

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE SERVICES REVIEW

PHASE I: CURRENT PRACTICES AND CRITICAL ISSUES

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S
SERVICES
and
MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION**

REPORT ON FINDINGS

Submitted to:

**English as a Second Language Services Review
Advisory Group**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS – English As A Second Language Services Review
Phase I: Current Practices and Critical Issues**

1	INTRODUCTION	4
	1.1 Purpose of the ESL Review Project	4
	1.2 Background	4
	1.3 Report Objectives	5
2	METHODOLOGY	5
3	CURRENT ESL DELIVERY MODEL IN BC	6
	3.1 Overview of ESL Service Delivery Model	6
	3.1.1 Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services Model	7
	3.1.2 Ministry of Advanced Education Model	9
	3.1.3 School District Continuing Education ESL Delivery	10
	3.1.4 Other ESL Service Providers	10
	3.2 Demographics	11
	3.2.1 ELSA Program	11
	3.2.2 College-based ESL	12
4	ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF IMMIGRATION TRENDS	15
5	FINDINGS	19
	5.1 Overall Strengths of the ESL Services	19
	5.2 Perceived Gaps in ESL Service Delivery	22
	5.3 Identification of Major Issues	25
	5.3.1 Coordination/Communication	25
	5.3.2 Funding	27
	5.3.3 Assessment	28
	5.3.4 Access	29
	5.3.5 School District Continuing Education ESL	31
	5.3.6 Quality of Service and Accountability	31
	5.3.7 Other Issues	38
	5.4 Input from Learners	38
6	ESL DELIVERY MODELS IN ONTARIO, ALBERTA AND MANITOBA	42
	6.1 Summary of Key Features	42
	6.2 Province of Ontario	44
	6.3 Province of Manitoba	46
	6.4 Province of Alberta	50
7	STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER	54
8	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	58

APPENDICES	59
1. ESL Services Review Advisory Group Members	60
2. Interview and Focus Group Questions	62
3. List of Interviews and Focus Groups	69
4. ELSA Classes	73
5. ELSA Client Profile	76
6. Immigration Trends	83

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the ESL Review Project

The purpose of the ESL Services Review Project is to review Adult ESL Services currently being delivered in the Province of British Columbia and funded by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) and the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED). The aim is to describe current practices and highlight critical issues that may have an impact on funders, providers and clients. Models of ESL delivery in three other selected Canadian jurisdictions will be presented as a basis for informing the BC model. This project is to provide a snapshot of the current state of ESL delivery as well as identify critical issues for long term strategic planning.

2.2 Background

The two ministries responsible for the administration of publicly funded ESL services in the province, the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS) and the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) are jointly guiding this review and both are committed to a thorough assessment of all aspects of current ESL programming.

It has been five years since the responsibility for the administration of settlement-focused English language training has been transferred to the province from the Federal Government. The *Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration* is being re-negotiated and this presents a timely opportunity to review all aspects of the current ESL Services delivery model.

An advisory group made up of representatives from the field involved in ESL service delivery and representatives from MCAWS and AVED has been established to guide this review. (See Appendix 1 for Advisory Group Members.) There are two phases to this review:

- Phase One includes the analysis of current practices and the identification of issues and opportunities in English language training. The Advisory Group will help ensure that there is a broad range of input and consultation with primary stakeholders and will review the findings from Phase One.
- Phase Two will include the preparation of a strategic plan for ESL services in BC. This second phase may be contracted or may be undertaken by the respective ministries and will involve the advisory group.

This report represents the findings and results of the first phase of data collection and input from key stakeholders across the province to identify current practices and critical issues.

1.3 Report Objectives

The report of Phase One of the ESL Services Review includes:

1. An environmental scan of immigration trends, movements and demographics that will inform future planning of service delivery.
2. Identification of ESL programming and services currently in place in BC.
3. Identification of ESL programming and services in other jurisdictions (agreement to review Manitoba, Ontario, and Alberta).
4. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and gaps vis a vis learners, service providers and funders.
5. Discussion of issues.
6. Strategic opportunities to consider.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on qualitative data collected from existing documentation, interviews and focus groups. Nineteen (19) individual stakeholder interviews and a total of 23 focus groups were conducted. Of the 23 focus groups there were:

- 6 focus groups with a total of 67 learners. Separate groups were conducted with ELSA learners and those enrolled in the College-based ESL programs.
- 17 focus groups with a total of approximately 160 participants representing Colleges, Continuing Education Departments of School Districts, non-profit agencies, and the private sector schools. Focus groups conducted with ELSA stakeholders included a mix of administrators and instructors. The College-based focus groups also included a mix of administrators, instructors, program directors and program coordinators.

(See Appendix 3 for List of Interviews and Focus Groups.)

Those who participated in interviews or focus groups were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps of the current ESL system, as well as, any issues related to structure of delivery, policy, coordination, funding, access, quality of service, and support services that might impact on delivery. Informants in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta were asked to describe their delivery models based on similar categories. (See Appendix 2 for Interview and Focus Group Questions.)

More specifically, the following data collection methods were used:

- Review of demographic data on immigrant trends available from Statistics Canada, relevant federal and provincial government ministries.

- Review of available documentation on ESL programming to identify what is currently in place in BC.
- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis session with the ESL Services Review Advisory Group to confirm key issues and identify stakeholders.
- Interviews with informants in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta.
- Telephone interviews or meetings with key informants from coordinating organizations such as: ELSA NET; Association of BC Teachers of English as an Additional Language (TEAL); Deans and Directors of Developmental Education; ESL Articulation Committee; and AMSSA.
- Interviews and focus group sessions with administrators, instructors, and learners from immigrant-serving organizations such as MOSAIC, SUCCESS, and Immigrant Services Society (ISS).
- Interviews with Assessment and Referral agencies such as Western ESL Services and independent assessors.
- Geographically-based data collection in five Regions - Northern, Interior, Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland, and Fraser Valley. In each of these locations, data was collected by a combination of methods including telephone and in-person interviews, and focus group sessions (i.e. SWOT analysis sessions). The focus group sessions were conducted with:
 - Administrators, program directors, program coordinators, and instructors in service provider organizations such as Colleges, Continuing Education Departments of School Districts, non-profit agencies, and private sector schools
 - Clients (i.e. learners)

The data were recorded respecting the voices of participants. The findings were analyzed by means of a content analysis, looking for similarities, repetition in responses and corroboration of information from different data sources. If an issue was mentioned more than once by different respondents, it was included in the results. If different opinions on the same issues were repeatedly stated, these were also identified.

3 CURRENT ESL DELIVERY MODEL IN BC

3.1 Overview of ESL Service Delivery Model

The province of British Columbia currently funds the delivery of adult ESL Programs under the auspices of two ministries: the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) and the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS).

ESL Funding

Most of the funding for ESL service delivery comes from the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) under the *Agreement for Canada-British Columbia Cooperation on Immigration* first signed in 1998. Under this agreement, the Federal Government transfers funds to the province which undertakes to administer the delivery

of immigrant settlement and integration services, including adult ESL. In addition, AVED provides base funding to Colleges (in the form of Block funding) that may be used to offset costs of ESL delivery.

Over the past several years, the federal funding transferred to the province has ranged from approximately \$47 M in 2000-01 to \$39M in 2002-03, and \$37M in 2003-04. In 2002-03, AVED provided approximately \$20M to Colleges and University Colleges for the delivery of English Language Training programs. MCAWS provided \$19M for delivery of English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) to a variety of service providers. In the 2003-04 fiscal year, the province has indicated that it intends to spend 90% of the federally funded dollars on ESL delivery. In addition, MCAWS has committed an additional \$1M of provincial funding to go into the ELSA stream for 2003-04.

Each Ministry is responsible for accounting for its share of the federal funds. However, as part of the terms of agreement for the devolution of funding, MCAWS, through its Immigration Policy Branch, has assumed the role of reporting agent for the Province of British Columbia.

Current ESL Delivery Model

ESL service delivery in BC is provided under the auspices of two ministries - MCAWS and AVED and under two different programs – the ELSA program and College-based English Language Training. Each ministry administers its share of the funding under different funding mechanisms to a different range of service providers. MCAWS funds not-for-profit agencies, School District Adult Continuing Education, Community and University Colleges, and private sector schools to provide the ELSA program. AVED funds Community and University Colleges to provide College-based English Language Training.

3.1.1 Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Delivery Model

ELSA Programs

MCAWS has a mandate to provide Settlement and Integration Services, and English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) in both rural and urban settings. It has undertaken to ensure that rural area clients are adequately served and has adjusted the funding formula to accommodate less densely populated areas. The following are key features of the ELSA delivery model:

- Service providers include not-for-profit agencies, private sector schools, Continuing Education Departments of School Districts, and University Colleges and Community Colleges.
- The ELSA Program is free of charge for participants and only open to immigrants and convention refugees, who score below CLB Listening and Speaking Level 5 and Reading and Writing Level 3/4 on the CLB Assessment test. In rural areas, some

exceptions are made to accept Canadian Citizens into ELSA when they have no other access to ESL classes.

- The ELSA Program content is intended to address the settlement and adjustment needs of newcomers to Canada and provides instruction based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB).
- A standardized assessment (CLBA) is administered by centrally located Assessment Centres in larger urban areas, and by other qualified assessors located throughout the province. Instructors and administrators in the Northern and Interior Regions have recently been trained and certified to administer the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT) which is a shorter form of the CLBA. This allows the smaller communities to assess clients in a more timely fashion and has reduced the wait list for assessment in these areas. Clients are tested and then provided with a choice of providers in their own area.
- ELSA Programs are administered within a highly centralized system. Service providers are required to fill out an extensive application form for funding each year and must provide proof of their fiscal responsibility, as well as, their ability to provide appropriate space, qualified instructors, and a curriculum based on settlement and adjustment needs. Funding for child minding has been incorporated into the agreement of a number of service providers. The application process for service providers will be altered in the year (2004/05) with the introduction of an “open solicitation process”, (more closely related to submitting RFPs) beginning in December, 2004.
- A computer data base called STaRS has recently been instituted and all ELSA service providers are required to report client data to MCAWS using this system. At the time of writing this report, STaRS is being used to register learners and monitor hours of instruction, exit dates, record names and dates of arrival.

Performance Measurement Framework

Over the past year, MCAWS has developed an ELSA Program Logic Model which includes a process for tracking learner outcomes over three or more years. A Performance Measurement Framework Committee (composed of ELSA Net members) was struck to develop a framework for performance measurement. The purpose of this framework is to provide an evaluation tool to measure whether the program is meeting its intended goals to achieve particular outcomes. It provides for systematic tracking of intended benefits and changes for clients. The model framework chart gives providers examples of intended program outcomes, behavioural outcomes indicators, and optional tracking methods. At the time of writing this report, providers were being introduced to this framework. However, they will be expected to develop their own framework with intended outcomes that fit their programs and indicate how they are going to track learners. MCAWS also intends to undertake a formal outcomes study in the near future.

ELSA Net

MCAWS has encouraged the development and financially supports the work of ELSA Net which is the umbrella organization for all ELSA program providers. It employs a full time Coordinator whose job it is to work with the Executive Committee, to arrange for Regional meetings and Professional Development (PD), and ensure that the lines of communication are kept open between the providers and the Ministry. The Ministry has assigned staff to represent the government in the organization's deliberations. ELSA Net has produced a revised 2003 edition of The Directory of ESL Courses in British Columbia with financial assistance from MCAWS. Updating of this directory is ongoing. ELSA Net has developed administrative guidelines for the ELSA program and maintains a website with special services for ELSA Net members.

3.1.2 Ministry of Advanced Education Delivery Model

College-based ESL Programs

AVED is exclusively responsible for funding ESL Service Delivery at Community and University Colleges (hereafter referred to as "the Colleges"). Until 2001, ESL program delivery at the Colleges was funded directly based on an FTE formula. College ESL delivery includes lower level Community Based language programs, as well as, higher level Academic English, English for Special Purposes, and Skills Based training. Several Colleges also deliver ELSA programs which are funded by MCAWS.

College ESL Funding

Since 2001, AVED has funded the Colleges using a block funding model based on a three-year service plan, giving institution boards the autonomy to decide what programs to offer at the institution, taking into account the needs of the regions they serve. The Ministry has established an accountability framework in which access to developmental programs is stated to be a priority in the Ministry's Service Plan and which is reiterated in budget and accountability letters sent to the institutions. In addition, AVED has introduced annual baseline targets for delivery of College-based ESL.

College ESL Delivery

The Colleges are mandated to serve the needs of their communities and have a high degree of autonomy regarding the number and type of ESL programs they deliver. The following are a number of key features of the College ESL service delivery:

- College-based ESL classes are open to Canadian citizens, convention refugees, new immigrants, as well as, International Students.
- All learners (with the exceptions of those on social assistance, employment insurance or those covered by the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) are charged fees for service.
- Each College creates curricula independently for its own programs, assesses learners using a wide range of assessment tools, and uses a variety of course names and level numbers that are distinctive from college to college.

- The ESL Articulation Committee provides a forum for institutions to rationalize their course offerings across levels. Members have agreed on common descriptors for a wide range of programs, and assigned CLB levels to each course in the 2003 edition of the Articulation Guide for English as a Second Language Programs in the British Columbia Public Post-Secondary System.
- While Colleges must account for FTEs of instruction in various programs, they are reasonably independent and expected to monitor their own quality of service.
- Learner progress and exit achievement are evaluated in-house. AVED tracks learner outcomes every two-three years in a study of learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the programs in helping them meet their own goals, before and after they leave the college system. In addition, the study also gathers information with regard to learners' access to employment opportunities and/or further education or training. The study is entitled, Outcomes of BC College and Institute ESL Students: English as a Second Language Student Outcomes Project.
- Colleges have well trained and qualified ESL instructors. Professional Development and opportunities to participate in curriculum and materials development are managed within each College.
- The Deans and Directors of Developmental Education meet twice a year to discuss issues of common concern, share best practices and exchange information to improve access and program delivery.

3.1.3 School District Continuing Education ESL Delivery

The scope of this report was intended to address ESL delivery which is publicly funded. Continuing Education Departments of School Districts are included in this review in so far as a number of them are funded for the delivery of ELSA by MCAWS. However, it is important to note that 10 School Districts in the province provide a wide range of community-based adult ESL on a cost recovery basis for which they currently receive no government funding. These programs are not part of this review. School Districts do, however, receive funding from the Ministry of Education for the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE). A large number of adult second language learners access high school completion classes under the auspices of Adult Basic Education because these classes are free. The ABE classes were not intended for ESL learners and this situation raises a number of issues that impact ESL delivery and funding. This is discussed further in the section of the report dealing with issues.

3.1.4 Other ESL Service Providers

While the purpose of this ESL Services Review was restricted to an analysis of publicly funded programs, we would be remiss in not mentioning the existence of other ESL service providers that operate, outside of, but parallel to, the publicly funded delivery system. Providers, who do not receive public funding, include churches and other religious organizations, community agencies, neighbourhood houses, private schools, and volunteer groups. The scope of this review did not include an analysis of these service providers.

3.2 Demographics

Demographic data was collected from a number of different sources including the MCAW's Student Tracking System – STaRS, and AVED's Articulation Guide for English as a Second Language, Report of FTE's, and the ESL Student Outcomes Survey, 2003.

There are in excess of 240 ESL service providers in BC including 56 ELSA Providers, 17 Colleges, 10 School Districts, and a wide range of church groups, volunteer agencies, and neighbourhood houses¹.

3.2.1 ELSA Program

Data provided by STaRS² on the ELSA Program identified a total of 56 ELSA providers who served a population of approximately 12,000+ students between September 2002 and August 2003. There were a total of 354 classes offered in 38 communities across BC. (Appendix 4 Table 1 for location and number of ELSA classes.) There are currently 28 child minding sites.³ (Appendix 4 Table 2 for location and number of child minding sites.)

Profile of ELSA Learners

The profile of ELSA clients from January 2002 to September 2003 indicates the following:⁴ (Appendix 5 for charts on ELSA Client Profile.)

- 80% of the clients in ELSA classes during this time period landed in BC since January, 2001
- 62% of these clients are female and 38% are male.
- The majority of clients range from age 25 to 44.
- Clients came largely from China (41.89%), India (17.58%), South Korea (9.85 %), Iran (6.39%) Taiwan (5.21%), Vietnam (3.10%), Russia (2.45%), Afghanistan (2.24%), with less than 2% from each of a number of other countries.
- Mother tongue of these clients closely corresponds to country of origin, with the top languages being Mandarin (28.24%), Punjabi (16.34%), Chinese (12.19%) (sic), Korean (9.73%), Cantonese (6.68%), Spanish (4.07%), Russian (3.80%). A variety of other languages are each represented by less than 3%.
- Immigration categories represented were: 53.22% economic class, 40.62% family class, 6.16% refugees. Close to 80% are permanent residents while 2.54% are Canadian Citizens.

¹ From Directory of ESL Courses in British Columbia, 2003 edition.

² STaRS is the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services' Student Tracking and Reporting System.

³ The total number of children enrolled in each site is not available because of the inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the entry of child minding data in STaRS

⁴ STaRS Data

At the time of writing of this report, information on STaRS regarding levels of education of clients could not be tabulated because of inconsistencies in data entry.

ELSA Assessment data

Data obtained from Western ESL Services which provides assessment services for ELSA in Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Richmond, South Delta, Burnaby, and New Westminster, supplies critical information on the number of assessments, wait times and demand for certain types of classes.

For the reporting period, September 2002- August 2003, the Assessment Centre received 28 new applicants per day. While wait times for assessment have tended to fluctuate over this time period, it is currently three weeks. Over this time period, 5, 219 clients were assessed as eligible while 1, 241 were ineligible for a total of 6, 490 assessments. One of the key shifts over the previous reporting period is the relative percentages of clients assessed at certain levels. For example:

- Level 1 and Literacy Level have increased from 31% to 35.5% of ELSA eligible clients.
- Level 2 has slightly decreased from 28% to 27% of eligible clients.
- Level 3's have decreased from 41% to 37.5% of eligible clients.
- Number of clients assessed as ineligible level (Level 4/5 +) has increased from 14% to 25% in the last 5 months of the current fiscal year (April, 2003).

Western ESL Services concludes the following based on the data collected through STaRS and their own data collection and experience:

- Level 1 classes, especially Literacy, are under supplied, while Level 2 classes have been over supplied.
- The ration of seats available for Level 1 starts is chronically lower than the demand, and this is exacerbated by the fact that Level 1 seats get “turned over” much less frequently than those at other levels.
- Even if seats are not vacant, the wait period for Levels 2 and 3 is always shorter and there are significantly more options (locations and shifts) from which to choose.
- In many instances, the wait lists for Level 1 and Literacy are closed (longer than 6 months). For example, the Assessment Centre has been keeping a manual tally of clients requiring Literacy level classes in Richmond since January 2003. Since that date, there have been 54 clients, eligible for ELSA at Literacy level, who have not been referred even to a wait list.

3.2.2 College-Based ESL

Information on College-based ESL delivery comes from AVED's ESL Articulation Guide for English as a Second Language Programs⁵, Report on FTE's, and the *Report of*

⁵ Articulation Guide for English as a Second Language Programs in British Columbia's Public Post-Secondary System, Third Edition, 2003 Prepared by the Province of British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education.

the 2003 College and University College ESL Student Outcomes Survey, which will be published late spring, 2004.

Course Offerings

The Articulation Guide identifies 17 Community and University Colleges and provides an overview of the three main types of programs offered throughout the College system: English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Access, and English for Work. The first two have been correlated to the CLB levels. Some Colleges also provide Adjunct and Sheltered Courses (ESL support provided for learners enrolled in academic courses) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses.

- **Completion of English for Academic Purposes programs** provides access for learners to regular College Academic Programs, Vocational/Career Training, Canadian Society, and the Canadian Workforce. The EAP courses require a minimum entry level of CLB Level 6 in all skills and CLB Level 10 is usually required as an exit level to enroll in the regular college programs. Virtually all of the colleges offer EAP courses at the CLB Levels 8-10. There are fewer EAP courses offered at the lower levels, although some of the academic skills are also taught at the higher levels of English for Access so there is some overlap between these two programs.
- **English for Access** includes Literacy through CLB Levels 1-8. These courses provide access to Canadian Society, Canadian Workforce, Entrepreneurial Activities, Vocational/Career Training, and Academic Programs. Twelve colleges offer English for Access courses with the biggest gaps in service occurring at the lower levels. Nine of the colleges do not offer any courses at CLB Levels Literacy, 1 & 2.
- **English for Work** includes Preparatory Programs, Combined Skills, Vocational ESP, Adjunct ESL and Job Search ESL. These courses have not been correlated to the Canadian Language Benchmarks. Completion of these programs provides access to the Canadian Workforce and Vocational/Career Training. The ESL Articulation Guide divides these courses into nine categories: (Number of colleges offering the courses are indicated in brackets.)
 1. Career exploration and job search skills (5 colleges)
 2. Vocational English For Specific Purposes (VESP) (3 colleges)
 3. Combined skills (ESL and Job Skills) (7 colleges)
 4. VESP offered in the workplace exclusively for upgrading English (1 college, Workplace Literacy)
 5. Combined Language skills and applied skills for specific jobs in the workplace (1 college)
 6. Combined Language Skills and applied skills for worker mobility to fit industry needs (1 college)
 7. Preparation for further employment related programs (2 colleges)
 8. Adjunct courses, ESL concurrent with job skills (2 colleges)
 9. Tourism and Technical Trades Access (4 colleges)

BCIT offers only Trades and Technology related courses. Vancouver Community College provides the broadest range of courses (10 courses) however the other colleges offer either no work-related courses or only one or two. Five colleges outside of the Lower Mainland offer job-related training.

FTE's Reported by Colleges

Data provided by AVED on the number of FTEs delivered (full time equivalents = 925 hours of instruction) as reported by the Colleges from 1999 -2003 and audited by AVED indicates the following:

- FTEs for English Language Training has increased from 3101.7 in 1999 to 3857.9 in 2002/3.
- FTEs for English Language Training Literacy was reduced from 67.6 in 1999 to 56 in 2002/3.
- FTEs for ELT Combined Skills Training was reduced from 305.2 in 1999 to 55.6 in 2002/3.

A clarification of the above FTE distribution is warranted. Colleges tend to report FTEs differently. Some combine all three categories and only report a total number to AVED. In addition, one FTE may indicate hours used by one full time student. However, several part-time students may be accounted for by one FTE. While each individual college may have an accurate count of their ESL student population, there appears to be no coordinated process at AVED to capture the total number of ESL students served by the College system, the number of people on waiting lists or how many of any specific type of ESL courses are being delivered.⁶

College-based ESL Student Profiles

Demographic data on ESL students in public-post secondary institutions was extrapolated from AVED's ESL Student Outcomes Survey, 2003. While the most recent Student Outcomes document was not available at the time of writing of this report, AVED provided the results of a number of survey questions for inclusion.

The ESL Student Outcomes Survey provides a snapshot based on interviews conducted in May and June of 2003 with a sample size of 4022 students from 16 public institutions. Students who took part in the survey were in ESL classes at BC public Colleges or University Colleges between July 01, 2000 and June 30, 2002. Data from this survey reveals the following information:

- *Number of clients by funding source:* 88.5 % are funded by AVED, 5.8% are funded by ELSA (MCAWS), and 5.7% were funded by both.
- *Gender:* 68.3% are female and 31.6% are male with the majority within the age range of 25-49 years of age.
- *Immigration status:* 95% of the ELSA clients are permanent residents and 2% are Canadian citizens, 69.4% of AVED funded students are permanent residents of which 28.6% are Canadian citizens.

⁶ Data on numbers of ESL students and types of courses taken is also not readily available from MAVED Central Data Warehouse.

- *Country of origin:* the highest percentage of clients came from China (30.3%), India (9.0%), Iran (8.7%), Taiwan (7.6%), Korea (5.3%), Hong Kong (5.1%) and Russia and Philippines each at 3.3%.
- *Languages most often spoken at home:* approximately 40% of the clients in the survey identified either Mandarin (29.2%) or Cantonese (13%)
- *Number of years in Canada:* For AVED funded ESL clients: 50.1% indicated 3-5 years, 26.5 % indicated 6-10 years and 10.9 % indicated 0-2 years. This differs for MCAWS funded clients, where a greater percentage is more recent to Canada.
- *Highest level of education of clients prior to arrival in Canada:* the majority of clients have a high school diploma or more, 30.9% have university undergraduate degrees, 14.1% have university post-graduate degrees, 15% have college or technical school with a diploma/certificate. These percentages are similar for both funded programs.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF IMMIGRATION TRENDS

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the immigration trends and demographics in BC that would potentially impact the development of a service plan for delivery of ESL services throughout the province. Information in this section was taken from Census, CIC Landings, and School District data. (See Appendix 6 for selected charts.)

BC is a province rich in ethnic diversity. According to the 2001 Census data, BC is home to the highest percentage of visible minorities in Canada (22%). A recent survey released by Statistics Canada (September 30, 2003) found that 46% or 720,000 people in the Lower Mainland population aged 15 years and over were born outside of Canada. This is twice the national average and second only to Toronto's 53%. The majority of Vancouver's immigrant population arrived before 1991, while 17% arrived between 1991- 2001. The following outlines a number of key immigration trends from a variety of sources:

- The total number of landings in BC has dropped from a high of 52, 000 in 1996 to 33,894 in 2002.
- In examining the number of immigrants who landed in BC by destination from 1993-2002, the following can be observed: Vancouver has experienced a decrease from 1996 and 1997 to 2001 and then a further decrease in 2002; Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond have experienced increases in landings over the last 10 years with a particular increase from 2001-2002. (See Charts 1 and 2 in Appendix 6) Victoria has experienced a decrease in the last 10 years with a particular decrease from 2001-2002. Coquitlam, Abbotsford, North Vancouver, Delta have fluctuated over the past 10 years with slight increases from 2001 -2002.
- Landing data, that is, CIC LIDS data which is % of immigrants landing in particular area based on total immigrants destined to BC, ⁷ does not provide a complete picture.

⁷ Information from these data sources were provided by MCAWS - Immigration Division

However, these landing trends are reinforced when comparing the dispersion of immigrants throughout BC using the following sources of data⁸:

- School District data, that is, % of children who speak other than English at home based on total school population; and
- 2001 Census data, that is, % of households speaking other than English based on total number of households in a particular location.

This type of analysis reveals that the top 11 locations where immigrants are landing in order of magnitude are: Vancouver, Surrey, Richmond, Burnaby, Tri City, North Shore, Abbotsford, Victoria, Delta, Langley, and New Westminster.

- Comparing the Census data from 1996 - 2001, school data from 2001- 2002 and CIC landing data from 2001 - 2002 illustrates the following:
 - Increases are evident in Burnaby, Surrey, and Abbotsford.
 - Slight increases in Richmond, Tri City, Delta, Mission.
 - A modest decline in immigrants settling in Vancouver Island, the North and Interior as reflected in slight decreases when comparing the above data in Cowichan, Nanaimo, Campbell River, Prince George, Penticton, Vernon, Kelowna, and Kamloops/Merrit.
 - Other locations in the province have each had less than 100 new immigrants yearly over the last 10 years and numbers have remained relatively unchanged.
- Over the past 10 years slightly more females than male immigrants landed in BC. In 2001 the median age of immigrants arriving into BC was 29.8 years, approximately 8.2 years younger than the median age of the overall population of BC (37.9 years).
- The top seven countries of origin of immigrants landing in BC over the past 10 years are Hong Kong, though there has been a steady decrease since 1996; China has steadily increased since 1993 to 2000/2001 with a decrease in 2002; Taiwan peaked in 1996 and 1997 and has decreased since then; India has remained consistent; Philippines has remained consistent; Korea is slightly up; and Iran has remained relatively consistent. (Chart 4 in Appendix 6) Since 2000 there has been evidence of increased landings of immigrants from Columbia and Afghanistan.
- The level of education of immigrants landing in BC over the past 10 years, reflects a definite trend for more highly educated immigrants coming into BC. The number of immigrants with a bachelor or masters degrees have increased steadily from 1993 - 2000 with a slight decrease in 2001. Certified trades have decreased steadily over the past 10 years. (Chart 3 in Appendix 6)

⁸ Information from these data sources were provided by MCAWS – Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch

- The 2002 Report on Internationally Trained Professionals in BC⁹ also confirms that more recent immigrants to BC have higher levels of education than their predecessors. This report provides profiles illustrating the number of landings, knowledge of official language, gender and education levels for each self-declared occupation arriving in BC from 1997-2001. While this information is based on self-reported data and does not reflect inter-provincial migration, it does provide an important source of information on foreign trained professionals in BC. A few highlights are identified below:
 - In 2001 58% of immigrants age 24 and older had a university degree compared to 38% in 1997.
 - The percentage of immigrants with official language ability varied according to immigration class. For example in 2001, 64% of Skilled Workers landed in BC had official language ability, compared to only 26% of Business Class immigrants.
 - In 2001, the majority of immigrants landed to BC from China were Skilled Workers (71%) and the majority of immigrants from India were in the Family Class (74%). Immigrants from the Philippines were also predominately Skilled Workers (54%).

- Languages spoken at home, reported in the 2001 Census data (self-identified) and the School District data, indicate that the languages most frequently spoken at home are Chinese, Punjabi, Tagalog, Korean, Farsi, Spanish, Hindi and Eastern European languages including Russian, German, and Polish.

- Census data for BC indicates that the number of people who self-identified as not having knowledge of either English or French has increased since 1996.
 - 1991 - 49,005
 - 1996 - 78,445
 - 2001- 87,599

- A comparison of 1996 and 2001 Census data related to the number who speak other than English at home, (as a percentage of the total number of immigrants who speak other than English at home) shows a slight increase in the Lower Mainland from 87.29% in 1996 to 88.88% in 2001. Most communities in the Lower Mainland show a decrease in the percentage who speak other than English at home except for Surrey which shows an increase 11.95% in 1991 to 15.39% in 2001 and slight increases in Richmond and Burnaby.

Analysis of Immigration Trends

Analysis of the available immigration trends highlights a number of important considerations that may inform future planning. For example:

- While there has been a drop in immigration to Vancouver, the increases to other areas of the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley may necessitate a reassessment of

⁹ Internationally Trained Professionals in BC: An Environmental Scan. Nov. 2002. Prepared for the BC Internationally Trained Professionals Network, Project Management Team (Surrey Delta Immigrants Services Society, MOSAIC, Immigrant Services Society of BC) and funded by Canadian Heritage.

where ELSA classes are being offered. This was reinforced by ELSA respondents indicating difficulties learners have in traveling to Vancouver for ELSA classes.

- The significant decrease in immigrants coming from Hong Kong and the increase of immigrants from the Peoples Republic of China may have an impact on ESL programming because of the differences in education systems and learning expectation in these countries.
- Since there has been a trend to more females and younger people coming to BC, this may lead to increased demand for child minding as part of the ESL program.
- A significant increase in more highly educated immigrants may require adjustments in curriculum to accommodate high levels of education and literacy. People with skills and professions require classes that will enable them to re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible.

Another key consideration is related to the recent changes to the federal government's immigration criteria and pass mark for independent skilled workers. In the fall of 2003, the pass mark for this class was reduced from 75 points to 67 points. This shift may mean that the initial backlog of applicants will be permitted to enter Canada with lower language skills in either English or French. These new immigrants will potentially require language training, job reentry training, and settlement and integration services which may have a direct impact on the ESL delivery system.

Further, it should be noted that landing data is limited in being able to determine the need for ESL. The Landed Immigrant Data System asks individuals to declare whether they speak English and/or French or neither language. It does not allow any self report of the degree of proficiency in English. It identifies individuals who cannot speak English at all. However, many individuals may only have a limited amount of English at the time of landing and still require some ESL instruction. Also, research on second language acquisition indicates that people take almost two years to attain conversational fluency and up to seven years to achieve full fluency (for academic work). Further, evidence suggests some immigrants, especially women, only consider themselves able to pursue language studies after they have established some financial stability and/or have been relieved of some of their child care duties as children enter school full time. While the Census provides additional data to supplement the Landings data, it identifies the population, which at the time of the census data collection, declared themselves unable to speak English at all. This data may also be a gross under estimation of the actual population which may need or benefit from ESL instruction. There is need to examine various sources of data cumulatively over the past several years to devise a method of determining a realistic picture of what proportion of the population may indeed benefit from ESL instruction.¹⁰

¹⁰ For example, Dr. Allister Cumming, Identification of Current Needs and Issues Related to the Delivery of Adult ESL in British Columbia, March, 1991, Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration, Province of BC., proposed a method to calculate the size of the population that may potentially benefit from ESL instruction.

Other considerations

The Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee of AMSSA has undertaken a service mapping project which provides demographic maps from the 2001 census and maps identifying the location of settlement services. While there are no maps tracking ELSA/ESL provision, these maps provide a picture of the distribution of immigrant populations in BC which could be helpful in future planning for ESL service delivery.¹¹

MCAWS is in the process of updating profiles of immigrants in BC Communities based on the 2001 Census data. The current data was not available at the time of writing of this report. These profiles provide extensive information on the immigrant populations in communities across BC and include: countries of origin, highest levels of schooling, labour force integration and occupations by gender as well as income distribution.

5. FINDINGS

Stakeholders who were interviewed or who participated in focus group sessions included instructors, administrators, and coordinators of ELSA programs and College-based programs. ELSA focus group informants included representatives from public institutions, private sector schools and non-profit agencies. College-based focus group informants represented the range of program offerings in each of the participating Colleges. Participants were asked to identify strengths, weakness and gaps in the current ESL delivery model. Participants were also asked to focus on particular issues related to program delivery as it affected providers, funders, and learners. At the end of each session, participants were each asked to contribute three ideas for changes that would make the delivery of ESL Services (in their opinion) more effective and efficient. For responses specifically from learners, see Section 5.4.

5.1 Overall Strengths of the ESL Services

A significant number of strengths in the present delivery model were identified by the respondents. In each focus group, the strengths reported tended to be related uniquely to the program with which the respondents were directly involved. In general, very few respondents had a sense of a total delivery system. Where there was agreement between the two program groups related to a particular strength this is indicated by the phrases such as *all informants, or the majority of informants etc.* Where strengths were attributed to either the ELSA program or the College-based programs they will be so noted.

There was a high degree of consensus, mentioned in almost all interviews and focus groups, on the following strengths.

Diversity

The existence of a variety of service providers such as: community organizations, immigrant-serving agencies, public schools, colleges and private providers offering a wide range of programs and levels is seen as a major strength of the system. All service

¹¹ Immigration Settlement Services Project, October, 2003, Dr. Nadine Schuurman and Rob Fiedler prepared for AMSSA Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee, www.sfu.ca/~rfiedler

providers acknowledged that each of the institutions or agencies that delivered Adult ESL had particular areas of expertise to support clients. This diversity is perceived as providing learners with a wide range of options to meet their specific needs. Respondents see delivery of ESL by multiple service providers as positive. In addition to the diversity of program deliverers, virtually all informants found that the delivery model provided for a wide geographic range of services, a significant variety of program types, and well trained, dedicated and experienced instructors.

Flexibility

“One size does not fit all, different service providers and a wide range of programs helps to meet client needs.”

Program flexibility in terms of types of courses offered, curriculum content, class schedules, and locations are seen by all respondents as positive features of the system. Programs are client-centred and service providers have some flexibility to tailor programs or shift the emphasis in the curriculum to meet changes in client needs and/or immigration trends. ELSA respondents reported having flexibility, within the ELSA program framework, to adjust classroom instruction. College respondents can develop a range of programs that meet the mandates of that institution.

Integration and Settlement

“ELSA programs help integrate students into Canadian culture; it teaches them real English and facilitates networking and making friends.”

The ELSA program has the goal of integrating recent immigrants into their new environment. It includes Canadian content, cultural information and opportunities for the learner to gain confidence and familiarity with essential daily activities such as shopping, banking, etc. It is seen as providing a safe environment for learners and assisting clients in accessing other immigrant support services.

College-based ESL Delivery

College-based ESL programs offer a wide range of levels which make it possible for learners to advance through the system from basic ESL to academic programs. The College environment provides access for the ESL learner to broader student services such as academic counselling, libraries and computer labs, and supports, and facilitates opportunities to interact with other College students who are native speakers. The Deans and Directors of Developmental Education work together to address issues of common concern and encourage and support faculty in the development of innovations in ESL service delivery.

ESL Articulation

The Articulation Process has made it possible for Colleges to rationalize course content in a number of ESL programs across institutions. Many respondents saw this as a strength in that this common understanding of course levels is useful when learners wish to transfer to another institution or move into other programs within a College. The College Deans and Directors feel that the Articulation process assures quality assurance

because institutions have had to define and refine the descriptions of their programs in order to communicate this information across the College system.

Assessment and Evaluation

The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) or Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) is used as the standardized assessment tool for all ELSA programs. Centralized in the urban centres, assessment is becoming more accessible in smaller regions because administrators and instructors are being trained and certified to administer the CLBPT in the Northern and Interior Regions. The CLBA makes it possible to have levels consistent across the program. A number of respondents identified the newly developed exit test for ELSA level 3 and the Performance Measurement Framework that are currently being introduced, as positive steps toward being accountable for learner and program outcomes.

“Students appreciate knowing where they stand in relation to others and these assessment tools (i.e. CLBA and CLBPT) provide students and instructors with a measurable starting point.”

Colleges use a variety of language assessment tools many of which have been developed in-house. Learners are evaluated based on criteria developed at each institution for the different programs offered.

Free Tuition

The ELSA program is tuition free and open to all immigrants and refugees who test below CLB Level 5. This is regarded by most respondents as a strong aspect of the program. The lack of tuition fees in ELSA removes barriers for many people, especially women, to participating in an ESL class. Tuition free literacy classes are funded by AVED for learners in College-based programs.

Age Range of Learners

All ESL programs in BC are open to a wide age range of learners from 19 years to seniors. This is seen as being inclusive and providing opportunities for adults of any age to access ESL classes.

Child Minding

MCAWS' funding and support of child minding programs are regarded by all ELSA respondents as extremely beneficial to children and families, enabling the adults to take language classes while increasing the readiness of children for school. Respondents expressed the hope that this aspect of the ELSA program would continue to be supported. Colleges also provide some child minding spaces which are open to all students as space permits.

ELSA Net

ELSA Providers all praised the ELSA Net as the organization that has brought providers together, enhanced sharing of information, facilitated the provision of professional development in various regions, encouraged coordinated activities, and spearheaded the

development of performance measures, exit tests, and support materials. ELSA Net has its own website. It has developed a policy and administrative manual which sets guidelines for organizations delivering ELSA programs.

Quality of Instructors

There was high consensus among respondents that, in general, ESL instructors are well qualified, experienced, professional and committed. They are seen by many as providing a bridge for their learners into the larger community and Canadian culture. Respondents indicated that there is a move toward hiring instructors that have completed TESL training programs and/or who are TESL Canada certified. Many instructors teach in both ELSA and College-based programs which provides a consistent quality to the instruction in all programs.

Quality of the Learners

ESL learners across the entire system are regarded by instructors and administrators as highly motivated and accomplished. Respondents pointed out that a high percentage of new immigrants are arriving with job skills and professions which make them important potential contributors to the economy of BC. This is supported by immigration data.

5.2 Perceived Gaps in ESL Service Delivery

Respondents repeatedly identified a number of specific gaps which they perceived as existing in the ESL Service delivery model. There was a high degree of consensus among the diverse service providers with regard to the following gaps:

Literacy Level Classes

Respondents and available data indicate there are insufficient numbers of ELSA Literacy classes and Level 1 classes. While this need has been identified by Western ESL Services and is evident from the current wait lists, this need has not been sufficiently addressed. Service providers indicated that Literacy classes are more costly to run because they require smaller class size and it takes longer for learners to complete the program. Given a finite amount of funds, providers indicated they would need to drop other classes to be able to afford delivering more Literacy and Level I classes. Some concern was expressed that if a provider applied for Literacy classes they would be seen as being too expensive and MCAWS would not renew their funding. Respondents also identified an insufficient number of instructors who are qualified to teach Literacy. They called for more teacher training for Literacy instructors, and improved literacy materials and resources.

Post Level 3 ELSA

ELSA and College-based respondents reported that immigrants who arrive in Canada and are ineligible for ELSA because their language levels are too high still need settlement and integration services. Most of the higher level classes at the Colleges are primarily English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and are not based on settlement needs. In addition, tuition and ancillary fees such as application, registration, and student fees for these classes were identified by respondents as presenting barriers for immigrants who

are newly arrived and ineligible for ELSA. ABESAP funds are available to offset tuition fees, however, some respondents indicated that need exceeded the availability of funds. (See also, sections 5.3.3 Funding and 5.3.5 Access.)

Respondents from both programs repeatedly indicated that learners who complete Level 3 have insufficient language skills for any employment beyond entry level. The language level at ELSA 3 is also too low for entry into English for Academic Purposes which requires a CLB Level 6 and a minimum of CLB Level 7/8 for entry into English for Work programs.

“ELSA is basic survival English, people need more than that to move on.”

The gap between the exit level from ELSA 3 and the required levels for academic or job training necessitates learners spending considerable additional time in general ESL classes (CLB Levels 5 and 6). These ESL classes, at the higher level, are only available at the Colleges.

There was high consensus among all respondents that the exit level of ELSA program should be raised to the equivalent of CLB Level 7 for speaking and listening, and CLB Level 6 for reading and writing. (Similar to Ontario and Manitoba.)

Learner differences

Respondents indicated that learner differences are not sufficiently recognized by the current ESL delivery model either in the college programs or in ELSA. A number of examples repeatedly cited include:

- More highly educated immigrants are arriving who may need a shorter time in general English language classes but require additional language support related to their professions.
- Skilled immigrants require more combined skills programs that deliver language instruction with work-related training.
- Seniors learn at different rates and have different integration needs than younger learners. Seniors often find that the length of classes and times available are not suitable for them. There are no classes for seniors only. Seniors often have low levels of education, difficulty travelling long distances to class, and impaired hearing and vision. There was consensus in all areas that seniors required more specialized classes, with shorter hours and fewer days a week.
- Older teens who are late arrivals into the school system, who are unable to complete their Dogwood Diploma (High School Graduation Diploma) or are deemed ineligible for high school because of their age, often do not have sufficient English to qualify for ABE programs. There are limited ESL bridge programs to help these learners make a transition to ABE or other suitable classes. The ESL Consortium of the BCSTA has identified this as an important gap in service.
- ESL learners with special needs include individuals who have hearing or sight impairments, and learning or mental disabilities. All respondents reported that these learners were not well served anywhere in the province. Learners who are deaf have

some limited services in Vancouver but no where else in the province. There are no specialized services for people with learning disabilities or mental problems. Further these are no assessment facilities to determine the level or extent of these disabilities and there is no specialized training for instructors to deal with such learners. The issue was also raised by the Deans and Directors of Development Education and everyone concurred about the lack of services for special needs learners

Support Services

Respondents raised the importance of support services. In addition to the need for increased child minding spaces which has already been mentioned, service providers and learners both identified the need for more extensive transportation support, and increased access to counselling for learners. For example, respondents indicated that at the time of the ELSA assessment, it would be beneficial to learners to have counselling about language requirements for specific jobs to enable them to set realistic goals for career planning. Colleges provide academic and career counselling, however, learners indicated the need for counselling to address their specific language, employment, and settlement and adjustment needs.

Further, while individual agencies may provide information on their particular ESL services, respondents spoke to the lack of coordinated information available from government to inform immigrants about education and training options available to them. A very limited amount of information is available in different languages to reach diverse immigrant groups.

ELSA for Naturalized Canadian Citizens

Both learners and instructors believe that there is a need for ESL classes for newcomers who have become Canadian citizens but have not yet acquired sufficient English language skills because they stayed home to raise children or needed to go to work immediately upon arrival. Many of these learners still need settlement and adjustment services or lower level English classes. They are not eligible for ELSA in urban areas, however some do qualify in rural areas. This was perceived by respondents as being inequitable.

Labour market focused language training

Limited availability of labour market language training at the Colleges was repeatedly identified by all types of service providers and learners throughout the province.

College-based respondents indicated that the provision of job skills courses is dependent on changing institutional capabilities and funding priorities. Thus some of these courses are designed, developed and delivered only once, while others are offered irregularly. They indicated that the design, development and delivery of combined skills and adjunct courses are high in cost because they require an ESL instructor and a content expert instructor, specialized equipment, and appropriate classroom space. Respondents indicated that the number of combined-skills courses have been reduced because of funding cuts. The FTEs reported by Colleges also reflect a reduction in the Combined Skills Training category.

Respondents at the Colleges further pointed out that the combined skills courses are also expensive for learners because it takes an ESL learner 3-5 months longer to complete the training and requires full time attendance. This creates a significant financial burden for students.

As this ESL Services Review was under way, the contractors were informed that the Ministry of Human Resources had just funded three immigrant-serving agencies in the Lower Mainland to provide English as a Second Language Training for Jobs Programs for British Columbians on income assistance who also had language barriers. The program will provide short-term ESL instruction and work experience needed for specific jobs. Minister of Human Resources, Murrey Coell stated, “*This new program will help remove these barriers (i.e. lack of work skills as well as language barriers) so clients can look forward to leaving income assistance and finding good jobs as quickly as possible.*” This program, while limited in scope, responds to the gap identified by participants in this study. Participants identified an urgent need for the development of more combined language and skill-based programs that would enhance employability.

5.3 Identification of Major Issues

The majority of respondents did not have a view of the total ESL delivery system and could only speak to their particular experiences as a service provider or learner in a particular environment. However, they independently identified many similar issues.

The following are the issues most frequently identified by respondents:

5.3.1 Coordination/Communication

The single most critical issue identified by both ELSA and College-based respondents is the lack of coordination and communication in the current delivery system. In describing the lack of coordination, respondents used words such as:

disjointed, fragmented, incomplete, piece-meal, patch work, delivered in silos.

Respondents provided numerous and repeated examples of lack of coordination and communication throughout both the ELSA program and College-based ESL and between these programs. Comments are not listed in any ranked priority.

- There is currently little or no coordination between MCAWS and AVED with regard to criteria for funding, assessment, curriculum, or outcomes accountability measures. Respondents do not see any coordinated mechanisms to address gaps or issues as they impact the entire ESL system.
- ESL at the Colleges and ELSA programs have different fiscal years. This impacts planning and reporting for the entire system. There is no mechanism for joint planning with relevant ministries and service providers where immigration trends and other key issues can be communicated and collectively addressed.

- With few exceptions, the system does not provide for a seamless movement of learners from ELSA Level 3 to higher levels. This is further compounded by the fact that ELSA is free of charge, while College delivered ESL has fees attached.
- Movement from an ESL program to an Academic or Skill Based program, either within a college or between institutions, often results in learners being re-evaluated and required to take additional ESL training. This creates an added financial burden for learners. Respondents expressed concern that there appears to be mistrust between institutions about assessment despite the Articulation process.

A college instructor expressed this concern as follows:

“A more transparent and seamless public system for learning ESL in BC is required. By transparent, I mean it should be very easy for learners to find out about the full range and variety of course offerings at all possible levels so that they know the pathway to take to realize their own goals. By seamless, I mean that students should be able to confidently move through programs knowing their credentials would definitely be recognized no matter what institution they go to.”

- There is a limited communication network among the different service providers delivering ELSA and College-based ESL programs. Respondents identified a need for enhanced partnerships among the different service providers within these two major sectors.
- The need for partnership development by the two ministries and ESL service providers with professional associations, business and industry sectors was also considered critical to facilitate a smooth transition for learners on the path between English language training, job skills training and employment. Respondents suggested establishing a consortium or council with representatives from all of these groups.
- Communication between MCAWS and ELSA service providers was perceived as being unclear. There are frequent staff changes in MCAWS and there is lack of continuity and clarity about expectations.
- AVED is seen as playing a limited coordination role in the College ESL programs. The Ministry determines the funding formula, informs the system of new government initiatives, and facilitates the ESL Articulation Committee process. Information from the Ministry is generally conveyed through the Deans and Directors of Developmental Education Programs, who in turn, relay concerns from the field back to the government.
- Each of the Colleges develops assessment tools, materials and curricula, but at present there is no process in place for designing a common assessment tool or system-wide curriculum guides.
- Each Ministry has different administrative and reporting requirements. Respondents indicated that ELSA has many more administrative requirements and is much more time consuming.
- Ministry policies (both AVED and MCAWS) related to Adult ESL program delivery that do exist do not appear to be effectively communicated to service providers. When

respondents were asked to comment about policies, they were unaware that any policies existed.

5.3.2 Funding

ELSA and College-based respondents all raised funding as a critical issue using such terms as: *under-funded, inequitable, insufficient funding, unstable funding*.

- ELSA and College-based respondents perceived that there is a lack of transparency regarding what funding is available, who receives what amount, and how it is used. Information about funding is not being clearly communicated throughout the system.
- Funding cuts have impacted organizations differently. Colleges have reported the need to increase their fees substantially in the last two years.
- With the current direction of ELSA funding, Colleges are increasingly unable to afford the delivery of ELSA programs.
- The status of ABESAP funding was unclear. Respondents perceived that ABESAP funding had been reduced. AVED reported that in 2003/04, \$1 M was added to the \$2.7 M previously allocated for ABESAP. The only eligible cost removed by government was child care.
- A number of ELSA service providers reported that while they maintained the same number of classes, they have reduced the number of hours of instruction per week. This extends the length of time it will take learners to complete the training and ultimately increases the cost per learner.
- The yearly funding cycle for ELSA results in instability in the system because providers are never sure they will be funded the following year. This makes it difficult to retain instructors and decreases the ability of institutions to do any long-range planning. In smaller communities, respondents indicated that contracts have been signed late forcing them to begin a program year without an important amount of their funding in place. Agencies such as Immigrant Services Societies operate on tight budgets and do not have the option of covering ELSA costs from other budget lines. ELSA respondents called for a stable three-year funding cycle.
- ELSA respondents were concerned that new “open solicitation process” to apply for ELSA funding will increase workload and competition among service providers. Service providers are unclear what expectations they will need to meet to receive funding.
- AVED has established that 925 hours of instruction is equivalent to one FTE for ESL while other college programs require significantly fewer hours (e.g., 525 hours for one FTE of French). This provides a disincentive for Colleges to deliver ESL because for the same amount of money more instruction can be delivered in non ESL courses.
- Since 2001, there has been a shift in funding policy at AVED toward Block Funding based on a three-year service plan. As a result of this shift, College Boards now have the autonomy to decide what educational programs should be offered at each institution. One of the priorities in the Ministry’s Service Plan is to “*maintain access to developmental programs by requiring institutions to continue to offer ABE/ESL/ASE courses to students.*” This is outlined in the budget letters sent from

AVED to each of the Colleges. However, there has already been some evidence of cutbacks in ESL services. A number of Colleges have reported increases in their tuition fees. For example, Vancouver Community College's ESL Division reported a decrease from 2300 full time spaces in 1999/2000 to 1300 full time spaces in 2003 and an increase of 97% in tuition fees in a one year period. Note: AVED has recently introduced Developmental Program delivery targets for the Colleges.

- The Colleges indicated that their ESL classes need a certain number of students to make it financially viable to hold a class. This is a particular issue in rural areas and smaller communities where there are small numbers of immigrants. This has resulted in many colleges actively recruiting International Students, who pay higher fees. In some cases, this enables the colleges to support the delivery of ESL to community/domestic students. (See also section below on Rural Issues.)

5.3.3 Assessment

- Assessment in the Lower Mainland for ELSA is centralized, “*one stop shopping*” and is seen by respondents as efficient and accurate. This is supported by data from Western ESL Services, for Lower Mainland, which indicates that only 2% of the clients assessed have their levels re-designated shortly after intake. Assessment outside the Lower Mainland for ELSA is not centralized. Respondents indicated that there are long wait list for testing especially for evening classes since some assessors are only available days, as well, there are too few assessors in some regions. An independent assessor is responsible for five sites on Vancouver Island. The assessor visits a site when there are three or more people requiring assessment. In many cases, the learner is already in the class before the assessment is carried out.
- The issue of long waits for ELSA assessment in the Northern and Interior regions is being addressed by training and certifying administrators and instructors to administer the short version of the CLBA known as CLBPT (Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test). This is recognized by participants as being an important improvement since previously learners, who had to wait long periods (up to 6 months) to be assessed, were often lost to the system.
- Every College administers its own assessment. Assessments from other institutions are, in general, not accepted when students transfer to another program and re-assessments are continually occurring in the system. Assessment tools across the College system vary and to-date, the CLBA is only used to assess ELSA learners. Several of the College Deans and Directors indicated that they are considering purchasing an ESL Assessment Tool produced in the United States called “ACUPLACER”. Vancouver Community College has produced a placement test which is available for purchase by other Colleges. Some respondents in the College system suggested that all College assessment tests should be coordinated with CLB to enhance referrals throughout the system.
- Assessment tools (both for ELSA and College-based programs) determine language skills for entry into the ESL system, however, respondents from both programs indicated that broader learner needs for settlement and adjustment information,

academic or skills upgrading, and employment goal setting are not being adequately addressed in this entry process. Providers and learners identified the need for more counselling support, and career and employment information as part of assessment and referral. (The Province of Alberta co-funds Assessment Centres, with the Federal Government, that integrate language testing and academic and career counselling in a single location.)

5.3.4 Access

Respondents repeatedly identified a number of barriers to access ESL programs:

- Information about ESL programs is regarded as a significant factor that facilitates access. Both ELSA and College-based respondents emphasized that there is a lack of information about what ESL program options are available and how to access them. Learners repeatedly mentioned that they did not have sufficient information to make viable choices. There is a Directory of ESL Courses in British Columbia which ELSA Net recently revised and updated with financial assistance from MCAWS. This directory is posted on the ELSA Net Website and 12,000 hard copies have been distributed to ELSA providers, immigrant-serving agencies and libraries across the province. However, respondents, particularly in the North and Interior regions called for the Ministries to take a more active role in promoting ESL programs. Some respondents suggested the development of an ESL website that would provide coordinated information on ESL courses at all levels, support services, and job training.

“A website is needed that would give new immigrants and new Canadians information about ESL classes, settlement services and job training. At least part of the message should be multilingual.”

- Child minding is available in 28 ELSA programs across the province. A number of different concerns were expressed about child minding in the ELSA program:
 - There is a need for an increased number of child minding spaces. ELSA programs that offer child minding have longer wait lists, however, data to verify this was not readily accessible from STaRS.
 - There is an inequitable distribution of spaces.
 - Lack of child minding is perceived as creating barriers for attendance, especially for women.
 - The provision of adult classes is not being maximized in centres that do have child care facilities.

While many Colleges have child care centres, access is perceived to be limited by available space, age criteria, and cost.

“I had to stay home one year before going to English class because my child was too young for the College day care program and I had no one else to care for him.”(i.e. Child was two, program started at 3 years of age.

- Many of the ELSA programs have limited or no funds to offset transportation costs for clients. This is particularly a problem for people living outside of Vancouver who have to travel from the suburbs to find an available class. In rural areas, there is often no bus transportation and respondents indicated there are limited options available to enable them to access classes.
- ELSA is free of cost but there are fees for most other ESL courses offered at the Colleges. These fees are variable across the College system. This has resulted in learners misrepresenting their abilities so they can access ELSA free of charge or seeking access to ABE course in school districts or Colleges.
- Learners, in all the College-based focus groups identified concerns about the increased tuition fees. This was substantiated by the Deans and Directors, many of whom reported that fees have more than doubled in their institutions in the last year. This is a significant issue since most of the learners indicated that they do not have employment income to offset these costs. (Less than 5% of the learners interviewed for this report had any employment.) While some financial assistance for ESL training is provided by the ABESAP fund, as previously indicated, respondents perceived that this funding was insufficient to cover the needs for tuition, books and transportation. Vancouver Community College, for example, reported using ABESAP funding to support tuition only up to 80% with learners expected to pay 20%, in order to provide more support for a greater number of learners.
- There is also a reported lack of coordination with other government departments who introduce policies that affect the ESL learner. For example, new income assistance criteria limit the amount of time people can receive assistance before they are required to find work. In most cases, those who do not have English language skills are given insufficient time to learn English before they are cut off assistance. This issue was raised frequently in the smaller communities in the North and Interior. Further, learners indicated that criteria for financial assistance frequently change and are applied inconsistently which creates confusion and is an added burden for them.
- Naturalized Canadian Citizens are eligible for ELSA in rural areas but not in urban areas. This makes the system inequitable for new Canadians in the larger centres. This has been discussed in the Section on Perceived Gaps in ESL Service Delivery.
- Difficulties in access to literacy classes were identified. The demand for literacy classes exceeds the availability of space and both ELSA and College-based providers expresses the concern that because literacy classes are more expensive to deliver, there is a disincentive to fund them.
- Respondents throughout the system identified the need to enhance access for learners with special needs such as: separate classes for seniors; bridge programs for late arrival high school students; and accommodations for people with disabilities.

- Respondents in the ELSA program identified the need to improve access by delivering ESL classes year-round and increasing flexibility of class scheduling to accommodate a wider-range of client needs, e.g., shift workers.

5.3.5 School District Continuing Education ESL

Learners not eligible for ELSA but seeking a free course are sometimes able to enroll in Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes offered by the School District Continuing Education Programs. These classes were intended for Canadian citizens wanting to obtain their grade 12 English equivalency. These ABE classes were not intended to meet the settlement or employment language needs of the ESL learner. Most School Districts only admit ESL learners who qualify for high school completion. However, respondents indicated that many immigrants are taking ABE courses offered by School Districts.

Eligibility for Adult Basic Education (ABE) provided by the School Districts Continuing Education Departments and the role of the School Districts in providing adult ESL were perceived by many respondents as being unclear and requiring clarification with the Ministry of Education.

5.3.6 Quality of Service and Accountability

Eligible Hours for ELSA

- The ELSA program is largely time-based. Currently, the allocation of hours for Literacy is 1100 hours, Level 1- 900 hours, Level 2 – 700 hours, and Level 3 - 350 hours. In certain circumstances, an extension of 200 hours may be granted to enhance competency levels. There was a high degree of consensus among all ELSA providers that the number of eligible hours does not bring most learners to a level that would enable them to access more training or a job, other than entry level employment.
- Respondents indicated that Literacy learners require more than 1100 hours to reach their learning goal, rendering it difficult for many literacy learners to advance to higher levels. Respondents called for a review of eligible hours allotted for each level, and in particular, extending the hours for Literacy.
- Respondents further pointed out that some learners do not get to level 3 because their entitlement hours have been utilized leaving them with very limited language skills and virtually no employment options.

Delivery modes

- While there are a range of class schedules available for both ELSA and College-based programs: full-time, part-time, day and evening classes, these options are not available in all locations. There are very limited options for week-end classes, summer programs, drop-in classes, self-study, tutorials, workshops, mentors, shorter and more intense courses, and/or distance learning to provide greater access for people with family or work responsibilities.

“Program schedules don’t account for learners who do seasonal work”.

- Respondents also indicated that a lengthy break between class sessions (e.g. ending in March and commencing in September) results in significant language loss and delays learning progress for students. While this type of break was intended to accommodate seasonal workers, many others are impacted negatively, particularly women with small children. Respondents felt that there was need for more creative solutions such as those mentioned above.
- Respondents reported that continuous intake in ELSA classes causes difficulties for instruction, learner integration and learner progress. Either classes are continuously going backward to assist the new learner to catch-up or the new learner is left to fill in his gaps in knowledge on his own.
- Respondents acknowledged that while multi-level classes are a reality, particularly in smaller communities, these classes are unsatisfactory for learners and difficult to teach. Learners learn at very different rates, have different needs, and there is insufficient time for a teacher to give everyone individual attention. Evaluation in these classes is very difficult as well. Respondents called for better professional development for teachers of multi-level classes and improved materials to assist classroom instruction.

ESL Provided by Colleges

- Many of the Deans and Directors identified a decrease in the number of domestic students in ESL classes over the past year. There was some speculation that this was related to the rise in fees. Some of the larger Colleges have been able to maintain separate classes for domestic students, others integrate domestic students with International Students.
- The majority of the Colleges have become reliant on International Student fees to maintain support for the ESL programs. This is particularly true in the smaller communities that have fewer numbers of immigrants. Where International Students are the majority, programs are designed to meet their needs and expectations which, in general, means courses heavily weighted toward Academic Preparation. For the most part, these programs do not meet the needs of the majority of immigrants who are often older, have family responsibilities and who may have already completed their post secondary education. Little attention is paid to the needs for settlement, integration or job skills in these courses. (See also section below on Rural Issues.)
- Some colleges, in the Interior and Northern regions have policies that to a large extent preclude immigrants or “domestic students” from registering for courses until as many seats as possible are filled by International Students. In one college, it was the instructors who became concerned and lobbied for equal access for domestic learners until the College policy was changed. Larger urban colleges have been able to handle this issue differently because of the larger number of immigrants and new Canadians.

ELSA Service Providers

Which service providers should be contracted to provide ELSA was raised in several focus groups and interviews. There is evidence of considerable competition and tension among providers:

- The position of the College ELSA providers is that they have highly trained and qualified instructors, well developed curricula, access to up-to-date materials and equipment and can provide a *potentially* seamless entry into other College ESL programs, higher level academic programs or job skills training post ELSA 3. The College system has credibility with learners. It is perceived by some to be a safe environment that enables learners to participate in College life and interact with native speakers.
- The Directors of School District Continuing Education Departments pointed out that providing ELSA in local, neighbourhood schools helped parents to become more familiar with the Canadian school system, offered classes within easy geographic access of people's homes and was a safer, more friendly environment for learning for those who had lower levels of education, particularly women, who might otherwise be too intimidated to go to a college.
- Respondents from NGOs indicated that they were the only ones who could offer learners access to integration and settlement services as part of the learning environment. These agencies generally have multi-lingual staff and are able to assist clients to access other services in the community.
- Many respondents expressed very strong opinions that the colleges were heavily subsidizing their ELSA programs due to the fact that the cost of delivery is very expensive because of collective agreements.

Curriculum

- There is currently no government support for development of common curriculum guidelines for ELSA or College-based ESL programs. Colleges have larger budgets than other providers to design curriculum and collective agreements provide instructors with time off to work on curriculum projects. Smaller agencies and immigrant-serving organizations do not have sufficient money to support curriculum development and individual instructors are generally producing curriculum materials as they teach.
- While respondents generally indicated that they prefer to have the flexibility in developing their own curriculum, they also acknowledged that this is not an efficient use of funding, time or expertise. It was clear from respondents' comments that a prescribed curriculum would not be viewed favourably. There was some indication that the development of curriculum guidelines could enhance service delivery consistency and effectiveness. Curriculum guidelines could include a philosophy of program delivery, learning outcomes, resources and materials while still enabling flexibility in meeting the diverse needs of learners.

- A suggestion was made by some College respondents that Centres of Excellence in Combined Skills, English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes should be established which would serve as hubs for research and development of programs.

Exit Tests

An exit test for ELSA 3 has been developed by the ELSA Program Department at Vancouver Community College. The test and a training video have been distributed to all ELSA providers. Some workshops have been held on how to design classroom instruction to assist learners to be prepared for the test. Respondents, who have reviewed the test, all indicate that:

- It is very time consuming to administer.
- Since it is intended to give to learners as they become ready to exit Level 3, testing could conceivably be taking place for different individuals several times during a given session.
- Each component needs to be done on separate days and the speaking test requires one on one testing. *“This is going to be a logistical nightmare.”*
- Several respondents expressed concern that they would need to teach to the test and not to the needs of the learners. *“Since there is no standardized curriculum, how will that affect the results of the test?”*
- Some respondents expressed concern that no field testing had been done outside of VCC.

At the time of writing this report, the use of the ELSA exit test is optional for service providers.

Exit tests for College-based ESL programs are developed by individual institutions. There is no consistency regarding exit testing since all programs have different curricula and end goals. Some College respondents suggested that exit criteria for all learners across the system should be based on CLB levels. This would enable learners to know their own level of achievement, and institutions would have a reliable measure of student language ability. The necessity for re-evaluation would be eliminated or reduced.

Rural Issues

Respondents indicated that limited resources for ELSA service providers in rural areas frequently means that one person (often an instructor) is responsible for recruitment, assessments and preparing the contract proposal, as well as, other administrative tasks. This results in less time being available for curriculum development, lesson planning, and meeting the needs of individual learners which impacts negatively on the quality of service.

“The key funding pressure is being able to write an acceptable proposal (this is not in my job description). I was hired as an ESL instructor but now I am spending 50% of my time doing administrative tasks.”

ELSA service providers in rural areas and smaller communities indicated that they experience difficulties in recruiting the minimum number of learners required by

MCAWS for a class to continue. This is due to the fact that there are smaller numbers of immigrants in some areas and also because of the lack of child minding, support services and flexibility in class schedules. Respondents reported that in some cases, this means eligible students cannot attend class.

“More flexibility is needed in rural areas for program delivery, allowing students to go to work and go to school.”

There is a perception in the Northern and Interior regions of the province that urban centres are favoured in terms of ELSA program funding and there is inequitable distribution of resources. Respondents in smaller communities implied that the model for ELSA delivery is based on the urban reality and does not take into account the differences that exist in their regions.

Deans and Directors of the Colleges from smaller communities pointed out that they do not have the “*economy of scale*” that exists in larger urban areas. Small classes are more expensive to deliver and therefore there is a disincentive for Colleges to support ESL delivery when numbers are limited. They called for funding strategies for both ELSA and College-based ESL that would acknowledge this reality.

Qualifications of Instructors

As indicated, virtually all respondents pointed to the high quality, extensive experience, and commitment of the majority of instructors as a major strength in the delivery model. Most Colleges prefer a Master’s degree, completed or in progress, for their ESL programs. However, there is a wide variation of qualifications accepted in the private sector and by most of the NGO’s.

Many service providers reported moving towards hiring new instructors that have ESL teacher qualifications and a TESL Canada Certificate. The TESL Canada Certification program recognizes different levels of ESL teacher training and experience. Certificates can be upgraded as instructors gain more experience or complete further training such as Masters degrees. These certificates have high recognition value by most providers and many institutions require proof of certification prior to hiring. Respondents indicated that the province has given no formal recognition to this certification process and there are no provincial standards for instructor qualifications. In rural areas, respondents reported that it is sometimes difficult to find qualified ESL instructors and some flexibility is required.

Many instructors have to split their employment between a college program and a private school or NGO in order to have full time work. Despite the fact that they bring the same qualifications to each job, they reported a significant discrepancy in terms of benefits and salaries which range from less than \$30.00 to \$70.00 per hour of instruction depending on the service provider.

Professional Development

- On-going professional development, funded equitably, across the province was seen as an important requirement by all administrators and instructors across the system to maintain quality of instruction. However, professional development opportunities are left up to each service provider which results in a wide discrepancy in what is being offered to instructors across the province.
- Colleges have collective agreements that provide a specified number of days or weeks for paid professional development. Some of this is provided in-house or individual instructors may be funded to attend ESL conferences or courses outside their institution.
- ELSA Net has been funded by MCAWS to provide professional development in the various regions once or twice a year. The majority of instructors felt this was very helpful. Smaller ELSA agencies have less money for professional development. Respondents reported that some ELSA service providers redirected professional development funds to other parts of the program and thus, no additional professional development was provided.
- Respondents suggested a need for professional development across the entire system to enhance instructional skills for specialized ESL courses such as Literacy, workplace training, and standardized test preparation (e.g. TOEFL, LPI, IELTS).

Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Canadian Language Benchmarks are not consistently applied to program curricula throughout the province. The ELSA Program purports to use the CLB as a guideline for instruction but there is no standardized curriculum guide to ensure consistency across providers. The College ESL Articulation Guide has assigned Benchmark levels to most courses. However, the Benchmarks are not commonly used to inform curriculum or assessment for these programs, at this time. There has been some discussion about moving toward a more Benchmarked system in the future. Many respondents indicated that if the CLB were more widely applied, learners would be able to move seamlessly from program to program because everyone would understand the meaning of the level assigned. Several respondents pointed to a need to benchmark various jobs so that learners could know what language level is required for particular trades or professions and work toward that. Other jurisdictions such as Manitoba and Alberta have done extensive work in designating benchmark requirements for a range of trades.

Articulation Process

The Colleges view the ESL Articulation Committee as an important forum for institutions to rationalize their course offerings across levels, discuss issues of common concern and provide for learners (at least potentially) ease of transfer from one institution to another. A number of key issues were identified:

- To-date, each of the Colleges administers its own assessments and evaluations. Common tools have not been developed.

- Learners frequently are required to be re-evaluated when moving from Department to Department within a College and from program to program across the College system. A number of respondents indicated that this may be related to a level of distrust among institutions, despite the articulation process, and may be rooted in the competition for ESL delivery funding.
- The CLB Levels are not yet common currency among Colleges and administrators and instructors continue to refer to whatever course name or level has been in use at a particular college.

College-based respondents supported the work of the ESL Articulation Committee and wanted to see a more effective implementation of CLB course designations across the College system.

Accountability and Performance Measures

With regard to the ELSA program, a number of accountability processes have been put in place such as the application of STaRS, the introduction of the Level 3 exit test, and the development of the Performance Measurement Framework. ELSA respondents all recognized the need for greater accountability and welcomed it, however many of them are still not familiar with the Performance Measurement Framework and expressed some frustration regarding what was expected of them. They also questioned whether the identified outcomes were realistic. While there is leeway in what methods are used to collect the data and how it needs to be reported, they indicated that it should be recognized that these accountability measures take time and resources to carry out. Several people expressed concern that there is great stress on the system to comply without sufficient training, support or additional funding resources to assist providers to be accountable in an efficient and effective manner.

“We are producing information but we don’t know what the government thinks about it. It goes down to a deep black hole. There should be some leadership to give feedback on these reports.”

In terms of College-based ESL, a budget letter was sent to each College expressing AVED’s commitment to Developmental Programs, including ESL, and encouraging the institutions to meet the needs of those students. Further AVED has recently introduced an accountability framework to ensure that Developmental Program delivery will be maintained throughout the College system, and baseline targets for delivery have been established.

All Colleges provide exit testing and in some institutions, students receive Certificates of course completion which indicate their language level, although there is no common tool to evaluate ESL learners across the Colleges.

There is a reporting requirement for public post secondary institutions that includes accountability for ESL delivery. However, information on ESL student outcomes and student profiles are not easily accessible from AVED Central Data Warehouse. While

AVED produces the Student Outcome Survey, this is carried out every 2-3 years and provides a snapshot of a sample of the student population.

5.3.7 Other Issues

STaRS

STaRS is a data base that has recently been instituted by MCAWS and all ELSA service providers are required to report client data using this system. At the time of writing this report, STaRS is used to register learners' names, monitor hours of instruction, exit dates, and dates of arrival. ELSA providers recognized that STaRS is undergoing development. They acknowledged that it is crucial to have a data base. However, many indicated that they are still having difficulty using this data base and find that it is not particularly user friendly. *"It is time consuming and frustrating."* Some agencies indicated that they have hired additional support staff to assist with the STaRS system.

Respondents indicated that the Ministry does not feed back information to them. Reports are not being produced by the system to help service providers manage the information and some of the service providers are still maintaining their own data collection system as a back-up.

"We don't know if the Ministry is satisfied with the data they are getting and we don't know what reports are being produced."

MCAWS is in the process of working out the problems with the STaRS system and has established an advisory group to address the concerns of providers.

5.4 Input from Learners

Six focus groups were conducted with 67 learners across the province. Two focus groups were held with immigrant-serving agency ELSA clients and 4 focus groups were held with learners in the Colleges who were currently enrolled in either ELSA or other ESL programs. The focus groups took place in Nanaimo, Prince George, Kelowna and Vancouver. The sample did not include ELSA learners in school district programs.

Learners were asked to provide qualitative information about their views of the system by responding to questions about their reasons for studying English, how well their classes were preparing them to reach their goals and what things they would like to see changed to make the program better for them. Prior to each session, learners were asked to complete a profile sheet (see Appendix 2) which provided the consultants with a demographic snapshot of the learners.

This sample included a mix of males and females ages 19 -50+ and represented individuals who have been in the country from two weeks to eight years. Countries of origin varied widely including: Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Iran, China, Cambodia, Croatia, Haiti, Vietnam, Thailand, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines, Columbia, Sudan, Japan, Romania, Ethiopia, Peru, etc. The classes were multilingual and multicultural and there

was a wide range of educational backgrounds. On average, each focus group consisted of about 12 learners.

The most significant characteristic of the participants in these sessions was their high levels of education and range of professional skills. In their home countries they were teachers, accountants, engineers, computer programmers, health professionals, business people, and professional musicians, as well, several had been University students. In Canada, the majority (over 90%) were unemployed. A few respondents reported being employed part-time in fast food restaurants, building management, family day care, and resident care.

Learners were asked how they had chosen the particular program or institution in which to study English. Most learners indicated that they had heard about the various classes from friends or family members. Some reported having seen a brochure or flyer. Word of mouth seems to be a popular form of communication within ethnic communities for making education choices. Those who chose college programs indicated that the Colleges have a good reputation, and had high quality teachers. They realized that they could continue on with their education by moving from ESL to academic programs within the College. The ELSA program participants had chosen this program because it was free and in many cases because of the child minding component.

When asked about waiting time to enter a program, most learners (both ELSA and College-based) reported having to wait very short periods of time.

Learners were very clear about their need to study English to participate in Canadian society, to become Canadian citizens, to get jobs, and to make friends and feel at home.

When asked how their ESL classes supported these goals they provided the following examples:

- ESL courses help them meet people from other cultures and make friends and get along with people who come from different countries. (all respondents)
- In College classes, some domestic students felt it was beneficial to be with International students.
- College students are serious and work hard.
- The College has a good reputation.
- College ESL courses provide practice in all four skills (Reading, writing, listening speaking).
- College reading courses are useful because they teach about history, the law, food and customs.
- College writing courses help learn how to organize ideas and learning idioms and slang is very useful.
- College ESL courses can help prepare a person for University transfer
- It is helpful to know that other people have the same difficulties with the language. This encourages us. (all respondents)

- ELSA classes have free day care. The children are learning while the parents are learning.
- The ELSA curriculum teaches about everyday life needs such as dealing with emergencies, going to the Dr., accessing community centres, understanding government services and looking for jobs.
- ELSA classes teach about Canadian culture.

A number of significant messages were reiterated by the learners:

- The ELSA program does not have sufficient hours of instruction to prepare learners for more training or obtaining a job.
- Preparation for employment is critical. Most of the learners are seeking language training combined with job training. Assistance with practical on-the-job training and help with finding a job in their areas of expertise are paramount for both ELSA and College-based learners.
- Skilled workers need more support to have their credentials recognized and currently this process takes too long. (all respondents)
- More volunteer opportunities are required to enhance Canadian experience in a work place. (all respondents)
- A counselling service that would provide advice about developing a career plan, identifying options and choosing courses of action would be extremely beneficial. (all respondents)
- There is a need for greater opportunities to practice English with native speakers. (all respondents)
- Differentiation of skills is required that would enable more speaking and listening support and less emphasis on academic reading and writing in the College programs.
- The mixing of domestic students and International Students was unsatisfactory for many learners at the Colleges because they felt that the needs of the domestic students and International Students were very different. The domestic students identified a need for information on settlement and employment issues that were not important to International Students. Several learners expressed anger and frustration about the fact that they perceived that International Students were given preference in terms of class seats.
- Fees and cost of books at the Colleges were identified as a major concern, since many are not working.
- More computer classes are needed to prepare learners for moving into academic courses where computer skills are required. (all respondents)
- There is a need for more day care while attending classes or looking for a job. (all respondents)
- People with family responsibilities and/or part-time jobs do not have time for homework. (all respondents)
- Learners at the Colleges want a half hour per week of one-to-one instruction with tutor or instructor to work on individual areas of weakness.
- Class sizes are too large. (all respondents)

Several learners at the Colleges indicated that they had had difficulties receiving permission from Employment Insurance Counsellors and staff with the Ministry of Human Resources (Income Assistance) to obtain funds to attend ESL classes. The rules are in constant flux and are inconsistently applied.

- *“Welfare office insists we go to work but we can’t get jobs without language.”*
- *“Employment insurance officers don’t support people to get more English.”*

Other barriers identified by College-based learners include:

- *“No evening classes for people who are working.” (true in smaller communities)*
- *“It takes too long to progress from level to level.”*
- *“Day care is expensive, not enough spaces.”*

6. ESL DELIVERY MODELS IN ONTARIO, ALBERTA AND MANITOBA

Three provinces, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta were consulted to obtain an overview of their ESL delivery systems as a comparison to the system in BC. In each province, the ESL coordinator or manager in the Ministry responsible for funding and administration of ESL delivery was contacted. The contact person in Ontario directed the consultants to a number of service providers for information. In Manitoba, the Director of the Adult Language Training Branch, Ministry of Manitoba Labour and Immigration was able to supply all the information for that province. In Alberta, the Manager of Language Training, Ministry of Alberta Learning provided information for the provincial programs and directed the consultants to the Calgary and Edmonton CIC offices to obtain information on LINC. It was outside the scope of this review to do a deep analysis and comparison among the provinces. The information presented here reflects the position of the Ministry personnel and/or others consulted. There are similarities and differences in the approach each province takes to ESL service delivery. Some aspects of each provincial model may be useful to BC for consideration in its strategic planning. Outlined below is a summary of some of the salient features of the delivery models in the three provinces. This is followed by a more complete description of ESL service delivery in each of the provinces as provided by key informants.

6.1 Summary of Key Features

The following is a summary of the key features of ESL service delivery in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta:

- Manitoba is the only one of the three provinces that has a federal/provincial agreement for the administration and delivery of ESL programs developed for settlement and integration. This agreement is similar to the one in place in British Columbia.
- The Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP) classes are supported in Manitoba to CLB Level 8. LINC classes are funded to CLB Level 6/7 in Ontario, and in Alberta to CLB Level 4.
- LINC programs are open to immigrants and refugees in Ontario and Alberta, and the MIIP classes in Manitoba are open to immigrants, refugees, refugee claimants and naturalized Canadians.
- Service providers include school boards, community agencies, and public institutions in all three provinces.
- All three provinces have partnership agreements for delivery of language training within the business, industry and labour sectors.
- Provincial Ministries in Alberta and Manitoba play a very active role in coordination, and provide support for curriculum and materials development, as well as professional development. Both of these provinces have supported the formation of consortiums or councils made up a wide spectrum of providers, government departments and employment sectors which meet regularly to develop strategies to

enhance ESL service delivery. The Province of Ontario is not directly involved in program management of ESL.

- All three provinces encourage and support partnerships between providers and between providers and other community agencies, and the employment sector. Labour market training is supported through a variety of English For Work courses and other types of programs that connect ESL learners to employment information and job opportunities.
- The Canadian Language Benchmarks are used as a delivery standard for all programs in Manitoba and Alberta. Ontario uses the LINC curriculum which is standardized across the system.
- Centralized Assessment Centres exist in the large urban centres of all three provinces. Alberta co-funds Assessment Centres with the Federal Government and learners are assessed for all ESL programs (including LINC) and provided with counseling and information services at the time of assessment. The Assessment Centres in Manitoba and Ontario provide CLBA testing for clients destined for the LINC or MIIP programs.
- In Ontario, instructors are required to have a TESL Ontario Certificate, but there is a grandfather clause for those with experience but no formal training. In Manitoba, ESL instructors are required to have a Manitoba Teaching Certificate for some of their ESL programs. However, all programs require ESL teaching experience. Manitoba is considering requiring the TESL Canada Certificate as the standard for all ESL teachers. In Alberta, service providers determine the level of qualification required for instructors in provincially funded programs. However, the province is very pro-active in developing teacher support materials and providing professional development. The LINC program requires instructors to have a University degree, an ATESL Certificate and experience.
- Exit testing is generally handled by the service providers. In Manitoba, learners receive an exit score based on CLB levels.

Examples of some particular features in each province include:

- Alberta funds Community Councils in smaller communities to determine the educational needs of Adult learners including those requiring ESL. The province funds a paid coordinator and classroom space. This approach ensures that ESL clients in rural areas receive ESL services.
- Manitoba provides a wide range of class schedule options including classes held on week-ends. Classes are held in the work place with the cooperation and involvement of employers. Volunteers are widely utilized as conversation partners.
- Ontario provides a three-week program called Steps to Employment in Ontario for LINC clients at Level 4/5 which provides orientation to specific professions and is free of charge.
- The LINC program in Ontario hires a Marketing staff person to promote programs and a Curriculum Facilitator, responsible for professional development and assisting instructors in the use of the LINC curriculum.

6.2 Province of Ontario

Funding of ESL in Ontario

There is no federal/provincial agreement for provision of ESL Services in Ontario. The Federal Government funds the LINC program with funding going to school boards, community agencies, private agencies, and community colleges. Providers submit a proposal and funding is provided on a contractual basis. In addition to instruction, LINC funding covers the cost of child minding, transportation and administrative support. The rate per instructional hours can be estimated at \$5-\$6.

The Provincial Government funds ESL programs (non-credit) with funding going solely to school boards. The province reimburses the school board based on number of registered students and an hourly instructional rate of approximately \$2.70. This does not cover any additional support or administrative expenses.

Both LINC and ESL (non-credit) are free to the client. ESL classes, in some jurisdictions charge a nominal materials fee (~\$20)

Demographics

In 2002, the LINC program had 21,161 students and the non-credit ESL had 164,706 students. A profile of the learners indicates that over 50% have some secondary education.

Delivery Structure

Community agencies provide about 70% of the LINC program with school boards approximately 30% and colleges 2%. Because the typical school board employs many more teachers than a typical community agency, school board teachers in many locations are contracted by community agencies to provide instruction. Overall, school boards employ about 70% of the adult LINC/ESL teachers in the province.

Many school boards (particularly in smaller areas) have blended classes of the federally-funded LINC and the Provincially-funded ESL. The level of LINC funding in rural areas makes it possible for service providers to include other ESL learners in their programs.

The Federal Government funds up to LINC Level 5 while there is no level limit specified by the Provincial ESL program. (Level 5 is equivalent to CLB 7 for speaking and listening, and CLB 6 for reading and writing).

Access

The LINC program is specifically for new immigrants and the focus is mostly on language training that is settlement-based. The Federal Government also funds some specialized employment language training programs. The LINC program supports the establishment of partnerships among service providers and other stakeholders such as police, social assistance programs, funders, social planning councils, etc.

The Provincial (non credit) ESL program accepts refugee claimants (may be

asked to pay tuition fees) and Canadian citizens.

Assessment

Assessments for the LINC program are centralized and provided by Language Assessment Centres in the larger areas and by itinerant assessors in the smaller/rural communities who are linked to the larger Assessment Centres.

A standardized assessment tool is used based on CLB called the CLBA. There is also a shortened version of this, the CLBPT which is being used by some school boards. For the Provincially-funded ESL program, school boards do their own assessments.

There is an automated reservation system for the LINC program that is able to identify various options for students in terms of what is available to them. There is also a management information system that provides profile data on learners. For the Provincial ESL (non-credit), school boards manage the data individually in a variety of ways. They are not required by the province to maintain data other than attendance information that is used for grant purposes.

Quality of Service and Accountability

LINC teachers all require a TESL Ontario certificate from one of the 12 recognized programs. Allowance has been made to grandfather in instructors who have experience but not the academic qualifications.

LINC has a standardized curriculum. Some larger school boards have taken a leadership role and have developed their own curriculum for the Provincial ESL program, others use the LINC curriculum. Where LINC is offered and provides settlement services, the Provincial ESL program has tended to specialize and meet other needs such as labour market and employment needs

No exit testing has been identified for either program. LINC uses a checklist as exit criteria.

Overall, LINC has specified a number of measures to ensure accountability, but the Provincial ESL program does not have any formal accountability measures. Provincial ESL is managed out of the Finance Department of the Ministry of Education. There is no program direction from the Ministry.

The province has not established an accountability system and there is no standardization of programs. Programs are highly variable. However, the quality of service is maintained at a high level because of the internal system controls within the school boards. All teachers hired are qualified and certified, and programs have been customized and developed to meet community need.

Particular Features

- *Steps to Employment in Ontario.* This is a three-week program intended for LINC 4/5 clients which provides an orientation to specific professions. It is free and is a

supplement to the LINC program. This program was effective in large centres, but in smaller centres, there was not sufficient numbers of students to offer the program.

- *Part-time LINC Marketing staff.* This position is responsible for promoting the LINC program and developing key information for dissemination. (Only in Peel and Halton)
- *LINC home study program.* This has been piloted in Halton and Peel and has expanded to 180 students and has now opened another 140 seats. This is proving successful and may become a national program.
- *LINC Curriculum Facilitator.* This position is responsible for professional development and assists instructors in the use of the LINC curriculum.

Suggested Future Actions

Respondents see potential in a federal/provincial agreement that would enable a leadership role from the Ministry of Education that could combine the best of the federally-funded LINC program and the Provincially-funded ESL program and move toward standardization of assessment and curriculum, certification of instructors and pay equity among instructors.

6.3 Province of Manitoba

Funding and Delivery

Manitoba has signed a federal /provincial agreement for funding ESL delivery. The presence of this agreement allows for a coordinated system of Adult ESL delivery. The program provides funding, coordination and/or staff support for service provided through partnerships between Settlement Agencies and Adult ESL service providers. The Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP) has two components: Immigrant Settlement Services and Adult English as a Second Language (ESL) Services.

The objectives of Immigrant Settlement Services component are:

- 1) *the provision of direct delivery of settlement services; and*
- 2) *supplementary services to enhance the effectiveness of settlement services delivery.*

The objectives of the Adult ESL Services component are:

- 1) *the provision of a continuum of Adult ESL services that meet the needs of adult immigrants; and*
- 2) *supplementary support to Adult ESL instruction in schools, workplaces and communities*

Service providers are funded under the federal/provincial agreement based on submission of a proposal that demonstrates an effective service delivery model that will assist Manitoba immigrants and refugees towards economic and social integration, participatory citizenship and long-term residency in Manitoba. The proposal must also give evidence that the services are needed and wanted. In addition, unless otherwise agreed upon, service providers must provide funded services free of charge to service recipients and without discriminatory practices.

The Adult Language Training Branch (Immigration and Multiculturalism Division of Manitoba Labour and Immigration) facilitates the integration of new immigrants to

Manitoba through the development, coordination, delivery, and funding of Adult English as a Second Language (A/ESL) training programs. The Branch houses the Language Assessment and Referral Center.

Demographics

Manitoba's top 10 source countries according to 2002 immigrant landing statistics provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada include: *Philippines, Germany, India, Korea, China, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, United State, and the United Kingdom.*

Most adult immigrants to Manitoba are in the 25-44 age group (From Manitoba Immigration Facts -2002 Statistics Report), though learners in the ESL programs range from ages 18-55. There are no upper end age restrictions, although the ESL programs are designed for individuals destined for the labour force. There have been approximately 300 senior adult ESL learners (age 55+) annually in a program specific to their needs. Learners under 18 years of age are not eligible for Adult ESL. Education levels of immigrants from Manitoba Immigration Facts, 2002 Statistics Report indicate that the largest percentage have a post-secondary education.

Service Providers and Course offerings

Eligible service providers include; not-for-profit organizations, specialized Settlement and Adult ESL service providers, educational institutions, business, industry and labour, and municipal government or government regulated and funded bodies.

The range of programs offered includes:

- Language assessment information and referral to ESL or other services
- Adult ESL instruction (CLB Levels 1-8)
- English for Specific Purposes
- Community based Adult ESL
- Workplace Language and Communication training
- Program supports such as child minding, transportation and teacher aides
- Adult ESL volunteer programs
- Materials and curriculum development and implementation
- Delivery assistance (e.g. needs assessments, demonstration projects, training and professional development).

There are both full time and part time classes in Winnipeg. Classes outside Winnipeg are generally part time. Partnerships have been established with the business sector for the delivery of workplace language programs. English for Business Skills is coordinated through an organization that delivers employment focused programming and services for immigrants looking for work. English for seniors is coordinated through Age and Opportunity, a social service agency working with seniors. Classes in rural areas may be partnered with adult literacy programs or other adult learning programs.

Access

In Manitoba, those who are permanent residents, Canadian citizens born outside the country, or refugee claimants who have an Immigrant Refugee Board acceptance, are

eligible to participate in Government funded ESL programs. In general, ESL classes delivered by major providers in Winnipeg are free to eligible clients. In some cases, where space exists in a class, a person who has applied for landing status and who can show proof that their application is in the final stages of approval **may** be allowed to attend class **if** space is available. Clients who do not meet the criteria for funded classes are provided with information about fee payer programs.

Some English for Specific Purposes classes have registration fees. Exceptions to these fees may be made for clients in special financial situations (Government assisted refugees, clients receiving Employment Insurance benefits or those on Income Assistance from the province). Learners in programs outside the city may pay a small registration fee.

Child care and transportation to class are usually the responsibility of the learner. For a limited number of women in Community Based Language Training, a part-time program for women unable to access regular ESL classes, transportation assistance and child minding may be available. Assessors will provide information about day care subsidy forms and information about the day care office. Settlement workers and community coordinators may provide assistance for clients looking for day care.

Classes are held in schools, workplaces, adult learning centres, and immigrant agencies, and with community organizations such as churches. Businesses provide space at the worksite for workplace language classes.

Classes are planned to meet the needs of a wide variety of learners with full time, part-time, daytime, evening and Saturday classes. There are also volunteer programs that provide volunteer assistance in classes or language partners to meet with clients for one on one tutoring.

Assessment

In Winnipeg, clients who meet the criteria for MIIP are assessed at the Adult Language Training Branch Assessment and Referral Centre using one of the Canadian Language Benchmarks assessment tools (CLBA or CLBPT). Clients may be referred to the assessment centre by settlement counsellors or agencies, friends, family or schools or training courses.

Appointments are scheduled everyday, morning and afternoon as well as one evening per week for the benefit of those who are working. Following the assessment, assessors assist the clients in choosing the program that best meets their needs and goals for settlement and/or employment and taking into consideration their personal circumstances. The assessment centre faxes the referral to the school. Clients are invited to phone or visit the site if more information is needed in the future.

Quality of Service and Accountability

The provincial government coordinates and supports the provision of a continuum of Adult ESL services that meet the needs of adult immigrants; and provides supplementary

support to Adult ESL instruction in schools, workplaces and communities. This includes materials, curriculum development and implementation, and delivery assistance (e.g. needs assessments, demonstration projects, training and professional development.)

Canadian Language Benchmarks influence all areas of language instruction in Manitoba. Learners are assessed using the Canadian Language Benchmarks tools for assessment (CLBA and/or CLBPT). Classes are defined by Benchmark levels. Learners receive end of term reports from their instructors with Benchmarks levels based on classroom activities. Some ESP classes have, as a prerequisite, a specific Benchmark level. New resources and curricula are developed with benchmark levels in mind. Manitoba has been involved in CLB implementation since the beginning of the national CLB initiative and has developed expertise in Adult ESL Literacy.

The Adult Language Training Branch facilitates the Adult ESL Coordinating Group that includes CIC and immigrant service providers, so that information regarding new immigrants and issues facing those settling in Manitoba is received in a timely manner. Adjustments can be made to programs; new classes or new initiatives can be added as resources allow.

Programs generally look for a combination of training and experience when hiring staff. Some programs require teachers to have a Manitoba Teaching certificate as well as Adult ESL teaching experience. Manitoba is considering requiring TESL Canada certification as the standard. For teachers in programs funded through the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program, a number of professional development (PD) opportunities are offered each year. People who volunteer with ESL students can also participate in special training sessions offered throughout the year.

Learner outcomes and program evaluation

Learners are assessed by the classroom teacher using a variety of techniques. Teachers are currently exploring the use of collaborative portfolio assessments. All learners are given 'exit' scores at the end of a term in a CLB progress report. Monitoring by project officers, required reports, and learner feedback is built into every project to determine its effectiveness and efficiency. Labour and Immigration is currently developing an evaluation framework for the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program.

Future Trends

Manitoba has made a commitment to increasing immigration to 10,000 annual arrivals. The ESL delivery system has been under increased pressure recently as it attempts to respond to the demands for language training in all areas of Manitoba. To date, the province has not had to limit access to ESL training by immigration category or proficiency level. Enhanced Language Training funds will be used to address needs in regions outside of Winnipeg and the development of additional English for Specific Purposes courses.

6.4 Province of Alberta

Funding of ESL in Alberta

There is no federal/provincial realignment agreement for the provision of LINC services in Alberta. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Ministry of Alberta Learning hold a statement of understanding between the two levels of government to work cooperatively for the delivery of ESL programs. CIC provides funding for LINC that is delivered and managed regionally (Edmonton and Northwest Territories and Calgary and the Southern Regions). LINC is provided at Levels Pre-Benchmark -Level 4 (CLB Level 5 Listening and Speaking and CLB Level 4 Reading and Writing) The LINC programs are tuition free and some money is provided for child minding and transportation (on a need basis).

Provincial ESL delivery is funded and managed by two departments, Alberta Learning and Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Providers can apply to five different funding streams that meet a broad range of different needs and circumstances:

1. Base Grants through Public Institutions, Alberta Learning
2. Language Training Programs, Alberta Learning
3. Community Adult Learning Councils, Alberta Learning
4. Academic and General ESL (tuition based programming support), Alberta Human Resources and Employment
5. Skills Investment Programs (formerly known as Skills for Work), Alberta Human Resources and Employment
6. Integrated Language Training for Skilled Immigrants, Alberta Learning and Citizenship and Immigration Canada – a joint call for proposals was released in mid February, 2004. This is not on-going funding.

The Alberta Human Resources and Employment Ministry provides grant funding called ESL Tuition Based Programming that funds learners directly for tuition and living allowances. This funding covers general and academic ESL as well as some ESL programs that give credit. In 2003, 19 providers delivered 29 programs. The cost of program delivery is covered by tuition. Public institutions and some private schools deliver these programs across the province.

The Ministry of Alberta Learning, through its Learner Transitions Sector, Community Programs, provides funds for innovative ESL programs, services, research, professional development and materials development through Language Training Programs. Language Training Programs also funds two drop-in ESL Centres and co-funds (with CIC) two ESL Assessment and Referral Centres in Calgary and Edmonton.

The Alberta Ministry of Human Resources provides funding for ESL Skills for Work Programs for immigrants that includes advanced language training. The projects often revolve around a partnership between the Colleges and non profit agencies to provide a transition from ESL to Content based ESP and /or Skill Based programs. Some programs are partnerships with industry to provide higher level language skills for ESL for Work.

Funding Issues

LINC funding is based on a Settlement and Allocation Model according to the number of immigrants landing in Alberta over the last 3 years. The federal funding to Alberta has decreased over the past number of years, resulting in significant waitlists for LINC programming, especially in Calgary. (my contacts at CIC claimed funding has not decreased) Until 2002, the Province used to top up LINC by providing living allowances to learners in need. This funding has been withdrawn because it was felt that the immigrant's sponsor should supply the living allowance. This can be appealed on a case by case basis.

Demographics

There is increasing polarization with regard to the learning needs in the immigrant population. Over 60% of new immigrants have some form of post secondary education training and require higher level ESL classes. There are also a significant number of immigrants who face multiple barriers and need different types of support with respect to ESL Literacy programming. The following information on demographics is culled from the 2002-2003 Annual Report of the Immigrant Language and Vocational assessment-Referral Centre (ILVARC) in Calgary. Of a total number of 7,635 new and repeat clients the following information has been gathered:

- females (approximately 60%) versus males (approximately 40%)
- age range 19-65+ with majority 35-44 years old (32%)
- leading languages among immigrant groups were, Mandarin (22%), Punjabi/Urdu/Gujurati/Hindi (15%), Russian/Ukrainian, Persian, and Arabic about 6% each. Smaller numbers for Spanish, Korean, Cantonese, and Vietnamese were recorded.
- largest immigration category was the Independent Class (44%), followed by Family Class (33%).
- (73%) of immigrants had lived in Alberta less than 1 year.
- over 1000 immigrants were inland migrants.
- unemployment among this group of clients was over 75%

Delivery Structure

Service providers for LINC include colleges, school boards, and non profit agencies. Private sector schools are no longer funded in the Edmonton Region for delivery of LINC. LINC is provided up to Level 4 (CLB 5) but most classes are at Levels 1-3. While Literacy is provided within lower level LINC classes, there are only separate Literacy classes where numbers warrant. More and more provincially funded providers are offering lower level and literacy classes to offset the LINC shortfall. Traditionally the province provided more academic and employment oriented language classes LINC classes are run in 10 week sessions, back to back and year round although some sites do close in the summer.

Service providers for provincial ESL include public post secondary institutions, school boards, non-profit agencies, and private providers.

There are two provincially funded drop-in centres that provide flexible program hours five days a week and evenings in Calgary and Edmonton. Students can come and go on a continuous intake schedule and approximately 500-550 people are served each year.

Access

The LINC program is open to immigrants and government sponsored refugees. All provincial programs are open to Canadian citizens, government sponsored refugees and immigrants. Refugee claimants are not eligible and International students do not receive public funding. There is a wait list for many programs, especially employment/vocational ESL programs and literacy (where there is a growing need). There is currently a 2- 6 month waiting list for LINC classes depending on the area. CIC (Northern Region) funds a Rural Delivery Program for up to 2-3 years based on a community's needs. A college is given a contract to train instructors, develop materials and provide assessment in that community. The instructors are called Education Aids and offer either group or individual classes.

Assessment

There are two Assessment Centres in Edmonton and Calgary, which were originally set-up and funded by the Province to provide assessment for all ESL programs throughout the province. They are now co-funded with Citizenship and Immigration Canada.. Approximately 13-14,000 people are assessed per year. The Assessment Centres also provide counselling and referrals to appropriate programs in addition to LINC. LINC assessment is also provided in Lethbridge and Red Deer, and there is itinerant service in the North.

Learners are required to go through the Language Assessment Centres for access to LINC and ESL innovative programs funded by Language Training Programs, Alberta Learning. Alberta Human Resources and Employment also funds formal, external language assessment (through the two Centres) for clients in some Skills for Work programs. Learners can, however, access other provincial language and employment programs without assessment

The Assessment Centres receive provincial funding to develop a Directory of ESL Services that is updated twice a year. This Directory is accessible through the language assessment centre web sites as well as through a hotlink with Alberta Learning's web site. There are approximately 75-90 providers listed.

Quality of Service and Accountability

The policy framework for the provision of provincial ESL is grounded in the "Foundations for Adult Learning and Development", 1999.

Instructors in the LINC programs are required to have a University degree in ESL or Linguistics, teaching experience, and an ATESL Certificate. The individual providers determine qualifications for ESL instructors in the provincial programs.

There are partnerships among funders with respect to reviewing proposals under virtually all funding streams. At least one, of these funders participates in the yearly review of proposals under each program.

The Language Training Programs Branch funds research and innovative ESL programs to maintain quality of service, enhance capacity and extend outreach with the overall objective of better access and programming for immigrants. Employment programs are tracked to determine the number of clients who find employment.

The Assessment Centres are funded to hold Advisory Meetings for all program providers 4-5 times a year for updates on delivery and assessment, as well as, provide a forum for sharing concerns and new program ideas. Approximately 90% of providers attend these meetings.

A Best Practices Guidelines for Adult ESL Programming was produced in 1994 co-funded by the province, CIC and prepared by the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL), however, providers self-monitor. All prospective ESL providers receive the Guidelines as well as information regarding Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). The Canadian Language Benchmarks are used for delivery standards and learner standards, and are an essential element of innovative programming. The Ministry of Alberta Learning provides some innovative curriculum and other resources to programs, as well as, professional development and workshops on CLB. Providers must state their intended outcomes in their funding proposals as well as indicating the Benchmarks entry and exit levels for clients. There is a Guide to Implementation for CLB Levels 1-8, and both formative and summative outcomes based assessment tool kits are being developed.

Innovative Approaches to Rural ESL Delivery

Alberta Learning approves and supports Community Adult Learning Councils to address the part-time, non-credit learning needs of adults within specified geographic boundaries.. There are 37 out of a total of 83 Community Adult Learning Councils that are currently offering ESL programming. These Councils receive provincial funding and a paid coordinator manages the programs and recruits instructors who may or may not be ESL trained. The classes are part time, some child care is provided and some classes have a small tuition fee. The ministry funded the development of an ESL Resource Package, based on the CLB, and currently funds workshops to support instructors, tutors and coordinators on this resource. A community language needs assessment tool is under development to assist communities to identify need and interest. Further topic specific workshops will be offered to rural communities through 2004/05 in order to enhance capacity to meet the ESL needs of immigrants living in smaller or rural centres.

A significant component of the community Adult Learning Program is the Volunteer Adult Literacy Learning Program for one on one literacy support. This program also supports numerous immigrants in rural communities to develop their English Language abilities.

7. STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

As part of the analysis of issues, this project was to identify strategic opportunities that should be considered for future long term planning. A number of strategic opportunities are identified below stemming from the input of the respondents in the focus groups and interviews.

Coordination

A major strategic opportunity arising from the results of this study is how to make the potentially seamless ESL system currently available in BC a reality. More specifically, the challenge is how to create a single, coordinated and integrated system that would lead to:

- Enhanced communication between MCAWS and AVED and the creation of mechanisms for joint planning to address issues and gaps in a coordinated manner.
- Smooth transitions for learners between ELSA and College-based ESL programs and within the College-based system. Note: Consider the role of the ESL Articulation Committee in this process.
- Partnerships among service providers such as Immigrant-serving Agencies, Colleges, School Districts, and the private sector for the provision of ESL training with each agency contributing its expertise in particular areas.
- Partnerships among government, public, private, post secondary, professional associations, business, and industry sectors to facilitate a smooth transition for learners on the path between English language training, job skills training, and employment. (See Alberta and Manitoba models.)
- Linkages with the Ministry of Education.

Funding

Concern about lack of clarity regarding funding suggests opportunities for MCAWS and AVED to enhance transparency by more clearly communicating funding criteria and decisions to service providers.

The challenge faced by MCAWS is how to ensure stable funding to service providers over a longer term.

The challenge for both MCAWS and AVED is to consider, in future planning, strategies to address the “economy of scale” issues in rural and small communities to support ESL delivery with limited number of learners.

The issue of ABESAP with regard to the funds available and how it is distributed was raised by administrators, instructors and learners. The strategic challenge for AVED is to consider some innovative alternatives for providing financial support for learners and/or for enhancing communication strategies about the distribution of funds.

Respondents who represented the various school districts (ESL Coordinators and Directors of Continuing Education) all pointed to the withdrawal of government funding for provision of Adult ESL by school districts. Although several of these districts receive ELSA funding, they are also providing extensive ESL service to their communities on a cost recovery basis. They argued for the reinstatement of some base funding to support their ESL service delivery. The strategic challenge for MCAWS and AVED is to consider how this issue might be raised with the Ministry of Education or how effective partnerships might be formed to capitalize on the expertise of this delivery sector.

Assessment

A strategic consideration for the College-based ESL system is to determine if the use of a common assessment tool such as the CLBA would have benefits for learners and result in greater efficiency and effectiveness. Another aspect of this is to consider the potential value of an integrated assessment process for both ELSA and College-based ESL programs.

A further consideration for both ELSA and College-based ESL is whether the identified need for increased counseling support for learners can be integrated into the initial placement assessment so that a broader range of learner needs for information and support can be addressed in a “*one-stop shop*”.

Access

The significant barriers identified to access ESL programs throughout the system pose a number of strategic opportunities to consider such as how:

- Ministries might undertake a more proactive promotion of ESL programs.
- Supply and demand for Literacy classes can be balanced.
- Special needs learners can be accommodated more effectively in the system.
- Support services such as child minding and transportation might be addressed.
- An examination of perceived inequities in tuition fees and other related ESL costs for learners might be undertaken.
- The need for ESL instruction related to settlement and adjustment for naturalized Canadians can be accommodated.
- The introduction of a wider range of delivery modes and more flexible scheduling of all ESL classes could better meet the diverse needs of the adult ESL population.

Significant barriers to access were identified resulting from the Income Assistance and Employment Insurance programs/policies. The strategic challenge for AVED and MCAWS is to establish improved lines of communication with these programs to facilitate removing of barriers for immigrants or Naturalized Canadians who require ESL instruction while on some form of social assistance.

Post ELSA

Since there is a significant level of agreement across the entire system that ELSA Level 3 is insufficient for learners to access employment, higher level training or more advanced education, the challenge is to consider how programs to bridge this gap can be effectively and efficiently implemented.

Labour market focussed language training

Limited availability of labour market focussed language training at the Colleges was repeatedly identified as an important gap in the system by all types of service providers and learners throughout the province. This is significant in light of the fact that a high percentage of incoming immigrants are arriving with job skills and/or professions but lacking language ability. The economic loss to the province is enormous when workers cannot re-enter the work force at levels at least close to those they held in their home country. A key challenge is to be able to provide combined skills training without sacrificing the need for instruction related to settlement and adjustment. To enhance labour market and combined skills language training, it would be important to consider:

- Incentives for service providers to increase the delivery of combined skills training.
- Partnerships with the employment sector.
- Language training for a wider range of professions and careers.
- Liaisons and partnerships with professional and trade associations.

Quality of Service

Increasing the consistency in learner assessment and evaluation, and developing common curriculum guidelines within the ESL delivery system, versus acknowledging and respecting service provider flexibility and autonomy to meet the unique needs of their client base, remains a significant challenge. The strategic opportunity is to consider how the vast knowledge and expertise in the current system can be shared and maximized, and how the duplication and gaps that have been identified can be minimized. Consideration could be given to:

- Development of consistent curriculum guidelines outlining philosophy, learning outcomes and resources.
- The use of the Canadian Language Benchmarks as a standard for instruction and assessment.
- A coordinated process for sharing expertise in assessment, evaluation, and materials design.
- Promotion and support of a wider range of delivery modes to meet diverse client needs.
- Research and development activities to enhance best practices.

Professional Development

A need has been identified for enhanced professional development for ESL instructors in such areas as Literacy, Skill-based Training and Testing. Opportunities exist to utilize and share the vast expertise of professionals within the ELSA and College-based ESL programs to benefit the entire system. The strategic challenge is to consider ways to enhance partnerships among service providers to facilitate shared professional development. It may be useful to consider further research into ESL instructor qualifications and professional development needs.

Accountability

While respondents recognized the importance of outcomes and performance measures, the strategic opportunity is how to balance the requirement for outcomes measurements that are reliable and useful for long term planning, with the needs of providers to have measurement frameworks that are *user friendly* and not too time consuming.

Considerations for future planning strategies may include:

- Identification of measures that are realistic, achievable and which acknowledge the diversity of programs and client needs.
- Clearly communicated expectations related to accountability and evaluation.
- Support for service providers to implement outcomes and accountability measures.
- Coordination of ELSA and College-based demographic and program data that would be accessible to funders and providers for long-range planning and program evaluation.

8. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is evident from the findings that BC has two, rather than one model of ESL service delivery. There are two ministries responsible, two funding formulae, different service providers and dissimilar expectations, outcomes and performance measures. There is a strong consensus that this obviates against a seamless system for learners. There is duplication of assessment and evaluation processes within the College system, as well, curriculum development is carried out by every service provider throughout the system. There remains a high degree of competition among providers who acknowledge that there are still wide discrepancies in the quality of service, teacher qualifications, salaries and other benefits, from provider to provider. Colleges are better able to support curriculum and professional development because of the economy of scale but there is no mechanism for sharing of these benefits even within the college system. Policy governing the delivery of ESL is not clearly articulated and communication between the two ministries is largely uncoordinated. Many of these issues have not been addressed either by the funders or the umbrella organizations.

Despite the number of gaps and weaknesses identified in the focus group sessions and in individual interviews, there is much to be said for the strengths that do exist in the system. The province provides significant funding to support delivery over an extremely broad geographical range. Service providers represent a wide spectrum of educational institutions and social service agencies in the public and private sector and offer a wide variety of programs for learners at many levels. There is a high degree of flexibility and autonomy for providers to determine the type of instructional delivery that suits the needs of their clients. Learners have, in many communities, a reasonable choice of times, locations and programs. The learners themselves are viewed as an important asset because they come with skills, experience, and motivation to become integrated and contributing members to the Canadian society and economy. British Columbia has very well trained, experienced and committed instructors who provide an important bridge for learners into the English language and Canadian culture.

These strengths would be significantly enhanced if there were:

- Effective overall coordination between Ministries to facilitate a more seamless transition for learners
- Long-term and stable funding
- Articulated consistent Ministry policies related to ESL service delivery
- Improved communication strategies between Ministries and service providers and among the service providers
- Encouragement for partnerships across sectors
- Increased support for skill-based language training
- A strategy for developing common curriculum guidelines, assessment, and evaluation tools across the system to avoid duplication of effort.
- Clear and consistent expectations for accountability.

There is a strong call from service providers, instructors and learners for MCAWS and AVED to take a leadership role in this regard.

APPENDICES
English as a Second Language Services Review

Appendix 1

ESL Services Review Advisory Group Members

**ESL Services Review
Advisory Group Members**

Advisors from the field:

Liz Bloomfield – Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria

Jack Finnbogason – Kwantlen University College

Kate Gilchirst – Okanagan University College

Marta Goodwin – Vancouver Community College

Lee Gunderson – University of British Columbia

Nita Jacob – Coquitlam Continuing Education

Loree Phillet – Burnaby College

Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services (MCAWS) and Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) Representatives:

Tom Jensen - Executive Director, Immigration Division MCAWS (Project Leader)

Arlene Paton, Director, Public Institutions Branch, AVED (Project Leader)*

Rob Boldt, Manager, Program Design and Evaluation, Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch, MCAWS (Project Co-ordinator and main contact)

Deb Zehr, Director, Immigration Branch, MCAWS

Dawn McKay, Manager, University Colleges, AVED*

James Sandever, Senior Policy Analyst, Immigration Branch, MCAWS

Brian Train, Education Officer, Public Institutions Branch, AVED

Barb Binczyk, Education Officer, AVED

Bill Walters, Director of Settlement and Multiculturalism, MCAWS

* Since the project began, responsibility for Developmental Programs has moved to The Private Institutions and Developmental Programs Branch in AVED with Debbie Hull as Director and Cheryl Bell, Acting Manager, Career Training and Developmental Programs.

Appendix 2

Interview and Focus Group Questions

ESL Services Review in BC Interview and Focus Group Questions

Purpose: To gain input on strengths, weaknesses/gaps, issues and suggestions for change in ESL Services in BC.

We are addressing the ESL program and service delivery system in its entirety and province-wide. This includes delivery by the colleges, not-for-profit agencies, school districts/continuing education and the private sector.

I Current delivery system

How would you describe the current ESL service delivery system in BC?

II Strengths

What do you perceive to be the main strengths of the ESL service delivery system? (If your comment applies to a particular area only, please specify.)

III Weaknesses/gaps in service

What do you perceive to be the main weaknesses or gaps in the ESL service delivery system? (If your comment applies to a particular area only, please specify.)

IV Key issues

What are some other issues/concerns related to:

1. Policy issues

- a. What policies guide the delivery of ESL Services? Are any changes required?

2. Structure of Delivery

- a. Are there any issues related to recruitment, intake, assessment and referral mechanisms?

3. Coordination

- a. Are there areas where coordination is lacking or needs to be improved? e.g., between government ministries, among service providers, etc.

4. Funding

- a. What criteria are used to fund ESL service providers?
- b. What are the key funding pressures?

5. Access

- a. What are the key barriers to access? Are there issues related to program fees, eligibility, location and time of classes?
- b. What groups are not being served by the current system?

6. **Quality of Service**
 - a. Do service providers have the flexibility to meet changing client needs in a timely fashion?
 - b. Are there issues impacting quality related to instructor qualifications, professional development, curriculum, materials, and equipment?
7. **Ancillary services.**
 - a. What are the needs related to financial support, child care, transportation, and counselling for learners?
8. **Learner outcomes and program evaluation**
 - a. What are some of the issues related to measuring learner outcomes?
 - b. What criteria would you use to determine if the delivery system is effective and efficient?
9. **Other issues**

V Suggestions

If you could change three things about the ESL Services in BC to make it more efficient and effective – what would they be?

ESL Services Review Questions for Learners

- 1. Access**
 - a. How did you choose your ESL program?
 - b. Was it easy or difficult to get into an ESL program? Why? How long did you have to wait?

- 2. Meeting Needs**
 - a. Where do you need to use English? i.e. school, job, shopping, children and how is your ESL class helping you do that?
 - b. What are learning in your ESL class now?
What else would you like to learn?

- 3. Barriers**

What are some of the problems you face in taking the ESL program? e.g. time and location of classes, fees, eligibility, etc.

- 4. Ancillary Services**

What kind of help would make it easier for you to attend ESL classes?
(financial, child care, transportation, counselling, etc.)

- 5. Outcomes**

Do you feel the ESL classes help you understand Canadian culture?
In what other ways does the ESL program help you?

- 6. Concluding questions**
 - a. What is working well in the ESL program?
 - b. What changes would you like to see in the ESL program?

**ESL Services Review in BC
Learner Background**

Please answer the following questions:

Name of School _____ **City** _____

- 1 Are you male or female?
- 2 How old are you?
- 3 When did you come to Canada? Month _____ Year _____
- 4 Where are you from?
- 5 What is your English level?
6. How long have you been studying English?
7. What was your job before you came to Canada?
8. Are you working now? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what is your job?

ESL Services Review in BC Comparison with Other Provinces

Purpose: To gain information about delivery of adult ESL Services in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario for purposes of comparison with the BC model.

Province:

Contact Person and Position:

Ministry:

I Overview of current delivery model

How would you describe the ESL service delivery system in your province?

- a. How are the programs funded? (i.e., role of provincial and federal governments?)
- b. Who are the service providers?
- c. What is the range of programs offered? (i.e., ELSA/LINC, workplace, academic, professional, etc.)
- d. Who is eligible to participate as learners in the programs?

II Specific areas of interest

Policy

- a. What is your government's policy for provision of ESL Services?

Coordination

- b. What is the government's role in the administration and coordination of programs?

Funding

- c. Does your province have a federal/provincial agreement for devolution of ESL funding?
- d. Does the presence or absence of this agreement affect service delivery in any way?
- e. What criteria do you use for funding service providers?

Structure of Delivery

- f. How are recruitment and intake managed?
- g. What kind of assessment/referral mechanisms exist?
- h. Are classes provided full-time, part-time or both?
- i. What partnerships, if any, exist among institutions and agencies for service delivery?

Access

- j. How do you deal with access issues such as:
 - i. program fees
 - ii. eligibility related to immigration status
 - iii. child care and transportation support
 - iv. classroom space
 - v. location and time of classes

Quality of Service

- k. What is the role of the provincial government in curriculum, material and resource development?
- l. What role to the Canadian Language Benchmarks play in service delivery?
- m. Do service providers have the flexibility to meet changing needs in a timely fashion?
- n. What qualifications are instructors expected to have and what professional development and teacher support are provided?

Learner outcomes and program evaluation

- o. How are learner outcomes assessed?
- p. What criteria are used to determine if the delivery system is effective and efficient?
- q. How are programs evaluated?

Are there any other specific features of your ESL service delivery model that you would like to mention?

III Learner Demographics

Could you provide us with a basic profile of the learners in your province such as:

- Countries of origin
- Age range
- Education levels
- Language levels

What changes are you anticipating in immigration trends to your province and how will that affect delivery service

Appendix 3

List of Interviews and Focus Groups

ESL Services Review

Schedule of Interviews and Field Visits

1. Interviews with Other Jurisdictions

- Manitoba – Margaret Pidlaski, Director- Adult Language Training Branch, Ministry of Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Ontario –David Newman, Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators; Tony Da Silva, Director, Centre for Language Training and Assessment; Barb Krukowski, President of TESL, Ontario
- Alberta – Carolyn Dieleman, Manager of Language Training Programs, Ministry of Alberta Learning

2. Interviews with key stakeholders

- Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services – Rob Boldt, Norah Cameron, Patricio Ibarra, Richard Klassen
- Ministry of Advanced Education, Barbara Binczyk
- Brenda Lohrenz, Coordinator ELSA Net
- Ming Burka, Language Training Program, SUCCESS
- Nina Miller, Co-ordinator, English Language Centre, MOSAIC
- Diana Smolic, ELSA Project Manager, Immigrant Services Society
- Elizabeth Jones, Executive Director, North Shore Multicultural Society
- Wes Schroeder, Manager, Western ESL Services
- Valarie Macdonald, CLBA Assesor
- Elizabeth Templeman, Co-chair ESL Articulation Committee, University College of the Cariboo
- Linda Hitchcock, Instructor, University College of the Cariboo, Williams Lake
- Steve Koehle, Dean Faculty of Adult and Continuing Education, Okanogan University College
- Kate Gilchrist, Chair English as a Second Language Dept., Okanagon University College
- Brenda Storr, Associate Dean, Camosun College
- Marcia Timbres, Dean College Foundations, College of New Caledonia
- Marta Goodwin, Dean of Academic and Preparatory Studies, Vancouver Community College

3. Key Stakeholder Organizations

- **ESL Services Review Advisory Group**
SWOT session

- **ELSA NET**
 - Interview with Brenda Lohrenz
 - ELSA Net Executive Meeting - attended to inform executive committee of Review and obtain general feedback
 - **ELSA NET Performance Measurement Framework Advisory Committee** - Focus group
 - **ELSA NET Regional Meetings** – see Field Focus Group Sessions below.

- **Association of BC TEAL Board Members**- Focus group

- **Deans and Directors of Developmental Education** - Focus group

- **School District ESL Co-ordinators** - Focus group

- **School District Continuing Education Directors** - Focus group

- **ESL Articulation Committee** –Interview with Elizabeth Templeman

- **AMSSA, Steering Committee for Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee** -Focus group

- **MOSAIC**
 - Interview with Nina Miller
 - Focus group with ELSA Class

- **SUCCESS** – Interview with Ming Burka

- **Immigrant Services Society**
 - Interview with Diana Smolic
 - Focus group with Instructors

- **ELSA Assessors**
 - Interview with Wes Schroeder, Western ESL Services
 - Interview with Valerie Macdonald – Independent Assessor

4. Field Focus Group Sessions

a. Lower Mainland (Greater Vancouver and Fraser Valley)

- ELSA Net Lower Mainland Instructors' Professional Development Day,
 - o Focus group with instructors
- Vancouver Community College
 - o Focus group with ESL Department Heads and Co-ordinators
 - o Focus group with learners
- Kwantlen College
 - o Focus group with instructors and administrators

b. Vancouver Island

- ELSA Net Vancouver Island Regional Meeting, Nanaimo
 - o Focus group
- Malaspina University College
 - o Focus group with instructors and administrators
 - o Focus group with learners

c. Northern Region

- ELSA Net Northern Regional Professional Development Day, Prince George
 - o Focus group with administrators and instructors
- College of New Caledonia
 - o Focus group with instructors
 - o Focus group with learners

d. Interior Region

- ELSA Net Interior Regional Professional Development Day, Vernon
 - o Focus group with administrators
- Okanagan University College, Kelowna
 - o Focus group with instructors
 - o Focus group with learners- 2 groups
 - o Meeting with Dean and ESL Co-ordinator

Appendix 4
ELSA CLASSES

**Table 1- ELSA Classes and Locations
November, 2003**

LOCATION DESCRIPTION	No. of Classes
Abbotsford	14
Burnaby	43
Campbell River	1
Chilliwack	3
Coquitlam	32
Courtenay	1
Duncan	1
Grand Forks	1
Kamloops	3
Kelowna	4
Langley	5
Mackenzie	1
Maple Ridge	1
Merrit	1
Mission	1
Nanaimo	4
New Westminster	5
North Delta	11
Oliver	2
One Hundred Mile House	1
Penticton	4
Port Alberni	1
Prince George	3
Prince Rupert	1
Quesnel	1
Revelstoke	1
Richmond	42
Salmon Arm	3
Smithers	1
Surrey	33
Terrace	1
Vancouver North Shore	19
Vancouver Downtown	22
Vancouver East	70
Vancouver West	6
Vernon	2
Victoria	10
Williams Lake	1

Total = 354

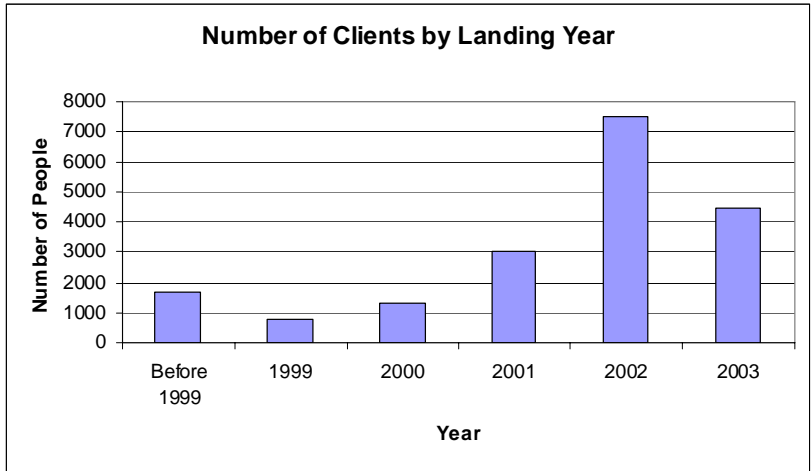
Table 2 – Child Minding Sites

November, 2003

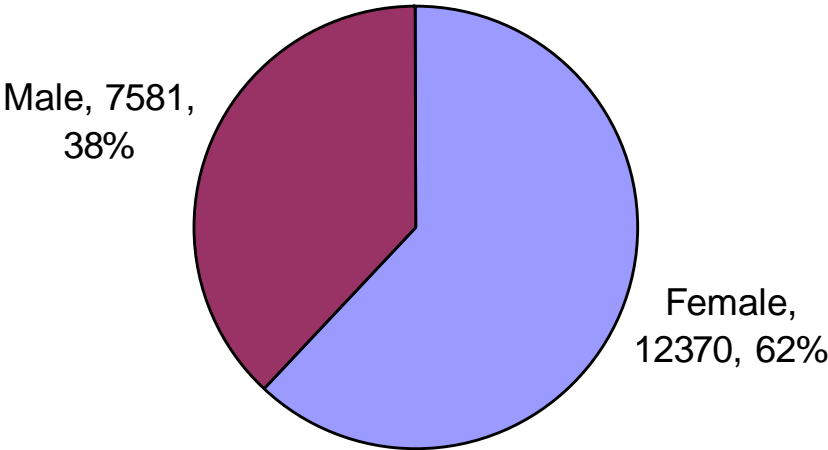
LOCATION	# of Childminding sites
Abbotsford	1
Burnaby	1
Chilliwack	1
Coquitlam	1
Duncan	1
Kamloops	1
Kelowna	1
Langley	1
Nanaimo	1
Penticton	1
Prince George	1
Richmond	2
Smithers NCC	1
Surrey	2
Vancouver EAST	6
Vancouver North Shore	1
Vancouver WEST	3
Vernon	1
Victoria	1
TOTAL	28

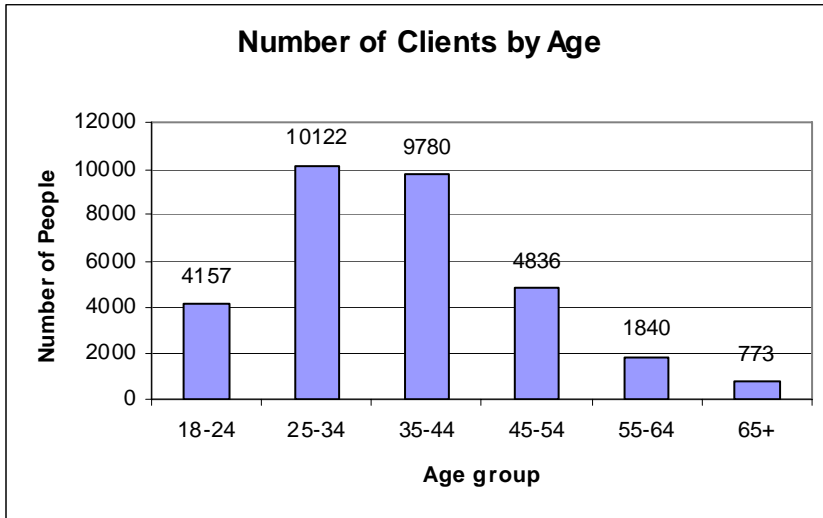
Appendix 5

ELSA CLIENT PROFILE January 2002- September 2003

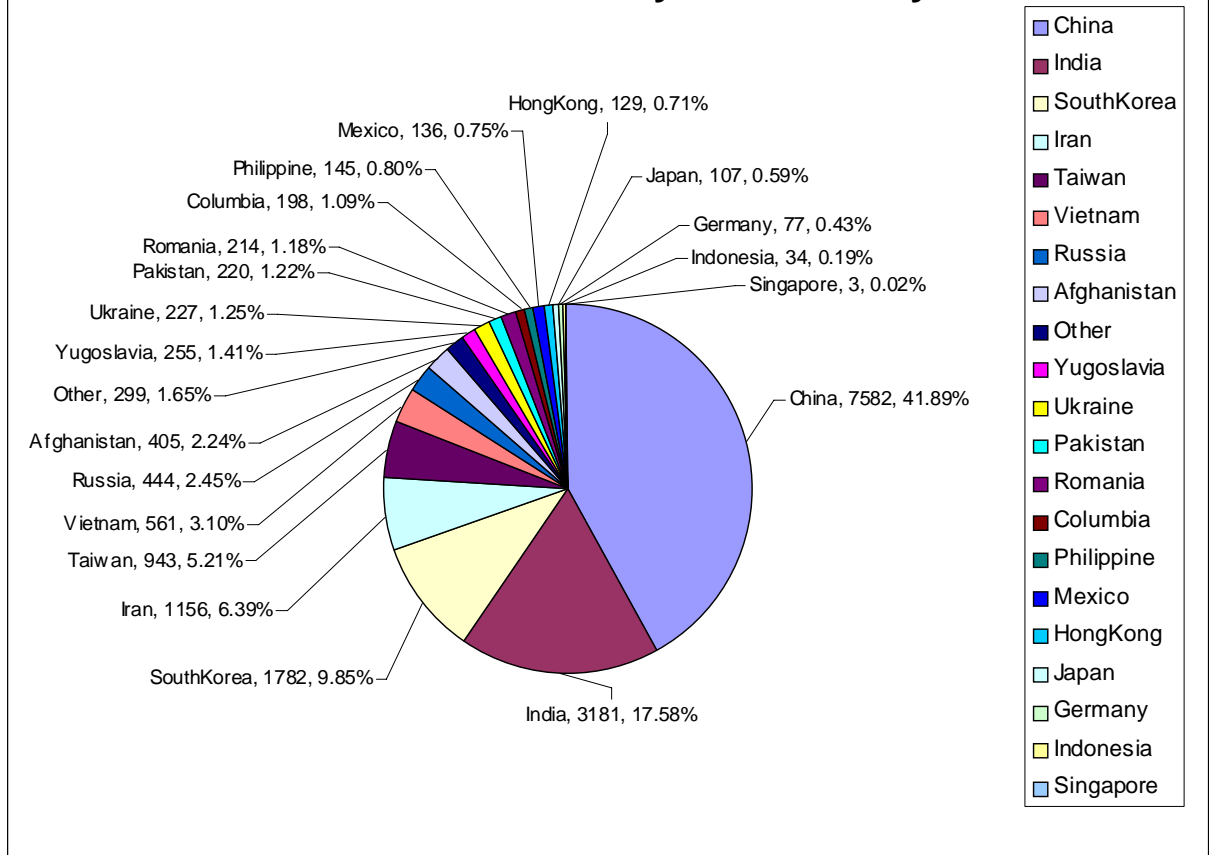


Number of Clients by Gender

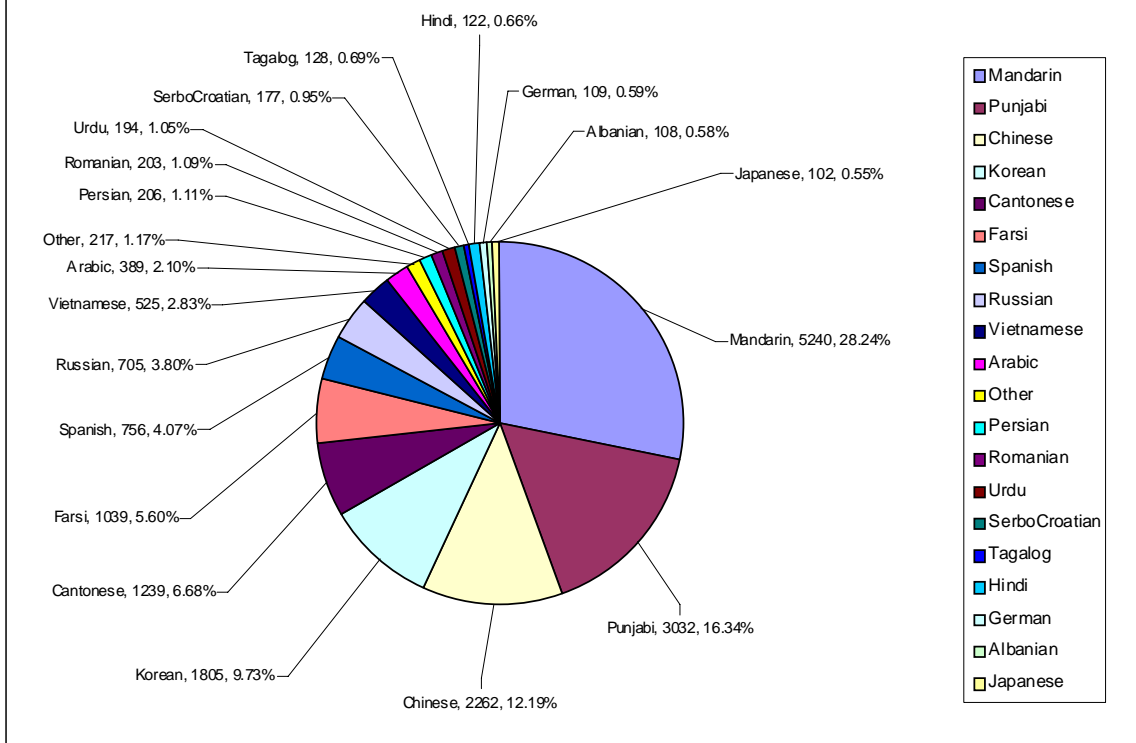


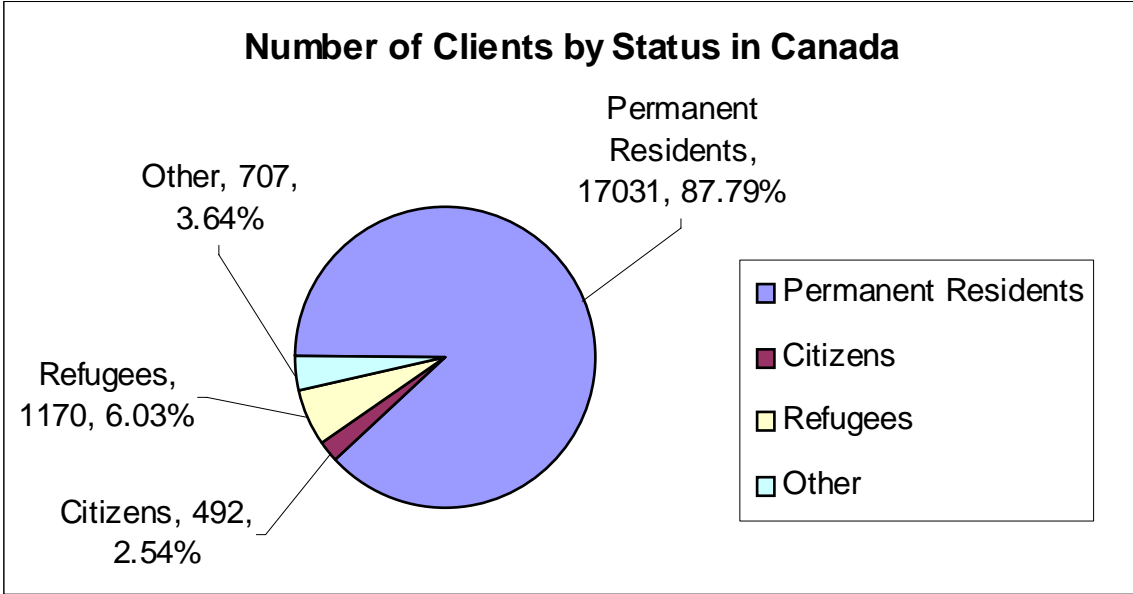


Number of Clients by Birth Country



Number of Clients by Mother Tongue





APPENDIX 6

IMMIGRATION TRENDS

Chart 1



Chart 2

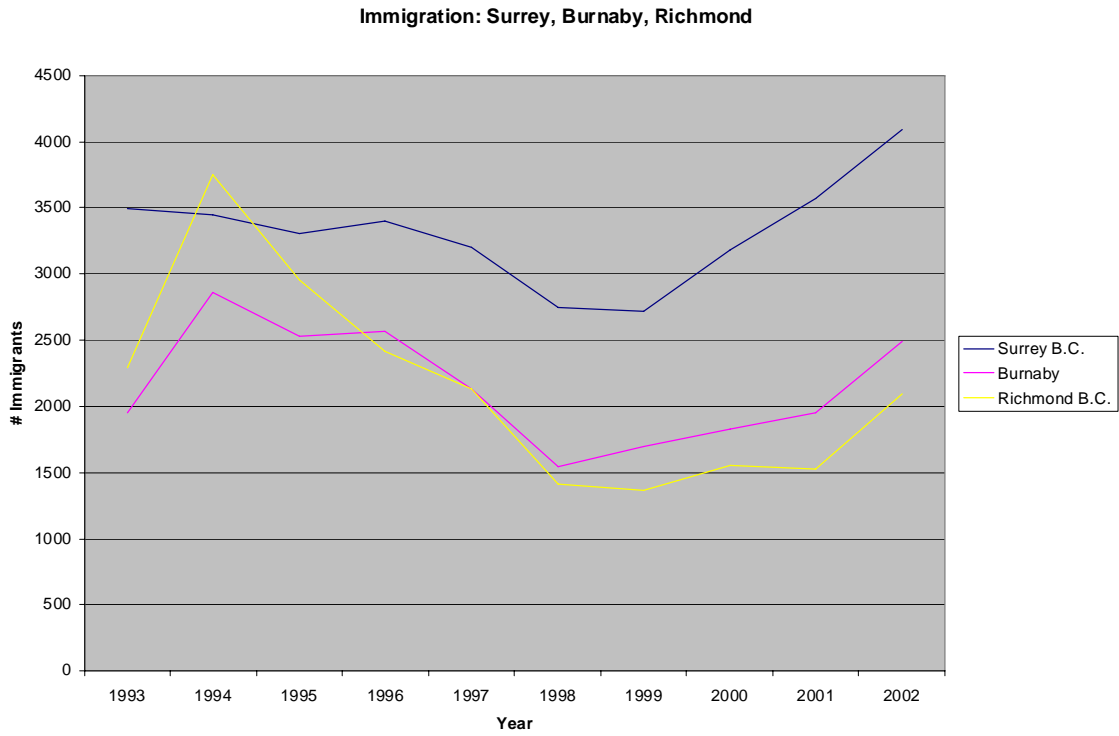


Chart 3

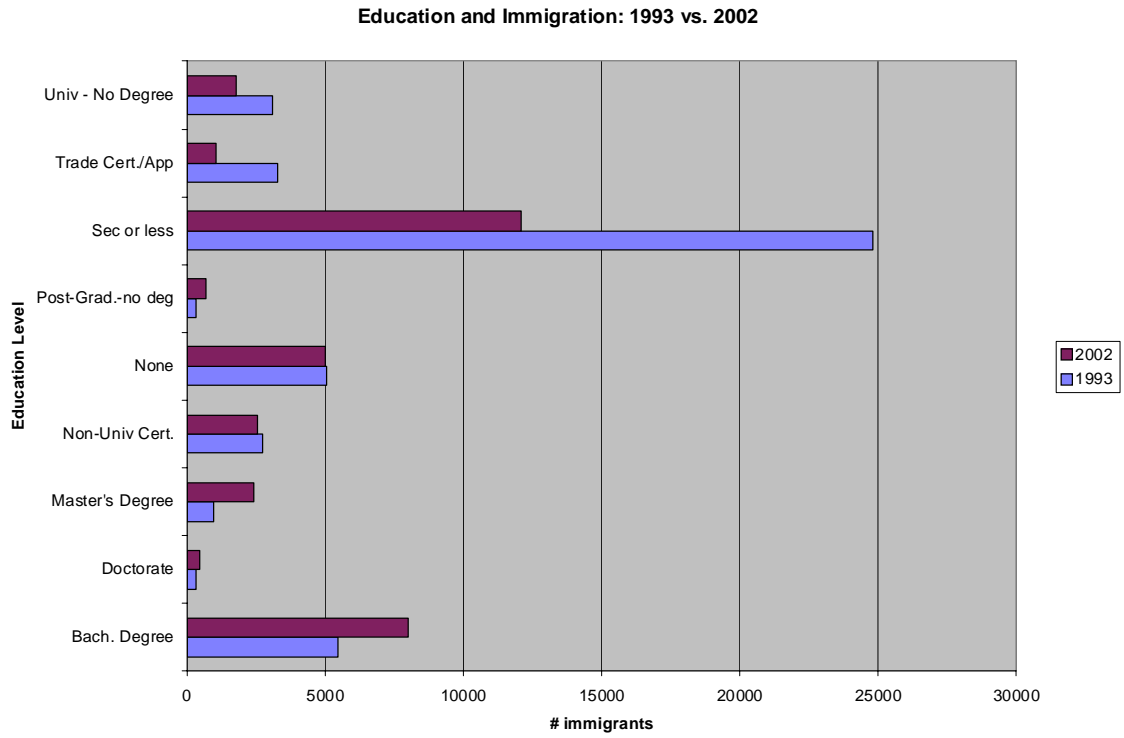


Chart 4

