

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES: AN ENGLISH MINORITY LANGUAGE INITIATIVE

An addendum to the midterm evaluation report

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Introduction and Overview

This addendum to the midterm evaluation report, *Community Learning Centres: An English Minority Language Initiative* (December 2008), presents the findings from the initial data collection of the implementation of Phase 2 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) during the 2008-2009 school year. The CLC project is based at the Leading English Education and Resource Network (LEARN) in Quebec, and funded through the Canada-Quebec Agreement for Minority Language Education and Second Language Instruction (the “Entente”) through the Sector for Services to the English-Speaking Community (SSCA) at the *Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport* (MELS). The initiative is led by the independent Project Resource Team (PRT) based at LEARN, with support and guidance from the SSCA. Learning Innovations at WestEd was contracted by LEARN to conduct the evaluation.

The December 2008 midterm evaluation report describes the background and funding of the CLC initiative, its objectives and role within the Quebec educational context, as well as the implementation of the first 15 Community Learning Centres. In the Spring of 2007 seven additional CLCs (referred to as Phase 2 CLCs) were selected and funded. Most of these CLCs began their planning in the fall of 2007, and active implementation in the Spring and Fall of 2008. These seven new CLCs are diverse in location, with six of them located in Anglophone school boards and one located in the Littoral board. Snapshots of the seven CLCs are provided in Appendix A. The findings are divided into the following two major sections, each includes reflections and recommendations:

1. PRT support and training, and
2. Findings on the implementation of the Phase 2 CLCs organized around major project themes and objectives.

Methods

The primary data sources for this report are qualitative data from site visits conducted to six of the seven Phase 2 CLCs and document review. Telephone interviews with the principal and coordinator were conducted with one site that was not visited by a WestEd evaluator. In addition, where indicated, this report draws upon focus group data with Phase 2 principals at a May 2009 meeting in Montreal.

Site visits to the Phase 2 CLCs were conducted from December 2008 through March 2009. Site visits generally lasted two days. A series of interviews and/or focus groups with key stakeholders were conducted at each site to gather a variety of perspectives and experiences about the implementation of each CLC. More specifically, the following data collection activities were conducted at each site:

- Interview with the principal,
- Interview with the CLC coordinator,
- Interviews or focus groups with teachers,
- Interviews or a focus group with parents,

- Focus group with students (at most CLCs),
- Interviews or a focus group with partners and/or the steering committee members, and
- Observations of CLC events or activities (when possible).

Interviewees were asked about: their understanding of the CLC concept and vision, implementation, role in the CLC, activities and events, the impact of the CLC on the school and community, student involvement, parent involvement, community involvement, partners and their involvement, sustainability, challenges and success of implementation, school, governing board and PRT support (see Appendix B for protocols). School governing board members were only sometimes interviewed, and when they were interviewed, it was often as individuals holding dual roles, such as teacher/Governing Board member or parent/Governing Board member. Coordinators, principals, and teachers were asked about the role of the Governing Board in the CLC.

PRT Support and Training

Phase 2 coordinators and principals were unanimous in their feedback that the training and support provided by the PRT is “one great aspect of the project” and that it connects them with a network of experts. Coordinators, principals and many partners see the PRT as an asset to the project. Coordinators described the PRT as “supportive, helpful and responsive”. They reported that the PRT is “open” and “always there.”

Based on observations and data collected by evaluators, the PRT training and support to Phase 2 CLCs was similar to, and often combined with, that provided to Phase 1 CLCs. This training included in-person workshops in the Montreal-area or over the VCN, as well as training provided through materials such as the “Guidebook” or “Framework for Action”. On-going support included consultation, visits, document review, and one-on-one assistance and feedback on the development of the CLC.

The PRT also shares information about events and resources as well as plans or coordinates events for the CLCs to participate in, such as the Tell Them from Me Survey and many videoconference opportunities. Coordinators and principals stated that these PRT activities support the development of CLCs. The VCN activities provide ready, often free or inexpensive, opportunities to engage students, teachers, and others. One coordinator noted appreciatively: “I didn’t invent things. We were bombarded with offers from the PRT and other CLCs.” One of the CLC coordinators praised the activities and events spearheaded by the PRT, but noted her/his school was not ready for or not willing to consider many of them because of slow buy-in from parents and teachers. A principal mentioned that because of the PRT’s ready support and information sharing, her/his CLC did not have the “growing pains” that many Phase 1 CLCs experienced.

Coordinators reported that the PRT trainings are good opportunities for them to network with one another. Data from coordinator interviews indicated that the coordinators view these trainings as important time to get together and share information and experiences. Several principals and coordinators expressed a desire for the PRT to share more

information about successes of other CLCs through these meetings/trainings. Several principals reported that the trainings require extended time away from their schools, which they find challenging and sometimes frustrating.

One aspect of the PRT training and support that has been challenging since the beginning of the project, according to principals and coordinators, is the “Guidebook” and reporting requirements. This continued with Phase 2 coordinators and principals, though it is not unanimous nor to the same degree. At least one coordinator reported, “They don’t ask for too much. I hear others complaining.” The PRT’s approach to use of the Guidebook was articulated differently for Phase 2 CLCs. Phase 2 CLCs reported receiving the message that the steps in the Guidebook are important, but how one completes them and how each CLC develops will be different.

All coordinators reported that some of the requirements for implementation (i.e. the forms and steps in the Guidebook) are cumbersome and some, though not all coordinators, were concerned that attention to paperwork and reporting impeded progress in implementation. Several coordinators and principals said they found the Framework for Action and Guidebook complicated and cumbersome to use. They did not necessarily find all the steps useful. For example, several CLCs reported not being comfortable requesting formal Partnership Agreements with their partners. Phase 2 coordinators reported varied use of the Framework and Guidebook, with some using it as a reference, for example, seeking information on how to conduct a needs assessment; while others tried to follow it more closely, for example, dutifully conducting step 1 before step 2. Quotations from different coordinators illustrate the differential usage of the Guidebook:

“The Guidebook, I refer to it when I need it...when I’m being asked by the PRT to produce a document, otherwise not.”

“The paperwork was a lot more involved than I thought it [would be].”

“I took the Guidebook, certain sections out of it, like vision and mission. I read the book and developed from there.”

“I used it [the Guidebook] all; I just [customized] templates for myself.”

“I’m not saying it’s overwhelming, it has to be somewhat extensive because it’s a process where the CLC takes on the flavor of the community and the school...I’ve referred to it a few times for my own personal guidance of where I’m standing in the process.”

Reflections and Recommendations on PRT Training and Support

Coordinators and principals reported feeling like they are negotiating a new frontier in school/community relationships. Principals and especially coordinators viewed the training and on-going support from the PRT as indispensable. The PRT, with its expertise and support, provided important information, served as a clearinghouse for all things

CLC, as well as provided moral support. The PRT could take several actions that would likely enhance the effectiveness of the training and support, as well as facilitate and strengthen CLC cooperation with reporting, and support implementation:

- Consider ways to effectively use technology to minimize the burden of principals being away from schools for extended periods of time. Some principals reported it is challenging to be away from their schools for more than two days at a time, and with three days of training and travel time, for many principals, attending training results in an extended leave.
- Allow time for sharing of experiences from coordinators and principals at the CLC trainings. Coordinators and principals rely heavily on the PRT, but also reported learning from each others' experiences including Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs. Provide more opportunities for principals and coordinators to share. They reported that they find the challenges and successes instructive and inspiring.
- Use the experience and expertise of coordinators and principals in the trainings or for on-going support. In addition to informal sharing of experiences, the PRT may want to consider asking certain coordinators and principals in high functioning or developing CLCs to participate with them as trainers or even consider developing a mentoring system for new coordinators and principals.
- Consider ways to facilitate connections between non-Montreal area CLCs and Montreal-based organizations that might be able to provide services or resources to these CLCs. CLCs in some remote or isolated communities reported not having resources in their communities to meet their needs.
- To the extent possible, develop a tentative schedule of trainings early in the year for coordinators and principals, as well as CLC activities, events, and theme weeks in order to allow CLCs to integrate them into their calendar of activities. CLC coordinators reported a desire to have more advance notice of events and activities, with the stated understanding that some, indeed, will be unforeseen.
- Communicate with coordinators and principals about the purposes of each required and recommended report. Most coordinators and principals describe the amount of required reports and other paperwork as somewhat burdensome, and some suggest that preparing them interferes with their ability to spend time on CLC development. Coordinators and principals may not have an understanding of the importance of certain reports in terms of the PRT's own reporting to funders or as tools to build each CLC's case for continued funding and impact. These purposes should be made clear to everyone involved.
- Review report templates and other project documentation to reflect learning and experiences of the past several years of implementation. Most reports and the project Guidebook and Framework for Action were developed prior to or early in

the implementation phase. An update of these documents might enhance their use and value.

- Consider ways to encourage the SSCA to communicate with the English School Boards about the CLC project. The SSCA should consider developing procedures or guidelines for Boards to follow regarding the coordinator position (e.g., classification, hours, and duties). Developing guidelines or best practices for the role of the School Board representatives in supporting the CLC would also be helpful.

Implementation at the Phase 2 CLCs

This section of the addendum explores the details of implementation at the Phase 2 CLCs and is organized into the following broad themes:

- Principal and coordinator roles and leadership,
- School-community partnerships,
- Student, parent, and teacher involvement,
- Defining the community to be served by the CLC,
- School board support,
- Sustainability, and
- Reflections and recommendations.

Principal and Coordinator Roles and Leadership

Principals of five of the seven Phase 2 CLCs were new to their schools this year, arriving after the CLC grant was awarded (based on an application from a previous principal) and after the CLC had begun operation. At the time of data collection, one of the CLCs had experienced a turnover in coordinator and one had never hired a coordinator. This latter CLC did not find a suitable candidate for the position and decided instead to divide up the responsibilities for CLC coordinator among three existing staff members, including the principal, a teacher, and pedagogical assistant. Principals, coordinators and others involved in the CLC reported that a turnover in principal and coordinator can stall implementation; though one CLC experienced a turnover in coordinator as a positive change that helped move forward a stalled project. Despite picking up the pace of planning and implementation, this new coordinator, who was reported to be a better match with the position and the school, felt like implementation time had been lost and goodwill with teachers, parents, and partners had to be repaired. One CLC did not hire a coordinator until the second year of the project, and consequently was inactive for a year. Below are some quotations illustrating the views of principals on the CLC:

“I was handed a letter -- congratulations you are a CLC. Because I didn’t do the application I didn’t have a lot of preconceived notions. One of the goals when I came to this school was to connect more with general community; so the CLC fit well. It’s been a good tool for us to make some of those connections ... to reach out and a good reason for people to reach in ... a good hook for those who might not have gotten interested in the school.” - A principal

“When opportunity came for the CLC we decided to do it; we’ve been trying to open up the school, get people to be more engaged, people who didn’t have positive school experiences themselves.” – A principal

“I really saw it as a separate thing – the school and the CLC. And I could see how the CLC would potentially help the school but I really saw it as two different things. I’ve evolved though – the main thing that helped me was going to [the Community Schools Conference in] Portland and really seeing how across the world there was a move to integrating this into the school fiber. So that being said – that has impacted the way I look at the project.” – A principal

Three of the principals reported that developing or strengthening school/community connections was a goal or direction for their school prior to receiving the CLC grant, but that the CLC formalized it. One principal, for example, wanted to both reach out and have the community reach into the school, because s/he believed it would be a way to support students and increase academic success. S/he described the CLC as “a good tool” to do that. While CLC principals all supported the idea in theory and verbally, several of the new principals reported that their priority was to get to know their new schools, which left little time for investing in the development of the CLC. In CLCs where the principal had not changed, evaluators saw evidence of more consistent planning and engagement in the CLC on the part of the principal.

Principals reported that working for a CLC adds to the already demanding job of a principal. Additional duties they described include working with the coordinator, networking with the community, and being involved in more meetings related to the CLC, such as Steering Committee/Partnership Table meetings. Also included in the principal’s role is reporting to the school Governing Board about the progress or happenings with the CLC. Principals reported that despite the challenges, they had no regrets in working towards becoming CLCs. Indeed, most embraced the CLC idea despite the fact that most of them were not the originators of the grant proposal. But several also mentioned that without a coordinator, the CLC is not something they would continue.

Principals and others, such as teachers and steering committee members, described the coordinator role as important or even indispensable to the implementation and on-going operation of the CLC. As indicated, several principals reported being unable to keep the CLC going without a coordinator. One principal noted, “The role of the coordinator is crucial—if the CLCs are going to have success, they must be sustained. Funding has to be found [for the coordinator position].” But coordinators and others also reported that the coordinator position is or seems precarious in terms of future funding and sustainability. For example, at the time of the site visits, there was no Ministry funding for coordinators after year 3. As one principal noted, “If it [the CLC] has any success as a CLC it’s the coordinator choosing to work many more hours...it’s a falsified system, what we are getting is at least 35 hours [but only paying for 20], that’s why the sustainability aspect is so hard.” Another noted, “we pay you half time...[but we] expect you to be here full time...”. And another principal noted, “My fear is the precariousness

of the position...do I want to grow and build this, and in a year I've created something that I can't manage in the sense that if the coordinator walks or the funding drops, I'm left with a job and a half to do."

Coordinators reported differing levels of involvement, roles and leadership from their principals. Most coordinators reported their principals are not involved in day-to-day operations or planning, but are involved more in terms of guidance and direction; some principals provide a vision for the coordinator to work toward. At least two coordinators reported wanting more direction from their principal about activities, partnerships, and ways to get teachers involved.

Five of the seven coordinators reported "wearing multiple hats" in their schools. One coordinator, for example, was the school secretary and CLC coordinator; several coordinators also substitute taught in their schools. In at least six of the CLCs, the coordinators are not employed full-time. Most coordinators reported working many more hours than they are paid. Coordinators said they are not able to do their jobs, including developing partnerships, overseeing activities, and completing the paperwork, within the hours allotted in their contracts.

Phase 2 coordinators reported that it was important for them to be able to rely on and network with Phase 1 and Phase 2 coordinators. They reported "bouncing ideas" and brainstorming with each other. They also reported collaborating on events and activities, either in-person at CLCs that may be geographically close, and over the VCN for those that are a distance from each other. One coordinator explained: "We [other coordinators in board] have a very good working relationship. We have a system of emailing back and forth. We meet bi-weekly and discuss what we're working on."

CLC and Community Partnerships

Steering Committees

In interviews with coordinators, each of the seven Phase 2 CLCs reported having a steering committee or partnership table. Two CLCs described regular and efficient steering committee meetings. Several CLCs reported that their steering committees were just beginning or not necessarily operating to support the CLC. Our observations suggest that some coordinators may not be experienced or knowledgeable in the effective use of committees, the structure and nature of committee work, or perhaps even the purpose of having a steering committee. One CLC reported the steering committee was just starting up; one reported that the partnership table meetings are basically for sharing information; and another, with a new principal and coordinator, reported a "rebuilding" of the steering committee after a "false start" with the earlier coordinator. One coordinator described the steering committee's role this way: "The steering committee is still at the advisory stage, not really steering it yet. [They] have a 'wait and see' attitude because so many things from past experience have not been followed through." Observations from site visits and interviews suggest that steering committees meet rather infrequently and that notes or meeting minutes are rarely kept.

CLC coordinators and/or their principals tended to identify or choose partners and individuals to be members of steering committees. Partners who were involved in the CLC, such as providing activities or services, were frequently members of steering committees. Teachers, parents, representatives from community organizations, business owners or representatives, and representatives from the municipality sometimes also served on steering committees. The evaluators were unable to collect complete information on the membership of steering committees and thus are not able to report on the size or frequency of steering committee meetings.

Interviews with steering committee members and coordinators, as well as results from the February/March 2009 CLC Community Partner Survey, which surveyed the partners working with both Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs, indicated that coordinators would benefit from additional guidance on how to effectively run meetings and work in collaboration. Several coordinators and partners reported their steering committee meetings do not use an agenda or keep meeting minutes. Partners at several CLCs reported wanting to be more involved or for the committee to meet more regularly, and several questioned whether all the “right” partners were at the table.

Partnerships

CLCs are establishing partnerships with many different kinds of organizations including community-based, provincial, regional, governmental, private-sector, social service, educational, cultural, religious, and other types of organizations. Not all CLCs are partnering with all types of organizations. Some CLCs have many partners and others have a few. A concern noted by two CLCs is that in small Anglophone communities, it is sometimes the same people and organizations who are tapped again and again, resulting in feelings of being stretched too thin.

Box 1: A few examples of partnerships

- Community based organizations: such as local literacy organization
- Provincial and national organizations: health advocacy organizations, literacy organizations,
- Regional: Chamber of Commerce, regional language or service organizations
- Governmental: CSSS, municipality
- Private sector: Banks, local depanneur, foundations
- Arts and cultural organizations: theatre groups, local artists
- Educational: other CLCs, other schools, universities and colleges
- Religious: local churches and other religious organizations

Though all seven of the Phase 2 CLCs mentioned having partners, few of the CLCs reported having signed “partnership agreements.” Coordinators and/or principals had varying opinions about partnership agreements, for example, that partnerships need to be developed and nurtured before formal agreements can be signed; others believed that formal partnership agreements would scare away or intimidate some partners. Two CLCs described their schools as already community oriented prior to being awarded a CLC grant and that the CLC augmented the activities and formalized partnerships that were already in place and that the CLC served to better coordinate these. Funding for the CLC allowed these schools to employ a person to coordinate these activities rather than relying on volunteers.

Activities, events and services

Each of the seven Phase 2 CLCs implemented, coordinated or engaged in a variety of activities over the past year. Few CLCs submitted activities lists with their year-end reports; therefore, a complete list is unavailable at the time of this report. Based on data

from CLC year-end reports, site visit interviews, and other documentation, we have listed in Box 2 examples of activities and services, by category, implemented in some of the CLCs this year.

There were many ways that activities and events were initiated or channeled through the CLC. CLC coordinators and principals reported seeking input from teachers, students, and others involved in the school and developing activities, programs, or services based on identified needs or preferences. Some examples of activities, services, or programs included after-school homework clubs, lunchtime yoga, mobile libraries, and videoconferences to support learning. Coordinators and principals also reported that some previous school events have come under the auspices of the CLC, such as an annual student talent show at one CLC that became a bigger and more professionalized event coordinated through the CLC. Coordinators and their partners also reported that partners approach the CLC with offers or ideas for activities and services for students or for a venue to operate programs and activities for others, such as parents or the broader the community. In many cases, the partners who proposed activities and events to the CLC were Steering Committee members. Some examples of activities initiated by partners include popular education courses, language courses, and cooperative day care. These types of activities are frequently started in response to expressed community needs.

There were clear differences between rural and urban CLCs in terms of the number and types of partnerships and activities. One of the remote CLCs described many partners, activities and services, and essentially keeping the school open all of the time. The value-added or direct benefit to the wider community of the CLC was obvious to many in schools and communities in areas where there were few services or activities available in English. On the other hand, one of the urban CLCs reported that there are already many services in the community, including an English community centre, thus it struggled to establish its niche or value-added to the community.

There were differences noted across sites in the implementation of activities, programs, and services for urban as compared to the more isolated or remote CLCs. The large territories served by some of the schools or the geographically dispersed student populations of the CLCs was identified by four of the Phase 2 CLCs as a barrier to providing some types of activities, such as after-school programming or summer school or summer activities.

In addition, coordinators, principals and partners in some CLCs reported difficulties with planning activities or events after school hours. In some CLCs, the issue was a janitorial or union

Box 2: Examples of activities, services and events

Education and Lifelong Learning

- Reading support for students
- Homework assistance for students
- Family Literacy Day
- After school tutoring
- POP courses

Youth Development

- Bullying workshop (via VCN)
- Entrepreneurship Day/seminar
- Girls Action Program

Support for Family and Community

- Library providing access to English language books
- Parenting seminars or workshops (some via VCN)
- Housing workshop
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentor for a Day
- Community Garden

Recreation

- After school athletics; Fitness room
- Yoga
- Scrapbooking club

Access to Information and Communication Technology

- Internet Café
- Video-conference seminars on variety of topics for students, parents, and community members (e.g. Science Museum, Antarctica, NASA, Language Course, etc.)

Service Integration and Access

- Provision of breakfast to students

Access to Health Services

- Community Health and Social Services video conference seminars/services

issue of not having staff to secure and clean the building for after-hours use; for some, school board regulations prohibited the rental of space or board security regulations made it difficult to open the school for activities. As referred to earlier, another significant obstacle mentioned at some CLCs was related to coordinator hours. All coordinators reported working more hours than their contracts specified and more hours than for which they are paid. At six of the seven CLCs, principals, teachers, and partners commended the amount of work coordinators do to identify, promote, and operate activities, as well as engage in all of the CLC planning work, such as Action Planning and Journals. Many commented that the part-time status of the coordinator at most of the CLCs limited how much could be done.

Student, Parent, and Teacher Participation in the CLC

At each of the CLCs, evaluators asked interviewees about student, parent, and teacher engagement and participation in the CLC. Focus groups and/or interviews with students, parents, and teachers, were also conducted to gather additional information.

Students

Student engagement in the Phase 2 CLCs varied, with some CLCs designed to be more student-focused in their activities, events and partnerships, and some designed to be more community-oriented. At some CLCs, coordinators were actively reaching out to students; for example, one went to student council meetings to get student input and interest. Coordinators and principals reported that many CLC activities are designed to enhance student learning, whether through presentation of material and experiences not available to them otherwise (e.g. through virtual field trips by VCN) or through programs such as tutoring and homework clubs. While the evaluators cannot make a judgment as to the quality of these educational enhancements, activities to support and enhance student learning, such as tutoring, homework clubs and educational uses of the VCN appear to both be valued by students and teachers, and also to be engaging to students.

All CLCs were using the Videoconference Network and/or the VCN room with students. Teachers, parents, and coordinators reported that VCN activities connect students to the wider world outside of their communities, such as with museums and individuals in other countries. In focus groups, students frequently reported participating in VCN activities. Some of the videoconference activities students described include talking with an astronaut, “going to” Antarctica, seeing a Dinosaur exhibit at a museum. Students at one CLC said, “We like using the VCN, it’s more exciting. It’s interactive. We use it a couple of times a week.” Teachers reported that VCN programming is engaging for students.

While several CLCs focus most student activity on the VCN, other CLCs facilitated or provided other activities, events, and resources for students. For example, some CLCs coordinated Remembrance Day Ceremonies; others coordinated community “clean-up” activities, and others have used the CLC to acquire sports equipment and/or facilities. Some CLCs provided lunch-time programming or activities for students, such as tutoring, exercise classes, or other activities. At several CLCs, students noted how the CLC facilitated or got sports equipment or facilities that have enhanced their school

experiences; one remarked the CLC has “things we like to do.” Teachers also reported that students enjoyed the activities facilitated through the CLC. At one CLC there was a reported improvement in the school climate, with students more engaged and cooperative.

Parents

Four of the seven CLCs reported some level of parental *awareness* of the CLC. Three reported some parental *participation* and *engagement* in the CLC and another two reported a low level of parental involvement and engagement, with the same parents who are already active in the school being active in the CLC.¹ Most CLCs reported that increasing parental involvement was an area of on-going or future work. One suburban CLC reported some “resistance” from parents who are wary of others from the community coming into the school for safety reasons. Some remote CLCs faced challenges where French is the predominant language in the community and the English-speaking community small and dispersed. And one in a low-income urban neighborhood faced the challenge of overcoming generations of negative schooling experiences on the part of parents.

Most CLC coordinators, principals, and teachers described the connection with parents as primarily through major events and activities such as VCN-based training sessions which have included workshops on “Clear Writing” and parenting. Several CLCs reported that they frequently see the same parents involved in the CLC that are involved in the school more generally, such as on the Governing Board, Home and School Association or Parent Participation Organization. Some quotations below illustrate coordinator and teacher perceptions of parental involvement in CLCs:

“Our parents are a challenge, they’re Francophone.” – a coordinator

“[The CLC] is demystifying school for parents.” – a coordinator

“Parents approach us [teachers] much more easily” –a teacher

Parents viewed the Phase 2 CLCs as early in their development but saw many potential opportunities for parents and communities to be involved and for enhancing student and family life. Parents also stated that it was too early to determine the impact of the CLC on the school, the students, or the community. A few parents expressed a desire for the CLC to unobtrusively fit into the school, being of the opinion that schools are primarily for educational activities; other parents noted challenges with scheduling events and activities because of uncertainty around the guidelines for the use of the school, or because of union issues. Some quotations from parents illustrate their positive perceptions of the CLC:

“It brings families together, closer, with more activities for children.”

¹ Participating refers to getting parents to participate in activities or events at the CLC, such as participating in a course or a special event. Engagement refers to having parents involved in a more on-going sustained way as generators of ideas and activities.

“It should continue, every community should have one [a CLC]. It’s a great way to get involved...”

“I think [the CLC is] a really good thing. I can feel what [the CLC] is bringing...I notice it. I enjoy meeting other parents ... it just brings it to a different level. It makes [me] feel less scared because I’ve been here, walked the halls, seen the lockers, the papers, what’s on the walls, been in the classrooms...Everything is out in the open.

Teachers

Teachers were primarily involved in the CLCs through videoconference, and to a lesser extent, community-based learning. Some CLCs reported difficulty in engaging teachers, but others reported weekly use of the VCN by teachers. Coordinators, principals, and teachers themselves noted that teachers have little time to devote to CLC activities, especially high school teachers who are preoccupied with implementing the high school reforms. Most CLCs had a teacher representative on the CLC steering committee. In several CLCs, teachers were also involved in participating in activities as members of community groups or volunteering to support CLC activities as citizens.

Four of the seven Phase 2 CLCs reported teachers regularly use the VCN for academic or enrichment purposes, to connect students to the outside world and resources. For example, teachers used the VCN to enhance a unit on climate by adding a virtual field trip to Antarctica and a unit on dinosaurs by adding a virtual trip to a museum. At some CLCs, teachers used the VCN for their own professional development. Teachers reported that the academic uses of the VCN were fairly frequent, as often as once a week in some CLCs, and that these VCN sessions were happening because of coordinator and PRT offerings. Teachers and coordinators reported a desire to have access to activities that integrate with or support the curriculum because they were unlikely to search for resources or activities on their own. Teachers also reported using the technology to show videos or have students do presentations. Teachers in four of the CLCs expressed a need for more training on the VCN technology, including the technical aspects of operating the system but most specifically about integrating the CLC with their courses.

Teachers viewed the VCN as a tool to use with students to enhance learning, communicate with other schools, and conduct presentations. Teachers reported using the CLC and especially the VCN to expose students to resources and opportunities outside of their schools and communities, as well as to provide on-site activities and resources. Teacher comments about the CLC are primarily about their use of the VCN; some teacher comments include:

“The CLC provides many opportunities for children during lunch and after school. I haven’t used it [the VCN] as much as I could, but I intend to use it more ... to further student knowledge ... for students to make presentations to others ... but it takes a lot of extra time.” – a teacher

“What we did with the competition and setting up a business was valuable to the kids. And last week at a staff meeting a woman from the museum showed artifacts and helped us to visualize how we could use the VCN. It’s basically having someone teach your class for an hour. Kids benefit from that, especially for science, it would be really helpful.” – a teacher

“[The CLC] has impacted me in a theoretical sense – there is this facility, opportunities available – it is sort of like Christmas shopping – waiting for inspiration to find me – a grand idea – which it did in the videoconference from a remote location” – a teacher

“I like how interactive it [the VCN] is, where teacher can see the kids, the children were very excited and mesmerized by it and they enjoyed the museum; [it is] something they wouldn’t see here in [our community].” – a teacher

“So far, I’ve been using the VCN, we have a membership to Discovery channel and I show it on the VCN screen. The kids have been presenting PowerPoints on the big screen. It’s much easier for them to watch on big screen rather than on their individual computers and they’re all in the same place, I can pause it when I want and we can discuss, if I want to add something.” – a teacher

Coordinators reported that getting teachers to buy-in to the CLC idea was challenging. They report that teachers are too busy in general preparing for their teaching and secondary school teachers, in particular, are concerned with the Quebec Education Reforms. They report teacher resistance to anything perceived of as “extra work.” The CLCs report usually one or more teachers who are more involved in the CLC or in using the VCN for teaching. In several CLCs teachers see the VCN and CLC as one and the same, at least in terms of their role. Coordinators described different efforts to reach out to teachers. An example of outreach is attending staff meetings to inform and reach teachers. Several quotations illustrate the issues surrounding teacher involvement:

“I’m pushing a lot of ideas on to different teachers... I don’t think they have the time to fool around with different websites, even though I tell them and put it on the whiteboard, they have their job. I’m trying to make everyone content with the idea.” – a coordinator

“I haven’t heard concerns. Maybe at the beginning, I think there was a concern that we’d have to do more work because we’re a CLC, but this year with the Coordinator, [coordinator] can go and get what we need. We have to make the effort, once we ask for something we have to be ready to use it. People were afraid we would have to say yes to everything. [Coordinator] shows me things, I can say no, I did that in September.” – a teacher

“One of the most important things, I said to [the principal], since we have so much activities, we need to make sure that we’re structured and organized and

don't have conflicts. We have to remember that we're still in a school, still needing to get through the education program.” – a teacher

“My big problem is getting teachers on board. I tried and I worked and I sent emails and I showed them things. I tried everything I could think of and finally I said to [PRT], I don't know what else to do to get teachers involved. [The PRT] went directly to principal and said that's your job. The principal embraced it and now the teachers are starting to get really interested and now they are coming to me and saying 'look I don't want to drive so far for professional development. I want to do by videoconferencing can you set me up'.” – a coordinator

“The teachers still need to have a bit more buy-in to using the VCN in their curriculum planning. This year was better than last year-- technical glitches can put people off. Teachers approached [the coordinator] about projects.” – a principal

Defining Community and Community Impact

As part of each site visit, evaluators interviewed or conducted focus groups with representatives from CLC partners, such as community groups, non-profit and community development organizations, who frequently are members of CLC steering committees. WestEd evaluators were only rarely provided with the opportunity to interview community members who were not officially involved in one of the partner organizations.

Community partners were enthusiastic about the potential opportunities that CLCs brought to their communities and organizations, whether it is because the CLC provided a place or venue for their activities and meetings, or that the CLC provided access to the student population and their families. Community partners, coordinators, principals, and teachers were all asked about the community, such as the ways in which the CLC has impacted the community, as well as how the community is involved and how the community views the CLC.

The definition of the “community” that a CLC should be serving was not always clear, according to coordinators, principals, teachers, and stakeholders. There was not always a shared vision of who the CLC should be serving or who is included in the “community.” Similarly, identifying the *English* community was sometimes difficult in CLCs that served large, dispersed territories. The seven Phase 2 CLCs included two remote, predominantly French communities in which the schools served a primarily Francophone student population; another was remote but primarily Anglophone, three had large and dispersed territories, and another was an urban primarily Anglophone community. The CLCs in the remote and primarily Francophone areas felt challenged to balance the English focus of the initiative with the community focus, with some wary of including Francophone organizations and others worried that by

Box 3: Phase 2 CLCs

2- Remote, primarily Francophone

1- Remote primarily Anglophone

2- Rural and town mixed

1 – Suburban, primarily Francophone

1- Urban, primarily Anglophone

excluding them, access to certain activities, services, and resources might be lost. CLCs serving large geographic areas found engaging parents and the general Anglophone community difficult. Quotations to illustrate the struggle of reaching and serving the English community in some CLCs are provided below:

“The school is the English community.”- a principal

“It’s such a small English community, other than teachers and parents; it’s hard to get other people.” – a teacher

“When I think CLC, community is students and their families. And then broader community – is primarily English in a 50 km range because the people we are attracting are from that range and are mostly English.” – a coordinator

“The other big challenge is the language barrier. But to find people who can offer their services in English, because of our low numbers, this is a challenge.” – a coordinator

Community partners at several CLCs reported that the CLCs were breaking the isolation of their communities. Partners, teachers, and parents at one CLC expressed that the school had become a true community centre for the town, whereas at one urban CLC it was commented there was already an Anglophone-serving community centre in town. A few CLC partners stated that the CLC had not yet had an impact on the community because the initiative and development of the CLC was new; they expressed the belief that impact would take several years. A few coordinators remarked that their communities are wary that changes and initiatives may not continue long term; they may fear false starts. Quotations representing different perspectives on the role and potential of the CLC in the community and on the English-speaking community are provided below:

“A community group is working with the CLC and educators and students in a collective atmosphere. This will bring health services into the school and we presented the same program to other high schools by DVD.” – a community partner

“My prime concern is the English speaking community of these kids --there is so little offered in English. I think the CLC can have an impact on this.” – a coordinator

“So there are so many more services and things students have access to, when you look at community life, the school is a central player. Without this type of a structure, they’re [the kids] losing out.” – a principal

“If you look at community aspect, we’ve made huge strides there. I see a more positive use and outlook toward the school, relationship is improving there.” – a principal

“I think people are more aware of the school because of the CLC; it increased the amount of people expressing interest in school and services. It certainly has the potential to open the doors to a myriad of community support.” – a teacher

School Board Support

During interviews, principals and coordinators were asked about their perception of the support and role of their school board. During the spring of 2009, evaluators also conducted telephone interviews with directors general, or their designee, in eight of the boards with CLCs.

Principal and coordinator perspectives on board support

Some CLCs reported that their vision, direction, and activities were determined without board involvement. Most CLCs reported keeping the board informed of their activities and receiving in-kind contributions. But others reported that the staff at the Board may not fully appreciate the purpose of the CLC project or the commitment that it requires from school leaders. School Boards have played a central role in the CLC project since its inception; despite this, some CLCs find that their Boards still lack an adequate understanding of the nature and implications of the CLC project. In the following quotation, a principal describes how the CLC project may have been misunderstood by School Boards and interpreted by some as a “directive” from above:

“I don’t think the whole [CLC] philosophy was ever transmitted in an effective way to senior management in the school boards, it was [perceived] as another directive from the assistant deputy minister. I think that once senior administrators realize the value and resources the CLC will bring to the school, the welcoming of the whole project will become warmer.” – a principal

At three CLCs it was explicitly mentioned that the schools and/or Board hoped that the CLC would attract students to boost enrollment, perhaps forestalling school closures. All CLCs reported that the Boards were concerned about long-term funding and sustainability of the CLCs, especially with funding for the coordinator position.

Most principals and coordinators reported that their Boards were supportive of the CLC idea and they were in contact with their school board liaison or representative. Though, at least one principal mentioned not getting in-kind support from the Board and a lack of understanding and support with policies and procedures for renting space, keeping the building open, and other logistics. Similarly, another principal mentioned needing direction from the School Board with regard to legal issues and questions, and was worried about missing opportunities while waiting for the Board’s response.

“I know our DG is very supportive. [DG] sees the merit of the concept. ... [DG] is cautious not to set something up that will be a white elephant. [DG] gets that the project is enriching lives, I think [DG] is hoping that there will be continued funding through the Entente. [DG] has put in in-kind contributions.” – a principal

At two CLCs it was reported that the School Boards are using the VCN technology to conduct meetings and thus lowering their travel costs and time.

School board perspectives on their roles and support

All Boards and directors generals were aware of their CLCs but they varied in the extent of their involvement in the CLCs. The board's role in the CLC initiative is mainly at an administrative level. DGs reported that the CLC was on the agenda of the monthly Board principal meetings. Several CLCs reported that the Boards' commissioners were involved in the CLCs by helping to identify partners in the community.

The reported barriers to support at the Board level fall into three main categories: sustainability of the CLC initiative, the cost of the coordinator, and the priority of the CLC initiative for students in the region. There was concern at the Board level about the sustainability of the CLC initiative and where the responsibility for funding will reside after the current funding agreement ends. Will responsibility for sustainability be at the school level or at the Board level? Funding from the Board brings up issues of funding the coordinator position, making the coordinator a permanent board employee, and the issue of equity across schools in the Board when one or more may be a CLC but most schools are not. Leaders at the school boards must balance competing priorities, and they reported that the CLC is not always at the top of the list. In one case the opinion was stated that since the CLC is not directly linked to students it might not receive more funding from the Board.

The reasons why some Boards are not providing CLCs with the necessary support remain unclear. It may safe to suggest that the obstacles are due to some of the factors identified earlier, such as the Board's understanding of the role of the CLC in serving students, competing policy priorities, and/or concerns about future funding and sustainability. Whatever the reasons, the low level of support at some Boards is felt at the level of CLCs, in the form of constraints with regard to in-kind support, opening hours of the school, janitorial services, and so on. CLCs that have more active support from their Boards seemed more certain about implementing the initiative. Hence, Board support appears to be important for moving implementation of CLCs forward and will likely be important to the long-term success of the individual CLCs.

Sustainability

Interviewees at all seven Phase 2 CLCs reported concern with the issue of sustainability after the period of grant funding ends. At one CLC, the principal and coordinator held different views from each other about whether the CLC is self-sustainable. It is important to note that the Phase 2 CLCs were visited and the interviews conducted prior to the MELS decision to use discretionary Entente funding to fund CLCs on a seven-year plan. Under the new arrangement there will be decreasing funding over the seven years but with a guarantee of \$40,000 for coordinator salaries for the first four years. All Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs will operate under this funding plan, perhaps alleviating some of the stress of becoming sustainable after three years of implementation.

In a May 2009 focus group, one of the Phase 2 principals said, “sustainability is the issue.” As mentioned earlier, several principals stated that without funding for a coordinator, they would not continue the initiative. Partners were also concerned that coordinators had to start thinking about sustainability at the same time as they were beginning planning for implementation. Stakeholders at the CLCs raised the question of “whose responsibility is sustainability?” with no clear answer.

“It’s scary, we’re a small school board. Given that the enrollment is dropping, our DG is concerned; [The DG] doesn’t want to suddenly have the responsibility for the salaries.” –a principal

“We are sustaining right now. This year we’ve taken in \$8K in administration projects, not counting salaries that we pay and other things. I don’t see sustainability issues; [the CLC is] too valuable right now, even for the school board. The budget is a quarter million in grants, what it would have cost the SB to transport teachers? These student exchanges we’ve got are around \$60-70 thousand per exchange in grant monies. What they’re getting from the little bit that is provided by [the school board] in return, it’s a huge return.” – a coordinator

Even with their concern over funding for sustainability, several of the CLCs had begun making plans, with some turning to grant seeking, and some to entrepreneurial or other revenue generating endeavors. Several CLCs reported thinking about charging for rental of space or facilities, or for the use of the VCN. Though at least two CLCs reported a lack of clarity around whether it was allowable to charge fees or how to manage the opening of the school after school hours.

“Without turning into a business its not really sustainable”- a principal

“We are totally looking ahead. When that grant is over we’re going to have to find that funding.” – a coordinator

“If there’s a long term vision of the CLC becoming self-sufficient or sustainable the school board will have to make certain concessions – like renting – I don’t think that will happen soon.” – a coordinator

“The real financial sustainability: we’re far from a real, 100% CLC that stands alone without school board or federal Heritage Canada money.” – a coordinator

A related concern, especially in economically depressed areas, is the issue of “false starts” or the introduction of a program or initiative with much fanfare but one that disappears as funding dries up. In the two CLCs where this was raised as an issue, stakeholders reported a reluctance of some individuals in the community and even some community organizations to get involved until they are confident the initiative will be around long term.

Reflections

A review of the data from the seven Phase 2 sites clearly confirms the CLC initiative is successful in many ways, with one CLC a notable exception. Steering committees are in place in most CLCs and while most are not active, several assist coordinators in a valuable way by providing information and sharing planning and overseeing of activities; VCN technology runs smoothly and many community organizations and partners use it regularly, as do teachers; coordinators are diligent in establishing relationships and assessing the needs of constituents; principals show strong support despite other competing responsibilities; and efforts continue to be made to engage reluctant teachers, parents, and community members through outreach and collaborations. Though some may be reluctant, it seems that feedback from those teachers, parents and community members interviewed has so far been quite positive and encouraging.

Despite the many successes, there are challenges to the CLC project and individual CLCs. These challenges include: low levels of School Board support in some boards, which contrasts to other CLC stakeholders in the community and school level; financial sustainability; engaging teachers and parents; lack of overall effective use of steering committees; and even logistics such as coordinator hours, keeping the school open, and janitorial services. The fact that coordinators and other CLC stakeholders believe that a coordinator can only successfully launch and implement a CLC if s/he regularly works more hours than his/her contract and pay is also a threat to the long-term viability and sustainability of CLCs. It is potentially a threat to long-term viability and sustainability because many coordinators reported feeling resentful that to do their job well, they have to give more time than they are paid for. We suspect that it may also lead to more frequent turnover of coordinators within CLCs and thus challenge continuity.

As indicated in the formative report, the evidence shows that the “one size fits all” philosophy does not apply to this initiative. There are a few similarities across sites in the way several core components of the initiative have evolved – principal/ coordinator roles, partnership agreements, steering committees, board/governing board support, and parent participation. But in most cases, these components are functioning well enough, and often times where one might be stalled, another is well-oiled and humming along.

The data show some distinct differences in CLC implementation across the sites, such as between urban and rural sites. The way constituents define “the community” served by the CLC tended to vary across sites, where some focus on the students and their families and others it’s the English speaking community more broadly. These differences are driven by the local contexts, e.g., the diverse locations where CLCs have been established, and the resources and services, or lack thereof, available in each.

Stakeholders across sites consistently identified a few components as crucial for successful CLC implementation. These were: the coordinator role; public leadership and support of the principal; guidance, assistance and training by the PRT; and, more recently, networking opportunities provided for coordinators. These components, when working well, seem to enhance the likelihood of success as CLCs gain access to new ideas and help with solving problems or addressing barriers. From our evaluators’

perspective, we would add that School Board support is important to propel or give legitimacy for implementation at the school level.

Once these components are in place, and in most cases they are, the next concern on everyone's mind is sustainability. No matter whether a CLC had a smooth or rough start, consistent or shifting roles and responsibilities, reluctant or enthusiastic constituents, support from governing boards, or the number of partnerships created, every principal and every coordinator still struggles with how to sustain the CLC. During site visit interviews and focus group discussions in early May, principals especially voiced strong concern and in some cases serious doubt that sustainability would be possible. This opinion was often stated even before the focus group facilitator mentioned it. It remains to be seen whether the new seven-year funding plan from MELS alleviates this concern.

Comparisons to Phase 1 Implementation Findings

Comparing Phase 1 and Phase 2 implementation data, it is heartening to see that several important challenges or roadblocks have been eased. VCN installation was smoother; paperwork requirements have been streamlined; assistance and guidance from the PRT is readily available and coordinators and principals access it regularly; CLC coordinators have established supportive relationships and collaborate more readily than during Phase 1 implementation. It is likely the events that brought both cohorts together in Montreal helped initiate this real "learning community" that is evolving among coordinators. Box 4, below, highlights some similarities and differences between Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs.

Box 4: Similarities and Differences in Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs

Similar challenges:

- Engaging teachers and parents has been a challenge for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 CLCs. Teachers are primarily engaged around the VCN and teachers reported wanting ways to fit the VCN or CLC activities into their curriculum, rather than having add-ons. Different CLCs face different challenges in engaging parents, such as a large territory that makes bringing parents to school difficult, or parental wariness of schools based on their own schooling experiences.
- Paper work/reporting requirements challenge CLC coordinators who need to find the balance between reporting and doing CLC planning, running activities and events, and networking with partners.
- Principal and/or coordinator turnover delayed implementation in those CLCs that experienced such turnover.
- Concern over sustainability can be a challenge in establishing buy-in and support from teachers, principals, and potential community partners.

Similar successes:

- Use of videoconference network (VCNs) for educational purposes- at all CLCs, VCN sessions for students have occurred, with many being initiated or coordinated for multiple CLCs by the PRT.
- Use of VCN for parent information/workshops and/or community groups – most CLCs have used the VCN to conduct workshops or information sessions for parents, and in many CLCs, business, community groups, and/or the school board use the VCN to conduct or attend meetings, reducing travel costs and time.

- Activities for students – all CLCs have conducted activities for students or coordinated partner activities or events for students, with some CLCs having many and/or on-going activities for students.
- Engagement of Partners- all CLCs have established formal and/or informal partnerships with other schools, community groups, governmental organizations, cultural, youth development, literacy, community development organizations, and many more.
- Serving the English-speaking community- CLCs reported activities, services, and events, either initiated by them or their partners, that support or enhance their English-speaking communities.

Differences:

- Phase 2 CLCs reported no issues with VCN installation.
- Phase 2 CLCs had more immediate appreciation of the value of the PRT training and support.
- Phase 2 CLCs reported having a network of Phase 1 coordinators and principals to talk with and rely upon.
- More Phase 2 CLCs reported using the CLC to solidify community partnerships already in place and expand on what they were already doing

Stages of Implementation

In the Phase 1 Midterm Evaluation report, we referred to a typology of the stages of implementation developed by Fixsen and colleagues (2005). The stages include, in increasing levels of implementation: exploration and adoption, installation, initial implementation, full operation, and innovation and sustainability.

The *early installation* stage of implementation is where a CLC has obtained the grant, has hired a coordinator, and is working on organizational changes but is only beginning to initiate activities, programs, and community partnerships toward student success and lifelong learning. In these CLCs there may have been turnover of the principal or delay in hiring a coordinator, there may have been a lack of support for the initiative from key stakeholders such as the principal, school board, or teachers, or an uncertainty about who the community is that should be served that slowed the momentum of implementation.

CLCs at this stage may not have completed important steps in the Framework for Action, such as developing an action plan or theory of change, or signed partnership agreements. These CLCs may formally have a steering committee but tend not to have regular steering committee meetings. Our data suggest that two Phase 2 CLCs are in this early installation stage of implementation.

The *initial implementation* stage is where there is evidence of change in the overall practices and operation in the school, including changes in organizational capacity and organizational culture. It is where the coordinator and principal are working together to engage with partners and implement activities and services designed to enhance student success and engagement and support life long learning in the community. These are the CLCs that frequently have several partnerships established and regularly have activities. The activities may have been developed prior to the completion of key

Box 5: Summary Stages of Implementation

- 2 CLCs in Early Installation – only beginning to implement, slowed by a multitude of factors such as lack of coordinator, or confusion over community definition
- 4 CLCs in Initial Implementation – implementation is moving ahead with leadership from principal and coordinator; activities and partnerships are happening, some continuing struggles including integrating the CLC into the school.
- 1 CLC in Full Implementation- initiative is fully integrated into school, leadership is provided by principal, active coordinator, teachers, and partners all working toward CLC purposes and goals.

Framework for Action Planning steps such as the mission statement or formation of the steering committee but the coordinator is working toward completing the steps in the Framework for Action, such as action planning or developing an initial theory of change. The challenges at this stage can be getting people to invest the time and effort to devote to the difficult and complex task of implementing a large and organizational change initiative. The CLC may still be struggling with questions of implementation and buy-in such as, what are the activities and services that best fit our goals, how do we get to the outcomes, how do we articulate our outcomes, how can we get teachers' support? Our data suggest that most of the Phase 2 CLCs, four of them, are in this stage.

What Fixen and colleagues (2005) call *full operation* tends to happen in years two to four of implementation and at this point, stakeholders are no longer questioning if this is the right initiative for us, but rather the initiative is fully integrated into the operation and practice of the school. There is leadership by the principal, an active coordinator, supportive teachers, an operating steering committee, and selected partners who are working together toward the CLC goals. For these CLCs, key stages of the Framework for Action were implemented. These CLCs have mapped their community assets, determined community needs, selected partners, developed a mission statement, selected and began offering programs and services. The community is aware of the CLC and the CLC may be working toward becoming a hub for education and community activities. The CLC is accepted by key stakeholders. In addition, benefits of the initiative are being seen and felt by stakeholders in the school and the broader community. There is evidence that one Phase 2 CLC is at this stage.

Recommendations for CLCs

Based on the findings above, we present recommendations that the PRT might want to share with CLC principals, coordinators, and stakeholders as they institutionalize implementation and work toward sustainability. The PRT might consider whether and how they could support the CLCs in these areas.

- CLCs should consider ways to enhance the effectiveness of their steering committees to support implementation and work toward sustainability. CLCs might want to assign formal roles, such as chair and treasurer, or work with a subcommittee system to enhance the effectiveness of their steering committees.
- CLCs should document their activities, events, services, partnerships, successes, and impact in order to build evidence and support for long-term sustainability and grant funding. This would include record keeping of activities and participants of school and partner sponsored events, as well as documenting things such as costs savings for the board and organizations that host meetings at the CLC and/or use the VCN. This may include documenting the educational value of the CLC and its activities for the school boards that have education and educational success as their primary concern.

- CLC principals and school boards should ensure there is two-way communication between them so that CLCs feel informed about board policies and school boards are well aware of CLC progress and challenges.
- CLC principals and coordinators need to think about ways to engage the school boards to invest them in the success of the CLCs.
- CLC leaders should continue to build student engagement in the CLCs with activities, events, and services designed to meet their educational, social and developmental needs.
- CLCs and the PRT should continue to support teachers use of the VCN for instruction, including through training and coordination of offerings.
- CLCs should consider ways to involve teachers in other CLC opportunities in addition to the VCN and remember that teachers, especially in remote communities, may not only be teachers in the school but also parents of students and community members.
- CLC leaders and their partners must plan for sustainability, financial and otherwise, given the new longer-term funding arrangement from MELS.
- CLC coordinator roles/positions need to be clarified, with clear expectations about hours, responsibilities, and priorities. Principals and coordinators should work together in prioritizing the multiple implementation tasks (e.g. long-term planning and activities planning).
- CLC leaders and partners need to actively consider the role they would like parents to play in the CLC and to plan accordingly to support that role. In some CLCs, communication with parents about activities, events, and services for students may be the primary focus, in others parents may be seen as active participants and partners themselves.
- CLCs should work with the school communities and partners to have a clear vision and mission that will allow them to identify *who the community is* that will be their primary audience and what activities, events and services are needed to address their communities' needs and desires.

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Appendix A: Snapshots of the seven CLCs

Remote, Primarily Francophone CLC #1 is located in the town's high school. The town is a mainly Francophone community in relatively remote area with a small Anglophone population. The school serves Kindergarten through secondary 5. The CLC is housed on the second floor of the high school. The Coordinator shares an office with the CLC's main partner, the local Anglophone association. The VCN room, which has a VC projector, large screen, and boardroom table/chairs, is across the hall. The Coordinator has focused on implementing and expanding the original vision of the CLC. A partnership table has been established. The VCN is being used extensively by teachers throughout the school, thanks to the efforts of the Coordinator, to find relevant activities/programming. The CLC offers English and Spanish language classes that the community needs and would otherwise not have access to without the CLC. The CLC hopes to use the need for English-speaking personnel in the burgeoning local tourism sector as a means for sustainability as there are not many other options for learning English in the community.

Remote, Primarily Francophone CLC #2 CLC is located in the town high school, which serves grades Kindergarten through secondary 5. The area is a remote, primarily Francophone area with few Anglophones. The school is described as *the* English community. The school has seen a declining population in recent years. The principal and coordinator are new to the school and the community in the 2008-2009 school year. The coordinator position was split between three people, which was found to not be particularly effective. There will be a new coordinator in the summer of 2009 and the principal is committed to getting the CLC off the ground. The CLC can be described as being in its "early days". Initial activities have been focused on using the VCN, a day care program, after school tutoring, and sports. Potential partnerships have been identified. Both the outgoing coordinator and the principal have signaled a need for support from the PRT team for the new coordinator so that the CLC can move ahead quickly and catch up with other CLCs.

Town and Rural CLC #1 is located in the regional high school that serves secondary 1-5 and is located in town. The school serves a largely dispersed territory that is both town and rural, with many students traveling long distances to attend school. The CLC coordinator has collaborated with other CLCs on a number of activities and press releases, and has found the networking among coordinators to be extremely valuable. The CLC has a functioning Steering Committee consisting of its major partners, including local and regional organizations, such as the CEDEC and CSSS. The CLC has conducted many videoconferences, including workshops for students and parents (Parenting Skills Workshop), a video exchange with an Alberta high school, a partnership with Authentik Magazine/Women's Center, participation in Family Literacy Day, Remembrance Day activities and an entrepreneurship seminar. Transportation to and from the CLC for seniors and families is a challenge, as is community reticence toward joining groups or activities. The coordinator and steering committee are actively pursuing ways to enhance the value of the CLC, for example, by connecting with a local literacy organization, offering tutorials for teachers in using the VCN, exploring partnerships with foundations and other organizations, providing classes for seniors in topics such as, tax preparation, degree programs, accounting, computer technology, and English.

Suburban CLC is located in a far suburb of Montreal. The school is not a neighborhood school; many students travel a long distance from home to school, and this distance is a challenge to after-school and parental participation in CLC activities. The CLC has established partnerships with several local community and regional organizations, including the municipality, the local CEDEC, a local church, and others. The CLC has integrated activities and events for students into the school day, such as through lunch time activities and use of the VCN. The CLC offers a Homework Assistance Program and After-School Indoor Soccer, and many lunchtime activities for students. The CLC is partnering with the school board's adult education to offer two popular education classes at the CLC (Basic French and Basic Computer and Internet Skills). A Meet and Greet event at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year was well attended, and helped to build awareness of the CLC in the community. Connections with a local day care center, seniors in the

community and students in higher grades have been an emphasis of the CLC. Despite these successes, parents and teachers have been resistant to engaging with the CLC activities, and since the coordinator position was vacated in spring of 2009, assistance from the PRT will be needed to strengthen the implementation efforts at the CLC.

Town and Rural CLC #2 is located in a local high school in a village in Western Quebec. The school enrolls students in secondary 1 through 5, and serves a large territory that is both rural and small town. The CLC's action plan is aimed at increasing enrollment as well as offering enhanced programming for the school and community, the promotion of health and fitness and opportunities for life-long learning. Many of the goals of the Action Plan have been reached and enrollment is up beyond what was hoped for. There is a strong feeling of satisfaction with respect to what the CLC and the community have accomplished. The CLC has offered an evening Internet Café for students and the community, fitness activities such as yoga and an agreement to use fitness facilities at the local arena, and has offered VCN workshops to parents and community members, as well as to students. The CLC has established a number of partnerships with local and regional organizations and business people and the school board. The next major challenges for the CLC are whether to aim at building a gymnasium for the school and the issue of sustainability. The new principal is committed to the CLC and transition between principals has not stalled the implementation process. Under the principal's leadership, teachers are increasingly engaging with the CLC.

Remote, Primarily Anglophone CLC is located in a remote village that is predominantly Anglophone. The village is economically depressed due to the collapse of the local fishing industry and is losing population. Because it is remote, travel in and out of the village is both expensive and often difficult due to the weather. The small school of about 150 students serves students from four other nearby villages. The CLC has filled a need in the area for community revitalization; the CLC is a community centre and is both well-known and well-used by all stakeholders. The school is described as "alive" at all hours. The CLC augments activities and partnerships already happening at the school with local and regional partners. The Coordinator has secured an impressive number of grants for students and community, such as for athletic equipment, numerous academic activities and trips for students to Montreal and Quebec City. The CLC is one of three in its School Board. There is very productive cooperation between the three CLCs.

Urban CLC is located in a French-immersion neighborhood elementary school in an urban area that serves a primarily Anglophone population. The CLC was described as having a false start in the first year, but with a new principal and coordinator in 2008-2009, the CLC has developed numerous local and regional partnerships and implemented or coordinated many activities for students, parents and the community. Speed cup stacking, Yoga, scrap booking workshops, parenting workshops, jump rope, kickboxing, peer groups, Parent Café and "Game Night" are just some of the activities for students, parents and community members. This spring the CLC planted two vegetable gardens. The CLC has hosted several videoconference workshops for parents, such as the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families and Finding Balance in Your Life. The greatest challenge for this CLC is a historically reticent parent/community population – a hurdle that the coordinator, principal and many teachers are working together to address.

Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

Interview Protocol – Coordinators

- 1) Could you tell me a little bit about how has this past year been for you and your site?
- 2) What are some things that are in the works for this coming year? What are you excited about?
- 3) In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students? What changes have you noticed?
(Probe for use of VCN and Community Based Learning)
- 4) In what ways has the CLC impacted the community in general and the English speaking community in particular? What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC?
 - a) How is the community defined for this CLC?
- 5) How is the CLC viewed in the community? What is being done to get info about the CLC out to the community? What role do you envision for the community in the CLC?
- 6) Tell me about parental involvement in the CLC. What is the extent of parental involvement? What role do you envision for parents in the CLC? How is that different from the roles that parents currently play?
- 7) Tell me about how teachers are involved in the CLC? Are they supportive? In what ways? In what ways do they use VCN or Community Based Learning?
- 8) What about the governing board? How have they been involved? Are they supportive?
 - a) What is your relationship with the governing board? Does the CLC have a role on the board?
- 9) Tell me about your Steering committee.
 - a) Who is on it? And why?
 - b) What do they do to support the CLC? What do you think they *can* do to support the CLC?
 - c) Have they been involved in planning, developing the action plan, for example?
- 10) Tell me about the principal's involvement in the CLC? Does the principal exercise "shared leadership" of the CLC? How has s/he engaged teachers?
 - a) In what ways? Examples?
- 11) Tell me about your partners.
 - a) Who are they and why were these particular ones selected?
 - b) What is their role? (Probe for: partners from English speaking community; what do they do with their partners; how the partners are involved in the CLC)
- 12) What about the school board? Is the school board/Director General supportive of the CLC and your work? How so?
 - a) Have you had contact with your school board rep? In what ways?
 - b) What support do you need/have you requested from the school board?
- 13) Tell me about the successes of the CLC/your work?
 - a) What were some of the major activities?

- b) What kinds of records do you keep about activities and participation?
- 14) Have there been any challenges you have faced in the implementation of the CLC? Please explain.
 - a) How are you dealing with them?
 - b) What factors do you think are essential to ensure the successful implementation of a CLC at your school?
 - c) What further support do you need from the PRT or your school board, for example?
 - 15) How do you find the set up and operation of the project, the use of the guidebook?
 - a) How have you implemented or used the guidebook
 - b) Working relationship with principal
 - c) Relationship/involvement with PRT
 - 16) Have you developed an Action Plan? (Can I have a copy?) Who was involved in this with you?
 - 17) Have you/the principal/the steering committee started thinking about sustainability or planning for after the period of grant funding is over? (Probe for details)
 - a) For the CLC in general
 - b) For the coordinator position in particular
 - 18) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Protocol – Principals

- 1) Could you share what your vision was back when you first got involved with the CLC project, and whether/how that has changed over the past year?
- 2) How has this past year been for you and your site?
- 3) Tell me about your role in the CLC? (Probe for leadership, involvement in steering committee, governing board, action planning, etc.)
- 4) What has been implemented in terms of activities or programs and such so far? What progress has been made? What are you excited about?
 - a) What are some things that are in the works for this coming year?
- 5) How is the CLC viewed in the community?
 - a) How is the community defined in the CLC? (who/what)
 - b) Tell me about your partners. Who are they and why were these particular ones selected? What is their role?
- 6) In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students?
- 7) In what ways has the CLC impacted the community in general and the English speaking community in particular?
 - a) What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC?
- 8) How have teachers been involved in the CLC?
 - a) To what extent are they involved? In what ways? VCN? Community Based Learning?

- b) Are teachers supportive?
- 9) What about the school's **governing board**, what is the extent of their involvement in the CLC? What is the role of the governing board in the CLC? What do they do to support or hinder its development?
- 10) How is your school board supporting (or not) this CLC? Is the school board/DG aware of/supportive?
 - a) Have you been in contact with your school board rep? In what ways? Has it been helpful?
- 11) Have there been any **challenges** you have faced with the implementation of the CLC? Explain.
 - a) How are you dealing with them?
 - b) What factors do you think are essential to ensure the successful implementation of a CLC at your school?
 - c) What further support do you need from the PRT or your school board, for example?
- 12) Tell me about the successes of the CLC/your work?
- 13) What has the CLC/school been doing to ensure a) the success of the CLC and b) its long term **sustainability** (after the project funding ends?)
- 14) How do you find the set up and operation of the project, the use of the guidebook?
 - a) Working relationship with coordinator
 - b) Relationship/involvement with PRT
- 15) Can you talk a little about your experiences with the PRT trainings?
 - a) What have you participated in?
 - b) Were they useful?
 - c) What kind of support or assistance do principals need?
- 16) Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Student Interview Protocol

What grade are you in?

What language do you mostly speak at home?

What do you know about the CLC? What do you think about it?

How did you hear about what was going on at the CLC?

What have you done at the [name] Community Learning Centre?

- What activities have you participated in? Who sponsored them (e.g. school or other group)?

Have you used the videoconference facility? For a class or some other activity or purpose?

Have you been involved in any “community based learning”? What was it? What was it for? What did you think about it?

What has been your favorite activity at the CLC so far?

About how many students participated in the CLC activities you’ve done?

- What about other people?

Have your parents done anything with the CLC? If so, what have they done?

What else would you like to see happen at the CLC? In what ways do you think the CLC can be helpful to students?

What would you tell your friends to get them to participate in the CLC?

Has having the CLC changed anything about your school? About your community?

Is there anything else you’d like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

CLC First Visit Parent Protocol

- 1) What is your understanding of the purpose and goals of the CLC?
 - a. Do you see benefit for you, your family, the community in general and the English speaking community in particular? Please explain.
 - b. To what extent is the CLC fulfilling that purpose so far?
- 2) Have you noticed any changes in your school or community since the CLC project began? Are there needs that the CLC is beginning to address?
- 3) Are there any additional school or community needs that you would like the CLC to address?
- 4) In what ways do you think the CLC can be helpful (or beneficial) to students?
- 5) What are the challenges you have seen/anticipate in the development of the CLC?
- 6) What are the successes you have seen or anticipate in the development of the CLC?
- 7) What CLC activities, if any, have you been involved? (Probe for details such as how many others, who sponsored, etc.)
- 8) What do you see as the role of parents within the CLC project? Have you had a role so far? Describe. (Do you feel included in the planning and implementation?)
 - a. Has the CLC led you to be more involved in the school?
- 9) How can parents become more involved in the CLC? What additional support do you need from the coordinator/principal/teachers?
- 10) Is there anything else you’d like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

CLC Interview Protocol for Teachers

1. What do you see as the **purpose** and the goals of the CLC?
2. Describe your role or involvement with the CLC (participate in planning or meetings, teaching courses for the community, donate their time, etc.) so far?
3. How has the CLC impacted your role as a teacher in the school?
4. Do you feel your needs and input as a teacher are considered in the CLC?
5. In what ways has the CLC impacted the school? The students? The community in general and the English speaking community in particular? What changes have you seen as a result of the CLC? (BE SURE TO ASK EACH OF THESE)
6. Have there been any challenges you have faced with the implementation of the CLC? Explain.
7. How has the principal and CLC coordinator supported your involvement in the CLC? Are there any additional supports you feel you may need?
8. Have you used community resources to enrich the curriculum?
9. Have you used any of the resources provided by the CLC? (Specifically the VCN and community based learning?)
 - a. If yes, what and how?
10. How can teachers use the CLC to enhance student learning?
11. In what ways can the partnership between teachers and the CLC be enhanced?
12. Do you have any suggestions for improving the CLC?
13. What do you think teachers in general think about the CLC?
 - a. What do you think the role of teachers should be in the CLC?
14. Are there other activities or partnerships that you think should be part of the CLC that are not currently involved?
15. Have there been any unintended benefits/consequences of having the CLC?
16. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?

Partners/Stakeholders interview/focus group protocol

1. What is your understanding of the purpose and goals of the CLC?
 - a. What benefits does (will) the CLC bring to the community?
 - i. And to the English speaking community in particular?
 - b. How is community defined by the CLC?

- c. To what extent is the CLC fulfilling that purpose so far?
2. How have you/your organization been involved in the CLC project?
 - a. Have you/your organization been involved in developing the “Action Plan” for the CLC?
 - b. How do you see your role in the CLC?
3. Tell me about the steering committee?
 - a. Is the role of the **steering committee** clearly defined?
 - b. What does the steering committee do? How frequently does it meet?
 - c. What do you think about the functioning of the Steering Committee (e.g., does it play a useful or necessary role? What about its composition?)
4. Have you noticed any changes in the school since the CLC project began?
5. Have you noticed any changes (or potential for changes) in the English community because of this project?
6. Are there needs in the community that the CLC is beginning to address?
7. Are there any additional school or community needs that you would like the CLC to address?
8. What are the challenges you have encountered in developing the CLC?
 - a. Probe for resources, policies, politics, working in school situation
9. What about successes?
10. What do you see as the role of the broader community/community groups within the CLC project? What potential do you see for parent and broader community involvement in the CLC?
11. What do you think the CLC and its leaders are doing to address a) the implementation of the CLC (e.g., shift from a traditional school to a community school), and b) sustainability? What do you see as the future of the CLC?
12. Is there anything else you’d like to share with me that you think is important for me to know about the CLC project?