

**Strengthening Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada:  
Learning from Experiences in Saskatoon**

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By

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## **Abstract**

The immigrant population in Saskatoon has grown in the past few decades. With the increase in the number of immigrants in Saskatoon, the federally sponsored program Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) has also been in demand. The purpose of this study was to establish ways in which LINC service providers in Saskatoon can support new ESL LINC instructors to excel in their careers. This study examined the experiences of these instructors in terms of what was expected from them at their workplace, the challenges they faced, and the supports they needed. This research was conducted as an intrinsic case study, considering Saskatoon as a complete case. The guiding theory for this research was the theory on organizational entry by Louis (1980). Due to pandemic, the data were collected through online one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The four overarching themes that emerged from the coded data were: motivation to join LINC, expectations from LINC instructors, LINC instructors' experiences with instruction, and supports for new ESL LINC instructors. Findings of this study revealed that the new ESL LINC instructors face challenges, need guidance in understating the LINC system, and require technical and moral supports. To assist the new LINC instructors in their career, the recommendations are to assign one-on-one mentoring, to offer an annual refresher on CLB and PBLA, to boost the technical support in LINC classrooms, to equip the new instructors on the software and applications being used in LINC classrooms, to consider new LINC instructors' feedback for implementing blended learning (BL) in CLB 1-4 classes, to support the new instructors on handling trauma in the classrooms, and to give clear instructions to the new LINC instructors on online and BL teaching. For future research, it is suggested to conduct similar research on LINC learners and LINC support staff, which includes managers and administrators for their views on the working conditions and their experiences with LINC.

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## **Dedication**

To individuals who, under all circumstances pursued their dreams.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

BL	Blended learning
CERTESL	Certificate of Teaching English as a Second Language
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmark
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a Second Language
GGP	Global Gathering Place
EIC	Employment and Immigration Canada
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
IWS	International Women of Saskatoon
LARC	Language Assessment and Referral Centre
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
PBLA	Portfolio Based Language Assessment
PNP	Provincial Nominee Program
SIA	Saskatchewan Intercultural Association
SINP	Saskatchewan Nominee Immigrant Program
SODS	Saskatoon OpenDoor Society

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

This research explored the experiences of English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors as they strive to settle and flourish in their careers with the federally sponsored program Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) in Saskatoon. The experiences of neophyte instructors with the hiring process and early years instruction were analyzed with the aim of contributing towards the improvement of LINC program. The study was delimited to the first five years of the careers of these instructors. Participants were selected from LINC service providers in Saskatoon that include Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Saskatoon OpenDoor Society (SODS), Global Gathering Place (GGP) and Saskatchewan Intercultural Association (SIA). In this chapter I present the background and context of LINC program by expounding its origin, the related policy, the learners, and the LINC team. I also delineate the purpose, research questions, and the significance of this study. I conclude the chapter by stating the assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and define the key terms for the study.

### **Role of Canada's Immigration Policy in LINC Program**

Canada has one of the largest multicultural populations in the world (Li et al., 2012). Fleras (2015) termed Canada as the welcoming land and the society of immigrants because of its strong immigration policy. The 2016 census results revealed that immigrants constituted more than 20% of the population of Canada, which underpins the classification of Canada as a society of immigrants. Projections for 2036 indicate that the proportion of immigrants in Canada may increase to 30% by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2017a). In addition to this, Statistics Canada (2019) affirmed the population growth rate of Canada to be the highest among G7 countries; the main contributing factor being international migration. These statistics endorse Fleras's (2015) views on the immigration policy of Canada of embracing immigrants.

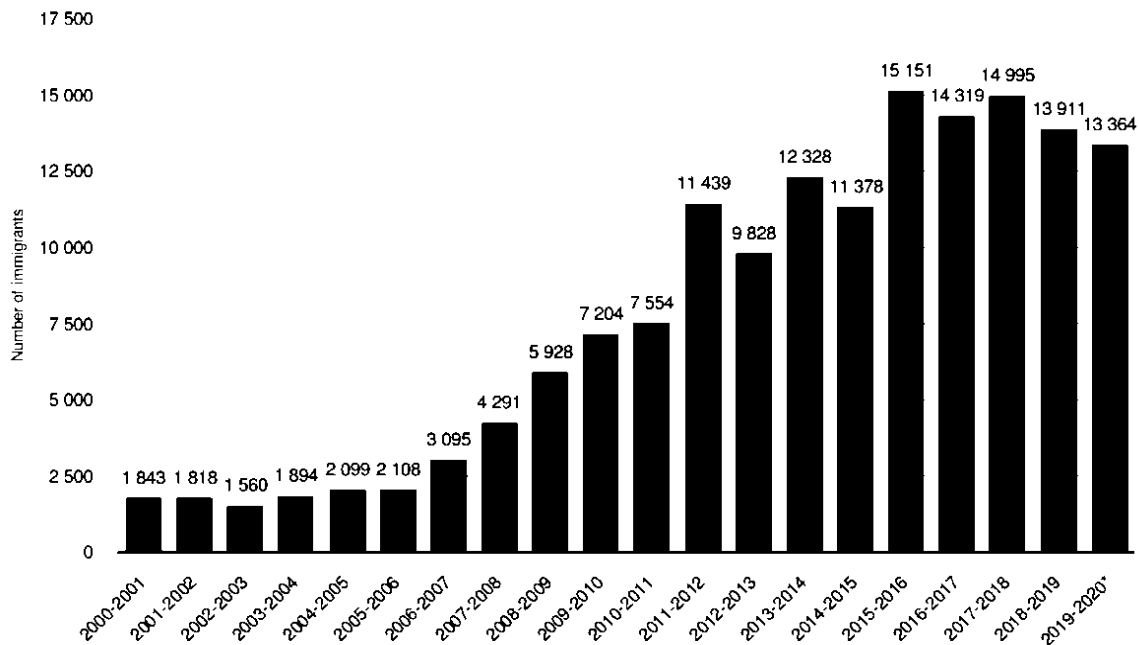
According to Fleras (2015), the three main objectives of Canada's immigration policy are to: (a) reunite the families, (b) give protection to individuals on humanitarian grounds, and (c) boost the national economy. These objectives are implemented by offering entry to individuals under three categories: family class, where individuals living in Canada sponsor their family members; refugee class, where individuals fear returning to their country; and economic class, where individuals apply for immigration on the basis of their skills and financial contribution which includes investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Family class and economic class of immigrants get permanent resident status once they enter Canada. Refugees can apply for permanent resident status after they complete specific requirements. According to the Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration in the House of Commons (2019), the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) funds the services related to the settlement of these newcomers to Canada. These services include needs assessment and referrals, information and orientation, language training and skills development, employment related services and community connections. In 2018-2019, more than 100,000 newcomers accessed the language training services across Canada (House of Commons, 2019).

Provinces like Saskatchewan have been facing challenges associated with an aging population, decreasing birth rates, and a dearth of skilled labour (City of Saskatoon, n.d.a). In 2001, these challenges prompted the federal government to introduce the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) in Saskatchewan (Government of Canada, n.d.a). Through this program, provinces could discretely open their doors to immigrants. With the introduction of PNP, Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) became the primary source of immigration to Saskatchewan. Therefore, the immigration policy at provincial and federal level led to an

increase of immigrants and refugees from English as well as non-English speaking countries (Li et al., 2012) in Saskatchewan. Figure 1 shows an escalation in the immigrant population in Saskatchewan within a few years of implementation of SINP.

**Figure 1**

*Number of immigrants in Saskatchewan from 2001 – 2020*



*Note:* This figure illustrates the number of immigrants in Saskatchewan from 2001-2020. From Statista. (n.d.). Number of recent immigrants in Saskatchewan from 2001 to 2020. [Number of immigrants in Saskatchewan 2020 | Statista](#)

Saskatoon being the largest city of Saskatchewan received the most impact of the population growth in the province. In 2016/ 17, with 2.8% population growth rate, Saskatoon became the city with fourth largest population increase in Canada; 86% of the population hike in Saskatoon was from international immigration (City of Saskatoon, n.d.b). With the influx of immigrants, the demand for learning English as a second language also escalated. In 1991,



Employment and Immigration Canada introduced a policy that gave access to newcomers to Canada to learn English or French (Cray, 1997). In 1992, the federally sponsored program, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), was introduced, which played a vital role in supporting newcomers to adapt to the new culture (Li et al., 2012). Hence the direct link between Canada's immigration policy and LINC program.

### **The LINC Learners**

The growing trend of newcomers from countries where the language of communication was neither English nor French put demand on the federal and provincial governments to provide language and intercultural training programs (Li et al., 2012). Expounding on diversity in demographics, skills, and qualification of newcomers, Li et al. (2012) stated that newcomers to Canada range from 18-80 years of age and their educational background ranges from no formal education to Ph.Ds. Some are not even familiar with the Roman alphabet, some have learning or physical disabilities, while others are highly educated and skilled professionals. Gebhard (2017) added that among these newcomers are doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, business people, housewives, farmers, and individuals from other professions. They have clear goals to join the LINC program. These goals are: to acquire language skills to pass accreditation or licensing exam in order to continue with their previous profession in Canada, socialize, and search for jobs (Huang, 2021; Li et al., 2012). The LINC program fulfills these goals by imparting language training; developing essential skills like critical thinking and problem solving; incorporating social, civil, and democratic values (Mukan et al., 2015); and offering job readiness to the learners (Evaluation of the LINC Program, 2010). Besides, if an individual completes a required level in LINC, the corresponding certificate can be used as a proof for meeting the Canadian citizenship language requirement (Government of Canada, n.d.b).

Despite of the availability of government sponsored newcomers' programs, some newcomers struggle to access these programs due to barriers such as money to purchase program resources, childcare, transportation, lack of awareness for the appropriate program (Li et al. 2012), waiting list for the program, and the struggle to choose between learning the language and earning an income (House of Commons, 2019).

The current approach to implement language training for newcomers in Canada offers LINC to immigrants as well as to the refugees. While both these group of learners have similar goals such as learning a second language, looking for a job, and settling in a new country; the variances cannot be disregarded (Huang, 2021). Refugees are a unique group of learners on the basis of the circumstances they have had to face, for instance, being forced to migrate and resettle in a new place, loss of family, and interrupted education and work. These experiences can lead to trauma and post-traumatic stress in individuals.

### ***Placement of Learners into LINC Program***

As mentioned earlier, in 1992, the federal government introduced the LINC program, which offers free English and French classes for refugees and immigrants to help them integrate into the Canadian society (Cray, 1997). It not only provides language training to learners, but also offers them job readiness training (Evaluation of the LINC Program, 2010). Today, the federal government funds LINC, whereas provincial and local governments implement and monitor different aspects of these classes (Cray, 1997; Fleras, 2015; Li et al., 2012).

Migrants; both permanent residents and refugees can take free online language tests, based on Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), to have their language skills assessed before they come to Canada (Li et al. 2012). Once they are in Canada, they are required to visit a government designated settlement agency in their city, to have their language skills assessed and

based on their assessment score, they get placed in a LINC class. In Saskatoon, the Language Assessment and Referral Centre (LARC) provides free services to permanent residents and refugees for English Language assessments. According to Language Assessment and Referral Centre (n.d.), assessors at LARC use the Canadian Language Benchmarks-Placement Test (CLBPT) as the standardized testing tool to assess the English proficiency of the clients, and the Canadian Language Benchmark Literacy Placement Test (LPT) to assess reading and writing proficiency of clients who are illiterate or semi-literate in their first language. After assessing their language skills, LARC refers them to LINC service providers in Saskatoon which include: Saskatchewan Polytech, GGP, SODS, and SIA (Language Assessment and Referral Centre, n.d.).

### **LINC Team**

The LINC team consists of administrators, lead instructors or team leads, and LINC instructors. The PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) assign clear roles to each member of the LINC team to implement PBLA. According to these guidelines, administrators are responsible for the overall implementation of PBLA, and they support the lead and the LINC instructors. Lead instructors or team leads are responsible to assist the instructors, which includes providing “PBLA orientation, and support to new teachers” (p. 43), observing classroom teaching, and providing feedback as a co-worker. In addition to this, these guidelines recommend lead instructors to support the instructors, and not to supervise or evaluate them. LINC instructors are responsible for planning and delivering the lesson and assessing the learners according to PBLA.

LINC instructors are native as well as non-native speakers of English. Some instructors are experienced ESL teachers, and many have taught ESL in K-12 system, while others do not have experience. Past studies affirm that LINC instructors face setbacks at the beginning of their careers (Buckley, 2000; Cohen, 2018; Valeo & Faez, 2013). Irrespective of being non- native

language speakers or native language speakers, instructors express their apprehensions in the early years of their careers (Cohen, 2018; Valeo & Faez, 2013). While discussing the teacher learning in the second language education, Farrell (2019) stated teacher educators are a prominent source of guide for the teacher learners in the second language education programs. On graduating from these programs, “many NQTs [newly qualified teachers] suddenly have no further contact with their teacher educators or programs” (p. 8). This sudden absence of a guide can be one of the reasons why the new instructors face challenges in the real classrooms. Valeo & Faez (2013) listed lack of job satisfaction and unsuitable job opportunities as factors that contribute to the turnover among LINC instructors. Other studies indicate inadequate teaching resources, vague classroom management guidelines, unawareness of learners’ cultural norms, and being new to Canadian culture as reasons for the LINC instructors’ turnover. In some cases, the new instructors are not fully aware of the available teaching resources, or they do not receive mentorship on the job or adequate information during their orientation (Cohen, 2018).

### **Problem Statement**

Federal policy and initiatives like the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) bring in immigrants to Saskatchewan to overcome the challenges of aging population, shrinking birth rates, and skilled labour shortages (City of Saskatoon, n.d. a). The 2016 census shows that between 2011-2016, more than 75% of immigrants came from non-English speaking countries (Statistics Canada, 2017c) and, therefore, needed language instruction to function meaningfully in Canadian society. The LINC program plays a vital role in supporting newcomers to function in the new culture, hence the need for effective LINC instruction. These newcomers contribute to the population of learners and instructors for LINC. Studies show that the new LINC instructors

face a number of challenges in their professional advancement, some of which include classroom management techniques and access to teaching resources (Buckley, 2000).

The literature indicates that there is not enough study done on the experiences of LINC instructors in Canada and how the challenges that they face can be overcome (Desyatova, 2018; Ripley, 2013). Besides, there are hardly any studies done in Saskatchewan. This research explored the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon with the aim of establishing how they can be supported to settle and excel in their careers.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of LINC instructors when they enter the field of teaching newcomers in Saskatoon, in terms of what is expected from them at their workplace, the challenges they face, and the supports they need. This was done with the aim of exploring the ways in which LINC service providers can support new ESL LINC instructors to excel in their careers in Saskatoon. This purpose was achieved by seeking answers to the following research questions:

### ***Research Questions***

What is the experience with becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?

- a) What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructors?
- b) What are the expectations from LINC instructors?
- c) What was the LINC instructors' experience with instruction?
- d) What supports do LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors?

## **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study have advanced the amount of literature on ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. With the growing population of immigrants in Saskatoon (Statistics Canada, 2017c) and an escalating demand for learning English by newcomers to Canada (Evaluation of the LINC Program, 2010), the demand for ESL LINC classes and ESL LINC instructors is growing. The areas of need for these new instructors have been identified through this research, which can offer motivation for instructors to plan their careers. It has also explored ways in which LINC service providers can support new instructors in their careers. Finally, this study has potential implications for LINC service providers and will benefit administrators in their planning.

## **Assumptions**

The first assumption for this study was that instructors who had taught for less than five years in LINC were considered as new LINC instructors. These instructors might have had experience teaching ESL in the K-12 school system for more than five years, but as they did not have an exposure to teaching adult newcomers in LINC, for this research they were considered as new instructors.

The second assumption was that all LINC instructors who had taught English to adult refugees and permanent residents in Saskatoon for less than five years faced challenges and received support at their work place. The third assumption was that instructors who join the LINC program do not take any other job assignment while working in LINC. This means that their challenges are not influenced by other assignments that they are doing in parallel. Similarly, they exclusively depend on LINC program for receiving supports for executing their jobs.

The last assumption is that, based on literature review, demographics and qualification of LINC instructors in Saskatoon are similar to that of instructors working in other parts of Canada.

## **Limitations**

This study was conducted under a few limitations. The first one is limited generalizability of the results of this study. This limitation appeared on the basis of using purposive sampling technique for gathering data. Since I had a well-defined population for this research and interviewed eight instructors with specific characteristics, which are discussed later in this report, the findings of this research are based on the experiences of these eight instructors only. Moreover, these instructors were from organizations that offer ESL LINC program specifically in Saskatoon. This limited the generalizing of findings of this study to a larger population.

The second limitation appeared on the data collection tools, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On account of the pandemic, restrictions were imposed on in-person forums at the University of Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan, n.d.). For this reason, I excluded data collection through classroom observations; as remote classroom observations would not have added much to the data collected for this research. I collected the data through online one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions.

The third limitation was the absence of sufficient literature on experiences of ESL LINC instructors in Saskatchewan. This limitation emerged from the literature review which reflected that there was not enough study done on the experiences of LINC instructors and how the challenges that they face can be overcome (Desyatova, 2018; Ripley, 2013).

The last limitation was time. Since this research was a part of the graduate study program at the University of Saskatchewan, it had to be completed within a predetermined timeframe.

## **Delimitations**

There were some delimitations for this study. The first delimitation was on the selection of data collection methods and the research methodology, which were based on the purpose of this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon when they enter the field of teaching newcomers. Being a certified LINC instructor and having experience in teaching in LINC program, I had a genuine interest in this area. For these reasons I used intrinsic case study (Stake, 1994). Because of the intrinsic case study approach, I delimited the data collection methods to interviews and focus group discussions, through which I could better understand the intrinsic aspects of the new ESL LINC instructors and get the views of the participants on their experiences with the LINC program (Berg, 2001).

The next two delimitations appeared as a result of the time factor. The first one was the scope of study. I delimited this research to the LINC service providers in Saskatoon. The second was sample size, as I included participants from organizations in Saskatoon only.

The fourth delimitation appeared because of small population size of LINC instructors in Saskatoon. Since only four organizations offer LINC in Saskatoon; few instructors qualified the criteria laid down for being new to LINC. Further restricting the selection to gender or age would have jeopardized the anonymity and confidentiality of these participants and put the participants under pressure in interviews and group discussions. For this reason, I did not restrict participant selection to age or gender.

The study was also delimited to instructors who had taught in LINC for less than five years.



## **Definition of Key Terms**

**Canadian cultural values:** Values embedded in the culture of Canada such as gender neutrality, respect for other culture and beliefs, no tolerance of violence, etc. The learners are introduced to these values in LINC classrooms.

**Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB):** The 12 levels of language ability in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. CLBs are used in Canada to describe the language ability of individuals learning English.

**CLB 1-4:** At CLB-1, learners can say and understand few words and simple phrases. They can also read and write some common words. At CLB-4, learners can exchange some formal and informal communication. They can read and write simple and short paragraphs. The language proficiency of CLB 2 and CLB 3 learners is between CLB 1 and CLB 4.

**CLB 5-8, Intermediate language ability:** At CLB-5, learners start using moderately complex spoken and written communication. At CLB-8, the learners are fluent at using moderately complex spoken and written communication. The language proficiency of CLB 6 and CLB 7 learners is between CLB 5 and CLB 8.

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** The use of English by those individuals whose first or native language is not English.

**Language Assessment and Referral Centre (LARC):** Government approved agency in Saskatoon that assesses language proficiency of newcomers to Canada and assigns them a benchmark that is based on their language assessment results.

**Language Companion:** A binder that the learners receive from LINC service providers a few days after they join a LINC class. This binder contains printed material and weblinks as practical learning and teaching resources for LINC learners and instructors.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC): A federal government sponsored program that offers free English and French classes to newcomers to help them settle in Canada.

Lead instructor: An experienced LINC instructor responsible to assist other instructors in PBLA implementation. Lead instructor should not supervise or evaluate colleagues, or screen portfolios or artefacts from colleague's classrooms (PBLA Practice Guidelines, 2019).

LINC service provider: A government approved organization that offers Language Instruction for Newcomer to Canada (LINC) classes.

New LINC instructor: An instructor who is new to the LINC program. For this research, a new LINC instructor is considered as an instructor who has less than 5-year teaching experience in LINC program. This can also be an instructor who had some experience teaching English as a Foreign Language back in their country, but started teaching LINC classes in Canada within past 5 years.

Portfolio: Classroom-based set of materials collected over a period of time by the instructor and the learner together, that provides evidence for the learner's language abilities.

Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA): A teaching and assessment model designed to reinforce nationwide consistency and standards of quality in English as a Second Language (ESL) training to adult newcomers to Canada.

Settlement agency for newcomers to Canada: Government sponsored agency that offers services to help newcomers to settle in their new life in Canada. For this research, Global Gathering Place, Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, and Saskatchewan Intercultural Association are settlement agencies in Saskatoon.

## **Researcher's Positionality**

Positionality is the researcher's social and political stance which can be useful in a study (Given, 2008). Creswell (1994) advocated that the researcher's culture and past experiences potentially shape the interpretation of data. In this section, I have expounded on my academic and professional background and the inspiration that sparked my interest in this research.

My propensity to teach ESL to adults comes from my family background of teachers, which influenced my interest in conducting this research on LINC instructors. My mother was an English language teacher in a high school in Pakistan. She also tutored adults in English language, while I took delight in assisting her anytime an opportunity arose. In this way I had some hands-on experience in teaching English and later developed an interest to enter this field. When I moved to Canada as a permanent resident, I started my career in university teaching. Later, I joined the field of ESL teaching and teaching in LINC program. Despite the ESL teaching experience that I had, LINC was new to me and it required me to go through the process of establishing myself in this field. As a new LINC instructor, I had to understand the requirements of my career. I faced challenges in exploring resources and developing lessons, but I was gradually able to overcome these hurdles once I started receiving mentorship from the experienced instructors.

I have worked as a LINC instructor with different LINC service providers in Saskatoon. Along with teaching LINC, my experience in teaching ESL in Canada includes delivering ESL courses at the University of Saskatchewan Language Center. I am also accredited as TESL Standard 2 Senior by TESL Saskatchewan. This makes me an emic researcher for this study.

## **Organization of Thesis**

This thesis has been presented in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research by providing the background, setting the context, stating the purpose, and giving the problem statement and significance of the study. It also lays the limitations and delimitations, as well as the definition of key terminologies used in this research.

Chapter two has a literature review on the evolution of ESL classes in Canada and the development of teaching resources for these classes. The review includes studies and documentation about the events that laid the foundations of ESL LINC, and the experiences of LINC instructors in other provinces of Canada.

Chapter three lays out the methodology used to carry out the study. It has the details on research design, theoretical framework, participants, and the criteria used to select these participants. I have also explained the methods and tools used to collect and analyze data, as well as techniques used to ensure trustworthiness of data, ethical considerations, and my role as a researcher.

Chapter four presents the research findings, while chapter five has my analysis and discussion of the findings. I conclude chapter five with answers to the research questions and suggestions for future research, and give recommendations based on research findings.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Chapter two gives a brief historical overview of LINC program. I discuss the evolution of ESL classes and past events that laid the foundations for the contemporary LINC program. This is followed by a review of literature on the hiring process of LINC instructors, challenges that these instructors face at the beginning of their careers, and supports available for them to succeed. I also present the theories that informed the conceptual framework of this research.

### **Historical Overview of LINC Program**

Teaching ESL to adult newcomers to Canada can be traced back to 1899 when Frontier College, a national literacy organization first started offering free English classes to immigrant workers who lived and worked in remote communities and were recruited on railroad, logging, and mining projects (Draper & English, 2016). At that time there was no formal program to conduct these classes (Derwing, 2017). In 1991, Employment and Immigration Canada introduced a formal policy for teaching English to newcomers to Canada (Cray, 1997). This was also the policy for the upcoming LINC classes. In 1992, the federal government introduced Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) with an intent to help newcomers develop their language skills and enhance their integration into Canadian society (Li et al., 2012; Mudzingwa, 2017). At that time, only 28% of newcomers had access to these classes and the goal was to make LINC accessible to 45% of the newcomers by 1995 (Cray, 1997). In 1995 a set of documents was recommended which gave 12 levels of language competency, also known as Canadian Language Benchmarks, CLB (Li et al., 2012). CLB are a descriptive scale of reference for assessing an individual's language proficiency in ESL over a range of basic to advanced level (Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020). Each CLB level sets up the learners' communicative skills and their "linguistic, textual, functional, and socio-cultural abilities" (Li et al., 2012, p. 8). After approval

of these documents, ESL programs were standardized across Canada (Nagy & Stewart, 2009). In 1996, a formal language assessment system was introduced in LINC that was termed as Canadian Language Benchmark Assessment, CLBA (Peirce and Stewart, 1997). Similar to the present-day scenario, in the past, due to work obligations, learners had to move across the country. Under such circumstances CLBA facilitated the placement of learners according to their language proficiency level. Peirce and Stewart (1997) conferred two reasons for the development of CLBA; the first one being the introduction of consistent terminology that defines learners' language proficiency levels; the second being the smooth transition of learners from one program to the other across Canada. In 2002, CLB 1-4 LINC Curriculum Guidelines were published, and in 2007 CLB 5-7 guidelines were published; the latter being more focused towards business and employment (Li et al., 2012).

In 2010, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) introduced a portfolio-based language assessment (PBLA), which is a unique way of assessing learners' progress in LINC (Evaluation of the LINC Program, 2010). PBLA is a teaching and assessment model designed to reinforce nationwide consistency and standards of quality in English as a Second Language (ESL) training to adult newcomers to Canada. Portfolio is a classroom-based set of materials collected over a period of time by the instructor and the learner together, which provides evidence for the learner's language abilities (Mudzingwa, 2017). LINC Learners are expected to maintain their portfolio in a binder called Language Companion that they receive from the LINC service providers a few days after they join a LINC class (Pettis, 2014). The goals of PBLA are to make learners autonomous where they can exercise control, evaluate their own work, individually solve problems, and take timely decisions. PBLA requires the instructors to plan, develop, and administer their own assessment tasks in order to evaluate their learners

(Abdulhamid & Fox, 2020). Besides, the instructors select what to include in a portfolio as evidence of the learner's learning progress, whereas, the learners are active participants in developing their portfolios, and are encouraged to take the ownership of its contents, and use it to reflect on and improve their learning. In 2012, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) introduced PBLA as a pilot project to evaluate the feasibility and cost of PBLA (PBLA Practice Guidelines, 2019; Ripley, 2018). After an extensive training of LINC instructors for 5 months in the settlement support agencies, mandatory implementation of PBLA in LINC classes started in 2014 (Desyatova, 2018; Ripley, 2018).

In addition to the evolution of the LINC program, it is worth taking a look at the development of teaching resources over time and the gaps identified between these resources and the real life second language usage in Canada. Derwing (2017) criticized some of the earlier literature that was introduced at different stages in ESL programs to have ignored to communicate Canadian values to the learners e.g., the literature being gender biased and the lack of documented material on the First Peoples of Canada; besides, the vocabularies used in these resources were beyond the learners' level of English.

Primarily, instructors assessed the learners in four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, based on how the second language learners acquire new language (ProLiteracy, 1996). With the passage of time, teaching resources and learners' assessment of second language was expanded and there was more emphasis on developing essential skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and incorporating social, civil, and democratic values among learners (Mukan et al., 2015). Later, learner's reflection became a vital part of ESL teaching (Haghighi, 2013). The inclusion of learner's reflection was a paradigm shift from a teacher- centered approach to a learner-centered model (Li et al., 2012), as it helped the learners

question and understand why they were learning certain things (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). For learners' reflection, instructors are expected to encourage the learners to record their thoughts on what they had learned and why it was important to learn (Haghighi, 2013).

### **Motivational Factors Behind Career Choice**

In this section, I review the past literature to comprehend the elements behind the choice of a career, which will give me an insight to compare the findings of my research on the first guiding research question, which is: What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructors?

Merriam and Bierema (2014) defined motivation as the driving factor that people use to achieve their goals. Researchers advocated that the thinking process varies among individuals (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Merriam and Bierema, 2014; Sumison, 2000). People have distinct incentives to achieve their goals. Furthermore, reward and importance of achievement differ from person to person. Likewise, individuals are influenced and motivated by different factors when they plan to choose a career. These factors can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Merriam and Bierema, 2014). Intrinsic factors relate to decisions that emanate from within a person for instance satisfaction, curiosity, and enjoyment. These are interests related to the profession or its role in society. Extrinsic factors are external influences that inspire an individual to act for reward such as salary, fringe benefits attached to a job, praise; or to avoid unpleasant circumstances. These influences are related to the desire for social recognition and security interests. For this research, due to lack of literature available on motivational factors for choosing a career in Saskatchewan, I include studies conducted in different countries on the motivational factors behind the choice of a career.

Sumison (2000) conducted a study on preservice teachers from Canada, New South Wales, and Australia on reasons for choosing teaching as a career. The findings of this study



revealed four reasons for pursuing teaching as a career: (a) little sense of personal agency, (b) teaching as a means of gaining personal agency, (c) teaching as a means of assisting others to gain agency, and (d) self as a reform agent. Under the category of ‘little sense of personal agency’, this study revealed the reasons of having an inclination towards a career as: changes in one’s life circumstances, not having a clear sense of career direction, considering teaching as the last option, or decision made on the basis of gender roles in a family e.g., women taking care of the family and spending more time with their children. Participants who chose ‘teaching as a means of gaining personal agency’ reflected that they wanted to fulfil their personal needs and goals. These needs and goals were to have the perfect fit for the prevailing circumstances in their lives, to meet their psychological needs that they perceived that the other careers could not achieve, to fulfill an ambition, to fulfill their career goals for which participants had considered a range of possible careers before settling on teaching as a career. Participants who took teaching as a career so that they could ‘assist others to gain agency’ indicated that they wanted to make a positive experience in students’ lives and contribute to the society. Those who reported choosing teaching because they wanted to be ‘agent of reform’ wanted to effect the educational reform. The results of Sumison’s (2000) study revealed that individuals had varying reasons for choosing teaching as a career.

Bakar et al. (2014) conducted a study in Malaysia to explore the factors that influenced individuals to choose teaching as a career. They categorized their research findings into three main factors: intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic. Intrinsically motivated teachers chose teaching as a career because they loved to teach. Extrinsically motivated teachers were attracted to the benefits related to teaching such as salary, holidays, or other external rewards; while the altruistically motivated teachers settled for teaching as they viewed teaching as a profession that

would help them contribute towards the society such as being part of other people's career growth and success. Bakar et al. (2014) advocated that the altruistic and intrinsically motivated individuals are more committed to their jobs. They are self-motivated and autonomous and seen to be more interested in their work. The results of Bakar's et al. (2014) study found that altruistic factors were rated at the highest level of motivational factors, followed by intrinsic and extrinsic factors respectively.

In 2018, Akosah-Twumasi et al. conducted a study similar to that of Bakar et al. (2014) to explore the motivational factors that influence career choices in Asia, South Asia, South Africa, Europe, and in North America. They suggested that the career influencing factors come from intrinsic, extrinsic, or interpersonal elements. Akosah-Twumasi et al.'s (2018) listed job security, financial compensation, professional status, and job accessibility as extrinsic factors; whereas, personal interests, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and professional development opportunities were the intrinsic factors in the choice of career. Interpersonal elements were defined as an individual's social circle, which includes influence of family members, teachers, supervisors, mentors, and peers. The results of this research suggested that intrinsic and interpersonal factors were the dominant elements in career decision-making. It also posited that career decision-making becomes complicated with an individual's age, and the choice of career is based on the developmental stages of individuals as well as the prevailing circumstances.

To answer the first guiding question of my research, I explored the factors that motivated the participants to choose LINC as a career in Saskatoon.

### **Expectations from LINC Instructors**

In this section I review the literature to get an insight into the second question of my research, which was: What are the expectations from LINC instructors? I have divided my query

into two parts, the first part focuses on employers' expectations, whereas the second part is on learners' expectations from LINC instructors.

### ***Employers' Expectations***

**Employers' Expectations for Recruitment.** Employers' expectations for hiring LINC instructors are based on qualification, experience, and skills (Li et al., 2012). The qualification and experience for teaching in LINC vary from province to province. In Saskatchewan, an undergraduate university degree and a TESL certificate are the basic requirements to teach in a LINC program. University of Saskatchewan offers an online program for TESL certification, though the student-instructors are responsible for arranging their own practicum observation and supervised practice teaching hours, which can be completed anywhere in Canada (Li et al., 2012). According to Li et al. (2012), TESL Saskatchewan certifies ESL instructors in Saskatchewan; however, a professional certification from TESL Canada is also required for teaching ESL in LINC.

The job postings by institutions offering LINC in Saskatoon show that the basic requirements to teach LINC in Saskatoon are completion of an undergraduate degree and a certificate in teaching English as a Second Language (CERTESL) (Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, n.d.). In a job posting by a LINC service provider in Saskatoon the requisite for applying for a LINC instructor position was post-secondary education, CERTESL or equivalent, and some teaching experience (Global Gathering Place, n.d.); however, the type and field of post-secondary education was not specified. Besides, the number of teaching hours, experience in teaching children or adults in Canada or abroad was also not specified. Another organization posted more specific requirements for hiring LINC instructors in Saskatoon (Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.). These requirements were: undergraduate

degree in Language Arts or Education, and completion of TESOL program or CERTESL from an institute recognized by TESL Canada or TESL Saskatchewan, with minimum of 1000 hours teaching experience within the past 2 years. In the job postings by all LINC service providers, it was observed that in the current scenario, LINC instructors are hired on contract for one fiscal year. The renewal of this contract is based on the employer's discretion.

If the teaching requisite for LINC is compared with the teaching requisite for K-12 system in Saskatchewan, it becomes clear that unlike the teaching requisite for LINC or any other government funded ESL program, the requirements for teaching in the K-12 system in Saskatchewan are strenuous. The requirements for teaching in the K-12 system in Saskatchewan are completion of: 4 years of post-secondary education and an undergraduate degree, teacher education program that includes 48 semester hours of teacher education and practicum, and a teaching certificate from the jurisdiction where teacher education was completed (Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board website, n.d.). Moreover, according to Section 198 of the Saskatchewan Education Act (1995), "No person shall be engaged, appointed, employed or retained as a teacher or principal in any school unless that person holds a valid teacher's certificate" (p. 107). This indicates that qualifying for a LINC teaching position is less challenging than qualifying for a teaching job in K-12 system in Saskatchewan.

The requisites for LINC instructors also include specific skills. Researchers have advocated that the second language instructors possess pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of subject content, awareness of learner's ability (Asaba, 2018), familiarity with online and inhouse resources, awareness of cultural diversity, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity (Derwing, 2017; Russell, 2015; Zekri, 2021), knowledge of PBLA techniques (Pettis, 2014), willingness to learn from others and from their own experiences (Farrell & Jacobs, 2016), and an initiative to

create a learning environment that reduces learners' anxiety (Haynes, 2007). A job posting from a LINC service provider listed similar characteristics as essential attributes for a LINC instructor (Global Gathering Place, n.d.). These characteristics were: being communicative, exhibiting teamwork, being open to diversity, technology driven, being able to develop real life tasks, and having basic knowledge of CLB and PBLA

**Employers' Expectations for Job Execution.** The following are the employers' expectations from LINC instructors on job execution:

***Following PBLA Guidelines.*** The PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) layout the guiding principles for CLB and PBLA for planning lessons, teaching, and developing assessments. These guiding principles are “learner-centered”, “competency based”, and “task-based” (p. 3), which emphasize on using real-life tasks in the classrooms that are relevant to learners and are in context to the community and work. Once an organization hires a LINC instructor, they expect these instructors to develop their own teaching resources based on CLB standard and PBLA, and independently manage the classroom activities. This was evident from the job postings by LINC service providers in Saskatoon, where creating lesson plans, maintaining attendance records, and completing monthly and quarterly reports were among the listed responsibilities for LINC instructors. These job postings also expected the instructors to comprehend CLB and follow PBLA guidelines in assessing the learners.

Pettis (2014) proposed a clear outline to assess the learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. There are 4 competencies under each of these skills. Instructors are expected to assess the learners in these four competencies; 2 artefacts are needed under each competency. PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) recommend a minimum of 8-10 artefacts per skill. This sets the requirement for a learner to collect at least 32 artefacts to move to the next CLB.

Though the requirement for a learner to move to the next CLB is to have at least 32 successful artefacts; the number of artefacts collected per week depends on the skills assessed and the frequency of classes per week. Moreover, based on artefacts and learner's progress, the instructor decides if the learner is ready to move to the next CLB. For this, the PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) recommend the instructors to schedule a regular time each week to work on portfolio management activities, such as ensuring that portfolios are organized and learners are given constructive feedback.

To implement PBLA, instructors are expected to design and grade assessments, give action-oriented feedback, and educate the learners on giving reflections on their assessments according to their CLB (Desyatova, 2018; Ripley, 2018). For giving feedback to the learners, instructors are expected to exercise their professional judgement to motivate learners, support them in their progress, and record their achievement (Cross, 2009).

***Blended Learning – Following the Trend.*** Friesen (2012) defined blended learning (BL) as options available by combining digital media with a physical classroom that require physical presence of instructors and learners. Rao (2019) expanded this definition to an approach to education that offers educational solutions through a mix of traditional face-to-face classroom and online teaching. Cleveland-Innes & Wilton (2018) gave three models of BL. The first model is blended presentation and interaction, which is a combination of activity focused face-to-face and online sessions. Learners use online resources independently, such as podcasts, which are followed by face-to-face classes for group learning based on the online resources. The second model is blended block model, in which sequence of activities is applied to integrate both face-to-face learning and online study. This model is intensive face-to-face with weekly online

tutorials. The third model is fully online, but is considered blended if it includes synchronous and asynchronous learning.

BL has its merits and demerits. Some rewards of BL include acquisition of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills, personalization and pacing of learning, going through shared as well as independent learning experience, and having an engaging and creative learning experience by integrating out of school activities with classroom activities. (Fahy, Sturm, McBride, & Edgar, 2016; Rao, 2019; Shebansky, 2018). Some classes in BL are virtual, which reduce the logistic and educational costs. From the administrative perspective, rewards of BL include enhanced reputation of the organization and greater access to digital educational resources. Cummings, Matthias, and Avram (2019) conducted a study on the effects of BL in LINC programs in British Columbia. The findings of this study revealed an increase in the levels of learners' engagement and participation, improved attendance, and enhanced English language skills of the learners on account of BL in LINC programs.

Few setbacks of BL are the lack of understanding about BL, information overload on internet regarding BL and limited time to seek the useful information, and the perception of developing BL materials as time-consuming. Besides, BL is technology dependent, therefore, if not properly planned and executed, it can lead to impediments in learning, such as learners facing barriers in accessing the learning material if they are not technology literate. This means that the learners must have access to technology and its accessories such as a computer and internet, and be willing to learn technology. Since BL also has a high set up and maintenance cost, if not properly utilized, it can lead to a waste of resources (Rao, 2019). According to Shebansky (2018), LINC instructors tend to view BL positively, but hesitate to integrate it in their teaching. This lack of integration of BL in LINC classrooms is because of time constraint

and inadequate supports to fully adopt it. They further suggested that since instructors are the ultimate patrons of BL, their feedback is significant for the successful implementation of BL.

BL is available for LINC program across Canada through Avenue.ca; a virtual learning platform funded by IRCC. Some features of Avenue.ca include availability of online learners' portfolios, a virtual space for the instructors to store digital resources, and attendance tracking where the instructors can check the time each learner spends working on the online activity assigned to them by the instructors (Avenue.ca, n.d.). Job postings from LINC service providers in Saskatoon reflect that the instructors are expected to be proficient in computer usage (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, n.d.). However, Saskatchewan Polytechnic (n.d.) clearly mentioned in their job posting on having familiarity of Avenue.ca as a requirement for BL classes offered by them. This job posting also stated that instructors can receive free online training on BL while teaching in a LINC program in any organization. This indicates that BL LINC classes are a growing trend in Saskatoon and in future, the instructors will be expected to interact with BL in their classrooms.

***Handling Additional Responsibilities.*** Researchers encourage the LINC instructors to value diversity among learners, who have different demographics and skills, and come from different cultural backgrounds and academic settings (Gebhard, 2017; Li et al., 2012). These instructors are expected to identify and respond to the varying learners' needs that can stretch from physical or learning disability, to settlement needs, or getting involved in the community. Additionally, they should be prepared to respond to any critical situation in the classrooms such as processing past trauma or dealing with racism (Huang, 2021). Some LINC service providers in Saskatoon set forth this expectation in their job postings (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.).



### ***Learners' Expectations***

Chang (2016) conducted a study to understand the learners' and instructors' perspectives on an effective second language instructor. Results of this study revealed instructors' perspective on an effective second language instructor as staying updated with the changing environment and treating learners as individuals. Learners' perspectives, however, exposed a gap between learners' and instructors' expectations of a good second language instructor. Learners valued the instructor's empathy, treating learners with respect, and showing fairness as valued characteristics in an instructor. Chang (2016) further elucidated that the learners did not want to be ridiculed on making mistakes and wanted to actively contribute to classroom activities.

### **Challenges for New LINC Instructors**

Evolution in ESL teaching brought in challenges for new instructors, as they needed continuous guidance on classroom management techniques and teaching methodologies (Haynes, 2007). Discussing challenges in ESL teaching in Canada, Derwing (2017) criticized the shift in priorities during the evolution of ESL classes. On account of this shift, issues that prevailed decades ago, linger on even today. Some challenges have been discussed here.

### ***Contemporary Work Conditions in LINC***

Breshears (2019) conducted a study on the work conditions of LINC instructors and found that they faced job insecurity, were offered low employment benefits, and had fewer hours of work which meant that they had to engage in multiple part-time jobs. In some cases, they were expected to work for unpaid hours, such as, giving feedback to the learners and counseling them without being paid for these activities. With the growing trend of integrating technology in LINC, instructors have to put in extra efforts, time, and resources. The Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (2017) report recommended to incorporate advance approaches in language

training programs to meet the learners' diverse needs, which included the use of social media in delivering language training in the LINC programs. However, literature review reflects that the use of social media brings in issues from learners' perspectives such as cyberbullying, sharing inappropriate content, and privacy issues; and concerns from the instructor's perspectives such as inadequate training, workload and lack of time and support (Zekri, 2021). Cross (2009) revealed that the hidden costs of incorporating technology in teaching such as responding to emails, working out of hours, and generating suitable material are absorbed by the instructors. According to Breshears (2019), these work conditions have had an adverse effect on the instructors.

### ***Continuous Intake, Multi-Level Classes, and Off-Site Locations***

Cray (1997) conducted a study on the instructors' outlook on LINC, and found that instructors related "continuous intake, multi-level classes, and off-site locations" (p. 26) as features associated with LINC. Continuous intake means that a new learner is added to the class as soon as one learner leaves; a requirement introduced to maintain the number of learners registered in a LINC class (Cray, 1997). Li et al. (2012) estimated 12-18 learners as the average number in one class. However, the decision on number of learners is made by administrators, and is based on the physical space available. Most of the LINC classes have learners from more than one CLB in order to maintain the number of learners registered, which makes LINC a multilevel class (Cray, 1997). The term off-site location means that these classes are conducted at different locations in the city, to facilitate learners' access (Cray, 1997). These locations vary from church basements and community schools, to classrooms equipped with technology (Li et al., 2012).

### ***Integrating Canadian Values and Understanding Learners' Culture***

In a study on how the historic events impacted the contemporary LINC classes, Derwing (2017) emphasized on the value of cultural awareness and teaching Canadian culture and values

to learners. They further elucidated that in each era instructors were expected to know and teach the Canadian values to the learners. Mukan et al., (2015) listed critical thinking, problem solving, moral, social, civil, and democratic values as the major learning content in second language acquisition, which the instructors are expected to integrate in their lessons.

ESL instructors are expected to understand and respect learners' culture (Cohen, 2018). Comparing the challenges faced by instructors who are native speakers of English versus challenges for non-native speakers of English, Cohen (2018) stressed that both groups faced challenges and breakthroughs. Non-native language speakers reported feeling nervous and less knowledgeable teaching the second language. They also had to learn the values of the home country, but at times they were familiar with the learners' culture. While native language speaker instructors reported as being more comfortable in communicating the values of the target country as they were conversant with this, but they had to understand the learners' culture (Cohen, 2018).

### ***Cultural Diversity***

New instructors are expected to handle unfamiliar cultural beliefs (Farrell & Baecher, 2017). According to Buckley (2000), when adult learners walk into the classroom, they usually have deep roots embedded in their home culture and may show resistance to learn new cultural practices. This can also influence the interactions among learners, for instance, learners from some cultures are unable to advance together, and sometimes class discussions can go wrong (Li et al., 2012). From the instructor's perspective, teaching and learning about culture in a second language classroom requires knowing one's own culture and can extend to developing an awareness of the learners' culture. Ignoring cultural diversity can lead to classroom conflicts. Once these characteristics are understood, instructors can identify learners' preference and behaviour, and develop their own framework to teach Canadian values (Buckley, 2000).

Stating the complexities that the new ESL instructors face with culturally diverse group of learners, Russell (2015) posited that these instructors can experience cultural imbalance; that is a mismatch between their own and the learners' culture, which can lead to misunderstandings. They further suggested that this situation can be eased to some extent by connecting the instructors to relevant resources and best practices for managing cultural issues. Besides, Haynes (2007) recommended equipping instructors as well as support staff in handling trauma and cultural diversity.

### ***Absence of Teaching Curricula***

Scholars have different opinions on LINC curricula. The "Draft LINC Curriculum Guidelines" developed in 1993, offered 12 themes that could be taught to the learners (Cray, 1997). Cray (1997) termed development of LINC curriculum guidelines as an accomplishment of LINC policy. However, Farrell and Baecher (2017) while discussing the challenges that new instructors face, mentioned unclear curricula as one of the challenges. They further elucidated that the absence of curricula on the one hand encourages creativity among instructors as they are free to plan their lessons; on the other hand, this can lead to frustration, as new instructors have to learn the skills to teach adults as well as to develop suitable teaching materials.

### ***Budget Cuts to Newcomer Programs***

Commenting on the evolution of ESL classes in Canada, Derwing (2017) mentioned that funding for newcomer programs has always been economy driven. Economic growth backs the settlement support programs, while economic downturn reduces the patronage of these programs. Moreover, hiring, training, and retaining instructors has depended on the funding for newcomers' programs.

Past studies indicate that besides the challenges that new ESL LINC instructors face in their careers, they also receive supports that help them grow in their profession. The following section presents a discussion on the supports that the new ESL LINC instructors receive.

### **Support for New LINC Instructors**

Asaba (2018) conducted a study on second language teachers at an American university to explore the factors that develop skills in the new ESL instructors. They compared the skill development process of an ESL instructor to that of a chess player, where the skilled player recognizes patterns and moves of the game. Similarly, skillful instructors approach classroom activities in a way where they remember, recall, and understand specific actions. Other findings of this study suggest that, with the passage of time, second language instructors develop pedagogical and subject content knowledge and awareness of learners' abilities, which together make the instructor's tacit knowledge. Asaba (2018) concluded that instructors develop these characteristics over a period of time by engaging in constant reflection on their teaching, and it frees them from the struggle of relying on external resources. The teaching content developed by these instructors at this stage is more relevant and meaningful to the learners. The reason behind this evolvement is, with their teaching experience and reflections, these instructors develop skills to understand the learners' needs, and to identify the gap in the learners' learning.

Reflective learning, co-operative learning, and collaborative learning are also approaches to self-development among ESL instructors (Gebhard, 2017). Reflective learning refers to taking a persistent look at one's [teaching] beliefs, attitudes, and classroom practices, which gives a chance to the new instructors to explore their teaching styles and make spontaneous decisions to improve their teaching. Co-operative learning refers to learning from co-workers under structured supervision, (Farrell and Jacobs, 2016) such as workshops and professional

development programs. Collaborative learning takes place when individuals work in groups without formal assistance and assess their individual and group performance, such as use social media, webinars, and online conferences (Gebhard, 2017; Nicholas et al., 2018). LINC instructors also use platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook for self-directed learning (Nicholas et al., 2018).

Besides self-development, there are other supports available for the new instructors, which include printed material and weblinks present in the Language Companion (Pettis, 2014). Despite these practical teaching resources available in the Language Companion, the new instructors heavily bank on the experienced instructors for guidance (Asaba, 2018).

The growing trend of online teaching has increased the demand on technology driven instructors for LINC classes, which is also reflected in the job postings from LINC service providers in Saskatoon (Global Gathering Place, n.d.). Now, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for technological skills is even more important. This reinforces the requirement of LINC instructors being trained in using technology. In one of their studies on the needs of ESL instructors being trained to integrate technology in classrooms, Karamifar et al. (2019) elucidated that language instructors also explore technology through social interactions and collaborations with their co-workers.

### **Relevant Theoretical Models**

In this section, I present the relevant theoretical models that I applied to this research. The guiding theory for this research was the theory on organizational entry by Louis (1980). The supporting theories to analyze the findings of this research were the theory on proactive socialization and desire for control by Ashford and Black (1996), social cognitive career theory

(SCCT) by Lent et al. (1994), and theories on adult education. Later I discuss the contemporary concepts on adult education established by different scholars.

### ***Theory on Organizational Entry by Louis***

Louis (1980) conducted a study on the experiences of new entrants at a workplace and their transition into the workforce. They proposed the theory on organizational entry that explained the stages of settlement of new entrants to an organization. According to this theory, a new entrant is exposed to different experiences. Once they join the workplace, they have a choice to take one of the two paths. The first path is voluntary turnover whereas the second one is organizational socialization. Voluntary turnover refers to the employee's willingness to quit and look for an alternate employment. The rationales behind turnover are unrealistic or unmet job expectations. The theory of organizational entry reported an increase in voluntary turnover during the first eighteen months among the college graduates in their first career job. In order to promote a more realistic view of the new job, "realistic job preview" (p. 227) (RJP) was introduced in which the new entrants received orientation for the real job in the form of a booklet, video, or other sources of information. The study also advocated that RJP lowers the new entrants' initial expectations, which lead to increased job satisfaction which in turn lowers voluntary turnover.

Organizational socialization, an alternate to voluntary turnover, involves familiarizing oneself with the organizational norms. Louis (1980) termed the process of organizational socialization as "learning the ropes" (p. 230) and suggested that there are cultural differences between organizations, and that the new entrants should learn and quickly adapt to the new settings. They explained organizational socialization in terms of stages of socialization and content of socialization.

In the stages of socialization, the first stage of socialization, also called “anticipatory socialization” (Louis, 1980, p. 230) takes place when the individual is still an outsider and speculates on the norms of an organization. At this stage the individual is motivated to join, has expectations on the organizational norms, and is eager to start a career. Once the individual joins the workforce, they enter the next stage of socialization, the “encounter stage” (p. 230). The experience during the encounter stage shapes the entrant’s long-term perception of the organization. During this stage, the new entrant becomes part of the organization by joining informal groups and sharing informal information.

The content of socialization involves learning role-related content and cultural content of the organization. In learning role-related content, the new entrant seeks clarification on their role, stays motivated to perform, and figures out the job expectations. While learning the cultural content, the new entrant learns the ropes of the organization, which includes getting the answers to the questions, “How do we do things, and what matters around here?” (Louis, 1980, p. 232).

According to Louis (1980), at the stage of entry and socialization, the new entrants go through the experiences of “change, contrast, and surprise” (p. 235). Change is the major difference between an old and a new condition. Contrast is a personally observed difference between the previous and the new job, and surprise refers to the negative or positive reaction to differences experienced by a new entrant between expected and actual job setting. The theory on organizational entry established that organizational socialization reduces feelings of uncertainty and leads to a smooth adaptation to the organization (Louis, 1980).

### ***Theory on Proactive Socialization and Desire for Control by Ashford and Black***

In one of their studies on organizational entry, Ashford and Black (1996) proposed that the phase of organizational entry is associated with a period of unpredictability, which can kindle



feelings of low control among new entrants. During the phase of entry to a new organization, individuals tend to lose feelings of control and make an effort to regain this control. Ashford and Black (1996) focused on how new entrants to an organization attempt to gain control during their initial phase of entry and the steps that these entrants take individually to ease their adaptation to the organization.

Findings of Ashford and Black's (1996) study revealed that individuals have discrete motivational reasons to engage in organizational socialization and they apply different approaches to socialize in the organization. Once the entrants are hired, they proactively engage in planned tasks to overcome the feelings of low control and improve their job performance. These tasks are: gathering information, building contacts, interacting, negotiating job-switch, seeking feedback, and "positive framing" (p.199). Individuals with more desire for control actively perform these chores which not only help them to adapt to the organization, but also improve their future performance. The findings of this study suggested that the success in adaptation to the organization depended on the entrants staying active throughout the entry process.

### ***Social Cognitive Career Theory by Lent, Brown, and Hackett***

The theory on career development postulates the reasons why people choose specific academic fields and careers, and how they excel in their careers. Keeping in view the purpose of my research, which was to explore the experiences of new LINC instructors in Saskatoon, I discuss the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) by Lent et al. (1994).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) focuses on the cognitive and motivational process in academic choices and career development in individuals (Lent et al., 1994). It explains three

aspects of career development in individuals: 1) how they develop an interest in academics and career, 2) how they make academic and career choices, and 3) how they excel in their careers.

The basic building blocks of SCCT are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. Self-efficacy is an individual's faith in their capabilities to perform certain course of action whereas outcome expectation is the belief in the results (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). According to the proponents of SCCT, an individual's involvement in activities, their commitment and effort in these activities and their success are based on their self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2007). Individuals tend to be interested in activities when they view themselves as competent at performing them and when they expect to get positive or valued outcomes from these activities (Lent et al., 1994).

Goals are an individual's ambition or plan to participate in a particular activity (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). SCCT proposes two types of personal goals: choice goals and performance goals. Individuals set goals that are consistent with their belief in their capabilities and in the results that they expect to see when they pursue a particular career. Success or failure in reaching personal goals, signals information that helps to continue or change a career path (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2007). In order to advance in their field of interest and areas in which they are talented, these individuals should be exposed to environments and experiences that offer opportunities to make them strong in their careers.

### ***Theories on Adult Education***

In this section, I have discussed Dewey's philosophy on progressive education, Knowle's theory of andragogy, Lev Vygotsky's social development theory, John Watson's behaviorism theory, and Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory to understand the perception of the role of a teacher and that of a learner in contemporary adult education. I have further connected

these theories to this research by elucidating how these theories can serve as a foundation for the career growth of the new instructors as well as creating an innovative experience for the learners.

**Philosophy of Education by Dewey.** Liberal education is the oldest philosophical approach to education in Western society (Dewey, 1916). The aim of liberal education was to produce well informed and civilized individuals. Lawson and Peterson; advocates of liberal education believed that education is neutral and the purpose of education is to transmit meaningful knowledge (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Paterson presented teacher as the authority to diffuse knowledge, who decides what is meaningful to the learners.

With the advent of industrialization, the progressive education movement emerged which was based on realism (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). According to the progressive approach, knowledge derived from experience and observation was more meaningful to the learners than that derived from tradition and authority. John Dewey, a prominent advocate of progressive approach, along with other philosophers gave the philosophy of education (Dewey, 1916). The major principles of this philosophy that made the basis of adult education are: progressive education is broader than liberal education; adult education focuses on learners' needs and experiences rather than teaching them predetermined content; adult teaching is based on problem solving and experience-based approaches; a teacher serves as a facilitator instead of an authority figure; and education is about social action and social change. Eduard Lindeman, another proponent of progressive adult education reinforced Dewey's perspective on the role of teacher as a guide, as someone who participates and contributes to the learners' learning (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). These days, the progressive approach is applied to adult

education in citizenship programs, community education, and adult basic education programs in Canada.

**Andragogy by Knowles.** Theory of andragogy postulated by Malcolm Shepherd Knowles's in 1980 is based on progressive approach, and is defined as the art and science of helping adults (Kasworm et al., 2010). Andragogy has two conceptual foundations: the learning theory and the design theory (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011).

In the learning theory of andragogy, Knowles et al. (2011) state that adults are autonomous and purposeful learners who take responsibility of their learning. They want to see a reason behind their learning and how a lesson will benefit them in their real lives; therefore, they resist the learning that they feel is being imposed on them. They have life experiences and their learning needs are triggered by changes in their lives. Although, adults have extrinsic motivation for learning, intrinsic motivation is more pertinent to adult learning (Knowles et al. 2011). They are motivated and ready to learn when they feel that their learning will help them in their real lives. As a result, adults prefer programs with well-defined goals and outcomes, and purposeful classes that are conducted in authentic and useful language (Li et al., 2012).

Design theory of andragogy is based on eight components: 1) preparing learners for their learning, 2) setting physically and psychologically conducive learning environment for learners, 3) involving learners in lesson planning, 4) involving learners in assessing their learning needs, 5) involving learners in establishing their learning goals, 6) involving learners in developing their learning strategies, 7) involving learners in implementing their learning plans, 8) involving learners in reflecting their learning (Knowles et al. 2011).

Similar to Dewey and Lindeman, Knowles also delineated instructors for adult learners as facilitators who lay the learning foundations for learners to develop confidence in their skills (Knowles et al. 2011).

**Social Development Theory by Lev Vygotsky.** In 1962, Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist gave the social development theory (SDT). SDT is based on the principles that cognitive development is limited to a certain extent at any given age of an individual, and individual's cognitive development involves social interactions (Yarbrough, 2018). According to SDT, social interaction is necessary for learning and to become fully developed. In order to gain new information and apply new skills, individuals seek knowledge expert. This knowledge expert can be a mentor, an individual who has greater understanding or a higher skill level, than the learner. Yarbrough (2018) advocates that the learning can become more productive when supported by a mentor. This mentor can work with the individual (learner) in the "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" (p. 5). ZPD is a virtual learning space between an individual requiring guidance and being independent, and where the individual is most responsive to instruction and coaching from the mentor. The mentor identifies ZPD of the individual, the individual's ability to perform, and the point at which they will need the mentor's support to complete the task. From the new LINC instructor's career development perspective, while in their ZPD, if the new instructors are supported by mentors, they can develop their skills faster.

**Behaviorism Theory by John B. Watson.** John B. Watson, a psychologist proposed the theory on behaviorism. Theory of behaviorism is based on the assumptions that behavior is learned from the surroundings, and can be controlled or modified based on the preceding or following reactions to behavior (Yarbrough, 2018), which means that in the

learning experience a behavior will occur if the individual is exposed to the right environment and a behavior will reoccur based on the consequences that follow, either reward or punishment. The theory of behaviorism discounts the individual's internal events such as thinking and emotions. Based on the theory of behaviorism, it can be assumed that new LINC instructors can be encouraged by exposing them to a supporting environment and giving them opportunities for growth and development.

**Transformative Learning Theory by Mezirow.** Jack Mezirow proposed the Transformational Learning Theory (TLT), a milestone in understanding the way adults learn. According to TLT, adult learning is self-directed (Mezirow, 1991). It establishes that adults have internal motivation to learn when they know that the learning will satisfy their needs. Their orientation to learning is problem centered and they learn by experiencing. The way adult learners interpret their life experiences, shapes them, makes them different from others, and facilitates growth and learning. TLT proposes two types of learning: communication and instrumental. Communication learning explains how individuals communicate moral values and feelings. Instrumental learning occurs when individuals are conditioned by consequences, which means that the future probability of that response will change depending upon the cause-and-effect relationship.

From the perspective of new LINC instructors, transformational learning can be facilitated at the workplace by offering these instructors opportunities for critical thinking, which can be fostered by encouraging them to practice reflective learning. Besides, arranging resources for the LINC instructors to generate new ideas, offering opportunities to them to interact with their peers, and supporting community of learning can also be sources for transformational learning (Yarbrough, 2018).

### **Teaching Concepts Derived from Theories on Adult Education.** Cross (2009)

proposed two ideas on adult learning while establishing teaching concepts from theories of adult learning. The first idea is that adults are responsible for their learning, which suggests that adults should continue to learn in order to equip themselves with the changing labour market demand, and to adapt to the requirements of the society. The second idea is that most of the learning among adults takes place outside the context of study, in non- traditional learning institutions. This means that learning opportunities can be made available through formal settings such as work, as well as through informal settings such as leisure, and daily life activities. Li et al. (2012) advocated this concept and posited that adult teaching should be based on a problem-solving model of co-operation between learners and instructors. As the learning process relates to learners' experiences, instructors can help learners explore their experiences. This can be done through class discussions and role plays. Instructors can also develop teaching material related to the learners' experiences to make the learning meaningful and integrated.

Cross (2009) stressed learners' involvement in setting their learning goals, and suggested that, since adult learners have specific reasons for learning, instructors should involve these learners in formulating learning objectives in which learners' needs are taken into account.

Knowles et al. (2011) also explained some teaching concepts from the learning theories. They suggested that instructors expose the learners to new possibilities of self-fulfillment, help them identify their life problems, spot the gaps between their goals and their present levels of performance, and assist them overcome these gaps. Instructors can arrange physical settings that facilitate interaction, accept each learner as an adult, and

respect their ideas. Space, seating arrangement, proper lighting, ventilation, room temperature, mutual trust and respect, freedom of expression, and acceptance of differences are some factors that can enhance the learning experience (Knowles et al., 2011).

There is a growing trend towards technology-based classrooms, where learners frequently work independently (Friesen, 2012; Karamifar et al., 2019; Rao, 2019). Cross (2009) cautioned that these trends can lead to a feeling of isolation and unsupportiveness among learners particularly the older adults. Since adult learners accept the responsibility of learning and have a feeling of commitment towards it, Knowles et al. (2011) recommended group activities for technology-based classrooms such as project groups where learners can share and learn in teams, and actively participate in their learning process. This can be done by integrating online multiple-choice quizzes through game-based learning platforms such as Kahoot, in which the learners can be engaged in online learning in a group setting.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This research was built on the notion that the prospective entrants to an organization are motivated to join the organization and have high expectations with their prospective jobs (Lent et al., 1994; Louis, 1980). Once they join the workforce as LINC instructors, they engage in activities to meet their expectations and improve their job performance (Ashford and Black, 1996). If their expectations are not met, they can choose voluntary turnover (Louis, 1980). The conceptual framework in figure 2 illustrates the concepts derived from the theories discussed earlier in this chapter, to explain the research topic and the overall experiences of new entrants to an organization. It is based on the theory of organizational entry by Louis (1980), and supported



by social cognitive career theory by Lent et al. (1994), theory on proactive socialization and desire for control by Ashford and Black (1996), theory of social development by Vygotsky (Yarbrough, 2018), theory of behaviorism by Watson, and transformative learning theory by Mezirow (Mezirow, 1991).

The theory of organizational entry by Louis (1980) posits that the new entrants to an organization are exposed to different experiences. On being recruited, these entrants have an option to choose turnover, which is linked to unrealistic expectations or unmet expectations; or to go through the process of organizational socialization. Organizational socialization is based on the stages of socialization and the content of socialization (Louis, 1980). In figure 2, the stages of socialization are shown as anticipatory socialization and encounter stage. In anticipatory socialization, individuals have not yet joined the organization; they anticipate the norms of the organization, consider themselves competent at performing the job and expect valued outcomes from the prospective job (Lent et al., 1994). At this stage they are motivated to join the workforce. At the encounter stage, individuals join the workforce and are exposed to the organizational norms, which is also the stage of learning the content of socialization. During the encounter stage, individuals tend to lose feelings of control and make an effort to regain this control (Ashford and Black, 1996). To overcome the feelings of low control and improve their job performance, they proactively engage themselves in activities such as gathering information, building contacts, interacting, negotiating job-switch, and seeking feedback.

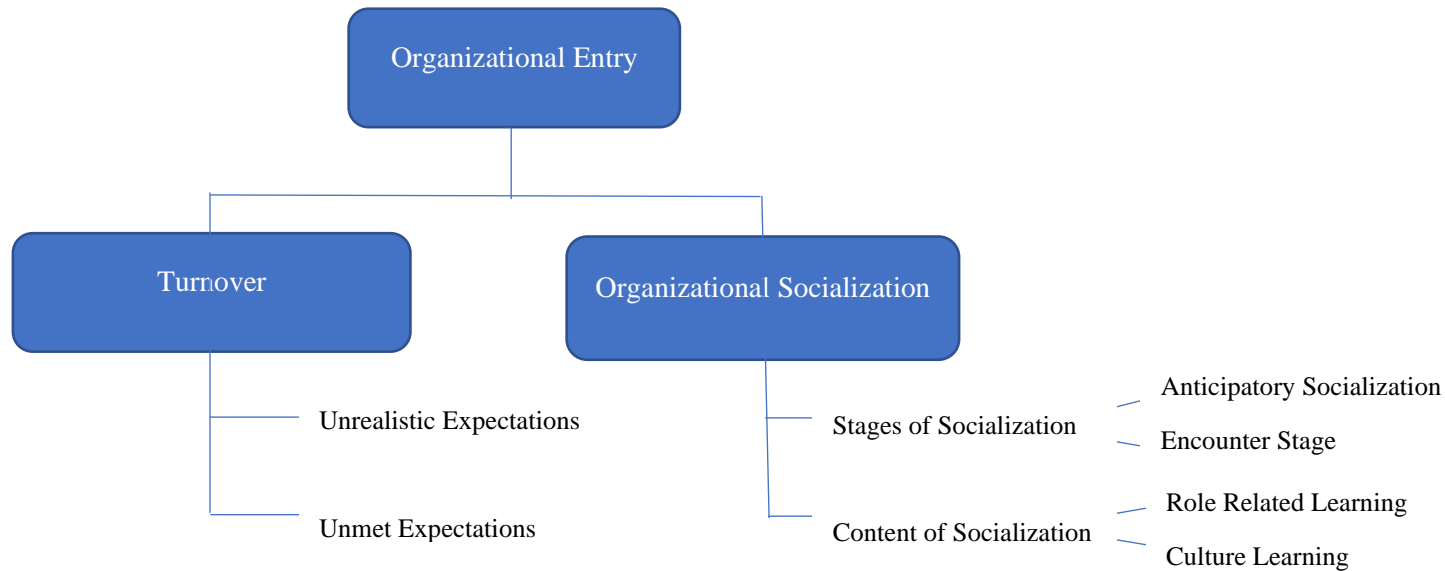
Based on the conceptual framework, I assumed that new LINC instructors are motivated to join the LINC program and have high expectations for the job. Once hired, these individuals enter the zone of proximal development, ZPD, and are keen on learning about their new role, as suggested by Vygotsky in the social developmental theory (Yarbrough, 2018). At this stage, they

engage themselves in activities that they consider can improve their job performance and can meet their expectations. These activities can be role-related activities or learning the culture of the organization. Role related activities are directly associated with the LINC job and assignments given by the employers. While learning the culture of the organization, LINC instructors get acquainted with the organizational norms. In both these activities instructors learn through experiences as suggested in the behaviorism theory by John Watson (Yarbrough, 2018). This learning experience can be enhanced by reflective learning as suggested by Mezirow in the transformational learning theory. Throughout these activities, new LINC instructors face challenges and receive support. Still, there are gaps in which these instructors struggle to get support to excel in their careers. If the LINC service providers offer career development opportunities to these instructors, they can excel in their profession. On the other hand, if the new instructors do not find opportunities to meet their expectations, they can face voluntary turnover.

The conceptual framework presented in figure 2 has been reconceptualized in figure 4 in chapter 5, illustrating the inclusion of findings of this research.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Framework on Experiences of New Entrants to an Organization*



*Note:* This figure has been adapted from Louis, M. R. (1980). Surprise and sense making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25(2), 226-251. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392453>

## Summary

I laid out the historical events in this chapter that led to the evolution of LINC program and the development of teaching resources for this program. Later, I discussed the experiences of LINC instructors from the past studies. At the end of the chapter, I presented the theories that I applied to analyze the findings of this research. The literature that I have included in this research is based on the standpoint of researchers from sources outside Saskatchewan.

In this chapter, I also introduced the conceptual framework for this study, which was based on the theory of organizational entry by Louis (1980), and supported by social cognitive

career theory by Lent et al. (1994) and the theory on proactive socialization and desire for control by Ashford and Black (1996), and theories on adult education. It conceptualizes that the new entrants to an organization are motivated to join the organization and have high expectations for their jobs. In the initial stage of their career, they strive to meet their job expectations. For meeting the job expectations, they engage in activities that they consider will improve their job performance. If they are not able to meet their expectations, they can choose voluntary turnover.

### **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

The driving forces that led the federal government to consider encouraging immigration to Saskatchewan were aging population, shrinking birth rates, and skilled labour shortages in the province (City of Saskatoon, n.d. a). In Saskatchewan, this immigration framed the need for language instruction for newcomers to Canada. The need for effective language instruction for these newcomers was materialized by introducing the LINC program in 1992 (Cray, 1997). Today, newcomers to Canada contribute to the population of learners as well as instructors for the LINC program. Studies have shown that the new LINC instructors, irrespective of being English or non-English speaking individuals, face a number of challenges in their professional advancements, and look forward to supports from the LINC service providers to advance in their careers (Buckley, 2000). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of LINC instructors in Saskatoon when they enter the field of teaching newcomers to Canada in terms of what is expected from them at their workplace, the challenges they face, and the supports they need. It also aimed at establishing how LINC service providers can facilitate the new instructors to settle and thrive in their careers. The methodology applied to this research was based on the following questions and beliefs surrounding these questions:

What is the experience with becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?

- a) What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructors?
- b) What are the expectations from LINC instructors?
- c) What was the LINC instructors' experience with instruction?
- d) What supports do LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors?

These questions set the ground for the theoretical framework for this research. Chapter three begins with this theoretical framework. Next, I expound on the methodology and the rationale behind this methodology. I explain the sample selection, data collection, and data analysis for this research. Finally, I delineate the ethical considerations and my role as a researcher.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I used the lens of constructivism to conduct this research. According to constructivist approach, knowledge is not acquired; it is constructed, and learner is an active participant in this knowledge building instead of being a passive recipient (Given, 2008). Individuals construct social realities when they give meanings to and interpret happenings; these interpretations are transitory and situational and vary from individual to individual (Gall et al., 2007). Mogashoa (2014) stated that from the constructivist point of view, reality is constructed through human activity, and does not exist prior to its social involvement. Creswell (2007) posited that knowledge is constructed collectively when individuals seek multiple and wide-ranging meanings of the world in which they exist. They further suggested that in order to construct knowledge for research, the researcher should rely on participants' views.

The application of the concept of constructivism in this research is reflected through the methodology that I followed. I used interviews and focus group discussions for gathering data, and I co-constructed my understanding with that of the participants through interactions and discussions during these interviews and focus group discussions (Creswell, 2007; Gall et al., 2007). Besides, my experience as an ESL LINC instructor also assisted me to co-construct this knowledge, as I was able to understand the experiences of the new LINC instructors from their perspectives through their narrations. Based on the research questions, I used qualitative research

for this study. Qualitative research is said to be subjective and it based on the assumption that “individuals construct social realities in the form of meanings and interpretations” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 650). It involves collection of data that is in the form of narrations or observations, and analysis of this data to gain insights into a particular phenomenon (Mertler, 2016).

### **Qualitative Research Design**

Yin (2003) defined research design as a logical sequence of steps that a researcher follows to seek answers to the research questions. It is the overall plan for collecting and analyzing data that the researcher intends to use in the research, and the way a research idea is transformed into a research project that can be practically executed by a researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Given (2008) proposed three interconnected elements of research design, as theoretical, methodological, and ethical considerations. Theoretical parts are the assumptions and understandings of a researcher that build an overarching frame of a research project. This overarching frame shapes and influences the research at every point. The methodological parts are assumptions, rules, and methods used to carry out the research, whereas ethical considerations are moral values incorporated in the research.

Research design is divided into two broad categories; qualitative research design and quantitative research design (Mertler, 2016). Qualitative research design involves collection and analysis of non-numeric data such as text to understand feelings, opinions, or experiences. Since this was an exploratory study to seek data on the participants’ individual viewpoints, and the meanings that they attach with their real-life experiences, I decided to apply qualitative research design to this study. My decision to choose qualitative research design was also based on the research questions. In order to answer these questions, I needed to explore the problem for a deeper understanding of the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors. For such a situation,

Creswell and Guetterman (2019) proposed qualitative research design as an appropriate approach. The third reason to choose qualitative research design was to seek data on participants' individual viewpoints and the meanings they attach to their real-life experiences (Mertler, 2016). Another reason for selecting qualitative research was that the data collected in this research were participants' personal comments that were saved in the form of words and narrations (Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). I analyzed the data inductively, as I answered the research questions from information that evolved from the data collected (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Mertler, 2016). Besides, the purpose of this research was not to generalize the results; it was to answer the specific questions (Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Gall et al., 2007). These approaches set the ground for applying qualitative research design to this study.

### ***Intrinsic Case Study***

Case study is a research approach in which one or a few examples of an occurrence are studied in depth (Given, 2008). Cohen et al. (2011) advocated case study for complex and real-life situations that involve human interactions and where there is rich description of participants' experiences and feelings. They further propounded case study for situations where researchers want to understand participants' perceptions on a unique stance. One purpose of case study is to understand an important part of the life cycle (Best & Kahn, 2006). For this research, I considered Saskatoon as one single case. I interacted with the new LINC instructors to understand their individual experiences in their careers (Mertler, 2016). To include rich data and vivid explanation to this research, I comprehended views of at least one new ESL LINC instructor from each LINC service provider in Saskatoon (Mertler, 2016). This established the rationale for applying case study approach to this research.



Baxter and Jack (2008) listed two approaches to categorize the case study methodology. The first approach initially proposed by Robert Stake is that case studies can be categorized as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Intrinsic case study approach is used when the subject itself is of primary interest and the focus is on the case itself which can be a person, specific group, occupation, or an organization (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). According to Cohen et al. (2011), instrumental cases study is done to examine a particular case in order to gain an insight into an issue or a theory. Whereas, collective case studies involve the study of several individual case studies undertaken to gain a fuller picture. The second approach proposed by Robert Yin is that case studies can be categorized as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive.

I used Robert Stake's intrinsic case study approach for this research. As a researcher, my primary interest was in studying the experiences of the new ESL LINC instructors working in Saskatoon. I conducted this research to understand the intrinsic aspects of the phenomenon through which these instructors go through while they are in the initial stage of their teaching careers in all four LINC service providers in Saskatoon. For this, I explored the experiences of these instructors; a phenomenon that had not been sufficiently probed before, and analyzed the data to perform an in-depth study on the experiences of these instructors, the supports they receive, and the challenges they face. This made intrinsic case study the best fit for this research.

### **Participant Selection**

Once I established the research design, the next step was participant selection. The process of selecting members from a defined population with an intention that these members will represent the population is called sampling (Gall et al., 2007). The sampling technique used in quantitative research is probability sampling, where participants are randomly selected; whereas the sampling technique in qualitative research is non-probability sampling, where participants are intentionally

selected to give the best information for the phenomenon under study (Berg, 2001; Gall et al., 2007; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 1994). I used non-probability sampling technique for this research.

Since I had specific selection criteria and research purpose, and wanted to get the maximum information to answer the research questions, I selected those instructors who could share their experiences in LINC teaching and could provide core information to answer the research questions. This laid the basis for applying purposeful sampling to this research. (Berg, 2001; Gall et al., 2007; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 1994). I selected at least one new LINC instructor from each LINC service provider in Saskatoon; altogether there were 8 participants for this research. I limited the sample size to a total of eight participants because of the time constraints for this study (Cohen et al., 2011). The sample size of eight also enabled me to carry out an in-depth study on the participants' real-life experiences (Mertler, 2016). The criteria for selecting participants were:

1. Instructors who had spent less than five years teaching LINC
2. LINC instructors who work in Saskatoon only
3. LINC instructors employed with LINC service providers in Saskatoon

### **Participant Recruitment**

After receiving approval from the ethics board at the University of Saskatchewan, I started recruiting participants. For this I contacted the LINC service providers in Saskatoon through email, in which I requested these employers to forward my email to their LINC instructors. In case any LINC instructor was interested to participate in this research, they could directly contact me (See Appendix A).

Once the prospective participants showed interest in this research by replying to my email, I emailed them a formal invitation for this research (See Appendix B), which had the selection

criteria, and asked them to let me know if they qualified for participating in the research, and also if they wanted to participate in the interview, focus group discussion, or both. I then emailed the interview consent form (see Appendix C) or the focus group discussion consent form (see Appendix F) to the individuals who qualified for this research and opted for the interview, focus group discussion, or both. Both the consent forms explained the research process, which required the participant to engage in an individual interview or focus group discussion, any risk that they might face during the research, permission to audio tape and take notes of their responses, and their right to withdraw from the research at any time they felt to exercise that right. These forms also requested them to give me their voluntary and informed consent by filling and emailing the forms back to me. I finalized the recruitment process by seeking a date for the individual interview with each participant who consented to participate. Six participants were selected for the individual interviews; out of these, four participants volunteered to participate in the focus group. Two other LINC instructors showed their interest in focus group discussion only. The date for the focus group discussion was finalized with the consent of the participants who had shown interest in this forum.

### **Data Collection**

Various authors of research texts propose studying the richness and intricacy of human behavior in qualitative research from more than one stance and recommend use of multiple data collection techniques to measure a single concept (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Gall et al., 2007; Mertler, 2016). Based on this suggestion, I conducted one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and took notes during interviews and focus group discussion to gather data for this research. All interactions were in English. My preference for using interviews and focus group discussions for data collection, rather than doing traditional classroom observations was based on

the fact that I was looking for the views of the participants, that could be obtained from one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. Since all the data collection processes were carried out online due to the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions (University of Saskatchewan, n.d.), classroom observations would have been limited to observing through a computer screen, the LINC instructor teaching the learners in a virtual classroom, which might not have contributed much to the data collected.

### ***One-on-One Interviews***

One on one interviews was one of the methods for data collection for this research. Kvale (as cited in Cohen et al., 2011) defined interview as an exchange of opinions between two individuals. Cohen et al. (2011) described interviews as planned, question-based discussions with specific purposes. Researchers recommend interviews for collecting data that are not directly visible such as personal experiences, opinions, and interests (Gall et al., 2007).

Mertler (2016) grouped interviews into three categories: “structured, semi-structured, and open-ended” (p. 204) interviews. For this research, I used semi-structured interviews. This is where there is a set of preestablished open ended questions, along with prompts to probe for more details (Williamson & Johanson, 2018). Semi-structured interviews enable the interviewers to investigate deeply into the topic to obtain detailed information (Gall et al., 2007). The questions that I used in these semi-structured interviews were in simple, concise, and clear language, and were based on the research questions.

Before starting the interviews, I reminded the participants that I would record their responses. The interviews were conducted over a period of three months. During these interviews, I established data credibility by avoiding to interrupt when the participants were responding. This

also encouraged the participants to give me an accurate and detailed reply (Mertler, 2016). In case I needed clarification on the answers to my questions, I reconnected with the participants.

### ***Focus Group Discussions***

Mertler (2016) defined focus group discussions as simultaneously interviewing a small group of people. The term group interview is synonymous to focus group (Given, 2007). It uses a researcher-led group discussion to generate data, and involves a group of individuals who participate in a guided discussion on a specific topic. Mertler (2016) affirmed that such discussions create an opportunity for participant to engage in meaningful conversations about the topic under review, and can be rewarding as compared to one-on-one interviews, as some people feel more comfortable in giving their views in group discussions and have a tendency to add to each other's comments. However, the downside of focus group is that some members can dominate the discussion, which can lead to groupthink. Groupthink is the phenomenon when some participants set aside their own opinion or beliefs and adopt the opinion of the rest of the group members, which can block the actual views of each participant reaching the researcher (Given, 2007). In order to avoid groupthink in the data collection for this research, I intervened to encourage views from all the participants, whenever the discussion led to groupthink. Another issue in focus groups is the risk of compromise on participants' confidentiality. Since the participants are face to face in a focus group, or in the case of online focus group, participants can see each other on the computer screen, the researcher has less control in maintaining confidentiality of these discussions as well as of the participants. In order to maintain participants' confidentiality, I included the clause in the consent form that the participants signed before starting the focus group discussion, which requested the participants not to disclose the

discussions and keep the names of other group members and their affiliation to their workplace confidential (Refer to Appendix F).

To supplement the data gathered in one-on-one interviews, I arranged two focus group discussions. Each group comprised of three participants, and each group discussion was approximately one hour long. Since researchers suggest that open-ended questions stimulate exchange of ideas and keep the participants engaged in discussions (Berg, 2001; Best & Kahn, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011; Mertler, 2016); I used open-ended questions for the focus group discussions as well. I also encouraged the participants to ask questions from each other, which generated information as I was the facilitator/ moderator in this discussion.

I recorded the interviews and the focus group discussions with the consent of the participants. From these recordings, I produced verbatim transcripts in Microsoft Word and emailed these transcripts to the respective participants for member check. This allowed the participants to review their transcripts for accuracy and to edit or clarify the information before I started analyzing the data (Mertler, 2016). After I received the feedback from the first participant, I started analyzing the data during the data collection process.

## **Data Analysis**

This section lays out the methodology that I used to analyze the data collected. Researchers use qualitative data analysis to make sense of the data and to give meaning to the data collected for research (Cohen et al., 2011; Williamson & Johanson, 2018). Qualitative data analysis includes organizing data, reducing long transcripts by identifying patterns and themes, and presenting data in a meaningful way that answers the research questions (Mertler, 2016).

As stated earlier, I started the data analysis during data collection phase. At the data collection stage, data were in the form of transcripts in Microsoft Word. As a first step, I

assigned a pseudonym to each participant from whom I received a member check. The next stage of data analysis entailed summarizing the text into codes. The word ‘code’ has been interpreted in different ways. Saldana (2013) defined code as an “interpretative act” (p. 4) where a word or a phrase symbolically highlights a feature or characteristic that the interview script carries. Code is “simply a name or label that the researcher gives to a piece of text that contains an idea” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 559).

The process of categorizing data into groups that provide similar information is termed as coding (Cohen et al., 2011). For coding the data, I read the transcripts and looked for words and phrases that were repetitive or gave similar information (Mertler, 2016). I sorted this information into codes, subcategories, and categories on an Excel spreadsheet. Saldana (2013) propounded that coding can be done manually or by using software. For this research, I manually coded the data, which ensured that the assigned codes had meaningful descriptors.

After coding the data, I described the main features of each category, so that I could make a connection between the coded data and the research questions, and use this category to answer the research question. As a final step in data analysis, I interpreted the data. For this, I looked for similarities, contradictions, and relationships in the data and grouped them into themes. Then I interpreted these themes to answer the research questions.

### ***Coding Techniques***

I used the first cycle and the second cycle coding techniques for coding data (Saldana, 2013).

**First Cycle Coding.** Since my prime concern was to honour the participants’ voices while seeking answers to my research questions, I applied in vivo and structural coding techniques in the first cycle coding. According to Saldana (2013), participants’ original words or phrases are taken from the research data and used as codes in in vivo coding. Structural coding

helped me to focus on the research questions during data analysis. While applying structural coding, I developed themes from the research questions; then, based on participants' experiences or values shared during interviews and focus group discussions, I identified codes, categories, and generated additional relevant themes or modified the existing themes as and when required throughout the data analysis process (Cohen et al., 2011; Saldana, 2013).

The first cycle data coding is illustrated in Table 2 and Table 3 in Appendix I. In Table 2, I applied in-vivo and structural coding to research question 1, which was: What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructor? For developing in vivo codes, I used the words or phrases from participants' responses (Saldana, 2013), which were in the form of verbatim transcripts from the interviews and focus group discussions, such as 'volunteered', 'good teaching model', 'giving back to the community', and 'job search'. Then, using structural coding, I grouped the coded data on the basis of differences or similarities. As shown in Table 3 in Appendix I, subcategories: extrinsic 1,2,3,4,5; intrinsic 1, 2; and compassionate 1,2,3,4,5,6 emerged in this process.

**Second Cycle Coding.** In the second cycle coding, I used pattern coding technique to review the codes developed in the first cycle coding. Pattern coding is defined as a way to find a sequence of similarities in the previously coded data (Saldana, 2013). During this process, I looked for relationships, similarities or contradictions, reviewed major themes from categories that had evolved in the first cycle coding, and finally answered the research questions. Table 4 in Appendix I shows the second cycle coding, where I reviewed the data coded and refined the subcategories from the first cycle coding. The new subcategories in second cycle coding were extrinsic, intrinsic, and compassionate. Then I developed category 'source of inspiration', and



the theme motivational factors. In this way I was able to arrange and analyze the data to answer the research question 1: What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructor?

### **Ensuring Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a pertinent component of qualitative research. It is determined by the extent to which the data collected are reliable, accurate, and enable the researcher to answer the research questions (Mertler, 2016). Researchers advocate basing the research findings on the participants' stance rather than the researcher's viewpoint, and to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in the study. (Gall et al., 2007; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 1994). In this section I present the techniques that I have used to bring in credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to establish trustworthiness in this research.

The first technique was triangulation, which is the use of multiple sources to collect data (Mertler, 2016; Yin, 1994). The purpose of triangulation is to check if the same data can be reconciled from different sources (Gall et al., 2007). For this research, I conducted interviews and focus group discussions, and reconciled these data through notes taken during these sessions.

The second technique was an audit trail, which involved creating transparent documentation that enables the reader to track the activities, changes, and decisions made during the research (Anney, 2015). Keeping an audit trail in qualitative research also creates a link between the research question, raw data, and the report findings. I integrated an audit trail in this research by documenting the research decisions and activities to show how data were collected, recorded, and analyzed. For this, I saved the raw data by recording and taking notes during interviews and focus group discussions. I further documented this raw data as verbatim transcripts in Microsoft Word. These recordings and documents will be archived at the

University of Saskatchewan for five years post publication of this report, further enabling inspection for anyone who wants to do an audit trail (Gall et al., 2007).

The third technique was an external audit. According to Mertler (2016), an external audit involves getting help from an outsider who is not directly involved in the research to “review and evaluate the final report” (p. 212). To integrate external audit in this research, I received continuous feedback from my research supervisor on the research process.

The fourth technique was member checking. Anney (2015) defined member checking as the testing of data and interpretations as they are received from participants. They further advocated that a member check enables the researcher to include participants’ voices and eliminates researcher’s biases during data analysis by removing any data inconsistencies. It lets the participants review the accuracy and completeness of the statements that they had shared during the interviews or focus group discussions (Gall et al., 2007), and ensures that the researcher’s understanding corresponds to that of the participants from whom the data were derived (Given, 2008). The flipside of member checking is that it can impede impulsive feedback, which means if a participant regrets on what they had shared as an immediate response to a question, and later decide to change their views, they can do it. For the member check, I emailed transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions to the respective participants, who reviewed the transcripts for exactness and informed me of any editing or clarification to be made in the data being reported (Mertler, 2016).

To reduce bringing in my biases in data collection, data analysis, and reporting on the final findings, I incorporated these factors: “credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Mertler, 2016, p. 210), that could guarantee trustworthiness in the research data.

### ***Credibility***

Credibility refers to the use of procedures and resources to create consistency in the research results (Given, 2008). Research authors suggest multiple approaches to bring in credibility to the study; some of these are disclosing the purpose of the study to the participants before data collection, revealing a link between what the participants expressed and the codes and themes that emerged, conducting personal interviews and providing a follow up for these interviews, and using triangulation and member checking (Anney, 2015; Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1994; Given, 2008; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 2003). Following the recommended strategies to maintain credibility, I disclosed the purpose of this study in the emails sent to the LINC service providers (see Appendix A), in the invitation letters sent to individual prospective participants (see Appendix B), and in the consent-forms sent to each research participant at the beginning of this study (see Appendix C and Appendix F). For data collection, I conducted one on one interviews and followed up for any clarification. I also applied triangulation which is the use of multiple sources for data collection such as interviews, focus group discussions, and taking notes in these sessions. I used member checking in interviews and focus group discussions to confirm that the data collected during these sessions were bias free and accurately interpreted.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be transferred to other contexts and conditions (Li, 2004). Researchers have elucidated that transferability can be achieved in qualitative research by providing a thick description of the research setting and by using purposeful sampling (Anney, 2015; Given, 2008). The term thick description means that the researcher provides the reader with a full and purposeful explanation of research framework, participants' background, and research design so that the readers can make their own decision

about transferability (Given, 2008). A research setting is the physical, cultural, and social environment in which the research is conducted. I ensured transferability by using purposive sampling, taking notes during interviews and focus group discussions, recording these online interactions, giving a detailed description of the events and deliberations during interviews and focus group discussions, and providing the details of data collection and analysis process to the reader.

### ***Dependability***

Research authors reveal that prior to the research, researchers plan to use appropriate methodologies based on their theoretical understanding (Anney, 2015; Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1994; Given, 2008; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 2003). However, once the researchers start the research, they may find things that are different from what they had expected. This change can affect the research process. Dependability in qualitative research recognizes that the research process is constantly evolving and might not be completely understood prior to conducting the research. Some techniques can address the issue of changes in the research process. One of the techniques is to give detailed documentation of events and changes; this enables the reader to follow the steps of the research design and process. I ensured dependability of data through audit trail, triangulation, external audit, and detailed documentation of events.

### ***Confirmability***

Confirmability in qualitative research is the degree to which the results of a study are based on the research purpose and not altered due to researcher's bias (Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1994; Given, 2008; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 2003). It provides evidence that the researcher's interpretation of participants' views is embedded in the participants' constructions, and that the data analysis, findings and conclusions can be verified from participants'

perceptions. In this way, confirmability establishes grounds to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the research participants and the meanings that they give to their experiences. To apply confirmability and to ensure objectivity in data collection and impartiality in the final reporting, research authors suggest audit trail, note taking, and triangulation to enable the researchers to clearly explain how data were gathered and analyzed (Anney, 2015; Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1994; Gall et al., 2007; Given, 2008; Mertler, 2016; Yin, 2003). Based on the recommendations of these research authors, I developed detailed notes and used audit trail and triangulation to establish confirmability in this research.

### **Ethical Considerations**

According to Merriam - Webster dictionary (n.d.) ethical considerations in educational research are defined as moral principles required for research. I worked closely with the participants for collecting data and was an active member of this research. For instance, I sought informed consent from the research participants after explaining them the details of the research process, their roles, and the nature of their voluntarily participation in this research. While discussing the conditions where ethical considerations are necessary, Leedy and Ormrod (as cited in Mertler, 2016) listed four moral principles for conducting research. These principles are protecting the research participants from harm, guiding them towards voluntary and informed participation in the research, giving them their right to privacy, and being honest in reporting the final results of the research.

### ***Protecting Participants from Harm***

My qualification and my previous experience as a LINC instructor accorded me an advantage in carrying out this study. I reviewed the ethics policy on research and Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethics Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and sought ethics approval

from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Saskatchewan. Approval of my proposal and the associated data collection tools ensured that this research and questions framed for the interviews did not bring in any physical or psychological discomfort for the participants, and protected them from harm (Mertler, 2016).

### ***Taking Informed Consent***

Informed consent in research requires approval from prospective participants to partake a study as an exercise of their choice (Berg 2001; Mertler, 2016). Informed consent is sought by providing participants with information related to purpose, methods, duration, inconveniences, risks, potential benefits, and funders of the research (Given, 2008). Cohen et al. (2011) expounded that informed consent is an act of facilitating the researcher as well as the participant in the research. On one hand it gives the right of “freedom and self-determination” (p. 77) to the participant, on the other hand it transfers the responsibility on the participant in case anything goes wrong.

After the individuals showed their interest to participate in this research, I emailed them a consent form that presented “accurate disclosure” (Mertler, 2016, p. 54). The consent form clearly explained the research process and any risk attached with the research. If the individuals agreed to take part in this research, they were asked to sign the form that informed them that they had the right to withdraw from the research any time they felt to exercise that right (Gall et al., 2007). By signing this form, participants gave me their voluntary and informed consent to participate in this research (Mertler, 2016). I also integrated participants’ consent during data collection. After producing verbatim transcripts of the interviews and focus group discussions, I emailed these transcripts along with the transcript release form to the participants to reaffirm their consent for the data collected to be used for analysis (see Appendix E, Appendix H).

Meanwhile, I assured them that the recordings and transcripts were stored on a password protected device. After reviewing the transcripts for accuracy, the participants emailed the edited transcripts to me along with the signed transcript release form, which authorized me to use the transcripts for analyzing the data.

### ***Maintaining Participants' Right of Privacy***

To ensure participants' right of privacy, research can be integrated with confidentiality and anonymity of participants (Mertler, 2016). Confidentiality refers to sharing information about a study in a way that it does not disclose the source or participants' identity. Anonymity means that participants and their responses cannot be identified (Given, 2008). There can be complete anonymity, as in the case of postal surveys; or partial anonymity, where participants' identity can be concealed with pseudonyms, but still their identity can be retraced.

I applied partial anonymity to this study. For this, I contacted LINC service providers in Saskatoon through email to inform them about this research, who further forwarded my email to their LINC instructors. Instructors who were interested in this research contacted me directly through email. These instructors also checked the selection criteria themselves to confirm if they were qualified to participate in this research. Participants' real names and organizations that they are affiliated to have not been disclosed in this report. Instead of using participants' original names, I used pseudonyms. I needed the original names of participants and the organizations that they work with so that I could contact them again, in case I needed clarification to any response. For this, I used a password protected laptop to ensure that no one had access to data, and also created a backup of the electronic data. These steps limited the access of information of participants to the researcher and ensured confidentiality of participants (Mertler, 2016).

### ***Being Honest in Reporting Final Results***

Research authors have emphasized on the efficacy of honest reporting of research findings (Anney, 2015; Berg, 2001; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 1994; Given, 2008; Mertler, 2016). They have suggested strategies such as triangulation, which is using more than one source to collect data; and safeguarding participants' identity throughout the research process. These techniques ensure that the data are not fabricated to support a preconceived conclusion, the research findings are reported without misleading others, and the conclusion is not manipulated to influence the research audience. Following the suggested techniques, I applied triangulation, which included one-on-one interviews, focus group discussion, and taking notes during these online sessions. To safeguard participants' identity, I gave them pseudonyms before analyzing the data, and also ensured that the data were saved in a password protected laptop.

### **Researcher's Role**

My role in this qualitative study was that of an interviewer and a researcher. As an interviewer, I was the primary measuring instrument, as I interviewed participants to collect data, recorded the interviews and focus group discussions, and transcribed the responses from these interactions. I closely interacted with the research participants for collecting data, and used empathy to understand and analyze their responses (Gall et al., 2007). As a researcher I selected the sample, collected and coded the data, and finally analyzed the coded data (Saldana, 2013). I also took the role of a "research ethicist" (Given, 2008, p. 772) during data collection and analysis process, which means that I ensured that the participants were informed and protected and that there was no harm to them from their participation in this research.

My experience in teaching ESL to adults put me in a position of an emic researcher for this study, where I was an insider and was able to understand participants' responses from their



stance (Yin, 2003). This also gave me a firm grasp of the issue that I planned to study in this research. From my experience I had learned that instructors who are new to LINC, face challenges and need supports at their workplace. Being an emic researcher, my personal experiences also provided me an insider's view on answering the research questions. Besides, the results of this research added to my experiences and enhanced my observations in LINC teaching. However, there were some concerns that I needed to address. Being an emic researcher, I could have brought in my predispositions in data analysis and reporting, which means that my experience in LINC teaching and my empathy towards the research participants could have exposed me to bring in my own biases to this research. Earlier in this chapter, I have discussed the techniques that I applied as a researcher and interviewer to avoid bringing in my own views and to ensure trustworthiness in this study.

### **Summary**

Chapter three laid the foundations for the theoretical framework and expounded the methodology for this research. This study was grounded in the philosophical approach of constructionism. The methodology of this research was based on the guiding questions. I applied qualitative research design and intrinsic case study approach to this research. For selecting participants, I used purposeful sampling technique, and limited the sample size to eight participants from LINC service providers in Saskatoon. I also laid out the criteria for selecting participants for this research. For data collection, I used one-on-one interview interviews and focus group discussions. I have also explained the data analysis process, coding techniques used for analyzing data, and the methods used to ensure trustworthiness in data collection and analysis.

In this chapter, I have discussed my role as an emic researcher and how I avoided bringing in my own biases to this research. The chapter ends with a discussion on the process that I followed to adhere to the ethical considerations, and my role as an emic researcher and an interviewer in this research.

## **Chapter Four: Research Findings**

In this chapter, I have presented the findings of the study that was aimed at exploring the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. I collected the data from eight instructors employed with different LINC service providers. Out of these, two instructors volunteered exclusively for online interviews, four instructors participated in both interviews and focus group discussions, and two instructors were exclusively for focus group discussions. Data were collected in response to the following research questions:

What is the experience with becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?

- a) What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructors?
- b) What are the expectations from LINC instructors?
- c) What was the LINC instructors' experience with instruction?
- d) What supports do LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors?

This chapter begins with the participants' introduction. It presents the participants' demographic data that includes their pseudonyms, region of origin, academic qualifications, and experiences. The next section is on themes, categories, subcategories, and codes that emerged from the analysis of interviews, focus group discussions, and notes taken during these sessions. The findings are presented according to the four overarching themes that generated from the research questions. These themes are: 1) Motivation to join LINC 2) Expectations from LINC instructors 3) LINC instructors' experiences with instructions 4) Supports for LINC instructors. The categories, subcategories and codes that emerged from the data, help to substantiate these overarching themes. The chapter ends with a summary of findings.

## Participants' Demographic Data

For this intrinsic case study, Saskatoon itself was considered as one case. The participants were from different countries of origin and had different backgrounds. The research sample included immigrants and Canadian born, native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English, employed with LINC service providers in Saskatoon. All of the participants had at least one university degree either from Canada or from a foreign country. Table 1 gives the participants' information. It lists their pseudonyms, region of origin, and their qualifications. The demographic information collected was significant and relevant to the study, as it helped in analyzing participants' experiences of becoming LINC instructors in Saskatoon.

**Table 1**

### *Participants' Information*

Participants	Region of origin	Native speaker of English	More than one degree from university	University degree from Canada
Jessica	Asia	No	Yes	Yes
Tara	Canada	Yes	No	Yes
Qi	Asia	No	Yes	No
Rose	South America	No	Yes	No
Susan	Canada	Yes	No	Yes
Amy	Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bella	Asia	No	Yes	No
Helen	Asia	No	Yes	No

*Note:* Source of data for Table 1 are online interviews and focus group discussions for this research.

## **Participants' Profiles**

At the beginning of each interview, each participant was asked to give their background with reference to their region of origin, academic qualification, and their first language. The following are the participants' profiles:

### ***Participant 1 - Jessica***

Jessica came from Asia to Canada as a child with her family. She experienced being a newcomer to Canada. She attended ESL classes in her elementary school to improve her English language skills, while her parents attended ESL LINC classes. Attending ESL classes at school, and getting help for her parents to learn English were the motivational factors for Jessica for being a LINC instructor. According to Jessica, her decision of taking ESL teaching as a profession came from her point of giving back to what she and her family had received from the community as newcomers to Canada. She has two university degrees from Canada, and is currently pursuing her master's degree in Canada. She also has CERTESL, which certifies her to teach English in LINC programs. Jessica started her career with LINC by volunteering for LINC classes at a settlement support agency in Saskatoon. This led to her employment as an ESL LINC instructor with the same organization where she had volunteered.

### ***Participant 2 - Tara***

Tara, a born Canadian, has a 3-year university degree and CERTESL from Canada. She worked in teaching and non-teaching positions in Canada, which gave her invaluable experience of working with people. After retiring from a non-teaching job, she started volunteering with different LINC service providers in Saskatoon as a volunteer LINC instructor. While she was volunteering, her supervisor in one of the organizations motivated her to join LINC program as an instructor. She applied for the job, and was able to get a job in this organization. These days

she is working as a LINC instructor with the same organization that she volunteered for in Saskatoon. According to Tara, even her non-teaching experience has benefitted her in the LINC teaching.

### ***Participant 3 - Qi***

Qi came to Canada from Asia, as an immigrant some years ago. According to Qi, he went through the experience of being a newcomer to Canada, and was familiar with the linguistic and cultural challenges that newcomers face in their initial years in Canada. Back in his country, he taught in a similar field, and wanted to pursue his career in the same field in Canada. Qi has two university degrees from his country. After coming to Canada, he got his foreign degrees accredited from TESL Canada to teach ESL in Canada. His motivation to teach LINC also came from the fact that he felt connected with immigrants since he had been through this stage, and understood the struggle of immigrants while trying to settle in a new country.

### ***Participant 4 – Rose***

Originally from South America, Rose was motivated to help newcomers settle in Canada and integrate in the new community. Being an immigrant herself, she was aware of the difficulties that the newcomers face in a new country. Rose has two university degrees from a foreign country and also holds CERTESL from Canada. She had been teaching ESL in different positions in various institutions across Canada, but had no experience teaching in a LINC program. A few years ago, after her layoff from an ESL instructor position, she was referred by friends to apply for the post of a LINC instructor in Saskatoon. She got the job, and started teaching LINC in a settlement support agency in Saskatoon. According to her, she feels connected with the newcomers to Canada, and contributes to the community by teaching in LINC program.

### ***Participant 5 – Susan***

Originally a Canadian, Susan has a four-year university degree and CERTESL from Canada. She started her career from teaching ESL at a university in Canada. According to Susan, once she realized that she was not satisfied with her university job, she started exploring other options in Canada to teach English as a Second Language. She finally got in contact with a settlement agency in Saskatoon, where she started teaching ESL to newcomers to Canada. In the past, she had been a second language learner for some time, and had planned to move out of Canada. Later, her plans on leaving Canada changed. According to her, she was “excited to help newcomers to make Canada home”. Her motivation to teach ESL to newcomers to Canada also came from her personal experience of being a second language learner.

### ***Participant 6 – Amy***

Amy was born in Canada and spent her entire academic and professional life in Canada. She holds two university degrees and CERTESL from Canada. Before joining LINC, she taught ESL in a different setting in Saskatchewan. Some years ago, she experienced layoff from her ESL teaching job. Her motivation to teach English as a second language to newcomers to Canada came from her job search after she experienced the layoff. She was referred by friends to one of the LINC service providers in Saskatoon. She applied for the post of LINC instructor in this organization. These days she is teaching ESL in the LINC program in the same organization.

### ***Participant 7 – Bella***

Bella came to Canada from Asia some years ago with her family. After coming to Canada, her parents attended ESL classes. Bella holds a university degree from a foreign country. She got her credentials assessed from World Education Services and TESL Saskatchewan, after which she received the accreditation to teach ESL in Canada. Her

motivation to teach English to newcomers came from her parents who had attended ESL classes in Canada, and also from her desire to help newcomers to Canada in their settlement process. Before joining LINC, she taught in a post secondary institution in North America, and worked as an education aide. After coming to Canada, she started working as a LINC instructor. Recently she lost her LINC job due to layoffs in that organization during pandemic. She was able to get an online job as a LINC instructor with one of the LINC service providers in Saskatoon. Nowadays she is working as a LINC instructor with the same organization.

### ***Participant 8 – Helen***

Helen comes from Asia and holds two university degrees from her country and CERTESL from Canada. A few years ago, she came to Canada with her family as an immigrant. Back in her country, she was a kindergarten teacher. After coming to Canada, she was looking for a job. According to Helen, since she did not qualify to teach in the K-12 education system in Canada; she did not have any option to teach other than teaching ESL to adult immigrants in a settlement support agency. Her friends referred her to one of the LINC service providers for the job. These days she is teaching LINC in the same organization in Saskatoon. Her motivation to teach LINC came from her job search.

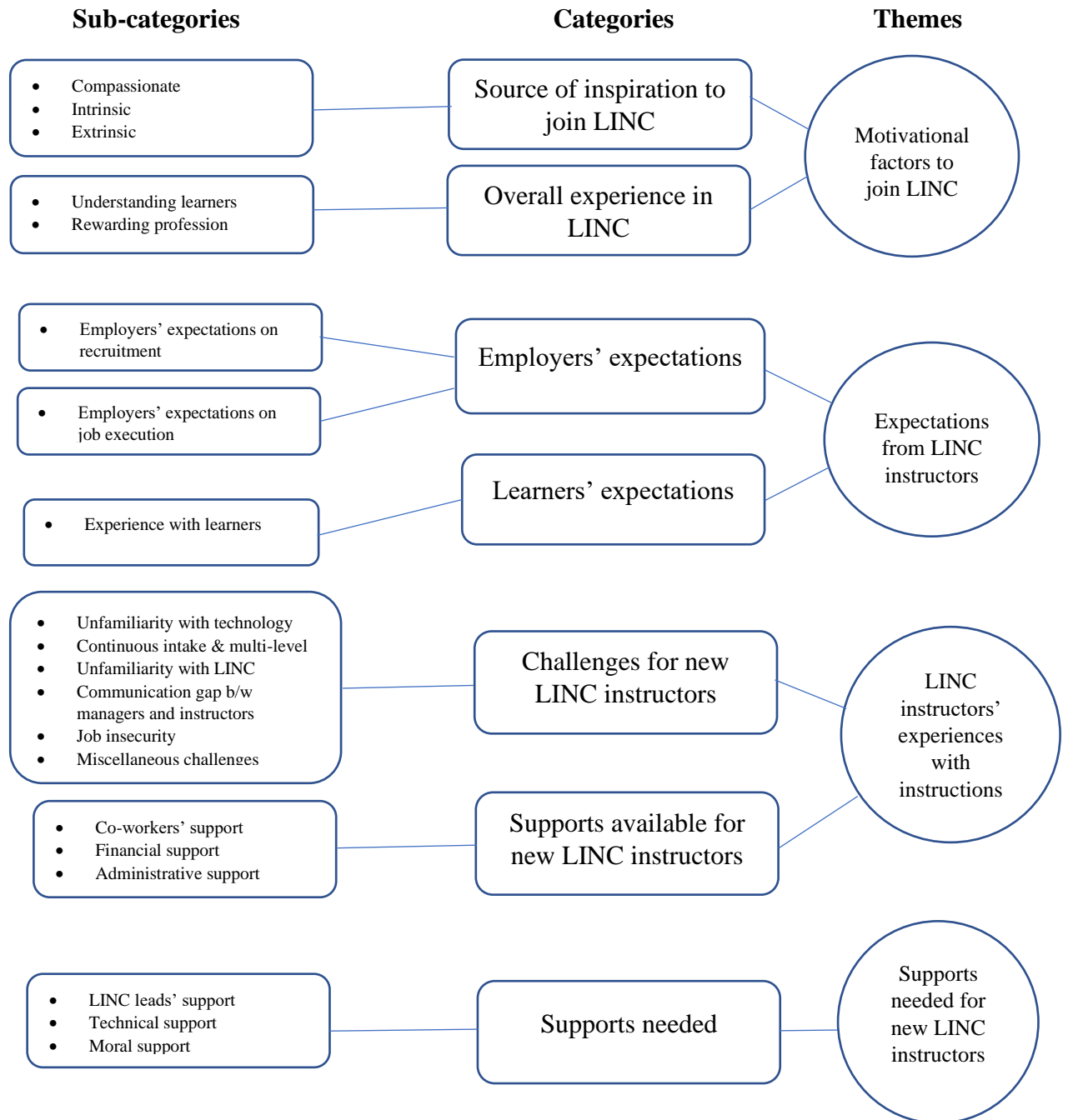
### **Themes from Data**

Figure 3 illustrates the subcategories, categories, and themes that emerged from the research findings. The overarching themes that emerged from the categories were: a) motivation to join LINC b) expectations from LINC instructors c) LINC instructors' experiences with instructions, and d) supports for new LINC instructors. The following section presents findings from interviews and focus group discussions that resulted in the four overarching themes.



**Figure 3**

*Sub-categories, Categories, and Themes for Experience of LINC Instructors*



*Note:* Figure 3 shows themes, categories, and sub-categories that emerged from the research

findings, adapted from Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.

## **Motivation to Join LINC**

The findings presented in this section are in response to the question on the factors that motivated the participants to choose LINC as a career. Based on the participants' responses, and guided by past studies (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Merriam and Bierema, 2014; Sumison, 2000), these three subcategories emerged from the coded data: compassionate, intrinsic, and extrinsic. As shown in figure 3, I place these subcategories under the category 'Source of inspiration to join LINC' and the theme 'Motivational Factors to join LINC' to analyze the reasons behind choosing LINC.

### ***Sources of Inspiration to Join LINC***

**Compassionate.** The responses placed under the subcategory compassionate are the ones that showed individual's empathy towards newcomers to Canada or their thoughtfulness for the community. Some participants' primary motivation to join LINC came from their families, who had attended government sponsored ESL classes as newcomers to Canada. Besides, if they had attended ESL classes at school in their initial years in Canada, they now wanted to return to the community what they or their family had received when they attended English classes as newcomers. Jessica was one of them. Her parents had attended LINC classes as newcomers to Canada, and she received additional support for English when she was in her elementary school. According to Jessica, "Now I wanted to give back what my family had had from Canada some years back; the benefits that we had received from ESL program".

Other reasons under subcategory compassionate included an urge to help newcomers to Canada and being a second language learner in the past. One of the participants, Qi's exposure to the struggle of settling in Canada as a newcomer and a passion to help newcomers to Canada were their sources of inspiration to pursue their career in LINC. According to Qi, "When I came

to Canada, I already had the knowledge about difficulties of newcomers. Then I realized that I need to continue and help newcomers with respect to their cultural and linguistic difficulties”.

Rose, who had taught ESL in different settings across Canada before she joined the LINC program in Saskatoon, shared her reason to join LINC was to help newcomers settle in Canada. She touched on her perception of having LINC as a practical framework to help newcomers to Canada. According to her, “I thought LINC is a good model to teach ESL to newcomers, and help them integrate and feel settled in the community”.

Susan, who had taught ESL in a different setting in Canada, before joining LINC, and had also been through the experience of a second language learner outside Canada, joined LINC with a desire to help newcomers to Canada. She recalled her experience as a second language learner, “My own experience of studying ... [language] in ... [name of country] and realizing that the whole emersion experience is invaluable; I was excited about people who were coming to Canada to make Canada home, and helping them”.

The reasons placed under the subcategory compassionate, were those that the participants had expressed as their altruistic motives to join a LINC program. However, these participants shared other reasons as well to join LINC.

**Intrinsic.** Some intrinsic reasons that the participants shared to join LINC, include being an ESL instructor in the past and the desire to connect to this profession, and a disliking for the profession at that time the individual was engaged in it. Qi’s previous experience in teaching English in their native country and their aspiration to reconnect with their previous profession were also reasons for them to join LINC. According to Qi, “It was also my profession back in my country.” Susan’s motivation to join LINC came from her not liking the teaching job

that she was engaged in at that time, and looking for other teaching opportunities. According to Susan,

“My first work was in [province]... at .... [organization]. I didn’t like teaching at ... [institution]. So, when I came to Saskatoon, I was exploring other options, and I heard about... [a LINC service provider], that they were working with refugees and immigrants to Canada. I thought let’s try that”.

Participants who had intrinsic motivation, shared varying reasons to join LINC.

**Extrinsic.** The findings also revealed extrinsic reasons among participants to join LINC. These participants expressed that they did not have a specific plan to join LINC. It happened by chance while they were looking for a job, and LINC was the only teaching opportunity available. Amy, an experienced ESL instructor had taught ESL in a different setting before joining LINC. She lost her ESL teaching job and was looking for another teaching job when she came to know about the LINC program. According to her, “I didn’t really choose it, it just happened to be the job available. My previous employment was not in LINC.” Helen, who had worked as a kindergarten teacher in her country, but did not have a four-year undergraduate degree in education expressed that she wasn’t eligible to teach in K-12 system in Canada. According to her, “I couldn’t work in a school in Canada, so I was told to contact... [organization]”.

Jessica had multiple reasons to join LINC, some of which have been mentioned earlier. Another reason shared by Jessica was volunteering with a LINC service provider to build contacts for her future job referral. Another participant Tara, who had past experience working in an entirely different non-teaching set-up, had similar reasons for volunteering with a LINC service provider. According to Tara, “While I was volunteering, the person in charge suggested

me to become an ESL instructor”. Later both Jessica and Tara joined the respective LINC service providers as ESL LINC instructors, where they had previously volunteered.

### ***Overall Experience as LINC Instructor***

In order to get the feedback on the participants’ current disposition on being LINC instructors, I asked them to comment on their overall experience with LINC. In response to this question, all participants expressed their assertiveness to their LINC jobs and their satisfaction on choosing LINC as a career. The following are some experiences shared by the participants:

**Good Learning Experience.** Participants rated LINC as a good learning experience. Tara proclaimed, “I always learn something new. I have learned from people who have lived in different countries.” Susan was excited about meeting people from different countries. She expressed, “It’s been great. I have met wonderful people from many different countries, and I’ve seen a lot of success stories of settlement in Canada, which is the goal, which is wonderful”.

These responses reflect that the participants are satisfied with their current jobs as LINC instructors.

**Rewarding Profession.** Irrespective of intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors for joining LINC, none of the participants showed regrets to join LINC. Amy expressed that even though she joined LINC without any plans, she doesn’t regret it. According to Amy,

“I’ve learned a lot about teaching ESL and I’ve learned a lot about myself in terms of ability to teach ESL... I’ve learned to be a little bit kinder to myself... Even though that I didn’t exactly choose LINC as a career, I’m not sorry that they chose me. Life is not perfect and no organization and no line of work is perfect. I think this has been a pretty good deal for me”.

Rose cherished her learners' success. She viewed LINC as a rewarding profession and valued the contributions she made in the lives of the learners. According to Rose, "It's when I see students succeed and that they have moved up different levels, got a job, that's my reward... That's the thing in LINC teaching; the rewarding aspect of the students and their appreciation for our work".

The participants seemed to be satisfied with their overall experience with LINC. None of the participants showed regrets about joining LINC.

### **Expectations from LINC Instructors**

#### ***Employers' Expectations***

Meeting employer expectations is one of the aspects that can make new recruits' experience a success. To get responses on employers' expectations from LINC instructors, I asked the participants, "What expectations does your organization have from you as a LINC instructor?" I further asked questions that would elicit information on expectations from the LINC instructors at the recruitment stage and at the job execution stage. As shown in figure 3, I place the relevant information under subcategories: 'employers' expectations on recruitment', and 'employers' expectations on job execution'. I further place these two subcategories under the category of employers' expectations and the theme of expectations from LINC instructors.

**Employers' Expectations for Recruitment.** The query on instructors' experiences for recruitment in LINC was meant to elicit information on experience with the hiring process. It included employers' expectations on academic qualifications, certification, past experience, and the interview proceedings.

In response to the question on the certificate requirement, all participants asserted that they were asked for CERTESL as a basic requirement for teaching in LINC. However, teacher's

certificate wasn't required. Bella, who had her university degree from outside Canada mentioned that she had to get her credentials assessed from World Education Services and TESL Saskatchewan as a requirement for being recruited as an ESL instructor in Saskatchewan. Recalling her interview experience, Bella added, "I did have to go through a lengthy interview; writing an essay, panel of interviewers." Qi, who also had his post-secondary education from a foreign country reinforced Bella's stance for assessment of credentials for recruitment as an ESL instructor in Saskatchewan. According to him, "When I came to Canada, I was awarded with 2 certifications/ accreditations, one from TESL Saskatchewan and one from TESL Canada".

When asked for a degree in any specific field, participants responded that they were not asked for a degree in any particular field. Amy, who is a native speaker of English recalled, "It was required that I have a university degree, I don't think it mattered which degree. And also, some ESL training, which I had in CERTESL. But an education degree wasn't required".

None of the participants mentioned being asked for having a prior training, or teaching experience in LINC or any other adult learners' program.

**Employers' Expectations for Job Execution.** The questions on expectations from instructors at the job execution stage included what the employers expected from instructors with reference to classroom environment, teaching resources, and student assessment strategies. The responses generated themes that covered details on employers' expectations on maintaining learning environment in the classrooms, accessing teaching resources, developing lesson plans, applying teaching methods, assessing learning, and handling other responsibilities. As shown in figure 3, I present these findings under subcategory: employers' expectations on job execution. I place this subcategory under the category 'employers' expectations', and the theme 'expectations' from LINC instructors.

***Classroom Environment.*** Since LINC teaching takes place in an adult classroom setting, maintaining a congenial environment in the classroom can promote a learning environment. In addition to this, classroom environment can have a direct impact on learners' attendance. In response to the query on whether the employer expects the instructors to maintain a learning environment, Tara commented, "It has to be professional, but it has to be fun". Jessica's viewpoint was, "We are expected to be culturally responsive and create a respectful environment in our classrooms". Susan delineated the expected role of a LINC instructor in case any critical situation arises in the classroom, she expressed, "Classroom environment is really important that people feel supported and encouraged and that discipline within classroom is maintained. When someone is acting out due to trauma or something, it's expected that we will somehow deal with that".

All of the participants acknowledged that the employers expected that the instructors maintain an academic as well as friendly environment in their classrooms. However, there was no evidence that they receive scheduled or periodic training on handling trauma.

***Teaching Resources.*** Participants were asked about the expectations their employers had from them as LINC instructors from the point of view of exploring teaching resources. All participants expressed that they had access to online teaching resources as well as to the physical ESL libraries in their organizations. Though most of the employers provided teaching materials to their instructors and encouraged them to explore and share the resources with their colleagues; the expectation on arranging teaching resources varied among organizations. While commenting on being allowed a freehand to acquire teaching resources, Rose said, "The organization provides some websites, subscriptions, but mostly I have to develop my own class lessons or look for my own resources."



Talking about the expectations on acquiring teaching resources, Susan expressed, “We’re not expected to get our own teaching resources. Extensive library of resources has been built over the ... [number of] years at ... [organization] that teachers can use”.

In Bela’s opinion,

“Often a lot of resource sharing and suggestions are more informal... talk with your peers and find useful resources that are relevant and match the themes and engage the students. Consider all the students’ different abilities, like with technology. It’s not that here’s the resources, go ahead. It’s like, here’s something you might do and find whatever you need.”

Amy brought up an issue that the new LINC instructors face when they have to adapt the teaching resource to the different levels in their classrooms. She commented, “The expectation is that you’ll adapt materials because many of us have a multilevel class... so, I have to adjust the material for lower-level students and also keep the upper-level students interested”.

All participants acknowledged that employers give them access to online as well as physical teaching resources. They also stressed that employers expected them to adapt these teaching resources to their class levels as well as to the learners’ needs.

***Lesson Planning.*** In response to the question on employer’s expectations from LINC instructors on developing lesson plans, Susan expressed that there is no LINC curriculum, instead the instructors have to plan their lessons based on themes. She said, “We plan with LINC themes... the expectation is that we will develop lesson plans and modules based on those themes, leading up to the task that will assess students’ knowledge, so that falls to us”.

Jessica added, “There is no curriculum in LINC classes that we have to follow. We have themes such as employment, shopping, health, food, which have real life learning content.” She valued the flexibility in lesson planning in LINC; her viewpoint was,

“We do have some flexibility; I think that’s a good thing. I don’t think we’d actually like to have a very prescribed curriculum to stick to. It’s not even culturally responsive to the learners’ needs... there’re countries where the government tells you what you have to teach, and that’s it, that’s what you teach”.

As mentioned earlier, Bella is pursuing a degree in education. She endorsed Jessica’s views and cherished the creativity that the absence of curriculum brings to lesson planning. According to Bella,

“I have heard from a lot of teachers that you have to make every lesson, constantly think of new ideas, and you’re not just studying from a textbook. You have to be creative and people see that as an obstacle..., this is normal, you do the same thing if you’re teaching elementary or high school. There’s no text that you just open and follow... There’re still guidelines like PBLA”.

***Teaching Methods.*** Expectations on teaching methods can have a direct impact on the efforts that the instructor has to put in in delivering lessons. When asked about the employers’ expectations on the teaching methods they use, I received a wide range of varying responses from the participants. Rose who had experience in teaching ESL in a different setting in Canada commented, “We are expected to follow task-based approach and PBLA framework”. Susan had similar views, according to her, “It should be task-based teaching; not grammar focused, not highly academic”. Qi’s perspective on employer’s expectation for teaching methods was “[to use] good methodology”. Qi further added, “...to teach learners in such a way that they learn

basic life skills in Canada, plus the language that they could start with a basic job. Like in everyday life, they are able to use this language”.

Some participants were not sure about their employers’ expectations for the teaching methods to be used. Amy, who had taught ESL in Canada in a different setting before joining LINC, expressed that she was unaware of her employers’ expectations on teaching methods in LINC. In her opinion, “Well, if they do, I haven’t been able to detect that, other than you practice concepts and ideas until you think the students are capable of doing that, and then administer an assessment”. Another participant Jessica expressed, “Each teacher has their unique [teaching] approach, which comes from experience”. Tara had a different opinion, she expressed, “If you do what you want to, they mostly criticize; they don’t help.”

The findings in this section show that except for a few participants, most of the participants were not aware of the employers’ expectations on the teaching methods used in LINC and those laid out in the PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019).

**Assessment.** Since learners need to be assessed to move to the next CLB, I asked the participants how they assessed their learners, and if there were any assessment criteria that they had to follow. Most of them asserted that they were expected to assess the learners as per PBLA Practice guidelines. Jessica explained the assessment process,

“We use PBLA to assess learners’ skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For each of these skills, we assess them in four areas of competency. After every nine hours of instruction, we are expected to assess learners in one competency in one skill”.

According to Susan, “Students’ progress is measured based on PBLA. There’s a minimum of eight tasks based on four competencies within each skill. So, a minimum of 32 tasks before they’re ready to move on to a new level”.

Some participants indicated that their employer had a flexible approach towards assessing the learners. They remarked that these employers set their own parameters for assessments. The timeframe for assessments depended on learners' needs, and the content covered. In Qi’s opinion,

“The organization gives parameters of assessment to the teachers. We have weekly and bi-weekly assessments, depending on learners' needs, and how much content has been covered. Learners are tested in each skill. Once a topic is complete, teachers are expected to test the learners.”

The findings on expectations on assessing the learners show that LINC service providers in Saskatoon have varying expectations on assessing the learners.

***Other Expectations.*** I asked the participants if they were assigned responsibilities other than teaching. Amy shared her views on the non-teaching responsibilities that the employer expected her to carryout and compensated her on regular basis. In Amy’s views, “Yes, ... there are staff meetings, and PD sessions; these are paid for. For reporting on students’ assessments, we're paid extra prep time wages”. According to another participant, Susan, “At the end of each month, there is quite a hefty amount of reporting required. Reporting on each student, on what we taught, how we taught it, what kind of tasks we did”. Jessica added some unpaid responsibilities to this list, she said, “Connecting with learners, ... If a learner is absent, as an instructor we are expected to call them to ensure that things are okay at their end”.

The articulation on additional teaching or non-teaching responsibilities assigned by the employers to the LINC instructors indicate that there are additional duties that the instructors are expected to accomplish. These duties include regularly paid as well as unpaid jobs.

### ***Learners' Expectations***

For the question on learners' expectations, I solicited responses on instructors' experiences during their interactions with the learners and on learners' outlook on the LINC program. Most of these responses were with reference to the clarity of instructions, significance of language proficiency requirements during delivery of lesson, and preference of communicating in English language. The category that emerged from the responses was learners' expectations. As shown in figure 3, I place this category under the theme of expectations from LINC instructors.

Expounding on the learners' preference on clarity of classroom instructions and involvement in lesson planning, Jessica expressed,

“Learners want clear instructions and level appropriate material to be delivered. If they want to practice a particular skill, they would let me know, or if they are tired of working on a skill, even then they would let me know”.

Amy's point was being rational towards learners' aspirations. According to her,

“You must never lose sight of the fact that you're teaching a group of adults... these people have lives, they have other commitments, and to come down too hard on them, I think is unfair. There are school policies, and then there are my real-life policies. I make judgements without any consultation with the administration, because sometimes you need to make decisions in the moment”.

Qi commented on the learners' desire of having a learning environment where they can acquire skills to learn Canadian culture, "They want a learning atmosphere, where they can learn the basic requirements to live in a new country". Commenting on learners' expectations, Susan remarked, "They want me to teach them English, help them get CLB 4 so that they can get their citizenship". Amy added to the learners' desire on early graduation, "[Learners] want to get them through the program in 3 months or less. The other expectation is that the teacher will keep them interested and even more, entertain".

Jessica shared her instinct on learners' expectation on a trivial but sensitive issue of understanding the learners' needs even when these needs are not voiced by the learners. She said,

"I think, just understanding how much needs can differ... I feel in a LINC class, people have needs that you might not even think of, like technological literacy. Specially if it's a literacy student and they don't even have internet at home, and they don't know how to use it, or they don't even have an email address".

Bella added some other needs,

"... building a really strong and supportive relationship between the whole class and each other. Taking the time for them to get to know each other; building that little community that is not competitive; it's supportive; giving them lots of opportunities to interact and become friends, and making sure that they have lots of positive reinforcements. This makes them feel happy, more enthusiastic about coming to class everyday".

Findings in this section suggest that learners' expectations and needs can stretch beyond classroom learning and language improvement. This can include attending LINC classes

exclusively to get the LINC certificate to apply for citizenship. In other instances, learners feel hesitant to voice their expectations. So, there are times when the instructor needs to be empathetic to understand the learners' expectations and needs.

### **Experiences of LINC Instructors**

Since this research was focused on exploring the experiences of new LINC instructors in their career development in Saskatoon, I asked the participants about the challenges they were facing and the supports they were receiving in LINC. As shown in figure 3, the theme that emerged from the findings from this section is LINC instructors' experiences with instructions, the categories are 'challenges for LINC instructors' and 'supports available for new LINC instructors'.

#### ***Challenges for New LINC Instructors***

For the question on challenges that the LINC instructors are facing in Saskatoon, I was looking for responses on accessing resources, comprehending the CLB and PBLA systems, communicating with managers, job security, and any other challenges. The responses indicated that issues related to technology were crucial to most of the participants. The subcategories that emerged from the responses are: unfamiliarity with technology, continuous intake and multi-level, unfamiliarity with LINC, communication gap between instructors and managers, job insecurity, and miscellaneous challenges. I place these under the category of challenges, and theme LINC instructors' experiences with instructions as shown in figure 3.

**Technology Related Issues.** Participants articulated on technology related issues that the instructors or learners were facing. Talking about the routine issues, Amy expressed that she struggled with technology. According to her,

“Listening materials are often very difficult to find ... even listening that are graded as being elementary or low intermediate, are often beyond my students... For anyone who’s not good with technology, that doesn’t help when you’re looking for resources.”

Rose reported on a few issues related with technology that can put the instructors under stress. These issues include learners not being familiar with or not having access to technology, or instructors spending more time in developing lessons. She commented, “Sometimes it’s difficult to develop communicative activities on Zoom. Learners, not always use a laptop, they use a cellphone; they cannot open windows or applications... Another challenge is more hours spent by the teacher”.

Jessica also showed her apprehension on technical issues in online classes, in her opinion, “While connecting online sometimes there are technical issues, even internet connectivity becomes a challenge ... Since learners are at home, there are distractions in the background. Locating teaching resources is another challenge”. Susan had similar concerns, she remarked,

“These days it’s the whole learning to teach online, which none of our training prepared us for... I’ve found administration not very supportive in this environment. The fact that students don’t have the technology; that’s been really hard ... It’s expected that I will help my students with their technology problems”.

Some employers plan to switch to Avenue.ca, an online teaching platform. Most of the participants voiced their concerns over teaching online to CLB 1-4. Referring particularly to Avenue.ca, some participants expressed that their employers had switched to this new online teaching medium, when there was no issue working on the previous online medium. According to Rose, switching to this new medium had put the instructors under stress. She said,



“I don’t think it will be useful for low levels. I think, CLB 5 and up will be okay for students to work on Avenue, but for CLB 1-4, it will be very challenging, because students don’t have language skills, or computer skills in order to perform portfolios, and it is taking a lot of time for teachers. It puts a lot of stress on LINC teachers and on students”.

Helen, who teaches intermediate levels (CLB 5-8) shared her experience with Avenue.ca,

“Avenue; it doesn’t work. ... when I started Avenue, I lost many students. Then I stopped Avenue, because I was losing students. And even now, it’s like twice a month, I ask them to do some work on Avenue and it’s only after I have gone through all the materials, all the tasks with them by sharing my screen. Workload has increased for me.”

Jessica noted that it was a challenge for her to teach and assess CLB 1-4 in a virtual setting, irrespective of any online teaching platform being used. She said,

“I joined just a few months before we switched to online classes. For basic CLB that I teach, it’s difficult to teach them online ... it’s a challenge to assess learners online after every nine hours of instructions, specifically assessing reading skills ... Since the time that we have moved to online classes, the attendance has also been a challenge.”

The findings in this section are that some learners are not technically literate or they do not have access to the necessities of a virtual classroom such as stable internet connection and access to computers, which makes it challenging for instructors to teach CLB 1-4 learners online.

**Continuous Intake and Multi-level.** Expressing her concerns on the challenges in LINC, Amy listed continuous intake and multi-level as issues linked to LINC and remarked that

these issues “really become a problem when you have a large group (of learners)”. While commenting on adapting material in a multi-level class, she said,

“The expectation is that you’ll adapt materials; I have to adjust the material for lower-level students and also keep the upper-level students interested, which I think was one of the most difficult parts for me when I first started this job.”

Rose’s views on continuous intake were, “The challenge is, learners going back to their countries, and then trying to come back after two months ... trying to accommodate everybody’s needs is the biggest challenge.”

The participants considered continuous intake and multi-level a challenge.

**Unfamiliarity with LINC System.** Some experienced ESL instructors who were new to LINC also faced challenges at the beginning of their career with LINC. Amy and Rose were a few experienced ESL instructors who struggled understanding the LINC system. According to Amy, “I struggled with the PBLA system for an entire year.” Rose had similar views for not being familiar with the system and receiving unclear expectations on LINC. She recalled,

“I didn’t know how modules were developed, and I had to rely on colleagues to tell me that there were LINC classroom activities that we could follow. They [manager] gave me a binder with expectations and things, but it was not very clear what I was expected to do. I knew how to teach ESL but not integrated that with the settlement issues. I had to rely either on classroom activities, and lots of research from the community on my own. From LINC leads? No! there has never been any support in 4 years. They only check the binders”.

Bella recalled her struggle in understanding PBLA and the additional time spent in developing level appropriate teaching materials, she remarked,

“Teaching resources for me when I started was a little challenging ... it seemed that there were differences of understanding what that was. There were a lot of textbooks. It took a little time for me to understand really how to use it in my own way that fit the program and made sense. I spend a lot of time online looking for those resources, and sometimes it’s very hard”.

Tara was not familiar with the technical jargon; she said, “When I started, I had the orientation but a lot of the language, I didn’t even understand. There were abbreviations, which I didn’t understand”. Amy struggled to find level appropriate material in the initial months as a LINC instructor, and would usually end up using materials that were too high for the CLB that she taught. According to her, “I didn’t immediately connect to what was appropriate for the level ... It took me probably several months to be able to distinguish between materials that were at too high level, and an appropriate level for my students”.

Participants expressed that they had trouble understanding and identifying the level-appropriate material for their classes.

**Communication Gap Between Managers and Instructors.** Participants working with different LINC service providers expressed their apprehension on the communication gap between instructors and managers. According to Helen, her employer was hiring new LINC instructors as some classes had been added to the LINC program at her workplace. She was willing and available to work for more hours, instead, her working hours were slashed. Helen’s concern was that she wasn’t given any reason for the reduction in her working hours. She said,

“What happened last year, I had my concerns about that. Maybe this year, my contract won’t renew. I have my concerns about job security and had my number of working hours reduced... I wasn’t given a reason why my number of

working hours were reduced .... there were classes, it's not that the classes weren't there. The working conditions are very good, but I have my concerns about job security and number of working hours.”

Rose had faced similar situation with the same employer, she expressed, “In my case I lost the ... [CLB] class, ... I wanted to know why I was not given that class, but I was not given any explanation”.

Amy expressed her concerns on the growing unpaid hours of work; she said, “We have the whole February break week off, without pay; we'll get another one at Easter time, the entire week off without pay, and 2 weeks of Christmas without pay; and a whole month of July without pay. Our unpaid time is increasing drastically”.

Another example of communication gap between instructors and managers was nonvoluntary commitment to work on Saturdays. Amy's comments reflect her unwillingness to work on weekends, she said, “A commitment for several Saturdays, I find this really intrusive”.

The findings in this section are that participants want clear communication from the managers if things are changed or new things are introduced that affect the instructors.

**Job Insecurity.** Funding for ESL programs in Canada depends on the prevailing state of economy (Derwing, 2017). Since LINC is one of the federally sponsored ESL programs; an economic downturn in the country can lead to job cuts in LINC, where as stable economy can steer more funding for such programs.

Participants showed their concerns over job security in LINC. Bella, who lost her LINC job some time ago, shared her thoughts as, “For me, the biggest challenge is continuing to have employment in LINC, because our contracts are short term and it's not much guarantee there if

you'll be employed again in the next term". Though Bella was able to get another job with a LINC service provider in Saskatoon, she has now started working on her backup plan on securing a job, in case she again loses her LINC job. While sharing her backup plan Bella expressed that she was pursuing a bachelor's of education degree in order to have more job opportunities. She expressed, "If I don't get a position [in LINC], I can then go and teach ESL in a school. So, I have a backup plan".

Rose and Amy lost their ESL jobs in a different work setup in the past, and accentuated another issue that can lead to job cuts in LINC. This issue was the reliance of funding for ESL classes on the number of learners registered in that class. According to Rose, "In LINC or any teaching as a second language, there's no job security. No students; no class". Amy added to this, "I think with parttime workers [in LINC], job security is always going to be an issue".

Most of the participants seem to be worried about the job security in LINC and considered teaching in LINC as unstable.

**Miscellaneous Challenges.** Some participants highlighted other challenges during interviews and focus group discussions. Tara, who had worked in different job settings before joining LINC seemed to be overwhelmed with the paperwork in LINC, she remarked, "Too much paperwork. It seems that they are always adding another form to fill out".

Qi, who had worked as an EFL instructor back in his country and came to Canada as an immigrant, expressed that along with challenges in his professional life, he had to go through the struggle of settling down in the new country. Recalling their initial days as a newcomer in Canada, Qi remarked, "Since I was new to Canada, I had not properly settled... lesson planning [in LINC] was a challenge, I had to do it my own way".

Most of the participants expressed that they struggled through their initial years in LINC.

### ***Supports Available for New LINC Instructors***

For this section, I was looking for information on the kind of supports that new LINC instructors receive, so I asked the participants to specifically include supports received from their co-workers, administrative staff, or financial support. The participants' responses generated subcategories: co-workers' support, financial support, and administrative support. The category was supports available for new LINC instructors, and the theme was LINC instructors' experiences with instructions.

**Co-workers' Support.** Amy, an experienced ESL instructor, but new to LINC, struggled with lesson planning, as well as strived to learn basic technology. She commented that her workmates are always eager to help her. She mentioned, "If I've ever asked for support from a co-worker, I've had excellent help ... Even I have had inquiries, do you need help?". Susan had similar views and cherished the support from her co-workers. She stated that, "Coworkers are awesome. They share materials, strategies, and ideas for involving students. When there's a difficult student, we brainstorm how to meet the needs of the difficult student".

Jessica elucidated on how she received supports from her colleagues during meetings and on social media groups. She remarked,

"There is a shared [online] folder that has teaching resources. Then we have monthly teachers' meeting in which we share a lot of things. There's a [social media] page for the teachers to remain connected with the group. Then there are level alike meetings".

While commenting on informal and formal support, Bella said, "I didn't have any official mentor, just teachers that I would work with, would give their suggestions ... Lead teachers help you out with PBLA stuff".

Findings in this section are that most of the participants rely on supports that they receive from their colleagues, and view the absence of a formal mentor as a significant missing support for new instructors.

**Financial Support.** Financial support boosts the employees' morale. Valuing the management's efforts in securing funds, Susan remarked, "Our manager is great at getting us funding." Rose appreciated the management's stance on financially compensating the instructors. According to her, "They paid us extra ... we were given a bonus ... for developing material." According to Amy,

"LINC instructors have pretty good working conditions, we had pay rises at a time when everyone else was getting pay reduction or job loss. We're being given extra hours pay for having extra students in the classroom, and for the extra work that is required in recording and just the management of students' learning".

The findings in this section are that participants are satisfied with the financial compensation for their work.

**Administrative Support.** Timely administrative support can help instructors in a smooth job execution. The administrative support can be in the form of getting supplies when requested, helping the instructors in arranging fieldtrips, and supporting them in the classrooms by arranging language interpreters and teaching assistants whenever needed. For administrative support, Jessica asserted that technical staff are available to support the instructors, she added, "We have our translators in the organization." Bella added to the list of administrative support, "We have education aides... Just helping with students who need additional support with things like pronunciation or writing." Qi was satisfied that whenever they asked for anything ranging from office supplies to fieldtrips, the administrative staff responded immediately to their request.

## **Supports Needed for New LINC Instructors**

One of the most pertinent aspects of this research was to establish what the participants consider to be the effective ways to support new LINC instructors for the ultimate success in their careers. As discussed earlier, the findings of this research show that the LINC service providers offer support in different forms to their instructors. To fill in the gaps between the supports needed by the instructors and the existing supports, I asked the participants what kinds of supports they would like to have in order to excel in their career. The following are the findings:

### ***LINC Leads' Support***

Some participants expressed on the urge of having formal mentors for new instructors. According to Jessica, mentors for new instructors “at least for a few classes”. Rose wanted the leads to have more interaction with the instructors. She remarked, “LINC leads could do some research on theme based and give us some tips, or develop one or two activities. I would like to see more leadership from leads other than checking the binders”.

Susan expounded on the role of the mentorship team and the supervisor for guiding the new LINC instructors. According to her,

“I would like to see new instructors mentored perhaps by one teacher, that would be the co-worker. Really supervised in an encouraging manner by the team leader. The team leader, besides giving an orientation, for the first couple of months be available to show resources, offer suggestions, provide that kind of real leadership for new instructors, walking them”.



Rose was not satisfied with the PBLA introductory course that connects new instructors to the LINC system. She emphasized on the involvement of LINC leads in the mentorship of new instructors and explaining the LINC system to these instructors. According to her,

“They [new LINC instructors] need a lot of support from lead instructors in order to develop assessments. Because one thing is to teach ESL in the classroom, and find materials, but then trying to assess them, and all that paper work that is with it... The new teachers need support on that; PBLA introductory course is not enough. LINC leads should get more involved with the new instructors.”

She further added, “LINC leads should develop sample modules and assessments for different levels, and upload on ... [online medium] on monthly basis or every 3 months”.

### ***Technical Support***

Technical problems can become issues for new instructors in their lesson planning and lesson delivery. Susan suggested on getting professional development sessions on remote teaching and technical support for teaching online. Amy, who needed assistance with online teaching, advocated for a thorough but slow-paced guidance for new instructors when they faced a technical issue. Sharing her own experience, she said, “As a new teacher, I definitely needed more guidance to get familiar with the system. I needed to be walked through even the use of a computer. I needed to be guided through, a little more thoroughly and slowly”.

On the other hand, Helen looked forward to the training for those learners who struggled with technology; she expressed, “Maybe, a basecourse on technology for students too. I had a student who didn’t know how to unmute on Zoom”.

Most of the participants expressed their eagerness on getting technical support for new instructors. Some participants were keen on having technical support for the learners as well.

### ***Moral Support***

Moral support can have a positive impact on the career development of new instructors. Susan commended on supporting new as well as the experienced instructors. She said, “I’d like the occasional word of encouragement that would be supportive”.

Some participants appreciated the work done in their organization. Jessica expressed, “I think they’re doing their best they can ... I would like more PD sessions. I learn a lot from those”. Most of the participants expressed on getting moral support from the management.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I shared the participants’ articulation on the questions asked in one-on-one interviews and in the focus group discussions. I illustrated the subcategories, categories, and themes in figure 3 that emerged from the findings. The four themes are (a) motivation to join LINC, (b) expectations from LINC instructors, (c) LINC instructors’ experiences with instructions, and (d) supports for new LINC instructors. The subcategories, categories, and themes that emerged from these responses have also been listed. My analysis and discussion on the research findings are in the following chapter.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations**

This study explored the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon, and the findings suggest ways on how LINC administrators can facilitate new instructors to thrive in their careers. I used the following arching question and four guiding questions for this research:

What is the experience with becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?

- a) What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructors?
- b) What are the expectations from LINC instructors?
- c) What was the LINC instructors' experience with instruction?
- d) What supports do LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors?

Due to lack of relevant literature on ESL LINC instructors in Saskatchewan, I focused on similar studies conducted in other provinces in Canada, in the United States, and in other parts of the world, and used these studies to understand the present situation of ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. To gain a better understanding, the study was also guided by theories on experiences of new employees in an organization (Ashford & Black, 1996; Louis, 1980), theories on adult education (Dewey, 1916; Knowles et al., 2011; Mezirow, 1991; Yarbrough, 2018), and theory on motivation for the choice of a career (Lent et al., 1994). After reviewing the relevant literature, I applied an intrinsic case study design to answer the research questions; and gathered data through face-to-face interviews and two focus group discussions.

In this chapter, I compare the results on the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon with the literature that I reviewed for this research. In the discussion, I address the research questions, aligning each of them with a specific theme: (a) motivational factors to join LINC (b) expectations from LINC instructors (c) LINC instructors' experiences with instructions

(d) supports needed for LINC instructors. Each theme carries categories and subcategories as shown in figure 3 in chapter four. In the next section, I give my conclusions drawn from the analysis of the research findings. The chapter ends with recommendations for action for the LINC service providers in Saskatoon, and suggestions for future research.

## **Discussion of Findings**

In this section, I discuss the four themes that emerged from the findings of this research. Then, I explain how these themes address the research questions. The four themes are: (a) motivational factors to join LINC (b) expectations from LINC instructors (c) LINC instructors' experiences with instructions (d) supports needed for LINC instructors.

### ***Motivational Factors to Join LINC***

Past studies reveal that the thinking process varies among individuals, and they associate rewards and importance with careers in different ways (Merriam and Bierema, 2014; Sumison, 2000); though, the thinking process becomes complicated with the individual's age (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). People tend to choose careers based on their self-efficacy beliefs, their expectations for success (Lent et al., 1994), and their prevailing circumstances (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). One of the studies on reasons for the choice of teaching as a career indicated that there are altruistic reasons behind this choice (Bakar et al., 2014). To explore the motivational factors for considering LINC as a career, I asked the participants their rationale for settling on LINC as a career. In response, they recalled their "anticipatory stage of socialization" (Louis, 1980, p. 230), when they were still outsiders to LINC, and shared the reasons that led them to choose LINC. The findings reveal that each participant had more than one reason for joining LINC. In this section I have placed these reasons under the categories: compassionate, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors.

Compassionate motivational factors reflect an individual's concern and care for, or their empathetic feelings towards someone (Lent et al., 1994). The compassionate motivational factors in this research were: individuals want to give back to the community what they or their families received; they want to help people who, they view, are going through similar circumstances as they had been through as second language learners or as newcomers to Canada; and they have an instinct to help newcomers to Canada in their community. One participant expressed that she chose LINC because she wanted to help newcomers in their daily lives. Another participant who had similar reasons, perceived LINC as a good teaching model to pursue her passion to help newcomers to Canada.

Extrinsic motivational factors are based on external factors such as salary, flexible working hours, and perks attached to a job (Lent et al., 1994). One participant said that she was looking for a teaching job and LINC was the only option available for her as she did not qualify to teach in the K-12 education system in Canada. Another participant had a layoff from their previous job and was referred to the LINC program by their friends. Two participants expressed that they had volunteered for LINC classes to build contacts while they were looking for a job. After volunteering for some time, they were offered a job by the same LINC service provider, and finally joined the organization as a LINC instructor where they had volunteered.

Intrinsic motivational factors are based on internal reward or self-satisfaction, and are not influenced by any external source (Lent et al., 1994). The intrinsic reasons revealed in this research for considering LINC as a career were to join a similar field of past profession due to the individual's emotional attachment with the profession, a desire to join a different teaching field because of disliking for the current teaching job.

Findings in this section are in line with SCCT theory (Lent et al., 1994), which advocates that individuals' choice of career is based on self-efficacy, beliefs, and outcome expectations. Past studies have established that altruistic factors play a major role in the choice of career (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Sumison, 2000). An insight on the findings reveals that most of the participants had more than one reason for choosing LINC. Among these reasons, the dominant ones were compassionate reasons, followed by extrinsic reasons. The dominance of compassionate reasons reflects that, individuals are committed to their jobs, are autonomous, and have internal drivers to keep them motivated to their job (Bakar et al., 2014). This can be rewarding for them in their career in terms of keeping their morale high (Lent et al., 1994).

Most of the reasons shared by the participants for choosing LINC were quite similar to those found in the past literature (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018; Merriam and Bierema, 2014; Bakar, 2014; Sumison, 2000). Some new reasons were also revealed such as not being qualified to teach in the K-12 education system in Canada and not having the passion for an existing job. In their choice of considering LINC, some participants said that they had an inclination towards teaching adults. In general, irrespective of a compassionate factor of helping community members or newcomers to Canada; an intrinsic factor of being emotionally attached to one's previous profession; or an extrinsic factor of a source of income; many individuals are involved in LINC teaching because they see their efforts leading to a valued outcome and achieving the goals on which they had based their decision to join LINC (Lent et al., 1994).

### ***Expectations from LINC Instructors***

The research findings reflect that, once the LINC instructors join the organization, their employers as well as their learners have expectations from them. Meeting these expectations can not only bring satisfaction to a LINC instructor's job, but can also lead to a successful career

(Ashford & Black, 1996; Louis, 1980). Due to the delimitation on participants for this research, employers' and learners' expectations have been presented from instructors' perspectives only.

**Employers' Expectations.** The literature review and findings of this research establish that employers' expectations from the LINC instructors start at the recruitment stage and continue throughout the career of these instructors. In this section, the first part of my analysis focuses on employers' expectations for recruitment. The second part is on employers' expectations for job execution.

***Employers' Expectations for Recruitment.*** The requirements for hiring instructors for LINC vary from province to province (Li et al., 2012). According to the literature review, the general requirements are completion of an undergraduate degree and a certification to teach English as a Second Language (CERESL) or equivalent; however, there is no requirement of a formal provincial teaching certificate. Some participants asserted that they chose LINC because they did not meet the requirements to teach in K-12 education system in Canada. This reflects that the requirements for teaching in K-12 education system are lengthy as compared to those for teaching in LINC program (Li et al., 2012).

According to the job postings, an undergraduate degree and CERESL are required for teaching in a LINC program in Saskatoon (Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.); though some organizations have lenient criteria of completion of post-secondary education and CERESL (Global Gathering Place, n.d.). Contrary to that mentioned in past studies (Li et al., 2012), the requisite of having a certificate from TESL Canada to teach in LINC was not seen as an obligation in the findings or in the LINC job postings in Saskatoon. Most of the organizations discreetly mentioned the field of the university degree in their job postings (Saskatchewan Intercultural

Organization, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.), whereas some organizations did not have any such requirement. The findings also disclosed that all participants had at least one university degree from Canada or from abroad.

According to the job postings by LINC service providers in Saskatoon, the prospective LINC instructors were expected to have some teaching experience; though this requirement varied among organizations from having some experience teaching newcomers, to teaching ESL in any program, to having a minimum number of hours teaching newcomers in face-to-face or in virtual classrooms (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Organization, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.). Some participants expressed that they had to go through a detailed interview at the recruitment stage, while other said that they had a brief interview.

Based on the findings, it is evident that all organizations hiring instructors in LINC have similar basic criteria, which is, requirement of an undergraduate degree/ post-secondary education and CERTESL or equivalent certificate. Except for these criteria, each organization has its own touchstone for hiring LINC instructors. Another insight into the findings of this research is that most of the participants reported to have more than one university degree. Some participants were pursuing a degree in Education as a backup plan, which shows that the participants perceive LINC teaching as a precarious job.

The hiring process among organizations offering LINC in Saskatoon varies from a brief and short interview to a detailed interview which includes assessing applicants' writing abilities. The requirements on teaching experience also vary among LINC service providers. Besides, individuals who volunteer in LINC were seen to have the privilege of being familiar with the



norms, system, and the organizational workforce; which not only supported their hiring process, but also facilitated their settlement in that organization.

***Employers' Expectations for Job Execution.*** The second part of my analysis is on the job execution phase of LINC instructors. I focus on employers' expectations on maintaining class decorum, acquiring teaching material, developing lesson plans, assessing learners, and executing responsibilities assigned by the employer.

Job postings indicate that LINC service providers in Saskatoon expect that instructors are aware of and respectful towards cultural diversity (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Organization, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.). Participants notified that the LINC learners come from diverse backgrounds. In case of any critical situation arising in the classroom, such as a learner facing trauma, instructors are expected to handle the situation on their own. Though, none of the participants affirmed on receiving periodic training on handling trauma in classrooms.

For teaching resources, participants mentioned that they have access to the physical ESL libraries in the organization, as well as to the online resources. Employers refer the instructors to the educational websites and subscribe them to the relevant online resources. However, instructors are expected to explore and share teaching resources and develop lesson plans on their own. This reinforces PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) and job postings by LINC service providers in Saskatoon (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Organization, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.) which delegate the responsibility of developing teaching materials to the LINC instructors. Some participants were not satisfied with the orientation sessions for the new instructors. According to them, new instructors need guidance in selecting level appropriate teaching material to adapt for their multi-

level classes. The findings show that the instructors consider the expectations on developing their own teaching material as burdensome for the new LINC instructors, as these instructors are new to LINC, and need guidance in developing teaching material.

All participants expressed that there is no specific curriculum for LINC, instead the instructors are expected to plan their lessons with themes. However, there were mixed opinions on the absence of a LINC curriculum. Some participants considered it as an impediment to their lesson planning, whereas as others considered it as a flexibility that added to their creativity in teaching. The latter group noticed that considering the diversity among LINC learners, having a prescribed curriculum would not be “culturally responsive”. This also substantiates Dewey’s philosophy of learning that suggested the adult education should be focused on learners’ needs and experiences rather than teaching them a preset content (Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Past studies endorse task-based teaching methods and learner centered approach for LINC (PBLA Practice Guidelines, 2019). The findings reveal an ambiguity among participants on teaching methods expected for LINC. A few participants were clear that they are expected to follow task-based teaching methods and assess the learners using PBLA framework. One participant said that they are expected to teach basic life skills in LINC. Others articulated that they were not sure if there is an expectation on teaching methods. This variation in responses reflects the instructors’ unawareness on the expectations of teaching methods.

In response to my query on the assessment criteria, participants had different opinions. Some participants asserted that their employers expect them to adhere to the assessment criteria proposed in PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019), which gives a structured approach of collecting at least 32 artefacts to assess the learners’ learning. Some stated that their employers have a flexible approach towards assessments, and instructors follow parameters of assessment set by their

employers. Others said that there are no assessment criteria set in their organization; it is on instructors' discretion to assess the learners. These differences in responses from instructors who even work in the same organization reflect instructors' unawareness on the assessment criteria laid out in PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019).

Touching on the regular and paid responsibilities, participants listed attending meetings, monthly and quarterly reporting on the lesson taught, reporting on learners' progress, and attending professional development sessions as regular and paid assignments. However, there are additional time-consuming tasks that some employers expect the instructors to carry out as and when required, but these are not compensated. These tasks include contacting the learners when they are absent and connecting with them if they have issues. These financially uncompensated responsibilities are also mentioned in the past studies (Breshears, 2019; Cross, 2009).

My analysis on employers' expectations from instructors once they are hired in LINC is that LINC service providers clearly communicate their expectations on classroom environment, acquiring teaching resources, planning lessons, teaching methods, assessments, and other responsibilities in their job postings (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Organization, n.d.; Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.; Saskatoon OpenDoor Society, n.d.). The PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019) also lay down the requirements in these areas. Still, the new instructors struggle in comprehending CLB and PBLA, and implementing these in their classroom teachings and assessments. Besides, instructors are expected to handle trauma and other critical situations in the classroom. However, there is no evidence from the participants' articulation that the new LINC instructors receive any formal periodic training on handling cultural diversity or trauma. My analysis is that handling a critical situation such as trauma without being trained can be stressful for the new instructors and can lead to employee turnover

(Cohen, 2018). Past studies suggest a need for formal training on cultural diversity and trauma for the new instructors (Haynes, 2007).

**Learners' Expectations.** As mentioned earlier, due to the limitations on the selection of research participants, the findings on learners' expectations are from instructors' perspective only. Most of these findings are present in the past literature; however, some unvoiced learners' needs, and suggestions on meeting learners' expectations have been revealed in the findings.

The theory of andragogy posits adults as autonomous and purposeful learners having reasons behind their learning (Knowles et al., 2011). Some of these reasons are search for a job, make friends, and acquire language skills to pass accreditation or licensing exam (Li et al., 2012). Another important reason is to get the language proficiency certificate for applying for citizenship (Government of Canada, n.d. b). The research findings reveal that though learners have clear reasons to join LINC; some learners have demanding expectations to get an early certificate, so that they can apply for citizenship.

Past studies indicate that adults are motivated to learn when they know that their learning will help them in their real lives (Knowles et al., 2011; Mezirow, 1991). Therefore, they prefer programs with clear outcomes, and purposeful classes that are conducted in authentic language (Li et al., 2012). In the progressive approach, Lindeman advocated teachers as facilitators of learning, who create an environment to involve learners in classroom learning (Knowles et al. 2011). Cross (2009) suggested that instructors should develop teaching material to the levels of the learners' experiences to make the learning process meaningful and integrated. Findings of my research substantiate the previous literature and reflect that the learners want clear classroom instructions, skill specific and level appropriate materials, and tasks that will help them adapt to

the culture in Canada. Learners also expect that the instructors will build a learning atmosphere that will facilitate their settlement in Canada.

The findings include suggestions to nurture the learners' intrinsic motivation to attend classes. These suggestions include developing a supportive community to encourage collaborative learning, encouraging interaction among learners, and making them feel enthusiastic for their learning. This was observed in the past studies, where instructors were responsible to arrange physical settings that facilitate classroom interactions, accept each learner as an adult, and respect the learners' ideas (Knowles et al., 2011). The literature review also indicates a growing trend towards technology-based classrooms, where learners work independently (Cross, 2009). However, there are raised concerns over this trend, as technology-based classrooms can lead to a feeling of isolation among learners, particularly the older adults. For this, Knowles et al. (2011) recommended group activities for technology-based classrooms such as project groups where learners can share and learn in teams, and actively participate in the learning process.

### ***LINC Instructors' Experiences with Instructions***

Some challenges for the new LINC instructors, that are evident in the findings are similar to those listed in the past studies. This endorses Derwing's (2017) claim on issues raised decades ago still existing today. The participants reported on multi-level and continuous intake, which was also present in the past literature. However, the participants did not mention offsite location as a challenge because when this study was being conducted, due to COVID 19 pandemic, LINC classes were switched to online classes.

A new issue that stood out was challenges due to unfamiliarity with technology, such as online teaching and assessing basic level learners, low attendance in virtual classrooms, learners'

unfamiliarity with technology, and instructors not trained for online classes. In those cases where instructors are not trained for online teaching, they are still expected to troubleshoot technical issues in virtual classrooms. Another new issue that was revealed was, excessive paperwork required for government reporting.

Some participants raised concerns about the learners' needs that are not evident to the instructors but complicated by the fact that the learners hesitate to communicate these needs. These needs include having technological literacy and an access to technology. Some instructors take it for granted that the learners are familiar with technology and can access the required accessories for online classes such as computer or smartphone, and internet. Some learners use their phones to attend online classes, whereas literacy learners sometimes don't have an email account. In that case learners can not access online teaching material, or fully participate in the activities of a virtual classroom. This was also evident in the past studies, in which the research authors voiced their concerns over the struggles of newcomers to Canada to access the government sponsored newcomers' programs due to barriers, such as money to buy program accessories, time, and lack of awareness for the appropriate program (Li et al. 2012).

Another critical issue that the participants reported on was job security in LINC, which was observed in the past literature as well (Breshears, 2019; Valeo & Faez, 2013). Findings of this research reveal that some participants had their working hours slashed or experienced a layoff due to shutting down of some LINC classes during the economic downturn due to COVID 19 pandemic. This substantiates Derwing's (2017) assertion in the past literature that funding for newcomer programs depends on the economy. Some participants shared their backup plan of having a degree in education, so that they can qualify to teach in the K-12 education system, in case they lost their LINC job.

Some participants reported their concerns on using blended learning (BL) for teaching learners at CLB 1-4. In some organizations, instructors are being trained for Avenue.ca, a virtual teaching platform; however, participants contended that the switch from the previous teaching platform to the new one might not be feasible for teaching CLB 1-4. Some participants notified that they are losing learners, and their workload has increased due to Avenue.ca. This indicates that little if any feedback was sought from instructors while deciding to implement Avenue.ca. However, a job posting from another LINC service provider revealed that BL is being implemented and preferred in that organization (Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.). Though the past studies endorse the growing trend of BL (Karamifar et al., 2019); some researchers caution for proper planning and execution of BL (Rao, 2019). According to Rao (2019) BL is technology dependent; learners must have an access to technology and its accessories, and have the temperament to learn technology. However, my findings of this research reflect that some LINC instructors and learners in Saskatoon need training and continuous assistance in technology.

Another issue that emerged from unfamiliarity with technology was instructors spending access time searching for level appropriate online material. Researchers notified in the past studies that the hidden costs of incorporating technology such as working out of hours are absorbed by the instructors (Cross, 2009).

Some other issues included unfamiliarity with Canadian Language Benchmarks and Portfolio-Based Language Assessment for new LINC instructors. Even those participants who were experienced ESL instructors but new to LINC admitted struggling with PBLA. Job postings establish that most of the LINC service providers list the use of PBLA and CLB as the instructor's responsibility (Global Gathering Place, n.d.; Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, n.d.;

Saskatchewan Polytech, n.d.). This reflects a gap between the skills requirements in the job postings and the skills of the hired instructors.

Participants were also asked to comment on their overall experience in LINC, which is the “encounter stage” (Louis, 1980, p. 230) in their organizational socialization. In response, there were optimistic views. Some participants termed it as a good learning experience, some considered LINC as a rewarding profession, and some cherished their learners’ success. This reflects that the participants perceived that they had achieved their goals and felt that they were competent for being LINC instructors (Lent et al., 1994). These responses reflect participants’ satisfaction as LINC instructors.

However, findings of this research also revealed participants’ concerns over the growing communication gap between LINC instructors and the managers. One of the concerns was teaching CLB 1-4 online, and in particular, implementing Avenue.ca platform for teaching CLB 1-4. Participants considered it a challenge to assess CLB 1-4 learners’ language skills online. These findings reflect that the LINC instructors were either not consulted before implementing Avenue.ca, or during implementation of Avenue.ca their feedback was not taken or their feedback was not considered. Another concern was on the working hours of some LINC instructors being slashed. When these participants asked their managers why their hours were reduced; they were not given any explanation. Though they were available and willing to teach; their manager hired new LINC instructors instead. Moreover, participants also expressed their apprehensions over non-voluntary commitment of LINC instructors to work on weekends and an increase in unpaid holidays. These findings communicate dissatisfaction among LINC instructors, on account of communication gap between the instructors and the managers, which can even lead to voluntary turnover (Louis, 1980). Advocates of SCCT suggest that individuals



should be exposed to environments and experiences that offer opportunities to strengthen their careers, so that they can advance in their field of interest and areas in which they are talented (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2007).

### ***Supports for New LINC Instructors***

In this section, I have discussed the supports that are available for the new LINC instructors and the supports that these instructors need for their career advancement.

**Supports Available.** The findings of this research reflect that the new instructors receive voluntary support from colleagues; and scheduled formal supports from administrative staff and management. Scheduled formal supports range from funding arranged by the management and instructors being financially rewarded, to having educational assistants and language interpreters in the classrooms, whenever needed. The findings also reveal that in case of inability to have in-person meetings, such as during pandemic, instructors are connected through formal online meetings and informal social media groups. As a support for developing teaching material, employers arrange group membership for instructors to access relevant websites, and subscribe them to online forums.

Past literature reflects that the instructors have access to formal self-directed as well as collaborative learning such as online courses, webinars, and conferences (Nicholas et al., 2018). To support the instructors' learning, LINC service providers encourage these instructors to join informal social media forums such as Twitter and Facebook (Farrell and Jacobs, 2016; Gebhard, 2017; Nicholas et al., 2018).

**Supports Needed.** In this section, I have shared the findings on the supports that the new LINC instructors look forward to. Participants expressed the need of learning technology, getting trained on PBLA and CLB. This was similar to new entrants involved in organizational

socialization, learning role-related and cultural content of the organization (Louis, 1980), and proactively engaging themselves in planned tasks to overcome the feelings of low control over their jobs (Ashford & Black, 1996).

Some participants expressed the need for training for themselves, such as training in remote teaching; while others wanted an introductory course for the learners on computer usage, which could release the burden of teaching technology to the learners. This reinforces the teaching concepts by Cross (2009) that individuals should equip themselves with the changing demand of labour market and adapt to the requirements of the society.

Some participants expressed that they wanted to be walked through LINC at a slower pace in order to comprehend details. They also showed their concerns on the PBLA introductory course offered for new LINC instructors, being treated as an absolute guide for these instructors. They suggested the LINC leads' involvement with the new instructors, where the LINC leads assist these instructors in selecting level appropriate teaching resources and developing assessments. The research findings indicate that, instructors want frequent professional development sessions and workshops. This endorses the concept of co-operative learning propounded by Farrell and Jacobs (2016).

While commending their colleagues supports, the participants said that their co-workers were always available to assist them. However, none of them mentioned to have a formal one-on-one mentor in their initial career as LINC instructors. The need for a mentor was also an issue raised in the past studies (Cohen, 2018). It seems like LINC service providers encourage organizational socialization. However, findings of this research reveal that the “encounter stage” (Louis, 1980, p. 230) for a new LINC instructor can be an overwhelming experience, where instructors have to plan lessons, teach and assess the learners, keep the learners motivated, cope

up with any trauma in the classrooms, and complete the routine reporting on their LINC teaching.

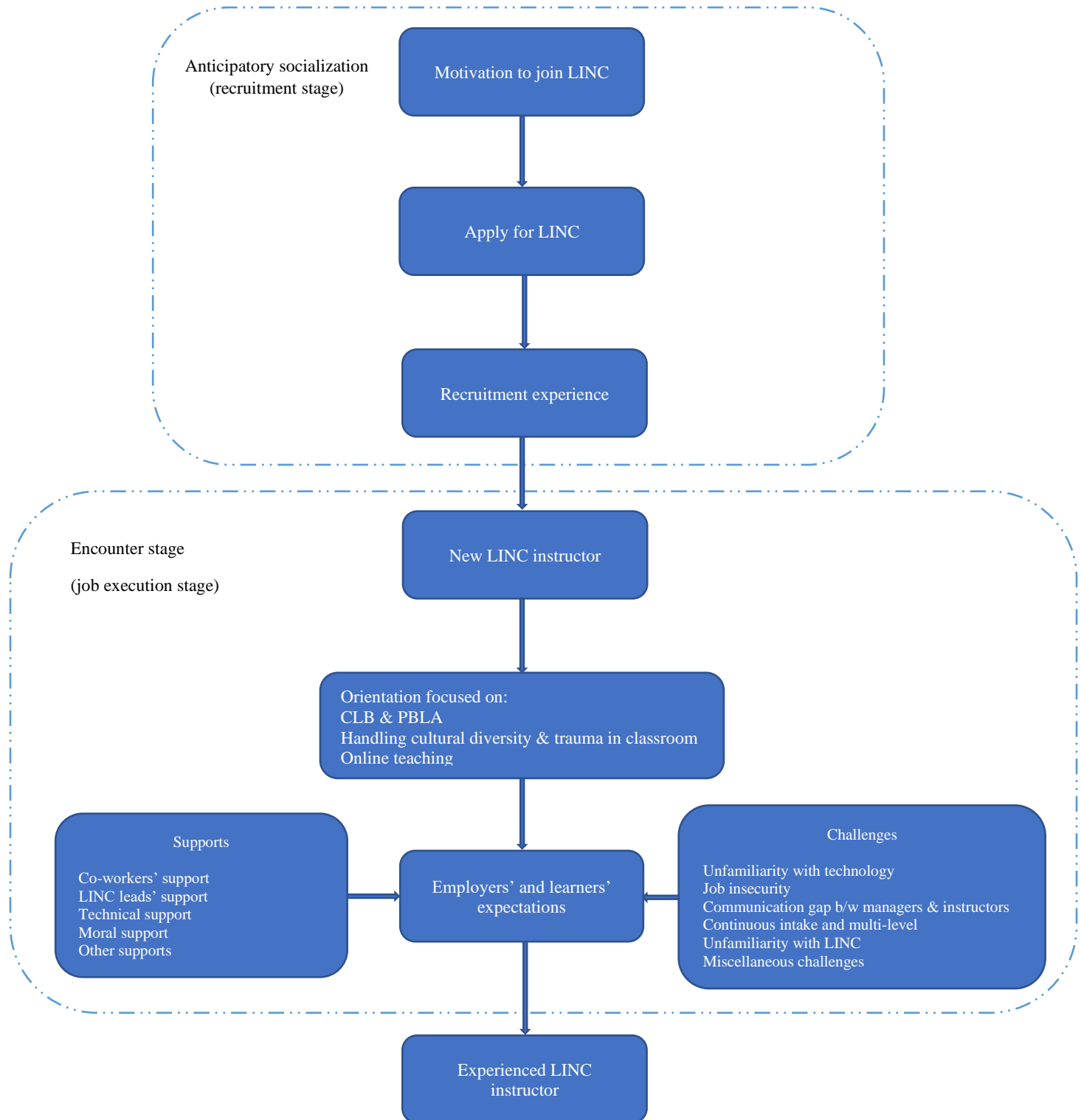
### ***Reconceptualized Model***

The reconceptualized model shown in figure 4 is based on the findings of this research as well as the knowledge drawn from the past literature. The conceptual framework in figure 2 was based on the theory of organizational entry by Louis (1980), and supported by social cognitive career theory by Lent et al. (1994) and the theory on proactive socialization and desire for control by Ashford and Black (1996). It illustrated the stages of organizational socialization and turnover. However, due to the scope of this study, the reconceptualized model illustrated in figure 4 is focused exclusively on organizational socialization.

The reconceptualized model in figure 4 illustrates that the prospective LINC instructors are motivated to join LINC while they go through the hiring process in the anticipatory socialization stage (Louis, 1980). Once they enter the encounter stage (Louis, 1980), the new instructors come across employer's and learners' expectations, which are accompanied with challenges and backed up with supports for these individuals. Most of these challenges and supports are also mentioned in the past studies (Breshears, 2019; Buckley, 2000; Cohen, 2018; Cray, 1997; Cross, 2009; Derwing, 2017; Farrell & Baecher, 2017; Gebhard, 2017; Haynes, 2007; Karamifar et al., 2019; Li et al., 2012; Nicholas et al., 2018; Russell, 2015).

**Figure 4**

*Reconceptualized Model: Overall Experience of New ESL LINC Instructors*



Dewey (1916) posited the instructors in adult education to act as facilitators and to take into account learners' needs and experiences. Knowles et al. (2011) placed the responsibility on the instructors of adult education for setting physically and psychologically conducive learning environment for the learners. Moreover, adult learners prefer programs with purposeful classes that are meaningful in their real life and have well-defined goals and outcomes (Cross, 2009; Knowles et al., 2011; Li et al., 2012; Mezirow, 1991). For implementing the approaches mentioned above, LINC instructors need supports from the LINC service providers. The need for support from the LINC service providers is also evident from the findings of this research where some new LINC instructors struggle with comprehending CLB and PBLA. They strive to cope with technology and need guidance in handling cultural diversity and trauma in their classrooms. The challenges that the new instructors face and supports that they receive have been added in the reconceptualized model in figure 4. The supports shown in figure 4 also include the supports needed by the instructors.

With the passage of time, the new instructors learn the cultural norms of the organization and develop teaching skills to finally become experienced LINC instructors.

## **Conclusion**

With limited literature on ESL LINC instructors in Canada, and almost none in Saskatchewan, this study has contributed in filling in the knowledge gap. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon, and to establish ways in which LINC service providers can support these instructors to excel in their careers. It focused on the experiences of the new instructors, in terms of what is expected from them at their workplace, the challenges they face, and the supports they need. My aim was not to generalize the findings, but to make inferences on the participants' views. In this section, I present my

findings based on the themes: a) motivational factors to join LINC, b) expectations from LINC instructors, c) LINC instructors' experiences with instructions d) supports needed for LINC instructors, and my conclusions.

### ***1. Motivational Factors to Join LINC***

The first finding answers the first guiding question of this research: What was the motivation for becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon? The data reveal that participants had clear reasons to join LINC, which were based on their self-efficacy beliefs, their expectations from LINC (Lent et al, 1994), and their prevailing circumstances (Sumison, 2000). Among the categories of extrinsic, intrinsic, and compassionate reasons for considering LINC as a career, compassionate reasons were the most dominant in this research. These compassionate reasons included giving back to the community what the individuals or their families had received as newcomers to Canada; having been through similar experiences as a newcomer to Canada or as a second language learner, and an instinct to help these people; and helping newcomers to Canada in their daily lives. These reasons reflect that, individuals care for their community or have empathy towards others. They view themselves as competent at performing their jobs, and expect positive outcomes from their profession (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2007).

### ***2. Expectations from LINC Instructors***

The next finding is that employers have expectations from new LINC instructors. These expectations start at the hiring stage and continue throughout the instructors' career. The following are the findings on employer's expectations at the hiring stage:

- a. Though the expectations at the hiring stage are not the same among all LINC service providers in Saskatoon, still the basic criteria for hiring remain the same, which is,

having a university degree or some post-secondary education, and CERTESL or an equivalent certificate to teach ESL in Canada. A variation in the hiring criteria was observed in the participants' responses on the interview process, degree requirement, and teaching experience. These variations include (1) going through a detailed interview which involves assessing the applicant's writing skills, to a brief interview; (2) from having a university degree in a specific field, to having any post-secondary education; (3) from having completed minimum number of hours teaching adult newcomers to Canada in a face to face or online setting, to having some teaching experience in Canada or abroad.

- b. The expectations at the job execution stage included acquiring teaching material, developing lesson plans, using specific teaching methods, assessing learners' learning, managing class decorum, along with executing responsibilities assigned by the employer. For acquiring teaching resources and developing lesson plans, participants stated that they have access to physical ESL libraries in the organization, as well as to the online resources. However, instructors are expected to explore and share teaching resources with their colleagues, and develop lesson plans on their own. The findings on acquiring teaching resources reveal the instructors' concern on the expectation from new LINC instructors to independently develop the teaching material, as these instructors are new to LINC, and need guidance in developing teaching material.

Once the new LINC instructors start their careers, employers expect them to be independent in classroom management and teaching. They are expected to select the level-appropriate teaching materials and to adapt these materials to the multilevel

class, follow CLB and PBLA framework to develop their own assessments, and complete reporting on the learners' progress. For this, the new instructors expressed the need for guidance to comprehend CLB and PBLA and to adapt the teaching material to their multilevel classes.

For the teaching methods being used, my findings reveal that few participants were aware that they are expected to follow task-based teaching methods and assess the learners using PBLA framework. Even being in the same organization, most of the participants had different responses for the employers' expectations on teaching methods and assessment criteria, which shows an unawareness of LINC instructors on the criteria on teaching methods and learners' assessment laid out in PBLA Practice Guidelines (2019).

The findings also reveal that LINC instructors are expected to handle trauma or other critical situations in their classroom, but there is no evidence from the findings that the new LINC instructors receive any formal periodic training on handling cultural diversity or trauma. My analysis is that handling a critical situation such as trauma without having any training can be stressful for the new instructors, as they have to plan lessons, teach and assess learners, cope up with any trauma in the classrooms, and complete the routine reporting on their LINC teaching.

- c. Another finding was on learners' expectations from LINC instructors. The findings reflect that the LINC learners want clear classroom instructions, skill specific and level appropriate materials, and tasks that can help advance their settlement in Canada. Learners also expect that instructors build a learning environment that would facilitate them in understanding the Canadian culture. The research findings reveal



that though learners have clear reasons to join LINC, some learners have reasons with demanding expectations to get an early certificate, so that they can apply for citizenship. The findings include suggestions to nurture the learners' intrinsic motivation to attend class. These are: developing a supportive community to encourage collaborative learning, encouraging interaction among learners, and making them feel passionate for their learning.

### **3. *LINC Instructors' Experiences with Instructions***

The findings in this section are with reference to the third guiding question: 'What was the experience with instructions?'. The following are the findings:

- a. New LINC instructors receive informal supports from their colleagues such as voluntary assistance in planning lessons and developing assessments, and being welcomed to the informal social media groups that help them in their professional activities. They also receive formal support from their employers such as financial rewards, being connected to formal online meetings during pandemic, having educational assistants and language interpreters in the classrooms whenever needed, having group membership to access relevant educational websites, and being subscribed to online educational forums.
- b. With reference to the working conditions for new LINC instructors in Saskatoon, most of the instructors expressed their satisfaction with the current working conditions in LINC, which includes supports for new instructors, suitable wages, and additional financial compensation. Still some instructors expressed their concerns with the contemporary working conditions in LINC. These concerns were on job security and communication between the new instructors and the managers in LINC.

The research findings reveal that there is a trend of pursuing more than one degree among LINC instructors in Saskatoon. According to the participants, this a backup plan, in case they lose their LINC job. An insight into this situation is that new LINC instructors work under pressure due to job insecurity.

The concerns raised by participants over the communication gap between LINC instructors and the managers are on teaching and assessing language skills of CLB 1-4 learners online, implementation of Avenue.ca for CLB 1-4, working hours of some instructors being slashed without being given an explanation, non-voluntary commitment of LINC instructors to work on weekends, and an increase in unpaid holidays. Participants expressed their demotivation on these issues not being addressed by their managers.

#### ***4. Supports Needed for new LINC Instructors***

Findings in this section answer the last guiding question of this research, which was ‘What supports do LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors?’. The findings are that the new instructors look forward to moral support in the form of word of encouragement from the managers, administrators, and team leads, instead of being criticized. Some new instructors face challenges while teaching online, which are:

- a. Some new instructors are not proficient in technology, and they need technical assistance while teaching online. The findings reveal that this issue is prominent among experienced instructors who join LINC after teaching ESL in other setups. This indicates that these instructors have experience in teaching ESL, but struggle with teaching online due to lack of technical experience. The findings also reveal that training instructors in remote teaching varies among organizations. In some

- organizations instructors are not trained for remote teaching, some organizations have started training their instructors on remote teaching, and other organizations encourage their instructors to join government sponsored online training session.
- b. Some learners do not have access to basic equipment required for online learning such as computer and internet, some learners are not familiar with technology.
- However, for the latter group, there is no evidence that LINC service providers offer basecourse for the learners on using technology.

My conclusions on the findings of this study are that the new ESL LINC instructors face challenges in their careers. At the same time, they receive voluntary as well as formal supports at their workplace. However, an insight into the research findings reflects that the challenges that the new instructors face outweigh the supports that they receive. If these challenges are not addressed, the small issues can turn into grave concerns. On the basis of the research findings, I have listed my recommendations in the following section that can assist the LINC service providers address the related issues.

## **Recommendations**

This research has added to the limited literature on ESL LINC instructors in Canada, particularly in Saskatchewan. It provides insights into the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. Findings of this research establish that new instructors need additional supports to overcome the encumbrances at their workplace. Based on these findings, there are recommendations that I make to enhance practice for LINC instructors and for future research in other areas of LINC.

### ***Recommendations for Practice***

One of the purposes of the study was to provide recommendations to enhance the experiences of LINC instructors with the aim of improving practice and ultimately strengthening the LINC program. The following are my recommendations for improving practice:

- 1. Boost the LINC Instructors' Morale.** Findings of this research indicate that individuals are motivated and have compassionate as well as extrinsic reasons to join LINC, but soon they are discontented on account of their unrecognized efforts. If not addressed, this discontentment can lower the instructors' morale, which can lead to employee turnover (Louis, 1980). Advocates of SCCT suggest that individuals should be exposed to environments and experiences that offer opportunities to strengthen their careers, so that they can advance in their field of interest, and areas in which they are talented (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2007). The findings also establish that new LINC instructors look forward to receive moral support in the form of words of encouragement from LINC managers, administrators, and team leads. The first recommendation is that the managers, administrators, and team leads to show appreciation for the input and efforts of the LINC instructors.
- 2. Create an Environment for Instructors to Surpass Employers' Expectations.** Another finding of this research reveals that the new LINC instructors struggle with comprehending Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA). During the first few months, these instructors need guidance on selecting level appropriate teaching material, adapting material for multi-level classes, learning techniques on adult teaching and classroom management, developing assessments according to PBLA guidelines, and reporting on learners' progress. For a new instructor, all this can be overwhelming in the absence of a mentor. In order to give a realistic job view, LINC service providers offer

orientation (Louis, 1998) to the new instructors on LINC and PBLA. The orientation and PBLA introductory course offered to the new instructors should not be treated as the sole guide for these instructors. Therefore, I recommend the following:

- a. LINC service providers to arrange one-on-one mentor for the new instructors. These mentors should be experienced LINC instructors, supervised by LINC managers.
- b. The orientation of new LINC instructors should be expanded to include the overview of Canadian Language Benchmarks and Portfolio-Based Language Assessment. In addition to this, there should also be an annual refresher course/ workshop on Canadian Language Benchmarks and Portfolio-Based Language Assessment for instructors to review the basics on CLB and PBLA in order to understand LINC.

The literature review established that cultural diversity is a prominent feature of LINC classes (Gebhard, 2017; Li et al., 2012). Findings of my research reveal that handling trauma or issues linked with cultural diversity can be stressful for the new LINC instructors, particularly when they are not equipped for handling such situations. For this, I recommend the following:

- c. Within the first six months of joining LINC, equip the new instructors on handling cultural diversity, trauma or any critical situation in the classroom (Haynes, 2007).

The program on handling cultural diversity or trauma in the classroom should be made a part of the periodic professional development for new instructors as well as for the experienced LINC instructors.

3. **Enhance LINC Instructor's Experiences with Instructions.** In this section I have given recommendations on the supports that the new ESL LINC instructors need for their career development and success as instructors in Saskatoon.

- a. The findings of this research indicate that the new LINC instructors need continuous assistance and clear instructions on online assessment of learners at CLB 1-4 level. PBLA guidelines (2019) were set out for physical classrooms. With the growing trend of blended and complete virtual classes in LINC, administrators to give clear instructions to the new LINC instructors on assessing learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills online, and classroom management in a virtual setting.
  - b. Mentors to support and guide the new instructors in implementing the instructions given by the administrators on assessing learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills online, and classroom management in a virtual setting.
  - c. Managers, administrators, and team leads be encouraged to share with the instructors, the rationale behind their decisions that directly impact the instructors.
4. **Provide Essential Supports for New LINC Instructors.** .
- a. LINC service providers to assist the new LINC instructors to familiarize with the software and applications used in LINC program. This assistance be offered within the first six months after the instructor has joined the organization. Refresher courses be made available for instructors in remote teaching.
  - b. LINC service providers to offer expert assistance in technology for troubleshooting issues in virtual and blended classrooms. This assistance could be sources on voluntary basis, as most of the settlement agencies have access to volunteers.
  - c. Blended and complete online teaching are excellent opportunities to equip the learners and instructors with technology. However, findings of this research reveal that some learners do not have access to computers or smartphones, due to which they cannot fully participate in complete online classes. In such a case where a learner does not have access

to computer/ laptop, the learner be referred to public libraries to use or borrow computer/ laptop for the duration of the class. LINC service providers to collaborate with public libraries to equip some laptops with the required software or application for LINC learners. This will assist the instructors in complete virtual classes; at the same time, it will encourage the learners to register for and participate in virtual classes.

### ***Recommendations for Future Research***

LINC program in Saskatchewan has not received much attention, compared to LINC program in other prairie provinces in Canada, despite the fact that Saskatchewan's immigrant population quadrupled from 2001 to 2016 and is projected to grow in future (Statistic Canada, 2017d). This research was limited to Saskatoon. For future, similar studies can be conducted on new LINC instructors across Saskatchewan, which would add to the literature on LINC program in a prairie province with growing number of immigrants. Besides, this study was based on the views and experiences of new ESL LINC instructors only; similar research can be conducted on the experienced LINC instructors on how they navigated through the challenges in their careers. Other studies can be conducted on the LINC support staff, which includes managers and administrators for their views on the working conditions and their experiences with LINC.

A study can also be conducted on the perspectives of LINC learners. Since LINC learners are autonomous and purposeful learners (Knowles et al., 2011), who decide to participate in programs that cater to their needs (Li et al., 2012; Merriam & Brockett, 2007); a study on the experiences and expectations of LINC learners can add to the information for strengthening the LINC program.

## **Researcher's Reflections**

This research has been an exciting and a rewarding learning experience for me. Having worked as an ESL LINC instructor positioned me as an emic researcher. Since I had the insider's view of the LINC program, I had to be watchful not to bring in my own biases to this report. In order to steer clear of these biases, I applied, what I had learned from the literature, and been guided by my research supervisor. I disclosed the purpose of my research to the participants before data collection, performed member check, and followed-up after interviews and focus group discussions. In the focus group discussions, some participants were hesitant to voice their opinions, and seemed to drift into group think. I encouraged these participants to share their views. In this way, I ensured that my research carried the voices of the participants.

Before conducting this research, my views on ESL LINC teaching were exclusively based on my involvement and exposure to this field. However, once I started collecting data, I realized that my views came in from a very limited perspective. I was aware of the challenges that I had faced, and had the knowledge of the supports that I had received. However, this study reshaped my understanding of the new LINC instructors' experiences, as the interactions during interviews and focus group discussions gave me the opportunity to view these experiences from the lens of different participants. It gave me an insight on the participants perspectives, on what they were facing, and the supports they were receiving. I can now relate my journey in this research to the theory of constructivism on how individuals construct their knowledge, based on their experiences.

Through my limited but knowledge-based experience with different LINC service providers in Saskatoon, and established from this research, I can conclude that though all LINC service providers in Saskatoon work under the umbrella of the same funder; each one has its



unique style of delivering quality service to its stakeholders. Each organization is putting in its best efforts to match the needs of the instructors and the learners.

This study has added to the limited literature on ESL LINC instructors in Canada, particularly in Saskatchewan. The findings of this study establish that the new ESL LINC instructors need supports to overcome the encumbrances at their workplace. Based on these findings, I have offered recommendation to enhance the experiences of these instructors. I have also offered recommendations on future studies, which will give a comprehensive image of the Language Instruction to Newcomers in Canada and help in improving the LINC program.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A



#### Department of Educational Administration

#### Email to the Organizations Offering LINC Program

Good morning,

My name is Nadia Maqbool, and I am a master's student in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, studying under the supervision of Dr. Janet Okoko. I am requesting permission to recruit potential participants for my study titled **"Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon"**. The purpose of this research is to explore and provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of ESL LINC instructors who are in the initial stage of their careers in Saskatoon.

There is a growing number of LINC instructors in Saskatoon. These instructors have an in-depth knowledge and can inform the institution on the assistance that they need and how they can be supported to excel in their careers. Their perspectives on any challenges that they are facing need to be heard.

Considering this, I am requesting you to forward this email to all ESL LINC instructors in your organization, so that they can contact me if they are interested in this research, and I will send them the invitation letter. My email address is: [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca)

If you require any information regarding this research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor Dr. Janet Okoko at [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca). This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding this research may be addressed to the committee through the Research Ethics Office [ethics.office@usask.ca](mailto:ethics.office@usask.ca) (306) 966-2975.

Best,

Nadia Maqbool

## Appendix B



### Department of Educational Administration

#### Invitation to Participants

Dear (                    )

Thank you for showing interest in the research titled “**Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon**”, being conducted by the undersigned. The purpose of this research is to explore and provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of LINC instructors who are in the initial stage of their careers. This research is guided by the following questions:

- What is the experience of becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?
- What is expected from LINC instructors?
- What challenges do LINC instructors face?
- What supports do the LINC instructors need in order to be effective?

The participant selection criteria for this research is:

1. Instructors who have spent less than five years teaching LINC classes.
2. LINC instructors who are working in Saskatoon only.
3. LINC instructors from organizations in Saskatoon offering LINC program.

Please let me know if you qualify the participant selection criteria, and I will guide you through the informed consent process. This process will provide you with information about the voluntary nature of your participation in this research and your rights as a participant. You will then be required to sign the informed consent form and participate in an interview and a focus group discussion. Each interview will take about 60 minutes and will be audio recorded with your permission. You will also be asked to participate in a follow-up focus group discussion that will last for approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview and focus group discussion will be conducted online through Webex application.

There is no incorrect answer to the questions that you will respond to during the research. As mentioned earlier, participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the research at any time or refuse to respond to questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. All data collected during this research will be kept private and confidential. This research is for academic purposes only; under no circumstances will your details be passed on to any organization.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Janet Okoko via email at [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca) or phone 306-966-7611 or me via email at [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca) .

Thank you for considering this research opportunity.

Best,

Nadia Maqbool

## Appendix C



### Department of Educational Administration

#### Interview Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: “**Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon**”

**Researcher:** Nadia Maqbool; M.Ed. student in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Email: [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Janet Okoko, Assistant Professor at Educational Administration Department, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, email: [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca), phone: 306-966-7611.

**Dear Participant:** You are invited to participate in an interview.

The purpose of this research is to explore ways in which the new ESL LINC instructors can be supported by the organizations where they work, so that these instructors can excel in their careers. This study will generate new knowledge about your experiences of teaching ESL to adult permanent residents and refugees in Saskatoon, in terms of what is expected from you at your workplace, the challenges that you face, and the supports that you need.

**Procedure:** This interview is focused on your experience in teaching English as a Second Language to adult newcomers to Canada in Saskatoon. During the interview you’ll be asked questions about your views and perceptions on the challenges that you are facing and the supports that you need from the organizations where you work. It will also establish how you can be supported to settle and excel in your career.

The data for this study will be collected using semi-structured individual interviews with selected participants. Each interview is scheduled to last for approximately 60 minutes. Your participation in this study will involve answering a set of open-ended questions on your experience in teaching ESL to adults. The introductory questions will be focused on gathering background information of the participants, which will further help in giving context to the participants’ responses.

The interviews will be conducted on Cisco Webex. Cisco Webex is an online meeting forum that allows you to virtually meet with other people. You’ll need a computer or smart phone with internet access to participate in Cisco Webex forums. You will have to download the free Cisco Webex on your electronic device. By logging into the Webex meeting, you’ll be able to see the presenter’s computer screen. In case you do not want to use Cisco Webex platform, you can use private phone to participate in the interview.

University of Saskatchewan requires that all research conducted by its members conform to the highest ethical standards. The interview will be conducted and transcribed by the researcher (Nadia Maqbool). With your permission, the entire interview will be audio- recorded to produce a transcript. However, the audio recording device will be turned off any time on interviewee's request without any reason. The audio recordings will be saved on a password protected laptop, rather than to the cloud. Since Cisco Webex platform will be used to conduct the interviews, this link gives the privacy policy of Cisco: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/legal/privacy-full.html> . There is no guarantee of privacy of data with the use of Cisco Webex platform.

The purpose of this consent form is to ensure that the interviewee has carefully read and understood the purpose of their involvement in this research and is giving a voluntary consent to participate. A signed copy of this form will be sent to you so that you can review what we discussed. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

**Potential Risks:** This research will be conducted respectfully and there are no known or anticipated potential risks to you by participating in this research, however there might be minimal risks involved. You will be free to answer those questions that you are comfortable with. However, if you feel any anxiety or distress, you will be free to leave the discussion if you want to.

**Potential Benefits:** This study will help create awareness on the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. It will identify the areas of need for new instructors. It may benefit the administrators in their planning by establishing how new ESL LINC instructors can be supported to settle and excel in their careers. These actions will consequently create information for decision makers to budget funding for the LINC classes to an effective degree.

**Confidentiality:** All information that you provide in this study will be considered confidential. Your name and your affiliation with the institution where you work will not appear in the final report or any publication resulting from this study. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. In case of quotation, participant(s) will be referred to as participant 1, participant 2, and so on.

**Data Storage and Security:** The data collection process, analysis, and report will adhere to University of Saskatchewan ethical guidelines. The notes and recordings taken during the discussions will be transcribed or written up and saved safely on the University of Saskatchewan OneDrive. A copy of the de-identified data will be backed up in PAWS.

During analysis, the data will be stored on a password-protected laptop. After analysis these data will be transferred safely to the University of Saskatchewan OneDrive. The data will be destroyed after five years post publication.

**Participant Right to Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary and you can partake in only those discussions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, without explanation or penalty of any sort. If you decide to withdraw from the study, all information provided by you for this interview will be destroyed and will not be used in the



research or publication. However, this will apply only before you review and sign the transcript release form.

Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your employment.

Once the interviews are completed, a transcript will be issued to the participant. The purpose of this is to ensure that the participant has been represented accurately. The participant will be given a period of 3 days to read and make any changes in the transcript, and sign a transcript release form. By completing and signing the transcript release form, the participant will be acknowledging that they have completed their transcript review and given permission for it to be used in data analysis. In case the participant does not respond within 3 days of receiving the transcript, it will be assumed that the permission to use the transcript in data analysis has been granted, and data analysis will commence immediately. After the period of engagement is completed, the participant will no longer be able to withdraw or revise the data.

**Follow up:** A summary of the final results of the research will be sent to you on your request.

**Questions or Concerns:** For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the student researcher at [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca) or the supervisor [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca) or by phone 306-966-7611.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee through the Research Ethics Office: [ethics.office@usask.ca](mailto:ethics.office@usask.ca); 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call toll free number 1-888-966-2975.

**Consent:** I consent to the following:

- ☐ My participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and I reserve the right to withdraw any time.
- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided in this form.
- ☐ I do not expect to receive any form of payment or benefit for my participation.
- ☐ I grant the permission to be audio recorded.
- ☐ I confirm that I will not make any unauthorized recordings of the content of the interview/ data collection session.
- ☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- ☐ A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.
- ☐ I agree with the use of direct quotes bearing my pseudonym in publications.

- ☐ I am aware that this consent form will be stored separately from the data.
- ☐ I agree that the interview will be conducted in English language.
- ☐ I wish to review my data/ transcript of my interview.

**Oral Consent:**

I have read and explained this consent form to the participant before receiving the participant's consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Researcher's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

***A signed copy of this consent will be sent to you, and a copy will be with the student researcher (Nadia Maqbool).***

## **Appendix D**



### **Department of Educational Administration**

#### **Interview Questions**

- 1) Tell me about your background and current job:
  - a. Qualification (in Canada or international).
  - b. Name of the organization where you teach ESL LINC classes.
  - c. Years of teaching experience with ESL LINC classes (Anywhere in Canada, including the present job).
- 2) What motivated you to choose the field of LINC teaching?
- 3) What was the experience of becoming a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?
  - a. Any certification required?
  - b. Any degree course required?
  - c. Any teaching experience required?
- 4) What expectations does your organization have from you as a LINC instructor?
  - a. Expectations from the point of view of exploring teaching resources.
  - b. Expectations from the point of view of developing lesson plans.
  - c. Expectations from the point of view of classroom management.
- 5) Do you have any additional responsibility/ies in LINC field in the same organization, other than teaching?
- 6) Did you face any challenges in your career as a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?
- 7) Currently, are you facing any challenges in your career as a LINC instructor?
- 8) If:
  - a. yes, what were/are these challenges?
  - b. no, what might be the reason/s that you never faced/are not facing any challenges?
- 9) Did you get any support while working as a LINC instructor?
  - a. Support from the co-workers?
  - b. Support from the administrative staff?
  - c. Any other support?
- 10) What challenges did you face in exploring the teaching resources?
- 11) What supports did you receive in exploring the teaching resources?
- 12) What challenges are you facing these days while teaching LINC program in this organization?
- 13) What supports would you like to receive from this organization while teaching LINC classes?

14) Is there any advice that you would like to give to a new ESL LINC instructor who has just joined this field?

15) Are there any other comments that you would like to make on your experience as an ESL LINC instructor?

Thank you.

## Appendix E



### Department of Educational Administration

### Transcript Release Form for Interview

**Research Title: Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors  
for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon**

Please select one appropriate statement:

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

- ☐ have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Nadia Maqbool. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Nadia Maqbool to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.
- ☐ decline to review the transcript. However, I authorize the release of this transcript to Nadia Maqbool to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student researcher

## Appendix F



### Department of Educational Administration

#### Focus Group Discussion Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: “**Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon**”

**Researcher:** Nadia Maqbool; M.Ed. student in the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Email: [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca)

**Supervisor:** Dr. Janet Okoko, Assistant Professor at Educational Administration Department, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, email: [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca) , phone: 306-966-7611.

**Purpose and Objective of the Research:** The purpose of this study is to explore ways in which the new LINC instructors can be supported by organizations where they work, so that these instructors can excel in their careers. This study will generate new knowledge on your experiences in teaching ESL to adult permanent residents and refugees in Saskatoon, in terms of what is expected from you at your workplace, challenges that you face, and supports that you need.

**Procedure:** Discussions in this focus group are centered on your perception of the supports that you need from the organizations where you work, in order to excel in your career. A focus group discussion is one of the methods for data collection in which a moderator moderates a small group to understand the views of the members on a specific topic.

The focus group discussion will be conducted on Cisco Webex. Cisco Webex is an online meeting forum that allows you to virtually meet with other people. You’ll need a computer or smart phone with internet access to participate in the Cisco Webex forums and you will have to download the free Cisco Webex on your electronic device. By logging into the Webex meeting, you’ll be able to see the presenter’s computer screen.

The focus group discussion is scheduled to last for approximately 60-90 minutes and will be moderated by the student researcher Nadia Maqbool. The entire discussion will be audio-recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysis. The audio recordings will be saved on a password protected laptop, rather than to the cloud.

University of Saskatchewan requires that all research conducted by its members conform to the highest ethical standards. The views and comments shared during this discussion should be kept in the strictest confidence by all participants. Your responses will only be shared with my supervisor and will be combined with other participants’ responses in the study. Since Cisco Webex platform will be used to conduct the focus group, this link gives the privacy policy of

Cisco: <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/about/legal/privacy-full.html> . However, there is no guarantee of privacy of data with the use of Cisco Webex platform.

This consent form is to ensure that your participation is voluntary and that you have carefully read and understood the purpose of your involvement in this research. A signed copy of this form will be sent to you so that you can review what we discussed. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

**Potential Risks:** This research will be conducted respectfully and there are no known or anticipated potential risks to you by participating in this research, however there might be minimal risks involved. You will be free to answer those questions that you are comfortable with. However, if you feel any anxiety or distress, you can leave the discussion if you want to.

Participants in this group discussion may respond to each other in ways that are frustrating for other participants. To ensure this risk is minimized the researcher (moderator) will ensure that everyone is respected. Participant(s) will be encouraged to talk one at a time and not debate.

**Potential Benefits:** This study will help create awareness on the experiences of new ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon. It will identify areas of need for these instructors. It may benefit the administrators in their planning by establishing how new ESL LINC instructors can be supported to settle and excel in their careers. These actions will consequently create information for decision makers to budget funding for LINC classes to an effective degree.

**Confidentiality:** The researcher will undertake to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, but cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of this discussion outside the group, and be aware that others may not respect your confidentiality. Similarly, there is no guarantee that all the participants will refrain from recording this session.

The participants for this research project have been selected from a small group of ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon, most of whom are known to each other, it is possible that you may be identifiable to other people on the basis of what you have said.

All information that you provide in this study will be considered confidential. Your name and affiliation with the institution where you work will not appear in the final report or any publication resulting from this study. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. In case of quotation, participant(s) will be referred to as participant 1, participant 2, and so on.

**Data Security:** The data collection process, analysis, and report will adhere to the University of Saskatchewan ethical guidelines. The notes and recordings taken during the discussion sessions will be transcribed or written, and saved safely on the University of Saskatchewan OneDrive. A copy of the de-identified data will be backed up in PAWS.

During analysis, the data will be stored on a password-protected laptop. After analysis these data will be transferred safely to the University of Saskatchewan OneDrive. The data will be destroyed after five years post publication.

**Right to Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary and you can partake in only those discussions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research for any reason, without explanation or penalty of any sort. If you decide to withdraw, you may leave the group discussion at any time; however, data that have already been collected will not be destroyed as it will form part of context for the information provided by other participants. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your employment.

Once the focus group discussion is completed, a transcript will be emailed to you. The purpose of this is to ensure that the participants have been represented accurately. You will be given a period of 3 days to read and make changes to those parts of transcript that reflect your contributions only in the discussion, and sign a transcript release form. By completing and signing the transcript release form, you will be acknowledging that you have completed the review of your contributions to the transcript and have given the permission for it to be used in the data analysis. You can also decline to review the transcript, and still authorize the release of the transcript to the student researcher Nadia Maqbool. In case you do not respond within 3 days of receiving the transcript, it will be assumed that the permission to use the transcript in data analysis has been granted, and data analysis will commence immediately. After the period of engagement is completed, you will no longer be able to withdraw or revise the data.

**Follow up:** A summary of the final results of the research will be sent to you on your request.

**Questions or Concerns:** For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the student researcher at [nadia.maqbool@usask.ca](mailto:nadia.maqbool@usask.ca) or the supervisor at [janet.okoko@usask.ca](mailto:janet.okoko@usask.ca) or by phone 306-966-7611.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee through the Research Ethics Office: [ethics.office@usask.ca](mailto:ethics.office@usask.ca); 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call toll free number: 1-888-966-2975.

**Consent:** I consent to the following:

- ☐ I agree to participate in the focus group discussion on career development of new English as a Second Language instructors for newcomers: Exploring the experience in Saskatoon.
- ☐ I have been made aware of the topics to be discussed in this focus group.
- ☐ I am aware that my information will remain confidential throughout the data reported and that I have the right to leave the focus group at any point.
- ☐ I am aware that the data collected will be stored safely and securely.
- ☐ I am aware that I am not compelled to answer any question or partake in a discussion; I will do so on my own free will.
- ☐ I agree to have the focus group discussions audio recorded.



- ☐ I am aware of my right to revise the transcript containing contributions that I made in the focus group. A period of three days will be given to me to read and sign the transcript release form. Once the form has been signed, a further revision of the transcript will not be possible.
- ☐ I am aware that anything discussed in this group and the identities of the participants must remain confidential.
- ☐ I am aware that this consent form will be stored separately from the data.
- ☐ I confirm that I will not make any unauthorized recordings of the content of the focus group discussion/ data collection session.
- ☐ I agree that the focus group discussions will be conducted in English language.

**Oral Consent:**

I have read and explained this consent form to the participant before receiving the participant's consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Researcher's Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

***A signed copy of this consent will be sent to you, and a copy will be with the student researcher (Nadia Maqbool).***

## Appendix G



### Department of Educational Administration

### Focus Group Discussion Guide and Questions

**Instructions:** *Email this consent form to each participant before this forum. Thank the participants for coming in and introduce to them the purpose of the study. Review the contents of this form with the participants, and get their consent to audio record this discussion before starting the focus group discussion. Explain the purpose of this focus group and set the norms of engagement (respect, fairness, keeping time). Emphasize the need to respect the confidentiality of other members of the group by not disclosing the contents of the discussion outside the group.*

**Purpose:** The research is framed around the following objectives: (1) to examine the process of being an ESL LINC instructor in Saskatoon (2) to explore the experiences that the new ESL LINC instructors go through when they enter the field of LINC teaching (3) to get the teachers' point of view on what is expected from them at work, and (4) provide insight on the ways in which the organizations offering LINC program can support the new ESL LINC instructors.

**1) Introductions:** Request the participants to introduce themselves. The introduction should include: name of the participant, the name of the organization they work with, and the number of years that they have taught LINC classes.

#### ***Facilitate the group to respond to the following questions***

- 2) What motivated you to choose LINC teaching? Probes: family background, friend etc.
- 3) What was the experience of becoming an ESL LINC instructor in Saskatoon? Probes may include certification requirement? University degree requirement? Teaching experience requirement?
- 4) What expectations does your organization have from you as a LINC instructor?
  - a. Expectations from the point of view of exploring teaching resources. Probes may include specific books, online resources, fieldtrips.
  - b. Expectations from the point of view of developing lesson plans. Probes may include blended learning, particular language skills, lesson themes, real life scenarios.
  - c. Expectations from the point of classroom management. Probes may include being more/ less vigilant on learners' regularity/ punctuality, learners' behaviour in the classroom.
- 5) Do you have any additional responsibility/ies in LINC field in the same organization, other than teaching LINC classes? Probes may include taking minutes of monthly meetings, helping the CNC staff, developing learners' progress reports, helping other teachers with their learners' portfolios.

- 6) Did you face any challenge/s in your career as a LINC instructor in Saskatoon?
- 7) If:
- a. yes, what were these challenges?
  - b. no, what might be the reason/s that you never faced any challenge(s)?
- 8) Did you get any support while working as a LINC instructor?
- a. Support from the co-workers?
  - b. Support from the administrative staff?
  - c. Any other support?
- 9) What challenges did you face in exploring the teaching resources? Probes may include: unfamiliar with technology, no/ minimal formal training, no guidance on the teaching resources available in the organization, absence of a mentor.
- 10) What supports did you receive in exploring the teaching resources? Probes may include: links to websites, ongoing training on PBLA, guidance from a mentor.
- 11) What challenges are you facing these days while teaching LINC program in this organization?
- 12) What supports would you like to receive from this organization while teaching LINC classes?
- 13) What are your views on the present-day work conditions for an ESL LINC instructor in Saskatoon? Probes can be changes made due to COVID-19, job security, number of working hours, job satisfaction, online classes versus face-to-face classes.
- 14) Are you satisfied with the present-day work conditions for the ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon?
- 15) Do you think the present-day work conditions can be improved for ESL LINC instructors in Saskatoon?
- 16) If the answer is 'yes' for the above question, what step(s) for improvement would you suggest?
- 17) Is there any advice that you would like to give to a new ESL LINC instructor who has just joined this field?
- 18) What is the most important thing that you have learned while teaching ESL LINC learners?
- 19) Are there any other comments that you would like to make on your experience as an ESL LINC instructor?

Thank you.

## Appendix H



### Department of Educational Administration

### Transcript Release Form for Focus Group Discussion

**Research Title: Career Development of New English as a Second Language Instructors  
for Newcomers: Exploring the Experience in Saskatoon**

Please select one appropriate statement:

I, \_\_\_\_\_,

- ☐ have reviewed the complete transcript of my contribution to the focus group discussion in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in the focus group discussion moderated by Nadia Maqbool. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Nadia Maqbool to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.
- ☐ decline to review the transcript. However, I authorize the release of this transcript to Nadia Maqbool to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of student researcher

## Appendix I

**Table 2**

*First Cycle Coding*

*In Vivo and Structural Coding to Develop Codes for Research Question 1*

Quotes from Participants	Emerging Codes
I volunteered at ... for making contacts	Volunteered
I had professional background in similar field from my country.	Attachment to past job
My first work was at ... in EAP. I didn't like teaching at the university. So, when I came to Saskatoon, I was exploring other options, and I heard about ... that they were working with refugees and immigrants to Canada. I thought let's try that.	Not satisfied with the current job
I experienced a layoff and ... was looking for a teacher. I applied and started working with LINC.	Job search
When I was doing my studies in ..., I was originally planning to go with the literature and kind of main stream English route, but then, when it came to choosing research topics and everything, it kind of drew me in more, because I felt like I was able to help people practically, in their daily lives.	Urge to help people practically
I didn't really choose it, it just happened to be the job available. My previous employment was not in LINC. When I was looking for work, it was recommended to me that I contact ...; they were looking for teachers. So, that was my first exposure to LINC.	Job search
My parents went to ESL classes to learn English in.... Now I wanted to give back what my family had had from Canada some years back; the benefits that we had received from ESL program. I went to ESL classes before, when I was in grade 1 and 2.	Giving back to the community
I thought LINC is a good model to teach ESL to newcomers, and help them integrate and feel settled in the community.	Good teaching model Urge to help newcomers

My own experience of studying ... (SL) in ... and realizing that the whole emersion experience is invaluable. I was excited about people who were coming to Canada to make Canada home, and helping them with same kind of thing.	Self-motivation as SL learner. Urge to help
When I applied for LINC, at that time I was just looking for a job.	Looking for a job
My mom came and she was from ..., and joined LINC program, back when it first began.	Giving back to the community
When I came here (Canada), I had the knowledge about the difficulties of newcomers, then I realized that I need to continue and help newcomers with respect to their cultural and linguistic difficulties.	Urge to help
I couldn't work in a school, so I was told to contact ... (for job).	Job search

*Note:* Source of data for Table 2 are online interviews and focus group discussions for this research.

SL: Second Language

**Table 3***Categories and Sub-Categories Emerging for Research Question 1*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-Categories</b>	<b>Category</b>
Volunteered	Extrinsic 1	Source of inspiration
Attachment to past job	Intrinsic 1	Source of inspiration
Not satisfied with the current job	Intrinsic 2	Source of inspiration
Job search	Extrinsic 2	Source of inspiration
Urge to help people practically	Compassionate 1	Source of inspiration
Job search	Extrinsic 3	Source of inspiration
Giving back to the community	Compassionate 2	Source of inspiration
Good teaching model Urge to help newcomers	Compassionate 3	Source of inspiration
Self-motivation as SL learner Urge to help	Compassionate 4	Source of inspiration
Looking for a job	Extrinsic 4	Source of inspiration
Giving back to the community	Compassionate 5	Source of inspiration
Urge to help	Compassionate 6	Source of inspiration
Job search	Extrinsic 5	Source of inspiration

*Note:* Source of data for Table 3 are online interviews and focus group discussions for this research.

**Table 4***Second Cycle Coding**Pattern Coding to Develop Sub-categories, Category and Themes for Research Question 1*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Research Question 1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered</li> <li>• Job search</li> </ul>	Extrinsic	Source of inspiration	Motivational Factors	What was the motivation for becoming LINC instructor?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment to past job</li> <li>• Not satisfied with the current job</li> </ul>	Intrinsic			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urge to help people practically</li> <li>• Giving back to the community</li> <li>• Good teaching model</li> <li>• Urge to help newcomers</li> <li>• Self-motivation as SL learner.</li> </ul>	Compassionate			

*Note:* Source of data for Table 4 are online interviews and focus group discussions for this research.



## Appendix J

### Certificate of Approval



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 06/Nov/2020

### *Certificate of Approval*

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Application ID: 2286

Principal Investigator: Janet Okoko

Department: Department of Educational  
Administration

Locations Where Research  
Activities are Conducted: Online, Canada

Student(s): Nadia Maqbool

Funder(s):

Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan

Title: Career development of new English as a Second Language instructors for newcomers:  
Exploring the experience in Saskatoon

Approved On: 06/Nov/2020

Expiry Date: 06/Nov/2021

Approval Of: Behavioural Research Ethics Application

Email to the organizations

Invitation to participants

Interview consent form

Interview questions

Transcript release form for interview

Focus group discussion consent form

Focus group discussion guide and questions

Transcript release form for focus group discussion

Acknowledgment Of:

Review Type: Delegated Review

**CERTIFICATION**

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TPCS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

**ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php>.

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***Digitally Approved by Stephanie Martin***  
***Vice-Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board***  
***University of Saskatchewan***



## ***Certificate of Re-Approval***

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Application ID: 2286

Principal Investigator: Janet Okoko

Department: Department of Educational  
Administration

Locations Where Research  
Activities are Conducted: Online, Canada

Student(s): Nadia Maqbool

Funder(s):

Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan

Title: Career development of new English as a Second Language instructors for newcomers:  
Exploring the experience in Saskatoon

Approval Effective Date: 06-Nov-2021

Expiry Date: 06-Nov-2022

Acknowledgment Of: N/A

Review Type: Delegated Review

\* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

### **CERTIFICATION**

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2014). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

### **ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php>.

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***Digitally Approved by Diane Martz  
Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board  
University of Saskatchewan***