UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ESL PROGRAM EVALUATION:
IMPLEMENTATION OF ALBERTA'S BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled ESL PROGRAM EVALUATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF ALBERTA'S BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES submitted by ELIZABETH KARRA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

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ABSTRACT

In 1994 Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, under contract to the provincial government, developed a document entitled *Best Practice Guidelines for Adult ESL/LINC Programming and Instruction in Alberta* (Government of Alberta & Government of Canada, 1994). This document includes a self-evaluation instrument designed to assist adult English as a second language programs to meet these guidelines. The purpose of this research was to implement the self-evaluation instrument in a private part-time ESL program in order to evaluate the program and also to identify any problems associated with the evaluation instrument itself.

In depth interviews were conducted with five instructors, one director, one support person and four students, and four classes were observed over a period of four months. All relevant school documents were also examined. The results of the evaluation show that while the program under review has many strengths, it also has a number of gaps or areas of weakness when compared to the *Best Practice Guidelines*. These areas were identified and recommendations were made for their improvement and/or change.

No major problems were encountered with the instrument; it proved to be effective in eliciting the information required for the study. However, it was determined that the information gathered could have been much richer in content if the instrument had been implemented internally rather than by an external agent. In conclusion some concerns are raised as to the use of this instrument by an external agent with no expertise in the field of ESL.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEED FOR AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

1.1 BACKGROUND

In spring, 1992 the federal government implemented a new language training policy for newcomers to Canada entitled LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada). Unlike the previous policy, LINC is not restricted to those who are employment destined. As a result of this change and the concomitant elimination of living allowances for ESL/FSL students, more money was made available for language programs. Among these language programs are a number of part-time offerings for special interest groups such as seniors or the non-literate, as well as part-time courses for immigrants who have managed to find some type of employment and who are therefore not available for full-time classes.

The policy changes meant that the federal government now funds many more programs than in the past, a large number of which are offered by non-governmental organizations and private schools. As a result, educational institutions, private schools, immigrant serving agencies, and ethnic groups are now competing for available funds; whereas previously most federally funded programs were limited to provincial institutions such as the Alberta Vocational Colleges.

Following the implementation of LINC, there was growing concern on the part of Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL), the provincial association of ESL teachers, with regard to the quality of some of the newer organizations offering these programs. It was generally felt that many people with little or no teaching English as a second language (TESL) preparation or expertise were accessing federal funding. In the absence of any government standards, poor quality programs which do not serve the best interests of the learners or taxpayers receive government support. Since funding is limited, a student may have only one chance to study English. If the student's time is spent in a poor quality program, then the student has been denied an optimal opportunity for language learning. Several anecdotal reports have surfaced of programs with untrained teachers and few resources operating in larger centres in Alberta. Unfortunately, there are currently no means in place by which the government funders can determine the quality or value of a program in a relatively objective and efficient manner.

ATESL first approached the federal government about program standards in 1991. However, the federal government would not take the initiative. They argued that standards are a provincial responsibility, even though the province only spends $1,000,000 annually on adult ESL programs, compared to the federal investment of approximately $10,000,000 in Alberta LINC programs alone. Because the province, then, could conceivably set standards, ATESL began lobbying the provincial government to establish minimum standards in the spring and summer of 1992. If provincial standards are put into place the federal funders have agreed to comply by funding only programs that meet those standards. In the fall, 1992 edition of the ATESL Newsletter, guidelines were proposed for the standards. As a result of the professional organization's lobbying efforts, I was hired in September, 1992 by Alberta Career Development and Employment (Immigration Bridging Programs) to carry out a research project in the area of standards and evaluation of adult ESL programs. The purpose of the government study was to raise an awareness among ESL stakeholders of the issue of standards, to elicit input from a number of these stakeholders, and to recommend a set of standards with an evaluation process for Immigration Bridging Programs to implement. The research involved a comprehensive literature review, visits with and observations of existing programs funded by Immigration Bridging Programs, and consultations with programmers and ESL professionals in Edmonton, Calgary and Red Deer.

As a result of the above research, a draft of recommendations for standards for provincially funded ESL programs was completed in March, 1993. At that point no steps were taken to implement these recommendations. The essential components for an adult ESL program as recommended in that draft are as follows:

Philosophy

- a written statement of philosophy which includes general goals and objectives, the target population, a general statement about evaluation and the mission statement or philosophy of the organization.
- a process of making this statement available to all stakeholders, including the learners.

Administration and Organization

- an administrator who is directly responsible for the program, has administrative knowledge or experience, and is a qualified ESL instructor. (If two administrators are in place, their combined qualifications should meet the above specifications.)
- job descriptions of staff and volunteers
- description of networking with community and other service providers
- an organizational chart
- a detailed budget

Facilities, Space and Equipment

Facilities that:

- meet local health and safety requirements
- are convenient and accessible for the clients
- contain space for private interviewing/screening
- contain workspace for instructors
- contain space for student breaks

Maximum class sizes of

- an average of 12 for lower levels
- an average of 20 for higher levels

Minimal equipment /supplies which include:

- adult chairs and desks/tables in each classroom
- blackboard and chalk in each classroom or a reasonable substitute
- instructional supplies (pens, paper, etc.)
- telephone

Support Services

- description of support services for students or referral process for services not available
- student access to self-study materials

Needs Assessment

- a needs assessment process which includes a number of stakeholders and a rationale for the methodology

Curriculum

A written curriculum with the following components:

- statement of the program's philosophy of language learning/acquisition
- goals and objectives
- content
- statement about methodology or instructional techniques
- list of materials/resources
- description of learner assessment - initial, ongoing and final - with rationale for methodology

Staffing

- instructional staff, and coordinators of volunteer programs accredited by Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language or eligible with an application in process

- training/orientation appropriate to assigned responsibilities for new instructors/volunteers
- opportunities for professional development of instructional staff
- pre-screening of volunteers and assignment of responsibilities appropriate to qualifications

Awareness/Coordination

- membership and participation in an interagency group or other documented participation in some form of ESL networking
- advertising suitable for adults in plain language or translated into first languages
- advertising with no misrepresentations

Evaluation

An evaluation process which obtains input from internal and external stakeholders(instructors, learners, administrators, funders, etc.) and which includes the following program components:

- philosophy
- administration/organization
- awareness activities
- coordination
- needs assessment
- personnel
- content
- materials
- methodology
- learner assessment
- facility/equipment
- support services

(Government of Alberta, 1993, pp. 21-23)

The second part of the government project involved a review of existing ESL program evaluation instruments. Although regular program evaluation was identified as a general need in Alberta, no tool or means of carrying out such a process was proposed at that time. An evaluation instrument was needed which government and other stakeholders could implement and use with relatively little cost in terms of both time and money. This instrument had to be relatively objective and easy for a person with no ESL expertise to use.

However, when Advanced Education and Career Development, the Department now responsible for provincially funded second language education, continued with the standards initiative, they did so by funding a project to develop a set of *Best Practice Guidelines*. These *Guidelines* were to include a self-evaluation instrument for program use rather than a tool to be used by government representatives. The *Best Practice Guidelines* describe an 'ideal' or 'perfect' program, which institutions may strive to achieve but in reality never do. In winter 1994, I was hired by ATESL, under contract to Advanced Education and Career Development, to assist in the undertaking of this project. My responsibility was the development of the self-evaluation instrument. In spring of the same year, the final draft was completed.

1.2 PURPOSE OF STUDY

This research entailed a pilot of the self-study instrument, developed under the auspices of Advanced Education and Career Development, in an experimental situation at a private English language school (School X). The program chosen for review was a part-time LINC program in its first year of operation. Although the self-study component of the *Best Practice Guidelines* was designed to be used internally, for the purposes of this study it was used by an external evaluator instead. The process of piloting, along with an intensive qualitative analysis of events and components of the program through class observations and interviews of staff and students, provides an understanding of the relationship between program components and quality of service. A summary of program strengths and weaknesses followed by recommendations for short and long term change are presented.

1.3 LIMITATIONS

Limitations which apply to this study include the following:

1. The self-evaluation instrument was piloted on a single small private ESL program, which is not representative of all ESL programs.
2. During the piloting process some staff changes occurred which meant that three of the four instructors on staff were teaching in this program for the first time.
3. The self-evaluation process was not internally motivated and implemented.

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions made prior to this research were the following:

1. All participants would be truthful.
2. Full access to relevant information and school records would be provided.
3. Any classroom behaviour observed was expected to be fairly representative.

1.5 ORGANIZATION

Chapter two presents an overview of literature dealing with evaluation, especially as it pertains to ESL programming. Chapter three describes the methodology used in the study; and chapter four presents the findings. Chapter five is a discussion of the findings with recommendations for program change. The evaluation instrument is contained in the appendices, along with the questionnaires used for data collection.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EVALUATION VERSUS ASSESSMENT

For the purposes of this research, a distinction is made between the terms *evaluation* and *assessment*. *Evaluation* is the appraisal of quality or the judgment of worth of an educational program, in this case an ESL program. *Assessment*, on the other hand, is "the set of processes by which we judge student learning ... the term refers to procedures for measuring the extent to which students have achieved the objectives of a course" (Nunan, 1988, p. 118). It is also used to refer to the determination of the learners' needs which often involves a comparison with course objectives. Thus, *evaluation* is a broader term including all components of a program or curriculum process of which learner achievement *assessment* or learner needs *assessment* is only one.

2.2 EVALUATION MODELS

In the general education literature, there are several reasons given for program evaluation. Popham (1993) incorporates these into five classes of evaluation models.

2.2.1 Goal Attainment Models

Models in this category are based on measuring the degree to which stated goals have been achieved. Ralph Tyler (1949), a strong proponent of this type of model, believed that "The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized" (p. 69). A major problem encountered with this type of evaluation model is the question of whether the original goals upon which the objectives are based are appropriate. Furthermore, goals may alter during the course of a program. Thus, unattained goals may not necessarily indicate that the instructional program was ineffective.

2.2.2 Judgmental Models Emphasizing Inputs

These models rely on the professional judgment of the evaluator(s) regarding the input into or the characteristics of a program. This approach could also be described as an evaluation of the program's process as opposed to its product. It was very popular in the sixties and seventies with accreditation teams in the United States. However, it presents problems as far as showing a relationship between certain processes or inputs and the desired program outcomes. It was felt that evaluation should measure effects in terms of whether needs are met.

2.2.3 Judgmental Models Emphasizing Outputs

These models look not only at achievement of stated goals, but also at the quality or worth of those goals and at the unintended outcomes. For this reason, Scriven (1972) proposed that a goal-free evaluation be carried out at the same time as a goal-based evaluation to determine the unintended outcomes. More specifically, Stake (1967) felt that an evaluation should involve a description of what takes place in a program, which would be judged against pre-determined standards. His approach (the Countenance Approach) involves three phases of a program: *antecedents, transactions,* and *outcomes. Antecedents* refer to the condition of a program at its onset or the context of the program. *Transactions* refer to the instructional process and those factors involved in this process. *Outcomes* refer to the effects or results of a program. Although Scriven and Stake are both proponents of judgmental models with an emphasis on outcomes or extrinsic criteria, their models also reflect concern with program inputs and process.

2.2.4 Decision Facilitation Models

These involve some judgments on the part of the evaluators, especially with respect to whether goals have been achieved, but the focus is primarily on the decision-making function. The evaluators avoid assessing the worth of a program. However, information is collected from the evaluation and is passed on to the decision makers in a program, who then have the responsibility of assessing its worth. One of the best known models of this type is the CIPP Model, originated by Daniel Stufflebeam and Egon Guba (Phi Delta Kappa National Committee on Evaluation, 1971), which involves evaluation of *context, input, process* and *product*. Three steps are involved in this evaluation process: *delineating,* which refers to the determination of the type of information required by the decision makers; *obtaining,* which refers to the collection, organization and analysis of this information; and *providing,* which refers to the presentation of this information in a form that is most useful to the evaluation procedure. Cronbach, a former student of Tyler, believes "the proper function of evaluation is to speed up the learning process by communicating what might otherwise be overlooked or wrongly perceived" (cited in Popham, 1993, p. 41). He regards the evaluator as an educator with a responsibility to all the stakeholders in a program. He states that "Evaluation used to improve the course while it is still fluid contributes more to improvement of education than evaluation used to appraise a product already on the market" (Worthen and Sanders, 1973, p. 48). These statements support the notion of ongoing decision making for the purposes of improvement and change.

2.2.5 Naturalistic Models

This category promotes naturalistic evaluations as opposed to those that are more structured as described under the preceding classes. This type of evaluation places few constraints on the antecedents to a program or on its possible outcomes. A proponent of this approach is Robert Stake (1967), who moved from his highly structured Countenance Approach (under Judgmental Models Emphasizing Outputs) to what he calls *responsive* evaluation. *Responsive* evaluation deals with those issues that are important to all the stakeholders in a program. Stake argues that an evaluation is more responsive if it "orients more directly to program activities than to program intents; responds to audience requirements for information; and if the different value perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program" (Popham, 1993, p. 42).

In what appears to be a synthesis of all five evaluation models, Edgar J. Boone (1985), a specialist in adult education programming, looks at evaluation as "the step that joins cycles of program activity, which provides for continuity" (Boone, 1985, p. 170). He states that the evaluation component of program development is based on three concepts:

1. determining and measuring program inputs
2. assessing program inputs, and
3. using evaluation findings for program revisions, organizational renewal, and accounting to the target publics, funding sources, profession, and, where appropriate, the governing body.
(Boone, 1985, p. 171)

He also acknowledges the complex issues involved with evaluation, from the choice of methodology to the diversity in programs and participants.

2.3 ESL PROGRAM EVALUATION

As in the general education literature, literature specific to ESL also identifies a number of reasons for program evaluation. MacKay (1988) states that the role of evaluation is "the provision of a service to the principal stakeholders so that the program and the management of the program can be improved" (p. 41). Cumming (1988), on the other hand, sees evaluation as not just a service function, but as an educational activity which should strive to "validate educational innovations, inform program development, illuminate the perspectives of learners, clarify educational rationales, adopt ethical criteria, bring to light social inequalities, and appreciate the art of educating" (p. 49). He also argues that evaluation is a means of monitoring facilities, outreach efforts, staff selection, nature of services, delivery, and client feedback or experiences. Pennington and Brown (1991) see the ongoing function of evaluation as a means "to develop and maintain unity within the program and to tie together all aspects of the curriculum process" (p. 58). Brown and Pennington (1991) argue that evaluation provides information for both decision making and the measurement of learning, as well as the evaluation of teaching performance and budgeting or accounting procedures. They state that the "value [of a program] must be defined relative to the needs and desires of all of the groups who make up or interact with the program" (p. 4). "Evaluation is an essential part of the curriculum process that provides for ongoing maintenance of a language program..." (p. 12).

The views of MacKay, Brown and Pennington appear to tie in most closely with the Decision Facilitation Models with an emphasis on unity and change. They also emphasize the importance of the views of the participants or principal stakeholders in a program. Cumming's views are more encompassing. He talks about validation and monitoring which, of necessity, involve some judgment of either inputs or outputs. However, he also discusses more abstract concepts such as illuminating the learners' perspectives and bringing to light social inequalities. These would involve a more responsive or a Naturalistic Model of evaluation.

Nunan (1988), a proponent of the learner-centred curriculum, talks about evaluation at a micro- or classroom level. He argues that "in a learner-centred curriculum model both teachers and learners need to be involved in evaluation" (p. 116). He also argues that "self-assessment by learners can be an important supplement to teacher assessment..." (p. 116). For this reason, one should be aware of the course goals and objectives. Furthermore, any testing involved in student assessment should relate to the objectives of the course. In other words, a test should test what has been taught. Although Nunan ties evaluation and assessment into course goals and objectives, he stresses the value of learners' identifying their own goals and acknowledges the potential importance of unintended outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used, and informal monitoring (evaluation) should be ongoing. That is, evaluation should be both formative and summative and the tools should be appropriate to the task. Nunan views evaluation as a decision-making process, not just an exercise in data gathering.

Overall, three main reasons for evaluation emerge from the preceding literature:

1. to promote unity within the program/curriculum,
2. to facilitate change and development of the program/curriculum, and
3. to demonstrate accountability to the various stakeholders.

The last reason, accountability, implies that certain standards, practices, or results are part of the program. For the purposes of this research, it is the most significant reason for evaluation. However, it is possible for an evaluation instrument which is designed to demonstrate accountability to be used as a means of determining areas requiring change or improvement. The difficulty lies in using one type of evaluation model to the exclusion of the others. Judgment of both inputs and outputs will play a role in accountability, but decision making will be of major importance to the programmers, either to demonstrate accountability, reach certain criteria necessary to demonstrate accountability, or simply to bring about desired changes or improvements for the sake of overall program unity. The latter would involve at times a more responsive approach to evaluation.

Since the evaluation results must serve the needs of the funder as well as other program stakeholders, the most appropriate model is one which looks at all aspects of a program and which takes into consideration the views of all stakeholders. Stufflebeam's CIPP Model seems best to fit this role, keeping in mind that at each stage representation from the primary stakeholders (teachers, learners, administrators) is essential.

> Evaluation within the CIPP model is ... a process for delineating, obtaining, and applying descriptive and judgmental information concerning some object's merit as revealed by its goals, structure, process and product. In addition, it is a process undertaken for some useful purpose such as decision making or accountability. (Guba and Lincoln, 1988, pp. 15-16)

2.4 SPECIFIC APPROACHES TO ESL EVALUATION

2.4.1 Guidelines

Alderson (1992) presents a set of guidelines for evaluation. He begins by stating that there is no best way to evaluate. The methods chosen will depend on the following:

- the purpose of the evaluation
- the nature of the program
- the individuals involved and how they interact
- the time constraints
- available resources

(Alderson, 1992, p. 274)

He describes six factors that should be considered in the planning. The first is **why** an evaluation is being done. The second is **for whom** the evaluation is to be carried out. Each group of stakeholders may have a different purpose in mind and so this question must be answered early in the design. The third question is **who** does the evaluating. An internal evaluator is preferable due to his/her knowledge and understanding of the program being evaluated. Support for this comes from Alderson and Scott (1992) in their report on an evaluation of an ESL project in Brazil. They say that "an outsider cannot possibly gain an adequate understanding of the background to the project, the nature of its development over time, the reason for important decisions, the status ante, and the organic perceptions of all associated with the project" (p. 38). However, an external evaluator is perceived as being more objective or credible and also as coming with a new perspective. One should question, however, the external evaluator's expertise or knowledge of similar programs. Next is content. **What** is to be evaluated - outcomes, methods, resources, etc.? Following content is means. **How** will the evaluation be implemented? This, of course, is dependent on what is being evaluated. Alderson discusses the time and resources required for formulating appropriate tests for student assessment, often making testing an impractical means. He suggests the use of triangulation data, that is, data from multiple sources to overcome the human factor in data collection for evaluation. The last factor is timing. **When** should an evaluation take place and how long should it be? Alderson states that evaluation time and resources should be built into the initial program planning stage. Formative or ongoing evaluation is useful for developmental purposes; whereas summative or final evaluations are used to demonstrate achievements and often decide a program's worth.

2.4.2 Self-Studies

A popular approach to ESL evaluation is that of self-study. In 1991, Mary Selman produced a document entitled *Adult ESL Program Evaluation Guide*. This document was prepared for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology in British Columbia. It begins with eighteen statements of good practice which are intended to describe high quality programs. Each of these statements has a corresponding questionnaire in which the questions "represent the conditions that support the achievement of the ideal in each good practice statement" (p. 7). These questionnaires are completed by personnel such as administrators, instructors, volunteers, etc. A section is provided for open comments as well as a page for summarizing all the ratings. There is also a learner questionnaire which elicits basic information about the learners, including their English course work. This is followed by a number of evaluation questions relating to the program. These questions are in regard to location, accessibility, atmosphere, the student's progress, opportunities for participation, counselling and referral services, course content, materials and activities. The final question deals with changes to the program the student would suggest. A tally sheet is also provided for a summary of all the students' responses. Selman offers six steps to be followed during the discussions of the results of the questionnaires by representatives from both the personnel and learner groups. These are:

1. Identify those issues that are most urgent and those that are most amenable to change.
2. Identify what resources you will need to make changes and plan ways to secure them.

3. Summarize which areas of the program you choose to focus on.
4. Identify your program objectives in your selected areas.
5. Prioritize your objectives.
6. Decide who will take the lead in facilitating their achievement (Selman, 1991, p 9).

The above steps indicate that Selman considers evaluation to be a means of identifying change and program development. All stakeholders are represented and all aspects of the curriculum process are taken into consideration.

The largest international association of ESL teachers, TESOL, also produced a document in 1985 entitled *Statement of Core Standards for Language and Professional Preparation Programs*. This document was followed by a *Self Study Manual* for administrators and *Standards and Self Study Questions* for each program level. TESOL claims a program should undergo self-study for the following reasons:

1. Self-study processes precede and provide the firm foundation for program planning efforts.
2. Self-study processes are intended to help programs improve by clarifying goals, identifying problems, reviewing programs, procedures and resources, and by identifying and introducing needed changes.
3. Self-study processes result in ongoing, useful research and self-analysis which can be incorporated into the life of the program.
4. Self-study stimulates the often long-neglected review of policies, practices, procedures and records.
5. Involvement in self-study processes is an effective orientation for administration, faculty and staff members.
6. Self-study enhances openness, improves communication patterns and heightens group functioning.
7. Self-study provides useful reports for evaluation teams, institutions, departments of education and accrediting agencies.
8. Self-study provides programs with the opportunity for thoroughly assessing the extent to which they meet TESOL's Core Standards and Specific Standards.
9. Self-study provides recognition of the ESOL program within the institution or community.
10. Results of the self-study processes help to improve organizational or programmatic health.

(TESOL Newsletter, 1987, 11(1), p. 13)

These claims were supported by Brigham Young University in Hawaii. Their English Language Institute (ELI) carried out a comprehensive self-study using TESOL's guidelines. (TESOL, 1985) Although the total process from data collection to development of an implementation calendar took almost two years, the gains were said to be significant:

- Our programs goals and purposes have been brought more clearly into focus than ever before. Not only do teachers and administrators have a much better sense of the program's direction, but the students do too. It is refreshing to be in the driver's seat and be in charge of our destination.
- Curricular needs and possible solutions have surfaced as a result of the study. We are already making major adjustments to the curriculum. The final product will be a much more effective curriculum based on student and institutional needs.
- The level of awareness of the ELI program has increased tremendously as a result of the study. Faculty members who had no concept of the program and its impact on them are now informed and actively involved. Administrators have a better understanding of the program and how it is helping the University meet its mission objectives. ELI faculty are much more aware of options, and there is a spirit of willingness to share and openly discuss options.
- The level of commitment and ownership to the program has increased significantly. There is a sense among the teachers that the program belongs to them; it does. When TESOL established its guidelines for a self-study, it was hoped that a substantial spirit of ownership would develop within a program during the self-study process; it certainly has with us.

(Evans, 1992, pp. 47-48)

Nunan (1988), who also views evaluation as a decision-making process, lists three main areas of the curriculum process and suggests sample questions relating to their evaluation. These main areas are: 1) the planning process, which includes the needs analysis and content; 2) implementation, which includes methodology, resources, the teacher and the learners; and 3) assessment and evaluation. Examples of his questions include, "Are the needs analysis procedures effective?", "Do the learners think the content is appropriate?", "Are resources appropriate?", "Is the timing of the class and the type of learning arrangement suitable for the students?" and "Are the assessment procedures appropriate to the pre-specified objectives?" (p. 121-122) It is interesting that one can see a parallel between Nunan's questions and those offered by Mary Selman in her self-study questionnaires. Selman appears to have taken them all into consideration with the exception of student attendance/attention and speech processing constraints.

In summary, the self-study approach allows for input from a number of stakeholders and is designed primarily to facilitate program change and development. It is an extremely useful tool for internal use and was emulated in the provincial government's *Best Practice Guidelines*' self-evaluation component (Government of Alberta and Government of Canada, 1994).

2.4.3 Checklists

There are a number of components to a program which lend themselves more readily to a quantitative evaluation. Some of these are categories such as facilities, equipment, teacher qualifications, class size, and so on. These may be best dealt with using a checklist approach in combination with a self-study. However, since a checklist only deals with program input and does not address the views of the stakeholders or the program output, it is not sufficient on its own as an evaluation tool. As Weiss (1972) states:

> In some fields, such as education and public health, there has been a tradition of using "checklist" items developed by experts as "standards of service" as the criterion measures for evaluation. These are generally not outcome measures, but statements of popularly accepted "good practice" (teacher-student ratio, adequacy of equipment). Such measures have been useful for purposes of monitoring an agency's activities, for accreditation, and for educating staff and public about service criteria, but they are not the measures with which evaluation research is primarily concerned, since they relate to program input rather than to outcome. ...measures of this kind may be useful as intervening variables, indices of particular program features that are presumed to have a beneficial effect on outcomes, to mediate between the program and its effects. Evaluation provides an opportunity to *test* whether supposed "good practice" components of a program *are* in fact related to successful outcomes (p. 42).

2.4.4 Objective vs. Less Objective

Brown and Pennington (1991) describe a number of more specific procedures for evaluation which they split into six categories, three of which are more objective than the other three. The objective categories – **existing records, tests** and **observations** – involve an outsider looking in; whereas the less objective – **interviews, meetings** and **questionnaires** – involve the facilitator's drawing out information. The type of procedure chosen for this would depend on the purpose of the evaluation (effectiveness of materials, methodology, etc.). They note that it is important to have ongoing data collection which will facilitate future evaluations, and that any evaluation should be tied to the program objectives and the learner assessment procedures. They also argue that an internal evaluation is more likely to further the goals of the program than one that is externally imposed.

2.5 PREPARATION FOR EVALUATION

Brown and Pennington (1991) suggest a number of conditions under which evaluation should occur. They are the following:

> Information for program evaluation is drawn from a variety of sources.
>
> Different types of instruments are used for collecting data on the program's effectiveness.
>
> All parties understand that evaluation is an ongoing process.
>
> All parties to the evaluation share the same understanding of the criteria and processes involved in the evaluation system.
>
> All parties understand the relationship of these criteria and processes to the educational philosophy and goals of the program.
>
> Instructors believe that the evaluation system both enables and motivates them to improve their performance and to grow as professionals
>
> Administrators believe that the evaluation system enables them to interact productively with instructors and to provide educational leadership.
>
> All parties see the evaluation system as achieving a balance between administrative control and individual autonomy, a balance "between adaptation and adaptability, between stability to handle present demands and flexibility to handle unanticipated demands" (Weick, 1982, p. 64).
>
> (Brown and Pennington, 1991, pp. 16-17)

These conditions are extremely idealistic and, in all likelihood, would never be met completely. However, they represent those conditions which a program should strive to achieve to the greatest degree possible before embarking on an evaluation.

Weiss (1972) offers a more realistic or practical discussion of preparation for evaluation. She believes that first and foremost in the planning of an evaluation is the support of the administration. This minimizes the disruptions and hopefully facilitates the process. Practitioners should also be involved in the planning stages and be given clear role definitions. The evaluation tool should reflect factors that practitioners feel are important. A program must also consider possible areas of friction. These can range from personality differences to negative perceptions of evaluation. Furthermore, one must keep in mind that there are several factors over which there is little or no control, and their stated existence does not guarantee a good program. An example would be a store room full of excellent resources that are seldom used, or a general belief among the practitioners in the value of a particular teaching approach that is never actually practised. The latter is demonstrated in a study by Libben and Rossman-Benjamin (1992). Although the primary purpose of this study was to support the hypothesis that "teachers' attitudes are best understood in terms of a model of TESL Culture" (p. 10), the research also indicated that there was no relationship between methods currently used and general TESL attitudes among a number of ESL teachers. These attitudes were measured by having the teachers rate a series of features of classroom teaching which could then be organized into clusters representing particular ESL methods and approaches.

2.6 RELEVANCE OF EVALUATION LITERATURE TO THE *BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES*

The *Best Practice Guidelines* (1994) were developed as a tool to "help new or established programs improve, develop and become more responsive to learner needs while at the same time providing a measure of accountability to the public, and to the funders" (p. 1). The statements of best practice are based on a dual process of research into relevant literature and of consultation with provincial programmers and other stakeholders. These statements represent the ideals toward which a program should work, but could also be considered criteria against which judgments can be made about a program. The document discusses the necessity of including all stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation, as well as employing a variety of methods both quantitative and qualitative. Evaluation is considered a cyclical or recursive process which should be built into the program at its onset.

In terms of the CIPP model, the *Best Practice Guidelines* specifies the information required for the study **(delineating)** through the use of checklists and self-study questions. Suggestions for the means or process of conducting the evaluation **(obtaining)** are also provided as is a section on reporting the results **(providing)**.

For the purposes of this research, involvement of all the stakeholders in the targeted program is essential. It is important that the nature of the study be explained clearly and thoroughly and that the expectations of all those involved be acknowledged. A self-study can be carried out for more than one purp[illegible] a be easily adapted to different types of programs. It involves all th[illegible] rs and can focus on either specific components of the program or [illegible] ogram. Time constraints and purpose will be factors in determ[illegible] pth and breadth of the study. Self-study also requires fewer res[illegible] nancial and physical) than an external evaluation. However, it does req[illegible] a lot of time from the participants in the process. The self-study can elicit information that a checklist alone cannot. For example, the existence of a curriculum does not guarantee that the stakeholders had input into its development. It also does not guarantee that it is based on sound adult education principles or language learning theory. Only a probing analysis will elicit this type of information. It is for these reasons that a checklist approach using existing records and observations will be used only as one component of the self-evaluation tool in the evaluation conducted for this study.

As for recommendations arising out of the evaluation, some of the necessary action required for government funding will be obvious, particularly with respect to missing items in the checklist. However, the plan of action may not be so clear for other aspects of the program. Weiss (1972) says that there is always "a gap between data and action that will have to be filled in with intuition, experience, gleanings from the research literature, assumptions based on theory, ideology, and a certain amount of plain guessing" (p. 125).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this research was to pilot the *Best Practice Guidelines for Adult ESL/LINC Programming and Instruction in Alberta* to evaluate a part time LINC program run by a private school in Edmonton. The results of this evaluation include the identification of both the strengths and weaknesses in the program, along with short term and long term suggestions for change.

The *Guidelines* include a self evaluation checklist and self-study questions. Implementation of a self-evaluation should result in information that programs could use to facilitate change and innovation as well as support for government funding proposals. The *Guidelines* were designed for program administrators or staff; however they were developed in the knowledge that government funders with little or no ESL background may use the evaluation tool in the future.

In order to conduct this research, I obtained permission from a small, private ESL school to evaluate its government funded, part time program called LINC using the *Best Practice Guidelines.*

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Prior to this study, I worked as an instructor in the LINC program at School X which gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with the staff and students, many of whom were later involved in the evaluation. This experience also provided an opportunity to develop an 'insider' understanding of the program.

The first steps undertaken in the evaluation were to gain permission to carry out a number of interviews with the LINC staff and administration, to conduct classroom observations, and to carry out interviews with a few of the students who were of intermediate level English proficiency.

The next step was to determine the participants' perceptions of their program. Here I utilized a semi-structured interview format with a few basic questions designed to encourage the participants to talk freely about their experience and/or training in ESL, their experience in and knowledge of the program under study, and their viewpoints as to its strengths and weaknesses. These questions differed slightly depending on whether the participant was an instructor (Appendix B), a support person (Appendix C), or a student (Appendix D). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Transcriptions of the tapes were given to the participants to check for any misunderstandings, ambiguities, or further elaboration. Repeat interviews or observations were conducted whenever necessary to clarify any ambiguities that had arisen.

Interviews with the current instructors and the support person took approximately one hour each and were held at the school. The former instructor's interview was in the researcher's home and lasted approximately two hours. Each student took only half an hour and was interviewed during class time. The administrator's interviews totalled approximately six hours and were held during three different sessions, two in the researcher's home and one at the school.

Copies of any documents or written statements pertaining to the self-study questions or checklists were also collected from the administrator of the program.

In order to determine whether classroom or workplace behaviour reflected stated practices or supported the use of certain checklist components in the self study tool, observations were carried out on both formal and informal bases. The formal observations involved a one hour classroom visit for each instructor, during which the general content and approaches were recorded; whereas the informal observations involved noting interactions among staff, learners and the administrator at breaks, in hallways, and in the photocopy/materials room.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study all worked or studied at a privately owned language school in Edmonton, referred to as School X. School X is run by two directors and had been in existence for two and a half years at the time of this study. The school's part-time LINC program consists of four classes with a maximum of eighty students at any given time. This total varies due to the continuous intake required by the government funder. The participants consisted of one of the two directors, all of the four instructors who were currently teaching in the part time LINC program, one former instructor in the program, one support staff, and four of the higher level LINC students. All participants have been assigned pseudonyms for purposes of this study.

Donna is the director responsible for the English language programs. Donna's duties included all administrative functions associated with the LINC program. The second director's (Doug) responsibilities were concerned with the bookkeeping and financial affairs of the school. He had no direct responsibility for the LINC program other than to issue the cheques. For this reason, I chose to interview Donna only.

The four students interviewed were assigned the pseudonyms Lisa, Sarah, Valerie and Nancy. Lisa, who was between 50 and 60 years of age, was attending LINC for the first time so had only been in the program for five weeks. She had attended one ESL course before as a visitor from South America the previous summer. She had returned to Canada as an immigrant to join her daughters and grandchildren. She wanted to learn English for personal or family reasons and had been referred by the Language Assessment Referral and Counselling Centre (LARCC), a federally funded central referral program. She chose School X because of its proximity to her home.

Sarah, also between 50 and 60 years of age, is a Ukrainian immigrant who had studied ESL part-time for two and a half months previously and had decided to return to classes because she still could not "understand or speak much." She also chose School X because it was close to where she lived. She had been in the program for nine months at the time of her interview.

Nancy, a Polish immigrant in her thirties, had studied ESL for four and a half months full-time before coming to School X. She returned to school as she felt she needed more English for survival. She also wanted to find a job similar to her occupation in Poland. She chose School X because she had seen an advertisement in a publication at the public library, and when she called the school, the receptionist was very nice to her. At the time of her interview, she had been in the program for almost nine months.

Valerie, on the other hand, came from Bosnia and started at School X on her second day in Canada. She needed English, she said, for a normal life and to find work similar to her occupation in Bosnia. School X was recommended to her by a friend, and at the time of her interview she had been attending for nearly nine months. She was also in her thirties at the time of the study.

All four students interviewed were selected from the highest proficiency level (LINC 3) class, which is similar to what is more commonly known as low intermediate. For LINC level descriptors see Appendix G. These students were the only four who volunteered from a class of about twelve. This may have been due to a couple of factors, including a reluctance to miss class time and general shyness with a stranger. Of those who did volunteer, three were already acquainted with the interviewer. The fourth had a very outgoing personality. Students in the lower levels did not have the language skills necessary to carry out a meaningful interview without employing interpreters, which would have been quite expensive.

The five teachers interviewed (four current and one former) came from varying backgrounds. Kathy had previous experience teaching French immersion in the school system and decided to change over to ESL. She had been at School X in the LINC program for four months. Irene had a background in nursing but had switched careers by going back to school and then doing some volunteer work at School X. She had been with the LINC program for almost four months at the time of her interview. Bob had almost ten years teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) experience before becoming a substitute ESL teacher at School X. He chose School X as he already knew people working there. He had also only been with the LINC program for four months. Allan had a background in TEFL and had been in the LINC program for six months when he was interviewed. Louise had a background in teaching upgrading and ESL, and had produced commercial ESL audiovisual material for classroom use. She had been with School X in this program for two and a half months when she was interviewed.

Although an immigrant herself, the support person Elaine was working with new Canadians for the first time. She had been in Canada for six years and with School X for one year at the time of the study. It was also her first time working in an educational setting.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Interviews

The series of interviews with the administrator of the program, with learners in the program, and with the instructors and support staff were transcribed. Their comments were categorized according to the major headings found in the self-study component of the *Best Practice Guidelines.* Within each category, information from the interviews, along with any supporting school documents or written statements, was compared to the checklists and questions in the self-study instrument. This helped to identify the gaps or missing elements in the program. Positive comments or opinions about the program as well as suggestions for change were also listed under each category.

3.4.2 Observations

All four classrooms were observed for approximately one hour each. No formal instrument was used but a general description of the lesson content and teaching approach was recorded.

Observations of classroom behaviour that supported the claim that certain components had been put into practice were categorized according to the *Best Practice Guidelines.* For example, if the program in question claimed to use a predominantly oral/aural approach when responding to questions under the appropriate category, then particular classroom behaviours or actions that substantiated this were noted and recorded.

A record was kept of all the steps taken in the study along with all notes, personal journal entries, and transcripts. The taped interviews were also preserved until after the completion of the thesis.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All participants in the study were asked to sign consent letters. (Appendix E) The participants were assured of their anonymity and their right to opt out at any time. Due to the personal nature of some of the content of these interviews, the tapes were later destroyed.

Participants were told that they would be given the opportunity to review the interpretations and conclusions. In return for their cooperation, the school was provided with a summary of the areas of strength in the program and the areas that were perceived to require improvement or change as a result of the evaluation. This summary also contained suggestions and recommendations as to how those changes could be implemented.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

A total of eleven people were interviewed for the evaluation. These eleven included all four instructors (Bob, Allan, Louise and Irene) at the time of the study, plus one former instructor (Kathy), the receptionist (Elaine), the director immediately responsible for the LINC program (Donna) and four students from LINC 3, the highest level (Sarah, Nancy, Valerie and Lisa). All four classes were observed for at least one hour each. In addition, any documents and written information pertaining to the program were collected. After organizing all the information from the above sources according to the categories in the *Best Practice Guidelines,* a comparison was made between these *Guidelines* and what actually was found to exist or take place in the program. This was accomplished by summarizing what was recommended in the *Guidelines* under each category and then looking at the related information found in the interviews, formal and informal observations, and written documents in order to determine where there were matches and mismatches.

The overall results revealed a number of strengths and weaknesses which existed in the program as outlined below. The weaknesses were treated as gaps or potential areas for change and innovation. Discussions of these areas along with resulting recommendations are found in the following chapter.

4.1 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Best Practice Guidelines

According to the *Best Practice Guidelines,* a program's philosophy should "articulate an organization's beliefs, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way" (Government of Alberta, 1994, p. 8), and should also be related to the goals of the larger institution. In other words it should contain a mission statement for the institution, a statement of assumptions upon which the program is based, a program description, and the broad program goals.

School X

School X had a written mission statement but no written philosophy for the particular program being studied. However, in a proposal submitted to government funders (School X, 1993), the rationale for the program reflected the values, assumptions and goals upon which it was based.

> ...the needs of the Newcomer that have been identified by this program follow quite closely the theory of motivation as expressed

in psychologist Abraham Maslow's "hierarchy of needs". Maslow's developmental theory is based on a process of self-actualization which has also been identified by Carl Jung and Carl Rogers.

> Self-actualization, which can be simply defined as the desire to be the best person one can possibly be, seems to be an extremely appropriate way to view the process that Newcomers are experiencing in their new environment - whether consciously or subliminally. Furthermore, to build a curriculum based on the furtherance and facilitation of this process for the Newcomer would be highly desirable for us as a school as it is completely compatible with our present overall supportive, communicative, and practical approach to the teaching of English as a second language. We have always striven to maintain a communicative, student-centred style of learning in the classroom, with the ultimate aim of equipping every student to be able (sic) to communicate in the Canadian community in the way that best facilitates his or her personal process of self-actualization. (School X, 1993)

These beliefs were compatible with the federal government's objectives for LINC—

> ...to provide basic language training to adult newcomers in one of Canada's official languages. LINC will facilitate the social, cultural and economic integration of immigrants and refugees into Canada so they may become participating members of Canadian society as soon as possible. The intent of the program is to include orientation to Canadian material.
>
> (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1993, p. 1)

and also with the school's mission statement which stated that it was "...committed to providing language instruction through qualified teachers in order to facilitate Canadian and International communication and integration." (The Learning Link, 1994, p. 31)

None of the teachers was aware of a written program philosophy. However, they generally felt that the program philosophy involved providing some type of integration into Canadian society. This was exemplified in the following quotes:

> ...to help our clients with their integration into Canadian society by helping them with their communication skills. Also maintain their pride in their culture and their self-esteem. (Irene)
>
> ...a bridge between people and the community - to further study and work. The philosophy goes beyond language. (Allan)

> ...to connect people together as members of the human race and connect cultures and provide a sense of belonging to everybody - an interconnectedness. (Louise)

Bob's view differed slightly as he did not mention the concept of integration.

> ...to provide new Canadians with a high level of English language instruction in a caring friendly environment.

The instructors' perceptions of the LINC philosophy also emphasized the concept of a transitional process.

> ...to function, to ease into Canadian society by helping them with their language communication. (Irene)

> ...to provide them with a transition type of course both culturally and linguistically so that you're providing them with the basics that they need in order to integrate into the culture as they are learning the language skills as well. (Kathy)

> ...readying people for employment... (Bob)

> ...to provide new Canadians with a course in English that is flexible enough to allow them continuous registration (and) intake and to fit in with their work schedule. An emphasis on acculturation complements the traditional language skills areas. (Bob)

> ...there are issues involved with getting people acclimatized - to survive in Canada in day to day living...(Allan)

Three of the students who were interviewed used the following terms to express what they felt was the overall philosophy of the program:

> ...to help people settle - to help newcomers begin a normal life. (Valerie)

> ...to integrate in Canadian life - to be more Canadian. (Sarah)

> ...for immigrants, for newcomers, people really need language because without English they cannot do anything. (Nancy)

These views were also shared by Elaine, the secretary, who said the philosophy of the LINC program was "...to help them learn English and to settle in this country and to deal with Canadians."

According to Donna, the director, the unwritten philosophy of the program is "...to help all of our students gain independence here in Canada, and they do that through their language learning and being able to function as an independent adult..." This view was supported in an article submitted by School X to the Learning Link in 1993. The article described the school's goal, "...to create independent learners who will gain enough confidence through their experience at this school to be able to carry this spirit of independence into their everyday pursuits" (The Learning Link, 1994, p. 31). Overall, the philosophy, Donna said, is to facilitate the integration of the students into Canadian society.

In summary, the major mismatch with the *Best Practice Guidelines* was that School X had no written philosophy for the LINC program. Although there was fairly general agreement on the program philosophy among the staff, there was no written statement available in a format that would be comprehensible to all the students. The sole match was that the school did have a mission statement.

4.2 CURRICULUM

Best Practice Guidelines

According to the *Guidelines,* the curriculum...

1. states learning objectives which are
   (a) appropriate to the mission of the program and
   (b) relevant to the intended student body.
2. specifies minimum performance outcomes in a way that
   (a) is meaningful for the intended students and teachers alike,
   (b) is demonstrable in some way,
   (c) indicates to what extent the curriculum can be negotiated and
   (d) is flexible enough to accommodate diversity
3. provides for open, regular and equitable evaluation of student progress.
4. addresses methodology in a way which is congruent with program philosophy, materials, learning objectives and other curricular elements.
5. is flexible to meet changing student needs.
6. addresses the cultural dynamics of the community.
7. facilitates an understanding of community resources (e.g., legal aid, settlement services, health care, educational resources, etc.) and access to them.
8. is available upon request.

A curriculum renewal process...

1. is based on a regular planning and review cycle which
   (a) includes a review of classroom practice and its influence on curriculum,
   (b) seeks input from learners, teachers, administrators, community representatives, and employers as appropriate,

(c) acknowledges students' issues and changing community needs and

(d) includes linguistic proficiency as well as other learner goals.

2. supports innovation and growth.

(Government of Alberta and Government of Canada, 1994, p. 11)

School X

Background. The curriculum for this program was referred to as a program of studies and contained three levels based on the three levels of LINC as defined by the federal government in its publication, *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. Program Handbook* (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1993). Each program level was divided into the following categories: objectives, concepts, life skills or topics, and knowledge content. The objectives were very general and fell under the broad concepts of survival, safety, socialization, and self-actualization. The life skills or topics and knowledge content implied more specific objectives arising out of the general ones, although they were not explicitly stated. Each level also had a list of structures or grammatical items that the students were expected to master. Although a list of materials was not provided for each level, a general list was provided at the end of all three levels. This program of studies did not provide any statements about methodology, ongoing and final assessment of the students, or a curriculum review process.

All but one of the instructors were familiar with the curriculum. Irene suggested that ideas for classroom techniques or activities and alternate materials could be added to it. Allan stated that it needed "fleshing out after a trial run in the classroom situation", and Louise expressed the need for a curriculum that "reflects the reality of part time learning - short activities, units that are isolated (so) that one can spiral back." In other words, three of the current instructors felt the curriculum required changes and the fourth was unfamiliar with it at that point in the study.

Needs Assessment. The curriculum or program of studies was organized according to those needs determined by the federal government and laid out in their publication entitled *Canada: a source book for orientation, language, and settlement workers* (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1991). It was developed by Donna with input from only one instructor from the full time program. This development took place before the program began. According to Donna, it was meant to be a guide only. Instructors were expected to be flexible and change the content and skills where appropriate to meet the students' immediate needs and interests, while still retaining the general objectives.

Objectives. The general objectives listed in the program of studies were the following:

LINC 1

To enable students to meet their most immediate needs in their new environment.

To provide basic body and health concepts.

To introduce students to socialization patterns and expectations in Canadian society.

To introduce students to Canadian citizenship.

LINC 2

To provide students with information on finding and furnishing suitable accommodation.

To familiarize students with food preparation and nutrition in Canada.

To enable students to utilize the transportation and communication services.

To familiarize students with Canadian social norms.

To provide further information on the Canadian health care and emergency response systems.

To introduce students to the variety of Canadian family types and social structures.

To sensitize students to Canada's multicultural diversity and ethnicity.

To make students aware of recreational and entertainment opportunities locally and nationally.

To instigate an awareness of citizenship as participation in society.

LINC 3

To provide information on identification needs in Canada.

To enable students to look for employment and to understand conditions in the workplace.

To allow students to recognize the phenomenon of culture shock.

To make students aware of the basic laws, rights, and freedoms in Canada, and (of) the system of government.

To inform students about the education system and opportunities in Canada.

To acquaint students with the Canadian economic system.

(School X, 1993)

These objectives tied in with the rationale or philosophy stated in the government proposal in that they all covered particular levels of needs from basic survival to self-actualization; for example, from buying food to becoming a Canadian citizen. They also tied in with the instructors' and students' general concept of the philosophy which was to survive and integrate into Canadian society.

Course Content. The stated course content for the program was based on information provided in *Canada: a source book for orientation, language, and settlement workers* (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1991). This was in line with government expectations as to what the program should contain in terms of Canadian content (see Employment and Immigration Canada, 1993) and also in line with the rationale expressed in the school's proposal for LINC funding, where reference is made to facilitating the process of self-actualization in a new environment. However, the organization of the program of studies did not follow Maslow's hierarchy of needs referred to in the proposal, where the more basic survival needs are met first. For example, the survival skill requiring the identification of oneself was in level three, whereas the self-actualization skills dealing with Canadian citizenship were in level one. The topics covered in the curriculum dealt directly with understanding and facilitating the use of community systems, as well as providing general functional language skills. For example, in level one students were made aware of available health care facilities. In level two, availability and use of city transport were discussed, and in level three use of the Canada Employment centres was covered. The program of studies also included topics on Canada's history, geography, and sociology, which in turn dealt with concerns such as the environment, marriage and divorce, multicultural diversity, basic laws, rights and freedoms, etc.

As the content was decided before classes started, it is not known whether these topics actually reflect the needs and interests of the learners. However, as LINC students are all new to Canada, the Canadian topics should be meaningful to them and hopefully promote their integration. On the other hand, informal observation led me to believe that "Canadian" materials were seldom used, thus Canadian content was not the focus of the program so much as general survival and linguistic skills. Furthermore, because people enter Canada with different levels of English proficiency, they may be placed in any of the three LINC classes and still require the specific Canadian content. School X's curriculum, however, assumes a progression with entry at level one.

Methodology. According to Donna, the methodology employed in the classrooms was based on a communicative style of teaching with a student-centred approach. Communication, she said, was essential to the process of self-actualization discussed in the rationale or philosophy. The following, however, are the teachers' own descriptions of their methodology or approach. Kathy said that first she worked on developing rapport with the students to establish their comfort level. She then worked from the "listening and visual" to gradually eliciting "more and more participation in a variety of interaction settings." Her class was composed of anywhere from 60% to 80% oral activities. She also made extensive use of 'realia' and field trips.

Irene said that she gave the class an oral or communicative focus by doing a lot of pair or group work. She let the students give direction in terms of their interests and needs. For example, if a student came to class and expressed a wish to learn how to do something such as filling in a job application, she would spend time in class and centre a lesson around it in lieu of or in addition to what she had planned.

Bob focussed on listening and speaking (about 85% of class time) because "that's where they seem to have the most problems in real life. These are the bases for learning a language and to be comfortable in the culture." He described his teaching approach as being very personal.

> What I teach then depends to a large extent on what I assess their needs to be - within, broadly speaking, the constraints of the curriculum. I have a strong bias toward the oral/aural skills. I do not do much of the "social worker" stuff in class. I do not feel competent in this area. I depend very much on the class motivating itself. I believe this is the foundation upon which language learning occurs. All the communicative activities in the world will not teach someone who has no desire to learn.

Allan tried to "root what happens in class to reality, ...to be flexible so I can deal with students' immediate interests." Because of the variety in ages, he tried to accommodate the different learning preferences with a variety of activities.

Louise considered listening to be the most important activity. She used materials with different themes that could stand independently. She also reported that she liked to use a variety of activities to accommodate different learning styles.

As for the learners, Nancy expressed the view that when they needed or wanted something different, all they had to do was ask the teacher; but she offered no examples. Valerie stated that there was a lot of speaking and listening practice in class, and Sarah said that "each teacher has something interesting - different activities." Lisa referred to the instructors as "very very good, very kind." All four were very happy with the classes. Overall, respect for students' feelings, needs, and interests appeared to be an integral part of the program.

Observations of Methodology. Results of classroom observations did not necessarily support the above statements that the program was basically communicative in nature and designed to meet some basic needs for integrating into or functioning in Canadian society. A communicative approach is learner centred. That is, it is an approach in which the learners play a role in determining the curriculum. Language items are selected on "the basis of what language items the learner needs to know in order to get things done" (Nunan, 1988, p. 27), and the goal is to provide opportunities in the classroom to use this language for communicative purposes. The language skills taught are determined by the communicative contexts with an emphasis on everyday usage. Interaction, whether between students or between teacher and student(s) is not structured or controlled in the sense that answers or responses are predictable. There should exist some spontaneity in the discourse in which responses are not known.

The lowest level I observed focussed on the basic skills of identifying oneself verbally, identifying parts of the body, and practising "where" and "what" questions in pairs. Communication was difficult as the students were at a very beginning level. They required considerable prompting from the instructor. The time was all spent on oral activities, but the teacher-student exchanges outweighed student-student exchanges. The teacher dominated in that student responses were usually short, and a lot of time was spent with the teacher asking questions and explaining items. The pair work was structured as one student was required to ask a "Where is..." question using a picture for reference, and the other student was required to point out the answer. The content was functional as it focussed on identifying oneself and one's body parts.

The next level focussed on "What kind of..." and "How much..." questions in the context of food shopping. The content was extremely practical and also very functional. The activities were all oral. The instructor made use of 'realia' such as food fliers. All interaction, however, was between the teacher and student(s). There were no group activities and only once in the hour was pair work utilized where students were required to ask each other questions about particular items in a flier using "How much do/does____cost?"

The teacher who had the highest group began by eliciting answers orally to a previously assigned exercise on compound subject-verb agreement. This exercise did not conform with the objectives of the LINC program or the communicative approach as the examples did not relate to a common theme. The apparent objective was grammatical and not communicative in nature. This exercise was followed by a listening exercise on marriage counselling with subsequent questions. Interaction was restricted to teacher-student exchanges, initiated by the teacher for the most part. No discussion ensued which would provide opportunity for communicative practice. The exercise tested listening comprehension only.

The fourth teacher, who had one of the level three classes, was doing a lot of interactive work based on a listening exercise found on a set of commercial tapes. Pair work and group work took place along with spontaneous communication initiated by the students in the form of questions and comments. The students all appeared interested in the topic of the day, which was listening for information, in this case from a news report. The instructor chose the topics according to the expressed interests of the students. Her structural explanations and exercises flowed directly from the listening and speaking activities on the taped passage.

To summarize, three of the four classes observed were not using a purely communicative based approach.

Learner Assessment. Learner performance was measured through occasional teacher produced tests, assignments, review exercises and presentations. Kathy stated that the students liked an occasional test and feedback from written assignments based on class work. She did not specify, however, as to how often she assessed the students. Allan tried to do non-threatening assessment to determine how the students were progressing. He used review exercises and open book tests. What he felt was needed were "some tools to help me know when my students are ready to move on..." All of these methods of assessment were not congruent with a communicative approach in which the criterion of success is "to have students communicate effectively and in a manner appropriate to the context they are working in" (Nunan, 1988, p. 27). The assessments used in the class were primarily of vocabulary and language skills. Assessment of content knowledge was not mentioned.

Three out of the four students interviewed felt that they received sufficient ongoing assessment through the teacher's feedback. The fourth, Valerie, said the assessment was good but she did not specify in what way. However, all four of them said that they <u>knew</u> that their English had improved. They believed they were speaking more and others understood them better.

In summary, there were no standard means of assessing the students' progress. If students were continuing, they were re-assessed using the placement test only to get an idea of where they were in relation to each other before placing them in their next class. No formal comparisons were made of pre- and post test scores.

Starting with the current session, however, teachers were going to be asked to fill out a final progress report. This report would be given to the students and would contain general comments on their progress in the four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. At the time of this study, the form had not yet been developed.

Review Process. This research served as an overall program review which, of course, included the curriculum. Future plans for change and review will be based on the findings and recommendations of this study.

Mismatches with the *Best Practice Guidelines* in the area of curriculum were as follows:

1) no written statements regarding philosophy, method, assessment and review;
2) the lack of student input into the existing curriculum;
3) an inconsistency between what was perceived to be the teaching approach by both the director and the instructors and what was actually observed in the classroom;
4) no standard means of assessing the learners and describing their progress in a way that is meaningful to them and the instructors;
5) inconsistency between current means of assessment and the program objectives; and
6) the lack of continuity in content matter from one level to the next.

On the other hand, matches with the *Guidelines* included

1) a fit between the program's objectives and the rationale or mission of the program,
2) the freedom to be flexible in choice of content or class activities in order to meet students' immediate needs or interests,
3) informal provision of information on community resources and their access, and
4) a plan to review the curriculum through allowing this study to take place.

4.3 PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Best Practice Guidelines

According to the *Guidelines,* key areas under program structure are personnel management, program co-ordination, daily administration, financial management, program development and the administrator(s). Together these should facilitate the service offered to a particular student body.

Personnel Management. The *Guidelines* state that personnel management is based on an organizational chart and includes the following: job descriptions, a personnel policy, criteria for staff evaluation, access to or promotion of professional development, and a policy for volunteer management if appropriate. It should also view staff members as a team and provide proactive leadership.

Program Co-ordination. Program coordination as defined in the *Guidelines* includes the following: 1) an orderly intake and placement process, 2) a means of providing information to the students on eligibility for the program, how they proceed through the program, and alternate programs,

3) cross-cultural contact within the program, 4) an appropriate student-teacher ratio, 5) program orientation for students and staff, 6) an adequate referral process to community support services, 7) a plan for program evaluation, and 8) a marketing and recruitment plan.

Daily Administration. Daily administration, according to the *Guidelines,* involves the maintenance of an accurate, confidential, and up-to-date records system. It ensures copyright legislation is enforced and working conditions are conducive to achieving program goals.

Financial Management. Three items are included under this category in the *Guidelines:* attempts to maintain financial stability, attempts to maintain salary levels comparable to those in other programs, and a clearly stated refund policy.

The Administrator. According to the *Guidelines,* the administrator should have a background in TESL and belong to a professional TESL association. It is important also that he/she has current knowledge of ESL classroom practice and theory. Ideally, the administrator should advocate on behalf of all members of the program and establish a good networking system within the community and among other service providers. He/she should possess skills in crisis intervention, problem solving and conflict resolution.

<u>School X</u>

Personnel Management. At the time of this study, the school did not have an organizational chart, comprehensive written job descriptions, a written personnel policy, written criteria for staff evaluation, or a written policy for volunteer management.

According to Donna, though, brief job descriptions were included on the instructors' contracts and were discussed during their interviews or at the time of hiring. These descriptions were very general. Very little detail or explanation was provided in them. For example, "The Contractor shall issue progress reports to the students upon completion of the course.." is the only explanation under the heading <u>Progress Reports</u> (School X, n.d.).

Donna and David also had job descriptions which they had written themselves.

Position: English Language Program Co-ordinator

<u>Duties</u>:
-Prepare program and curriculum of studies.
-Prepare proposals for projects.
-Periodically evaluate program and provide final evaluation.
-Interview and hire teachers.
-Supervise teachers.
-Control teachers' methods of evaluation.

-Offer counselling support for students and staff.
-Call and coordinate teacher meetings
-Arrange substitute teachers and volunteer staff.
-Be liaison between students and teachers.
-Evaluate placement tests and interview students.
-Coordinate workshops and presentations.
-Update textbooks.
-Maintain contact with publishers.
-Order printed and audiovisual materials.
-Attend meetings and workshops as the school's representative.
-Assist in development of international program

Position: Administrative Manager

Duties:
-Contact government agencies.
-Attend meetings and workshops with government agencies
-Supervise secretarial staff
-Call and co-ordinate staff meetings.
-Manage budget for programs.
-Supervise bookkeeping system.
-Periodically prepare financial reports.
-Calculate and pay salaries
-Supervise client's documentation
-Keep student statistics, i.e. Attendance records and evaluation.
-Administration of placement tests.
-Co-ordinate and use different types of publicity.
-Assist in development of International program.
(School X, n.d.)

Donna is the English language program coordinator and Doug is the administrative manager. Their job descriptions are quite broad but generally fit what their roles appeared to be with the exception of the administration of placement tests. My observations indicated that either Donna or Elaine filled this role in the LINC program.

Because of the general nature of the instructors' job descriptions, there was no room for conflict with what they actually did. In actuality, one could consider the descriptions terms of employment rather than true job descriptions available for public information.

With respect to professional development, employees of the school were encouraged to attend local ATESL meetings and the annual ATESL conference. Although funds were not available to cover their costs, the staff were allowed to miss school time (at a loss of pay) in order to attend the conference. They were also responsible for making arrangements to have their classes covered, if necessary.

The management style promoted a lot of informal sharing among instructors, support staff, and the directors. Donna had a highly visible presence. She interacted frequently with both staff and students. This appeared to work well for the program as it resulted in a sense of "caring" which had been conveyed to the students.

> I was looking for school and I arrive many places. This is first school which is really nice, very good. Everybody, teachers and directors are really helpful and... they are really open people. Here you've got books and lots of things. They are really really nice... The most important thing are people who work in this place. (Nancy)

> These people, this school, all these people, organization it help you feel not scared, alone, you know. Here like all family. (Sarah)

Elaine said that she had also received positive feedback from students indicating that 1) they learned more in the small classes, 2) they had confidence in the teachers, and 3) they felt they could speak about their problems.

Program Co-ordination: Intake and Placement. To enter the LINC program at School X, the students first had to go through the Language Assessment Referral and Counselling Centre (LARCC) for LINC testing. If students approached the school directly and appeared to qualify for LINC, they were referred to LARCC where they were screened for eligibility, tested, and given information about the various LINC programs available in the city. Thus, LINC students chose to come to this particular program. Once the students arrived, their language skills were further assessed, initially with a commercial test, *CELSA (Combined English Language Skills Assessment)* (Ilyin, 1993). This test assesses the learners' grammar skills in a reading context. There is no listening or speaking component. Two instructors, Louise and Irene, felt an oral component was needed; and Louise also felt there should be less emphasis on grammar. The other three instructors, however, felt that an oral component might not make much difference, in spite of the fact that they said their classes emphasized oral skills. They felt the grammar test helped with the initial placement. Any changes to the placements could be made after the instructors had had an opportunity to assess the students informally in class. Some shuffling of students did occur, but specific numbers were not recorded. The difficulty of shuffling was compounded by full classes and the reluctance of some students to move after they had become comfortable in their initial placements. Donna recognized the necessity of having a listening component, but at the time of this study had made no plans for implementing one.

Program Co-ordination: Student Information. There were no written formal descriptions of the program provided to the students. However, information was provided verbally to them, both at the time of applying and in class. Students were also made aware of their place in the program by the classroom teacher. In addition, a schedule of upcoming LINC classes was available as well as a statement of the school's policies and procedures. Program expectations of the students were covered in the policies and procedures, but no translations of these into first languages were provided. These policies dealt in a very general manner with attendance, smoking, cleanliness, and discrimination. They also outlined the procedure for a student to make a complaint. There were no formal means of providing information to the students about program eligibility, counselling, alternative programs and other support services.

Program Co-ordination: Cross-cultural Contact. The LINC program is open to new Canadians regardless of their cultural background. School X does not group students into homogeneous cultural groups, but rather by linguistic proficiency. This ensures that every class has a mix of nationalities. Unfortunately, and not by design, the students at the time of the study were predominantly of one ethnic group due to the recent influx of Bosnian refugees. This limited the amount of cross cultural contact. Furthermore, as the class was only part time in the evenings, contact with Canadian born people through the program was limited to the occasional field trip or to a guest speaker. The latter included a counsellor from a private job finding organization and an instructor from Grant MacEwan College, who spoke on sexual harassment. Interestingly, a field trip which appeared to stimulate contact with others outside the program was an excursion to an indoor rodeo. Thus, the opportunities for cross-cultural contact in the program are always present.

Program Co-ordination: Student-Teacher Ratio. School policy dictated a maximum class size of fifteen, although an effort was made to keep lower levels smaller. Unfortunately, the funder insisted on larger numbers which occasionally resulted in a class having as many as twenty students. However, because of sporadic attendance, there were usually no more than 12 to 15 in a class at one time. The four students felt a class size of 12 to 15 was optimal. "Everybody can talk, can speak. Everybody can make questions. Always a smaller group, you have more time for each other." (Nancy) "...(There) shouldn't be more than 12 or 15. If too big not enough time for everybody to ask something, to speak." (Sarah)

In reference to class size, Donna stated that she was adamant that"...we're not going to sacrifice quality as a private school. I would rather pay a teacher a little less and have fewer students in the classroom."

Program Co-ordination: Program Orientation. There was a staff meeting before the start of a new session during which instructors had some orientation to the program. Louise, however, felt that she was not really prepared for the nature of the LINC levels, the potential problems arising from erratic attendance, and the fact that the students were predominantly from the same language background. There was no formal orientation for the students. Any necessary orientation was done within each class.

Program Co-ordination: Referral Process. All referrals for community support were done on an informal basis. A student might express a problem to an instructor, who in turn either consulted Donna or simply made the appropriate referral. There was no formal procedure in place.

Program Co-ordination: Program Evaluation. There were no plans as yet in place for future program evaluation. As stated previously in the section dealing with curriculum, future plans will depend on the results of this study.

Program Co-ordination: Marketing and Recruitment. As students had to go through LARCC to qualify for the LINC program, part of the school's marketing strategy was to keep LARCC staff informed about their program - changes, spaces, dropouts, etc. They also kept them informed of any new programs they were developing or had developed in the event a student was not eligible for LINC. Other means of marketing included advertising on the multicultural radio station in four different languages and advertising in the brochure published by the Learning Link, *Learning is Living.* The rationale for not using the newspapers was that they are discarded daily, whereas *Learning is Living* may be kept in the home for a while.

Daily Administration. Student files at School X contained a short information sheet with the student's address, phone number, social insurance number, school identification number, and name of his/her government counsellor or social worker if applicable. There was also a short questionnaire for the student to complete which provided some information on his/her origin, educational background, (including ESL courses), and previous occupation(s). However, this information was not always filled out. The files also contained copies of government documents and possibly other personal information. For this reason, Donna stated that the instructors did not have direct access to them. If they wished information on one or more students, they could request it.

According to the instructors though, access to the files varied. Kathy stated that there was no need to have access. One just had to ask Donna for information. On the other hand, Irene and Louise both said they had access but had not used it. Louise did say, however, that it would be useful to have such information as education, progress, strengths, weaknesses, interests, etc. on the students. Bob had almost never accessed the files. He stated that they contained such things as test results and placement tests and that he had access if he wished to consult them. He also added that he would have liked to have had information on training, progress, problems (including trauma), experience, etc. Allan, on the other hand, said that he used the files to obtain information such as education, languages, work experience, etc. to use as a "launchpad for some language they might need." Kathy and Louise both reported the fact that they obtained any necessary background information from the students on their first day in class.

Staff files contained a resume, accreditation status, salary information with copies of contracts, and pay invoices. The information in staff files may be used in the case of a company audit or to provide proof of staff qualifications to government funders. Employment and Immigration Canada did, in the past, request copies of instructors' resumes. At that time, Donna checked with the instructors to ensure that they had no problem with this before she provided them. There were no copies of reference checks as this had never been done.

Copyright legislation was conveyed verbally to instructors at staff meetings. Photocopying was restricted by assigning a common code to the LINC instructors to access the machine. Theoretically, if excessively large numbers of copies were being made (more than 50 to 70 copies per student per month), then the director(s) would consult with the staff to see if this involved, among other things, copyright violation; and if perhaps more class sets were required. Although this procedure may not ensure adherence to copyright legislation, it was thought to promote it. However, the photocopy of a copyrighted text was observed in the resource room.

With respect to staff meetings, Donna said that she aimed for three during a LINC term. The length of each term could vary according to the time period specified with funding approval. At the time of this study, a new term had started in September and then again in January after the Christmas break. The first meeting was before classes start, the second about midterm to "talk about anything that is major that they (the instructors) want to talk about - or re-evaluating what's going on in the program...", and the third at the end of term to discuss how to wind things up.

Instructors, however, said that in actuality there was no midterm meeting. Kathy, the former instructor, explained that they only met a couple of times at the beginning "when things were just getting rolling" to talk about placement, resource choices, etc. Otherwise, she and Elaine both explained that meetings were informal. Elaine, the secretary, said that Donna called the instructors together informally when an issue or concern arose, whereas Kathy said, "We met informally sort of in coffee break and before and after classes. We chatted about whatever was happening, because we were such a small group and we were there as a unit all at the same time."

Louise said that they met at the beginning for an orientation that was quite administrative in content. She was not sure if they would meet at the end. Irene also said that they had a couple of meetings at the beginning, but had one at the end as well to talk about the new progress report for LINC students. It should be noted here that Irene's interview was later than Louise's. A term had just finished. The others were all interviewed before the end of term. Kathy, who had taught in the previous session, did not mention a wind-up meeting. Bob said that they would meet at the end of the session with the supervisor to discuss student placements, class size and allocations. However, Allan, who had also taught in the previous session, said that the first meeting of the current session was really "...two meetings sandwiched together. The first was a post mortem on the first three months and...(the second was) orienting new instructors to the peculiarities of this program."

Two of the instructors felt that it would have been beneficial to have a midterm meeting. "...I'd like to kind of bump some of my ideas off other people and see where everybody else is at." (Louise) and "...it would be nice to have regular ones (meetings) to exchange ideas." (Bob)

Financial Management. This study addresses the first two items mentioned previously, as the third is not applicable to federally funded students. School X constantly looks to the private market locally, nationally, and internationally to offset the instability of government funding. Over the past three years, the school has grown from two classes in an old home to a multi-level full time and part-time program offered on two floors of an office building. This is in addition to contracts with Athabasca University and Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), and part-time classes in Spanish and TOEFL. An accountant has been hired to come in two or three days a week to ensure the proper maintenance of the financial records and concerns which are the prime responsibility of Donna's partner, Doug.

The hourly wage for the LINC instructors was comparable to that in other programs. According to a recent survey conducted by ATESL (Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language, 1994), the range in salaries across the province is $20. to $38. an hour. The average is $26.77; School X offered $27. to everyone teaching in the LINC program. No differentiation was made based on experience or schooling.

The Administrator. Donna, the director of the program, holds a Bachelor of Education degree with an English major. She has also done some course work related to ESL in the adult education program at the University of Alberta. Her working experience includes teaching English as a foreign language overseas for seven years and three years business experience here in Canada. Two and a half of these three years were served in an administrative capacity.

At the time of the study, Donna's professional development had been restricted to the provincial ATESL conferences or local ATESL presentations. The major benefits she felt she had gained from the conference were the opportunity to network and provide a more visible, positive image of the school and the opportunity to examine new materials at the publishers' display.

Donna had attended the Learning Link meetings, ATESL meetings, and government consultations on a regular basis. She had formed working ties with both Athabasca University and NAIT. The former provided an alternative for further study for her students, while the latter provided an alternative source of revenue for the school from international students.

As LINC's general goals were determined by the federal government, any innovation(s) implemented by the administrator had to fall within them. However, as the program was in its first year of operation during this research, it was too soon to observe any innovation(s). Staff appeared to have spent the time becoming accustomed to the existing program of studies and trying out different texts.

When asked about how crises were handled, Donna said that instructors either came to her for advice or a referral to an appropriate agency, or they simply made the referral themselves. No examples were provided. It is likely that crises in this program were not as common as they may have been in a full time program. The amount of contact with the students was limited to nine hours a week. Also, the majority of the students, Bosnians of Ukrainian origin, were working during the day and had the support of the Ukrainian Society in terms of settlement concerns.

Mismatches with the *Best Practice Guidelines* found within the personnel section of the program structure were the following:

1) no organizational chart,
2) no written personnel policy,
3) no written criteria for staff evaluation,
4) no comprehensive written job descriptions for instructors and support staff, and
5) no written policy for volunteer management.

Matches with the *Guidelines,* however, included

1) encouragement of instructors to attend ATESL meetings and the annual conference for professional development purposes, and
2) a positive, personal management style, which resulted in a sense of loyalty and belonging on the part of students and staff.

In reference to program coordination, the first mismatch with the *Guidelines,* was the inconsistency between the placement test and the objectives of the program. The second was the lack of written program information, including eligibility and alternate programs, in a form that is understandable to the students. Third, was the lack of a consistent means of orienting staff and students in the program.

Matches with the *Guidelines* included 1) a well defined intake process defined by government funding requirements, 2) some limited cross cultural contact within the program, 3) an appropriate student-teacher ratio, 4) an adequate referral process to support services, 5) a defined marketing and recruitment plan, and 6) the implementation of a program evaluation.

Daily administration had only one mismatch with the *Guidelines*. This was lack of knowledge or agreement among the instructors as to what the student records or files contained and whether they had access to them.

Matches with the *Guidelines* included the fact that both student and staff files were confidential and specific student information useful to the instructor could be accessed. A second match was the attempt to ensure that copyright legislation would be observed and not violated, and a third match was the existence of a team spirit or sense of belonging, which was conducive to achieving goals.

In terms of financial management, only one mismatch occurred. There was no stated refund policy in the event that the program might decide to take fee payers. Matches with the *Guidelines* were 1) the attempts of the school to diversify and develop alternate sources of revenue rather than depending solely on government funded programs, and 2) an hourly wage in line with that of other LINC programs across Alberta.

Finally, with regard to the administrator responsible for this program, a mismatch with the *Guidelines* was the lack of formal training and experience in TESL. Also her professional development had been restricted due to organizational responsibilities.

4.4 STAFF

Best Practice Guidelines

The Guidelines recommend that "Qualifications for all positions are available and are demonstrably suitable for the program. Qualifications for teaching staff must not compromise the professionalism of the TESL field" (Government of Alberta & Government of Canada, 1994, p. 14).

School X

Donna stated that in the upcoming year, ATESL accreditation would be a criterion for hiring. Currently there are two routes available through which one can become accredited. Option A requires a Bachelor's degree, post graduate work in TESL, 250 documented classroom hours and ATESL membership. Option B, which will expire in 1997, requires a Bachelor's degree, 500 documented classroom hours and ATESL membership. At the time of the research, she was asking instructors to apply. Of the four teachers on staff, four had a Bachelor's degree and two had two degrees. Three had a post-graduate diploma in adult education with a specialization in TESL. All came with experience in either TESL or TEFL, ranging from overseas teaching to volunteer work. Two had ATESL accreditation and two had applications in process, with no reason to believe they would be refused. An additional, more subjective criterion for hiring was that potential staff would fit into the school atmosphere and feel comfortable with the way things were done.

Three of the four instructors in the program perceived the staff qualifications as good, and two said they felt they were definitely working with professionals. However, a written statement of required qualifications for either support or instructional staff was not available.

School X had no mismatches with regard to staff qualifications as they adhered to the accreditation requirements set out by the provincial professional association.

4.5 FACILITIES

Best Practice Guidelines

A number of things should be taken into consideration with respect to facilities: ease of access, health and safety, appropriateness, adequate instructional and office equipment, study and work spaces, access to other facilities, and access to printing services.

School X

This school's facilities were located in a central downtown location, next to an LRT station and a major bus stop. Some free parking was available close by as meters were not in effect during the time of the classes. Parking in nearby parkades was only two dollars, a cost which was often shared by two or more students in car pools. The facilities were inspected regularly by the building's maintenance staff and at least once a year by the City of Edmonton. Private space for interviewing or assessment was always available in the evening as was space for instructors to work for at least one hour before classes and as long as they liked after class. The floor below the classes housed a fairly large lounge for the students with a sink, coffee maker, and coffee supplies. In addition, it had a small library with materials for students to read. Instructors also had a small staff room with a coffee maker, kettle, microwave, and coffee supplies. It was on the same floor as the office area and LINC classrooms. Unfortunately, the facilities had no access for the handicapped to the office area which contained the classrooms used by the LINC program. Kathy also expressed the fact that the lounge's being on a different floor was a disadvantage.

Three of the four students mentioned that they liked the building. The fourth made no reference to it.

Instructional equipment included a shared overhead projector, a flip chart stand, several tape recorders, a television and a video cassette recorder. Bob felt that better quality tape recorders would be useful. Kathy, on the other hand, felt that the rooms needed more decoration in terms of art work, plants, etc. to make them less sterile and "classroom" looking. Louise said that more chalkboards were needed as the existing one in each room was too small, making it difficult to get students up for board work or to save items on the board for the duration of the class. To compensate for this, she often used a flip chart. Allan and Irene felt that the facilities were adequate, and Irene expressed the feeling that they just had to ask if they needed anything.

Of the students, Sarah felt that another video cassette recorder would be useful. She also felt it should be used more in class. Valerie and Lisa both expressed satisfaction with the equipment. Elaine felt that computers for student use would be desirable as today's job market often required some computer literacy. She also felt that the resource room could use more shelves.

Office equipment included a computer, a printer, a telephone, a photocopier, a fax machine, and a word processor. Instructors did their own photocopying on site. Students were allowed to use one of the phone lines if necessary and could always be reached by phone as Elaine was present all evening during class time. Instructors had access to the phone in the staff room.

With respect to facilities, the school met the recommendations of the *Guidelines* in terms of access, health, and safety. Appropriateness could have been improved, though, by making the classroom atmosphere more comfortable and stimulating.

In terms of equipment, the gaps included insufficient blackboard space and an inadequate supply of overhead projectors and flip chart stands. On the other hand, office equipment, photocopying facilities, and study and work spaces all matched well with the *Guidelines*.

4.6 RESOURCES

Best Practice Guidelines

Materials should be up-to-date, relevant to the program's goals and the students' interests, and Canadian in content where feasible. They should also provide a variety of activities in all the skill areas. In addition, they must conform to copyright law. Materials should be available to instructors for both lesson preparation and professional development. Students' resources should be accessible to them after class time if possible.

School X

All basic supplies such as pens, paper, chalk, etc. required by the instructors were provided by the school. Kathy, however, said she would also have liked materials for students to make their own posters as well as some transparencies for instructor use.

According to Donna, materials covering all four skill areas had been purchased. The school, she said, tried to choose materials that would encourage students to be vocal, to communicate, and to participate. An attempt was also made to keep the texts both Canadian in content and of a functional nature. The following is a list of the textbooks included with the program of studies: *Amazing Canadian Newspaper Stories* (Bates, 1991), *Canadian Concepts Series* (Berish and Thibaudea, 1993), *Citizenship/ESL Literacy Series* (Crean and Unda, 1992), *The Environment and You* (Derwing and Cameron, 1991), *It's Your Right* (Department of the Secretary of State, 1988), *Who Cares About the Environment?* (Derwing and Cameron, 1991), *Canadian Citizenship Education: An Instructor's Handbook* (Munro, Cameron, and Derwing, 1992), and *Interchange* (Richards, 1992). The main text for each of the three levels was *Canadian Concepts* which included activities in all four of the skill areas.

My observations indicated that supplementary resources in the materials room, however, tended to be predominantly reading, writing, and grammar focussed. Listening and speaking resources were present but in the minority.

On the other hand, Irene, Allan and Kathy all felt that there was a good choice. In fact, Irene and Allan both said they were still familiarizing themselves with what was available. Kathy expressed a need for a picture file and instructional posters. She also felt that audiovisual materials should be built up and in the meantime she wanted a resource list to be compiled indicating location and proficiency level. Louise also expressed a need for a picture file as well as materials with lessons that were not sequenced, as attendance could be sporadic and student intake was continuous. Furthermore, she saw a need for materials with more topics relating to the learners' interests. For example, a number of her students were men who were interested in mechanics, but general interest material in this area was not available in the school.

Lisa said that she was happy with the materials, as was Sarah. However, Sarah also expressed that it would be nice to have a means of purchasing ESL books at the school for self study.

Elaine felt that the contents of the library should be expanded, giving the students a greater choice of reading material.

Resources were kept in an unlocked room close to the classrooms, along with the photocopier. With the exception of a few single copies of reference texts, the instructors, and in some cases the students, were allowed to borrow them The resources had not been catalogued and no sign out system was in effect.

Professional development books were available to the staff but had to be borrowed from Donna's office. According to Donna, the instructors were made aware of these books after being hired. None of the instructors, however, referred to their existence when questioned about resources and professional development.

Mismatches with the *Guidelines* included 1) a shortage of Canadian content, 2) the absence of a picture file and instructional posters necessary for lower levels, 3) lack of resource lists informing instructors of what is available both within the school and from other outside agencies, and 4) the absence of a list of the professional development resources available which are kept on the main office.

On a more positive note, School X matched what was recommended in the Guidelines by 1) providing most basic supplies for the instructors for lesson preparation, 2) providing up-to-date materials which had all been published within the last six years or less, 3) providing materials relevant to the goals of the program in that they were designed for adults learning ESL and contained some specific Canadian content, 4) providing a main text which included activities in all four skill areas, and 5) providing ease of access to these materials for both instructors and students.

4.7 COURSE EVALUATION

Although course evaluation is not treated as a separate category in the *Best Practice Guidelines*, I felt it was important to include the views of the participants with respect to this area.

To begin with, the instructors interpreted my question about program evaluation to mean course evaluation. Kathy felt that students' evaluation of an instructor's performance was a necessary component of a program. In the past, she had always developed her own form to elicit students' viewpoints, but in this program the students had already been giving her considerable verbal feedback. She did say, however, that she would like to have had some feedback from Donna as to whether she was "on track with what they (the school) had in mind." Evaluation, she felt, also served as a "safety net against those who interview well and look good on paper but are not good in class."

Allan felt that a formal instrument for evaluation would be a good idea as one needs to know "how best to utilize space, resources, staff. Are we accomplishing what we intended to do? What changes should we make, if not?" With respect to instructor evaluation by students, he pointed out that anything on paper would be a problem for the lower levels.

Irene questioned student evaluations of instructors as they (the students) "usually think everything you do is great."

Bob said he would be suspicious of any external program evaluation but an internal one "may be all right." He also said that he evaluated his own performance on a daily basis with regard to the usefulness of what he had taught. He felt there was a problem in knowing whether one's objectives had been met or not.

Louise was not aware of any evaluation process at that time but did feel a form for the students to complete at the end of a session would be a good idea.

Elaine informed me that she and the instructors had no formal input into any evaluation. She confirmed, however, that the students had program evaluation forms to complete at the end of each session, but as mentioned previously, teachers appeared to be unaware of it.

Donna supported Elaine's statement but also specified the three areas the students evaluated on the form - materials, instructor, and school. These forms were used for instructors ' information only and not as part of any program or staff evaluation process. The problem with students' evaluations of a program, she pointed out, was that the students came and left at various times in the session due to the continuous intake and other factors. Some remained for a fairly long time, whereas others had rather short stays, not a good basis for expressing one's views. With respect to teacher evaluations of the program, she felt that the school needed to "get a little more formal" rather than rely on informal interactions and staff meetings. She wondered, however, if the instructors might not be reluctant to evaluate the administration as there were so few of them (only four at the time of the study).

The findings reported here will be discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discrepancies or mismatches between the *Best Practice Guidelines* and the characteristics of the LINC program at School X indicate those areas which require change or improvement. The following chapter discusses each of those areas and offers recommendations as to how these changes can be implemented. It is important to remember that although this study focusses on a particular program's gaps, it is not intended to be a criticism of the program in general. School X has many strengths which receive only a cursory treatment in this chapter.

The conclusion of the chapter contains a discussion of the implications of using the *Guidelines* for decision making purposes by those with no ESL expertise.

5.1 CURRICULUM

The curriculum is probably the most important aspect of any program. According to the *Guidelines,* it "provides the link between the program philosophy and classroom practice. That is, it is a crucial aspect in how assumptions about language learning and language teaching are applied in classroom practice" (Government of Alberta & Government of Canada, 1994, p. 9). For this reason it will be discussed first. In addition, three other areas of the *Guidelines* - philosophy, student placement (part of program coordination), and materials will be included in this discussion as they are so closely linked with the curriculum.

As the existing curriculum at School X was developed without the input of the instructors, students or any external stakeholders, it is recommended that regular meetings be held to discuss each of the following areas: program philosophy, objectives, instructional methodology, content, initial assessment and placement, ongoing and final assessment, and materials or resources. These include the components of the curriculum as identified in the *Guidelines* plus the three above mentioned areas. It is important that the views of all stakeholders, including the students, are represented. If students are unable to attend meetings, their input can be obtained through the use of questionnaires (translated into first languages) and/or interviews designed to elicit their views on each of the above areas. In addition, the administrator should be in regular contact with the funding agencies, any referral agencies, and other concerned ethnic organizations to ensure their views are also brought into the discussions.

As the program is small, meetings should include all LINC instructional staff, the administrator, and student representatives if possible. The major difficulty one can expect to encounter will be the reluctance of instructors to spend time in meetings because they are currently paid for class contact hours only. A possible solution is to include a clause in their contracts which commits them to a designated number of meetings during a session, in addition to their teaching time. Ideally, the program would pay them for this time. Unfortunately, this could result in a lower hourly wage being offered in order to offset the costs of the meetings, unless the school were able to build the time into its budget proposal. Another possibility is to designate class time every month for meetings, during which the students could work together or individually on tasks assigned by the instructors. This would also be more convenient for any student representatives.

As the meetings required to discuss the preceding areas would be fairly complex and numerous, it is advisable to cover only one or two areas at a time. For example, both general and specific objectives could be discussed in conjunction with the philosophy to make sure they are compatible. The results of these discussions would naturally lead into discussions of the methodological approaches which should be adopted.

Content and materials are closely related and could be reviewed together, at the same time referring to the newly defined general objectives and methodology. Materials should be researched and chosen based on the stated objectives and methodology as well as on the content. Finally, assessment and placement procedures should be examined as to their relevancy with respect to the objectives of the program.

In terms of the CIPP model of evaluation, this curriculum section includes **context** (philosophy, needs, objectives, etc.), **process** (placement, methodology, use of resources, etc.), and **product** (assessment). It also includes the necessity for feedback from all the stakeholders.

5.1.1 Program Philosophy

First and foremost, the LINC program philosophy at School X should be made available to all the stakeholders in writing. Before doing this, however, these stakeholders should have some input into its final form. The first recommendation here is that the administrator, instructors, and student representatives meet to discuss, formulate and revise a philosophy which is acceptable to all and which contains all the components listed in the *Guidelines*. The final draft should then be included in the curriculum, in a simplified format in student information handouts, and in staff contracts. It is important that the philosophy be in written format to eliminate inconsistencies in interpretation. Reliance on verbal transmission may result in misunderstandings. A regular review of this philosophy should be included with any future plans for curriculum review.

As discussed in chapter four, there appears to be a general consensus or feeling among the staff and students about the nature of the program philosophy. Informal observation also indicated there is a sense of overriding commitment to helping the students in ways that best suit their needs. These factors should make the above task relatively easy in terms of reaching an agreement on any official statement.

A recommended long term goal is to have the philosophy translated into the first languages found in the school. This could be a gradual process in which the school utilizes volunteers for translating purposes from the community or from the higher level classes. Unfortunately, this still does not guarantee the philosophy will reach those who are non-literate in their first language. It is hoped that those students or friends who are literate will read and explain it to them. Instructors may want to use higher level students of the same language background for this purpose.

5.1.2 Objectives

Although the general objectives of the program are in line with the program's rationale or philosophy, they should be discussed with stakeholders, in particular the students, to ensure their immediate needs and interests are being addressed. Many of these needs can be written in the form of more specific objectives, an area which is missing in the current curriculum. However, it should be kept in mind that learners' goals may, and often do, change, so instructors must have the flexibility of changing or modifying specific objectives according to the needs of each class.

5.1.3 Instructional Methodology

Methodology is not addressed in the school's LINC curriculum. Any methodological approach adopted in the program should be founded in current TESL theory. It should also be compatible with the program's philosophy and objectives. Once again, students should be provided with an opportunity to give input as to what techniques or activities are most effective for them. However, it is not enough to formulate a recommended teaching approach (or approaches) for inclusion in the curriculum. The instructors, students, and administrators must all have the same understanding of what has been recommended and why. This can be achieved through discussion. However, an additional suggestion is that the administrator do regular observations of instructors to monitor what is happening in the classroom, as it is essential that practice reflects what is stated in the curriculum. An example of inconsistencies in belief and practice is found in a study by Libben and Rossman-Benjamin (1992), who were looking at ESL teachers' attitudes toward classroom techniques as support for their hypothesis that these attitudes are "best understood in terms of a model of TESL Culture." (p. 10). This culture consists of shared values relating primarily to teaching and learning. One component of the study was to have the respondents rate classroom procedures in order to determine what they considered as desirable practices. These procedures could be clustered according to a number of approaches or methodologies. The respondents were also asked to rate their opinions of 13 ESL methods and approaches on a four-point scale. "The respondents exhibited a marked preference for the communicative approach and a uniformly negative attitude toward the Grammar Translation approach" (Libben & Rossman-Benjamin, 1992, p. 17). However, no relationship was found between the methods the teachers actually used and their general TESL attitudes.

Although observations could be used as part of the instructors' evaluation process, another less threatening suggestion is peer observation and/or team teaching, especially with a combination of new and experienced staff. Not only do these contribute toward a common understanding of the recommended teaching approach, but they also provide instructors with an opportunity to share ideas on specific techniques and resources.

In School X, the LINC instructors all stressed the importance of oral communication skills, a good start toward consensus on a teaching approach.

5.1.4 Content

Organization of content should match more closely the steps in Maslow's hierarchy of needs if reference to this hierarchy is going to remain in the program philosophy. For example, it should begin with basic survival skills such as calling the doctor and gradually progress to self-actualization skills such as being a 'good' citizen. An attempt should also be made to provide more continuity in content from one level to the next as well as within each level. Before doing this, however, the students need to be consulted for their views on what is necessary for inclusion in the curriculum. The current topics were determined without the instructors' or students' input.

As LINC students are new to Canada and at the beginning levels of English proficiency (Appendix G), topics dealing with survival skills are appropriate in all three levels. For those that enter the program at level 1 or 2, the degree of complexity and sophistication of material taught for both survival and language skills should increase as they progress through to the completion of level 3. By level 3, they may also need to practise their language in other contexts that are both meaningful and interesting and which provide some continuity so they can see their progress. "Without continuity of content, students can see no connection between individual classes; they may conclude that the course is leading nowhere and that they are making little or no progress in their second language." (Cameron, Derwing, and Munro, 1991, p. 1)

As mentioned previously, the students are new to Canada so content dealing with Canadian history, geography, and government, as well as current issues such as family violence, HIV, employment, etc., should be of interest to them and also help them to integrate into Canadian society. As Cameron et al. (1991) aptly state, "Using Canadian issues in the ESL classroom gives newcomers access to the ideas, conflicts, symbols and services within Canadian society in order that they may become active participants" (p. 3). In other words, it provides a context within which to move from basic survival skills to self-actualization skills.

To summarize then, what is recommended is that the curriculum be reorganized according to the identified objectives, starting with those that are based on the acquisition of survival skills and progressing to those which deal more specifically with Canadian content. Some flexibility should be allowed to accommodate students' emerging needs and interests. In addition, the list of linguistic skills for each level needs to be expanded, enabling the students to progress from expressing themselves in simplistic terms to using a variety of structures in order to make their communication more descriptive or precise.

5.1.5 Materials and Resources

Materials are closely linked with content, objectives and methodology as they should reflect all three. The materials at School X should be expanded to include more of those with Canadian content. At the time of the study, there were sufficient resources in all four skill areas dealing with both survival skills and linguistic skills, but there was very little on Canadian issues. The responsibility for researching available resources in this area could be carried out by the administrator or delegated to an instructor. Another alternative is for instructors to share ideas by giving workshops on resources they have produced using newspaper or magazine articles, brochures or pamphlets on services and issues in the community.

Additions to resources can be relatively low cost and require a minimum of time. If finances permit, a few instructional posters and materials to make classroom posters should be purchased. Instructors should be encouraged to save pictures, mount them on construction paper and keep them together in a file for classroom use. To avoid copyright problems, one could also use actual photographs or write to a number of publications for permission to use their pictures for classroom purposes only. Picture and poster files were both gaps identified by instructors.

Other recommended tasks are: 1) listing all the available resources and organizing them by the LINC level for which they are appropriate; 2) organizing all teacher developed materials and techniques by LINC level; 3) listing audiovisual resources available from both the school and from other sources; and 4) listing the professional development resources available on loan from the administrator's office. To improve access, a sign-out book or card file could be drawn up to account for an item's whereabouts.

Finally, a means of knowing which materials are used frequently in teaching activities needs to be developed, another possibility for classroom observations by the administrator. This is necessary to ensure that instructors are actually using the recommended texts and materials.

5.1.6 Assessment

At the time of this study, a commercial test (CELSA), designed to measure language skills in a reading context, was used by the program for placement purposes. There is no speaking or listening component although the stated general teaching approach adopted by the instructors is an oral/aural one. Also, the test does not distinguish between students at the very beginning levels, especially if some of them are pre-beginning with no literacy skills in English. In fact, the users' guide to CELSA states that the test is "not suitable for students in adult immigrant open-enrollment pre-literate (sometimes called pre-beginning) classes. If the test is too difficult or too easy it will not distinguish between more than one level in those areas" (Ilyin, 1993, p. 2). By definition LINC could include pre-beginning or pre-literate students.

Once objectives, content, materials and methodology have been decided, the current placement tool needs to be examined and a new one chosen or developed. Program stakeholders should discuss the preceding sections of the curriculum, in particular the objectives, before deciding what type of tool is most appropriate. For example, if the objectives are to provide new Canadians with basic survival skills with a focus on oral communication, then a writing or reading test would be inappropriate on its own. Another factor which needs to be considered is how one level should be distinguished from another. Because this distinction is currently made on the basis of reading and grammar skills, it is quite possible that students with little or no speaking fluency will end up in level three, which may be contrary to program objectives. In addition, those who are non-literate will not be distinguished from the literate beginner. The initial assessment, therefore, requires not only the addition of an oral/aural component, but also a more effective means of measuring literacy skills at the beginning level. The Ilyin Oral Interview Test, developed by Donna Ilyin (Madsen, 1983, p. 194), is one example of an oral test which assesses listening comprehension and speaking skills from a near beginning to a fairly advanced level. For those with limited English proficiency, the HELP Test, written by Cindy Henderson and Pia Moriarty (Madsen, 1983, p. 195), features pre-production, recognition, and production items in basic literacy.

There are similar needs for improvement in ongoing and final assessment as there are for initial assessment. It is necessary to determine how the instructor can best assess student progress and how this progress can then be expressed to the student. Once again, if the focus of the classroom is on oral communication, as expressed by the LINC instructors at the time of this study, a grammar test score is not significant or meaningful to either the students or the instructors. On the other hand, oral skills are difficult to rate and for this reason it would be advisable to look at what is being used successfully in other LINC programs before purchasing a commercially prepared test as suggested above. For example, a central Alberta college uses sets of up to ten descriptors, developed by the instructors, to indicate progress in the four major skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Pronunciation has three descriptors.

In summary, it is recommended that the LINC program stakeholders hold a number of meetings to discuss the preceding areas and develop the following:

1) a written philosophy,
2) written objectives, both general and specific,
3) a written statement regarding methodology,
4) a reorganization of curriculum content more in line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs,
5) an inclusion of Canadian content which demonstrates some continuity,
6) lists of available classroom and professional development resources, both internal and external,
7) a picture file,
8) a purchase plan for Canadian materials and instructional posters,
9) a more appropriate placement test, and
10) more meaningful assessment tools

5.2 PROGRAM STRUCTURE

The evaluation of program structure and its components parallels the evaluation of input in the CIPP model. "The purpose of input evaluation is to provide information for determining how to utilize (organizational) resources to meet program goals" (Phi Delta Kappa National Study Committee on Evaluation, 1971, p. 222). It involves the analysis of such factors as staffing, time, budgeting, etc.

5.2.1 Personnel Management

School X has no written personnel policy, which, of course, would include job descriptions and formal processes for staff evaluation. Recommendations in this area arising from this study are that the administrators do the following:

1. Draw an organizational chart for the school which clearly illustrates the lines of decision making. Reference should be made to this chart when writing job descriptions.
2. Write job descriptions for each position on the above chart.
3. Write out the staff evaluation process for each of the above job descriptions.
4. Compose a written policy for volunteer management if volunteers are to be used at any time in the program.

As the job descriptions and evaluation processes are completed, drafts should be presented to the instructional and support staff for discussion. Any concerns or questions should be raised at this time. A policy for volunteer management should also be presented to staff for their input as they may be required to supervise volunteers in the future.

A suggested method of dealing with these changes is for the two administrators to allot a designated amount of their time on a regular basis to this task. The amount of time and the frequency will depend on two factors: 1) the size of the staff, and 2) how much time can be spared from other daily responsibilities. At the time of the study, communication within the school was good as the staff size was still relatively small, and the hierarchy only had two levels - administrators and teachers. As mentioned in chapter four, Donna interacted frequently with the LINC instructors and students, promoting a lot of informal sharing of information. This relaxed nature of the school setting should be conducive to achieving the four previously mentioned tasks.

5.2.2 Program Coordination

Some major gaps in the area of program coordination are 1) an inadequate assessment tool, 2) no written description of the program which includes school regulations and expectations of the students, 3) no formal program orientation for students and staff, and 4) no formalized referral process.

The first item, the lack of an appropriate assessment tool, was discussed with the curriculum.

The second item, a written description of the program along with eligibility criteria and program rules, could be accomplished during a brainstorming session including staff and student representatives. A couple of instructors could then be assigned to write it up, with the assistance of the administration, for further feedback and revisions at a later meeting. These should then be translated into the first languages of the students.

Program orientation for the students could be done on an individual basis at registration by having the administrator or a representative explain the process to them and supply them with translated copies of the program description. This orientation should be reinforced in class by the instructors to ensure that all the students have understood. Orientation for the instructors at their first meeting should be more comprehensive and include an explanation of the levels, the nature of the students and an overview of school policies.

As for information on alternative programs and support services, the school could utilize the part-time counsellor in the full-time program who has been hired since the completion of this research. The counsellor's duties include, among other things, researching services available in the city for different types of personal and educational problem situations. This information could be included in a brochure or handbook which could be given to all instructors, including those in the LINC program.

Although the student-teacher ratio at School X is within the *Guidelines,* there is a concern in that Donna said she prefers to pay less to instructors to keep the classes small. Apparently she assumes that students will interact and initiate communication with each other, a prime advantage of small classes. Unfortunately, the type of interaction pre-supposed by small class size was not evident in three of the four classroom observations. If the primary focus is on teacher-student interaction, there is not the same necessity for smaller classes. It should be noted also that paying instructors less could compromise program quality if the better instructors choose to work where they will be paid for their qualifications. While it is important to keep the classes small, a fair balance must be maintained between instructors' salary and class size. This balance should be discussed with the instructors and students as it affects all of them.

Although the school has implemented a program evaluation by permitting this study to take place, plans for ongoing or formative evaluation should be developed for future use. A means of eliciting confidential input from staff and students on different aspects of the program should be developed. This could be in the form of questionnaires, the design and content of which should be determined by all the internal stakeholders. In addition, it is important that results of these questionnaires be summarized and discussed in any evaluation process, and changes made as a result should be recorded.

5.2.3 Daily Administration

Given that there was a lack of consensus as to what information the files contained and what was available to them, instructors should provide input as to what information they would like to have about the students at the beginning of each session. A card with only this basic information could be developed by the support staff, kept in each file and pulled for the instructor at the start-up of each class. Based on what was said in the instructor interviews, this card would probably contain the following: name, telephone number, address, country of origin, first language, years of education, previous ESL courses, other training, occupation in native country, work experience in Canada, academic and/or career goals, special problems such as a learning disability or medical condition, and the placement test score along with any other assessments. At the end of the session, each card should be re-filed with a notation regarding the course the student has just completed.

In terms of financial management, no noticeable gaps were present in this area in the LINC program at School X. As mentioned in chapter four, an accountant comes in to help with the bookkeeping on a regular basis. The salary or wage per hour is slightly above average for LINC programs in Alberta and a refund policy is not required because all the students are government funded. This is a possible area for development though, in the event that the School decides to take fee payers into the LINC classes in the future.

With respect to the administrator, increased professional development specifically in the area of TESL would provide her with the skills and expertise to give ongoing professional support to the instructional staff. This could be in addition to inviting other ESL professionals to come in to present workshops and/or seminars to the staff.

5.2.4 Facilities

As mentioned in chapter four, the facilities at School X are clean, safe and centrally located. Both staff and student lounges are provided as well as space for private interviews. Since this study began, School X has expanded its facilities and has also provided the staff with a work room. Furthermore, they have installed a pay phone in the students' lounge. A recommended short term goal would be to add more blackboards in the classrooms, a request that came from instructors, as well as providing flip chart stands and overhead projectors for each room. A long term goal, over the period of the next two or three years, and as finances permit, would be to install computers for student use.

5.3 PROGRAM EVALUATION

Essential to program accountability is the fact that the stakeholders in a program have ongoing input as to the quality of its services and the basis of its decision making. The means of soliciting input may be informal and unstructured, such as networking with external stakeholders, or more formal and structured, such as planned meetings, discussions, questionnaires and interviews. This input should cover all facets of the program discussed in the *Best Practice Guidelines*. It is important that communication channels be kept open at all times. This creates an evaluation loop as described in the CIPP model of evaluation (from delineating, to obtaining, to providing, then back to delineating). This loop also represents the recursive process as described in the *Guidelines*.

Although the LINC program has an evaluation form for the students to complete at the end of a session, an attempt should be made to expand on the number of items covered and to have it translated into the first languages in the school. If this is not possible, students should be given the form one or two days before the end of session and asked to return it on the last day of classes. Many may be able to find a friend to help them translate or understand it. A 'neutral' person such as the receptionist should collect and summarize the results for each instructor and give a copy of each of these summaries to the program administrator.

This same procedure should be followed for the instructors and support staff to evaluate the program and its administration.

A serious gap in the program was the lack of formal meetings. Instructors may not always find the time or the energy to express concerns before class or during breaks. Also many good ideas may fall by the wayside if the opportunity is not made available for them to be expressed. A pressing recommendation is that the administrator of the program meet with instructors on a regular basis, perhaps once a month for an hour. This time can be used to deal with any classroom problems or concerns or to convey relevant administrative information to the staff, as well as to discuss possible changes to the curriculum and materials.

As mentioned previously, ongoing curriculum review should take place over a number of pre-planned meetings. Whether this is done on an annual or sessional basis is the decision of the programmer. In the early stages of a program it is advisable to review more frequently. However, as the program becomes more established, major reviews may be carried out every three to five years depending on current trends in the field.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Since the completion of this research, an article was published in the TESOL Journal entitled "Conducting an ESL program self-study: 20 lessons from experience" (Henrichsen, 1994). This article was based on Brigham Young University's experience with a self-study project in Hawaii. The following is a list of the recommended lessons:

1. Use TESOL's Self-Study Guidelines
2. Customize the Guidelines
3. Make Your Purpose Positive and Clear
4. Get Support From Your Administration
5. Use Win-Win Thinking

6. Allow Adequate Time
7. Make Sure One Person Is Clearly in Charge
8. Delegate Work and Involve Others
9. Involve Administrators, Colleagues From Other Departments, and Students
10. Create Feedback Loops
11. Work Out Symbiotic Relationships
12. Let People Talk
13. Produce Tangible Products Periodically
14. Diagnose Thoroughly Before Diagnosing Solutions
15. Take Advantage of the Momentum Generated by the Self-Study
16. Plan a Culminating Transitional Activity
17. Allow Time, Energy, and Funding for Follow-up
18. Draw Up an Implementation Plan and Calendar
19. Invite Outsiders to Help
20. Plan to Continue Your Self-Study Habit

(Henrichsen, 1994, p. 8)

Henrichsen goes into some detail and explanation of each lesson, giving a good overview of the ingredients of a successful self-study.

As this research was not a self-study per se, but an external evaluation using a self-study instrument, several of these lessons did not apply. The research did, however, use the *Best Practice Guidelines*' self-study component which was modelled in part after TESOL's self-study guidelines. The *Best Practice Guidelines* were customized to fit Alberta's needs and interests. Support for the study was obtained from the administration in the LINC program at School X, and its purpose was made clear to all participants during a general meeting at which they signed consent forms. The benefits of an evaluation to both the program and its stakeholders were emphasized and obtaining input from all those involved in the program was a priority. Open ended questions were used during the interviews to encourage participants to talk freely, giving as much information as possible. This information, as seen in chapter four, was then organized and analyzed according to the *Best Practice Guidelines*. This chapter has offered some recommendations based on that analysis; however, at this stage it is crucial that the program stakeholders take over and follow Henrichsen's remaining lessons. Only they are in a position to determine the time, energy and money that they are willing to invest in order to implement a plan for change.

The final recommendation for the program at School X is that this study be used as a starting point for a series of discussions leading to a comprehensive plan for change, which would include time lines, resources required, participants, and ultimate goals.

For School X and for other programs embarking on a self-study, however, there are a number of things to consider regarding evaluation.

Method

All participants in the process should have a general understanding of the concept of evaluation and its various forms or models.

Purpose

Participants should understand the many reasons for evaluation, particularly those that relate to a self-study. They should have a clear and common understanding of the benefits resulting from self-evaluation, as well as the work involved.

Focus

It is important not to focus on only one reason for evaluation as three of the previously discussed models do (Goal Attainment, Judgmental Emphasizing Inputs, and Judgmental Emphasizing Outputs). Multiple reasons should be taken into consideration as expressed in the Decision-Facilitation Model which looks at all aspects of a program and listens to all its stakeholders.

Balance

Throughout the evaluation process, both the strengths and weaknesses of the program should be kept in mind. The process should not be started with the pre-conceived idea that all is well in the program and that probably little or no change is required. On the other hand, the gaps or weaknesses should not overwhelm or discourage the participants. All programs require constant review and change. No program is perfect. In fact, probably some of the most established of our institutions and programs are at the stage where they could use some serious review and innovation.

Planning

When planning a self-study, allow for a lot of time. The current study took one year and was relatively superficial in comparison to a comprehensive internal evaluation involving all stakeholders. This study was restricted to one on one interviews and lacked the benefit of group discussions or sessions, which involve much more time.

Unity

Involvement of all the stakeholders in group discussions helps build a sense of unity and common purpose, a major reason for evaluation according to Pennington and Brown (1991).

Implementation

The process does not stop after the self-study has been completed. All recorded gaps or weaknesses in the program should be discussed and suggestions for change decided upon. A plan to implement these changes should be drawn up and should designate the participants, the required resources and the timelines. Meetings should be planned to discuss progress and resolve any problems in implementation.

Record

Some changes will take place during the self-study. These changes should be recorded during and after the self-study.

Renewal

The self-study should continue both during the implementation and after. The process is a recursive one and should, therefore, never be complete.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research arising from this study needs to be carried out in two areas. The first is the documentation of more self-studies, such as that at Brigham Young University in Hawaii, which have been undertaken in different programs in order to determine the major obstacles and how these may be overcome. The second area involves the use of self-study instruments, or the criteria upon which they are based, for external use. External use includes use for purposes of accountability to the general public or for purposes of decision-making by funding agencies. As the general public and the funding agencies' representatives often do not have any TESL expertise, their ability to make judgments based on a self-study report is limited. The easiest component of the self-study for them to utilize is the checklist. However, the existence of a curriculum on a checklist, for example, does not guarantee its use and/or acceptance by instructors. The existence of a personnel policy does not mean that the staff have all read and understood it. Ideally, what is now required is the development of a guide for the public and funding agencies which identifies observable relationships that indicate a program is actually attempting to fulfill the ideals in the *Best Practice Guidelines*.

Development of such a guide would necessitate going through the checklists and self-study questions and devising practical strategies for identifying the existence or lack of relationships within a program which are implicit in the *Guidelines*. Such strategies could include: 1) short interviews with teachers during which one could inquire about the curriculum, its location, its contents, and how it is used in the class; 2) examination of summaries of student evaluations of the program which should indicate their views on administration, instruction, content, resources, facilities, and their own progress; 3) class observations for purposes of determining student-teacher ratio, variety in class activities, appropriateness of resources, type and amount of student interaction; and 4) examination of student facilities for space, comfort, cleanliness, and access to a telephone. An alternate recommendation for government funders is that they hire qualified ESL consultants to assist programs in implementing the self-study instrument. Through such a process, they can learn far more about a program than they would as an external evaluator. An added advantage is that they would be perceived as having a position of support rather than that of judgment making.

The next few years will hopefully see the implementation of the *Best Practice Guidelines'* self-study instrument in a number of programs across Alberta. These programs should be encouraged to document this process, highlighting and commenting on areas which cause difficulties and suggesting possible solutions. Use of the *Guidelines* by external agents should also be documented for the same reasons. As the programs themselves undergo self-studies and change, so also should the *Guidelines* self-study tool if it is to comprise an effective instrument which serves both the programs and the public.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Background and Personal Information

1. Could you tell me what kind of things led to your becoming involved in the field of ESL?
2. What factors led to your starting your own language school?
3. What are the qualifications of the immediate administrator of the program? In other words, yourself?
4. Do you have a TESL background? Explain.
5. Have you had any experience in conflict resolution and crisis management? Explain.
6. How do you think your qualifications are an asset to your job?
7. What type of further training or professional development do you think would be beneficial to your position? Why?
8. Have you done any professional development over the last year? If yes, what effect do you think it had on your work and/or the program?
9. Do you have plans for any professional development in the coming year?
10. What innovations would you like to see take place in your program in the upcoming year?

Program Structure

Personnel

1. Do you have an organizational chart?
2. If not, how are the staff made aware of the relationships between all participants in a program?
3. Do they all have job descriptions?
4. What form of program orientation is provided to new instructors?
5. How and when are they made aware of the criteria for their evaluation?
6. What type of grievance procedure is made available to them?
7. How does the program promote and provide access to/facilitate professional growth in the staff?

Management

Financial

1. How are the organization's books maintained?
2. Is there a separate detailed budget for this program?
3. Are the instructors made aware of any aspects of the budget?
4. Do they have input into those areas that most concern classroom practice (materials allotment, photocopying, etc.)? Explain.
5. Are the salaries in this program comparable to those in similar programs? Explain.

Files and Records

6. What types of files are kept?
7. What information is kept on these files?
8. How is this information used?
9. Do the instructors have access to students' files?
10. If so, what type of information do they provide that is useful to them?

Meetings and information sharing

11. How often do the instructors meet?
12. Does the administrator attend these meetings?
13. Are the students represented at these meetings? If no, why not?
14. What generally is the content of these meetings?
15. What types of administrative information are the instructors and students provided with?
16. What types of decisions do the staff and students have input into?

Advocacy

17. Describe your networking system with other providers and with the larger community?
18. Of what professional organizations is the program or its administrator a member?
19. How are these memberships of benefit to the program?
20. How does the program provide information about
    –access to the program?
    –counselling?
    –alternative programs?
    –other support services for both instructors and students?

Recruitment/Advertising

21. Describe your recruitment and advertising strategies. How are these appropriate to your intended audience?

Learner assessment and placement

22. Describe the process of initial assessment and placement of students.
23. How is this process appropriate to the goals and objectives of the program?
24. How does it take into account the learners' needs?
25. How are learners made aware of the stages of the program and of their position in those stages at any given time?
26. What other form of program orientation are the students provided with?

Class size

27. What are your teacher-student ratios for each class?
28. What is your rationale for class size?

Philosophy

1. What is the program philosophy?
2. How was it determined? That is, who provided input? and how? and when?
3. Does the philosophy contain –
   –the organization's mission statement?
   –a statement of program goals and how they are to be achieved?
   –a statement re: the intended population (i.e. students)?
   –a statement re: the program evaluation or review process and its participants?
   –a statement re: methodology?
   –a statement of values?
4. How are the philosophy and the organization's mission statement related, especially with respect to organizational and program goals?
5. How is the methodology appropriate to the stated goals and objectives?
6. How are the goals congruent with the intended student population?
7. What are the assumptions re: language learning and language teaching on which the philosophy is based?
8. How do you bring these two together in the classroom?

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21. Describe your recruitment and advertising strategies. How are these appropriate to your intended audience?

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5. How is the methodology appropriate to the stated goals and objectives?
6. How are the goals congruent with the intended student population?
7. What are the assumptions re: language learning and language teaching on which the philosophy is based?
8. How do you bring these two together in the classroom?

9. How does the philosophy recognize the diversity of experience, learning styles, and needs?

10. How often does the program re visit the philosophy?

11. What are some of the changes that have been made as a result of one of these re visits?

12. Is the philosophy made availal e on request to
    –students?
    –staff?
    –funders?
    –community workers?
    –ESL network?
    –other? Explain...

13. How are the above made aware of the philosophy and how is it made available to them?

Facilities

1. Do the facilities
   –meet health and safety regulations?
   –provide space for private interviews or assessments? Explain.
   –provide workspace for instructors? Explain.
   –provide space for lunch/coffee breaks? Explain.
   –provide a self–study and/or a common area?

2. Are the facilities convenient and accessible to the clients? Explain.

3. Does the program provide in each classroom
   –adult size chairs and desks/tables?
   –a blackboard or substitute (white board, flip chart.)?
   –an overhead?

4. Does the program have
   –a duplicating machine?
   –a telephone for student use?
   –a telephone for staff use?
   –instructional supplies (paper, pens, chalk, etc.) for instructor use?
   –a video recorder with T.V.?
   –tape recorders for class or individual use?
   –computers with software for class or individual use?

5. What do you consider essential to a program and what do you consider "extras" or non-essential?

Curriculum

1. Do you have a curriculum?
2. If yes, who provided input into its development? Why and how?
3. Does the curriculum contain the following:
   –the program philosophy?
   –a statement re: the needs assessment procedure (initial, ongoing, final)?
   –content, including cultural information where appropriate?
   –general goals and level specific objectives?
   –a statement re: methodology?
   –a list of materials and resources?
   –expectations re: performance outcomes of learners?
   –a statement re: measurement of student progress/achievement?
   –a statement re: the degree of negotiation possible?
4. How are the general objectives compatible with the philosophy of the program?
5. How does the curriculum content relate to the general objectives and to the characteristics/needs of the learners?
6. How does the methodology take into account the diversity of experience and learning styles of the learners?
7. Is the curriculum made available for students to read upon request?
8. What kinds of flexibility are built into the curriculum to meet changing student needs?
9. How often is the curriculum reviewed?
10. Does this review include
    –learners?
    –instructors?
    –administrator(s)?
    –other? Explain...
11. How are they included? In particular, what part do the learners play in setting goals?
12. How is classroom practice and its influence on the curriculum reviewed?
13. Who is included in this process
    –learners?
    –instructors?
    –administrator?
    –other? Explain...

Resources

1. Are the program materials (both commercial and teacher prepared) specifically designed for an adult population?
2. Are they up to date?
3. How are your commercial materials chosen? Do instructors and/or students have any input?
4. How are the materials (comm. and teach. prep)/resources appropriate to objectives and methodology?
5. Do they provide a variety of learning experiences? Explain/Give examples.
6. Are all four skill areas, which are necessary to language learning (reading, writing, listening, speaking), covered in the materials/resources (comm. and teach. prep)? Explain/give examples.
7. Are class sets available where appropriate?
8. Is copyright enforced?
9. What resources/materials for teacher reference or [illegible]ent are provided?

Staff

1. Are the instructors accredited by ATESL (Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language)?
2. What are the criteria for hiring?
3. Are these criteria available to the public?
4. How are the qualifications and experience of the instructors compatible with their responsibilities?
5. Are the instructional staff all members of a professional association?
6. What types of professional development have your staff participated in during the last year?
7. In what way did your organization facilitate this professional development?
8. What changes, if any, have you noticed since this professional development?
9. What plans do your staff have for professional development in the upcoming year?
10. Why have they chosen these particular activities?

Evaluation

1. What provisions do you make for program review and change?

2. Which of the following components are reviewed on a regular basis?
   - –philosophy
   - –administration (including the administrator)
   - –program structure
   - –personnel
   - –management
   - –facilities and equipment
   - –curriculum
   - –materials and resources (commercial and teacher prepared)
   - –student assessment
   - –student progress
   - –evaluation process

3. What methods are used for program review?
   - –quantitative? Explain.
   - –qualitative? Explain.

4. Are the following people involved in the evaluation process:
   - –administration? Why/why not?
   - –support staff? Why/why not?
   - –instructors? Why/why not?
   - –former learners? Why/why not?
   - –current learners? Why/why not?
   - –others? Explain.

5. What improvements or changes would you like to make in any of the following areas:
   - –administration?
   - –philosophy?
   - –program structure?
   - –curriculum?
   - –materials/resources?
   - –facilities/class size?
   - –personnel (qualifications, prof. dev., etc.)?
   - –evaluation process?

6. What do you think most makes this a good program?

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Could you tell me what led to your becoming involved in the field of ESL?
2. Could you tell me how you came to work for School X?
3. What is the school philosophy or mandate?
4. What is the program philosophy?
5. Do you have a copy of the curriculum?
6. If so, what does it contain? (goals, methodology, materials...)
7. How would you describe your teaching approach?
8. Do you have access to student files? If so, what type of information do they provide that is useful to you?
9. How often do instructors meet? - with/without your supervisor?
10. What generally is the content of the meetings?
11. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the areas of
    –facilities/equipment?
    –learner assessment?
    –curriculum?
    –materials?
    –advertising/awareness activities?
    –staff qualifications, responsibilities, professional development?
    –program evaluation?
12. What do you think most makes this a good program?

APPENDIX C

SUPPORT STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Could you tell me what led to your becoming involved in the field of ESL?
2. Could you tell me how you came to work for School X?
3. What is the school philosophy or mandate?
4. What is the program philosophy?
5. Have you ever seen the curriculum? If so, what does it contain?
6. How would you describe your approach in dealing with student inquiries/complaints?
7. Do you have access to student files? If so, what type of information do they provide that is useful to you?
8. How often does the staff meet with you included?
9. What generally is the content of the meetings?
10. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the areas of
    –facilities/equipment?
    –learner assessment?
    –curriculum and materials?
    –advertising/awareness activities?
    –staff qualifications, responsibilities, professional development?
    –program evaluation?
11. What do you think most makes this a good program?

APPENDIX D

LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Can you explain why you are taking English classes (or why you took English classes)?
2. What made you decide to study English at School X?
3. Do you know the program's philosophy? It's goals?
4. If not, what do you think they are?
5. What improvements or changes would you like to see in the areas of
   –content?
   –materials?
   –instructional activities?
   –instructors?
   –facilities/equipment?
5. Do you think your English has improved? Why/Why not?
6. What do you think most makes this a good program? (bad program?)

APPENDIX E

CONSENT LETTER

Thesis Title: **Development of an Adult English as a Second Language Program Evaluation Instrument**

Researcher: **Elizabeth Karra**
University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Adult Career and Technology

This is to certify that I agree to participate in the above study. Having been contacted by the researcher, a graduate student in the Department of Adult Career and Technology, I understand that:

1. The purpose of this study is to develop an adult ESL program evaluation instrument.
2. My name will not be disclosed at any time during this study or used in the resulting thesis.
3. Any information I provide to the researcher or that the researcher has access to will be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes of this research study. The results will be published in a thesis, and may also be used for a conference presentation and/or journal article.
4. I am participating in this study on a purely voluntary basis. Therefore, I have the right to quit or refuse to participate at any time.
6. I have been fully informed as to the nature of the study and my involvement in it.
7. The thesis derived from this study will be available for examination at the University of Alberta Library.

Signature of participant____

Name (please print)____

APPENDIX F

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR ADULT ESL/LINC PROGRAMMING AND INSTRUCTION IN ALBERTA (PART 2)

Best Practice Guidelines
Self Evaluation Guide

Reporting the results

Throughout this self-study process, the recorder should maintain an orderly file containing all findings and comments. For each category, the strengths and the weaknesses of the program should be identified and stated clearly. These should be followed with a list of recommended changes and accompanied by both a short term and a long term plan for implementing these changes. Specify exactly when and how these changes will take place, and who will be involved. This report can then be used as a document to share with all participants in the program as a first step in bringing about change.

1.0 Program Philosophy

A program's philosophy guides decisions about curriculum, program structure and evaluation by establishing a clear sense of vision and common purpose. A program philosophy helps to focus regular, critical evaluation and reflection. Regardless of 'labels', a philosophy document should articulate an organization's beliefs, assumptions and goals in a meaningful way. It should be related to the goals of the larger institution if that is applicable and to the needs of the community.

Program Philosophy Checklist

- the institution's Mission Statement (if applicable).
- the program's Mission Statement/Philosophy.
- a statement of the program's values.
- a statement of the assumptions about language learning and teaching upon which the program is based.
- the broad program goals.
- the program's role in the community.
- statements about the program's mandate which include
  - a description of the intended participants
  - a description of the needs being addressed
  - a description of any constraints within the program must operate

Program Philosophy Self-Study Questions

1. a. Where is the philosophy for your program kept?
   b. Who can access it?
   c. How are the stakeholders made aware of its existence and content?
   d. Are the learners aware of the philosophy?
   e. If so, how is it made available to them and in what form? That is, is it understandable? (e.g., is it written in English they can understand or translated into their first languages?)

2. a. How are the general goals of the program compatible or consistent with the Mission Statement of the institution and/or the institution's goals?

   b. How are these goals congruent with the intended learner's needs and goals?

3. How do the assumptions about language learning and teaching take into account such things as the diversity of life experience, learning styles and student needs among adult learners?

4. When or how often is the philosophy reviewed, who participates in this review, and why?

2.0 Curriculum

The curriculum provides the link between the program philosophy and classroom practice. That is, it is a crucial aspect of this is how assumptions about language learning and language teaching are applied in classroom practice. The curriculum is not the same as a course outline or syllabus although these are subsumed under it.

A curriculum must specify learning objectives and performance outcomes. The former tend to be abstract statements stated in pedagogical/androgogical terms; the latter, concrete statements related to students' production which guide any program or student assessment process. The curriculum is an extension of the program philosophy insofar as the learning goals and performance outcomes are 'shaped' by the program philosophy.

The curriculum should be based on a needs assessment. A curriculum also includes statements about course content, teaching methodology, materials and resources. It is relevant to adult learners and consistent with the diversity of experience, learning styles and adult student needs. In addition to the consideration of content, there should be a recursive process of revision which permits the curriculum to change in response to identified needs.

Curriculum Checklist

- statement of learning objectives and performance outcomes for each level or class.
- course content for each level.
- statements about methodology.
- statements about materials and resources.
- statements about ongoing and final evaluation of student progress.
- statements about the curriculum review process.

Curriculum Self-Study Questions

1. On what form of needs assessment is your curriculum based?

2. a. How are the broad objectives relevant to the needs of the intended learners?

   b. Explain how the objectives are compatible with the philosophy of the program.

3. a. How was the content determined? Who had input into this process and why?

   b. How is the content appropriate for the stated objectives in each level?

   c. In what way does the content take into account the diversity of experience, learning styles, and needs of the adult learners in the program?

   d. To what extent can the content be negotiated? Explain.

4. a. Describe the methodology employed in this program.

   b. How is this methodology consistent with the objectives of the program?

   c. How is this methodology appropriate for the content of this program?

   d. How is the methodology consistent with the principles of language learning and teaching outlined in the program philosophy?

5. a. How is the learner performance measured?

   b. Give the rationale for this measurement, explaining how it relates to the objectives and content.

6. If applicable, how does the curriculum address the cultural dynamics of the community and facility understanding of and access to community systems (legal aid, health care, settlement services, etc.).

7. How is your curriculum made available for stakeholders to read?

8. a. How often is the curriculum reviewed, who is involved, and why?

   b. How is the appropriate input necessary for review collected (input from learners, teachers, administrators, community representatives, employers, etc.)?

   c. During this process, how do you take into account learner's changing needs, changing community needs, and students' issues as they arise?

   d. What are some of the recent changes or innovations you have implemented as a result of curriculum review?

3.0 Program Structure

The program structure creates the environment which facilitates a specified service to a particular student body. Key areas under this heading are personnel management, program coordination, daily administration, financial management, program development and the administrator(s).

3.1 Personnel Management

Personnel Management Checklist

- an organizational chart.
- job descriptions.
- a written personnel policy.
- written criteria for staff evaluation.
- a written policy for volunteer management (where applicable).

Self-study

1. Using the organizational chart identify the relationships between all participants in a program.

2. What is the decision making process as reflected in this chart?

3. What means does the program use to provide the staff with information regarding their evaluation, their job descriptions, and the grievance procedure (i.e., the personnel policy)?

4. What rationale is behind the criteria used to evaluate the instructors and those chosen to provide input into this evaluation?

5. In what way does the program promote or facilitate professional development? Give examples.

6. How is the policy for volunteer management communicated to the volunteers and others who may be working/studying with them?

7. a. Describe the management style within the program. Explain how this style works tot he program's benefit.

   b. What changes in management style do you think could further benefit the program?

8. Can you describe or explain recent changes or innovations which have come about as a result of the administrator, staff and students working together?

3.2 Program Co-ordination

Program Co-ordination Checklist

- description of intake and placement processes.
- information for the students about the program.
- information for the students and instructors about:
  - access to/eligibility for the program
  - counseling
  - alternative programs
  - other support services for instructors and students
- a plan for program evaluation.
- a marketing and recruitment plan.

Program Co-ordination Self-study

1. a. Describe the student intake and placement process.

   b. How are the students made aware of their place in the program and how they move through it? (orally, in writing, in English, in a first language, etc.).

2. a. What are the program's expectations of the students?

   b. How are they made aware of these expectations?

3. a. Describe your orientation process for new students. What information are they provided with during the orientation?

   b. How is this information conveyed to those whose English proficiency is low?

   c. If not in the orientation, how are potential students made aware of eligibility for the program and alternate programs which may be more appropriate for them?

4. What are your maximum class sizes? If they are larger than 12 for beginning levels and 20 for intermediate or high levels, give your rationale.

5. How does the program facilitate referral to community support for both

6. How are the learners and instructors made aware of the program evaluation plan?

7. a. How does the program market itself and recruit new students?

   b. Does any of the program advertising contain statements which might be misleading or misinterpreted? If so, how could you re-word them?

3.3 Daily Administration

Daily Administration Checklist

- policy & procedures manual.

Daily Administration Self-study

1. Describe your records management system for students and staff.

2. a. To which records do the instructors have access? (e.g., student files).

   b. What types of information do they provide that is useful to the instructors?

   c. What additional information would be useful?

3. What information is kept on staff? How is this information used?

4. a. How is current copyright legislation conveyed to your staff?

   b. What means do you use to ensure that copyright legislation is followed? (e.g., purchase of class sets, texts with permission to copy, etc.)

5. Explain how the working conditions or environment are conducive to achieving program goals.

3.4 Financial Management

Financial Management Checklist

- the salary scale or grid for instructional staff.
- a statement of payment and refund policies.

Financial Management Self-study

1. What steps are taken to try to ensure some type of financial stability for the program?
2. a. How was the salary scale determined?
   b. How does the salary scale compare to that of other programs? It there is a significant difference, why?
3. How are the public, learners and staff made aware of the fee payment and refund policy in a way that is easily understood?

3.5 <u>The Administrator</u>

Administrator Checklist

- the administrator's resume.

Administrator Self-study

1. Give examples of ways in which the administrator has supported or encouraged innovation in the program.
2. Give examples of how the administrator represents and supports the program and its stakeholders in both the larger community and the organization or institution in which it is housed.
3. Give an example of how the administrator used his/her skills in a crisis or conflict situation. Was the problem situation successfully resolved? Why/why not?
4. What recent forms of professional development or upgrading has the administrator participated in? How have these been of benefit to the program?

4.0 Staff

Staff includes teaching staff (i.e., instructors, tutors, aides) and support staff (i.e., secretaries, office managers, counselors, advisors). Qualifications for all positions are public information and are demonstrably suitable for the program. Qualifications for teaching staff must not compromise the professionalism of the TESL field.

Staff Checklist

- Statement of selection criteria for new staff.
- Evidence of teaching staff membership in a professional TESL organization.

Staff Self-study

1. Discuss the qualification requirements of those working within the program. How are they appropriate to the program?

2. In what ways does your staff reflect the cultural diversity of the community?

5.0 Facilities

Facilities consist of the physical site, instructional and support equipment. All of these should be appropriate for the program and consistent with the goals of the program.

Facilities Self-study

1. Explain how your facilities are convenient and accessible for the learners?

2. How are your facilities culturally and socially appropriate to your particular group of learners?

3. a. What instructional equipment do you have and how does it meet the needs of the program?

   b. What other types of equipment would be of benefit to the program?

4. What office equipment do you have? How is it used?

5. Do students have access to a phone? If not, how can they be reached in an emergency?

6. Is a self-study area provided in your program? If not, please give your reasons.

7. a. Is there a common area for students to have their breaks and lunch?

   b. If not, where do the students go during those times? Does this present any problem?

8. Where and how is the copying or printing done for the instructors?

9. What other facilities do your students have access to (e.g., library, child care, etc.)? How do these fit in with the goals of the program?

6.0 Resources

Resources are the "tools of the trade: in that they provide necessary support for teachers and students to further the learning process. They can be commercial, teacher or student-generated and may also include 'human resources' such as guest speakers. They should provide a variety of learning experiences for students in a way which is consistent with program goals. Teaching staff should have input into decisions about what resources to purchase.

Resources Checklist

- a comprehensive list of all available resources.

Resources Self-study

1. How are your resources relevant to your program goals and objectives? Give examples.
2. How are the resources relevant to the needs and interests of the learners? Give examples.
3. Explain how your resources provide a variety of learning experiences in the different skill areas.
4. How do your resources relate to your recommended teaching approach/methodology?
5. How are your resources catalogued?
6. Where are the resources kept? Is this an easily accessible location? Explain.
7. Are the students allowed to borrow these resources? If not, why?
8. a. Which resources are available for professional development (teacher reference?
   b. How are the instructors made aware of the existence of these books?
   c. What is the "borrowing" policy?
   d. Identify any personal or program changes brought about as a result of these resources.

(Government of Alberta and Government of Canada, 1994, pp. 17-27)

APPENDIX G

A-LINC LEVEL DESCRIPTORS*

Level 1

May speak a little, but usually not at all. May recognize some letters but have trouble pronouncing them. Understanding is very limited and may range from no apparent comprehension, to comprehending short phrases or key words.

May be unable to copy Roman script. Can usually print own name, but cannot manage address or anything else. May not handle pen/pencil at all, or only with awkwardness. May not read/write in own language, or with minimal ability.

Usually has little or no sight recognition. Usually has little or no ability to phonetically decode words. If words can be decoded, there may be little or no understanding of their meaning.

Level 2

Minimal speaking ability, with very little vocabulary, usually limited to topics of personal information. Speech is frequently interrupted by hesitations while searching for needed words/structures.

Can understand only a little, usually with the help of gestures, and only if words are spoken at a slow pace. May tend to repeat phrases/questions just heard rather than respond to them.

Writing usually quite limited, i.e. name/address, and some high-frequency words.

Can read the alphabet and numbers and basic words or sentences.

Level 3

Can speak with simple structures, using present tense, but attempts at linking or sequencing sentences prove difficult. Speech is fragmented, i.e. a mixture of sentences and phrases, or single key words strung together without function words. Will struggle to search for words. Vocabulary limited to personal information, daily life, or similar topics. Pronunciation problems often make speech difficult to understand.

Listening ability is often better than speech production, with the ability to understand basic instructions/questions, often by picking up on key content words rather than necessarily understanding everything.

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* Entry level descriptors.

Writing is mainly limited to single words, phrases, simple sentences, such as personal information required for filling out a form. Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Can read basic information presented in simple sentences within a known, usually practical context, such as basic forms, lists, familiar classroom material.

(Employment and Immigration Canada, 1993, pp. 7-8)