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About the Organization

LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

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Impact of Language and L1 Literacy on Settlement in Canada

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the interplay between L1 literacy and access to social services in Canada for two LESLLA learners. Participants described the target language and literacy skills as critical to navigating life in Canada. Social and cultural capital were also found to affect access to available resources. While length of residency and increased L2 may reduce the level of support required for day-to-day tasks, the need for language training, support accessing services and access to information remained over time. L2 programs play an important role in enabling access to social services.

INTRODUCTION

Many factors affect settlement for newcomers to Canada. Awuah-Mensah's (2016) literature review found common barriers to settlement in Canada included "social support services, language barriers, social isolation, mental health, patriarchal ideologies, social networks, social class, and racial discrimination" (Awuah-Mensah, 2016, p.20). Settlement needs are gendered and dependent on factors like whether a person has arrived to Canada as a refugee or an immigrant. Settlement needs of Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) are different from those of other class refugees who are more likely to have family connections prior to arrival in Canada. Well-developed second language (L2) and literacy skills are important, but alone do not guarantee successful settlement for newcomers, (see Norton, 2016; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Warriner, 2007; Wood, McGrath, & Young, 2012; Ennsner-Kananen & Pettitt, 2017; Derwing & Waugh, 2012). L1 literacy may also have implications for adult newcomers who have migrated to a highly literate society.

Literacy development is also affected by many factors, pre- and post-migration. In post-industrialized countries, girls tend to fare slightly better than boys in reading, even though globally the majority of persons who have not developed print-literacy skills are women (Stromquist, 2014). Gendered barriers

to education may continue to exist post-migration (see for example, Folinsbee, 2007; Gonzalves, 2013; MacKinnon, Stephens, & Salah, 2007; Watkins, et al., 2012). Socio-economic status also has a bearing on literacy skills development (Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, & Soler, 2000). Additionally, the very nature of the classroom environment and educational programming requirements are incompatible with what we know to be best practice for teaching LESLLA learners (Reeder, 2015).

Literacy Education and Second Language Acquisition for Adults (LESLLA) has created a base of research from which we can draw to inform program design and instructional practice with adult L2 learners with no to little formal schooling. A growing number of studies offer information about how L2 literacy acquisition occurs in adults with no to limited print literacy in the first language (see for example, Kurvers & Ketelaars, 2010; Strube, van de Craats, & van Hout, 2013; Tarone & Bigelow, 2005; Young-Scholten & Naeb, 2009).

In keeping with the Canadian context, the terms *settlement* and *resettlement* will be used in this paper to refer to programs and services available to immigrants & refugees and to Government-Assisted Refugees respectively. Settlement refers to “a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities” (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2000). Settlement services are available to immigrants and refugees. They include language training (largely Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada or LINC), employment training, and supports like settlement counselling (IRCC, 2017). Eligibility for settlement programs ends upon obtaining Canadian citizenship.

The Resettlement Assistance Program available to GARs only includes accommodation at a resettlement center for a short time after arrival, a small temporary living allowance, and a loan to cover the cost of their flight to Canada (Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003). Drawing from Wong & Tézli’s (2013) working definition, Integration is used to describe “where groups and individuals have full and equitable access to, and participation in, power and privilege within major societal institutions” (Wong & Tézli, 2013, p.14).

This paper is built on the assumption that access to available services is a critical piece of the settlement process. Drawing on research from multiple disciplines, the following study was viewed through a theoretical framework of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), this paper looks into how two women with LESLLA backgrounds accessed social services by listening to their day-to-day experiences. Interview data was taken from a qualitative study in Western Canada where five women with LESLLA backgrounds, a LESLLA teacher and a settlement worker were interviewed about their work with LESLLA learners or clients. The purpose of the study was to answer two questions. 1) What barriers do LESLLA clients experience to accessing social services and to settlement? and 2) What resources are they employing in order to access these services? The answers to these questions can help us think about

approaches to target language and L2 literacy training for LESLLA learners. They may also provide insight into ways social services are provided to such clients.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to look into the interplay between L1 literacy and access to services for LESLLA learners. A qualitative approach was taken to the questions at hand (see Mackey & Gass, 2005). The data included in the present analysis were part of a larger study (Wall, 2017) involving five women with LESLLA backgrounds, a teacher in a LESLLA-focused program, and a settlement counsellor.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted mainly at participants' classes either with the support of an interpreter or in English. Each participant was interviewed one time for approximately an hour. In exchange for their participation, learners were offered tutoring at a local library outside of class time. Though none of the five participants pursued this offer, several participants asked questions about accessing services during their interviews. With participants' permission, I spoke with a teacher, settlement counsellor or other resource person who could connect participants with the information or resources in question. Interview questions were informed by the literature review and my previous experience working with LESLLA learners. LESLLA participants were asked about language and literacy use. They were also asked about services accessed, as well as barriers to and successful experiences accessing social services and who helped them access services. They were asked how important speaking L2 and literacy skills were to their lives in Canada. Learners were also asked their advice for teachers teaching students with LESLLA backgrounds. Interviews with a teacher and settlement worker offered insight into the service providers' work with LESLLA background clients.

Video recorded interviews were transcribed and coded by types of services accessed, barriers and enablers to those services and the resources employed to access services.

PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

Two women's stories, those of Abrehet and Tenneh (pseudonyms), were selected for the following discussion. Abrehet and Tenneh both arrived to Canada as GARs. Abrehet had arrived relatively recently, while Tenneh had lived in Canada for approximately 13 years. Both had relocated from the Canadian cities where they had initially landed. Both reported no prior formal schooling or print-text literacy prior to attending classes in Canada. They were enrolled in community-based LESLLA classes that ran twice a week for a total of six hours of class time. Both learners attended two different classes, doubling their class time to 12 hours per week. The ESL literacy classes were offered by an immigrant-serving agency offering a range of Settlement Programs, and the teacher participant not included here, made frequent referrals to the agency's services. Their similar backgrounds and contrasting lengths of residencies made

for an opportunity to look at how LESLLA learners' experiences of the L2, literacy, and access to services might shift over time.

Table 1

LESLLA Participants: Demographic Information

Participant	Prior schooling	Country of origin	Languages	Length of residency
Abrehet	0 years	Eritrea	Tigrinya, Amharic, some Arabic	3 years
Tenneh	0 years	Liberia	Vai, Mende, Krio, Temne	13 years

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

SLA research has historically been carried out with middle-class university level L2 students (Tarone & Bigelow, 2005). To understand facets of the settlement experience for newcomers with LESLLA backgrounds, this study draws on research related to LESLLA, Information Literacy, and Social and Cultural Capital.

The Role of Literacy for Women with LESLLA Backgrounds

Three studies focusing on women with LESLLA backgrounds (Gonzalves, 2012; Love & Kotai, 2015; Pothier, 2011) are included here. Their participants' backgrounds are similar to those included in the following study, and participants were also asked about their literacy practices (Pothier, 2011) and the place of literacy in their lives (Gonzalves, 2012; Love & Kotai, 2015; Pothier, 2011). A common thread woven through the women's stories was their desire for greater autonomy. They wished to be able to perform day-to-day tasks such as talking to a doctor, taking public transportation, completing paperwork for subsidized housing or helping children with their schoolwork. They described limited literacy as a barrier to full participation in the welcoming country, including further education and training, employment, navigating institutions and, in Pothier's (2011) Toronto study, to obtaining citizenship.¹ Print-text literacy is an expectation of service providers in post-industrialized countries, where completed forms are required to access nearly any service. Participants in Love & Kotai's (2015) study noted literacy was important in their countries of origin, but did not limit their access to services to the same extent pre-migration as it did post-migration.

Participants felt literacy was needed to improve their quality of life, yet they described barriers to attending classes in the receiving country. In addition to

¹ While participants noted that limited literacy was a barrier to obtaining Canadian citizenship, a person is no longer eligible for LINC programming after obtaining citizenship.

commonly identified barriers such as transportation and the need for childcare during classes, women in Gonzalves' (2012) study described three main barriers to learning. First, domestic demands were sometimes at odds with time spent in classes or studying at home. Similarly, studying was not viewed as an important priority for women. A third barrier was affective in nature: women expressed that they did not feel confident stepping foot inside a classroom, did not believe they could be taught, or that studying alongside literate learners discourages women from continuing classes or even attending in the first place.

L1 Literacy and Access to Social Services

It has been established that second language and literacy development occurs differently for LESLLA learners than for adults who have had access to L1 schooling and have developed print literacy in another language. A Toronto area study (Geronimo, Folinsbee & Goveas, 2001) looking into gaps in services for newcomers who had less than a grade nine education and had been in Canada less than five years found that barriers that exist for any immigrant group, like access to language training and employment, were exacerbated by the role literacy plays in accomplishing tasks and accessing services in Canada. Pathways to services in Canada assume a certain level of literacy is in place, and perhaps also that clients' means of accessing and vetting information is compatible with service providers' information provision.

Information Literacy

Information literacy, "those practices, beliefs and skills which enable engagement with information needed for productive social agency" (Richards, 2015, p. 14), offers us another lens into how services are accessed by newcomer groups. Studies have found access to information to be critical to successful settlement and integration for immigrants and refugees in Canada (George & Chaze, 2009; Ahmed, Shommu, Rumana, Barron, Wicklum, & Turin, 2016).

Making information available does not guarantee it is accessed in a useful way. Participants in a Queensland, Australia study (Richards, 2015) looking into the information infrastructure pre- and post-migration for Bor Dinka South Sudanese described a disconnect between ways in which information was delivered by settlement workers in Australia and the ways in which Bor Dinka community members engaged with information. In refugee camps where participants had lived, for example, information was mainly obtained orally from family and clan members. This means of information gathering continued after participants arrived in Australia, where settlement information was mainly provided in print-text and via an infrastructure less based on relationships or networks. Study participants described the importance of the information source to determine whether it was important or accurate. The stark contrast in information practices to the way information was provided in an Australian context meant that, while social service providers endeavored to provide information to the Bor Dinka community, the mismatch in means of provision to the way community members engaged with information rendered it ineffective.

Service providers are encouraged to other consider means of information provision. One valuable method of seeking and assessing information is “pooling” (Lloyd, 2017), which involves drawing on the collective (e.g., a church group) to piece together information and create a full picture. Social service organizations play an important role in not only providing information, but addressing additional barriers, such as those faced by refugees seeking housing in a Toronto area study (Murdie, 2008). Participants in a Winnipeg, Canada study (MacKinnon, et al., 2007) suggested hiring members of refugee communities could increase knowledge about services available in their community.

Social and Cultural Capital

Effective classroom support for LESLLA learners can only take place when recognizing gaps in language and literacy is counterbalanced with understanding the strengths they bring to the classroom (Bigelow, 2007). Bigelow (2007) exemplified an asset-based approach in her case study involving a Somali high school student in the United States, by applying a framework of social and cultural capital to identify strengths the learner brought to her education experience.

Social capital can be defined as the mutually beneficial relationships that can be drawn on to achieve goals (Coleman, 1990; Social capital, 2014), while cultural capital denotes the ability to navigate systems and knowledge of how systems work (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, as cited in Bigelow, p.2). Bourdieu (1986) hypothesized that cultural capital could help us understand variances in children’s academic performance at a time when children’s academic success was considered the result of merit and aptitude. Cultural capital, “the symbols, ideas, tastes, and preferences that can be strategically used as resources in social action” (Cultural capital, 2014), are passed down from one generation to the next. They serve as a sort of currency that can be converted into social mobility. Bourdieu’s (1986) view of social capital includes a person’s membership to certain associations, families and social groups and acts to multiply an individual’s capital.

Through this lens, Bigelow (2007) identified the social and cultural capital that Fadumo, an 18-year-old high-achieving high school student brought to her schooling. Fadumo’s greatest source of social capital was found in her family. Fadumo’s mother clearly supported her children’s schooling, stopping by the school to talk to teachers, ensuring her children were associating with ‘good’ friends in school and making her children’s studies a priority. Social capital provided by the family was converted to cultural capital in the form of academic success. Fadumo’s family also found social capital within the Somali community, where Fadumo’s mother recruited community members to translate conversations with the children’s teachers. Cultural capital included the strong L2 skills Fadumo and her family had developed and their sense that education was important to their future. Fadumo demonstrated good student behaviours such as strong attendance, asking teachers for help when needed, and consistently completing homework. Bigelow also noted gaps in Fadumo’s social and cultural capital. Fadumo did not mention peers supporting her school

experience, and several challenges – like the college application process and underdeveloped literacy skills – arose as she worked towards high school graduation and her goal of entering college. Bigelow pondered the school's role in supporting the development of cultural capital that would have led to a more successful academic transition.

Supporting Settlement and Integration

The design of target language programs and adult literacy programs makes certain assumptions about adult learning. Refugee background participants in a Calgary, Canada study (Wood, et al., 2012) described the many ways in which settlement agencies and counsellors helped them to negotiate the settlement process. Immigrant serving agencies and settlement workers not only serve as a bridge to resources and information, but also as advocates for clients. However, given decreased funding and increasing demands on settlement workers, high rates of burnout in the sector were also reported. Federally funded language training programs are part of Canada's Settlement Program and are designed to provide language and literacy skills necessary for settlement and integration into Canadian society. These programs, like settlement counselling, however, are available only until a person obtains Canadian citizenship, a change in status which is unrelated to whether or not a person needs help to access services.

Language training programs across Canada are heavily settlement-focused (see Aberdeen & Johnson, 2015 for examples of how settlement themes are embedded into LINC ESL literacy classes). Reder (2015) notes that LESLLA learners benefit from bringing literacy issues they face in their own lives to class and work to solve these literacy problems as a class (2015). Fleming (2015) suggests drawing on Westheimer & Kahne's (2004, as cited in Fleming, p. 71) notion of justice-oriented citizenship for ESL literacy programming. Applied to language training, learners would be engaged in dialogue that challenges existing systems.

Adult literacy programs tend to reflect a K-12 model, where seats are filled, learners retained, and attendance is considered key to learners' academic achievement (Leander, 2009 as cited in Reder, p. 4). Reder's (2015) large-scale longitudinal study on Practice Engagement however, challenges the efficacy of such a model for adult literacy learners and instead confirms Condelli, Wrigley & Yoon's (2009) study disputing the relationship between instructional hours and literacy proficiency for LESLLA learners. Data showed that enrolment in formal literacy programs increases engagement in literacy practices outside of the classroom in the short-term. Literacy skills show minimal improvement. However, engaging in literacy practices over time led to literacy gains long after exiting a program. Progress takes place over long periods of time and is also tied to life events such as the birth of a child or starting a new job. Reder (2015) proposes what he terms a busy intersection approach to literacy, where literacy programs are designed as a resource from which participants take tools for literacy practice in their lives at various junctures in their lives.

Language and literacy skills, gender, protracted periods in refugee camps and information practices are just some of the barriers facing women with refugee

backgrounds and limited no prior access to schooling to achieving their self-defined measures of success. The next section explores how two women with LESLLA backgrounds valued second language and literacy skills and experienced access to social services in Canada.

FINDINGS

During their interviews, Abrehet and Tenneh talked about the value of developing English and literacy skills and their experiences navigating systems. Their advice to teachers concluded the interviews.

Abrehet

Background. Originally from Eritrea, Abrehet spent 14 to 15 years in a refugee camp in Sudan before arriving in Canada. Abrehet spoke Tigrinya, Amharic and a little Arabic which she picked up during her years in Sudan. At the time of the interview, Abrehet had been in Canada for three years. She left her destined city² shortly after arrival when a friend told her more jobs were available elsewhere. Abrehet lived with her young adult son who was studying at a community college. Her interview was conducted in Tigrinya, with the support of a community interpreter.

Abrehet had not accessed schooling prior to her arrival to Canada, though her son attended school while in the refugee camp and Abrehet learned to speak some Arabic. Abrehet reported that she rarely used English outside of school. When asked about her use of L1 or L2 literacy, she said that the first time she had put pen to paper was in Canada and that she did not read or write outside of class. On several occasions during her interview, Abrehet said that she had no one in Canada but her son, though she was engaged in a Tigrinya-speaking church on the weekends.

Taking the Bus. Several times throughout her interview, Abrehet talked about her experiences with public transportation.

[My son is] like 18. With the bus, he used help me, like uh, which bus goes where. Because like before I used to get into bus number 3 thinking it's 4, or I'll get into bus number 4 thinking it's 3, so I used to get lost...It was difficult for my son before. It was very, very difficult, but he's okay now...I do everything by myself. I'm becoming like a native person now...I go to church by myself...I'm like independent now.

Later in the interview, Abrehet spoke of being lost overnight:

Yeah, this was when I was like, new like in Canada, that happened to me. Like I went in a bus and like I went...all the way [to the end of the line], and I got lost in there, so I like spent a whole night there, and like the whole night...I was uh, lost in [the grocery store parking lot] so I saw people

² 'Destined city' here refers to the city where a Government-Assisted Refugee initially lands, as described in Simich et al. (2001).

pressing [the button on the bus] and then like getting off. And when I saw that I, I like did the same thing, pressed it and then get off...So the next morning, I got on on the bus and then I went back [home]. And when I saw people pressing [the button] to get off, I had no idea like that's how you get off from the bus. So, when I saw them press it, and then getting off, I did the same thing and then I got off. Even like the next stop, the next day, I was like circling around the streets, and my son was doing the same thing. Just by some accident, we just met at four, at 4:00.

Abrehet returned to her experience of being lost later in the interview:

In that time I was lost, I thought...the system was like my country, where like, if you raise your hand, the bus driver normally stops. That's... the bus system back home. But that's not how it is. So I just...went along, or the bus just kept on taking me. That's why I kind of got lost. And that time it was summer, so I thought, I will just go out and buy some things and come back. [And that way] there is no way you can just get lost. There is a bus and you just get on the bus and then get off. But like I thought I raise my hand and that's how I end up getting lost. Then when I get off, like nobody can see me. [The people], they didn't notice I was there.

Abrehet relied on members of her ethno-cultural community when she needed directions or had questions about navigating her life in Canada. She approached people who appeared to be from her community en route to her destination for directions or in a medical office to confirm information about her appointment. A previous landlord who spoke her language also called 9-1-1 when she was in a medical emergency. Abrehet felt it was important for teachers to include topics such as these in the curriculum. Given her prior experiences with public transit, it is not surprising that she recommended instruction on how to use public transportation.

Tenneh

Background. Tenneh had lived in Canada for 13 years at the time of this study. Originally from Liberia, Tenneh spent 10 years in a refugee camp in Sierra Leone before moving to Canada. Tenneh reported Vai as her first language, but also spoke Krio, Mende and a little Temne. Tenneh spoke mainly English outside of her home. Tenneh's interview was conducted in English.

Tenneh had not attended school or developed print-literacy prior to arriving in Canada. Soon after landing, she enrolled in a language training program, where she was encouraged to develop print literacy skills, and when a friend took her to a toy store to buy toys for her children, she bought an educational toy that she used to learn the alphabet alongside her daughter. Tenneh lived in her destined city for several years before relocating.

Tenneh spoke about changes in her ability to access services in Canada over the 13 years. While she received very little support from resettlement centre staff when she arrived in Canada, friends helped her obtain important information

about where and how to register her children for school and how to speak Canadian English. It was a friend who took her to the toy store to buy toys for her children, and where she bought an educational toy that she used to learn the alphabet.

Soon after moving cities, friends accompanied her to social service offices. Determined not to rely on friends, she began commuting by herself, asking for help from bus drivers and people on the street when needed. In this way, she learned to navigate important places in the city independently.

Family services. When asked what advice she had for teachers, Tenneh talked about the importance of encouraging students who are new to print-literacy. Teachers should let students know what they are doing right and clearly explain how to perform tasks that are new. As learners in her class came mainly from rural backgrounds, she said that teachers need to show them how to navigate their urban environments, read signs, and understand directions. Tenneh also talked about her experience with family services:

And, the school send, the lady came, 'I'm gonna take your child.' And this guy was talking. I said, 'Why? Why are you taking [my child]?' He said, 'because this country you can't beat child.' I said, 'Africa it's normal.' He said, 'No.' And I talk, they were talking, then they go out, and it's was two lady, came in, and then they go out, and they come back and say, 'Okay.' And the other lady said, 'Oh, you have to go for parent [parenting course].'

Tenneh had just moved into a new home, in an unfamiliar community with her children. After putting her children to bed, she went to sleep – only to be awakened late at night by her youngest child who was asking where his brother was. Tenneh did not know anyone in her complex at the time. When she eventually found her son behind the building, she hit her him. It is unclear how family services came to learn about this event, however, a social worker told Tenneh she was going to remove Tenneh's children from her care. Tenneh advocated for herself, resulting in her enrolment in a parenting course for newcomers to Canada rather than her children being removed from her care. Tenneh found the program invaluable as she learned positive parenting skills that worked with her children. She questioned why she was not made aware of Canadian parenting norms and laws earlier. Tenneh described a travel show she had seen:

[T]he government need to teach people, how you come to this country, how you be like this...[T]hat time I was watching TV, like the lady was going Africa. She go for school. She was in the school. They were playing in the TV. How you, how Africa like this, this food in Africa, Africa different... everybody here if they going for Africa, they can teach you. Why when we coming they can't teach their culture?...The lady, they were teaching, because they say, "...You going Africa. Africa, go like this..." If you go to Africa, you can't say insult people...You can't say something like that. Africa like this.

The lady, they teach her, explain...in the, like movie...Where Canada, we came, they don't teach me the rule. Now we go in trouble.

Table 2

Summary of Interviews

Participant	Social capital	Cultural capital/ Knowledge and skills	External supports	Language, literacy and numeracy
Abrehet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family: son • Ethno-cultural community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation • Medical appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settlement counsellor • Medical interpretation • Income tax clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language necessary to access services
Tenneh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family: children • Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation and navigating the city • Understanding directions • How to ask for help • Parenting in a Canadian context • Self-advocacy • Inequity in access to critical information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting course • ESL literacy program • Social service agency in housing complex: social worker, settlement counsellor, help reading important documents, referrals to additional services like income tax clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L1 not readily available • Uses English to access services and ask for help, including to file her social assistance report over the phone • Can fill out a few fields on a form by herself • Life is easier with print-text literacy

Barriers and enablers to accessing services

While coding the interview data, it became evident that the same factors that were barriers to accessing social services could serve as enablers to access. Limited knowledge of L2, for instance, left Abrehet unable to ask for help at the bus terminal. Skillful use of L2 was critical to Tenneh's ability to self-advocate when confronted by family services. Limited literacy and numeracy left Abrehet

unable to read bus route names and numbers. The paperwork required by many social service agencies to access services unwittingly created additional barriers to clients. Lack of information led to Abrehet becoming lost overnight and Tenneh nearly losing guardianship of her children. On the other hand, Tenneh later gained information from a parenting program that led to confidence in parenting skills considered culturally acceptable in Canada. A social network or lack thereof were also noted as barriers and enablers to services.

Social and cultural capital were also found to influence participants' access to social services. Abrehet's main source of social capital was her son, who was more adept at using the local transit system and had stronger English language skills and on whom she relied to get around the city. Members of her ethno-cultural community were also sources of valuable information. These supports enabled her to increase her independence. Like Fadumo in Bigelow's (2007) study, social capital was converted into cultural capital of the dominant class. In this case, Abrehet's source of social capital enabled her to develop skills and familiarity with systems she needed to navigate in Canada. Her son and co-ethnic community provided her with important information about how things were done in her new city, and as she developed this knowledge, she was building the cultural capital of the dominant society in Canada. Her connection to her ethno-cultural community at the time was, however, limited and dependent on seeing people in the city who looked like her.

Throughout her interview, Tenneh spoke of various friends who had helped her over the years. When she first arrived to Canada, a friend filled in the gap left by an unhelpful worker at the settlement center who suggested she find a school for her children on her own. A friend taught her the language she needed to use public transit, and another brought her to a toy store where she bought a children's toy she used to learn the alphabet. Later, friends connected her with resources like language training and subsidized housing. Tenneh determined to learn to navigate these systems with greater independence, preferring not to bother friends whose lives are busy. As in Abrehet's case, Tenneh's social capital was converted into cultural capital.

In addition to relying on relationships in their communities, formal supports were also important for successful access to social services. Institutional supports are critical when Abrehet has questions about documents or how things work. Sometimes those supports were, perhaps, accidental. When she saw a member of her ethno-cultural community in a medical office, she spoke with that person to confirm her appointment time. Other institutional supports, such as medical interpreters for appointments or a settlement counsellor who speaks her language and will have the cultural sensitivity to support her effectively are aides that have been built into service provision by service providers. Abrehet also described her LESLLA teacher as important source of support who helps her read documents and who at the time was teaching the class how to contact emergency medical services.

As described by Wood, et al. (2012), settlement workers play an important part in a refugee's immediate and long-term experiences in Canada. Both Abrehet and Tenneh seem to have missed quality support afforded by resettlement

centers during GARs' first year in Canada; Abrehet likely moved too early in her settlement to make use of the services available to her where she landed, while Tenneh's experience shows that the quality of settlement services may vary. While formal institutional supports were important to both Abrehet and Tenneh, the level and type of need for these additional supports differed.

Participants' need for institutional supports may have been affected by their target language and literacy proficiency. Abrehet, whose interview was conducted with interpreter support, spoke strongly of the value of both speaking the target language and of literacy skills. She felt that if the English language was a potion, she would absorb it and that nothing can be done in Canada without literacy skills. While Abrehet spoke little English outside of class, she was now able to greet people in English. She thanked medical staff at the hospital, who in turn complimented her on her language learning and ask her where she had learned English.

Tenneh, in Canada 13 years at the time of the study, spoke mostly English outside of her home. Unlike the other participants, she spoke some English before landing in Canada. Nevertheless, when she first arrived in Canada, her friend helped her learn Canadian English that would be comprehensible. She believed that when a person knows how to read and write, "everything can be easy for you". In addition to attending 12 hours of literacy programming a week, she worked on literacy skills with her six-year-old son at home.

Table 3

Participants' Recommendations to Teachers

Participant Recommendations to teachers

Abrehet	Lessons involve important knowledge, practical skills, and language and literacy skills. Suggestions included how to use 9-1-1 and public transportation.
Tenneh	Understand your learners. ELL literacy classmates come mostly from rural areas and will learn best with a teacher who is patient. Be aware of what learners are doing well. Newcomers need to be provided with information about Canadian law, how things are done in their new country, to avoid problems later on. Information on issues such as parenting law should be shared with all newcomers.

Both Abrehet and Tenneh's primary recommendations to teachers centered around sharing information about how things are done in Canada. For Abrehet, including content like how to use public transportation and how to access emergency services were invaluable. And for Tenneh, who had been in Canada for much longer, knowledge of parenting law in Canada was of primary importance. Tenneh also indicated that it is important for teachers to understand their students and to consider their backgrounds. Teachers need to be patient with their students, to explain information 'slowly', and to recognize and

acknowledge what learners are doing well. In this way, Tenneh said, learners can feel proud of their accomplishments. Knowing that they are learning and capable encourages learners to persevere despite demands on time and energy.

DISCUSSION

For teachers working with LESLLA learners, Abrehet and Tenneh's experiences are perhaps not surprising. L2 language and literacy skills are important to supporting newcomer integration but possession of L2 language and literacy skills does not on its own lead to full integration in Canadian society.

As Geronimo et al. (2001) suggest, newcomers with no prior access to formal schooling face the same challenges as other newcomer groups, only these barriers appear to be magnified for such adults. For Abrehet and Tenneh, barriers were multi-faceted. Abrehet and Tenneh believed that L2 skills and literacy were important for access to social services. Despite a desire for independence and 13 years in Canada, filling out forms was still something Tenneh relied on support for. A lack of information and 'know-how' about how things are done in Canada, whether that be using the transportation system or disciplining children created difficult circumstances for both participants. Discrepancies between language and literacy skills required by social service providers to access services and those held by the two participants made access difficult without additional supports like teachers, a settlement worker or social worker. If it is surprising that participants were unfamiliar with common information, then service providers might consider whether the ways in which information is shared complements the ways in which members of newcomer groups use information.

And while Tenneh and Abrehet described vastly differing levels of social capital, Tenneh preferred to learn how to do things by herself than bother already busy friends for help. Abrehet and Tenneh also utilized their social capital to increase cultural capital of the dominant culture. Abrehet's son accompanied her to her destinations originally, but now she has learned how to get to familiar places on her own. Members of her ethno-cultural community are valuable sources of information as she navigates life in Canada. Tenneh's friends helped her find a school for her children when she first arrived in Canada. When she relocated to another city, friends took her to social service agencies which she later accessed independently. Social capital was converted to cultural capital in both cases.

Regardless of length of residency, participants required organizational support. Both rely on teachers as sources of information and for help understanding documents. Abrehet, after three years in Canada, was still unsure about what types of information or support she could access via community organizations. In contrast, Tenneh, who was able to access social services more independently, still required organizational supports not only to help her fill out documentation but also to gain the knowledge and skills that would enable her family to stay together. Government policy makes access to social services like

the family literacy program Tenneh applied to and full-time LINC programming unavailable when funding ceases after citizenship.

Language training programs play an important role in supporting settlement processes. Abrehet and Tenneh pointed to the value of language and literacy skills to navigate places and systems alike. They wanted to develop both the skills and knowledge to navigate their environments successfully. Their requests for information about services during their interviews underscores the value of connecting LESLLA learners with existing community resources.

IMPLICATIONS

Both Abrehet and Tenneh found ways to navigate systems and information despite the disparity between language and / or literacy levels and the language and literacy demands placed on them by social services. Gaps in cultural capital led to distressing events for both participants. They believed target language and literacy skills are important to their lives in Canada. They described the importance of learning critical information in their ESL literacy classes. Length of residency did not mitigate their need for support.

Social service providers may consider reducing the demands on LESLLA clients' language, literacy and information infrastructure, while teachers might consider how instruction can contribute to learners' independence and successful settlement. By thinking about the ways in which LESLLA learners do access services successfully, service providers can optimize access to social services as well as language and literacy programming.

Reder's (2015) *busy intersection* model is invaluable to both language training and social services to ensure that LESLLA newcomers can access information and services at various locations and points during a person's life. While ESL literacy programs serve a distinct purpose from that of other Settlement Programs, classes developed for or including LESLLA learners must consider ways to improve access to the very services intended to support their settlement. Programs should consider ways to support social and cultural capital, as Bigelow (2007) suggested. Finally, we should consider Fleming's (2015) recommendation to create learning environments where a critical lens to existing systems is encouraged so that learners are better equipped to understand and address social inequities.

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