

Analysis of LINC Students' Career Goals Pathways

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WHAT THE RESEARCH IS ABOUT

OVERVIEW: This study looked at the career goals of students in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, and how students' goals change as they progressed through the program. The research team also created a board game to share research findings.

OBJECTIVE: to understand the common pathways of newcomers' career goals as they progress through the LINC program offered by NorQuest College and Red River College; and to identify how the LINC program and other factors impact career goals.

RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION: Newcomers' economic integration is impacted not only by the opportunities and barriers they face, but also by their career goals and how these change throughout the settlement process. Past research by NorQuest College showed that students' career goals change from the time they register for the LINC program to when they exit the program. This project seeks to better understand common career goal changes and factors that influence the change process.

HOW THE DATA WAS OBTAINED

The research team used an explanatory sequential mixed method approach. They first undertook a quantitative analysis of NorQuest College's student records and the 2018-2019 LINC Outcome Survey to identify common goal changes. Researchers then held face-to-face interviews with LINC students who had engaged in common pathway changes. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how and why students' career goals changed. Interviews were analysed using the Arthur Frank narrative inquiry approach to identify eight typologies of career goal pathway changes based on the meaning-making behind those changes.

WHAT THE STUDY FOUND

- 25% of all LINC students changed their overall plans after completing the LINC program.
- The most common changes were: those who initially planned to pursue further education choosing employment (36%); and those who thought to pursue employment opting for further education (25%).
- 64% changed their goal occupation (from one profession to another). The most common occupational change was from Health Professions to Education and Social Services (16%) and from Education and Social Services to Health Professions (13%).
- None of the LINC students initially planned for self-employment; however 5% were pursuing self-employment by the time they completed the program.
- Eight typologies of career goal pathway changes were found. LINC students may initially embody one 'type' but, after a specific encounter, begin to embody a different 'type'. This points to the power of specific experiences either within the LINC program (e.g., a positive volunteering experience) or outside of it (e.g., discovering the length of time recertification of their credentials will take).
- The typologies also revealed that no single set of LINC program supports suited all students. Depending on the 'type' of career changer they were, individuals accessed different program and community supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A wide range of services, supports, and experiences are needed to support the varying needs of LINC learners as they progress throughout the program.
- Community-based learning experiences, general student supports, and instructors' active discussions of students' lives outside of the classroom are very important to complement the career decision-making support offered through the LINC program.
- LINC students may have clear career goals at the time of completion and a strong understanding of how to achieve them, but there is a significant gap between students' current occupations (post-LINC completion) and their career goals. Further support is needed to help LINC students achieve their career goals post-LINC.
- Changing one's career goal should be seen as an act of settlement, not a "failure".



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ABOUT CYRRC

The Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition (CYRRC) is a network of researchers, service providers, and government partners working together to produce and share research that facilitates the integration of young refugees and their families in Canada and beyond.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Child and Youth Refugee Research Coalition.

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