BEST PRACTICE FEATURES

OF

QUALITY LINC PROGRAMS

Prepared for The Ontario Region LINC Advisory Committee

by:

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Executive Summary

This document identifies fourteen best practice statements in four key areas in LINC programming sponsored by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in London, Ontario. The principles used in the development of these best practices are those that could be applied to LINC programming throughout the CIC Ontario Region. The administration, instructors and students in the fourteen organizations currently offering LINC programming in London were involved throughout the development of the best practices. Each of the best practice statements is followed by a note expanding on, or, m some cases limiting, the best practice. Following these notes is a series of 'evidences' by which the meeting of the best practice can be demonstrated.

The fourteen best practices identified are:

1. Learners understand clearly the expected learning outcome of the program at the beginning of their involvement in it.

2. Learners participate in all aspects of the curriculum from the choice of subject matter to appropriate approaches to teaching/learning.

3. Learners are expected to make an appropriate commitment of time and energy to the program with consideration for individual circumstances.

4. Each learner's original placement and progression through the curriculum represent deliberate decisions based on measurable criteria.

5. The teaching/learning materials available to the learners are adequate and appropriate.

6. The characteristics of the class are conducive to language learning.

7. All program personnel who interact with learners have appropriate qualifications and skills.

8. The LINC Curriculum Guidelines, drafted under the auspices of Employment and Immigration Canada (now Citizenship and Immigration) Ontario Region, form the basis of the program's curriculum.

9. The program uses the resources of the community in which it is located *in* serving the needs of its learners and invites the involvement of the community.

10. The program facilitates practical language learning through encouraging and enabling learners to practice in a 'real world' situation.

11. Formative evaluation, of value to the learners, takes place on a regular basis in all skill areas of language.

12. A formal system of outcome-based summative evaluation, of value to learners, is in place in the program.

13. A formal system of regular evaluation of the program and instruction by program participants, including learners, is in place in the program.

14. The Canadian Language Benchmarks, produced through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, are the bases for determining learners' achievement levels.

Acknowledgments

Thanks for guidance in the development of these best practices go to the members of the Advisory Committee who volunteered their time and expertise willingly:

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Preface

Project Inception

The instruction of adult immigrants and refugees settling in Canada took on a completely new look with the introduction of the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). LINC represented more than a different philosophical rationale for encouraging the learning of one of the two official languages in Canada; it promoted a completely new delivery approach, requiring a new learning outcomes-based curriculum and offering new approaches to program delivery. Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) was quick to introduce a system of pretesting to place prospective learners into appropriate classes and to set up stepped achievement levels for learners. In Ontario, the Ontario Region LINC Advisory Committee recommended and supervised the development of outcome-based Curriculum Guidelines to guide instructors in their teaching.

Individual communities across the province developed their own method of determining the best way to distribute the funds to organizations wishing to develop and deliver programming under LINC. In London, CEIC created a Language Council, representing a wide variety of interests in the community and used this council as a recommending body for the determination of community language need and the distribution of funds. As a result, organizations which had never before been involved in formal training of any kind applied for and received funds to run LINC programs. They scrambled to develop curricula, obtain appropriate space and acquire materials and personnel.

In the years following the first rush to begin the programming there have been new organizations authorized to deliver LINC, changes in existing programs due to new needs being recognized and changes in immigrant nationalities and first languages. To help programs keep abreast of the changes a committee representing all of the delivering programs meets monthly to review what is happening and make recommendations to the Language Council. This committee has recognized that there is no method in place to determine what practices around language training are actually occurring in the various programs m the city. The Language Council and CIC London face the problem annually of recommending the distribution of LINC funding to organizations with incomplete knowledge of what happens once the monies are distributed.

In the winter of 1995 MWB Education Consultants Inc., whose director had recently retired from a leadership role in LINC at Fanshawe College, proposed the development of Best Practice Guidelines for the London CIC LINC programs. While the proposal was supported by the London Language Training Advisory Council, the Ontario Region LINC Advisory Committee determined that such guidelines would be a valuable resource

to all LINC programs funded through the CIC Ontario Region. The proposal was revised to include a step-by-step guide to allow other jurisdictions to develop their own 'best practice' guidelines. The completed project is designed to fulfill these two functions: a series of best practice guidelines to be used by the London Language Advisory Council in its LINC programming in London, and a detailed description of the method of development with the necessary steps other Ontario programs might take in developing their own best practices.

The Objective of the Project

In general terms the objective of the project was the development of **a set of guidelines which will ensure that organizations delivering LINC programming have available a set of best practices around which to conduct all aspects of their interaction with learners, their peers and their community**.

Best Practice Objectives

To achieve this objective the document identifies best practice outcomes in four key areas:

- **the program in its relationship to the learning process of the student;**
- **the program in its relationship to the process of instruction;**
- **the program in its relationship to the larger community it serves;**
- **the program in its relationship to the evaluation of results.**

Organization

The document consists of three sections:

Section 1 is a listing of best practices in the four identified areas. Where necessary the best practice has a note of explanation followed by a number of 'evidences' by which a program can determine whether or not it is meeting the best practice. These 'evidences' are not intended to be a complete listing. Individual programs may be able to identify other methods of determining that they are achieving the best practice.

Section 2 gives some suggestions on how the best practices can be utilized by individual programs, by groups of programs through consultation and collaboration, and by funding organizations in determining how scarce dollars can most effectively be spent.

Section 3 is a step-by-step guide to the development of the best practices. It is designed to be an approach other LINC delivery agents might use in developing their unique best practice guidelines. This section details the 'grassroots' approach followed in the development of these best practices guidelines. Through its insistence on the involvement of the students, faculty and administration of all of the UNC programs in London, the approach involved a significant amount of time in meetings and consultation with individuals and groups. The result of this time and energy is a document that expresses the views of all of the people involved in LINC programming in London.

SECTION 1

Best Practice Features of Quality LINC Programs

General Note: It must be recognized that the best practices listed below have some limitations with respect to individual situations. Although all best practice features must relate to the basic principles of adult learning (see Appendix IV), it is impossible to make sweeping statements that cover all eventualities. In a community like London, Ontario, which distributes LINC programs to a wide variety of organizations meeting language needs in many varied situations, best practice guidelines must recognize the diversity, find the areas of common interest and speak to them. It is important, therefore, when evaluating a specific learning situation to determine whether or not it fulfills the best practices listed below, to take into account the unique character of each situation, each class and each program.

The best practices are categorized under four headings, with each having two or three best practices tied to it. The 'evidences' following each best practice are designed to help individual programs determine whether or not they are meeting the best practice. It is not necessary for all of the 'evidences' to be manifested in the program to indicate adherence to the best practice. However, with respect to most of the best practice statements, the greater the number of 'evidences' that are present in the program, the more successful that program is in fulfilling the requirements of the best practice.

1. The program in its relationship to the learning process of the learner:

Explanation/Expansion: The four best practices associated with the relationship of the program to the learning process of the learner make demands on both-the program's organization and presentation and on the learner's response to that organization and presentation. Both learner and program have a responsibility in this process. The best practice associated with 1.1 places the onus for its achievement on the program and those responsible for it. That associated with 1.3 places the onus on the learner, once the 'ground rules' are laid out. 1.2, on the other hand, has a shared commitment; while participation in the learning process is ultimately the responsibility of the learner, this participation will take place only if the program's organization and the instructor's inclination is to allow it. There is also a recognition in this practice that expectations and responsibilities change and are clarified on an ongoing basis.

1.1 Knowledge of the program:

Best Practice: _**Learners understand clearly the expected learning outcomes of the program at the beginning of their involvement in it and on an ongoing basis.**_

1.1.1 Evidence: Note: The evidences listed below relate to the program's side of the 'learning contract' that is made with each learner.

- Program objectives are discussed with all learners prior to the beginning of the program.

- For learners at an appropriate level, written objectives are provided.

- The program provides translation/interpretation where necessary to ensure that objectives are understood.

1.2 Involvement in the learning process:

Best Practice: *__Learners participate in all aspects of the curriculum[1] from choice of subject matter to appropriate approaches to teaching/learning__.*

1.2.1 Evidence: Note: While it is recognized that each learner's cultural background and individual learning style will influence his or her involvement, the best practice is achieved if the program and the instructor actively move toward an ever greater involvement by the learner.

- Individual learning styles are understood and considered by the instructor and the learner.

- Where the level of achievement of the learners allows, they are involved in choosing approaches to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

- Continuous positive feedback is given to learners.

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[1] This, and all future references to 'curriculum', assume that the program has a formal, written curriculum in place for instructors and learners to follow.

1.3 Commitment to the program:

Best Practice: _**Learners are expected to make an appropriate commitment of time and energy to the program.**_

1.3.1 Evidence: Note: The evidences listed below relate to the learners' side of the 'learning contract'. It is a recognition that, especially with adult learners, there is a contract, be it explicit or implicit and both parties to that contract have a responsibility in the fulfilling of it.

- The program expects all learners to set personal learning goals.

- Learners have a clear understanding of what is expected in each class.

- The program has a written attendance policy which students must honour.

- Learners are encouraged to pursue individual or group projects outside of class.

1.4 Learner placement:

Best Practice: *__Each learner's original placement and progression through the curriculum represent deliberate decisions based on measurable criteria.__*

1.4.1 Evidence: Note: While the 'Needs Assessment' in the published LINC Curriculum Guidelines forms an important part of the evidence for this practice, the key to achieving the best practice is the existence of a policy with placement and progression based on measurable criteria. Time must be provided for testing to be done adequately.

- The 'Needs Assessment' approach outlined in the LINC Curriculum Guidelines is used with all new learners.

- Learners are assessed at entry into the program to determine their appropriate placement.

- Testing (either formal or informal) is used throughout the program to determine each learner's readiness to progress.

2. The program in its relationship to the process of instruction:

Explanation/Expansion: 'Process of instruction' refers to those characteristics of a quality program which can be manipulated: the teaching expertise, the materials used and the make-up of the class. Unlike 'Learning process' which referred to the intangibles of attitude, understanding and willingness to participate and recognize participation as valuable, the best practices in this section consist of concrete attributes.

2.1   Teaching/Learning materials:

Best Practice: *The teaching/learning materials available to the learners are adequate and appropriate.*

2.1.1 Evidence: Note: The materials refer to teaching/learning materials - texts, workbooks, video and audio tapes, and computer software as well as the hardware to make their utilization possible. The materials must be appropriate for adults, comply with copyrights, and reflect Canadian and local content. They must be free from cultural bias and demonstrate sensitivity and diversity.

- The learning materials in use are appropriate for adults.

- Learners recognize the learning materials as being meaningful to them.

- The materials available adequately support the curriculum.

- A resource centre is available for the use of the learners.

- Resources allowing a range of teaching/learning approaches are available.

2.2   Class constitution:

Best Practice: _**The characteristics of the class are conducive to language learning.**_

2.2.1 Evidence: Note: It is impossible to identify learner/instructor ratios in programs as diversified as LINC. The evidence listed below refers, rather, to those characteristics of a class which create an ideal language learning situation.

- The class size is appropriate to the achievement level and knowledge mix of the learners.

- To the extent possible classes are constituted of learners having a similar ability to understand and use English (in written and spoken form).

- In most cases the ideal class consists of learners with a mix of linguistic backgrounds; however, other arrangements to meet cultural needs may be appropriate as well as bilingual classes in introductory programs.

- Learners feel valued in the class.

- The class has a comfortable and non-threatening atmosphere.

- Cultural interpretation is available as required.

- Learners with disabilities are welcomed and accommodated.

- The physical environment is conducive to learning by having, for example, proper ventilation, heating and lighting.

2.3   Quality instruction:

Best Practice: *All program personnel who interact with learners have appropriate qualifications and skills.*

2.3.1 Evidence: Note: The evidence here does not identify specific training programs, nor does it make any attempt to state what is 'appropriate exposure and sensitivity'; rather, it leaves these to the program itself. Because LINC funding is applied to a myriad of different language learning situations, it is inappropriate to apply qualification demands which are too restrictive.

- Instructors have received recognized TESL training, including methodology appropriate to working with adult learners.

- Instructors, and wherever possible, all other personnel interacting with learners in a formal LINC setting, have proficiency and competency in their use of the English language.

- All personnel who assist in the instructing of learners have appropriate exposure and sensitivity to a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.

- All personnel who interact in an instructional capacity with learners receive professional development as a regular part of their employment.

- All personnel who interact with learners have an understanding and awareness of community resources.

2.4 Curriculum Guidelines:

Best Practice: *The LINC Curriculum Guidelines and the Literacy Component of the guidelines, drafted under the auspices of Employment and Immigration Canada. Ontario Region, form the basis of the program's curriculum.*

2.4.1 Evidence: Note: While the evidence for achieving this best practice is based on the LINC Curriculum Guidelines, the practice itself recognizes that there may be programs with existing curricula modified to incorporate the guidelines.

- The LINC Curriculum Guidelines are used as a constant guide in determining program direction and content.

- LINC programs with literacy learners use the Literacy Component of the guidelines in determining program direction and content.

- The thematic approach with selections from the twelve themes in the Curriculum Guidelines form the basis of the content in the program's curriculum.

- Specialized LINC programs build on the Curriculum Guidelines to meet the needs of the learners.

3. The program in its relationship to the community it serves:

Explanation/Expansion: The 'community it serves' varies dramatically from one program to another. Achieving the best practices entails contact outside the walls of the institution, no matter how extensive the institution is, because part of the LINC mandate is the assisting of Newcomers to Canada in their integration into Canadian society.

3.1 The program in the community:

Explanation/Expansion: 'Community' in this practice, refers both to the specific locale of the program, i.e. the institutional facility or other community facility in which it is housed, and the larger physical community in which the program is located, the municipality itself or the specific area of the municipality.

Best Practice: *__The program uses the resources of the community in which it resides in serving the needs of its learners and invites the involvement of the community.__*

3.2.1 Evidence: Note: The evidence for this practice includes, but goes beyond the curriculum and the formal teaching of language. It demonstrates the program's willingness, through appropriate referral, to encourage the learner's participation in the community.

- The program encourages the participation of community professional business and trades personnel in appropriate parts of the curriculum presentation.

The Program in the Community (continued)

- The neighbourhood in which the program resides is a source of curriculum material and resources.

- Knowledge of the municipality, the province and the nation are integrated into the curriculum.

- The program helps learners get necessary information about counselling, financial and other community services.

- Learners are encouraged to become acquainted with, and where they wish to, involved in community organizations.

- The program plans activities with other programs or educational organizations.

3.2 The community as language trainer:

Best Practice: *The program facilitates practical language training through encouraging and enabling learners to practice in a 'real world' situation.*

3.3.1 Evidence: Note: There are many opportunities for learners to practice their language skills outside the classroom. For some, living in the community may be sufficient to facilitate the improvement of their communication ability in English. For others, especially those living and studying in an ethnic community within the larger community, it is necessary for the program to consciously integrate opportunities for language practice in 'real life' situations. The thrust of this practice is the recognition that the naturally insular nature of the classroom is only one part of language learning, that the need for constant practice in 'real world' situations is equally important.

- As part of the curriculum learners interact in the community outside the classroom.

- Field trips, where they are not restricted by federal and provincial regulations, are integrated into the program.

- Involvement with other LINC programs is encouraged.

4. The program in its relationship to evaluation

Explanation/Expansion: Evaluation serves two clearly identifiable purposes in learning: it not only identifies what has been learned, but also encourages further learning. In a good program, however, evaluation of the learners' achievement is not the only evaluation that takes place. Evaluation of the program and the instruction by the learners is also an important feature.

As LINC moves toward the adoption of the Canadian Language Benchmarks, it must take greater note of the validity and importance of summative evaluation, the results of which have the same meaning in all programs across the country. Formative evaluation, evaluation to encourage further learning, has always been, and must continue to be an integral part of UNC programs.

4.1 Formative evaluation.

Best Practice: *Formative evaluation, of value to the learners, takes place in all skill areas of the language on a regular basis.*

4.1.1 Evidence: Note: Assigning specified intervals for formative evaluations is inappropriate as a best practice because the delivery of LINC programming varies so widely in location and time allotted. Thus the evidence details evaluation of value to the learner in the program.

- Evaluation is both qualitative and quantitative.

- Recorded evaluations are performed at regular, frequent intervals throughout the program.

- Where possible, evaluation is consistent with the learning styles of the learners being evaluated.

- At all levels of LINC the value to the learners is the primary criterion in the selection of evaluation methods.

- Evaluation is used as a factor in determining curriculum direction, pace and content.

4.2 Summative evaluation:

Best Practice: *A formal system of outcome-based summative evaluation of value to the learners is in place in the program.*

4.2.1 Evidence: Note: Summative evaluation will continue to take on a more important role as national standards are set through evaluative approaches which coincide with the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

- A program policy exists stipulating appropriate intervals for, uses of and record keeping of summative evaluation.

- Learners are made aware of the policies with respect to summative evaluations and their uses at the beginning of the program.

- All summative evaluation is outcome-based.

- Summative evaluations (using the Canadian Language Benchmark evaluation tool when it becomes available) are done at intervals during the course and upon its completion to identify the learners' standing against the Benchmarks.

4.3 Program and instruction evaluation:

Best Practice: *A formal system of regular evaluation of the program and instruction by program participants, including learners, is in place in the program.*

4.3.1 Evidence: Note: The evidences listed below are only some of many ways that program administrators and instructors can use evaluation to improve their curriculum, their methods of instruction and the achievement of desired outcomes. They represent only the easily identified and most frequently used approaches.

- Curriculum material is determined on an ongoing basis by the results of the 'Needs Assessment'.

- Both formal and informal opportunities are scheduled for learners in a non-threatening environment to evaluate the curriculum, the program and the instruction and to make recommendations on improving each

- Opportunities for the evaluation of the program and curriculum are scheduled for instructors, staff and service providers on a regular basis.

4.4 Canadian Language Benchmarks:

Best Practice: *The Canadian Language Benchmarks, produced through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, are the bases for determining learners' achievement levels.*

4.4.1 Evidence: Note: The evidences point clearly to the importance of the Benchmarks. Their use will give learners mobility with a recognizable standard of accomplishment and serve as a standard for educational institutions and prospective employers.

- The Canadian Language Benchmarks are used as a guide in determining the learner's placement in class.

- The Canadian Language Benchmarks are used in determining the level of achievement when learners leave the program.

- The statement of achievement which learners receive upon completion of the program makes reference to their final benchmark achievement in listening/speaking, writing and reading.

SECTION 2

PUTTING THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES TO WORK

Suggested Uses for the Guidelines:

The uses listed below are just some of the many possible uses for the best practice guidelines. Individual programs and communities, depending on their unique features, will use the guidelines in other ways

1.The Individual Program:

- to initiate a review of existing practices using the best practices as benchmarks;

- choosing each best practice separately, to develop a more effective program by building on the 'evidences';

- to serve as an opportunity for the professional development of staff;

- to serve as a guide to 'staying on track' with respect to the curriculum guidelines and national benchmarks;

- to serve as the basis of a contract between institution, instructor and learner;

2. A Group of Programs (whether grouped around learners at the same level, program size. delivery approach. or any of a number of other shared characteristics):.
- as common points of discussion around which to become better acquainted with one another;

- to serve as the basis of inter-program professional development;

- to provide opportunities for evaluation of one program's effectiveness by peers in other programs;

3. A Local CIC or Designate:

- to provide guidelines to newly-funded LINC programs;

- to serve as the basis for a series of professional development workshops for all LINC providers;

- to act as a guide in the evaluation of the effectiveness of newly-funded programs;

- to ensure a fair and objective standard of program evaluation by those responsible for funding continuation of programs;

- to act as a demonstration of accountability to the tax-paying public;

SECTION 3

APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SET OF BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Principles Underlying the Best Practices

1. To be accepted as having value to individual programs, each program must have as much input into the development of the features as possible.

2. Assurance of a learner-centred approach to the best practices depends on the involvement of learners in their development.

3. The guidelines must incorporate a method of allowing programs to determine easily whether or not they are meeting the best practices.

4. The document incorporating the best practice guidelines must include the necessary steps to follow for the benefit of programs seeking to achieve the best practices.

Seven Essential Steps

Note: Outlined below are steps that should be taken if the best practice features are being identified for and by a number of language development programs which are similar in only their learning outcomes. An individual program, or even a small group of programs that are similar in structure may find this process unnecessary and cumbersome.

Step 1: Create an Advisory Committee

Identify a broad-based advisory committee from the community to guide the development. The committee should include representatives from a number of the programs including learners, faculty and administration. It should include, also, representatives of funding and ethnic organizations involved in language education. The committee should be used to examine, first of all, the plan of development and secondly, to meet periodically to review and advise on the development.

Step 2: Develop and Have Completed a Questionnaire on Existing Practices (see Appendix II for a sample)

It is necessary before the development of a set of best practices is undertaken, to determine what each of the programs feels is happening in their programs. Thus, a questionnaire evoking opinions on all aspects of the program should be completed by at least three members of each program: an administrator, an instructor and a learner (where the language level of the learner is adequate). The questionnaire should examine the way in which the programs see their philosophy, their approach to curriculum, their program structure, facilities and resources. Having three respondents, a learner, a teacher and an administrator from each program gives a broader and more complete picture than would be obtained by asking only one program representative to complete the questionnaire.

A second questionnaire, aimed only at learners is optional at this point. Developing questions for learners which reflect on a set of best practices but which are relevant to them alone is difficult. Such a questionnaire is, however, valuable for the individual program to identify its strengths and weaknesses as learners see them.

Step 3: Determine Features of Best Practices with Individual Programs and Develop Draft Guidelines

Once the questionnaires from each program have been returned and the responses assembled into a useful format, a meeting with those who filled out the questionnaire should be arranged. At this meeting the varied responses to the same question can be compared and the program personnel can have an opportunity to see how they differ in the view they hold of their own program. More importantly for the 'best practices', however, is the opportunity to discuss with each program what it feels to be the important characteristics of a program with respect to the four key objectives listed earlier. (Page 3).

The importance of this step cannot be overstated. If eventual consensus among a group of programs is the ultimate goal, it is necessary to build that consensus from the various points of view offered by the different programs. By taking into account the idiosyncracies of each program at this early stage, draft guidelines can be drawn up using a 'grassroots' approach. As each program offers its opinion the draft can be revised incorporating the proposed changes.

The draft guidelines developed at this stage should be more than a set of statements representing best practices. There must be full explanations of what the practices entail. One effective way to present this is by attaching 'evidences' to each best practice. Each of the best practices is made relevant by the 'evidences' which represent different ways that a program can determine the extent to which it adheres to the best practice. As well, the 'evidences' offer avenues for the program to meet the best practice if it is currently not doing so.

Step 4: Vet the Draft Guidelines through the Advisory Committee

At this stage an advisory committee can be extremely helpful. Because the next step is to try to get consensus from all of the programs which will be affected by the document, the advisory committee's stamp of approval prior to the consensus-building attempt is very important. The advisory committee is truly outcome focused and should have no bias when it comes to determining the essential best practices as they relate to LINC programs and learners. Thus, their opinion, if it is received and incorporated prior to the consensus-building meeting, will carry weight with the individual programs.

Step *5*: Obtain Consensus on the Best Practices through a Committee of all Programs:

If steps three and four have been followed this is not a difficult task. The committee developed to do this review of the draft should, wherever possible, consist of program representatives who have not been part of the process up to this point. This brings a fresh look at the guidelines and gives added weight to their relevance to the program represented, and the probability of their being seen as credible after they are finalized and published.

Step *5* should be seen as a working step rather than one where a facile approval is expected. One at a time the proposed best practices should be thoroughly examined to be sure that they cover all of the essential areas, and make sense in the context of the uniqueness of each program. This is a time-consuming process; however, if consensus on the best practices is the ultimate goal, and it should be, the time will be well spent. An opportunity to talk out differences and fully understand each point facilitates eventual consensus.

Step 6: Vet the Revised Draft through all Programs

Once consensus has been reached by the committee representing all programs, have the revised document discussed within each program. This step serves two purposes: first, it represents a final opportunity to fine-tune the document; secondly, and of much more importance, it offers an opportunity for more people who will be affected by the results to take ownership of the best practices.

Step 7: Publication and Distribution of the Best Practice Guidelines

In considering the publication of the final document it is important to give some thought to format. The energy expended in the development of the 'best practices' can be justified only if the resulting practices are followed. It is essential, therefore, that the published format of the best practice guidelines be user-friendly (i.e. easy to keep at hand and refer to).

Recommendation: To make the best practices accessible to all instructors in LINC, the preparation of a check list of best practices which could be kept handy to each program and instructor could be prepared, listing the best practices and providing a space to indicate whether or not each is being met.

APPENDIX I: PROJECT BACKGROUND

When the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) was announced, the London Region of Canada Employment and Immigration, responsible for the allocation of federal language training dollars, determined to use a community consultation model to develop and monitor a process for the distribution of the LINC dollars once they became available. A broad-based committee, representing users, deliverers and ethnic and other community organizations, was brought together by CEIC to write a proposal for the development of a community Language Training Advisory Council which would then be taken to the community for modification and approval.

The London Language Training Advisory Council was in place in time to deal with the first allocation of LINC dollars in 1992. Using the LINC guidelines as essential criteria to meet, the council issued calls to the community for UNC delivery proposals. As a result of this process the first year saw delivery agencies ranging from the college and the two school boards to ethnic organizations, community agencies, a labour union and a not-for-profit private trainer. As expected, the proposals promised to offer language instruction to a wide variety of newcomers, from those destined for the workplace to shut-ins and seniors. For the first couple of years, especially, some of the programs offered were restricted, not by their own mandate, but by their location and their sponsorship, to one ethnic group. To a certain degree this still exists; however, today all of the programs, with one exception, are significantly more multi-cultural in nature.

Guidelines for everything from curriculum to methods of staffing were either skeletal or non-existent in the first year. However, during that year the non-institutional deliverers set up a committee to meet and look at common concerns. The following year the institutions were added to the committee and there has been a strong committee representing the delivery organizations since that time. This organization, while not attached to the Language Council, is invited twice a year to make presentations to the Language Council, thereby keeping the advice and concerns of the delivery organizations before the Council.

In the summer of 1993 the LINC Curriculum Guidelines, drafted under the auspices of Employment and Immigration Canada, (now CIC) Ontario Region, were issued and became the basis of the curricula used in all of the programs in London. Those delivery agencies which had been offering multi-level ESL to adults for a number of years tended to adapt their existing curricula to meet the Guidelines. New delivery agencies had something to develop a curriculum around. This should have brought about a more uniform offering to all LINC students in the province. It is expected that the Canadian Language Benchmarks, once they are fully in place, will bring about a uniformity of outcomes.

APPENDIX II: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: This is a survey questionnaire, with the covering letter, that was sent to all of the LINC programs in London, to begin the process.

Survey of LINC Programs

The following survey is intended to determine the current practices, in five general areas, each LINC program in London is following. It is hoped that the final 'Best Practices' we develop as a system will use these five divisions.

Please choose the most appropriate response in the right column to the statement in the left column. Following each of the five sections is space for comment. In this section please comment on anything else about your program that relates to this section.

NOTE: The results of this survey will remain confidential. They serve only as the basis for discussion leading to best practices. To obtain a true picture of your current program it would be best to have the main survey filled out by three people in your program: the administrator, a teacher, and a LINC 3 student (if you have LINC 3) Sometimes what one thinks is happening is not the way someone else sees it. I would appreciate having three students complete the one-page 'Learners Evaluation'. This can certainly be done by LINC 3 students. If your LINC 2 students can handle it I would appreciate hearing from them as well.

Because I am on a tight time schedule to have this project completed I would appreciate your having this questionnaire completed as soon as possible. I shall call you on to see if it is complete, and come and pick it up.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this project.

1. The program as it relates to the learning process of the student

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1.1 The students clearly understand the objectives of the program at the beginning of the program.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.2 Students understand what is expected of them in class.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.3 Students help decide what is to be learned and what resources and materials are to be used.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.4 Students receive helpful criticism on the progress of their learning as a regular part of the program.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.5 The teaching and learning in the classroom takes into account the individual learning styles of the students.	_____	_____	_____	_____
1.6 The program helps students get information about counselling, financial help and other community services.	_____	_____	_____	_____

2. The Program as it relates to the process of instruction

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
2.1 The learning materials the program uses are appropriate to adults.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.2 Students recognize the learning materials as being meaningful to them.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.3 The students can get to a resource library without too much difficulty.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.4 Classes have the right number of students in them.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.5 Students are encouraged to share their cultural experiences with one another.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.6 Students feel welcome when they come to the program.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.7 Students have access to a good selection of audio-visual hard and software and computers.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.8 Instructors in the program encourage a lot of discussion with and among the students.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.9 Students feel comfortable when they try to answer but make mistakes.	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. The Program as it relates to the larger community it serves.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
3.1 People from the community are part of the program.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.2 The program plans activities with other educational organizations or programs.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.3 Students take part in deciding what appropriate community-centred activities the class should get involved in.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.4 As part of the curriculum the students go out to agencies and organizations in the community.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.5 Students are encouraged to learn about, and, where they wish to, become involved in community organizations.	_____	_____	_____	_____

4. The Program as it relates to the evaluation of results.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
4.1 Students are given a formal oral evaluation with grades recorded at least once a week.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.2 Students are given a formal written evaluation with grades recorded at least once a week.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.3 Beyond the literacy level, students are involved in choosing the methods of evaluation.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.4 A record is made of students' progress at each stage of the curriculum.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.5 A summative evaluation is done at the end of the course to identify the student's standing against the National Benchmarks.	_____	_____	_____	_____

5. The Program as it relates to student placement, Curriculum Guidelines and the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

	Always	**Usually**	**Sometimes**	**Never**
5.1 The LINC Curriculum Guidelines are used as a constant guide in determining program direction and content.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.2 The 'Needs Assessment' approach outlined in the LINC Curriculum Guidelines is used with all new students.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.3 The thematic approach with selections from the twelve themes in the Curriculum Guidelines are used in class.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.4 Students are tested at time of entry into the class to determine appropriate placement.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.5 The Canadian Language Benchmarks are used in determining a level of achievement when the students leave the program.	_____	_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX III: Glossary

The glossary defines terms as they are used in this document.

cultural interpretation   a rendering of one language into another by considering the characteristics of both languages that are developed and influenced by the culture in which those languages exist

evaluation   procedures to judge or estimate student abilities in language; usually expressed in descriptive terms rather than numerical scores

formative evaluation   procedures for determining learner understanding and retention used mainly for learner motivation and instructor guidance

summative evaluation   procedures for determining learner understanding and retention used mainly at the conclusion of a unit of work to determine readiness to progress or to compare to a standard

language skills   references to the four language skills mean listening comprehension, reading comprehension, speaking and writing

learners   adults participating in language classes sponsored by LINC

learning contract   either a formal, signed document or a verbal understanding of the responsibilities of the two parties i.e. the program and the learner

learning outcome   a measurable product; unlike an objective which refers to a goal which may or may not be measurable

learning styles   individualized approaches to absorbing, understanding and retaining information

LINC   Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, a federally-sponsored program to assist immigrants and refugees in learning one of the two official languages

linguistic background literacy   usually refers to the first language of the individual; may refer also to a range of language experiences that an individual has been exposed to

literacy   In the context of ESL it is necessary to differentiate between the ability to read and write in English and the ability to read and write in the learner's own language; ESL literacy refers to reading and writing in English; first language literacy refers to reading and writing in the learner's first language

needs assessment   a determination of the learning needs of a learner; specifically referring to a segment of the LINC Curriculum Guidelines

off-site   refers to learning that occurs in a location other than that in which the LINC program is housed

on-site   refers to learning that takes place at the location of the LINC program

outcome-based   refers to all aspects of learning from curriculum development to evaluation which are based on learning outcomes

resource center   a physical centre where a variety of student-accessible learning materials and devices are available; may include a language lab, a computer lab as well as written materials

TESL   refers to a training program to prepare teachers to instruct in the acquisition of English as a second language

APPENDIX IV: TEN PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

Note: The following ten principles of adult learning are taken from Heather Maclean's 'Linking Person-Centred Teaching to Qualitative Research Training'.[2]

1. Adult learning is enhanced when learners perceive that the learning process and outcomes are relevant to their own purposes.

2. Adult learning is enhanced in a group setting which allows for the interplay of ideas and hence the potential for 'building' on the combined resources of the group.

3. Adult learning is enhanced when learning is viewed as an evolutionary process which requires time and patience. and where one accepts that goals and directions that emerge may change as people become clearer about what it is they want to learn.

4. Adult learning is enhanced when learners are treated as self-directing, responsible people who are encouraged to take an active role in decision making, planning and implementation of learning activities. Such an approach assumes that adults have a rich accumulation of experiences which can be tapped in the learning process.

5. Adult learning is enhanced when learners are encouraged to trust themselves (including their emotional reactions), to draw from their experience as a source of knowledge and to integrate their personal meanings with external knowledge.

6. Adult learning is enhanced when the learning climate fosters self-esteem, interdependence, freedom of expression, acceptance of differences and freedom to make mistakes.

7. Adult learning is enhanced when evaluation of learning includes self-evaluation - that is the learner's assessment of what he or she has learned - and feedback from others.

8. Adult learning is enhanced when people are encouraged to be active and to learn through doing, particularly when emphasis is placed on reflecting on the meaning of what people have experienced.

9. Adult learning is enhanced when it is recognized that some learning cannot be predicted or planned. Some goals, therefore, may initially be ambiguous.

10. Adult learning is enhanced when learners discover their preferred learning styles. As people become more aware of how they learn and become exposed to other ways of learning they can redefine and modify their own styles as they seek ways of becoming more competent and responsible learners.

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[2] Heather Maclean. 'Linking Person-centred Teaching to Qualitative Research Training'. *Appreciating Adults Learning: From the Learners 'Perspective,* David Boud and Virginia Griffin, editors. Kogan Page Ltd. London, 1987. Pp. 129-130.

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