming.

**5. Newcomers destined to official language minority communities**

- Build more awareness of the Francophone community.
- More discussion needed around meeting language and Francophone needs.
- Need for more informal services to compliment formal services.

**6. Additional categories coming out of provincial summits included:**

- Remote communities: Informal supports may present an alternative, but don't discount need for access to formal language training to meet citizenship goals
- Contracting: incorporate current best practices from transitioning provinces and allow for flexibility; consideration and recognition of instructor time demands over and above classroom delivery; more variety in funded delivery models
- Client supports (childcare, transportation): increased access and availability
- Provincial involvement: better linkage needed between LINC and ESL (certain jurisdictions); coordinate between all levels of government

**NLAB RESPONSE TO SUMMIT PROCESS**

- Excellent opportunity to network and discuss with larger stakeholder community
- Lack of time to prioritize often led to proliferation of points at summit tables; CIC regional offices should consider an array of inputs when determining CFP priorities
- Often few language experts in the room led to misinformation or misunderstanding
- Good to have a model where frontline can also input and/or be involved in the process
- Francophone representation / voice appeared to be missing in some jurisdictions

## **HIGHLIGHTS ON NLAB FORWARD PLAN**

- a) **New National Curriculum:** Review existing curriculum guidelines (LINC, ELSA, EAL) to support the development of a new national curriculum
- b) **Online / Blended Learning:** Ongoing: Advise CIC on the development and implementation of the online learning strategy, as well as potential pilots.
- c) **Placement Assessment:** Review of assessment approaches, tools, tests, standards, etc.
- d) **Support for FSL offerings:** Ongoing: Advise CIC on how to improve access to FSL language training supports for newcomers.
- e) **National settlement language framework / program guidelines:** Outline the essential elements of a national settlement language program, to ensure greater consistency in the delivery of CIC-funded language training across Canada (but keeping in mind the importance of maintaining regional flexibility wherever possible)

## **NATIONAL SETTLEMENT COUNCIL TOPICS OF INTEREST**

**CIC National Survey of Training Gaps:** How can we best utilize this information (and other inputs) to inform a professional development plan for those involved in settlement language services? (PD Survey for CIC Funded Settlement Service Providers final report: <http://www.listn.info/site/wp-content/uploads/CIC-PD-Survey-Report-FINAL-Dec-2014.pdf>)

**2016/17 Evaluation of the Settlement Program:** How do we in settlement language help tell the story of what we do?

**Pre-Arrival Services:** Language services not yet determined. Domestic vs overseas continuum important to consider; how can we best align?

**National Action Plan 'Helping Immigrants Succeed':** Federal/Provincial/Territorial considerations: Credentials, employment fit and career alternatives; official languages for newcomers outside the labour force; services related to social connections

**Pan Canadian Strategy on Vulnerable Populations:** Inform strategy with consideration of language input from the 2014 Summits and other means

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR TESL CANADA FOLLOW-UP**

- Ensure that TESL Canada continues to look at opportunities to share information and make recommendations regarding national settlement language program and policy directions.
- Consider options for TESL Canada Lake Louise 2015 and upcoming affiliate conferences.
- Follow up on implications of Citizenship Act Reforms, particularly related to the expanded age range requirement.
- Continue to appraise interested TESL Canada members on such things as planning processes and sector structures as they relate to settlement language sector consultation and inclusion, and national discussions leading towards the implementation of Vision2020.