



Centre for  
Canadian Language  
Benchmarks

Centre des niveaux de  
compétence linguistique  
canadiens

National Consultation on the Canadian Language  
Benchmarks 2000 and Niveaux de compétence  
linguistique canadiens 2006



**FINAL REPORT**  
**National Consultation**

January 2010



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With the contributions of

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- CCLB staff

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Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This final report, outlining the results of the National Consultation, is intended to convey the shared commitment amongst many stakeholders to continue to evolve the use and application of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (CLB) and the Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006 (NCLC) to benefit immigrants and prospective immigrants to Canada.

Many stakeholders gave generously of their time and energy to convey their perspectives and develop a shared understanding with others of what is needed to evolve the CLB and the NCLC. Over 1300 people participated in the first phase of the consultation process. CCLB brought together a group of 54 people (24 external stakeholders, 22 Board members and 8 staff) at a National Forum to validate the findings and engage in shared analysis of the questions and issues that had emerged. The level of commitment and good will was evident. People recognize the value of the CLB and the NCLC and are proud that the Benchmarks serve such a valuable purpose on a national scale.

While this process has enabled the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks/Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (CCLB/CNCLC) to define its role and strategic directions, its impact has been much broader. CCLB/CNCLC has a deep commitment to expanding the use of the CLB and the NCLC. The Board of Directors and staff undertook the National Consultation fully recognizing that many stakeholders have a role in advancing the CLB and the NCLC. The process was to be a catalyst to strengthen existing and establish new partnerships to carry out the work that is needed. We believe it has served that purpose.

On a personal note...

Thank you for giving us the privilege of joining you in this process. We appreciate the conversations we had with so many of you. We respect your dedication to making the experience of new immigrants and prospective immigrants easier and we look forward with anticipation to seeing the results that emerge.

Pamela and Paul

## ACRONYM LIST

ALP - Analyse linguistique des professions  
AQEFSL – Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde  
CanTEST - Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees  
CAEL - Canadian Academic English Language Assessment  
CECRL - Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues  
CELBAN - Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses  
CSPS - Canada School of Public Service  
CCLB - Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks  
CEFR - Common European Framework of Reference for Languages  
CIC - Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
CIITE - Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment  
CLB - Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000  
CLBA - Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment  
CLBPT - Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test  
CLIC - Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada  
CNCLC - Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens  
DALF - Diplôme approfondi de langue française  
DELFI - Diplôme d'étude de langue française  
ELSA - English Language Services for Adults  
ESL - English as a Second Language  
FSL - French as a Second Language  
HRSDC - Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
IELTS - International English Language Testing System  
LINC - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada  
MELAB - Michigan English Language Assessment Battery  
MICC - Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles  
NCLC - Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006  
NCFLSIA - Niveaux de compétence en français langue seconde pour immigrants adultes Québec  
OLA - Occupational Language Analysis  
PSCC- Public Service Commission of Canada  
TCF - Test de connaissance du français  
TEF - Test d'évaluation du français  
TESL - Teachers of English as a Second Language  
TFI - Test de français international  
TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language  
TOEIC - Test of English for International Communication  
WLA - Workplace Language Assessment

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks/Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (CCLB/CNCLC) is the centre of expertise in support of national standards in English and French for describing, measuring and recognizing the second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada.

In late 2008, with funding support from the federal and some provincial governments, the CCLB/CNCLC embarked on a National Consultation to determine how the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (CLB) and the *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006 (NCLC)* as described in the core documents Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults and les Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006: Français langue seconde pour adultes should evolve to meet the needs of stakeholders.

The National Consultation process was highly valued by a broad range of stakeholders who are committed to the CLB and the NCLC and want to influence their ongoing evolution. Over 1300 people were engaged in the process.

The CLB has a strong foundation of support. While there are some concerns about the rigour of the CLB to be addressed, fundamentally they have tremendous support across the country from a wide range of stakeholders. The level of passion, commitment and buy-in has actually created the demand to address gaps and challenges in a more robust way.

Given its relative youth, support for the NCLC is quite strong and growing among groups and institutions working in settlement and with French as a second language stakeholders.

The NCLC and the CLB are both recognized for: the comprehensiveness of the frameworks and their constructs; their service as common nation-wide standards; the strong foundation they provide for assessment; and the strong foundation they provide for language teaching and curriculum development. Given their different contexts and history, it is important to acknowledge and recognize that such a high level of convergence exists.

There is considerable synergy across the country in terms of the gaps, challenges and unmet needs to be addressed for both the CLB and the NCLC in relation to: their integrity<sup>1</sup>, language training application and sharing of resources. There is less history with the NCLC and as a result less focus on gaps and challenges as they relate to application in the pre-immigration, employment and academic contexts compared to the CLB.

Many questions emerged related to the role and core work of the CCLB/CNCLC. The process of exploring what is needed to evolve the CLB and the NCLC has served to clarify what role CCLB/CNCLC needs to assume. Stakeholders have defined the desired role as: providing leadership for the evolution of the CLB and the NCLC; preserving the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC; promoting their use; and supporting their application.

As stakeholders work together to advance the recommendations in this National Consultation report, CCLB/CNCLC will be prepared to assume its role, while working in partnership with the many individuals and organizations that have an interest in and commitment to ensuring that the CLB and the NCLC benefit immigrants and prospective immigrants to Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Integrity is defined as fundamental reliability. In this context the integrity of the Benchmarks enables stakeholders to trust that levels are unique and distinguished from each other based on sound logic and description.



The following recommendations have emerged through the National Consultation:

### **Vision**

1. Continue to articulate the vision for the CLB and NCLC as standards for language proficiency for adult immigrants and prospective immigrants. [urgent]
2. Develop guidelines for the adaptation of the CLB and the NCLC with populations other than adult immigrants or prospective immigrants. [important]
3. Monitor developments to evolve the CLB and the NCLC for use beyond the adult immigrant and prospective immigrant populations and assess the implications for maintaining the ongoing integrity of the CLB and the NCLC. [important]

### **Integrity of the CLB and the NCLC**

4. Enhance the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC – establishing more distinct differentiation between levels, clearer descriptors within levels, and the capacity to track outcomes and differences between outcomes across levels. [urgent]
5. Address issues related to comprehensiveness of the core CLB and NCLC documents. [urgent]
6. Address issues related to ease of navigation of the core CLB and NCLC documents. [urgent]
7. Inform stakeholders of the validation that has been completed, articulate the caveats for using the Benchmarks and provide any guidelines that are required for use. [urgent]
8. Develop a model and guidelines for validating the use of the CLB and the NCLC as standards for multiple applications. [urgent]
9. Conduct validation of the CLB and the NCLC according to principles of academic rigour. [important]
10. Identify research priorities in partnership with researchers and academics. [important]
11. Conduct articulation of the CLB and NCLC frameworks and associated tests with other frameworks and tests when a clear benefit can be demonstrated. [important]

### **Pre-immigration**

12. Develop a strategy to inform prospective immigrants about language as a predictor of successful integration. [important]
13. Develop a strategy that will enable more prospective immigrants to assess and improve their language proficiency prior to arrival. [important]
14. Build partnerships with employers and sector councils involved in language proficiency assessment and training of skilled workers in the pre-immigration stage. Identify what is working, challenges arising and establish partnerships to build capacity within sectors where appropriate. [explore]

### **Language Training and Application**

15. Establish a pan-Canadian training framework that outlines best practices for providing CLB and NCLC related implementation support to language teachers. [important]
16. Establish an action plan with defined priorities for developing language training resources of national relevance. [urgent]

17. Establish new modalities of service where critical mass for classes does not exist. [important]
18. Provide a forum for administrators and teachers of ESL and FSL programs to problem solve about appropriate modalities of service. [explore]
19. Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment that involve the CLB or the NCLC (also relevant to Academic and Employment Application). [urgent]
20. Develop the tools and applications required to ensure assessment processes have the appropriate level of rigour. [urgent]

### **Academic Application**

21. Once changes have been made to enhance the integrity of the Benchmarks, promote the use of the CLB and the NCLC amongst academic institutions, building on the research and work that has been done in different provinces to establish consistent entry requirements across institutions. [important]
22. Determine what if any, articulation of the CLB and the NCLC and their associated tests is needed with other frameworks and tests used to establish entry into academic programs. [important]
23. Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment that involve the CLB or the NCLC (also relevant to Language Training and Employment Application). [urgent]
24. Develop language proficiency assessment tests that are suitable to measure language skills at the higher CLB and NCLC levels. [urgent]

### **Employment Application**

25. Increase awareness of the role of the CLB (and in future the NCLC) in understanding and describing language proficiency and how the Benchmarks interface with measuring other skills (e.g. socio-cultural, technical). [important]
26. Expand capacity in the employment sector to apply the CLB and the NCLC in the employment context. [important]
27. Address pronunciation, intonation and comprehensibility through resources and applications associated with the CLB and NCLC. [important]
28. Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment that involve the CLB or the NCLC (also relevant to Language Training and Academic Application). [urgent]
29. Develop language proficiency assessment tests that are suitable to measure language proficiency in the employment context. [urgent]
30. Establish a portfolio type of approach that allows immigrants learning a second language to track and demonstrate their language proficiency. [explore]

### **Developing and Sharing Quality Resources**

31. Establish a national on-line repository (with processes to ensure it retains its currency) to house information about research, best practices and guidelines as well as resources and tools used in the application of the CLB and the NCLC in the pre-immigration, language training, employment and academic contexts. Tailor the website for easy use by different stakeholder groups. [urgent]

32. Establish a coordinated approach to defining priorities for development of resources and applications of national relevance. [explore]
33. Establish a coordinated approach to developing resources and applications of national relevance. [explore]
34. Continue to align NCLC resources and resources developed by the government of Québec wherever possible [important]
35. Clarify protocols around the sharing of resources between organizations and across jurisdictions – taking into account recognition of intellectual capital and the need to cover development costs. [important]
36. Establish a quality assurance framework to assess benchmarked tools and resources. [important]

#### Role of CCLB/CNCLC and Other Stakeholders

37. Advise stakeholders of the CCLB/CNCLC's role and core services. [urgent]
38. Clearly define the respective roles and the relationships between the CCLB/CNCLC and its funders for maintaining the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC. [important]
39. Establish a strategic plan for the CCLB/CNCLC – building on the results of the National Consultation. [urgent]
40. Address any governance changes that may be required to enable the CCLB/CNCLC to assume its leadership role. [important]
41. Establish a stakeholder engagement model that outlines how stakeholders are continuously engaged in identifying and responding to system needs. [important]
42. Establish funding practices that will enable CCLB/CNCLC to fulfil its core functions. [important]
43. Expand CCLB/CNCLC capacity to provide service and engage stakeholders in both official languages on a consistent basis. [important]

## INTENTION

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks/Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens (CCLB/CNCLC) is the centre of expertise in support of the national standards in English and French for describing, measuring and recognizing second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada.

In spring 2008, the Board of Directors of the CCLB/CNCLC decided that a National Consultation was needed to determine how the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 (CLB) and the *Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006 (NCLC)* as described in the core documents Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second Language for Adults and les Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006: Français langue seconde pour adultes should evolve to meet the needs of stakeholders.

With funding support from the federal and some provincial governments, the CCLB/CNCLC embarked on a National Consultation in fall 2008. The intention was to develop a comprehensive and shared understanding across key stakeholders of:

- the strengths of the CLB and the NCLC;
- challenges, gaps and unmet needs in the use and application of the CLB and the NCLC;
- potential new uses and applications of the CLB and the NCLC given the changing contexts in which they are used;
- the changes needed to the CLB and the NCLC and the core documents to ensure they maintain their quality, currency, relevance and transferability; and
- the types of tools, tests and resources needed to support implementation of the CLB and the NCLC.

The findings of the National Consultation would allow the CCLB/CNCLC to:

- undertake, in consultation with its primary funder and the holder of the copyright for the Benchmarks (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) and with experts in the field, the revisions required for the CLB and the NCLC to meet existing and emerging needs; and
- define its priorities and future directions for the evolution of the CLB and the NCLC and to determine the organizational capacity and structure needed to maintain the value and maximize the potential of the CLB and the NCLC as national standards for language proficiency.

## APPROACH

The CLB and the NCLC exist in a complex self-organizing system with many stakeholders who depend on the Benchmarks as the foundation for their work with existing and prospective immigrants. The different contexts within which the CLB and the NCLC are applied include pre-immigration, language training, employment and academia. As indicated in Figure 1, within each context there are multiple stakeholders who influence or are influenced by the Benchmarks and their application.

The process utilized in the National Consultation reflects this complexity and the intent to effectively engage stakeholders from across the country.

**Figure 1: Multiple Stakeholders working with the CLB and the NCLC**



## MAXIMUM ENGAGEMENT

The National Consultation process had three phases: a broad consultation phase involving many stakeholders; a validation process with a representative group of stakeholders; and a strategic planning process with the Board of Directors of the CCLB/CNCLC.

### Phase 1:

Over 1300 people participated in Phase 1 of the consultation process. The consultation activities carried out included:

- multi-stakeholder forums focused on the context within which the CLB and the NCLC are used, challenges and gaps and emerging opportunities;
- practitioner<sup>2</sup> specific forums to seek specific feedback on the CLB and the NCLC and associated tools and resources;
- a survey of CLB practitioners to validate information gathered through forums and reach a broader number of practitioners;
- individual interviews to seek feedback on the NCLC where numbers did not warrant conducting a workshop;
- a survey of CLB learners to explore their experience of the CLB;
- a focus group with NCLC learners to explore their experience of the NCLC;

<sup>2</sup> Practitioners are referring to the broader group of teachers, teacher trainers, assessors, resource developers

- key informant interviews to get specific information on issues that have emerged and require clarification;
- consultation with CCLB/CNCLC Board and staff in separate sessions; and
- a document review targeting information related to specific issues that have emerged.

There were some differences in the consultation process involving the NCLC relative to the CLB given that the NCLC was launched in 2006 and has a smaller base of stakeholders familiar with them. Fewer forums were held (6 compared to 22 for the CLB) in fewer regions (4 instead of 11 for the CLB). The number of practitioners familiar with the NCLC did not warrant a separate web-based survey as was undertaken for the CLB. The NCLC consultation benefitted from the results of studies that were undertaken in 2007, soon after the launch of the NCLC. These studies explored the perceptions of potential users within the French as a second language community in Canada<sup>3</sup>. Although NCLC is not used in Québec, representatives from the *Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* (MICC) of the Government of Québec and researchers from the *Université de Montréal* were consulted because of their interest and involvement with the NCLC.

Appendix A includes an overview of the consultation steps, intended outcomes and number of participants in Phase 1.

#### Phase 2:

The key results and preliminary analysis resulting from the initial stages of the National Consultation was integrated into a discussion document in preparation for the National Forum.

Twenty- four people representing the broad range of stakeholders accepted the invitation to meet with the CCLB/CNCLC Board of Directors to engage in further analysis and validation of the findings.

Participants in the National Forum explored some of the tensions and questions that had surfaced during the initial consultation phase and offered their insights into the best way forward given competing demands and priorities. They reviewed the recommendations outlined in the discussion document, proposing modifications and indicating the relative level of priority for action. The National Forum was also a critical opportunity for stakeholders to offer their insights related to the role of the CCLB/CNCLC.

#### Phase 3:

Building on the outcomes of the National Forum, the Board of Directors of the CCLB/CNCLC clarified the mission and core services of the organization and outlined its strategic directions and key implementation strategies for the coming three-year period.

It is anticipated that other organizations will also utilize the results of the National Consultation to inform their work in evolving the use and application of the CLB and the NCLC.

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<sup>3</sup> *Perceptions du document Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006, français langue seconde pour adultes: Résultats de l'enquête auprès des lecteurs*, Philippe Ricard, Bureau d'études socio-graphiques inc., Février 2007 and *Perceptions des intervenants en français langue seconde sur l'utilisation des Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 2006: Français langue seconde pour adultes dans leur contexte et milieu de travail – Résultats de cinq groupes de discussion réalisés en Ontario, au Manitoba et au Nouveau-Brunswick*, Silvia Dancose et Philippe Ricard, Centre des niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens et Bureau d'études socio-graphiques inc., Juin 2007.

## **DOCUMENTATION RELATED TO THE CONSULTATION**

There are a number of key documents that outline the results of the National Consultation:

FINAL REPORT (this document) - High-level strategic analysis and recommendations<sup>4</sup> to guide the evolution of the CLB and the NCLC;

CHANGES TO THE CLB AND THE NCLC COMPANION DOCUMENT – Detailed input and recommendations for making adjustments to the Benchmarks;

CLB PRACTITIONER SURVEY RESULTS – Analysis of the results of the CLB Practitioner Survey;

CLB LEARNER SURVEY RESULTS – Analysis of the results of the Learner Survey;

NCLC LEARNER FOCUS GROUP RESULTS – Brief report of results; and

DOCUMENT REVIEW - Exploration of specific questions emerging from the forums.

Throughout the remaining text, references are made to these documents, which can be reviewed for further detail.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS**

The evaluation results related to the multi-stakeholder and the practitioner specific forums indicate a high degree of satisfaction amongst participants with both the process and the opportunity to provide their input. Satisfaction with the National Forum was also high, although participants have indicated that as a national organization working to engage both French and English speaking stakeholders, CCLB/CNCLC needs to develop the capacity to offer simultaneous translation at all bilingual events.

The National Consultation process has enabled the CCLB/CNCLC to establish clear directions to guide the evolution of the CLB and NCLC and created a strong foundation of shared understanding and commitment to those directions amongst stakeholders.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A National Consultation Advisory Team made up of CCLB/CNCLC Board and staff worked with the Veradus Consulting team to provide advice on the design of the National Consultation and its implementation as the process unfolded.

CCLB/CNCLC assumed the project management role and CCLB/CNCLC staff supported all aspects of implementation. The Veradus Consulting team was engaged in process design, facilitation of forums, survey development, analysis of all results and documentation.

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<sup>4</sup> Recommendations have been identified as: urgent - immediate action with dedicated resources; important - move forward as soon as resources allow; or exploratory - determine extent of action needed and how to advance them.

## THE CONTEXT

The CLB is rooted in a strong commitment to enhance integration of new immigrants. The CLB emerged in response to a need, identified by new immigrants in 1993 at a TESL Canada Learners Conference, for a common language to describe language proficiency in English. The intent of a common language was to enable new immigrants to demonstrate and understand their language proficiency and access the services, supports, and jobs that they needed to settle in Canada. Federal and provincial governments and service-providing organizations across the country recognized the need to respond and the CLB was born in 2000, after the initial development and piloting phase, which started in 1996.

The NCLC has a different history. The NCLC was developed with a similar intent to support immigrants but evolved from a government initiative to ensure that services were being provided in Canada's other official language, French. The NCLC was first established in 2002, primarily as a translated version of the CLB. A more robust version was developed in 2006. The NCLC is younger; has a smaller base of stakeholders located primarily in French minority communities; exists in an environment in which immigrants are primarily choosing to learn English as a second language; and has a unique relationship to the work being done by the Quebec government.

Managing the relationship of the NCLC and the CLB to ensure they both evolve and respond to their particular challenges while at the same time remain closely related and equivalent can be difficult. Clear intention, targeted resources and perhaps changes in government policy and criteria are required to enable the NCLC to evolve in response to the needs of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants seeking to learn French.

The CLB and the NCLC were established primarily with a settlement focus. While the Benchmarks are grounded in an understanding that they have relevance in the community, school and work environments; changes in the labour market and immigration policy have resulted in an exponential demand for their application in employment and academic contexts. Canada's immigration policy has increasingly been oriented toward bringing in professionals to respond to labour demands. The focus of the Provincial Nominee Program to expedite the entry of prospective immigrants with the skills required for specific types of employment has resulted in immigrants going to each province in the country. Some provinces who are just now coming to terms with how to serve the immigrant population are looking to apply the CLB and the NCLC in their context.

The language training sector itself is undergoing significant change as it seeks to fulfil a role in bridging language proficiency training and assessment with academic training, certification and licensing and employment. These pressures are more pronounced for the CLB given its relative maturity in relation to the NCLC.

### Immigration facts...

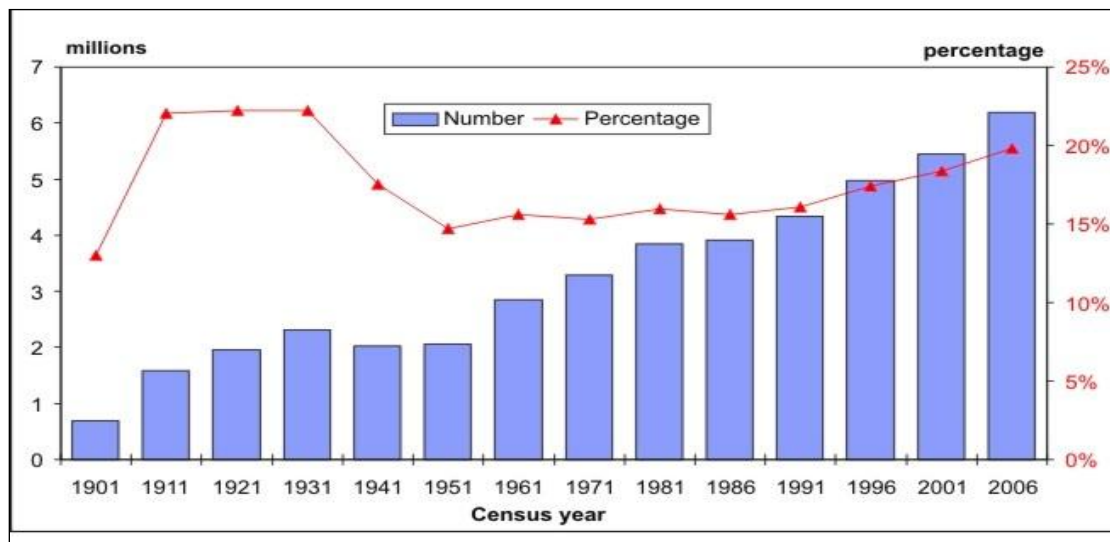
Immigrants represented 17.4% of the population when the CLB was introduced in 1996. This increased to approximately 20.0% in 2006 (Census)

Canada admitted 247,243 permanent residents in 2008. (CIC, 2008)

In 2003 only 1 in 10 immigrants spoke English or French as their mother tongue, compared to 1 in 3 in 1980. (Statistics Canada, 2003)

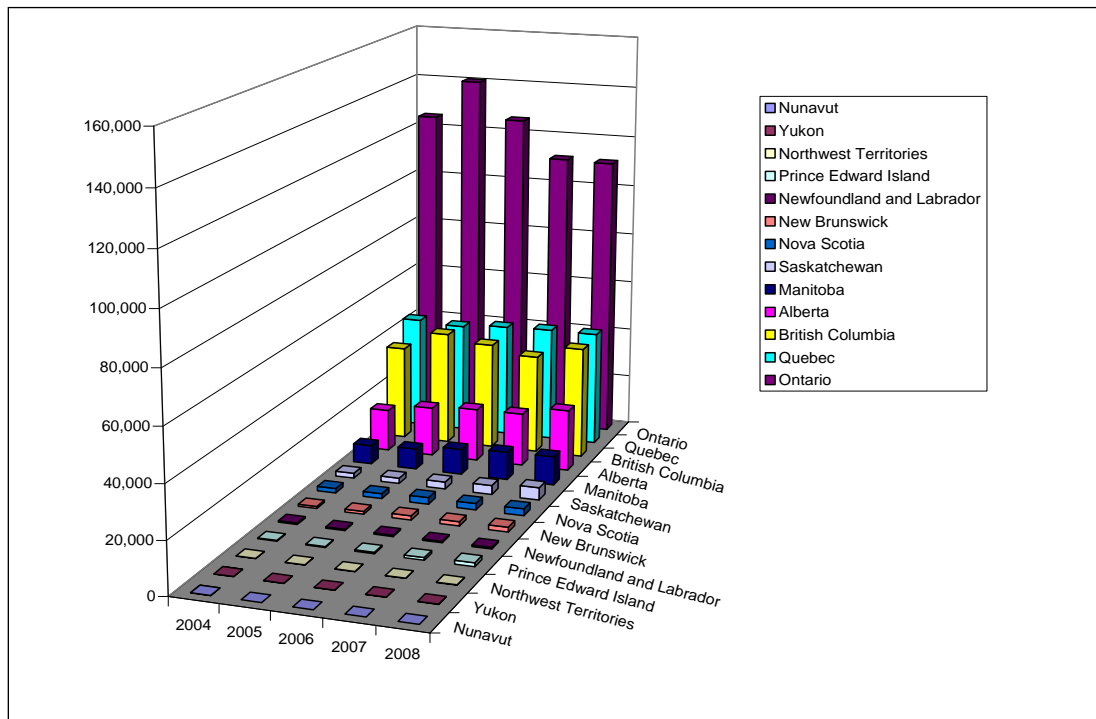


**Figure 2: Changes in immigration in Canada**



Number and share of the foreign-born population in Canada, 1901 to 2006  
 (Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1901 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 2008 taken from Integrating Internationally Educated Professionals: documenting University Bridging programs in Ontario).

**Figure 3: Changes in Immigration by Province / Territory**



Components of population growth, by province and territory  
 Statistics Canada: <http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/demo33b-eng.htm>

## A STRONG FOUNDATION

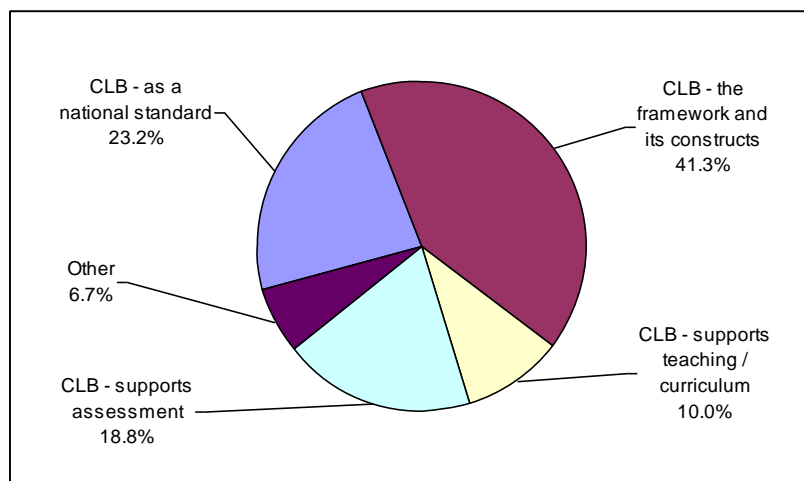
The CLB has a strong foundation of support. While there are concerns about the rigour of the CLB to be addressed, fundamentally they have tremendous support across the country from a wide range of stakeholders. The level of passion, commitment and buy-in has actually created the demand to address gaps and challenges in a more robust way.

Given its relative youth, support for the NCLC is quite strong and growing among groups and institutions working in settlement and with French as a second language. Although stakeholders are supportive and recognize the importance of such a national standard, the NCLC is having to distinguish itself from another language framework, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (), which is already being widely piloted within French immersion programs.

## STRENGTHS OF THE CLB

During the consultation forums on the CLB, participants were asked to identify what for them were the three most important strengths of the CLB. Participants had complete freedom to identify anything they considered to be strengths of the CLB. An analysis of all the strengths identified in this way reveals that most of the strengths fall into four main categories with a number of 'other' strengths which have been grouped under a fifth category.

**Figure 4: Strengths / CLB Forums - All Participants<sup>5</sup>**



Within each broad category, the strengths fall within a number of sub-categories. Table 1 summarizes this information, with the main categories ranked from A to E according to the degree of support each received, and within each main category, the sub-categories ranked with numerals. The table also includes the percentage of forum participants that had identified strengths that fell within these sub-categories and categories.

The four most important categories (A to D) account for 93.3% of the strengths identified by forum participants. However, there were a number of other significant strengths identified by participants even if these did not recur as often. It is also useful to compare the relative importance of the sub-categories according to the percentage of support received. For example

<sup>5</sup> Data source for Figure 4: Summary table of data from all CLB forums; 337 participants in all.

the availability of resources in print (within the 'Other' category) was identified as a strength by a higher percentage of participants than a number of the sub-categories within the most important categories.

**Table 1: Main Categories and Sub-Categories of CLB Strengths**

<b>MAIN CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF STRENGTHS FROM CLB FORUMS</b> (both main categories and sub-categories are ranked by importance)	<b>Rank</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Comprehensiveness of framework and its constructs</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>41.3</b>
Benchmarks are task-based, functional and practical	1	6.6
Framework distinguishes between the four skill areas	2	6.0
Organized in three stages and twelve levels	3	5.2
Includes well developed performance indicators, conditions and descriptors	4	4.4
Puts emphasis on competency as opposed to knowledge	5	3.7
Learner-centered and focuses on what learners 'can do'	5	3.6
Wide applicability	6	3.0
Framework has a good theoretical framework	6	2.9
Well laid out thereby facilitating ease of use	7	2.4
Other		3.4
<b>The framework as a common nation-wide standard</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>23.2</b>
Geographic portability: it provides a common reference for understanding and measuring language proficiency across the country	1	11.4
Provides practitioners across the country with a common/consistent language they can use with respect to language proficiency	2	4.9
It enables alignment and consistency between a range of contexts (settlement, employment, education) and stakeholders (language teachers/trainers, administrators, assessors, regulators)	3	3.6
It makes possible transparency and articulation between programs	4	2.1
Other		1.2
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for assessment</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>18.8</b>
Learners appreciate the standard as a reference to set themselves goals and measure progress	1	4.3
Foundation for quantifiable, consistent performance measurement of language proficiency	1	4.2
Potential for achieving rigour, reliability and equity	2	2.9
It serves as the basis for developing reliable assessment tools	3	2.6
Other		4.8
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for language teaching and curriculum development</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>10.0</b>
Provides a solid reference to develop language training curricula and prepare lessons plans	1	6.4
Provides guidance to, and supports consistency, between language teachers	2	2.1
Other		1.5
<b>Other</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>6.6</b>
The CLB and various CLB-based resources available in print	1	3.0
The CLB emerged from a process of collaboration and stakeholders continue to value opportunities to be engaged in influencing how the CLB evolves and is used	2	1.5
The framework has potential for sector applications	3	1.2
Other		0.6

### What people said...

"The CLB have exceeded our expectations. We hoped for widespread use and look what happened."

"We have the potential for multiple applications. Other benchmarking systems are much more limited in their application."

"The CLB have created a need for people who use them to talk to each other – we are forced to have a common language to talk to each other."

"The CLB were developed collaboratively, therefore they allow buy-in."

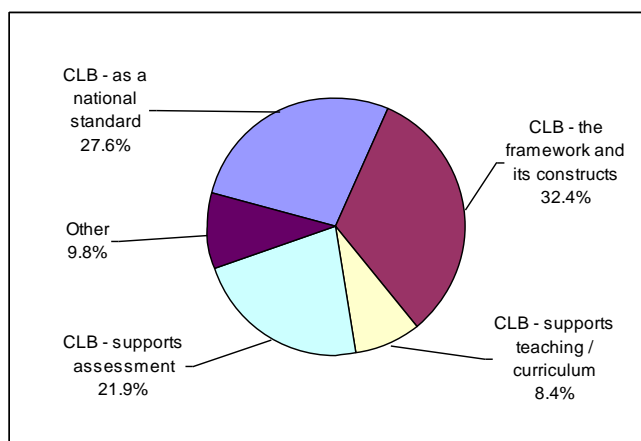
"I am impressed that it is national – there is not much related to education in this country that is national."

"CLB are the bones of the body of knowledge related to language acquisition."

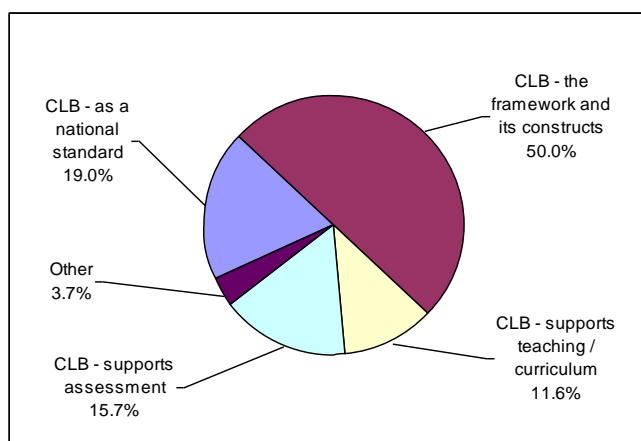
"CLB resulted in a huge change in the way we taught language – from a focus on grammar to how you use the language."

There were slight differences between multi-stakeholder forums and practitioner specific forums, but more in the degree and emphasis given to certain categories. Because of their greater familiarity with the CLB framework and its constructs, practitioners were more inclined to identify strengths in this area than participants in multi-stakeholder forums. The reverse is true for the CLB as a national standard.

**Figure 5: Strengths / CLB Multi-stakeholder Forums<sup>6</sup>**



**Figure 6: Strengths / CLB Practitioner Specific Forums<sup>7</sup>**



<sup>6</sup> Data source for Figure 5: Summary table of data from CLB multi-stakeholder forums; 168 participants in all.

<sup>7</sup> Data source for Figure 6: Summary table of data from CLB practitioner specific forums; 169 participants in all.

A web-based survey provided the opportunity to 497 CLB practitioners (66.4% of whom had not participated in any of the forums) to further comment on what they believed were the strengths of the CLB. Drawing on the results of the forums, the survey identified 16 dimensions which survey respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 whether they thought the dimension was a strength or not (where 1 = not at all a strength; 5 = very much a strength). The table below lists the 16 dimensions and indicates the percentage of respondents that rated the dimension a significant strength of the CLB (i.e. giving it a rating of 4 or 5).

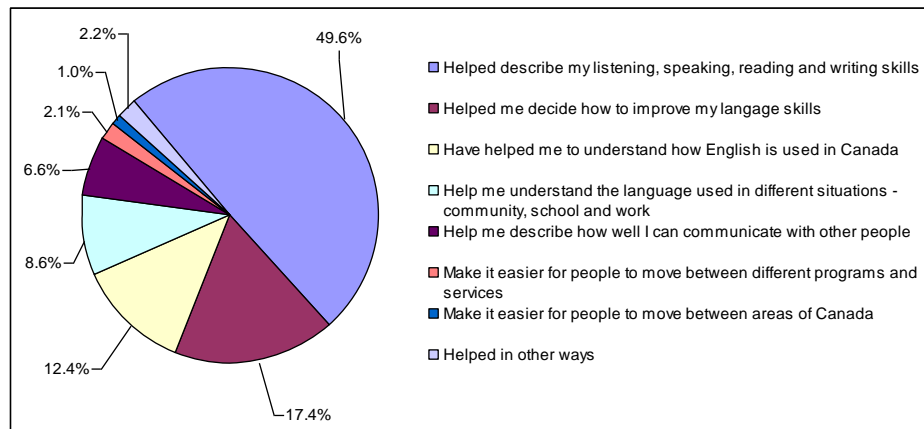
For all the dimensions identified as strengths of the CLB, more than 50% of the survey respondents (who gave a rating) endorsed them as significant strengths, with three of the dimensions receiving an over 80% endorsement and a further three receiving an over 70% endorsement. Only three dimensions received an endorsement of less than 60%, and in each case they were only one or two percentages short. Generally the percentage of respondents without an opinion was very low (below 3% for the most part). The one exception was with the 'CLB document has its counterpart in French – the NCLC', where 42.8% of respondents did not have an opinion.

**Table 2: Strengths of CLB Framework**

<b>STRENGTHS OF CLB FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>% of respondents with an opinion rating either 4 or 5</b>
<b>NATIONAL RELEVANCE – COMMON FRAMEWORK</b>	
National framework for understanding and measuring language proficiency	81.8
Common language for stakeholders across the country	80.6
Allows alignment and consistency between and within programs and services	78.0
Reflects Canadian context	72.6
CLB document has its counterpart in French - the NCLC	67.8
<b>COMPREHENSIVENESS - QUALITY</b>	
Comprehensive – covers all four aspects of language proficiency (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	80.4
Good theoretical framework	74.9
Competency based/ task based/practical approach to language	73.0
Addresses the process of language acquisition - levels and stages	65.0
Well developed performance descriptors, performance conditions and outcomes	62.6
Addresses different dimensions – community, work and school	59.7
<b>FOUNDATION FOR APPLICATION</b>	
Foundation for the development of resources – tools and processes related to measuring and supporting language acquisition and proficiency	65.7
Foundation for organizing services (e.g. classes, assessment, etc.)	64.2
Supports a learner-centred approach to defining capacities, goals and to track progress	62.6
Foundation for an accountability framework between funders and providers, and administrators and staff	59.2
Foundation for professional development and training	58.1

Almost half (49.6%) of the 566 respondents to the Learner survey indicated that the CLB has helped them 'describe their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills'. The second most frequent response (17.4%) was that the CLB "helped me decide how to improve my language skills'.

**Figure 7: How have the Benchmarks (CLB) helped you?<sup>8</sup>**

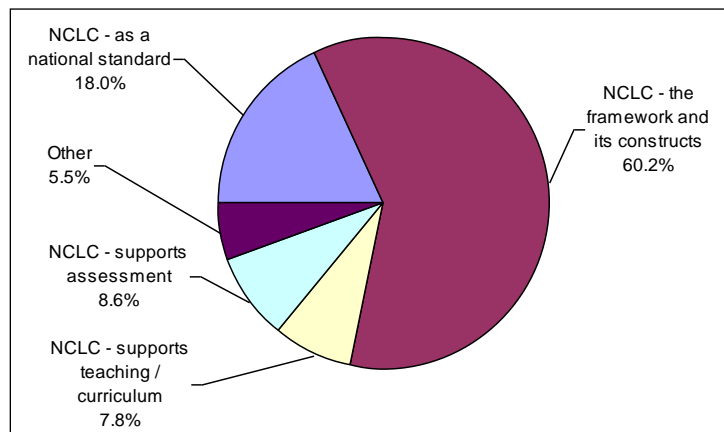


## STRENGTHS OF THE NCLC

During the NCLC consultation forums, participants were also asked to identify what were the three most important strengths of the NCLC. Participants had complete freedom to identify anything they considered to be strengths of the NCLC. An analysis of all the strengths identified reveals that the strengths participants identified most often fall into four main categories:

- the comprehensiveness of the NCLC framework and its constructs;
- the framework as a common Canada-wide standard;
- the framework as providing a strong foundation for assessment; and
- the framework as providing a strong foundation for language training and curriculum development.

**Figure 8: Strengths - NCLC Forums and Interviews - All Participants<sup>9</sup>**



An examination of the sub-categories under each of the main categories provides further detail about the perceived strengths of the NCLC (Table 3).

<sup>8</sup> Data source for Figure 7: Learners Survey, question 15. A total of 579 learners responded to this question.

<sup>9</sup> Data source for Figure 8: Summary table of data from all NCLC forums and interviews; 46 participants in all.

### What people said...

«Le cadre NCLC est un cadre de référence uniforme à l'échelle du pays qui permet d'utiliser les mêmes repères quant à l'évaluation et à la formation linguistique. » (The NCLC framework is a uniform framework of reference across the country that permits using the same benchmarks for assessment and language training.)

« La vue d'ensemble des descripteurs de performance par compétence et par stade permet d'avoir une vision synthétique par niveau et d'un niveau à un autre. » (The overview of performance descriptors by competencies and stages permits to get a global vision within and across levels.)

« Cohérence et cohésion des différents niveaux (1-12) ce qui permet de suivre le cheminement de l'apprenant depuis le tout début et d'établir son niveau et, dans une certaine mesure, son rythme de progression. Très complet. » (The coherence and cohesion of the various levels (1-12) is what enables one to follow the learner's progress from the start and establish his level and, to some extent, his rate of progress. Very comprehensive.)

« Les NCLC permettent aux administrateurs de programmes linguistiques de parler un langage commun lorsqu'ils parlent avec les formateurs et les apprenants. » (The NCLC enable linguistic programs managers to speak a common language when they talk with trainers and learners.)

« L'utilisation des NCLC assure un meilleur travail d'équipe des formateurs et une meilleure homogénéité du programme. » (Using the NCLC ensures better teamwork among trainers and a more homogenous program.)

« Le cadre est accepté par la communauté d'experts de partout au pays. » (The framework is accepted by the expert community across the country.)

**Table 3: Main Categories and Sub-Categories of NCLC Strengths**

<b>MAIN CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF STRENGTHS</b> (both main categories and sub-categories are ranked by importance)	<b>Rank</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Comprehensiveness of framework and its constructs</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>60.2</b>
Organized in three stages and twelve levels	1	12.5
Framework distinguishes between the four skill areas	2	10.2
Puts emphasis on competency as opposed to knowledge	2	10.2
Well laid-out thereby facilitating ease of use	3	5.5
Includes well developed performance indicators, conditions and descriptors	4	4.7
Benchmarks are task-based, functional and practical	4	4.7
Other		12.4
<b>The framework as a common nation-wide standard</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18.0</b>
Geographic portability: it provides a common reference for understanding and measuring language proficiency across the country	1	6.3
Provides practitioners across the country with a common/consistent language they can use with respect to language proficiency	2	4.7
Framework is essentially the same for both of Canada's official languages	2	4.7
Other		2.3
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for assessment</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Foundation for quantifiable, consistent performance measurement of language proficiency	1	4.7
Potential for achieving rigour, reliability and equity	2	3.9
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for language teaching and curriculum development</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Provides a solid reference to develop language training curricula and prepare lesson plans	1	4.7
Provides guidance to, and supports consistency, between language teachers	2	2.3
Other		0.8
<b>Other</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>4.5</b>
The NCLC benefits from and provides a space for dialogue/engagement and encourages inter-governmental collaboration	1	2.3
The NCLC and various NCLC-based resources available in print	2	1.6
Other		0.6

## COMPARISON OF STRENGTHS OF THE CLB AND THE NCLC

The most important categories of strengths identified through the forums are the same for both the NCLC and the CLB. While there is some variance in the percentages and ranking of sub-categories, the ranking of the main categories in order of importance is the same between the NCLC and the CLB.

The degree of convergence between stakeholder perspectives of strengths is interesting given the different context and history of the CLB and the NCLC. Certain sub-categories are not perceived as strengths of the NCLC because they do not apply (e.g. the NCLC does not yet have a theoretical framework) or it is too early in the life of the NCLC (e.g. the NCLC has yet to deal with employment or academic applications to any great extent; at the time the NCLC forums were held, NCLC-based assessment tests were not yet available).

**Table 4: Comparison of Strengths and Themes for the CLB and the NCLC**

MAIN CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF STRENGTHS (both main categories and sub-categories are ranked by importance)	CLB		NCLC	
	Rank	%	Rank	%
<b>Comprehensiveness of framework and its constructs</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>60.2</b>
Benchmarks are task-based, functional and practical	1		4	
Framework distinguishes between the four skill areas	2		2	
Organized in three stages and twelve levels	3		1	
Includes well developed performance indicators, conditions and descriptors	4		4	
Puts emphasis on competency as opposed to knowledge	5		2	
Learner-centered and focuses on what learners can do	5		-	
Wide applicability	6		-	
Framework has a good theoretical framework	6		-	
Well laid-out thereby facilitating ease of use	7		3	
<b>The framework as a common nation-wide standard</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>18.0</b>
Geographic portability: it provides a common reference for understanding and measuring language proficiency across the country	1		1	
Provides practitioners across the country with a common/consistent language they can use with respect to language proficiency	2		2	
Enables alignment and consistency between a range of contexts (settlement, employment, education) and stakeholders (language teachers/trainers, administrators, assessors, regulators)	3		-	
Makes possible transparency and articulation between programs	4		-	
Framework is essentially the same for both of Canada's official languages	-		2	
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for assessment</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>8.6</b>
Foundation for quantifiable, consistent performance measurement of language proficiency	1		1	
Learners appreciate the standard as a reference to set themselves goals and measure progress	1		-	
Potential for achieving rigour, reliability and equity	2		2	
Serves as the basis to develop assessment tools	3		-	
<b>The framework provides a strong foundation for language teaching and curriculum development</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Provides a solid reference to develop language training curricula and prepare lessons plans	1		1	
Provides guidance to, and supports consistency, between language teachers	2		2	



MAIN CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF STRENGTHS (both main categories and sub-categories are ranked by importance)	CLB		NCLC	
	Rank	%	Rank	%
<b>Other</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Various CLB/NCLC and CLB/NCLC-based resources available in print	1		2	
The CLB emerged from a process of collaboration and stakeholders continue to value opportunities to be engaged in influencing how the CLB evolves and is used; the NCLC benefits from and provides a space for/encourages inter-governmental collaboration	2		1	
Potential for sector application	3		-	

## MOVING FORWARD – BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION

During the Phase 1 consultation forums about the CLB and the NCLC, participants were asked to identify major challenges, gaps and needs. Participants worked in small groups to identify priority responses. The responses were then grouped into themes within each forum.

An analysis of the themes arising from all the forums, both CLB and NCLC, shows that eight priority themes emerged – each with sub themes. The eight priority themes are:

- Vision for the CLB and the NCLC
- Integrity of the Benchmarks
- Pre-immigration application
- Language training application
- Academic application
- Employment application
- Sharing of resources
- Role of CCLB/CNCLC

Table 5 and 6 outline the major challenges, gaps and needs related to the CLB and the NCLC identified in each of the multi-stakeholder and practitioner specific forums. The shaded boxes indicate the forums within which the challenge, gap or need was identified. The tables provide a visual representation of what challenges, gaps or needs were identified across the country. They also give some indication of where issues are prevalent.

There is considerable synergy across the country in terms of the gaps, challenges and unmet needs to be addressed for both the CLB and the NCLC in relation to: their integrity, language training application and sharing of resources. The role of the CCLB/CNCLC obviously pertains to both the CLB and the NCLC.

There is less history with the NCLC and as a result less focus on application in the pre-immigration, employment and academic contexts compared to the CLB.

The vision for the CLB and the NCLC and its use with different populations is an area where there are similarities yet differences in terms of the extent to which a broader focus might be desired.

The remainder of the document addresses the themes which have emerged. Information gathered through all of the different avenues of consultation is included. The results of the consultations with the CCLB/CNCLC Board and staff during Phase 1 are noted separately only where there is new information to add or an important perspective to share, such as the role of the CCLB/CNCLC. The recommendations made for each theme have been validated or modified by participants in the National Forum.

**Table 5: Main Gaps, Needs and Challenges related to the CLB**

		BC				AB				SK		MB		ON				PEI and NB		NS		NL	
MAIN GAPS, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES		Victoria		Vancouver		Calgary		Edmonton		Regina		Winnipeg		Ottawa		Toronto		Moncton		Halifax		St. John's	
		M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P	M	P
Vision – Clarify Use with Others	Immigrants – non adult																						
	Non immigrants																						
Integrity of the Benchmarks	Integrity																						
	Comprehensiveness																						
	User Friendly																						
	Validation																						
	Research																						
	Articulation																						
Pre-immigration Application	Understand expectations																						
	Advance training																						
Language Training Application	Training of teachers																						
	Service delivery model																						
	Appropriate resources																						
	Assessment																						
Academic Application	Understanding																						
	Reflect academic																						
	Assessment																						
Employment Application	Understanding																						
	Reflect employment																						
	Implementation support																						
	Assessment																						
Sharing of Resources	Repository																						
	Quality assurance																						
	Agreements																						
Role of CCLB/CNCLC	Organizational capacity																						
	Define role																						

Legend – M=multi-stakeholder forum; P=practitioner specific forum; a shaded cell indicates that 'gaps, needs and/or challenges' in the area identified in a particular row was raised in the forums identified in the columns; a blank cell indicates that this was not the case.

**Table 6: Main Gaps, Needs and Challenges related to the NCLC**

		MB	ON		QC		NB
MAIN GAPS, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES		Winnipeg	Ottawa		Montreal		Moncton
		M	M	P	M	P	M
<b>Vision – Clarify Use with Others</b>	Immigrants – non adult						
	Non immigrants						
	Admissibility rules/challenges in minority situation						
<b>Integrity</b>	Rigour (including lack of theoretical framework)						
	Comprehensiveness (including literacy)						
	User Friendly						
	Research and validation (including limited expertise outside of Quebec)						
	Articulation						
	Broad-based adoption/ communication/managing expectations						
<b>Pre-immigration Application</b>	Understand expectations						
<b>Language Training Application</b>	Training of teachers						
	Service Delivery Model						
	Appropriate resources (including lack of financial resources and isolation)						
	Need for web-based supports given dispersion of learners						
	Assessment						
<b>Academic Application</b>	Understanding						
	Reflect Academic						
	Assessment						
<b>Employment Application</b>	Understanding						
	Reflect employment						
	Implementation support						
	Assessment						
<b>Sharing of Resources</b>	Repository						
	Quality assurance						
	Agreements and mechanisms						
<b>Role of CCLB/CNCLC</b>	Organizational Capacity (including French capacity)						
	Define role						

Legend – M=multi-stakeholder forum; P=practitioner specific forum; a shaded cell indicates that 'gaps, needs and/or challenges' in the area identified in a particular row was raised in the forums identified in the columns; a blank cell indicates that this was not the case.

## VISION

The consultation forums across Canada revealed an urgent need to articulate a clear and widely shared vision for the intended uses and outcomes of the CLB and the NCLC.

Two critical questions required resolution:

- Are the CLB and the NCLC frameworks, or standards for understanding and measuring language proficiency, or both?
- Should the target population for the Benchmarks remain as adult immigrants and prospective immigrants, or be broadened to include other second language learners?

The responses to these questions had significant implications for how the CLB and the NCLC would evolve. Participants in the National Forum were invited to contribute their perspective.

## STANDARD AND/OR FRAMEWORK

The CLB and the NCLC core documents indicate that they are the Benchmarks are both frameworks and standards for understanding and measuring language proficiency.

In Phase 1 forums some stakeholders working with the CLB expressed caution about a perceived shifting of the underlying values of the CLB away from a framework that supports language learning and successful settlement toward a standard that has a labour market orientation. Others contended that the use of the Benchmarks in the employment context is a priority which requires that they be a standard with rigour. This tension did not arise in consultations related to the NCLC, likely due to its more limited application in the employment context.

The emphasis on settlement versus employment seems to be arbitrary. A clear and shared vision will serve to refocus attention to the benefits that the Benchmarks have for new and prospective immigrants and to increase acceptance that they have application across the continuum of the immigrant experience.

It is recognized that the CLB and the NCLC provide a valuable framework for immigrants and the people working with them to understand their language proficiency. The majority of stakeholders in Phase 1 forums also indicated that they would like the CLB and the NCLC to serve as a standard, to demonstrate language proficiency for multiple applications including:

- Entry into government funded language training and employment programs
- Entry into academic institutions
- Application for certification or licensing
- Application for employment

The intention for the Benchmarks to serve as standards was reaffirmed in the National Forum.

### ***What people said...***

*"The philosophical roots of ESL are in a very different set of principles and commitments, and a notion of country-making (inference as compared to the labour market). What are our values? What do we believe that people need to live and work and be successful members of the community? This is inherent in our Benchmarks, but do we all come at it from that perspective?"*

*"As soon as the CLB stepped out of the world of language training to a far bigger world, it became a more complex process. There is tremendous potential for the private sector to get involved. The more complexity, the more pressure to distort or challenge its integrity."*

## FOCUS ON IMMIGRANTS OR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The potential for evolving the CLB and the NCLC into language frameworks for second language learning to be used for a broader population than adult immigrants and prospective immigrants was identified. The current demand for use with other populations helped to inform stakeholder perspective.

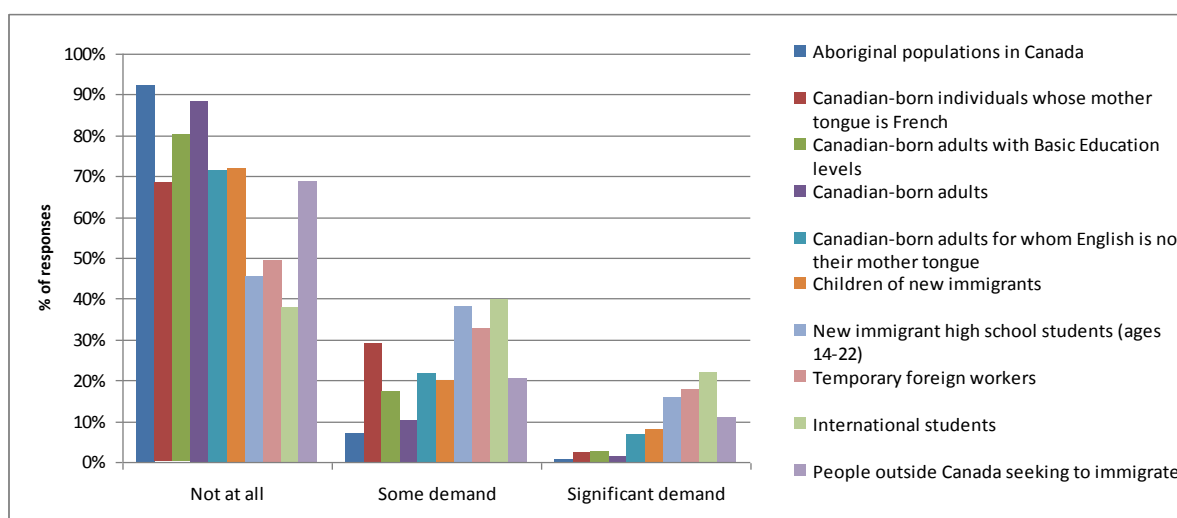
### USE OF CLB

Participants in 9 CLB forums indicated that the CLB had relevance for population groups beyond adult immigrants and that it was in fact being used with those populations.

This was further validated through the survey, which asked practitioners if they experienced demand to use the CLB with population groups beyond adult immigrants. If both “significant” and “some” demands are taken into account, the groups with the greatest demand are: international students (62% of respondents), new immigrant high school students (54%) and temporary foreign workers (51%).

About 30% of respondents also identified four other groups as being a source of significant or some demand - Canadian-born individuals whose mother tongue is French (32%), people outside Canada seeking to immigrate (31%), Canadian-born adults for whom English is not their mother tongue (28%) and children of immigrants (28%).

**Figure 9: Demand to use CLB with Other Population Groups<sup>10</sup>**



### What people said...

“The focus on adults and immigrants only is a strength.”

“The CLB have only been validated for immigrant adults. The concept is useful for other audiences. Tools and guidelines are needed.”

“We have 13 year old kids who have been living like adults for a long time and don’t fit into typical programs. We need to figure out how to integrate them intelligently.”

“We often get requests from within the college to test a First Nations learner using the CLBPT but we don’t.”

“Could the CLB position itself as a general proficiency language scale for the English language not just ESL?”

“Can we have and should we have a national plan for a coordinated response to the role of language? Should we actually treat immigrants differently?”

<sup>10</sup> Data source for Figure 9: Practitioner Survey, question 33.

## USE OF NCLC

Issues related to using the NCLC beyond the adult immigrant population were identified in four NCLC forums.

One of the significant pressures for expanded use of the NCLC is related to the context of French minority communities, outside of Eastern Ontario, with a lower immigrant population. Currently the eligibility criterion for a 'Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada' (CLIC) class is 15 learners. In many communities the number of immigrants wishing to learn French has been insufficient to meet the CLIC requirement. Yet in most of these communities, there are a number of people within the general population who are interested in learning French. If the NCLC was applied in the broader context of French as a second language (FSL) service providers could more easily respond to the dual demands for FSL services.

Current admissibility rules for new immigrants training in a second language further compounds the issue of access given that immigrants must choose one of Canada's official languages, either English or French. In most places in Canada, the demographic and economic realities are such that English is virtually always the immigrant's first choice. Anglophone immigrants to Canada are not eligible for CLIC training because they speak one of the official languages. An indirect result of concern, is that as the number of new immigrants increases in Canada with most speaking English, the relative proportion of English speaking versus French speaking people in Canada is also increasing.

In NCLC consultations the need to extend the NCLC to immigrant youth was also identified.

### What people said...

« La création des NCLC a précédé l'offre de services de formation en français. Quand les NCLC ont été créés, les immigrants ne recevaient pas de formation en français langue seconde, contrairement à ce qui s'est produit en anglais. En réalité, les NCLC ne seront probablement jamais employés si largement que les CLB. » (The creation of the NCLC has preceded the offer of services in French. When the NCLC were created, immigrants did not receive training in French as a second language, contrary to what happened in English. In fact, the NCLC will probably never be as widely used as the CLB.)

« L'immigrant doit connaître l'anglais pour faire sa place au Canada. On ne peut pas lui demander de choisir entre l'anglais et le français. L'immigrant qui apprend l'anglais ou qui se perfectionne dans cette langue devrait avoir accès à la formation en français. Le poids démographique de l'anglais ne doit pas être favorisé par rapport à celui du français. » (The immigrant has to know English to establish himself in Canada. We can't ask him to choose between English and French. The immigrant who learns English or upgrades his competency in English should have access to French training. The demographic weight of English should not be favoured compared to that of French.)

« Est-ce que la politique actuelle ne défavorise pas l'apprentissage de la langue française? La politique actuelle favorise le français au Québec et l'anglais ailleurs. » (Doesn't the current policy play against learning French? The current policy encourages French in Quebec and English elsewhere.)

While the option to expand the target population for the CLB and NCLC to other language learners was considered, the majority of stakeholders in the National Forum agreed that the target population for both the CLB and the NCLC should continue to be adult immigrants and prospective immigrants at this time. Adults in this context were defined as people of school leaving age.

The main reasons for this continued focus are:

- The Benchmarks are based on a theoretical model that is competency-based and reflects adult learning principles that are not considered to be applicable to children and youth. While it is recognized that the Benchmarks may have some relevance to youth, particularly mature youth, use with this population requires validation.
- Given the existing and anticipated level of immigration to Canada stakeholders want to stay focused on the immigrant population to ensure that the Benchmarks and their associated applications maintain a high level of integrity and can continue to evolve effectively in response to a critical need. A broadening of the population focus now would involve many new stakeholders and could weaken the momentum toward establishing the CLB and the NCLC as the standards for language proficiency in the immigrant population.

The decision to remain focused on the immigrant population was not an easy choice. Since the Benchmarks are perceived to have applicability for other populations and are in fact being used with other populations, stakeholders agreed that guidelines should be established to outline what is required to adapt the CLB and the NCLC to apply them effectively in other contexts. A primary emphasis would be on the need for appropriate validation.

Inappropriate application of the Benchmarks in other contexts could have a negative impact on the perceived integrity of the CLB and the NCLC in the immigrant context. There continues to be some caution that others could evolve the CLB and the NCLC without direction from the CCLB/CNCLC. Developments should be monitored and the decision to leave it to others to evolve the CLB and the NCLC for other purposes should be reassessed in a few years.

**Recommendation 1:** Continue to articulate the vision for the CLB and NCLC as standards for language proficiency for adult immigrants and prospective immigrants. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 2:** Develop guidelines for the adaptation of the CLB and the NCLC with populations other than adult immigrants or prospective immigrants. **[important]**

**Recommendation 3:** Monitor developments to evolve the CLB and the NCLC for use beyond the adult immigrant and prospective immigrant populations and assess the implications for maintaining the ongoing integrity of the CLB and the NCLC. **[important]**

## INTEGRITY OF THE CLB AND THE NCLC

Stakeholders identified a number of issues and questions related to preserving the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC including: ensuring the integrity of the core benchmark documents; demonstrating validity of the Benchmarks; promoting and engaging in relevant research; and



articulating the CLB and the NCLC and their associated tests against other frameworks; and tests.

## **ENSURING INTEGRITY OF THE CORE**

There is a myriad of stakeholders working with and influencing the implementation and evolution of the CLB in a range of different contexts – pre-immigration, language training, employment and academia. The current focus of the NCLC is primarily in the language training context. The actions of different stakeholders (e.g. service providers, funders, policy-makers, employers, immigrants) are all influencing how the CLB and the NCLC evolve and are applied in different contexts.

Stakeholders need to be confident in the integrity of the CLB and NCLC so they can continue to evolve and innovate, building different applications that correspond to the CLB and the NCLC. As long as the Benchmarks have integrity, stakeholders wishing to experiment with different applications of the Benchmarks can do so without a negative impact on the Benchmarks themselves. Over time, work can be done to define best practices and common tools and processes but their application does not all need to be controlled if the fundamental integrity of the Benchmarks is intact.

The consultation with stakeholders suggests that there is a need to manage the tension between controlling the use of the Benchmarks to retain integrity and validity while responding to demand for its use and opportunities for innovation.

## **CHANGES TO THE CLB AND THE NCLC**

Stakeholders are clear that if the Benchmarks are to serve as a standard then there is a need for enhanced rigour. In 19 of 22 CLB and in all six NCLC forums this was identified. The need for enhanced rigour was reaffirmed in the National Forum.

The changes to enhance the rigour of the Benchmarks include:

- More distinct differentiation between levels;
- Clearer descriptors within levels; and
- Capacity to track outcomes and differences between outcomes across levels.

Stakeholders have identified numerous examples within the Benchmarks that demonstrate the need for change. While the critical changes to be made relate to enhancing their rigour, important recommendations have also been made about the comprehensiveness of the document and ways to make it easier to navigate and use. It is logical to address all of these changes simultaneously.

Some recommendations have emerged that address literacy Benchmarks that also require consideration.

**Recommendation 4:** Enhance the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC – establishing more distinct differentiation between levels, clearer descriptors within levels, and the capacity to track outcomes and differences between outcomes across levels. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 5:** Address issues related to comprehensiveness of the core CLB and NCLC documents. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 6:** Address issues related to ease of navigation of the core CLB and NCLC documents. **[urgent]**

The Companion Document – Changes to the CLB 2000 and NCLC 2006 provides an analysis of the changes needed and detailed recommendations related to enhancing the integrity, comprehensiveness and ease of navigation of the CLB and NCLC core documents. The recommendations are summarized in Table 7 and 8.

**Table 7: CLB Recommendations**

#	CLB - RECOMMENDATIONS
1	Establish greater clarity and differentiation between levels.
2	Use more specific language to describe differences.
3	Ensure outcomes and tasks are consistent and flow throughout levels as appropriate or are introduced as new at the appropriate level.
4	Provide a clear rationale for and articulate the merits of using a 12-point scale.
5	Include critical information in the CLB document that requires a common understanding amongst the majority of stakeholders. Address unique needs of stakeholders through supplementary resources.
6	Establish guidelines for addressing grammar and pronunciation.
7	Determine how to address socio-cultural competencies in the CLB document or through associated companion documents.
8	Include some more tasks or exemplars in the core document. Provide additional exemplars through supplementary resources for particular applications as needed. Update tasks to reflect current societal communication practices.
9	Review and modify the language used in the CLB document to ensure it conveys critical information with the greatest possible clarity.
10	Augment the information on what is included in the CLB document and how to use it.
11	Change the order of the skills to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Retain the four levels of each skill together and introduce a colour coding for skills. Consider developing a loose-leaf version to allow maximum flexibility.
12	Consider changes to the layout that will make the document more user-friendly for the wide range of stakeholders.
13	Consider the feasibility of creating a searchable online document of an updated version.
14	As changes are made to enhance the integrity and comprehensiveness of the CLB, ensure changes are appropriate to support academic and employment application.
15	Integrate pre-benchmark levels with CLB in the core document and associated resources as appropriate.

**Table 8: NCLC Recommendations**

#	NCLC - RECOMMENDATIONS
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#	NCLC - RECOMMENDATIONS
1	Establish a theoretical framework for the NCLC.
2	Establish greater clarity on the distinctions between levels and stages and greater integrity and clarity of descriptors and performance indicators.
3	Provide a clear rationale for and articulate the merits of using a 12-point scale categorized into 3 phases.
4	Establish guidelines to address grammar, syntax, morphology and pronunciation.
5	Address assessment more thoroughly in the NCLC document and develop a separate document which fully develops the assessment dimension.
6	Assess the feasibility and add the following features to the NCLC document if appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasks that reflect current societal communication practices;</li> <li>• An index, glossary and references;</li> <li>• A section specific to French in Canada; and</li> <li>• Tasks that reflect a full scope of work environments.</li> </ul>
7	Consider changes to the layout that will make the NCLC document more user-friendly for the wide range of stakeholders.
8	Consider the feasibility of creating a searchable online document of an updated version.

## DEMONSTRATING VALIDITY

It became clear within Phase 1 forums that many stakeholders are not aware of the extent of validation<sup>11</sup> that has happened in relation to the CLB – either for its use in a language training context or for application in employment and academia. Stakeholders who are aware of the validation that has taken place are seeking independent validation by experts to ensure that the CLB can be used as a standard. This validation is considered vital to retain and continue to gain support from stakeholders – particularly those engaged in what is commonly referred to as high stakes use of the standards (academic, licensing/certification and employment application).

Validation in the NCLC context is different. While the recent battery of tests for French language placement (BTC-NCLC)<sup>12</sup> has been validated, the NCLC itself was not previously validated empirically at the time of its adaptation.

Different perspectives emerged in the Phase 1 forums about what is required to effectively validate the Benchmarks. Some stakeholders recommended an empirical approach to ensuring that the Benchmarks are an accurate measure of language proficiency for different applications. Others saw it as an accumulation of proof, which is documented on a continuous basis using a mix of qualitative and quantitative measures. What is clear is that stakeholders are concerned about the perceived lack of validation for multiple applications. At the same time stakeholders have indicated that they want a pragmatic approach to validation. They want to make the adjustments to the

<sup>11</sup> A systematic and thorough process using various methods to verify the reliability and robustness under various conditions

<sup>12</sup> Batterie de tests de classement aux Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens

Benchmarks that are needed and continue to move forward with applications given the extent of the demand.

**What people said...**

“An implicit validation of the Benchmarks is taking place – people are using it and see it as having merit resulting in wide spread use and acceptance.”

“Empirical validation is needed before we can call the CLB robust.”

“Are we building our house on the sand? Are the CLB what we need them to be for tool development, to meet employer needs and to provide training?”

“From a workplace perspective it appears that the validation has not been done. It needs to be defensible in a court of law if it gets challenged.”

“Validating empirically can take a long time. As a result you will lose a lot of people who are using the tool. We need to balance the need for a strong foundation with the need to keep evolving.”

“Relatively quick validation could be done through expert judgement protocol teams that work blindly using a clear methodology to reach consensus. It is a consensus building approach amongst experts.”

« Le cadre n’a pas été mis à l’épreuve en situation de classe avant d’être publié. » (The framework has not been tested in the classroom before being published.)

« Le cadre est basé sur un modèle théorique, conçu en vase clos. On aurait avantage à faire une étude de validation du modèle. » (The framework is based on a theoretical model, developed in a vacuum. It would be worthwhile to do a validation study of the model.)

In the National Forum, CCLB staff provided a preliminary overview of what validation has taken place for the CLB and the NCLC according to eight factors:

- Theoretically grounded;
- Empirically validated;
- Congruent with teacher’s perceptions and experience with language learners;
- Transparent and user-friendly;
- Context-free but context-relevant;
- Comprehensive;
- Flexible and open; and
- Sufficiently discriminating at lower levels of the framework.

Building on this analysis, National Forum participants recommended that further validation of the Benchmarks be done according to principles of academic rigour. The intent is to assure multiple stakeholders that the Benchmarks have validity.

Additional validation will be required when the Benchmarks are applied in different contexts. Validation of applications is a continual process as new uses and potential uses are identified. As particular resources and tools are developed these also require validation.

**Recommendation 7:** Inform stakeholders of the validation which has been completed, articulate the caveats for using the Benchmarks and provide any guidelines that are required for use. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 8:** Develop a model and guidelines for validating the use of the CLB and the NCLC as standards for multiple applications. **[urgent]**

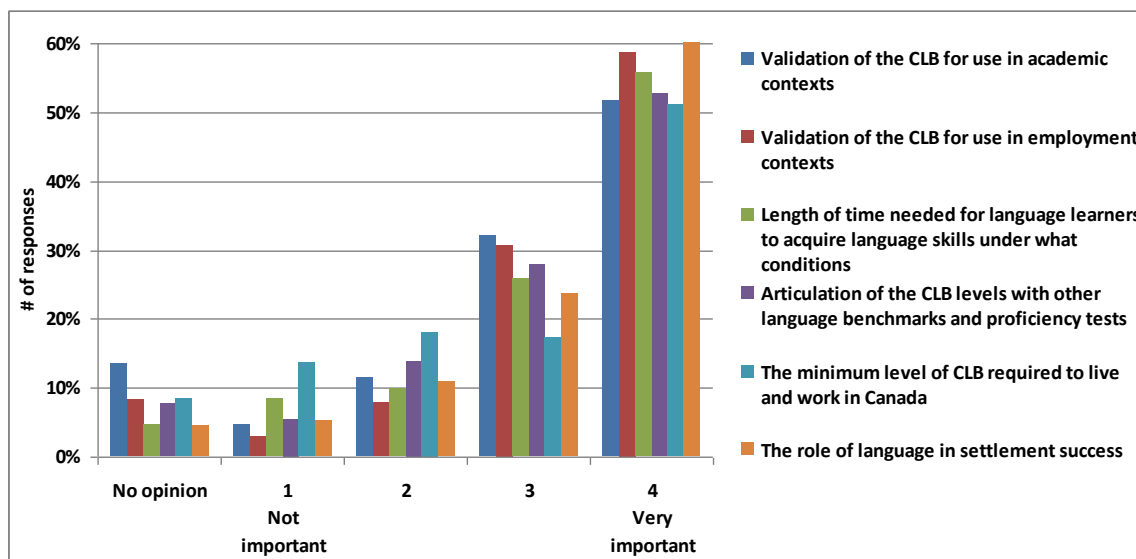
**Recommendation 9:** Conduct validation of the CLB and the NCLC according to principles of academic rigour. **[important]**

## RESEARCH

The need for research was identified in a number of Phase 1 forums, particularly but not exclusively in relation to validation of the Benchmarks and their use in different contexts. The desire is for solid research conducted by academics that will be reputable and recognized.

CLB survey respondents were asked their opinion about the importance of particular areas of research identified through the forums. More than 80% of respondents with an opinion rated 5 of the 6 research areas as either very important (rating of 4) or important (rating of 3), with 'validation of the CLB for use in employment contexts' receiving an endorsement of 89%. Even the lowest endorsement indicated was relatively high (69%) for 'the minimum level of CLB required to live and work in Canada'.

**Figure 10: Importance of Research Areas<sup>13</sup>**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

The research realities and possibilities for the NCLC are different than those for the CLB and will most often have to be examined in their own right. There are a limited number of experts and researchers that could be drawn upon to carry out research in relation to the NCLC, many of whom are based in Quebec. This is an added incentive for the CCLB/CNCLC and the Quebec MICC to maintain a close working relationship and ensure convergence between the NCLC and the NCFLSIA<sup>14</sup>. With a high degree of convergence between the two frameworks, research that is carried out for one will often be relevant for the other. The difference to be taken into account is: in Quebec teaching of FSL occurs in a French majority situation, whereas in the rest of Canada teaching of FSL occurs in French minority situations.

The interest and need for research aligned to the CLB and the NCLC was affirmed during the National Forum.

<sup>13</sup> Data source for Figure 10: Practitioner Survey, question 34.

<sup>14</sup> Niveaux de compétence en français langue seconde pour immigrants adultes, Quebec's own framework. The NCFLSIA was developed with reference to, and inspired by the CLB, prior to the development of the NCLC 2006.

**Recommendation 10:** Identify research priorities in partnership with researchers and academics. [important]

## ARTICULATION

Stakeholders in 8 of 22 CLB forums and 4 of 6 NCLC forums expressed a desire to understand how the CLB and the NCLC align with other language frameworks and their associated assessment tools. Their intent is to:

- Seek a mutual recognition of standards;
- Reduce the need for assessment if alignment can be demonstrated; and
- Continue to evolve the CLB and the NCLC relative to other benchmarks as appropriate.

### A. Other Frameworks outside of Canada

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CECRL)* is currently the most discussed framework. The CEFR is used internationally even in countries outside Europe. Australia is considering using it as their national standard and Japan has adapted a version. A few of the people consulted have put forward the perspective that Canada should consider adopting the CEFR.

Approval was given by Heritage Canada to the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada to undertake pilot projects related to the CEFR. Pilot projects are now being conducted within French immersion programs in Canada.

#### About the CEFR

The CEFR provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. It is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula and by international consortia for the comparison of language certificates. It facilitates a clear definition of teaching and learning objectives and methods and provides the necessary tools for assessment of proficiency. It describes in a comprehensive manner i) the competencies necessary for communication, ii) the related knowledge and skills and iii) the situations and domains of communication. It is available in over 30 language versions. Council of Europe website

### B. Other Frameworks inside Canada

Québec's own framework - Niveaux de compétence en français langue seconde pour immigrants adultes (NCFLSIA) was inspired by the CLB to a considerable degree before the NCLC existed and as a result there is a high level of similarity between the NCFLSIA and the NCLC. CCLB/CNCLC and the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MICC), Government of Québec, have collaborated closely in the past few years, and MICC has supported CCLB/CNCLC in validating some of its resources and tests. Both partners have indicated a desire to continue to build on this partnership and maximize the articulation between the frameworks. This will be critical to consider if changes are made to NCLC as a result of the consultation process.

Quebec's use of its revised version of the NCFLSIA (inspired by the NCLC) has evolved beyond MICC-funded service providers to the FSL programs for immigrants funded by the Ministry of Education of Québec.

There is demand to articulate the CLB and the NCLC with other federal government frameworks such as the Public Service Commission of Canada's (PSCC) ABCE system. Articulation has already occurred with the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC)

'Essential Skills' framework. Some French language institutions have indicated that they are required to align their course offerings and curriculum to some of these frameworks.

### **C. Other Assessment Tests**

Stakeholders identified a number of ESL and FSL tests that are non CLB or NCLC aligned which are used in Canada to screen for language proficiency by colleges, universities, some professional organizations, the federal government (to screen prospective immigrants) and employers. Clearly these tests can not be aligned to the Benchmarks themselves however there is interest in alignment with associated CLB and NCLC assessment tests.

#### **English Tests:**

- CAEL - Canadian Academic English Language Assessment
- CanTEST - Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees
- IELTS - International English Language Testing System
- MELAB - Michigan English Language Assessment Battery
- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language – Internet and paper based versions
- TOEIC - Test of English for International Communication

#### **French Tests:**

- DALF - Diplôme approfondi de langue française
- DELF - Diplôme d'étude de langue française
- TCF - Test de connaissance du français
- TEF - Test d'évaluation du français
- TFI - Test de français international

Stakeholders in the National Forum expressed considerable interest in articulation of the CLB and the NCLC and their associated tests with other frameworks and tests. While the intent is for the CLB and the NCLC to become accepted as the national standards along with their associated tests there are currently other frameworks and tests being used. Stakeholders perceive that there are benefits for immigrants and prospective immigrants if the frameworks and associated tests in use are articulated.

Stakeholders are also cautious about how feasible, appropriate and cost effective articulation will be. A number of steps are required to guide this work:

1. develop a clear understanding of what articulation work has been done;
2. establish criteria to guide decisions about when articulation should be done;
3. develop guidelines and a process for conducting articulation;
4. assess the validity of existing articulation work; and
5. identify priorities and establish an action plan for carrying out desired articulation.

Stakeholders in the National Forum indicated that CCLB/CNCLC should be involved in either a leadership or partnership role on CLB and NCLC articulation efforts to ensure that appropriate quality assurance is achieved.

**Recommendation 11:** Conduct articulation of the CLB and NCLC frameworks and associated tests with other frameworks and tests when a clear benefit can be demonstrated. **[important]**

### **What people said...**

“Articulation of CLB within and among a variety of stakeholders creates portability.”

“TOEFL and IELTS do not indicate sufficient information for employment purposes. CLB does a better job.”

“Comparative analysis is so challenging. One of our (CIITE) deliverables was to do a comparison of CLBPT, IELTS and other assessments (CAEL, Accuplacer). They are apples and oranges. CLB looks at the 4 skills of communicative language. Most of the others are strongly embedded in knowledge.”

“We need to broadcast what CLB is and what it isn’t.”

« Les NCLC est arrivé deux ans trop tard. Le CECRL est déjà très développé; il est reconnu internationalement; les maisons d’édition sont déjà orientées avec le CECRL. Pourquoi réinventer la roue? » (The NCLC arrived two years too late. The CEFR is highly developed; it is recognised internationally; publishers are already oriented towards the CEFR. Why reinvent the wheel?)

« Les NCLC sont très importants parce qu’ils s’adressent à un contexte canadien. Le CECRL et les tests qui y sont associés sont basés sur un contexte multiculturel qui est complètement différent du contexte canadien. » (The NCLC are very important because they are aimed at a Canadian context. The CEFR and associated tests are based on a multicultural context completely different from the Canadian context.)



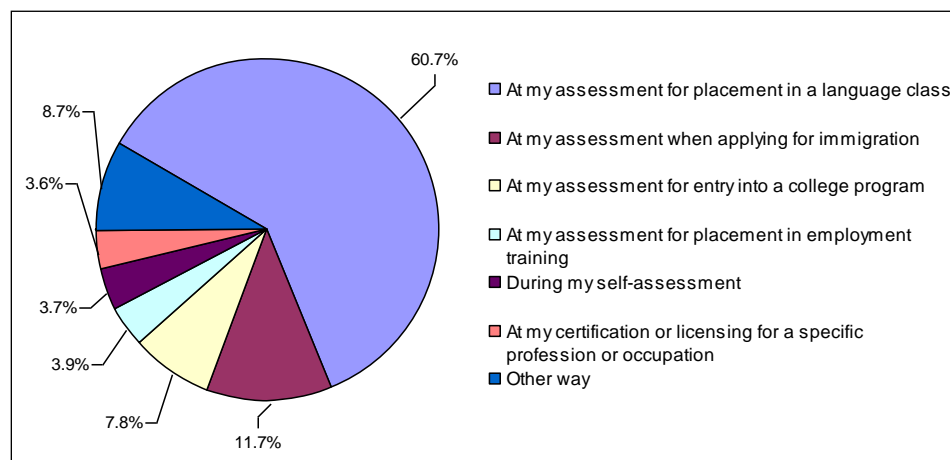
## PRE-IMMIGRATION APPLICATION

A number of issues were identified in relation to application of the CLB in the pre-immigrant context. Given its relatively young history the NCLC is not yet being applied in this context. Demand is expected to increase over time.

In six of the 11 CLB multi-stakeholder forums, participants identified the need, amongst prospective immigrants, for increased awareness and understanding of language skills (particularly listening and speaking) as a key predictor of successful immigration. New immigrants arrive unprepared for language proficiency assessment and training and are unaware of the training time it will take to acquire a second language. Stakeholders indicated that some immigrants arrive with no understanding that language ability may even be an issue.

Only 11.7% of respondents to the learner survey had heard of the CLB at the assessment when applying for immigration. A further 3.7% became aware as a result of completing a self-assessment. The majority first became aware at the time of assessment for placement in language training or employment training, entry into college or certification or licensing.

**Figure 11: How did you hear about the Benchmarks (CLB)?<sup>15</sup>**



Stakeholders perceive that many new immigrants (even those with the resources) do not invest time in language testing or training in advance of immigration. Stakeholders identified circumstances in which language trainees leave their program because they have exhausted their government funding (reduced in past years) and their own financial resources, to earn an income. This in turn affects their ability to become employed in their own occupation.

### Immigration facts...

Forty-five percent of immigrants do not engage in language training when they enter Canada. (Statistics Canada, 2003)

In the International Adult Literacy and Skills survey conducted in 2003 immigrants performed significantly below the average of the Canadian born population in all 4 domains – prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem solving. (Statistics Canada, 2003)

Employers and sector representatives in CLB forums identified the need to assess immigrants' language skills using the CLB overseas. Employers want to be confident that they are recruiting

<sup>15</sup> Data source for Figure 11: Learners Survey, question 3. A total of 643 learners responded to this question.

skilled workers with the language proficiency level required for them to do the job and to be safe.

Part of the demand for articulation of CLB associated tests to other language proficiency tests used internationally stems from the current lack of ability to effectively assess language skills internationally using the CLB.

CCLB staff note that there has been a significant increase in the number of requests for use of the CLB and for assessments and resources appropriate to the international context.

Some stakeholders indicate concern that the current immigration criteria do not reflect language ability and do not motivate people to acquire a basic level of language proficiency. Others are cautious and want to avoid creating barriers to immigration based on language capacity.

National Forum participants agree that potential immigrants should be better informed about the language proficiency level needed for them to integrate successfully into the workforce and community in Canada. Ideally people would have the option to assess and improve their language proficiency prior to arrival. Many stakeholders have a role in advancing change in this area, including CIC, academic institutions as well as employers and sector councils.

**Recommendation 12:** Develop a strategy to inform prospective immigrants about language as a predictor of successful integration. **[important]**

**Recommendation 13:** Develop a strategy that will enable more prospective immigrants to assess and improve their language proficiency prior to arrival. **[important]**

**Recommendation 14:** Build partnerships with employers and sector councils involved in language proficiency assessment and training of skilled workers in the pre-immigration stage. Identify what is working, challenges arising and establish partnerships to build capacity within sectors where appropriate. **[explore]**

#### **What people said...**

"The CLB addresses a key barrier to immigration – language."

"Can CLB become international so that immigrants can begin the language process before arriving in Canada?"

"If we are recruiting in a non-English speaking country, we don't know what level of language we should be recruiting at. Help us determine what those levels are and assess what they should be."

"Temporary foreign workers have only so many months to demonstrate their language level before qualifying for permanent residency. Employers need to sign an affidavit. We need to know we can get people to that level."

"There is no good way to assess overseas."

"Word has got out overseas that to be a truck driver you need CLB 6. That may or may not be the right level."

"Maybe a self test can be used. Maybe it can explain to them (prospective immigrants) what they can do, even if they are overseas. They need some indication of what will be required to move between levels. This is really missing for our clients. When we explain it to them they go into shock. They spend all their money learning the language."

"People go to the CIC website and see IELTS. CLB means nothing in immigration processes right now. CIC is evaluating the point system. Can they define thresholds for levels?"

## LANGUAGE TRAINING APPLICATION

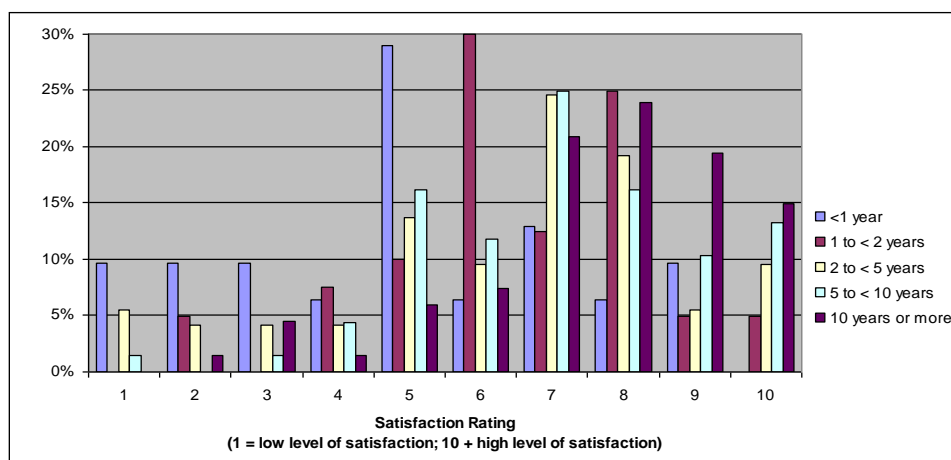
Application of the CLB and the NCLC has been strongest in the language training context. As a result a number of issues have emerged in relation to: the level of training and support for practitioners; the need for a training framework; the resources that are required; and assessment.

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

In all of the multi-stakeholder and practitioner specific forums, both NCLC and CLB, issues were raised about the need for more appropriate support for teachers involved in language training. The issues identified were further explored through the CLB survey.

Amongst practitioners (participating in forums and responding to the survey) there appears to be some correlation between the length of time practitioners have worked with the CLB, their current level of knowledge and understanding of the CLB and their level of satisfaction with their ability to use the CLB. The following chart demonstrates how the length of time practitioners have worked with the CLB correlates with their level of satisfaction with their ability to use the CLB: a higher proportion of practitioners with 10 years or more experience, and even 5 years or more, rate their satisfaction at 9 or 10; conversely a majority of those with less than a year experience have rated their satisfaction at 5 or lower.

**Figure 12: Satisfaction in ability to use the CLB against length of time working with the CLB<sup>16</sup>**



As noted earlier the context for working with the NCLC is significantly different given its shorter history, however many of the issues related to teacher support are similar.

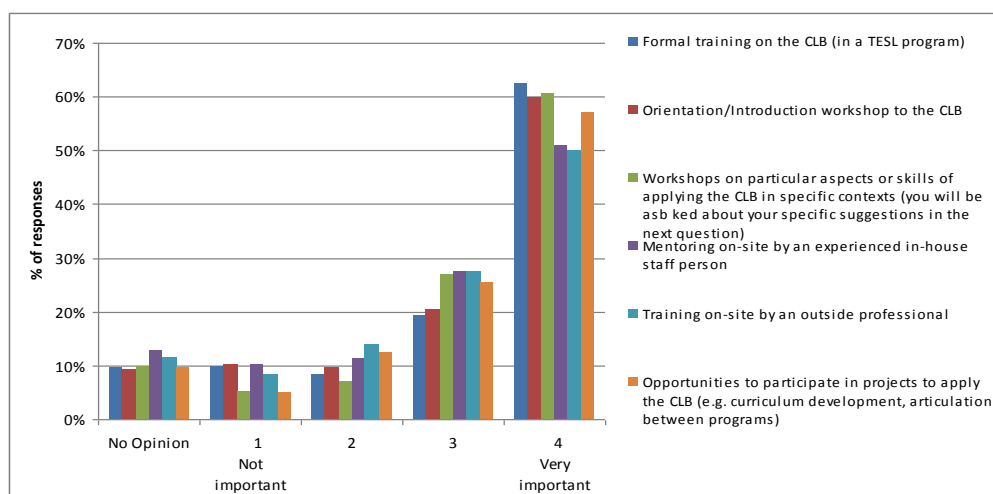
There was considerable discussion in forums about the profile of teachers and the impact that has on their need for training and support. Teachers working with the Benchmarks have a wide range of training from no training to graduate degree training in second language acquisition, teaching or adult education. They work in full time, part time, contract or volunteer positions which can impact their willingness to participate in training and/or make full use of the resources available. Some teachers have peers that provide mutual support and others work alone, particularly in smaller rural areas and in French minority communities.

<sup>16</sup> Data source for Figure 12: Practitioner Survey, question 10 cross-tabulated with question 6.

## A. Types of support needed

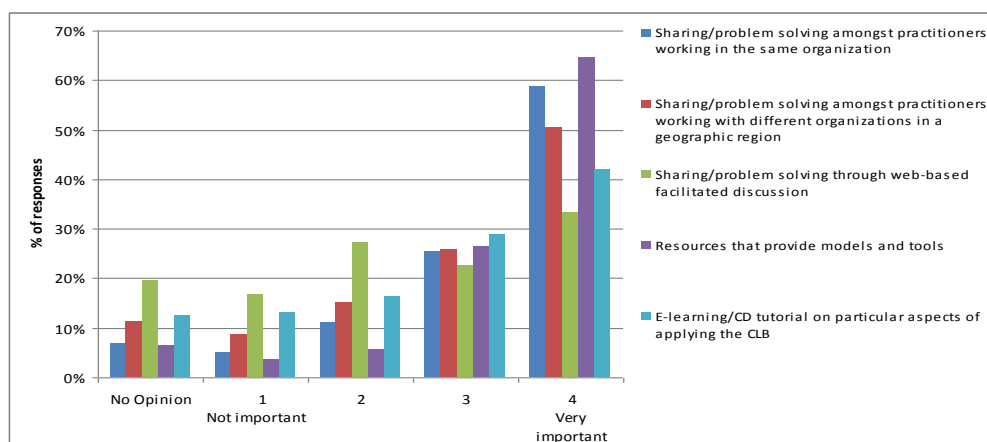
During the forums, practitioners identified a number of potential supports, which would enhance their ability to apply the CLB. These were further validated through the survey (two thirds of the survey respondents had not participated in a forum which further validates the need identified).

**Figure 13: Supports to enhance Practitioner ability to apply CLB<sup>17</sup> - Part 1**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

**Figure 14: Supports to enhance Practitioner ability to apply CLB - Part 2**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

Respondents' preferences, in terms of supports that would enhance their ability to apply the CLB, are the following (starting with the most preferred, and counting those that rated 4 and 5):

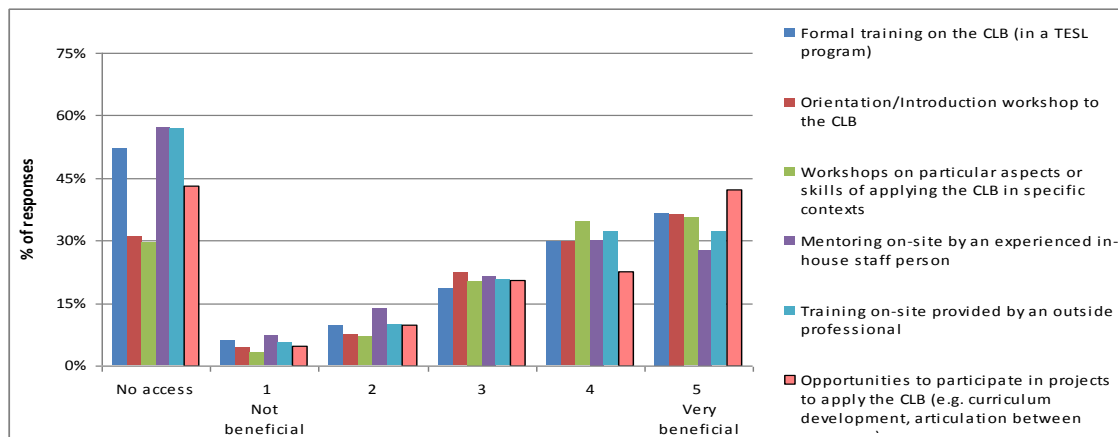
- resources that provide models and tools (91%);
- workshops on particular aspects or skills of applying the CLB in specific contexts (88%);
- sharing/problem solving amongst practitioners working in the same organization (84%);
- opportunities to participate in projects to apply the CLB (83%);

<sup>17</sup> Data source for Figures 13 and 14: Practitioner Survey, question 15.

- formal training on the CLB (in a TESL program) (82%); and
- orientation/introduction workshop to the CLB (80%).

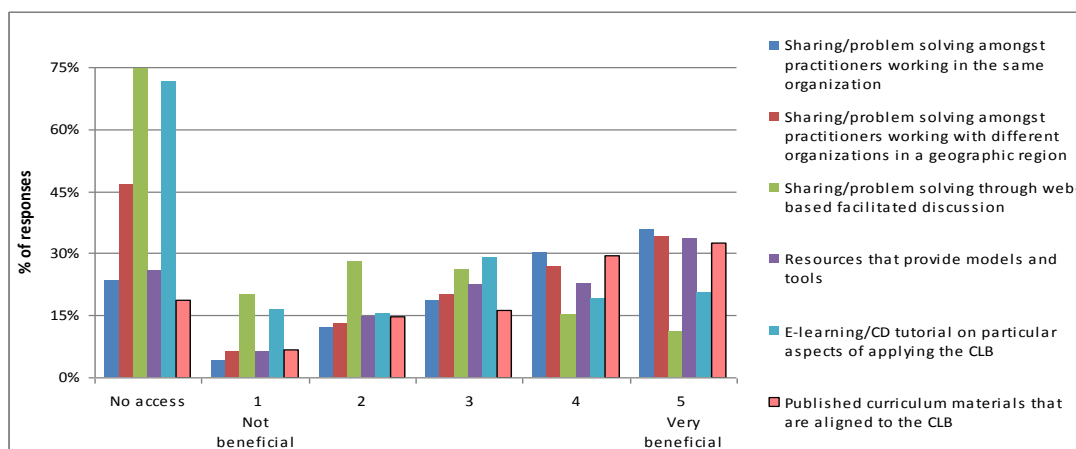
Respondents identified which supports they had access to and which ones of those supports they found to be most beneficial.

**Figure 15: Actual access to Supports<sup>18</sup> - Part 1**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No access' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 5 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

**Figure 16: Actual access to Supports - Part 2**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No access' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 5 scale are percentages of respondents with access.

Of particular interest is that over 50% of respondents (of the approximately 400 who responded to this question) indicate not having access to 'web-based facilitated discussion', 'e-learning/CD tutorial', 'mentoring on-site by experienced in-house staff person', 'training on-site by an outside professional', and 'formal training on the CLB'.

There is a correlation between the supports people had access to and found beneficial and those they identified as being most helpful in enhancing their ability to apply the CLB. Survey results did not indicate significant differences in terms of access by province or territory.

<sup>18</sup> Data source for Figures 15 and 16: Practitioner Survey, question 14.

The NCLC is different. The number of French language teachers and institutions working with NCLC-based curricula is smaller given the relatively low number of immigrants learning French. The FSL community is strongly oriented toward teaching French to English speaking Canadians. Orientation and training of teachers/language trainers and administrators about the NCLC is required. There is a need for support to translate the NCLC framework into curricula and course plans that can be applied in a class context as well.

#### **What people said...**

“The lack of training results in people not understanding and they don’t buy-in and don’t use the CLB.”

“There is a huge difference between the amount of training being provided to users of the CLB.”

“Trained language practitioners’ thoughts about language training are very different from instructors without formal language training.”

“I work with a lot of instructors not trained in ESL. CLB provides strong guidance. CLB requires that instructors have a deep understanding of learner’s competencies.”

“Instructors are at different levels of understanding of the CLB. Award a certificate in CLB. It is even more important than a TESL certificate.”

“Some instructors would take training if there were clearly defined outcomes.”

“I would like on-site delivery of training because of the uniqueness of so many programs but also because there would be a mentor with ongoing involvement.”

« Il y a un manque de formation sur les NCLC pour les enseignants de FLS et pour les administrateurs de programmes FLS. » (There is a lack of NCLC training for teachers of FLS and for managers of FLS programs.)

« L’isolement des enseignants de FLS est un défi important dans plusieurs régions du Canada. » (The isolation of FLS teachers is an important challenge in many regions of Canada.)

## **B. Teacher Training Framework and Best Practices**

Many stakeholders have a role in supporting and delivering teacher training and ongoing professional development. Throughout the forums, people identified the need for the respective stakeholders to fulfil their role in order to ensure that teachers have access to the supports they require.

There is considerable frustration about the inconsistencies in support across the country. One particular source of frustration is that some teacher-training programs do not include an emphasis on using CLB as a fundamental component of training in second language acquisition and teaching. Many teachers believe that this is a lost opportunity given the expectations that teachers in Canada use the CLB in their work with adult immigrants.

Within forums, stakeholders identified the need for a national CLB and NCLC based language-training framework that outlines best practices for implementation support. The ideal training framework to build and retain competencies in the CLB and the NCLC would reflect a full range of supports - orientation to the CLB and the NCLC, formal and informal training in application (ongoing basis), mentoring and peer support and access to needed resources. The broad profile of teachers with their diverse needs and experience needs to be considered.

Stakeholders identified what they think the possible roles and responsibilities are of various stakeholders:

**Teacher Training Programs** – incorporate the CLB or the NCLC in teacher training programs;

**Teacher Organizations (e.g. TESL Canada<sup>19</sup>; AQEFLS<sup>20</sup>)** – require that training in the theoretical frameworks and application of the CLB and the NCLC be included in formal teacher training programs in order to be certified;

**Organizations that develop resources and support teachers (e.g. CCLB/CNCLC)** – provide training on specific aspects or skills related to applying the CLB and the NCLC;

**Service delivery organizations** – ensure practitioners have access to and utilize appropriate training and support; create and support opportunities for problem solving and application of the CLB and the NCLC amongst practitioners in house; and

**Funders** – define expectations in service delivery contracts for the level of CLB or NCLC competency expected amongst practitioners; fund professional development where appropriate.

#### **What people said...**

“There is a lack of buy-in by teacher training programs.”

“Management needs to enforce the importance and use of the CLB.”

“Management can’t hire instructors knowledgeable about the CLB when they are not able to determine what the instructor’s knowledge is.”

“If the cost barrier would be removed a lot more teachers would get training. I am the only one in my organization who takes workshops. I am punished because my time is not paid for.”

“If funding was tied to the use of the CLB (as in Manitoba) people would toe the line a bit better.”

“We need a national strategy to train teachers. CCLB needs to take a stronger role in making that happen.”

« Il y a un grand besoin de professionnalisation des enseignants de FLS et de valorisation de la profession. Il y a de grandes différences à cet égard entre les enseignants de FLS et les enseignants ESL : salaires, certification des enseignants, bassin de candidats, types d’organismes. » (The need for making the FLS teachers professional and promoting the profession is great. There are important differences in this respect between teachers of FLS and teachers of ESL: salaries, teacher certification, pool of candidates, types of organisations.)

« Il nous faut une association comparable à l’AQEFLS, mais il faudrait la créer pour les francophones hors Québec. » (We need an association similar to AQEFLS, but it should be created for French speakers outside Quebec.)

National Forum participants supported the development of a pan-Canadian training framework that outlines best practices for offering pre-service and in-service supports that would allow teachers to build and retain core competencies in working with the CLB and the NCLC. The framework would build on the experience of existing stakeholders. The process of developing a framework is expected to have a catalyzing influence, encouraging key partners to assume the roles that will be most beneficial for teachers.

**Recommendation 15:** Establish a pan-Canadian training framework that outlines best practices for providing CLB and NCLC related implementation support to language teachers. **[important]**

#### **Immigration fact...**

“Of the immigrants who participated in the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada about 45% said they took language training in English and 10% in French. Of English learners, 38% found it very useful and 47% found it useful. Of French learners, 55% found it very useful and 35% useful. (Statistics Canada, 2003)

<sup>19</sup> TESL Canada has developed nation-wide standards for teacher training which are used by many ESL schools

<sup>20</sup> Association québécoise des enseignants de français langue seconde. Although the name of this association might lead one to believe that it relates only to teachers in Québec, it also serves French language teachers from across Canada. It provides some training in FSL but does not provide certification.



### C. Resources needed

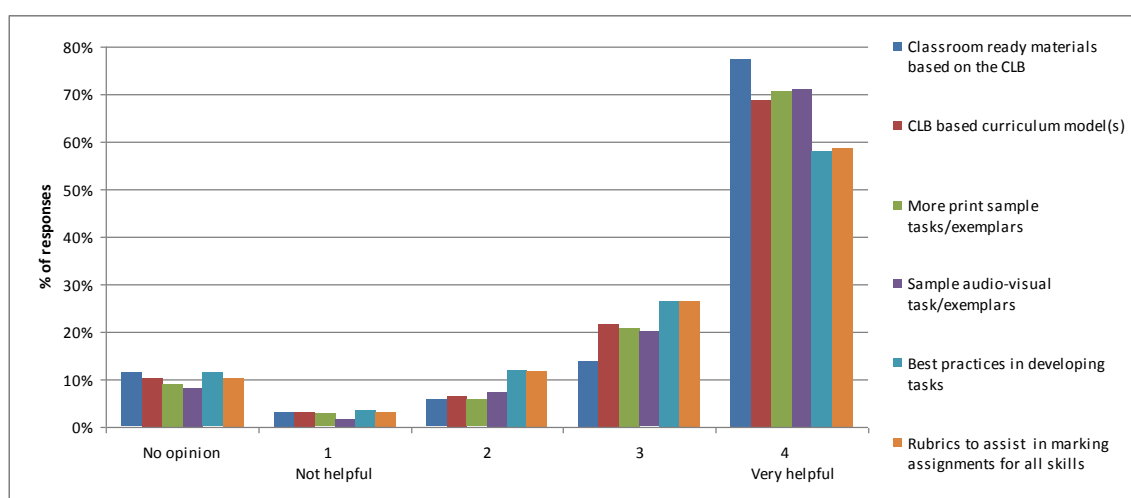
Practitioners were asked in the survey about the perceived usefulness of particular resources to support language training. Of the resources that have been used the most by respondents, between 55 and 70% have found these resources quite useful or very useful:

- CCLB main web-site (63%);
- CLB 2000 Theoretical Framework (57%);
- CLB Can-Do Checklists (69%);
- CLB 2000 Posters for ESL Classroom (66%); and
- Companion Tables to the CLB 2000 (61%).

Within forums many stakeholders commented about the need for improvements to the CCLB/CNCLC website (Refer to Section on Developing and Sharing Quality Resources).

Comments have also been made about improvements to particular resources. Information will be provided to CCLB/CNCLC for future consideration.

**Figure 17: Potential usefulness of suggested Language Training Resources<sup>21</sup>**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents, the percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

A number of resources were identified in the forums as priorities for development to support CLB related language training. These were further validated through the survey. The resources that received the highest level of endorsement (rating 3 or 4) are:

- more print sample tasks/exemplars (92%);
- classroom ready materials based on the CLB (91%);
- sample audio-visual tasks/exemplars (91%);
- CLB based curriculum model(s) (91%);
- rubrics to assist in marking assignments for all skills (85%); and
- best practices in developing tasks (85%).

<sup>21</sup> Data source for Figure 17: Practitioner Survey, question 28.



There are fewer NCLC associated resources available. Priorities for the development of resources were identified as:

- curriculum guide including an indication of the time required to move from one level to the next.
- pedagogical tools and resources (e.g. exercises and exercise books, examples of texts for each of the levels, typical lesson plans, typical curriculum, audio examples based on the French Canadian accent, tools to help with phonetics and pronunciation); and
- tools that would help develop the intercultural competencies of both teachers and learners.

**Recommendation 16:** Establish an action plan with defined priorities for developing language training resources of national relevance. **[urgent]**

#### **D. Service Delivery Model**

Participants in both the CLB and the NCLC multi-stakeholder and practitioner specific forums identified some issues related to the existing service delivery models which have an indirect relationship to the CLB and NCLC.

#### **LINC/CLIC/ELSA**

Many stakeholders would like to see the existing language training service system simplified with all providers using the CLB and the NCLC as their framework for ESL and FSL services. Stakeholders expressed frustration that the federal government has continued to have LINC and CLIC levels rather than using the CLB and the NCLC to describe program levels. The same comment has been made about ELSA, which is used in British Columbia. The differences create confusion and require additional training and resource development to support application. The federal government is working on a revised service delivery model, which could potentially address this concern.

#### **CLIC Parameters**

NCLC has a particular challenge in that there are frequently insufficient numbers to offer a class, or classes often include numerous levels given low enrollment. Approximately 300 participants in total were registered in 'Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada' (CLIC) classes in 2009 (CIC). Even the larger, formal education institutions offering French language instruction in French minority settings (e.g. Winnipeg, Edmonton, Regina, Moncton) face this challenge which is similar to the experience of smaller English communities. The current CIC requirement (15 learners) to offer a class<sup>22</sup> is limiting. Different modalities of service are required to respond to this need.

One unique difference between immigrant ESL and FSL learners is that immigrants registered in French courses in provinces other than Quebec have generally been in Canada for a while and have already moved forward in their integration. There has been some demonstrated success in the inclusion of these immigrants in courses aimed at native Canadians.

#### **Organization of Classes**

The other main issue that teachers and administrators working with both CLB and NCLC identified was related to the challenge of organizing classes given that many learners have differing levels of language proficiency across skill areas. While some organizations have been

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<sup>22</sup> CIC has indicated through the consultation a willingness to explore other modalities of service to facilitate access to language training.

able to establish different classes for different skills, this is difficult for smaller training organizations with fewer students. NCLC teachers also spoke of the need for 'gap training' when individuals do not meet the requirements for a particular level and of the lack of resources to provide that training.

### **Literate/Non Literate Learners**

The difference in resource requirements to teach literate and non-literate learners was identified as an issue in different forums. Some stakeholders perceive that there is a lack of understanding that affects how services are organised and the amount of resources that are dedicated to working with non-literate learners. There appear to be some differences across the country; however they were not validated through the consultation process.

### **Rural Access**

The lack of rural access to language training was identified as an issue in a few forums. It was not a priority focus of the consultations; however this does not mean it is not an issue. New modalities are being piloted such as on-line study to facilitate access in recognition of the need.

#### **What people said...**

"The notion of LINC levels doesn't make much sense to us as it is just aligned to CLB levels. Why don't they just use CLB levels?"

"What needs to happen to reduce the confusion between LINC and CLB? Why hasn't it happened? With 2 systems the strengths of each are reduced."

« Un établissement de formation comme le nôtre, en milieu minoritaire, travaille avec plusieurs clientèle qui emploient différents cadres : conseil d'administration d'éducation – le Cadre européen; École de la fonction publique du Canada – échelle ABCE de la Commission de la Fonction publique; Immigration Canada – les CLB et les NCLC. On est donc contraint à travailler avec plusieurs cadres. Comment faire l'arrimage entre ces différents cadres? Que peut-on conclure de la cohérence entre différents ministères? » (A training organization like ours, in a minority context, works with numerous clients who are using different frameworks: governing body – the European Framework; Canada School of Public Service – the ABCE scale of the Public Service Commission; Immigration Canada – the CLB and NCLC. We therefore have to work with many frameworks. How do we tie those different frameworks together? What can we conclude about coherence between different Departments?)

**Recommendation 17:** Establish new modalities of service where critical mass for classes does not exist. **[important]**

**Recommendation 18:** Provide a forum for administrators and teachers of ESL and FSL programs to problem solve about appropriate modalities of service. **[explore]**

## ASSESSMENT

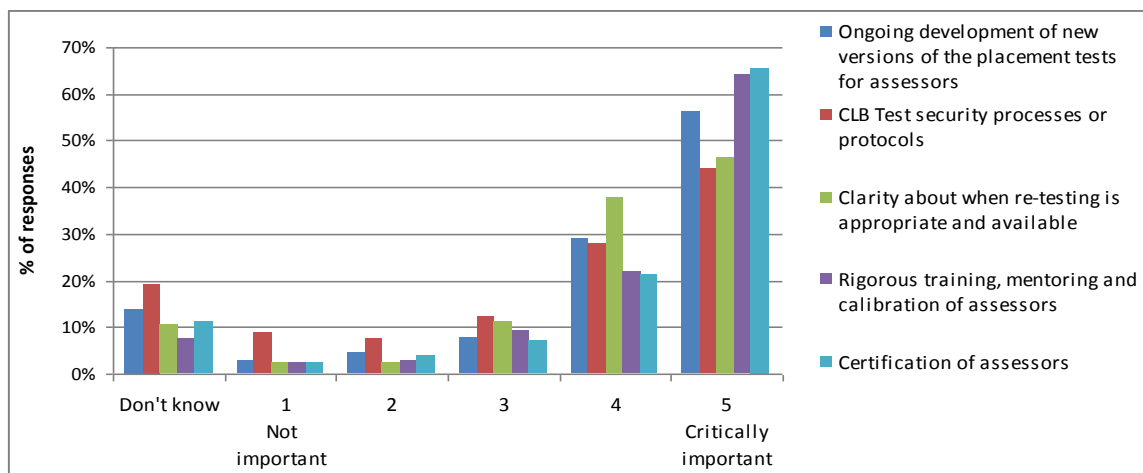
There are a range of issues related to assessment in relation to the CLB and language training – some unique and some common to academic and employment applications.

Assessment related to the NCLC is in the preliminary stages. The Batterie de tests de classement, a collection of four tests with one for each skill, were released in March 2009. People consulted during Phase 1 of the consultation process had not yet had experience with them.

### A. Integrity

Stakeholders in the CLB forums expressed concern about the integrity of the assessment process for language training placement and measuring of language proficiency – low number and security of test versions, outdated tests, training of assessors. This reflects comments on both the CLBPT (developed by CCLB) and the CLBA (developed by the Centre for Education and Training), including confusion about the respective benefits of each test and what criteria are used to determine which test to use. These tests were both developed for use with LINC programs however the use of each tool has been expanded over time. Stakeholders in the National Forum indicated that the confusion might intensify as new assessment tools are being developed for specialized purposes.

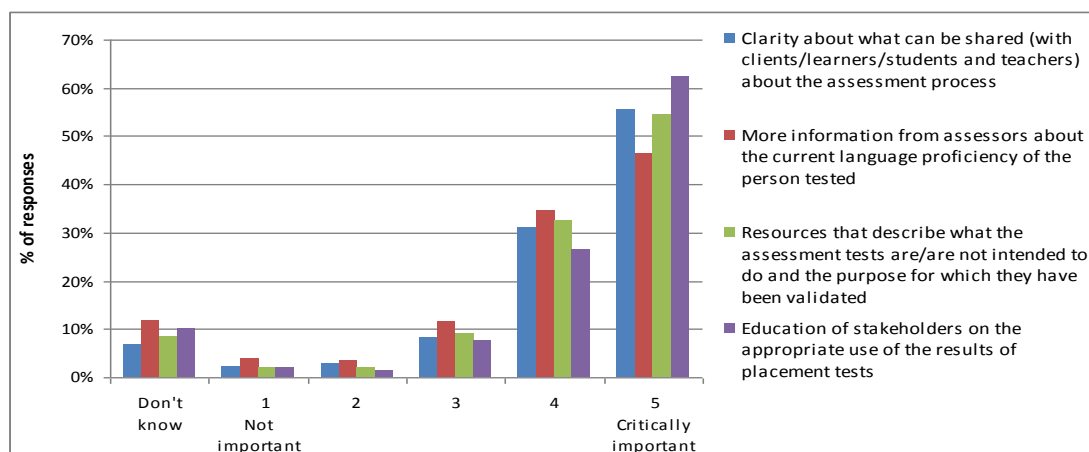
**Figure 18: Challenges identified in Forums / CLB Assessment<sup>23</sup> - Part 1**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'Don't know' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 5 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

<sup>23</sup> Data source for Figures 18 and 19: Practitioner Survey, question 17.

**Figure 19: Challenges identified in Forums / CLB Assessment - Part 2**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'Don't know' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 5 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

Responses to the CLB practitioner survey validated that all of the challenges related to assessment are deemed quite important. All items but one were deemed very important (i.e. over 80% of respondents with an opinion gave a rating of 4 or 5) and the outstanding item 'CLB Test security processes or protocols' scored quite high as well (72%).

Stakeholders agree that enhanced rigour in the training and ongoing calibration of assessors is needed. Some stakeholders have put forward the option of a more intensive approach that includes re-certification. To date, funders have not supported this position. Cost of maintaining such a system is a factor. However as use of the Benchmarks continue to evolve and assessors assume increased responsibility for high stakes assessment, the core competencies of assessors and how they are evaluated requires further consideration.

#### What people said...

"We need substantial investment to create capacity in terms of variety, security, validation."

"When CLBPT is used outside its original purpose there is no accountability. We need rigorous monitoring and training".

"The longer the tests are on the market, the greater the possibility that people can be coached to take the test."

When students are assessed and get different levels from different assessors they get very discouraged. There are very real consequences."

"Students need some sort of final testing – to demonstrate improvement."

"A teacher not qualified to do the test could assign a mark that is not authentic."

"Tools like CLBPT are being used for exit testing. Everybody is just doing what they want with it."

"The assessment process is a mystery – both the tool itself and what it is about. People want to know what to expect. Is it oral? Is it multiple choice? Is it done individually or in groups?"

## B. Increasing Understanding

Settlement workers and teachers are frustrated at their lack of understanding of the assessment process, which they believe hampers their ability to prepare people for the experience. New immigrants are nervous about the assessment, which can affect their ability to perform and prevent assessors from providing a fair assessment of their skill level.

There appears to be a lack of consistency in application of the assessment process between assessors. Some teachers indicate that they get very little information from assessors about the

current level of language proficiency of the learner. Others indicate that they get significant information from assessment centres. Teachers indicate that a type of report card would be extremely valuable for teachers in establishing goals with the learner and reduce the need for reassessment by teachers.

Stakeholders in a number of different forums called for a portfolio type approach, which learners and language training practitioners could use to track language proficiency that could be useful to the learner during language training but also when seeking employment in the future. Forty-two (42%) of respondents to the Learner Survey indicated that they had used such a resource. Seventy-three (73.1) percent of learners indicated that a simple description of CLB levels would be 'very helpful' or 'helpful' for them to use to explain their language levels.

### **C. Access to Assessment**

The lack of alternative assessment models to respond to needs in rural areas was identified in some forums. The need for more trained assessors compounds the challenge. The option to use technology and expand use of self-assessment tools was identified.

Only 21.1% of respondents to the Learner survey indicated they had used the self-assessment tool on the CCLB website. This tool has only been on-line to the public since April 2009 and has not yet been officially launched which may explain the lack of use.

#### **What people said...**

"The lack of assessment tools has been a real roadblock to implementation."

«On a besoin de tests qui nous permettront de faire une évaluation uniforme des apprentissages pour fin de pistage et d'évaluation du rendement des étudiants et des programmes. Il ne s'agit pas d'évaluations quotidiennes développées par les professeurs. » (We need tests that will enable us to do a uniform assessment of what has been learned in order to track and measure the performance of students and programs. It is not a matter of daily assessments developed by teachers.)

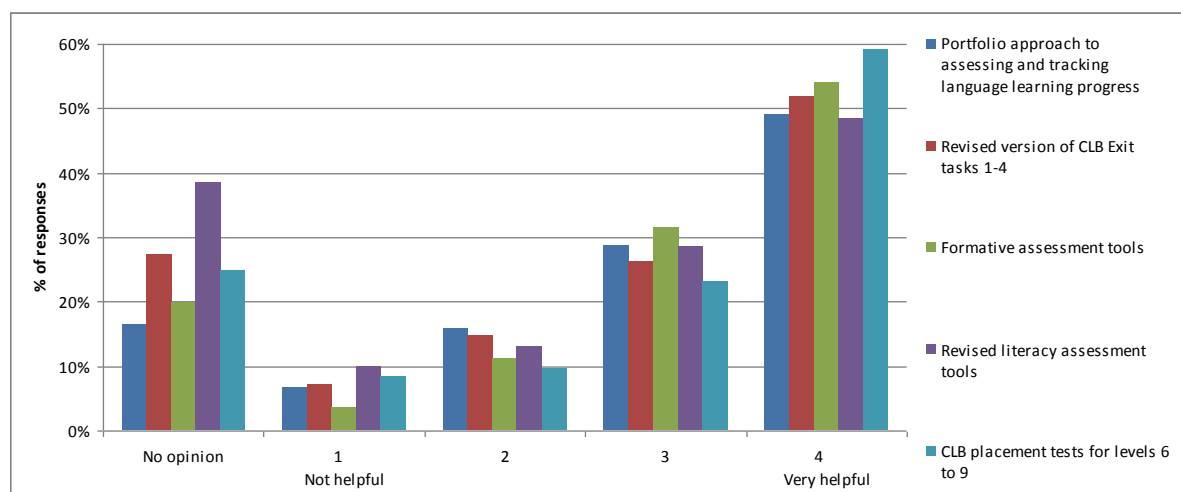
« Il faudrait créer des test certificatifs. Il s'agit d'une idée qui n'est probablement pas populaire dans le milieu de l'enseignement. Cependant, ceci donnerait énormément de forces au NCLC et permettrait de contrer la compétition (p. ex. le cadre européen). » (We should create certification tests. This is an idea which is probably not popular in the education community. However, it would give enormous strength to the NCLC and fight competition (e.g. the European framework).)

« Il faudrait développer des tests qui pourraient être administrés en ligne (de la même façon que le CLIC en ligne permet une meilleur accessibilité des personnes dans les régions éloignées, à mobilité réduite, etc.). De cette façon, un évaluateur pourrait évaluer des gens à travers le Canada, et même ailleurs dans le monde. Puisque les francophones sont dispersés au Canada, l'utilisation de l'Internet va aider à la communication et à un coût moindre. ». (We should develop tests that can be administered on line (just as on-line CLIC gives more access to people in remote areas, with impaired mobility, etc.). This way, an assessor could assess people across Canada, even elsewhere in the world. As French speakers are spread across Canada, using the web will help communicating at a lower cost.)

### **D. Appropriate Assessment Resources**

The need for particular assessment resources to be developed was identified through the forums and validated through the survey.

**Figure 20: Potential usefulness of suggested Assessment Resources<sup>24</sup>**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

The percentage of respondents with opinion rating 3 or 4 for perceived usefulness of these assessment resources were:

- Formative assessment tools (85.4%);
- CLB placement tests for levels 6 to 9 (82.2%);
- Revised version of CLB Exit tasks 1-4 (78.2%);
- Portfolio approach (77.8%); and
- Revised literacy assessment tools (77.0%).

Recently released CCLB 5-10 Exit Assessment Tasks were considered to be very beneficial.

Within Phase 1 forums, confusion about the role and intention of exit tasks and more formal exit tests surfaced. For most stakeholders involved in language training exit tests are intended to determine language proficiency to define the next steps for learners. Funders have also expressed interest in using results of exit tests as a mechanism for demonstrating accountability. Stakeholders have expressed caution that exit tests used to measure accountability and movement of learners through language training will actually undermine the system. There is a real threat that organizations could start teaching to the test. National Forum participants suggested that if more quality assurance for language training services is required a comprehensive approach be developed that involves indicators beyond assessment results.

National Forum participants affirmed the need for a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practises for all aspects of assessment involving the CLB or the NCLC. Some of the issues to be addressed include:

- purposes of testing and types of tests needed;
- criteria to guide test development and validation requirements; and

<sup>24</sup> Data source for Figure 20: Practitioner Survey, question 28.

- processes to protect the integrity of the assessment process including training and certification of assessors.

The assessment framework would serve to:

- establish a shared understanding amongst stakeholders of how assessment does or should occur;
- support evaluation of existing assessment processes and inform changes required; and
- guide future assessment projects.

**Recommendation 19:** Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment that involve the CLB or the NCLC (also relevant to Academic and Employment Application). **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 20:** Develop the assessment processes and tools required to ensure assessment processes have the appropriate level of rigour for particular applications. **[urgent]**

## ACADEMIC APPLICATION

Application of the CLB in the academic sector is relatively new and not consistent across the country. Issues related to the academic context were raised in forums across the country. The NCLC is not currently being applied in the academic context, however the MICC and the Ministry of Education of Québec are looking at how the NCFLSIA could be used as a framework to teach and assess French language capacity for adult immigrants served by the school system and by MICC service providers.

## CURRENT USE

Academic institutions in some jurisdictions are embracing the CLB as a way forward for defining entrance requirements – both within particular institutions and across institutions<sup>25</sup> in an effort to set common standards. Clear entrance requirements, which outline the required language proficiency level, are expected to support new immigrants to enter into programs that match their skills and interests and increase their likelihood of success.

Stakeholders in some jurisdictions indicated that academic institutions are not using any language proficiency entry criteria. One issue is the lack of tools that are appropriate for this purpose.

### What people said...

“Academic proficiencies are not clearly addressed.”

“It speaks to multiple users. The scope allows for broader use than original intended audiences. We have been involved in a multi-year project to see to what extent CLB can be used in colleges. We have been benchmarking programs and the experience has been quite positive.”

“The impact of language training is migrating to the post secondary level, with the focus on benchmarking programs.”

“Is it that they don’t know about the CLB or that they have chosen not to use it?”

“Is it about admission (minimum to get in) or about admission to succeed?”

“When do we leave people alone? Do we expect more of immigrants than native Canadians?”

“TOEFL is a strong test. Those who pass it will have no problem with academics (critical thinking, quick thinking).”

“We need to make sure that CLB levels do not become used as a barrier in the academic context. Our expectations for immigrants should not be higher than our expectations for native Canadians.”

## CHANGES REQUIRED TO EXPAND USE OF THE CLB AND THE NCLC

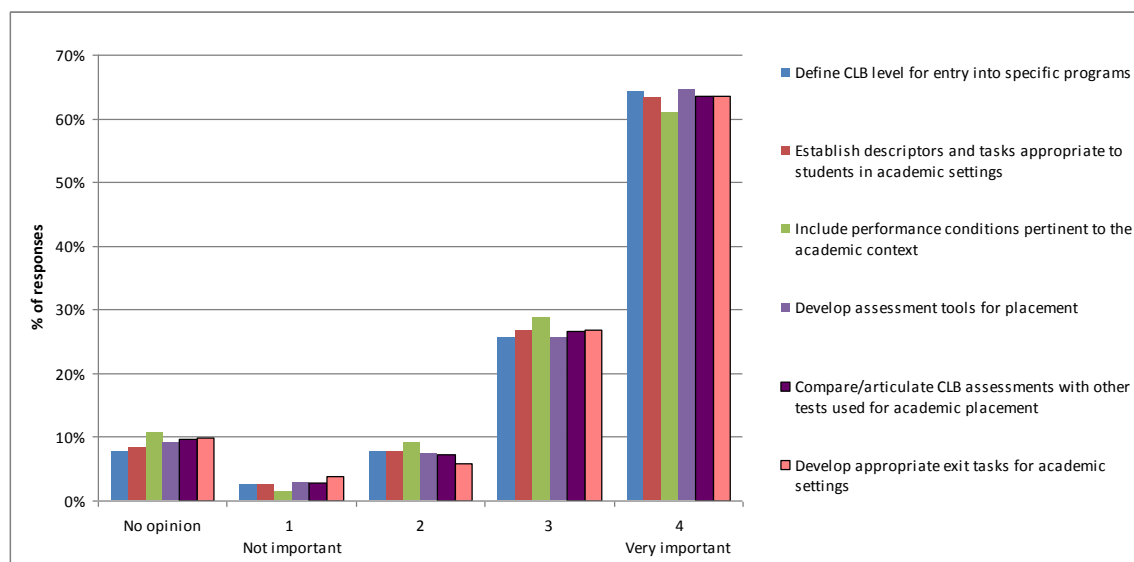
Representatives from academic institutions, who participated in the forums, have identified what changes are required to facilitate the use of the CLB. These changes were validated through the survey. Similar changes are likely required to expand use of the NCLC.

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<sup>25</sup> British Columbia academic institutions have collaborated to articulate the CLB to BC ESL levels and are now working to define common entrance requirements across common programs. Ontario colleges have collaborated through the *Colleges Integrating Immigrants through the Ontario College System*, to integrate use of the CLB from pre-entry services through employment transition and into the workforce. Individual colleges like Red River College in Manitoba and Bow Valley College in Alberta have defined entry requirements according to the CLB.



**Figure 21: Importance of Supports for the Academic Context<sup>26</sup>**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

All the 'supports for the academic context' identified in the survey questionnaire were deemed very important (rating of 4) or important (rating of 3) by 90% or more of respondents with an opinion.

Learners in the survey validated the need to understand what CLB levels people require to study at college or university with 85.8% indicating that it would be very useful (4 on scale of 1 to 4) or useful (3 on scale).

## A. Changes to Benchmarks

Some institutions are reluctant to use the CLB, expressing caution about their validity particularly at the higher levels and their utility for academic purposes. To facilitate use of the CLB more definition between levels (particularly higher levels), clear descriptors and suitable tasks that reflect critical thinking are required. Refer to section on Integrity of the Benchmarks and the Companion Document on Change to the Benchmarks for more details.

**Recommendation 21:** Once changes have been made to enhance the integrity of the Benchmarks, promote the use of the CLB and the NCLC amongst academic institutions, building on the research and work that has been done in different provinces to establish consistent entry requirements across institutions. **[important]**

## B. Articulation

Some stakeholders in the academic world perceive that CLB is a small framework in an increasingly global world where a framework like the CEFR has international recognition. Existing tests that are used in Canada like IELTS and TOEFL are more recognized than the tests associated with the CLB and the NCLC. Others see the relative merit of the CLB and the NCLC, given their communicative framework that focuses on competencies and is more aligned with the needs of the employment sector.

<sup>26</sup> Data source for Figure 21: Practitioner Survey, question 32.

Refer to section on Integrity of the CLB and the NCLC – Articulation.

**Recommendation 22:** Determine what if any, articulation of the CLB and the NCLC and their associated tests is needed with other frameworks and tests used to establish entry into academic programs. **[important]**

### **C. Assessment**

As the CLB, and in the future NCLC, continue to expand into high stakes uses like placement in academic programs the need for valid and secure tools and processes increases.

Appropriate CLB and NCLC assessment tools are not available for placement or for exit testing in the academic setting. The need for CLB placement tests for the higher levels is considered by stakeholders to be particularly urgent if the CLB is to be applied effectively in that setting. The current lower level placements tests are not adequate to meet the needs of academic institutions.

**Recommendation 23:** Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment using the CLB and NCLC (also relevant to Language Training and Employment Application). **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 24:** Develop language proficiency assessment tests that are suitable to measure language skills at the higher CLB and NCLC levels. **[urgent]**

## EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

In all of the CLB multi-stakeholder and practitioner specific forums issues were raised about the application of the Benchmarks in the employment sector - which includes licensing and certification by professional and regulatory bodies.

## CURRENT USE

Stakeholders have indicated that there has been an explosion of interest for using the CLB and increasingly the NCLC in the employment sector in the past few years. The CLB is being applied in sectors such as engineering, food processing, health, technology and tourism. The NCLC has been applied in tourism, food processing and for trades. The interest reflects the reality of the labour market and immigration patterns.

While some employers and sectors have embraced the CLB (with some reservations) others have not. In some cases it may simply be because they are not aware of the Benchmarks and their application to the employment context. In other cases employers question their utility given the complexity of application.

To some extent this is reflective of the lack of concrete support available to employers/sectors to apply the CLB and the NCLC. Stakeholders indicate that a wide variety of information and application is causing confusion and disenchantment amongst employers.

### What people said...

"We need education for employers so they understand what the levels mean."

"It is the basis for rich data to do occupational and sectoral analysis e.g. food processing, pharmacy."

"It is a foundational piece - allows companies to recruit, based on knowledge of language levels needed."

"Engage the employers through programs that already have an established relationship with employers."

"Few instructors have the ability to teach pronunciation, but this is really critical when people get out into the real world."

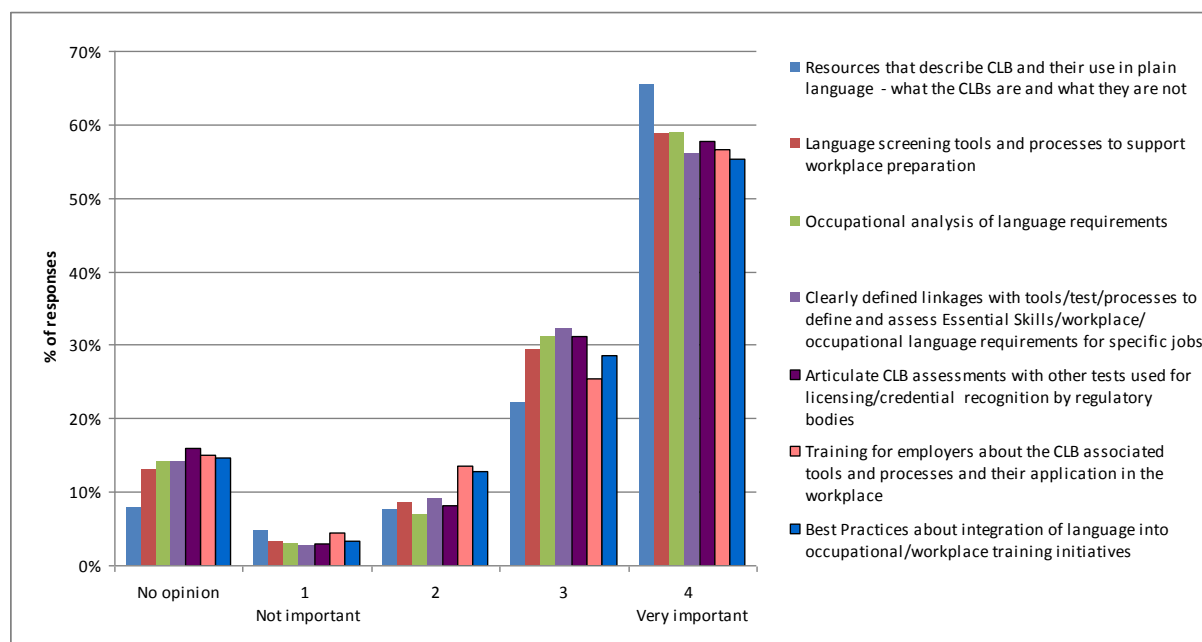
"We lack experience and confidence in using the CLB because of the low numbers we see coming in with a CLB assessment."

"Collaboration and trust is building up among our stakeholders. We have been working 14 years with employers."

## CHANGES REQUIRED TO EXPAND USE OF THE CLB

The importance of supports to apply the CLB in the employment sector was identified in 11 of 22 forums. It was further validated through the survey although these results should be interpreted with some caution given that the survey was directed toward and completed by language training practitioners. That said all of the 'supports for employment context' were deemed very important (rating of 4) or important (rating of 3) by more than 80% of respondents.

**Figure 22: Importance of Supports for the Employment Context<sup>27</sup>**



Note: In this bar chart, the 'No opinion' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

## A. Awareness and Education

Stakeholders indicate that while many employers understand the importance of language proficiency to successful employment, there is a need for greater awareness about how to measure language proficiency and the interface between language, socio-cultural competencies and technical skills. The need for a plain language description of the CLB and associated tools was identified as a priority.

Bridging programs that combine linguistic upgrading in CLB with technical training and socio-cultural skills are being increasingly introduced. Stakeholders indicate support for this direction and note that it is critical that employers understand the distinction between language proficiency assessment tools and tools that measure other competencies.

**Recommendation 25:** Increase awareness of the role of the CLB (and in future the NCLC) in understanding and describing language proficiency and how the Benchmarks interface with measuring other skills (e.g. socio-cultural, technical). **[important]**

**Recommendation 26:** Expand capacity in and support the employment sector to apply the CLB and the NCLC in the employment context. **[important]**

<sup>27</sup> Data source for Figure 22: Practitioner Survey, question 31.

## B. Changes to Benchmarks

Stakeholders have called for an increased focus on pronunciation or comprehensibility to facilitate employment. The need for guidelines associated with the Benchmarks to clarify how pronunciation can be addressed has been identified (See Companion Document - Changes to the CLB and the NCLC) along with an increased focus on pronunciation and intonation in language training. Some language training and settlement agencies have introduced new programs focused on this aspect of speaking. “There is little doubt pronunciation problems create barriers to successful economic and social integration in Canada.”(Derwing et al, 2008)<sup>28</sup> Stakeholders, including the employers represented in the National Forum, reaffirmed the need for a focus on pronunciation and intonation.

**Recommendation 27:** Address pronunciation, intonation and comprehensibility through resources and applications associated with the CLB and NCLC. **[important]**

## C. Implementation Support

Employers and sector councils are increasingly investing resources to apply the CLB. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada has been one vehicle to support these efforts.

The priorities identified related to implementation support were:

- occupational analysis of language requirements (90%);
- development of best practices about integration of language into occupational and workplace training initiatives (84%); and
- training for employers about the CLB tools and processes and their application in the workplace (82%).

### What people said...

“Occupational analysis must be affordable. The industry is not prepared to spend a lot of money.”

“OLA do not screen just define requirements. Industry is asking for a screening tool.”

“Assessors in our English at Work program help employers develop a tool to assess based on the tasks for the job.”

“The Workplace Language Assessment will be launched soon.”

“Can we develop a model of team teaching with a CLB expert and a job expert teaching together?”

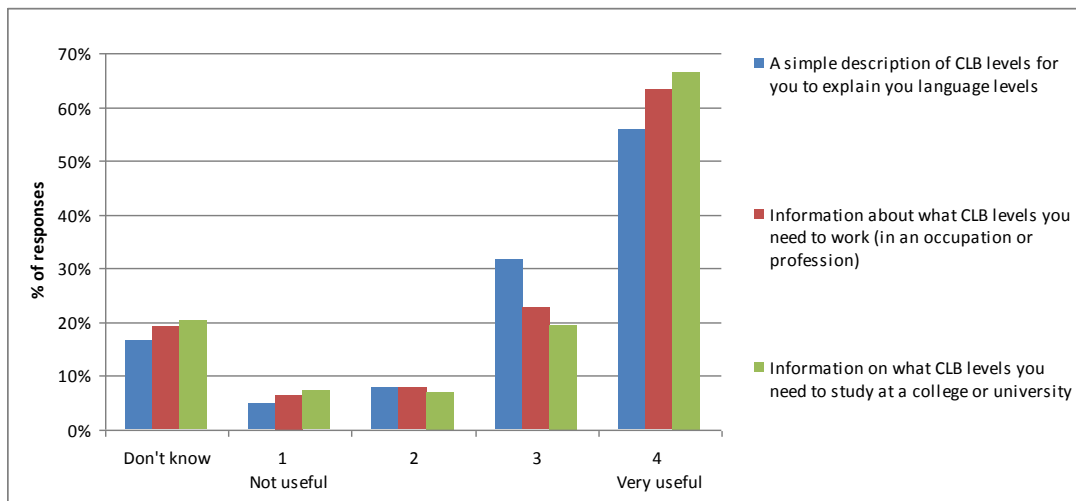
“Employers do not want to benchmark all jobs. There needs to be a basic minimum standard determination of language level.”

Learners in the survey validated the need to understand what CLB levels people require to work in particular occupations with 85.9% indicating that it would be very useful (4 on scale of 1 to 4) or useful (3 on scale). The need for a simple description of the language proficiency levels they have achieved was also identified as very useful or useful at 87.6%.

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<sup>28</sup> Derwing, Tracey, Diepenbroek Lori, Foote Jennifer. A synthesis of the literature on aspects of second language acquisition important to skilled immigrants, University of Alberta/Prairie Metropolis Centre, March 2008.

**Figure 23: How useful would the following be?** <sup>29</sup>



Note: In this bar chart, the 'Don't know' percentages are percentages of the total # of respondents. The percentages appearing over the 1 to 4 scale are percentages of respondents with an opinion.

One particular capacity issue that had been identified through forums was the need for more certified Occupational Language Assessors. At the time of the forums only five people were certified to do the work across Canada.

#### **D. Assessment**

As the CLB continues to expand into high stakes uses (placement in higher level government employment support programs, assessment by regulatory bodies and for licensing) the need for valid and secure tools and processes increases.

Priorities related to assessment include:

- articulation with other tests used for licensing and credential recognition (89%);
- clearly defined linkages with other tools/tests/processes (88%); and
- language screening tools and processes (88%).

Stakeholders are demanding appropriate and cost effective approaches and tools to assess language skills that align with fair hiring practices. Interest in sector specific applications (e.g. CELBAN) exists, however stakeholders indicate that other less complex and costly approaches are needed. CELBAN is considered to be somewhat unique given the large numbers of nurses to be assessed.<sup>30</sup> Stakeholders are concerned that if appropriate tools are not developed the pragmatics of assessment for hiring will result in existing tools being used inappropriately, which could over time erode confidence in the Benchmarks. A new Workplace Language Placement Tool (developed by the CCLB/CNCLC) has recently been launched in Alberta and is in use in Ontario. It is anticipated that this tool will meet some of the needs that have been identified. Monitoring of its implementation is required.

<sup>29</sup> Data source for Figure 23: Learners Survey, question 19. 643 learners responded to this question.

<sup>30</sup> The need for a French equivalent to CELBAN and access to CELBAN assessment in the Atlantic has been identified.

**Recommendation 28:** Establish a comprehensive assessment framework that outlines best practices in relation to all aspects of assessment using the CLB and NCLC (also relevant to Language Training and Academic Application). **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 29:** Develop language proficiency assessment tests that are suitable to measure language proficiency in the employment context. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 30:** Establish a portfolio type of approach that allows immigrants learning a second language to track and demonstrate their language proficiency. **[explore]**

## DEVELOPING AND SHARING QUALITY RESOURCES

Stakeholders seek enhanced information about and sharing of resources related to CLB applications. This issue was raised in 15 of the CLB forums and 4 of the NCLC forums. When asked in the survey how helpful different mechanisms would be for sharing information and knowledge about the application of the CLB, over 75% of respondents scored 4 (very helpful) or 3 (helpful) on 5 of the mechanisms that had been identified in the forums:

- Establish on-line mechanism for notifying people of new resources (86%);
- Establish national protocols for sharing resources developed through government funding (81%);
- Establish a national mechanism to identify priorities for resource development (79%);
- Integrate sharing of information about resources into existing opportunities where practitioners network and share information (77%); and
- Establish a peer review system to rate the quality of existing and new resources that are aligned to the CLB levels (76%).

NCLC practitioners also noted the need for a user-friendly, user-accessible, internet based mechanism that facilitates sharing of resources between practitioners/users. The need to be informed of new tools and documents as they become available was highlighted. There is an explicit intent to continue to build on the relationship with the government of Quebec to align resources wherever appropriate.

## REPOSITORY

While CCLB/CNCLC has a website it is not considered to be sufficiently user-friendly and reflective of the wide range of resources and development work that is occurring across the country in relation to the CLB and the NCLC. People are interested in an on-line repository that includes: core NCLC and CLB documents; existing resources to support application; overview of resources under development; occupations that have been benchmarked; academic institutions that have defined CLB or NCLC related entry criteria; and what CLB related research has been or is being done.

National Forum participants affirmed the need for a repository. Federal and provincial governments have actually initiated a study to assess the feasibility of establishing a repository, including its scope and the agreements and resources required to make it work.

**Recommendation 31:** Establish a national on-line repository (with processes to ensure it retains its currency) to house information about research, best practices and guidelines as well as resources and tools used in the application of the CLB and the NCLC in the pre-immigration, language training, employment and academic contexts. Tailor the website for easy use by different stakeholder groups. **[urgent]**

### What people said...

"I would love to know what other provinces are doing. We need a common repository of resources – a shared space – so we can see what is going on in other places."

« Il serait important de mettre sur pied une banque de ressources en ligne (matériel, forum, pratiques, etc.). Ceci aiderait à illustrer la vitalité des NCLC, à animer le réseau des utilisateurs, à renforcer l'utilisation des NCLC et à permettre de partager les pratiques exemplaires. » (It would be important to set up an on-line data base of resources (materials, forum, practices, etc). This would help illustrate the vitality of the NCLC, give life to the network of users, reinforce the use of the NCLC and permit sharing exemplars.)



## DEFINING AND ACTING ON PRIORITIES

Participants in the CLB forums indicated considerable frustration about the amount of resources currently being developed without defined national priorities. Many stakeholders perceive that a more coordinated approach between funders would maximize the use of limited resources. At the same time stakeholders are clear innovation should not be stifled. If coordination slows the ability of stakeholders to respond to unique needs and interests it will not be supported. Participants in the National Forum indicated a preference to define national priorities for resources to be developed that are of national relevance. This approach allows innovation within jurisdictions and organizations.

Stakeholders in forums also expressed some caution about organizations' willingness to share resources that they have developed given competition for funding resources. The need for protocols to guide sharing resources was identified. National Forum participants indicated that agreements currently exist between jurisdictions and will enable the sharing of resources of national relevance.

Practitioners in the NCLC forums noted a lack of financial resources to support resource development including support for practitioners who spend time developing resources. It is perceived by some that the challenges faced by the NCLC are more daunting than the CLB because there are far fewer institutions and practitioners that can contribute to the development of the NCLC and associated resources, and generally fewer resources available. Some believe that this is offset by an advantage: there is less competition for resources given fewer stakeholders and greater readiness to collaborate and cooperate, both locally and across the country.

**Recommendation 32:** Establish a coordinated approach to defining priorities for development of resources and applications of national relevance. **[explore]**

**Recommendation 33:** Establish a coordinated approach to developing resources and applications of national relevance. **[explore]**

**Recommendation 34:** Continue to align NCLC resources and resources developed by the government of Québec wherever possible **[important]**

**Recommendation 35:** Clarify protocols around the sharing of resources between organizations and across jurisdictions – taking into account recognition of intellectual capital and the need to cover development costs. **[important]**

### What people said...

"Funders support the development of resources and tools with the expectation that these will be used across the country without clear buy in or mechanisms to facilitate sharing."

"Some organizations and/or their funders refuse to share the resources/tools they have developed."

"We need to charge for the resources we develop so we can cover our development costs."

"We need to continue to foster innovation."

« Pour assurer un partage plus dynamique des ressources créées avec l'appui d'un bailleur de fonds externe, il faudrait que la bailleur de fonds mette une condition de partager. » (To ensure a more dynamic sharing of resources created with the support of an outside funder, the funder should put a condition to this effect.)

« Pour faciliter un partage des ressources, on a besoin d'une entente entre les parties prenantes : pourquoi on y adhère, incitatifs pour partager, etc. » (To facilitate sharing of resources, we need an agreement between stakeholders : why does one join it, what are the incentives for sharing).

## INDICATING QUALITY

The explosion of new CLB related resources developed by organizations across the country and the anticipated NCLC related resources has a downside. Stakeholders are not easily able to assess the quality of the resources. CCLB/CNCLC has considered but not had the resources to establish a quality assurance mechanism to rate resources.

The document review revealed a number of organizations that issue some quality seal or stamp of approval. For example, Curriculum Services Canada (CSC) evaluates learning resources (print, multimedia, e-learning) and approved resources earn the CSC Seal of Quality. The Seal of Quality has become a recognized standard used by purchasers to guide purchasing decisions and by developers of learning resources to improve their products. Curriculum leaders specifically trained in learning resource evaluation are engaged in the evaluation process. Manufacturers have a similar opportunity for review of their products by associations such as the Canadian Dermatology Association or the Canadian Dental Association. The intent of such independent approval standards is to support consumers making purchase decisions, professionals recommending products and manufacturers engaged in research.

**Recommendation 36:** Establish a quality assurance framework to assess benchmarked tools and resources. **[important]**

### What people said...

"I would love to know what other provinces are doing. We need a common repository of resources – a shared space – so we can see what is going on in other places."

"Organizations may or may not be willing (or able) to share their resources."

« Il serait important de mettre sur pied une banque de ressources en ligne (matériel, forum, pratiques, etc.). Ceci aiderait à illustrer la vitalité des NCLC, à animer le réseau des utilisateurs, à renforcer l'utilisation des NCLC et à permettre de partager les pratiques exemplaires. » (It would be important to set up an on-line data base of resources (materials, forum, practices, etc.). This would help illustrate the vitality of the NCLC, give life to the network of users, reinforce the use of the NCLC and permit the sharing of best practices.)

## ROLE OF CCLB/CNCLC

The need to clarify the role of the CCLB/CNCLC and the organizational capacity required to fulfil that role was identified in CLB and NCLC forums, the Board and staff consultations and key informant interviews during Phase 1 of the consultation process. Table 9 provides a summary of the various perspectives that emerged in this Phase..

While there appeared to be significant synergy between what the organization and other stakeholders perceive to be the role of the CCLB/CNCLC, clarification was needed in a number of areas, particularly in relation to CCLB/CNCLC's leadership role. National Forum participants were invited to offer their perspective about the core work of the organization.

### What people said....

"The community is putting a lot of expectations out there. Is CCLB ready to redefine its portfolio?"

« Un des rôles du Centre est de faire preuve de leadership pour appuyer la dualité linguistique du Canada et assurer la vitalité linguistique francophone. » (One of the Centre's roles is to show leadership to support Canada's linguistic duality and ensure French linguistic vitality.)

"The whole scope of what we are talking about cannot fall to CCLB. Government wants to see partnerships."

"CCLB needs to show increased leadership, advocacy and speed. When trying to change something the response is always about complexity, which can lead to inertia. Some sense of urgency and a time frame would be helpful."

"The CLB has to be based on a vision not funding proposals."

"The CCLB was not created as a top down centre, but rather as a hub, a forum for exchange with a vision of where the field can be taken."

"Being here makes me aware of how much we need a forum to share – a chance to lift our heads up from work."

"Buy-in is not just symbolic. What will all stakeholders (not just government) do to ensure sustainability? For example, can we introduce a fee-paying membership that people pay because it is worth it for them to belong? It is the support and will of the membership that keep it going."

"We need stable sufficient funding for the CCLB."

« Le Centre devrait avoir un financement de base pour assurer le maintien des deux cadres (NCLC et CLB) et leur promotion. » (The Center should have core financing to ensure that both frameworks (NCLC and CLB) are maintained and promoted.)

**Table 9: Roles to evolve the CLB and the NCLC - Identified in Phase 1**

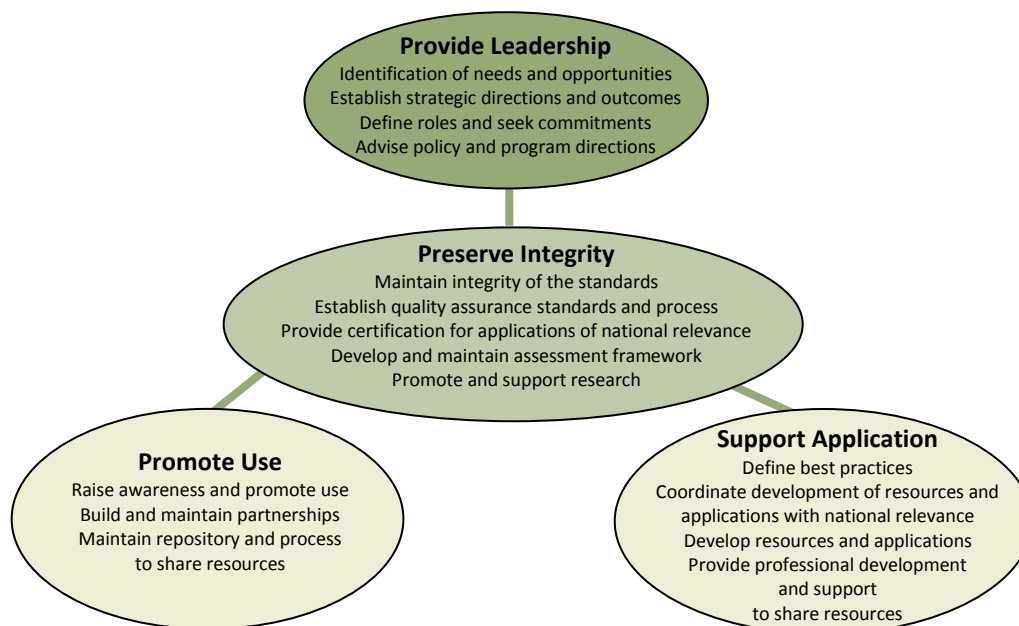
Roles To Evolve The CLB And The NCLC	Current CCLB/CNCLC role	Perspectives - Changes to CCLB/CNCLC Role		Comments
		CCLB Board and staff	Combined – forums	
LEADERSHIP				
Set directions and priority outcomes for Benchmarks	Partial	Clarify	Clarify	Clarify who provides leadership for system and role of CCLB
Consultation with stakeholders to identify needs and opportunities				Requires enhanced focus; consultation sets a good precedent
Define roles and seek commitments to fulfil roles		Clarify	Clarify	Clarify who is responsible for identifying roles and seeking commitments
Advise policy/program directions		Clarify	Clarify	Clarify if CCLB has advisory role on how Benchmarks are used; no desire for advocacy
INTEGRITY OF STANDARDS				
Maintain integrity of the standards				Clarify role in relation to CIC who holds copyright
Establish research agenda and monitor developments		Clarify	Clarify	Clarify role of CCLB
AWARENESS AND OUTREACH				
Raise awareness and promote use of Benchmarks				Needs enhanced focus to be continuous and consistent
Build and maintain partnerships				Opportunity for enhanced focus to act on consultation results
Create and maintain repository and process for sharing resources				On-line database developed without resources to sustain
SUPPORT APPLICATION				
Demonstrate and encourage best practices				Make role more explicit
Coordinate development of resources and applications	Partial	Clarify		Clarify how to coordinate within competitive funding model
Create and support the development of resources and applications		Clarify		Determine how to reconcile with coordination role
Establish quality assurance mechanism to validate resources and applications				Consider implementing peer review process
Training, certification and support of trainers, teachers and assessors		Clarify	Clarify	Need for national training strategy; clarify extent of role
Develop and administer assessment framework; develop tools and tests; maintain test bank; license providers; train and certify assessors	Partial	Clarify	Clarify	Serious capacity issues; lack of assessment framework; clarify role of CCLB and other partners

Legend: white – no role; light grey – partial role or need for clarity re extent of role; dark grey – clear role

## CORE WORK

Stakeholders would like the CCLB/CNCLC to assume responsibility in four core areas of work, as depicted in Figure 24.

**Figure 24: Core Work of the CCLB / CNCLC**



### A. Provide Leadership

Stakeholders have identified the need for leadership to guide the evolution and application of the CLB and the NCLC. This requires a clear vision, strategic directions and defined outcomes and priorities. There appears to be agreement across a broad range of stakeholders that the CCLB/CNCLC should assume this leadership role. Participants in the consultation process called for a clear action plan that would lead to results. The first tangible result of the National Consultation has been the development of a CCLB/CNCLC strategic plan, grounded in the results of the National Consultation, to guide the Centre over the next three years.

As demonstrated through the participation in the consultation, a broad range of stakeholders want to be engaged in identifying needs and opportunities to inform those directions and priorities. The National Consultation establishes a strong precedent and foundation to build on. It is essential that CCLB/CNCLC establish clear mechanisms for seeking stakeholder input into how the CLB and the NCLC continues to evolve. Stakeholder support has considerable influence on funding decisions.

Many stakeholders have a role to advance the evolution of the CLB and the NCLC. The Benchmarks and their application have evolved through a strong history of partnership and stakeholders value this collaboration. However the role of partners relative to the CCLB/CNCLC has been confusing at times, sometimes resulting in competition for resources that undermines the potential for collaboration. If the CCLB/CNCLC is to operate as a centre of expertise, stakeholders, including funders, need to understand the distinction in roles between the

CCLB/CNCLC and others involved in developing applications based on the CLB and the NCLC. The role of CCLB/CNCLC needs to be clear and transparent and where appropriate the role of other partners needs to be defined and commitments clarified to ensure that the work required can advance.

Finally, the CLB and the NCLC have an enormous influence on how language proficiency of immigrants is measured and understood. The CCLB/CNCLC had a clear role to play in advising policy-makers on the role of the CLB and the NCLC as it evolves.

## **B. Preserve Integrity**

There is clear agreement across all stakeholders that CCLB/CNCLC has a crucial role in ensuring and preserving the integrity of the Benchmarks. As depicted in Figure 24, preserving integrity is second only to providing leadership as a core area of work.

Stakeholders identified five key areas of focus:

- Maintain integrity of the CLB and the NCLC, ensuring the appropriate level of rigour and comprehensiveness;
- Establish quality assurance standards and processes to guide resource development and application;
- Provide certification for applications of national relevance;
- Develop an assessment framework given the key relationship between assessment and integrity of application; and
- Promote and support research.

While CCLB/CNCLC is understood to have responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC, it does not in fact hold copyright – Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) does. CCLB/CNCLC cannot make changes to the Benchmarks without negotiating those changes with CIC. This has led to some confusion about the level of real influence and ownership CCLB/CNCLC has over the CLB and the NCLC. While there are differences of opinion as to how important it is for the CCLB/CNCLC to have the ultimate copyright it is clear that the respective roles of the CCLB/CNCLC and CIC for maintaining the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC need to be defined and made explicit. If consideration is to be given to transferring copyright from the CIC to the CCLB/CNCLC or establishing a licensing agreement between the two parties, the conditions for and implications of doing so need to be understood and clearly articulated.

## **C. Promote Use**

Stakeholders agree that the CCLB/CNCLC has a key role in promoting the use of the CLB and the NCLC, while recognizing that many partners have a role in promoting and advancing their use within certain contexts.

The three key areas of focus include:

- Raise awareness and promote use;
- Build and maintain partnerships to advance application; and
- Maintain a repository and process to share resources.

## **D. Support Application**

Stakeholders agree that the CCLB/CNCLC has a critical role in advancing application of the CLB and the NCLC in different contexts. Most, if not all, of this work is undertaken in partnership with stakeholders working in these different contexts.

The work of the CCLB/CNCLC in this regard has been articulated as:

- Define best practices;
- Coordinate development of resources and applications with national relevance;
- Develop resources and applications where appropriate; and
- Provide professional development and support.

Questions have surfaced throughout the National Consultation about whether or not the CCLB/CNCLC can both coordinate development of resources and applications with national relevance, and develop resources and applications where appropriate. Part of the challenge is related to working within a competitive funding model.

National Forum participants indicated a clear desire for CCLB/CNCLC to assume a coordination role in the development of resources and applications with national relevance. That said, the CCLB/CNCLC also has the expertise to develop resources and applications, sometimes through existing staff and sometimes through contract to other individuals or organizations. To stay relevant and ensure that expertise is retained within the organization it is also appropriate for the CCLB/CNCLC to engage in the actual development of resources and applications. Parameters for CCLB/CNCLC engagement in relation to resource coordination and development need to be defined by the organization to ensure that the CCLB/CNCLC can continue to assume a capacity building role and avoid conflicts of interest.

**Recommendation 37:** Advise stakeholders of CCLB/CNCLC's role and core services. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 38:** Clearly define the respective roles and the relationships between the CCLB/CNCLC and its funders for maintaining the integrity of the CLB and the NCLC. **[important]**

**Recommendation 39:** Establish a strategic plan for the CCLB/CNCLC – building on the results of the National Consultation. **[urgent]**

**Recommendation 40:** Address any governance changes that may be required to enable the CCLB/CNCLC to assume its leadership role. **[important]**

**Recommendation 41:** Establish a stakeholder engagement model that outlines how stakeholders are continuously engaged in identifying and responding to system needs. **[important]**

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

A number of stakeholders, including Board and staff members expressed caution that the CCLB/CNCLC did not have the organizational capacity and stability of funding to fulfil all of its core work. Stakeholders are seeking assurance that the CCLB/CNCLC can actually carry out the work that has been defined as a priority, particularly the work that needs to be sustained on an ongoing basis.

As a bilingual organization, CCLB/CNCLC seeks to expand its capacity to provide service and engage stakeholders in both official languages on a consistent basis.

Although core funding is not an option given current federal and provincial government funding policies, stakeholders perceive that there are ways to establish some more stability of funding for the CCLB/CNCLC.

On a go forward basis it is recommended that the CCLB/CNCLC:

- Clearly articulate what work needs to be done to advance the CLB and the NCLC, demonstrating stakeholder engagement in the identification of priorities;
- Establish cost benefit analyses for the work to be done wherever possible;
- Continue to build a more diversified funding base; and
- Establish funding practices that allow for the funding of core functions that need to be sustained on an ongoing basis.

**Recommendation 42:** Establish funding practices that will enable CCLB/CNCLC to fulfil its core functions. **[important]**

**Recommendation 43:** Expand CCLB/CNCLC capacity to provide service and engage stakeholders in both official languages on a consistent basis. **[important]**

## MOVING FORWARD

The National Consultation has generated significant discussion and built interest in acting on the recommendations made by the many stakeholders engaged in the process. It is critical that this energy is harnessed for the benefit of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants to Canada.

Many people are looking to the CLB and the NCLC as a critical foundation to improve how we assess and improve the language proficiency of immigrants to Canada. If the recommendations in this report are acted on, fundamental improvements could be made in how immigrants are integrated into our country. There is work to be done in the pre-immigration context, in our language training services, in our academic institutions, and within the employment sector.

There is a long history of collaboration surrounding the CLB and increasingly the NCLC. Many stakeholders need to fulfil their role in advancing the CLB and the NCLC. This National Consultation will serve as a solid foundation for action.



## APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

	Multi-stakeholder forums	Practitioner specific forums	On-line survey	Key Informant Interviews	Learner Consultation	Board Consultation	Staff Consultation
<b>Desired outcomes</b>	<p>Gather information and develop shared understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current uses and applications of the CLB and NCLC</li> <li>• strengths and benefits</li> <li>• gaps and unmet needs</li> <li>• opportunities and priority areas for development – tools, applications, resources</li> <li>• what is happening in the external environment that will inform how the CLB and NCLC need to evolve</li> <li>• how CCLB and NCLC need to evolve to support evolution of CLB and NCLC</li> </ul>	<p>Gather information and develop shared understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• current uses and applications of the CLB and NCLC</li> <li>• strengths and benefits</li> <li>• challenges in their uses</li> <li>• gaps and unmet needs</li> <li>• specific recommendations for changes to the CLB and NCLC and rationale</li> <li>• specific recommendations for development of associated tools and resources and rationale</li> </ul>	<p>Gather detailed information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specific changes to the CLB changes to current tools and resources</li> </ul> <p>Information gathered from practitioner specific forums were used to guide survey development</p>	<p>Gather information about specific details that would inform how the CLB and NCLC could evolve to meet the existing and emerging needs</p>	<p>Gather perspective of learners about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengths and benefits of the CLB and NCLC</li> <li>• challenges and unmet needs experienced - related to the benchmarks themselves and their application</li> <li>• recommendations for change</li> </ul> <p>Note: As a consultation with learners was not originally planned, this consultation was exploratory. Resources were not available to do a comprehensive consultation with learners from across the country at this time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity on process and proposed modifications</li> <li>• Clarity about what has been achieved to date</li> <li>• Shared understanding of the Board's stewardship role as the CCLC/CNCLC advances through next stages</li> <li>• Shared understanding of: key roles to support evolution of CLB and NCLC</li> <li>• Perceived role of CCLB and CNCLC and others</li> <li>• Capacity and challenges of CCLB and CNCLC in fulfilling its perceived role</li> </ul>	<p>Gather perspectives about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• major contributions of the CLB and NCLC to policy and service delivery</li> <li>• priorities for the evolution of both the CLB and NCLC</li> <li>• Developments that will and are influencing how the CLB and NCLC evolve-</li> <li>• opportunities for advancing priorities</li> <li>• challenges faced</li> </ul>

	Multi-stakeholder forums	Practitioner specific forums	On-line survey	Key Informant Interviews	Learner Consultation	Board Consultation	Staff Consultation
Number of participants	<p>CLB: 11 forums - 163 participants</p> <p>BC – Victoria and Vancouver AB – Calgary and Edmonton Saskatchewan – Regina MB – Winnipeg ON – Toronto, Ottawa NB – Moncton NS – Halifax NL- St. John's</p> <p>NCLC: 4 forums - 26 participants MB - Winnipeg ON - Ottawa QC - Montreal NB - Moncton</p> <p>5 individual interviews with people in regions where forums were not held (AL, SK, YK)</p>	<p>CLB: 11 forums - 171 participants BC – Victoria and Vancouver AB – Calgary and Edmonton Saskatchewan – Regina MB – Winnipeg ON – Toronto, Ottawa NB – Moncton NS – Halifax NL- St. John's</p> <p>NCLC: 2 forums - 18 participants ON - Ottawa QC - Montreal</p>	<p>CLB: Web-based survey - 497 participants</p>	<p>CLB/NCLC: Meeting with CIC – 8 people</p> <p>NCLC: 2 interviews</p>	<p>CLB: Web-based survey - 783 respondents</p> <p>NCLC: 1 focus group - 8 learners in Ottawa.</p>	<p>19 of 23 Board members</p> <p>Executive Council participated in a preliminary consultation regarding the process and the current and past context within which the CLB and NCLC are situated</p>	<p>7 staff</p>

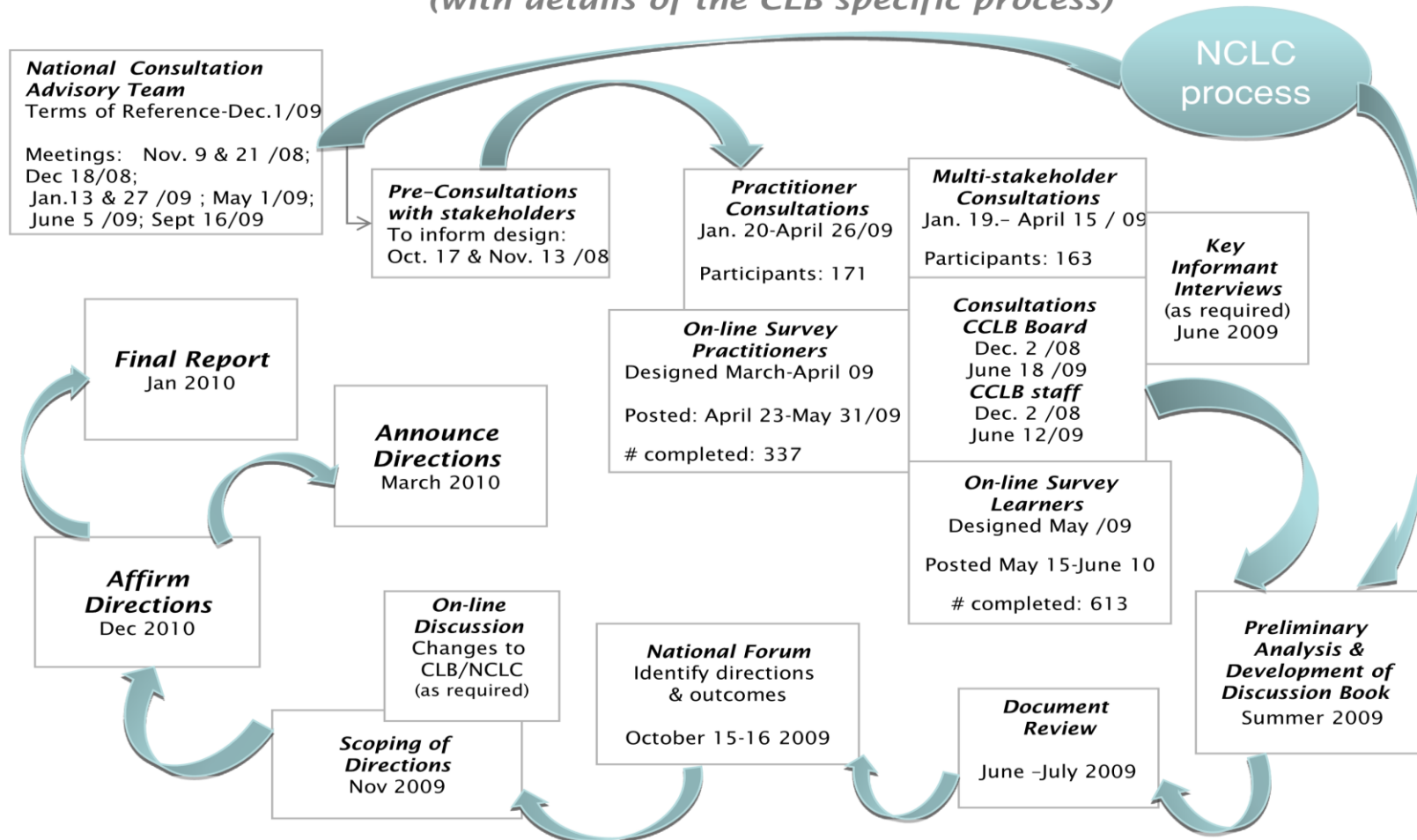
	Multi-stakeholder forums	Practitioner specific forums	On-line survey	Key Informant Interviews	Learner Consultation	Board Consultation	Staff Consultation
Representation	<p>Across functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Training of teachers</li> <li>• Assessment and Resource Development</li> <li>• Applied research i.e. academics, language experts</li> <li>• Settlement support</li> <li>• Planning/needs identification</li> <li>• Policy/funders</li> </ul> <p>Across organizations and programs<sup>31</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LINC (ELSA – BC, MIIP – MB) and CLIC</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Enhanced Language Training/Bridging Programs</li> <li>• CLBPT–BTC–NCLC (Non LINC)</li> <li>• School Boards – public, private</li> <li>• Workplace language teachers</li> <li>• TESL – Training of Teachers</li> <li>• ESL- Literacy</li> <li>• Sector Councils</li> <li>• Regulatory bodies</li> <li>• Settlement agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Across functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Literacy ESL/FSL</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Training of teachers</li> <li>• Assessment and Resource Development</li> </ul> <p>Across organizations and programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LINC (ELSA – BC, MIIP – MB) and CLIC</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• Enhanced Language Training/Bridging Programs</li> <li>• CLBPT– BTC–NCLC (Non LINC)</li> <li>• School Boards – public, private</li> <li>• Literacy ESL/FSL</li> <li>• Workplace language teachers</li> <li>• TESL – Training of Teachers</li> <li>• Settlement agencies with language programs</li> </ul>	<p>Representatives from across functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Training of teachers</li> <li>• Benchmark and Resource Development</li> </ul> <p>Discussion groups of experts to be convened to scope recommended changes to the CLB and NCLC.</p>	<p>People with particular information or expertise in an area that requires further exploration</p>	<p>Graduates as well as learners currently participating in language training programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LINC/CLIC</li> <li>• Other publicly funded ESL/FSL programs</li> <li>• Enhanced Language Training/Bridging Programs</li> </ul>	All Board members	All program staff involved with the CLB and NCLC

<sup>31</sup> Representatives familiar with different geographic areas across province – urban, rural, suburban; and different needs of learners – professionals, trades, learners from different cultural and ethnic groups



## UPDATE on CCLB National Consultation Process (with details of the CLB specific process)

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