

Enhancing Pathways

Phase 2: The Literacy and Language Continuum

**Final Project Report:
Five Pilots for Facilitating
Service Coordination**

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This project was generously supported by individuals (frontline and management staff) at a wide variety of programs and agencies in the five pilot regions. The individuals representing their programs and organizations actively participated in meetings and activities throughout the five pilot sites. The types of agencies included, but were not limited to: Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS); English as a Second Language (ESL); Language Instruction for Newcomer Canadians (LINC); Adult Secondary School Credit Programs; Employment Services (ES) of Employment Ontario; Ontario Works (OW); Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP); Libraries; and Local Immigrant Partnership Committees (LIPC).

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We greatly appreciate all the time, effort and consideration that each individual provided in their respective roles within this project. This project was about facilitating a collaborative effort to support adults in their pathways through literacy and language programming. The spirit of collaboration and best practice was evident throughout all the pilots. Thank you!

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Important Notes

- 1. Please Note:** For the purposes of this report, "learner", "client" and "student" refers to any adult who takes part in a literacy or language class or who receives service from an agency. The terms are used interchangeably through this report.
- 2. Glossary of Terms:** Within the pilots, specific Glossaries were developed to aid in local discussions and to facilitate understanding amongst agency representatives. Readers of this report may find it helpful to refer to the Common Language Worksheet, a glossary developed in Phase 2 that is contained in the Appendix, before reading this report to aid in understanding how specific terms were used with the contexts of the pilots.
- 3. English as a Second Language (ESL) Eligibility** (source: Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) Please find below an excerpt from MCI's Learner Eligibility Criteria for Adult Non-Credit Language Training Programs.
"An eligible learner is an individual:
 1. Whose first language is neither English or French; and
 2. Who is eighteen years old, or an early school leaver, or has completed his/her high school diploma and is not a day school pupil enrolled in any publicly supported day school in Ontario; and
 3. a) Who is a Canadian Citizen, permanent resident, Convention refugee or a refugee claimant; or
b) Who is a provincial nominee, or their dependent, who has been approved through the Opportunities Ontario: Provincial Nominee Program but has not yet been processed to receive permanent resident status; or
c) Who is a temporary foreign worker, or their dependent, who has been approved through the Canadian Experience Class but has not yet been processed to receive permanent resident status; or
d) Who is approved as a foreign domestic worker admitted under the Live-In Caregiver Program."

4. Each Pilot Report follows the same format –

Pilot Report Table of Contents

Part 1

Regional Context

Facilitative Process & Agencies Involved

Existing Coordination and Referral Practices

Gaps, Needs, Issues/Challenges

Recommendations & Next Steps

Part 2

- Learner Pathways, Outcomes and Profiles (case studies)
- Assessment Tools & Practices
- Client Eligibility & Program Entry Criteria
- Mode of Delivery - Program Models and Teaching Practices
- Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

Executive Summary

Praxis – the constant cycle of conceptualizing the meanings of what can be learned from experience in order to reframe strategic and operational models.

This project, upon reflection, was praxis in service coordination and system integration. *Enhancing Pathways Phase 2* allowed language, literacy and regional network staff to engage in a collaborative examination of how agencies work together for the benefit of those they serve. The volume of adults with complex language, literacy and employability needs is growing in Ontario. In the 2008 *Reading the Future Report*, the Canadian Council on Learning predicted that: “*As a result of population growth, Canada will see a 25% increase in the number of adults with low literacy skills [Levels 1 and 2], from almost 12 million to a total of 15,029,000 adults.*” Ontario will experience a 50% growth in the number of adults with low literacy skills due to high rates of projected population growth. The Report goes on to focus on immigrants with low-level skills. “*The number of immigrants with low-level literacy skills will increase by more than 61%.*” Our collective responsibility to the citizens of Ontario is to conceptualize and provide a highly responsive and effective system for meeting the growing literacy and language needs of our workforce.

The participation of local agencies and other stakeholder groups in the development of system integration through funded, formal processes is being recognized throughout the world. “*Participation of stakeholders in the process of change is considered to be the best way of breaking down barriers to accessing work and exploring new ways of organizing work to the benefit of the business and employees. Stakeholders need to be supported in order to participate effectively in exploring new ways to work.*” (*Equal Partnership Development Toolkit*, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, September 2005)

The overall goal of this project was to engage in a knowledge transfer phase to share and build the coordination capacity of regional literacy networks and the programs they support to understand the roles each plays in service coordination. *Enhancing Pathways Phase 2* built upon the results and outcomes of Phase 1, to further the partnership development among service delivery agencies that provide literacy and language programming. As this report outlines, the project goal was achieved very successfully and has laid the foundation for more wide spread development based on intense interest and desire from all those agencies involved in the five Pilot Sites and expressed in other regions of Ontario. The five Pilot Sites included: Adult Basic Education Association (Hamilton); Literacy Link South Central (London); Literacy Network of Durham Region (Durham); Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Learning Network (Peel Halton); and Project READ Literacy Network (Waterloo and Wellington).

- “*I am more confident that I will refer clients to the correct agency according to their skill set and their personal goals.*” – Agency Representative
- “*Excellent opportunity to build confidence and trust in each other and each other’s agencies.*” – Agency Representative

The project's outcomes were:

- Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver programs funded by TCU, MCI and EDU regarding literacy and language program delivery
- Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between the programs
- Increased awareness and trust amongst educators about each program in order to promote referrals
- Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination practices between literacy and language programs

In each of the outcomes, the formal evaluation revealed 94% to 100% agreement with the outcomes among all respondents (all agencies and networks that participated in the five Pilot Sites).

In an analysis of the results and conclusions from the five Pilot Sites, the following overall Project Conclusions emerged, listed in random order.

- Learner-Centred Service is important – All participating agencies agreed that services should be responsive to an individual's needs and goals.
- Strong facilitative process and skilled facilitator – It is important to set clear goals, expectations and goal-directed tasks for each meeting.
- Purpose, Structure, Process – Clarity of each of these facilitative aspects brought about success, inclusion and partner satisfaction in each Pilot Site.
- Production of tangible products - Concrete evidence of collective efforts to complete goal-directed tasks, e.g. Referral Tools and protocols.
- Collective dedication to increased referrals – The creation of tools and protocols based on local services and identified client needs.
- Increased understanding and trust – A result of the development of shared definitions/vocabulary, the documentation of program delivery information, and the clarification of learner profiles and pathways.
- Strengthened relationships – A result of frequent guided discussions about specific topics that engendered mutual understanding and trust.
- Group collaboration drives the individuals – The strength of the group or network (newly formed partnerships) influenced the behaviours and actions of the individual participating agencies by the end of the pilots.
- High degree of Funder interest & support – The participation and interest of representatives from the Learning Ministries (EDU, MCI, TCU) in the pilots inspired delivery agency participation and assisted the Ministries to understand the immediate benefits of service coordination process.
- Regional Networks are critical change agents - They leveraged their expertise in service coordination to serve as change agents, facilitators of system integration and quality improvement, which enhanced their validity and trustworthiness as neutral bodies within the system.

In consultation with the Pilot Site Coordinators and the Project Advisory Committee and utilizing the analysis of the Pilot Site Reports, the following Recommendations were realized.

Agency Level Recommendations:

- **Partnership development and maintenance** is integral to effective, sustainable service coordination
- **Regular meetings** amongst literacy and language representatives should involve of management and frontline staff
- **Widen the circle** to include “Wrap Around” services from other relevant, community services and programs to support learner success and satisfaction
- **Innovative programming** should explore shared delivery models (ESL and LBS) and
- **Ask for Learner Opinions** to build on results from the Learner Survey and inform program design
- **Referral tools and protocols** to facilitate learner/client movement should be developed collaboratively to ensure local “buy-in”

Network and System Level Recommendations:

- **Develop Common Assessment Model** for LBS similar to successful CLARS model in ESL to ensure objective, efficient routing of adults into LBS programming and communication with CLARS assessors
- **Alignment of policies** in the Learning Ministries to provide a supportive policy framework for service coordination and program delivery
- **Entrench service coordination** in regional network services – support all regional networks to facilitate the LBS – ESL service coordination process including the development of a service coordination guide and an evaluation of the implemented models, e.g. use social network analysis or contribution analysis
- **Involve government representatives** (TCU, MCI, EDU) for local interaction between government representatives and local agencies to facilitate policy and programming dialogues
- **Investment by all three Ministries** – investment will ensure the sustainability of the service coordination model among LBS and ESL programs as well as consistent implementation across the province

More details regarding the overall Project Conclusions and Recommendations can be found in two sections of this report: “Overall Project Conclusions” and “Overall Project Recommendations”.

Project History and Context

Project READ published the *Enhancing Pathways Phase 1 Report* in October 2010 following a year of collaborative development in two regional network areas: Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Learning Network and Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington. The Project Advisory Committee and the participating agencies (ESL, LBS and LINC) in both network areas strongly recommended the continuation of the community discussions with the goal of enhanced learner pathways and system integration. The project conclusions and recommendations supported this request for continued, facilitated dialogue.

The project conclusions included:

- a recognition of the strong commitment to learner-centred practices by all programs (ESL, LBS and LINC);
- the benefit of regular, facilitated dialogue as a means to collaboration and supporting effective learner pathways;
- the identification of similar gaps and needs within and across the three programs (ESL, LBS and LINC);
- the understanding of how the three programs function in a broader context of adult education, training and employment (e.g. Employment Ontario)
- the opportunity for productive contributions to policy development through facilitated dialogue

The Phase 1 project focused on addressing the overwhelming demand for literacy and language programming by recently laid off individuals in the two communities. The widespread lay-offs were due to the global Recession that began in October 2008. As companies, many in the auto and manufacturing sectors, came under financial pressure, they began to internally restructure resulting in plant shut downs and/or massive lay offs. Many of the adults working in these companies had limited education and credentials. This large group of adults included "grey area" individuals. This term, coined by the Literacy Service Planning Committees in Waterloo and Wellington, referred to adults who were not easily identifiable as clearly fitting into either ESL or LBS programs. These adults fell between systems and needed further assessment to determine which program would best support their learning needs and goals. This group had several common characteristics: they spoke English (verbal skills); they had lived and worked in Canada for many years (usually over ten years); they were Canadian Citizens; many had taken ESL classes upon their arrival in Canada; and they were interested in employment-focused training.

The Phase 2 Project Proposal was based on the conclusions, recommendations and successes of Phase 1. The Phase 1 Report was met with a great deal of interest by other regional networks, government representatives and literacy and language programs throughout the province. There was a clear desire to see the initial two pilots spread to other regions. The success of bringing together the language and literacy programs (ESL, LBS and LINC) in two regions prompted the knowledge transfer goal of expanding it to three more networks in Phase 2. Regional literacy networks in

Ontario have long played a service planning coordination role with Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs. Their collective experience of facilitating strategic dialogues for the purpose of system coordination positioned them well for supporting these new discussions. Networks act as hubs of information and support for LBS delivery agencies and do not directly provide literacy instruction (classes, groups or tutoring). Further, as a neutral player within the adult education, training and employment system, networks are well positioned to facilitate planning discussions while bringing various key stakeholders and environmental information to the table.

Phase 1 provided many helpful recommendations that prompted the Phase 2 proposal. These recommendations included:

- the need for educator support such as key information, best practices and government policy updates;
- the need for a formalized, ongoing cycle of service coordination and planning amongst ESL, LBS and LINC programs with the optional addition of other adult education programs such as adult credit;
- the development of client-centre, flexible access programming to meet the diverse needs of adults for literacy and language training;
- the provision of consistent standards of practice that supports positive, learner-centred program delivery exemplifying best practices in adult education;
- the provision of informed advice by the field to government ministries to influence policy and service delivery.

It was thought that a Phase 2 project could develop more tangible referral and coordination tools to support the collaborative process. Tools are the practical side of the facilitated process as well as being evidence of effective coordination. Phase 2 could also provide the opportunity to share these broadly through a website.

Based on insights from educators about program design from Phase 1, it was decided to propose a survey of learners and others (adults not in an ESL or LBS program) to ask for their insights on program design. The goal of the survey would be to compare learners perspectives about program design to the educators perspectives. The survey would inquire about what aspects of program design attract and retain students and which aspects are not effective in supporting student commitment. In designing any effective program, it is important to ask the opinion of “customers”, who are in this case literacy and language students.

Additional contextual factors that influenced the submission of a Phase 2 proposal were the transformations and initiatives taking place in the English as a Second Language (ESL) and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) systems. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) was well into its pilot of a new Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) including pilot locations in Kitchener-Waterloo and London. Kitchener-Waterloo falls within the catchment area of Project READ Literacy Network, which was leading the *Enhancing Pathways Phase 1 project*. Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) covers the City of London and the network

had expressed great interest in possibly bringing the Enhancing Pathways coordination process to their region. Additional interest was expressed by the two other regional networks: Literacy Network of Durham Region and Adult Basic Education Association of Hamilton. In all network areas, positive relationships already existed between the network and local ESL and LINC programs thus providing fertile ground for further coordination. Within the LBS system, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) was implementing the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) initiative along with developing new program guidelines for Service Delivery Agencies and Support Organizations. OALCF is a competency matrix based on the Essential Skills 500 point scale. The OALCF recognizes five key learner pathways: independence; employment; apprenticeship and skills training; post-secondary; and secondary school credits. The Curriculum Framework helps provide task-based learning activities for learners to develop competencies needed for transition to the five pathways.

Therefore, in reviewing the key factors of system transformation, the continued demand for literacy and language services by adults and the success of Phase 1, Project READ decided to submit a proposal to MTCU for project funding to expand the work of the initial phase to three additional regions while developing new tools to support learner pathways and transitions. Further, Phase 2 would provide opportunities for widespread knowledge transfer in best practices of service coordination leading to system integration.

Project Goals and Outcomes

The information listed below includes the original project objectives, outcomes and performance indicators outlined in the proposal. These statements acted as a guide for all project activity and evaluation. It assisted the Project Advisory Committee to focus their efforts on the outcomes of the project.

Phase 2 was intended to build on the success of Phase 1. In the Phase 1 pilots, the two regional networks involved were able to develop initial foundations for collaboration through collective discussions regarding the overwhelming number of adults seeking language and literacy training programs due to the recession. The facilitated discussions with educators were such a success that it was strongly recommended to continue. This enthusiasm lead to the Phase 2 proposal to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for a second year of project funding.

Proposed Phase 2 Project Overview and Objectives:

Building on our current *Enhancing Pathways project* results, we will engage in a knowledge transfer phase to share and build the coordination capacity of programs funded by TCU, MCI, EDU and HRSDC (LINC programs). To accomplish this we will engage in the following knowledge transfer activities:

- Pilot and facilitate the coordination models between LBS, ESL and LINC programs to three additional regional network areas in Ontario.
- Build capacity in the original two regional network areas [Project READ Literacy Network (PRLN) and Peel Halton Dufferin Learning Network (PHDALN)] involved in Phase 1 by expanding the model to include representatives from EDU credit programs and Employment Ontario's employment services.
- Develop referral protocols amongst the various agencies in PRLN and PHDALN and document learner pathways among and between the programs.
- Develop presentations for educators and workers in all programs (LBS, ESL, LINC, Credit, EO) in the pilot sites to build understanding about learner/client pathways including intersections and program structure (including teaching methodologies) in each system.
- Conduct a survey with a sample of students within each program (LBS & ESL) and with adults outside of the system (potential students) to ask for their perspectives on program delivery in the two original network areas.
- Provide training to regional network staff on how to facilitate the coordination process.
- Create a website (or post on an existing platform) to share the coordination model (tools and process) and presentations developed in Phase 1 and 2 with the broad range of delivery agencies across Ontario.
- Strike a Project Advisory Committee with broad representation from all key sectors – LBS, ESL, LINC, Credit and Employment Services.

Proposed Project Outcomes:

- Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver programs funded by TCU, MCI and EDU regarding literacy and language program delivery
- Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between the programs
- Increased awareness and trust amongst educators about each program in order to promote referrals
- Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination between literacy and language programs

Proposed Project Evaluation:

The project's effectiveness will be determined on our accomplishment of our project outcomes.

- Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver programs funded by TCU, MCI and EDU regarding literacy and language program delivery –Tool: Project Evaluation Survey - 60% of participating agencies will report satisfaction with the coordination process and an increased understanding of the literacy and language programs
- Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between the programs Tool: Project Evaluation Survey – 60% of participating agencies report an increase in their knowledge of transition points and pathways
- Increased awareness and trust amongst educators about each program in order to promote referrals Tool: Project Evaluation Survey – 60% of participating educators report increased satisfaction with their interagency relationships
- Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination practices between literacy and language programs Tool: Presentation Evaluation Form – 70% of regional networks report increased knowledge of coordination practices

Development of the Collaboration Process: Praxis of Service Coordination and System Integration

This project is, at its essence, an exploration of service coordination models and how they support student placement, pathways, transitions and customer satisfaction. It is based on two key statements. The first is focused on learner or customer-centred service; specifically that educators and administrators are committed to supporting individual adults to access the best, most appropriate services to hasten their success. Secondly that the limited resources in the education and training system must be used in the most effective and efficient manner to provide the best services possible. The coordination of services and programs is paramount to achieving the two key statements.

Features of an Integrated System

In the December 1999 report (p II-24), *People Over Programs: Some Characteristics of More Integrated Planning and Delivery of Employment and Training Programs and Some Possible Directions and Supports for Communities*, researcher and author Norm Rowen posited five key features as defining an "integrated system" of employment and training programs and services.

"While the specific approaches vary, several common features are evident in the requirements.

- (v) *common performance measures across all funded programs*
- (vi) *customer satisfaction measures from both individual clients and employers*
- (vii) *an emphasis on service improvement (including performance targets, financial incentives and penalties)*
- (viii) *reporting of results for individual providers and the system as a whole*
- (ix) *certification of providers"*

Within such a framework of system integration, the features of customer satisfaction, service improvement and performance management come together through service coordination. While each funded agency has an individual responsibility in performance management and customer satisfaction, there is also a collective effect that can be examined at various levels, e.g. locally, regionally and provincially, since no one agency provides all services to support all aspects of an individual adult's journey through life. The local service coordination table becomes a place for the balancing of system accountability and local autonomy in the design and delivery of customer-centred programs. This balance enables communities to identify local needs and create a responsive delivery continuum while meeting system-wide measures and outcomes.

"Providers would clearly need to play a central roles in any re-design to increase effectiveness and efficient of service organization and delivery." (p II-28, Rowen)

In training and employment systems around the world (e.g. United States, United Kingdom, Australia) local planning and coordination models are used to facilitate system wide restructuring and locally responsive program delivery. Rowen states that based on his examination of initiatives in the US, UK and Australia “*the only way to integrate . . . services is to do so locally.*” (p II-32) Further, that “*a statement of expected outcomes . . .[be] developed by local bodies with specific provisions to integrate services by local providers.*” (p II-32) “*An effective local system requires considerable support including funding, guidance and resources*” and “*extensive policy coordination.*” (p II-32, II-33)

Strata of System Integration

The Table below illustrates the strata underlying system integration.

System Integration
Service Coordination
Partnership Development & Service Delivery
Facilitated Interaction
Networking and Information Sharing

In Ontario within Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), regional networks have been catalysts for local coordination among LBS delivery agencies since the early 1990s. Literacy Service Planning (LSP), also known as Literacy Community Planning (LCP) is a key coordination role facilitated by regional networks. It involves an annual planning cycle as pictured in Figure #1. The ongoing cycle of environmental scanning, needs identification, service delivery and evaluation provides a framework for LBS agencies to review and plan programs on both an individual agency level and a local community level. Annually, the regional network produces an LSP Report for the geographic area in cooperation with the LBS agencies outlining service projections for the coming year. The Report is submitted to the funder, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU), prior to the submission of annual agency business plans. The content of the business plans must reflect the projections provided in the Report as evidence of the collective commitment to service coordination.

Literacy Service Planning

This experience and expertise in service coordination provided fertile ground for the *Enhancing Pathways project*. Literacy Service Planning always included reaching out to various groups and stakeholders within the broader community to inform the environmental scan and needs identification stages. An obvious ally of LBS programs is English as a Second Language programs. Both types of programs shared a devotion to learner-centred service as well as experiencing an overwhelming demand for services during the period following the Recession, 2008 to 2010.

Literacy Service Planning is one model of service coordination. The foundation for

any service coordination model is partnership development and facilitated, frequent interaction. The purpose of service coordination is to move individual agencies from the informal, lower level of information sharing up to the formal, committed level of collaborative program delivery. In *Planning Together: Literacy Service Planning Guide*, published by Project READ Literacy Network in 1999 and updated in 2012, the goal of service planning was stated as: "The central work of the LSP is creative. It involves thinking, analyzing, responding, shaping, and creating anew." (p. 5) The Guide posited that the most important and challenging task for an LSP Committee is to move from viewing themselves as "reporting bodies" to "planning bodies" (p. 5) and to understand that information sharing is insufficient for effective service coordination. The underlying dynamic of the LSP process is a carefully supported development of trust as evidenced by: common purpose and goals; shared customer service philosophy; shared risk and responsibilities; commitment to decision-making process and accountability; and high degree and frequency of communication. Figure #1, below, illustrates the annual cycle of planning used by Literacy Service Planning Committees.

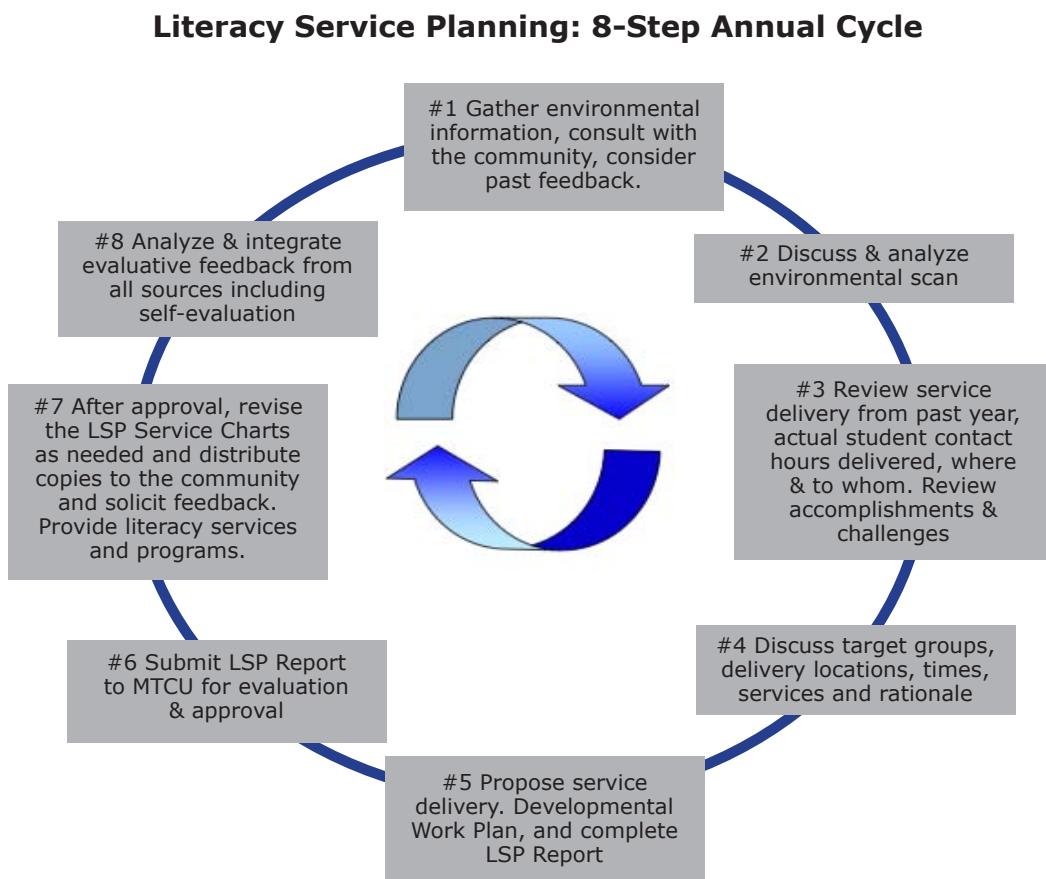
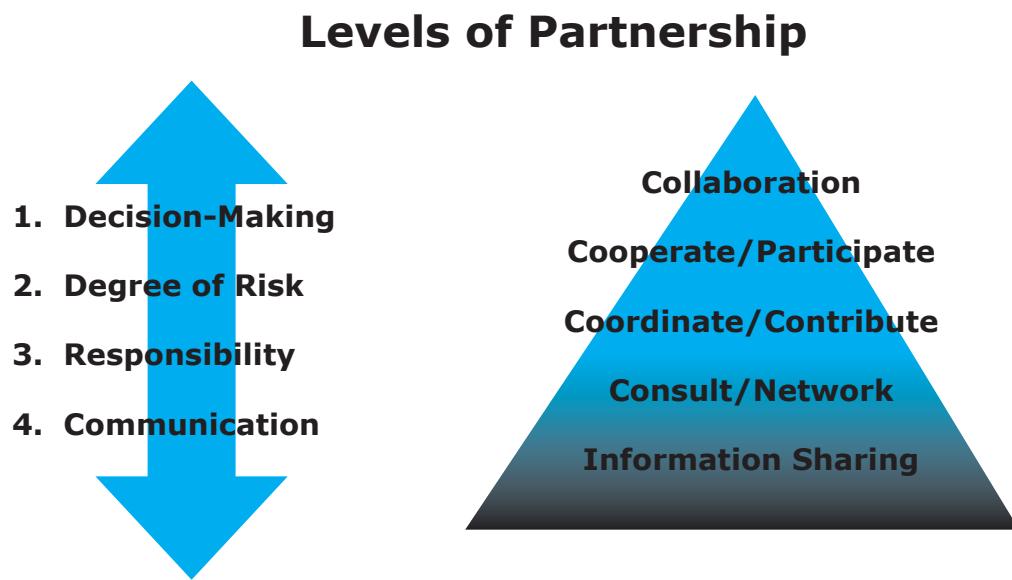


Figure #2 – Levels and Elements of Partnership



Partnership and Service Coordination

Service Coordination is focused on leveraging the power of individual connections or relationships as a means to focus the energy of a broad, diverse group of agencies to serve clients in the most effective and efficient manner. In this context, effectiveness is defined as the system's ability to provide quality services relevant to the client's needs and goals. Efficiency is defined as the ability to provide services in a timely manner with appropriate use of resources to achieve the outputs and outcomes. The leveraging of power and the development of trusting partnerships must be carefully facilitated over the long-term through a focused process of partnership development as outlined in Figure#2. Most agencies interact at the "consult" and "contribute" levels, often referred to as networking and information sharing, via frontline staff communications and community meetings of management representatives, e.g. employment services committees or networks.

Service coordination operates at the "cooperate" and "collaborate" levels. Therefore, partners participating must be "up-leveled" via facilitated discussions and tasks until there is an increased investment from each in the four key elements of partnership: decision-making; degree of risk; purpose and responsibility; and communication.

Service coordination is often referred to as "client-centred" service or "wrap-around case management". To achieve a state of integrated service delivery considerable effort and time must be invested in facilitating linkages, both informal and formal, between individual workers and managers and among delivery agencies in the system.

Invest a minimal amount of time and funding into service coordination and only a minimal amount of coordination is achieved, i.e. networking and information sharing at community meetings. Invest and entrench service coordination as a funded function with specific performance indicators and more significant system integration is achieved as evidenced by learner outcomes and program quality.

Underpinning any linkage is mutual trust and shared philosophy. Partnerships develop based on the sharing of explicit, common beliefs regarding service delivery and the treatment of learners. Shared philosophy leads to mutual trust. Mutual trust and understanding leads to program coordination and formal referral protocols. This context of trust, linkages and coordinated program delivery must be actively maintained by ongoing, facilitated communication, both formal and informal at management and frontline levels. Thus, the cycle of service coordination is dependent on individual partners committing to a supported process of ongoing discussion, change management and problem solving.

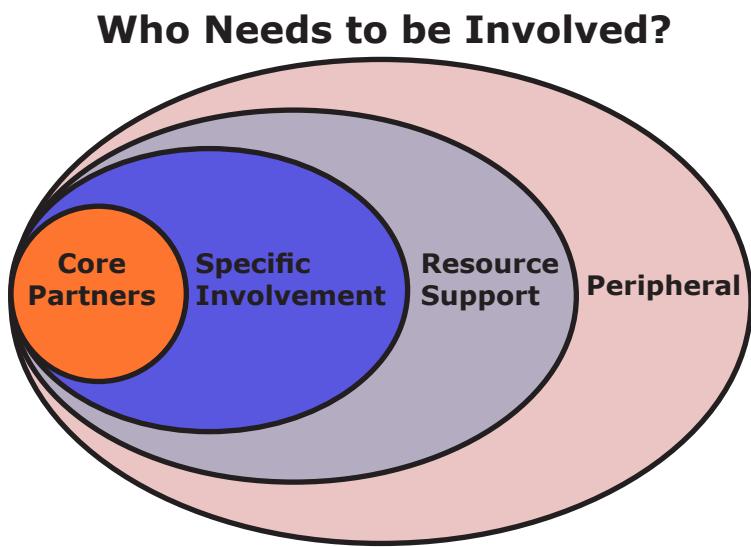
Service Coordination – Research and Analysis

"Participation of stakeholders in the process of change is considered to be the best way of breaking down barriers to accessing work and exploring new ways of organizing work to the benefit of the business and employees. Stakeholders need to be supported in order to participate effectively in exploring new ways to work." (Equal Partnership Development Toolkit, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, September 2005) This quote further supports the notion of service coordination as a vital foundation for system integration. The quote's emphasis on the need to support stakeholders to participate in exploring new ways of organizing work denotes that service coordination must be recognized, formalized, funded and accountable.

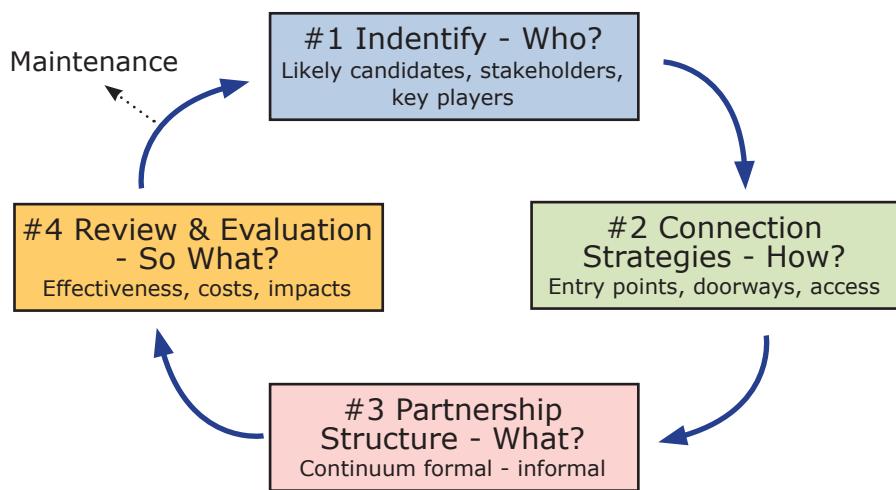
A new area of research that provides additional support and a framework of metrics for service coordination is **social network analysis**, which studies "*less-bounded social systems, from non local communities to links among websites.*" It has gained importance in various fields including organizational studies, economics, sociology, and social psychology, among others. The research and resulting software programs endeavor to make sense of the significance and utility of informal and formal linkages or relationships. *"Rather than treating individuals (persons, organizations, states) as discrete units of analysis, it focuses on how the structure of ties affects individuals and their relationships. In contrast to analyses that assume that socialization into norms determines behavior, network analysis looks to see the extent to which the structure and composition of ties affect norms."* "Social network analysis produces an alternate view, where the attributes of individuals are less important than their relationships and ties with other actors within the network." Therefore, it is the linkages and partnerships that drive behaviour amongst members of the network. With collective behaviours come comprehensive changes and results in the system or network. If the goal of the Learning Ministries (TCU, EDU, MCI) and Employment Ontario (TCU) are integrated, coordinated delivery systems then using the metrics of network analysis and facilitated service coordination are vital to achieving that outcome.

The two Figures, below, illustrate two aspects of service coordination.

The Partner Development Cycle, Figure #3, represents the key steps in developing a partnership. Figure #4 entitled "Who Needs to be Involved?" illustrates the levels of involvement in which partners may participate depending on their role.



Partnership Development Cycle*



*Kennedy & Ramsay, March 2005

Pilot Methodology

In each of the five pilots, regional literacy networks were allowed some autonomy for facilitating their local pilots thus enabling them to reflect their unique communities and the local mix of delivery agencies. Generally, four of the five pilots took on a community development model while one pilot continued with the case study, micro level approach. In all cases, the work of the original two pilots provided a model and information for the three new pilots.

The two original pilot areas, Project READ Literacy Network (PRLN) and Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Literacy Network (PHDALN) continued with the service coordination models developed in Phase 1. PRLN pursued a community development approach of facilitated meetings with representatives from key partner agencies including, but not limited to ESL, LBS, LINC, Employment Services, Adult Credit, Immigrant Services and Libraries. This approach built on the enthusiasm, commitment and success of Phase 1 while enhancing the process and producing specific referral tools. More details are provided in the Pilot Report. PHDALN focused on developing service coordination among various programs within a school board. This micro approach allowed for intensive development within a large, formalized institution.

The three new pilot areas all took a community development approach by facilitating meetings of key partners within their regional network area. Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) serves several counties in southwestern Ontario. LLSC focused its efforts by working with agencies in London. Adult Basic Education Association Hamilton worked with LBS, ESL, LINC and Employment Services agencies within the Hamilton-Wentworth urban area. While Literacy Network of Durham Region (LNDR) focused on facilitating meetings with service delivery agencies in Durham Region. In each region, the networks already had relationships with various education and training providers so they were able to leverage those linkages for this more intensive service coordination process. More details of each pilot can be found in the respective pilot reports in this document.

Project Advisory Committee

As in Phase 1, this project worked with an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from various perspectives (refer to committee membership list below). The Committee functioned as an informant and support to the overall activities of the project. It included government representatives from the provincial Learning Ministries (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration; Ministry of Education; and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) that fund various adult education and training programs such as ESL, LBS, Adult Credit and Employment Services. The Committee membership also included representatives from the sectors (colleges, community-based agencies and school boards) that deliver adult education programs in Ontario. Each regional network that coordinated a pilot site sent a representative. Key informants from within the adult education field were also invited to attend including a representative from Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, which was concurrently conducting their own similar project. The Advisory Committee met in-

person twice during the project (February 2011 and January 2012). At each meeting, the Committee discussed the outcomes, challenges and opportunities presented in the project. The Committee also communicated via email and they were provided with periodic updates. The Advisory Committee was very helpful in drawing broad system-wide conclusions from the individual pilot results.

Project Advisory Committee Members:

- Jennine Agnew Kata, Literacy Network of Durham Region (pilot site)
- Chris Beesley, Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy
- Felicity Burr, Ministry of Education
- Joseph Colonna, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Adriana Ionescu-Parau, YMCA Language Assessment Centre
- Tamara Kaattari, Literacy Link South Central (pilot site)
- Andrea Leis, Career and Academic Access, Conestoga College
- John MacLaughlin, Essential Skills Ontario (formerly Ontario Literacy Coalition)
- Mourad Mardikian, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Sande Minke, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Leah Morris, Adult Basic Education Association Hamilton (pilot site)
- Anne Ramsay, Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington (pilot site)
- Matthew Shulman, Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Learning Network (pilot site)
- Jill Slemon, London District Catholic School Board
- Jane Tuer, Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington (pilot site)

Project Pilot Coordination Committee

The project benefitted greatly from the communication of Pilot Coordination Committee. The Committee met five times (in-person and teleconference) throughout the project as well as communicating via email and Central Desktop (web-based tool). These meetings allowed for discussions about the progress of each pilot, problem solving, planning of presentations and sharing of tools. It was a rich environment for each pilot to address issues and successes from their local meetings. The Committee invited Olga Herman from Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML) to participate in some meetings. MTML is the regional literacy network that serves the metropolitan Toronto area. It was concurrently doing a similar project with LBS and ESL programs. It was a good opportunity to exchange perspectives on the various models being developed in both projects. MTML and the five pilots also worked together on developing and delivering two presentations to regional literacy networks in Ontario. One of the objectives of the project was to increase knowledge among regional networks regarding service coordination practices. This objective was achieved through two half-day workshop presentations: October 2011 and February 2012. It enabled the Pilots and MTML to directly share the coordination models, facilitative processes, survey results and tools developed in the two projects. The workshops contributed to the potential for sustainability of this initiative beyond the project period. The Pilot Coordination Committee was an important contributor to the success of this project.

Pilot Coordination Committee Members:

- Jennine Agnew Kata, Literacy Network of Durham Region
- Anne Marie Curtin, Literacy Link South Central
- Sara Gill, Adult Basic Education Association Hamilton
- Tamara Kaattari, Literacy Link South Central
- Andrea Leis, Career and Academic Access, Conestoga College
- Leah Morris, Adult Basic Education Association Hamilton
- Anne Ramsay, Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington
- Lorri Sauve, Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington
- Matthew Shulman, Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Learning Network
- Jane Tuer, Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington
- Special Guest: Olga Herman, Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

Opinion Survey of Program Design: Learner and Non-Learners Responses

As listed under the Project Goals and Outcomes, Objective # 5 was: "conduct a survey with a sample of students within each program (Literacy and Basic Skills and English as a Second Language) and with adults outside of the system (potential students) to ask for their perspectives on program delivery in the two original network areas". In examining some key factors including the project's budget, the survey's scope and the need for trusting relationships in order to carry out the survey, it was decided to focus the survey on learners and non-learners in Waterloo and Wellington (Project READ's region) only. Adults outside of the system or "non-learners" were defined as any adult who was not currently attending an LBS or ESL program, but they may have attended in the past. It also included those adults who had never attended a program. The Survey Report's Executive Summary is provided below. It provides important information about the perspectives of LBS and ESL learners regarding program design features that support enrollment and retention.

Executive Summary from the Survey Report

Please Note: The full report is contained in the Appendix.

As part of *Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 2*, a survey was conducted of English as a Second Language (ESL) and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) learners as well as individuals who were not engaged in ESL or LBS classes (non-learners). This survey sought to provide information on program design from a learner perspective that could be compared to practitioner and administrator perceptions from Phase 1. The survey was not an evaluation of specific program quality or program delivery. The Participants in ESL programs were recruited from school board programs in Kitchener and Guelph. LBS participants were obtained from community-based programs, public and separate school board programs and college sector programs in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph and surrounding areas. Non-learners were accessed through the Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Areas in Kitchener and Cambridge or were solicited by the survey consultants independently.

Individuals were surveyed using a variety of tools and methods: online and paper format survey, one-to-one interview and focus groups.

In total, 160 people completed the Enhancing Pathways survey: 34 people responded to the online survey, 51 people took part in focus groups and 75 people completed a paper copy of the survey. Survey response totals from each of the above groups are as follows: 91 respondents were registered in LBS programs, 50 respondents were from ESL programs and 19 were not registered in any program at the time of the survey. Of the 19 non-learners surveyed, 9 were interviewed in person at Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Areas in Cambridge and Kitchener. The remainder of respondents completed the online survey or were interviewed over the phone. All respondents lived in Waterloo Region or Wellington County.

Survey Results

When analyzing the survey results the following primary results were noted:

- ESL and LBS learners thought it was easy to sign up for a program
- More ESL learners join a program to gain “independence” over any other factor
- LBS learners join an upgrading program to improve their skills for more schooling over any other reason
- LBS & ESL learners feel they are moving toward their goals
- LBS learners value transportation supports more than ESL learners
- ESL learners value childcare supports more than LBS learners
- LBS learners value free resources & computer/internet access more than ESL learners
- ESL learners are less interested in taking computer classes than LBS learners
- ESL learners would prefer more class hours per week, smaller classes and more time with their teachers
- LBS learners feel they get enough time with their teachers but would prefer a more flexible schedule
- LBS learners want to register in a program by meeting with a person
- ESL learners would prefer to register online or over the phone
- LBS learners prefer programs with continuous intake
- LBS learners have clear impressions of what they need from a program location
- ESL learners are not interested in program location as long as there is adequate and free parking
- LBS learners are more apt to take self-directed classes
- Both ESL and LBS learners want greater inclusion of real-life documents in their programming
- LBS learners are more apt to want recognition of their achievements
- If ESL learners want recognition, it is likely to take the form of formal certification

Recommendations

Based on the results of the survey and the survey process, the following recommendations have been made.

- Better program promotion and advertising directly to learners and to learner advocates or support programs
- Lower student-to-teacher ratio within programs
- Improve “next steps” processes to include more personalized contact during transitions
- Clarification to learners of financial supports eligibility and availability prior to program intake and during participation in program
- Develop more opportunity for learners to give feedback to programs
- Further needs analysis of non-learners
- Further needs analysis of evening program participants
- Further needs analysis of Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs
- Further needs analysis of Ministry of Education funded program participants: specifically adult secondary or continuing education programs.

Comments from Survey Respondents:

"What makes it work is the people. Without them you'll be stuck they take the time to understand where you came from to get you where you need to be. There's no judgement."

"I like teachers that have respect and spend time with you to help you, and have understanding."

"The teachers help. They do their job (with love) that makes me learn better. The one on one is what I needed."

"I'm not the only person that hasn't been in school in years and re-attending"

"The program is designed for you. It only focuses on your needs."

"One call changed my life"

"I wish I had known about it sooner. It would have changed my life."

"The relationship with your teacher is the most important factor. The experience of the teacher is the second most important factor"

Conclusions

All of these comments reflect the learners desire for caring, knowledgeable and experienced instructors and open, flexible and welcoming programs. Programs designed on the best practices in adult education and the principles of Malcolm Knowles (learner-centred design) are clearly the most successful in terms of effective and efficient delivery.

"When applied to the organization of adult education, a democratic philosophy means that the learning activities will be based on the real needs and interests of the participants; that the policies will be determined by a group that is representative of all participants; and that there will be a maximum of participation by all members of the organization in sharing responsibility for making and carrying out decisions."

Malcolm S. Knowles, *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy (Revised and Updated)* (1980)

While the survey of learners and non-learners had some limitations due to budget and access, it indicated the need to ask more questions of both groups as key informants to program design. If there is a Phase 3 project, we will propose to continue this survey work on a larger scale.

In reviewing the Survey Results and Recommendations, it is clear that learner feedback and opinions are vital designing responsive programs. Further, by surveying learners across agencies within the two program types (LBS and ESL), it provided objective information for local delivery agencies to discuss. It was not isolated critique of one agency and their instructors, but a basis for broader discussions about the range of programming that should be provided within a community. This function is key to a formal, facilitated process of service coordination. A neutral body, the regional network in this case, facilitated the gathering of the information and the presentation to partners. The presentation hastened critical discussions regarding program management and design. It illustrates the change process that can take place within service coordination. As mentioned earlier in this report, it is local action within a framework of accountability.

Overall Project Conclusions and Recommendations

After the completion of the five Pilots, the Project Coordinators collated the results from the Pilot Reports. This information was analyzed along side the formal Evaluation Results to create Draft Conclusions and Recommendations. The Project Advisory Committee and the Pilot Coordination Committee both reviewed the Draft to create the final Overall Project Conclusions and Recommendations. These Overall Statements may vary from the individual Pilot Site Conclusions and Recommendations, which reflect individual regions and the specific mix of delivery agencies within those regions.

Conclusions:

Service Coordination best practice is based on facilitated interaction, a process of partnership development and the undertaking of goal-directed tasks. Local service coordination leads directly to system integration providing seamless service delivery.

The following conclusions define elements of service coordination that need to be present in any community to ensure coordination between the programs of the Learning Ministries, to facilitate client success and maximize community resources.

- Learner-Centred Service is important – All participating agencies agreed that services should be responsive to an individual's needs and goals. The Learner Survey provided helpful feedback and should be repeated in the future especially among ESL students.
- Strong facilitative process and skilled facilitator – It is important to set clear goals, expectations and goal-directed tasks for each meeting.
- Purpose, Structure, Process – Clarity of each of these facilitative aspects of the field-test models brought about success, inclusion and partner satisfaction in each Pilot Site.
- Production of tangible products - Concrete evidence of collective efforts to complete goal-directed tasks, e.g. Referral Tools and protocols.
- Collective dedication to increased referrals – The creation of tools and protocols based on local services and identified client needs.
- Increased understanding and trust – A result of the development of shared definitions/vocabulary, the documentation of program delivery information, and the clarification of learner profiles and pathways.
- Strengthened relationships – A result of frequent guided discussions about specific topics that engendered mutual understanding and trust.
- Group collaboration drives the individuals – The strength of the group or network (newly formed partnerships) influenced the behaviours and actions of the individual participating agencies by the end of the pilots.
- High degree of Funder interest & support – The participation and interest of representatives from the Learning Ministries (EDU, MCI, TCU) in the pilots inspired delivery agency participation and assisted the Ministries to

understand the immediate benefits of service coordination process.

- Regional Networks are critical change agents - They leveraged their expertise in service coordination to serve as change agents, facilitators of system integration and quality improvement, which enhanced their validity and trustworthiness as neutral bodies within the system
- Evaluation Report – The formal feedback from all Pilot Sites confirmed and provided evidence for the benefits realized by individuals, agencies and the systems involved in the pilots.

Recommendations:

Based on the conclusions and results from all the Pilot Sites, several key themes emerged as strong recommendations for moving forward. Those recommendations are outlined below for two levels – Agency and Network/System. Further, in discussions held with the Pilot Sites, Project Advisory Committee and Regional Networks in Ontario, **Three Options** were put forth to sustain and expand this important initiative. Those Options are stated below after a discussion of the current context for supporting the Options.

Agency Level Recommendations:

- Develop and maintain partnerships for effective service coordination – regular meetings to sustain existing relationships and to develop new linkages
- Facilitate ongoing meetings amongst literacy and language representatives – involve of management and frontline staff to ensure that all levels are involved in service coordination since each has a role in actively engaging in the process for productive results (learner transitions)
- Widen the circle to include “Wrap Around” services – include managers and workers from other relevant, community services and programs to ensure all literacy and language agencies are aware of the complimentary, wrap around services to support learner success, e.g. housing, interpersonal counseling, etc.
- Investigate innovative programming – explore shared delivery models (ESL and LBS) with supportive funding and policy; encourage hybrid program offerings as identified by local needs

Implement Learner Surveys to solicit feedback from LBS and ESL students about program design features that attract and retain students

- Develop and implement referral tools and protocols to facilitate learner/client movement – utilize a collaborative approach to developing tools and protocols to ensure consistent implementation within the community and conduct periodic evaluation of the tools and protocols as part of performance management

Network and System Level Recommendations:

- Develop Common Assessment Model for LBS – similar to successful CLARS model in ESL to ensure objective, efficient routing of adults into LBS programming and communication with CLARS assessors regarding “grey area” students (those adults who have more complex language and/or literacy needs that are not readily apparent as ESL or LBS students)

- Alignment of policies in the Learning Ministries – provide a policy framework, including accountability and performance management structures, that support service coordination and innovative programming among LBS and ESL programs
- Entrench service coordination in network services – support all regional networks to facilitate the LBS – ESL service coordination process by funding it as a core service or as a project entitled *Enhancing Pathways Phase 3*, which focuses on knowledge transfer (training and information dissemination), the development of a service coordination guide and the evaluation of the implemented models, e.g. use social network analysis or contribution analysis
- Involve government representatives (TCU, MCI, EDU) in local meetings – local interaction between government representatives and local agencies facilitates policy and programming dialogues leading to more consistent program delivery and service coordination
- Investment by all three Ministries – investment will ensure the sustainability of the service coordination model among LBS and ESL programs as well as consistent implementation across the province. In order to support a larger number of agencies in the community, additional funding is required to extend the staffing and resources of the regional networks to ESL, Adult Credit and other EO agencies.

Context for Moving Forward

There are three options, outlined on the following page, for sustaining and developing this initiative by building on the current foundation of bringing together literacy and language programs to encourage best practices in service coordination for better learner outcomes. Both the current climate and key government documents support the options, especially Option 1.

While the current climate is one of fiscal restraint, it is also one of consolidation and streamlining of government funded services. This project has proven that the level and quality of service coordination is heavily influenced by the funding investment and policy structure that supports it. *The Drummond Report*, released on February 15, 2012, makes this statement about the importance of literacy training: “Ontario’s aging population, slower labour-force growth and increasing global competition, among other forces, have made **skills development, workplace training and lifelong learning more important**. For example, **literacy needs have evolved and increased over time** as a result of fundamental changes in the economy. In addition to reading and writing, many people today require analytical skills, numeracy, and technological and computer literacy to do increasingly complex work.” In Recommendations 9.1 and 9.2, the Report states: “Streamline and integrate other employment and training services with Employment Ontario” and “Focus the efforts of Employment Ontario on clients who need complex interventions.” These Recommendations reinforce the need for service coordination between LBS and ESL to more effectively and efficiently identify and serve clients’ needs.

The current context for moving forward is supported by the new Guidelines and Roles envisioned for LBS Support Organizations by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. They focus on “**seamless client pathways** across Employment Ontario and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) programs” and coordinated service provision. The excerpts below are drawn from the Guidelines Document and Business Plan Instructions posted on the Employment Ontario Partners Gateway (eopg.ca) in January 2012.

LBS Support Organization Guidelines

“The functions and activities of the *support organizations* are similar in that they broadly provide support to service providers to ensure the LBS Program is:

- coordinated and promoted in communities as a system of service provision that avoids duplication
- of the highest quality
- responsive to emerging needs (identified by the community and government)
- integrated into the broader Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and MTCU: Employment Ontario (EO) programs.”

(page 1, LBS Support Organization Guidelines December 2011 Final)

Support Organization Roles:

“To achieve these objectives, support organizations undertake activities in four **service categories**:

1. Support seamless client pathways across Employment Ontario and Ministry of Education (EDU), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) programs.
2. Support quality delivery by providing resource development and support (including instructional content, mode of instruction, and assessment).
3. Support the improvement of service provider organizational capacity.
4. Support the collection and distribution of research findings and conduct research through research and development projects to strengthen the LBS Program and contribute to Ministry-led initiatives.”

(page 7, *LBS Support Organization Guidelines* December 2011 Final)

“Through the activities in the four service categories, support organizations help service providers to achieve the objectives of the LBS Program which are to: . . . coordinate literacy and other services to help move Ontario toward a seamless adult education and training system that supports an adult’s life long learning”.

(page 7, LBS Support Organization Guidelines December 2011 Final)

Options for Moving Forward

Option 1: Full Implementation – Long-term investment is provided by EDU and MCI in addition to increased TCU funding into the core funding of regional networks to undertake the implementation of the LBS-ESL service coordination process across the province in all sixteen regional networks. It entrenches the process as a core service of networks. It would include funding to:

- develop a service coordination guide (detailed facilitative information) for regional networks to ensure the consistent transfer of best practices
- provide training to regional network staff to facilitate the process (consistency of process and quality assurance)
- create a performance management rubric for service coordination with performance indicators developed collaboratively by regional networks and the Learning Ministries
- conduct an evaluation of the process possibly using social network analysis or contribution analysis frameworks

Option 1 would contribute to the considerable progress in service coordination and system integration across the province. High quality and efficient service coordination impacts learner pathways, transitions and customer service. It also facilitates change at the local service delivery level for the ultimate goal of system integration. In network areas where ESL services are lacking, but demand is rising, e.g. northern and/or rural areas, networks could facilitate the discussion and development of service solutions through the involvement of current service delivery agencies (ESL and LBS) within a service coordination process.

Option 2: Further Development: Enhancing Pathways Phase 3 – Project READ applies for TCU project funding to roll out the LBS – ESL service coordination process to all sixteen regional networks. The current five pilot sites continue the positive momentum of meetings and service coordination development. The project objectives include: the development of service coordination guide; training for network staff; implementation across the province (and continuation in the first five pilot sites); and the development of a service coordination rubric.

Option 3: Stagnation – Regional Network Pilot sites maintain relationships on an infrequent, informal basis, where possible, but no notable development or increases in service coordination among various agencies. The gains realized in the Phases 1 and 2 are lost due to lack of funding and support.

Project Evaluation Report

Working Committee and Network Evaluation Report

Executive Summary:

"Working Committees" was the term used to describe the local committees formed in each Pilot Site for the purposes of facilitating service coordination. The Working Committees consisted of regional network staff and representatives from LBS, ESL, LINC, Employment Services, Adult Credit and other community agencies. All the individuals, agencies and networks that participated in the five Pilot Sites and/or other project activities were invited to provide feedback through the summative evaluation process. In some Pilot Sites, individual networks engaged in formative evaluation through out the pilot timeline to help guide ongoing development and facilitation. Those results are not included in this report but may be found in the Pilot Reports.

In *Enhancing Pathways: Phase 2*, project effectiveness was determined based on the accomplishment of the four project outcomes through the implementation of two evaluation tools: Project Evaluation Survey and Presentation Evaluation Form. Listed below are the four outcome statements with projected performance indicators. After each statement is the result revealed by the Evaluation tools.

- 1. Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver programs funded by TCU, MCI and EDU regarding literacy and language program delivery. Indicator: 60% of participating agencies will report satisfaction with the coordination process and an increased understanding of the literacy and language programs.**

96% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the coordination process and an increased understanding of the literacy and language programs

- 2. Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between the programs. Indicator: 60% of participating agencies report an increase in their knowledge of transition points and pathways.**

96% of respondents reported an increase in their knowledge of transition points and pathways

- 3. Increased awareness and trust amongst educators about each program in order to promote referrals. Indicator: 60% of participating educators report increased satisfaction with their interagency relationships.**

94% of respondents reported an increased satisfaction with their interagency relationships

4. Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination practices between literacy and language programs.
Indicator: 70% of regional networks report increased knowledge of coordination practices.

100% of regional networks reported an increased knowledge of coordination practices between literacy and language programs.

Overall Working Committee Results

The evaluation was sent out to all the field test sites to share with their working committees. Responses came from the following regions:

- Durham Region
- Hamilton
- London
- Peel-Halton
- Waterloo Region
- Wellington County

The Working Committee members who answered the survey were comprised of:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • ESL/LINC/CLARS/Language Assessment Centres | 25% |
| • LBS | 46.2% |
| • Employment Services | 13.5% |
| • Credit | 9.6% |
| • Other (mental health, libraries, planning board, college) | 7.7% |

(The percents do not total 100 as some agencies identified themselves as more than one kind of organization).

The majority of the responses came from the Waterloo Region (31%) and Waterloo-Wellington together was responsible for 44.2% of all the responses. Hamilton (21.2%) and Durham Region (19.2%) comprised 40.4% of the respondents. The rest of the respondents were evenly split between Peel-Halton and London.

Overall individuals involved in the *Enhancing Pathways Project – Phase 2* felt the project encouraged open involvement of all participants. 100% of participants either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

"The sessions were aimed at sharing knowledge to mutually benefit our clients."

Open and regular communication was given between project coordinators and working committees and the methods of communication allowed sufficient dialogue for the purpose of the project (96% agreed or strongly agreed with this).

Participants were then asked to respond to questions about the project's Performance Indicators. The following were the Indicator statements and they had the range of choice from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

Performance Indicator 1: I have an increased understanding of literacy and language program delivery.

- 96% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed with this Indicator
- The two individuals who disagreed with this and other statements never gave any comments as to why

Performance Indicator 2: I have an enhanced knowledge regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between programs.

- 96% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed with this Indicator

Performance Indicator 3: I have an increased awareness and feeling of trust with other service providers to promote referrals.

- 94% either Strongly Agreed or Agreed with this Indicator
- One individual commented that they "would like to see more interaction between OW and LBS service providers"

"Excellent opportunity to build confidence and trust in each other and each other's agencies."

When reviewing the overall results of the *Enhancing Pathways Project* over 95% of respondents were either strongly satisfied or satisfied with the results.

"This project can only be successful if there is representation from each of the players in the community. It is crucial to have this commitment from each player."

The evaluation survey then went on to ask five open-ended questions and one "Other Comments". The following is a summation of those results:

What expectations did you have for the project and were they met?

Many individuals did not have any specific expectations going into this project (9 out of 34 or 26.5% of responses), but were happy with the results. The majority of individuals wanted to increase their knowledge of other programs and make better referrals and felt that their expectations were met.

What unexpected information, skills or relationships have you learned/gained through this project?

The majority of individuals responding to this question (22 out of 35 or 62.9% of responses) felt the increase in knowledge of other programs, agencies and individual contacts were gained. The tools developed by the various pilot sites were also mentioned as unexpected information.

There were two individuals who pointed out how some of the entry requirements laid out by programs as being Ministry requirements were not actually a Ministry requirement. A suggestion was made that a few of these kinds of scenarios should perhaps be addressed by MCI in regional meetings.

Referring to the previous question, how do you anticipate benefitting from the information, skills or relationships in the next six months?

The participants hope the meetings will continue after the end of the project to plan and work together.

Making better and more frequent referrals between programs was also highlighted. Along with taking the information back to their own agency and sharing it with other staff. Some have already gone on to modify their intake procedures.

"I am more confident that I will refer clients to the correct agency according to their skill set and their personal goals."

What information will you take from this project and apply within your organization in the next six months?

33 respondents answered this question and the majority of them reiterated the information from above. The focus was on either taking the information back to their staff or the fact that they were already implementing the information and many of them were already using the tools in their own agencies.

What future work should be done in order to bring our communities' programs together to serve adults? (31 responses)

- Information sessions to professionals in the community who would benefit from this information
- Establishing guidelines for referrals
- More dialogue (sharing post referral information/feedback...the good and the bad)
- Meetings among service providers to introduce new programs, innovative strategies, etc. x16 (including updating the referral kits, agency fairs, mock case management studies)
- Maintain and update the common website with an online directory

- Developing programs across ministries to meet the needs of individuals
- Common assessment process in LBS like CLARS
- Frontline training opportunities

Additional Comments:

Many “thank you” and “worthwhile/well-run” project comments.
Frontline and support staff should also be brought together to develop networks amongst themselves.

“This is only a framework and literacy is too large an issue to be solved in a few meetings. Great Start.”



Pilot Report

Adult Basic Education Association Hamilton



Five Pilots – Local Approaches

Pilot Report Format

Each Pilot Site was asked to report their results and findings using the same Table of Contents to ensure consistent reporting and analysis across regions. Each Pilot Site had some unique results and recommendations, which reflect individual differences in communities and regions. These unique aspects can be found in the specific Pilot Reports.

Pilot Report Table of Contents:

Part 1

1. Regional Context
2. Facilitative Process & Agencies Involved
3. Existing Coordination and Referral Practices
4. Gaps, Needs, Issues/Challenges
5. Recommendations & Next Steps

Part 2

6. Learner Pathways , Outcomes and Profiles (case studies)
7. Assessment Tools & Practices
8. Client Eligibility & Program Entry Criteria
9. Mode of Delivery - Program Models and Teaching Practices
Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

The Pilot Reports are inserted in alphabetical order by network name.

- o Adult Basic Education Association - Hamilton
- o Literacy Link South Central – London
- o Literacy Network of Durham Region
- o Peel Halton Dufferin Adult Learning Network - Halton
- o Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington

Part I

Regional Context

Although Hamilton is an area where referral protocols have been established between sectors, few in-depth and formal referral processes have been developed between sectors. In a recent (August 2010) review of literacy services, including Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), Early Years and the Ministry of Education (EDU), it was noted that most delivery is occurring within silos. Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) was involved in a Literacy Mapping project in association with the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative where this was also confirmed (see Appendix A).

In 2010, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), a major settlement service organization in Hamilton, closed suddenly. The services offered were redistributed to various providers across the city. This created a lot of confusion around delivery and service provision.

As a result of these issues, there was a need to develop a more cohesive, effective and efficient system for information sharing, referrals and partnership.

Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) was well suited to facilitate this project in Hamilton. ABEA has worked with the language programs in Hamilton for many years. We have delivered on-site services to the Immigrant Women's Centre; we have provided Clear Writing training to, and participated in, projects with the former agency SISO; we had an articulated referral protocol between SISO and ABEA; we have also worked with individual clients who seek information and referral to language and settlement services.

The goals of this project were to

- increase discussions among the various players in Hamilton
- increase understanding of the educational pathways, client profiles and client goals among the various players in Hamilton
- develop a referral protocol that moves clients from their initial level of skill to successful outcome of goals
- bridge services for seamless movement of clients
- ensure referrals are appropriate and clients access services easily
- create new partnerships

Facilitation Process and Agencies Involved

Invitations were sent to all literacy and language program managers inviting them to an initial meeting to direct the process and determine the direction of the project (see Appendix B). This letter included an overview of Phase I of the project and the goals of Phase II in Hamilton. Attached to the invitation was the meeting agenda, *Enhancing Pathways Phase I Report*, a glossary of terms developed in Phase I, Hamilton's Literacy Service Plan and the Essential Skills for Literacy Practitioners CD.

A letter was also sent to Hamilton Members of Parliament (MP), Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and the Mayor to inform them of the project (see Appendix C).

Agencies Involved

A total of 13 agencies participated in the project. They represent 7 Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs, 7 Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs, 5 English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, 1 ESL Credit program and 3 support organizations.

CNIB was not able to attend the meetings but were kept up to date with meeting notes and correspondence.

Agency	LBS	LINC	ESL	ESL Credit	Support Org
ABEA					1
Hamilton Literacy Council	1				
HWDSB – Community and Continuing Education	1	1	1		
HWCDSB – St. Charles Adult Education Centres	1	1	1	1	
Mohawk College	1	1	1		
Circle of Friends		1	1		
College Boreal French LBS/ACE Offer FSL (French as a Second Language)	1	1	1		
Hamilton Public Library		1			
CNIB	1				
Hamilton Regional Indian Centre	1				
Workforce Planning Hamilton					1
YMCA Settlement Services					1
Immigrant Women's Centre		1			
	7	7	5	1	3

The objectives of the meetings were to

- increase awareness of the various literacy and language services in Hamilton
- increase collaboration between the groups resulting in wrap around referrals

Meeting Map

Meeting	Target	Agenda
1	Managers	Community Strengths and Gaps Project Next Steps
2	Frontline Workers	Defining Terms WIN Hamilton Presentation Agency Presentations
3	Frontline Workers	Wrap Around Services Presentation Large Group Discussion – Referral Tool and Recommendations to Manager Group
4	Managers	Approve Referral Tool Recommendations for Next Steps

Meetings took place from April to June in the same location from 8:30 to 12:00. This model worked well for people as they could come to the meeting directly and be back at the office in a timely manner.

Meeting 1

Target Audience	Managers
People in Attendance	15
Agencies Represented	12/13
LBS	6/7
LINC	5/7
ESL	3/5
ESL Credit	1/1
Support Organizations	3/3

Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Overview of Phase I - Jane Tuer, Project READ Literacy Network
3. Phase II Expected Outcomes
4. Review Common Language (using the Common Language Worksheet developed in Phase I by Project READ)
5. Small Group Discussions
6. Next Steps and Conclusion

Small Group Discussions

In this meeting there was a large group discussion about wrap around services. The group commented that wrap around service

- encompasses the client
- involves making appropriate and effective referrals to meet all client needs
- involves understanding client needs - each individual situation
- considers the whole person
- focuses on the relationship with the person

Everyone was in agreement that training was needed to better understand this issue and to rethink processes. This meant how we talk to the client, how we think about the client and how we refer the client.

There was also a discussion around the community strengths and gaps. Some of the strengths identified were

- having service provider meetings
- co-locating programs
- working backward from clients' goals

Some gaps were also identified such as

- practitioner knowledge of all services
- working in silos
- making appropriate referrals for older English as a Second Language (ESL) clients
- not understanding how much programming flexibility exists within the different program models

It was decided that the next steps were to bring the frontline workers together for information sharing and professional development.

Frontline Worker Meeting 1 would focus on the agencies presenting to each other, as well as a presentation from WIN (Workforce Information Network) Hamilton.

Frontline Worker Meeting 2 would include a presentation around wrap-around services and a discussion about referral tools and recommendations to the manager group.

Meeting 2

Target Audience	Frontline Workers
People in Attendance	14
Agencies Represented	9/13
LBS	3/7
LINC	3/7
ESL	3/5
ESL Credit	1/1
Support Organizations	2/3

Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Review Defining Terms
3. Presentation - WIN Hamilton - Hamilton Training Advisory Board
4. Agency Presentations

WIN (Workforce Information Network) Hamilton

WIN Hamilton is an online database that was developed as a project of the City of Hamilton Skills Development Flagship. The lead for this project is Workforce Planning Hamilton (formerly known as the Hamilton Training Advisory Board). It was designed to be a resource and a tool for career professionals and service providers. WIN Hamilton contains comprehensive information on employment, training and upgrading services in Hamilton with contact information and interactive maps in order to assist professionals in matching services to client needs. This site will be going public shortly.

It was felt by participants that getting training in WIN would assist them to make appropriate referrals but also to get comprehensive program and service information that is up to date.

Agency Presentations

Six presentations were given by agency representatives from Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), English as a Second Language (ESL), Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), ESL Credit as well as a support agency.

Agencies were asked to present the following information about their programs

- a. learner pathways, outcomes and profiles
- b. assessment tools and practices
- c. client eligibility and program criteria
- d. mode of delivery - program models and teaching practices
- e. accountability - what do they report and to whom?

Meeting 3

Target Audience	Frontline Workers
People in Attendance	14
Agencies Represented	7/13
LBS	5/7
LINC	3/7
ESL	3/5
ESL Credit	1/1
Support Organizations	2/3

Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Wrap Around Services Presentation - Elske de Visch Eybergen, Shalem Mental Health Network
3. Large Group Discussion - Who is an English as a Second Language (ESL), Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) or Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) client?
4. Small Group Discussion - Issues and Solutions
5. Large Group Discussion - Referral Protocol/Resources Required

WrapAround Services Presentation - Elske de Visch Eybergen, Shalem Mental Health Network

This presentation took us through the formal model of wrap around services but also discussed the philosophy of wrap around and how the concept would apply to the work practitioners do with learners.

Wrap Around Community Values

1. People first
2. "Family" counts
3. "Nothing about us, without us"
4. Safety always
5. Personalized - fit the program to the person
6. Respect for culture
7. Never give up
8. Keep it close to home, build on your strengths
9. "No blame, no shame"
10. One plan bringing Community and Services together
11. It takes a Community
12. Do what works
13. Efficient and effective

Wrap Around can be used for anyone who wants help. Wrap Around planning is owned by the person and the team walks alongside to help identify needs, outcomes hoped to be achieved, and strategies to address the outcomes and who on the team can help and when it will occur. Wrap Around teams are a blend of informal and formal supports with a goal to reduce the number of formal supports.

Although literacy and language practitioners are not typically part of formal Wrap Around teams, there was a lot of positive feedback around this presentation because more and more, practitioners are being asked to help their learners with a diverse set of needs. Examining this approach allowed practitioners to get a sense of the breadth of challenges a learner might be facing and recognizing that those needs will impact their success in the program.

Large Group Discussion

Topics discussed included

- a. English as a Second Language (ESL), Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) client profiles
- b. eligibility criteria from ESL/LINC to LBS
- c. bridging from ESL/LINC to LBS
- d. referrals - it was noted here that all programs are making interagency referrals but rarely make other social service referrals and there is a need to have a list of resources to access
- e. best practices around holistic programming

Small Group Discussion - Issues and Solutions

Some issues identified for clients accessing services were

- waiting lists
- fees
- transportation
- mandated participation
- inappropriate referrals
- pre-existing physical/medical conditions (including learning disabilities)
- housing issues/poverty
- lack of services/inconsistent offering of services

Some solutions identified were

- a. Supports – have a full-time paid person to provide counseling and support to all service providers.
- b. Wait lists – make an interagency referral (already happens to some degree).
- c. Transportation – refer to a subsidizing agency (if available).

- d. Forced participation/inappropriate referrals – Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) need to be part of the wrap around team with a closer liaison with case managers.
- e. Learning disabilities – clients need specialized programming and supports, as well as access to diagnostic testing. Practitioners need training and support.
- f. Lack of 1:1 services – provide/encourage peer tutoring.

Large Group Discussion

Three recommendations were made back to the Manager group from this meeting.

1. Create a referral tool with literacy and language program information.
2. Find a way to share updates and resources across programs.
3. Hold ongoing face-to-face meetings to continue to network and discuss common issues.

Meeting 4

Target Audience	Managers
People in Attendance	9
Agencies Represented	8/13
LBS	4/7
LINC	2/7
ESL	1/5
ESL Credit	1/1
Support Organizations	3/3

Agenda

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Summary of Meetings to Date
3. Moving Forward - Frontline Worker Recommendations
4. Discuss/Approve Referral Tool
5. Is there anyone missing from these discussions?
6. When and what should we share with funders?

Discuss/Approve Referral Tool

From the frontline worker recommendation to develop a referral tool, Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA) developed an Enhancing Pathways Program Chart (see Appendix D) that provides detailed program information for all language and literacy programs in Hamilton as well as lists resources for wrap around referrals. This type of dot chart has been used for several years in the Hamilton Literacy Services Plan. This template was approved by the managers.

Is there Anyone Missing From these Discussions?

It was identified that if this work was to continue that Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), as well as the Employment Ontario Employment Service agencies should be involved or give input.

When and what should we share with funders?

It was recommended that the final report be sent to the local Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), the mayor, along with representatives from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI).

Recommendations Moving Forward from the Manager Group

1. Strike an Enhancing Pathways Steering Committee to review the recommendations and create an action plan with suggested funding sources or community partnerships needed to address the action plan.
2. Continue to update the Enhancing Pathways Program Chart and house it on Adult Basic Education Association's (ABEA) website for easy access by all practitioners.

Evaluation of Enhancing Pathways Program Chart Evaluation Results

Of the 7 respondents that participated

- a. 86% have shared the chart with their practitioners
- b. 80% reported that the chart was being used by practitioners
- c. 71% reported that the information on the chart was very useful
- d. 71% reported that the format was very easy to understand
- e. 100% agreed that all pieces of information are needed
- f. 100% reported that there is no information missing
- g. 100% agreed that it makes sense for ABEA to continue to update the chart and house it on our website

For the full report see Appendix E.

Existing Coordination and Referral Practices

The Literacy Community Planning (LCP) Committee in Hamilton has a referral protocol whereby the Learning Network - ABEA - is the first point of contact for clients looking to upgrade their skills. Typically clients are referred to ABEA through community service providers such as Ontario Works or Employment Services. ABEA offers information, referral, and in some cases educational assessments and then refers clients into the appropriate programs.

Informal coordination of services happens in agencies that offer multiple programs. For example, school board Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs may work closely with the credit programs to ensure that their learners make seamless transitions into credit studies.

Before the project a preliminary referral protocol had been established which states that clients below the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) of 5 in Speaking and Listening are referred for language assessment (through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Assessment Centre if LINC eligible, through English as a Second Language provider if not LINC eligible), and those with CLB 5 or higher are assessed by ABEA and referred to appropriate services.

This protocol was agreed to through the project and identified on the program chart. However, based on the new LBS guidelines, LBS programs cannot accept learners below CLB level 6. Therefore, this protocol will have to be modified.

Needs, Gaps, Issues and Challenges in Service Provision

Needs and Gaps

- a. settlement needs to be included in discussions and planning
- b. problem solving skills and life skills of clients
- c. older ESL clients - what is the best pathway?
- d. programs for the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) literacy grad to go to the next level of training
- e. writing skills of English as a Second Language (ESL)/LINC clients (there is a gap identified between advanced LINC and credit entry)
- f. understanding how much flexibility there is in programming

Issues

- a. Francophone Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) is not connected with the rest of LBS
- b. practitioners do not have knowledge of all services or relationships with other providers
- c. working in silos
- d. agencies being possessive of clients
- e. geographic locations

Challenges

- a. Getting the right people at the table (decision makers). Getting people to understand that other agencies provide valued and specialized programs.
- b. Time. Although the participants felt that there was value in this type of work, we found it difficult to get people to commit to a steering committee. We believe people are overwhelmed with various meeting groups and are hesitant to take on another one, especially with the changing landscape of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) implementation.
- c. This project came at a time when the community was in turmoil over the closing of the Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). This made the future of delivery in Hamilton questionable. It is hard to talk about a full range of services when we didn't know who was delivering them. However, this was also a reason why the timing of this project was ideal so practitioners could start to understand all the new services and agencies in the wake of the closing.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Recommendations for Other Communities Interested in Service Coordination

1. Allow the participants to make the agenda.

Participants appreciated that we didn't come in with descriptive outcomes and were letting them formulate them based on what they perceived was needed. Being flexible and able to change focus to meet the need and wishes of the community partners is important for dialogue to remain open. We approached the process as an offer to facilitate but expressed that we had no definitive plans for the final look of the work; the outcomes belonged to the group.

2. Meet face-to-face.

All participants were quite open and appreciated the fact that they could get together. One comment made was that they appreciated putting faces to names. The fact that at the first meeting they established a Frontline Worker agenda proves their willingness to collaborate. Frontline Workers felt that the face-to-face meetings were valuable to share information and network.

3. Hold separate meetings for managers and frontline workers.

There is value in meeting at a manager level and a frontline level separately. However, in a community where there are few providers, these meetings may have to be combined.

4. Define a lead agency.

There needs to be an agency that is willing to take the lead role in the process. There could be buy-in from various agencies but without a lead to pull it all together, it won't happen.

5. Create a steering committee.

A steering committee can focus the agenda and direct the outcomes. Ideally, each program type would have representation at the table as well as supporting organizations in order to have all perspectives included.

Next Steps

ABEA will continue to update the Enhancing Pathways Program Chart and house it on our website.

The Language Working Group of the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council is adopting the Enhancing Pathways Program Chart as a mapping and referral tool of literacy and language services in Hamilton. They are going to expand the tool and create client profiles with referral pathways identified. It is anticipated that the expanded tool and pathways will be one of their outcomes.

The Jobs Prosperity Collaborative (JPC) is also interested in this work. The JPC is a group of organizations that come together to solve job challenges in Hamilton. The Innovation and Learning Working Group of the JPC is planning to further map services, possibly building upon an existing database, as well as bring the literacy and language stakeholders together for an event to plan next steps.

We believe this project has strengthened existing partnerships. This work supports the direction of the City of Hamilton, the Jobs Prosperity Collaborative, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and the Ministry of Education (EDU) systems and most importantly, it benefits clients.

Together we will continue to create and adapt a Hamilton-based strategy to bring Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), English as a Second Language (ESL), Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and ESL credit programs together to create a more cohesive, seamless system for the people we serve.

Part II

During the first frontline worker meeting agencies were asked to report on learner

- pathways
- outcomes and profiles
- assessment tools and practices
- eligibility
- entry criteria

They were also asked to report on mode of delivery as well as accountability parameters.

Not all agencies were represented. However, below is a summary of that information.

Learner Pathways, Outcomes and Profiles

Pathways

All programs have multiple referral pathways into their programs.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) - Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)
Referral pathways include

- Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA)
- HWDSB English as a Second Language (ESL) Assessor
- HWDSB Credit Assessment Centre
- walk-in

Mohawk College - LBS

Learners find the program through

- post-secondary programs (majority)
- apprenticeships
- work

Many clients want to be "an example to the kids."

Mohawk College - Literacy Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and ESL

Clients are referred by

- word of mouth
- community networks
- Mohawk College's website
- other college departments

Profiles

LBS, ESL and LINC programs represent a diverse demographic of learners. However, what all learners have in common is that they are adults looking to upgrade their skills for a particular goal.

HWDSB - Student Profiles of LBS Learners that Speak English as a Second Language

Profile 1 - Learners who are Highly Educated in their First Language

These learners typically

- are goal oriented - they want their Grade 12 and often college/university
- demand very clear time lines for credit entry
- have strong self-management skills
- retain learning
- maximize class time
- have strong numeracy skills
- have transcripts translated in English with a credit history one at board assessment centre
- need their final 4 credits for their Grade 12 diploma
- have weaknesses in writing mechanics and reading comprehension

Profile 2 - Learners with Limited Education in their First Language

These learners typically

- have a goal to acquire Grade 12
- are generally weak in numeracy, writing, and reading skills
- will need to acquire some or all Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) credits before entering Adult Day School
- progress slowly
- have generally weak retention of new language skills
- may have to consider alternatives to credit as the 2 year Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) time limit draws near

Profile 3 - Learners with Some Secondary Education in Canada

These learners typically

- are younger and have recently left high school
- will have most (if not all) Grade 9/10 credits
- were unable to sustain the pace of learning required at the senior credit level due to English language deficiencies
- have a goal to complete their Grade 12
- are self-directed
- thrive with the pace of the LBS classroom

Mohawk College - LBS

Learners are typically

- ages 20-50's - average early 30's
- male and female
- Ontario Works recipients, Workplace Safety Insurance Board/insurance clients, Second Career clients, life/career changers, or those tired of dead-end jobs

Hamilton Literacy Council - LBS

Learners

- range from 16-71 years of age (55% are 25-44)
- are working on LBS levels 1-4 (53% LBS 1, 41% in LBS 2)
- are 61% male
- have goals of employment (30%), further education (53%) or increased independence (17%)

Mohawk College - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

Learners are

- newcomers
- men and women, ages 18-60+
- educated, skilled and experienced

Learner goals are related to post-secondary education and/or the labour market.

Outcomes

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) - Outcomes of Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) - Students who Speak English as a Second Language (ESL)

Profile 1 Educated in First Language

Outcome will successfully enter the credit program from LBS

Profile 2 Limited Education in First Language

Outcome may reach LBS-to-credit goal but alternative pathway options may also need to be considered

Profile 3 Partially Educated in Canadian Secondary School

Outcome with LBS support and self-pacing, will successfully enter the adult credit program

Assessment Tools and Practices

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) clients are required to be assessed through a central third party assessment centre using the Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT). This, for the moment, is the only mandated standardized placement test and referral system among the programs. LBS and ESL programs use a variety of assessment approaches for intake, ongoing and exit assessment. However, the implementation of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) for ESL/LINC programs and the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) in LBS may change many assessment procedures.

HWDSB - LBS

Initially there are a variety of LBS materials and assessments used that are specifically tailored to fill gaps and measure increases in language and numeracy learning required for goal completion. When a learner is closer to being credit ready, class work, assessments and progress rubrics begin to mirror those used in credit programs (greater academic focus). The final stage is preparation for the Academic Assessment Tests required for successful entry into the credit program (5 paragraph essay requiring "credit ready" writing skills as well as a reading test that indicates grade level).

Mohawk College - LBS

English skills are assessed using Common Assessment of Basic Skills (CABS) based reading and writing assessments. Math is assessed using a tool developed in-house that covers LBS levels 2-5.

Assessment and Intake Practices

- a. continuous intake
- b. orientation and assessments on the same day
- c. applicants write both English and Math assessments
- d. applicants are interviewed later in the week - referred if necessary
- e. learners start within 2 weeks of the assessment date

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB) - English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Clients are given an initial Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test (CLBPT). Task-based assessment tools are also used, as well as the Dufferin-Peel Adult ESL Assessment Manual 1 and 2 which are used to show skill progression.

HWCDSB - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

Learners are assessed at the third party assessment centre and referred. The HWCDSB then uses the Dufferin-Peel Adult ESL Assessment Manual 1 and 2 to show skill progression.

Client Eligibility and Program Entry Criteria

In general, Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) entry criteria are those that are over the age of 19 and out of regular school. For ESL, learners have to speak English as a Second language and be 19 or older. To be eligible for LINC, learners have to speak English as a Second language, be 19 or older, and their citizenship status must be one of

- permanent resident/landed immigrant
- convention refugee

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) - LBS Students who speak English as a Second Language

These learners must have a minimum of

- Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 5 in writing and reading as indicated from an Exit Test from an ESL assessor
- LBS level 2 in writing and reading as indicated in an LBS assessment

Mohawk College - LBS

Learners must

- be 19 years old or older and out of school for at least a year
- attend an orientation session (offered at the same time as the assessment)
- be functioning at reading LBS level 4, writing LBS level 3(high), and basic operations LBS level 3

Hamilton Literacy Council - Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

Learners must

- be 16 years or older and out of full-time school
- have a good command of spoken English
- be functioning at LBS levels 1-2

Mohawk College - LINC

Learners must

- be a permanent resident of Canada, convention refugee, or a protected person
- be assessed at a Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Assessment Centre (either Hamilton or another area)

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB) – Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

This program is for adults 18 years of age or older that are no longer attending a secondary school. They must be

- eligible to attend school in Canada
- Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 5 or higher

HWCDSD – English as a Second Language (ESL)

This program is for non-English speaking adults (18 years or older) including

- landed immigrants
- refugee claimants
- convention refugees
- Canadian citizens, work/study visa holders and international visitors

HWCDSD - LINC

This program is for non-English speaking adults including landed immigrants (permanent residents) and convention refugees.

HWCDSD - ESL Credit

This program is for non-English speaking adults (18 years or older) including

- landed immigrants
- refugee claimants
- convention refugees
- Canadian citizens
- work/study visa holders and international visitors

Learners must be CLB level 3 or higher.

Mode of Delivery – Program Models and Teaching Practices

Typically, programs are offered in a class environment. However, many variations exist within that model.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) - LBS

LBS at King William is 1:1 teacher/student centred using an individualized learner plan to focus on the clear and deliberate steps toward goal attainment. The program is self-paced as directed by the individual student. This program works backwards from each student's end goal and attaches explicit and realistic time lines for credit entry. These timelines are linked to intake cycles for the appropriate credit program best suited for each student.

Mohawk College – Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

Mohawk College LBS program offers

- continuous intake
- independent learning
- integrated computer use
- career planning sessions
- preparation for post secondary success (optional college general education course, success strategy seminars)

Hamilton Literacy Council - LBS

The Hamilton Literacy Council offers both one-to-one tutoring as well as small group classes. Small group classes integrate e-learning.

Mohawk College - Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

This program offers continuous intake for full time LINC 4-7 learners. This program leads to post-secondary programs, Enhanced Language Training (ELT) or bridges to the labour market. Additional supports include

- part-time discrete skills courses (listening and writing)
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) preparation
- LINC 6 intensive (15 week prep for post-secondary)

There is an academic focus in this program with

- literature circles
- lending library
- oral presentations
- writing portfolios
- practice listening to lectures and note-taking

There are also opportunities to practice English outside of class hours through English as a Second Language (ESL) Voices, Student Council and library volunteering. Mohawk College also offers Enhanced Language Training for Internationally Trained Professionals, Enhanced Workplace Communications and Occupation Specific Language Training.

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board - ESL

This program is classroom-based where a LINC curriculum is used.

Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)- Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)

The HWDSB LBS program reports to

- the student
 - o to prepare them for successful LBS goal attainment (as outlined in a learner plan)
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)
 - o for fulfilling their mandated LBS program requirements documented in monthly statistics as well as 3 and 6 month follow-up calls after program exit
- the LBS/credit program manager
 - o for ensuring best practices for student goal attainment reported directly as requested

Mohawk College - LBS

Mohawk College reports outcomes to MTCU and the Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies.



Pilot Report

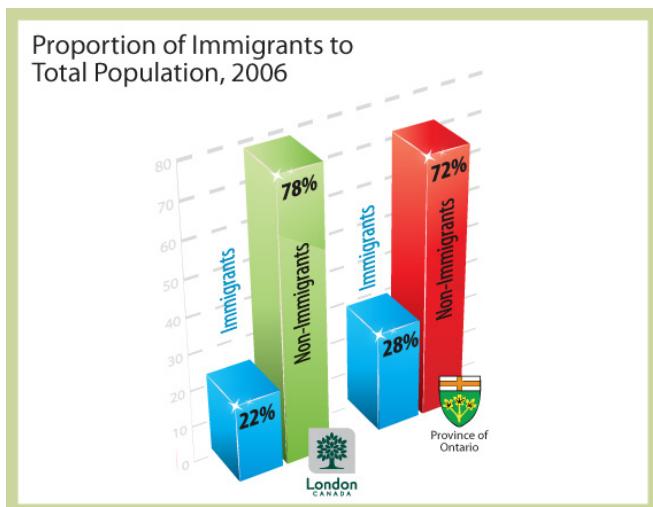
Literacy Link South Central



Regional Context (London, Ontario)

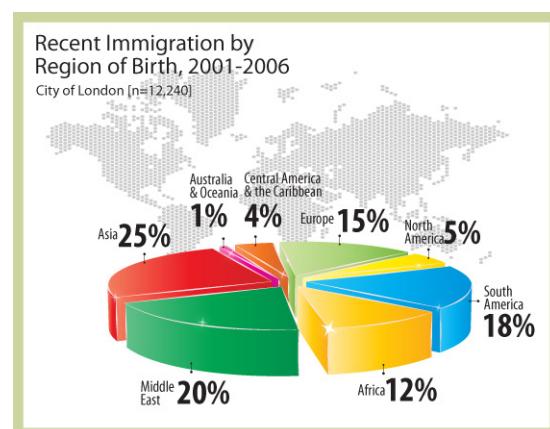
Graphic source: immigration.london.ca (all data is based on Statistics Canada 2006)

London Ontario is the largest city in southwestern Ontario, and the 10th largest in Canada. There are more than 360,000 people located within the city boundaries. Statistics from the 2006 census data showed that 22% of the population was made up of immigrants.



One of the five focus areas for the current London City Council is to "Develop a Vibrant and Diverse Community." Strategies to achieve this include:

- Strengthen and embrace *London's diversity and cultural identity*
- Preserve and *celebrate arts, culture and heritage*
- Build the *vibrancy of the downtown*, including special events
- Welcome and *support newcomers*
- Invest in *neighbourhoods*
- Encourage *volunteerism and community engagement* (www.london.ca)



London has many working groups addressing the needs of Newcomers, including (but not limited to) The London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP), Networking for an Inclusive Community (NIC), and the London Diversity & Race Relations Advisory Committee. The Thames Valley School Board and the London District Catholic School Board each provide adult English as a Second Langue (ESL)

programming. There are several Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) sites located throughout the city. The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre is a CLARS pilot site at which Newcomers are primarily assessed and then referred.



The adult literacy programs that participated in the most recent Literacy Service Planning process were:

- London District Catholic School Board
- Fanshawe College
- Literacy London Inc.
- WIL Employment Services
- Nokee Kwe Occupational Skills Development Inc. (Native programming)
- Thames Valley District School Board
- CNIB (Deaf/blind programming)
- College Boreal (Francophone programming)
- ATN Access Inc.
- Frontier College
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- Hutton House

Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) Pilot Site

As stated, during the time of this project, London was one of 3 regions operating as a CLARS pilot site. The CLARS pilots were funded by the federal and provincial government, to explore the benefits of a harmonized approach to language assessment and referral for newcomers. Through standardized language testing and benchmarks, referrals could be made to language training that best meets the needs of a client – regardless of whether the course is funded by the federal or the provincial government.

Having a CLARS site located in London was beneficial to this project as staff at the site were able to speak to the assessment process and offer insights into the learning path and overall challenges of London's immigrant community. Going forward, this system gives us a unique opportunity. Having one language assessment centre provides the foundation to effectively streamline protocols between language and literacy programs.

London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership (LMLIP) (immigration.london.ca/about-us/LMLIPBackground.htm)

The London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership is co-led by The City of London and the United Way of London & Middlesex. There are six sub-councils with close to 80 members, representing education, employment, health, justice, settlement, and a number of ethno-cultural groups and faith groups. The LMLIP Education Sub Council has members that work in the field of English as a Second Language (ESL), Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC), elementary and post-secondary education and literacy. Literacy Link South Central had previously set the goal to create stronger linkages with the ESL community and therefore also chose to participate in this committee.

Collectively, members of this group developed a workplan. This workplan primarily focused on mapping ESL and literacy services in the London area. The group also hoped to create referral tools and protocols for literacy and language programs. Part of the plan was to engage language and literacy service providers in community roundtable sessions where they would network to increase their understanding of each other's services. The workplan was in place but there was limited human and financial resources to move the activities forward. It was very timely, then, that London was chosen as one of the pilot areas for the *Enhancing Pathways Project*.

The Enhancing Pathways Project Begins

At the time this project began our ESL programs were at capacity, so better coordination between two overstretched systems (ESL and LBS) not only made sense, but was necessary. Better coordination between the services would help all involved make the best use of limited dollars. Fortunately, due to the previous involvement in the LMLIP Education Sub-Council the groundwork was laid to have an invested working group to oversee the project. The activity plan and partnerships were already in place which meant that we could immediately start moving forward.

Facilitative Process and Agencies Involved

It should be stated here that in our pilot area, we chose to include only agencies that represented the fields of literacy (LBS), ESL literacy and language (ESL and LINC). We did not include credit programs, Ontario Works, employment agencies or a wide variety of important community service organizations. We felt it was necessary to limit the size of our group so we could get an in-depth understanding of each other's services and of each other's referral protocols. This way, we would be clearer when and if we were to engage a wider variety of organizations in the literacy and language conversation.

The project was able to step in to develop the tools previously identified by the LMLIP working group. This was a small working group with an average attendance of 5 people. We met regularly (about every 2 months). The Enhancing Pathways Project Coordinator established meeting times and locations and set the agenda. This working group reported back to a much larger city-wide group, the LMLIP Education Sub Council.

The Mapping working group/Enhancing Pathways project members were from:

Centre for Lifelong Learning (London District Catholic School Board)
City of London
Cross Cultural Learner Centre
Literacy Link South Central
London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership
Ontario Early Years Centre
Thames Valley District School Board

During our initial meetings, it soon became clear that we needed to develop a better understanding of the basic components of the language and literacy continuum. Within this group, the definition of literacy was often varied and open to debate. The first priority was to identify what would be the group's definition of literacy and ESL literacy programs. Although this was done by another network during the first **Enhancing Pathways project**, it was important that the London group develop its own as part of the learning process. The following is what the group approved:

What is literacy?

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute, problem solve and use printed, written and numerical materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to

participate fully in their community and wider society." (Source: adapted from the UNESCO definition, www.unesco.org)

What is ESL literacy?

ESL literacy is a program for individuals who are learning English as a Second Language and who are not functionally literate in their own language for a variety of reasons. They may:

- Be speakers of a language that lacks written code, so they may not have needed to know how to read or write until coming to Canada;
- Have had very little education (one or two years) in their home countries;
- Have gone to school for up to eight years, although sometimes with sporadic attendance for reasons such as family responsibilities, ill health, war etc. They understand, to some extent, that the written word signifies meaning. However, they don't usually have the skills to read new words. They probably lack what is often termed "study skills" such as organizing papers in a binder, dating new papers, reviewing new materials or doing homework. They may tend to avoid reading or writing whenever possible, and may have preconceived notions of reading and writing that might hinder progress in class;
- Have come from a country with a non-Roman alphabet. They will have difficulties learning to read the English language, but have acquired reading and study skills, which can transfer to a second language situation.

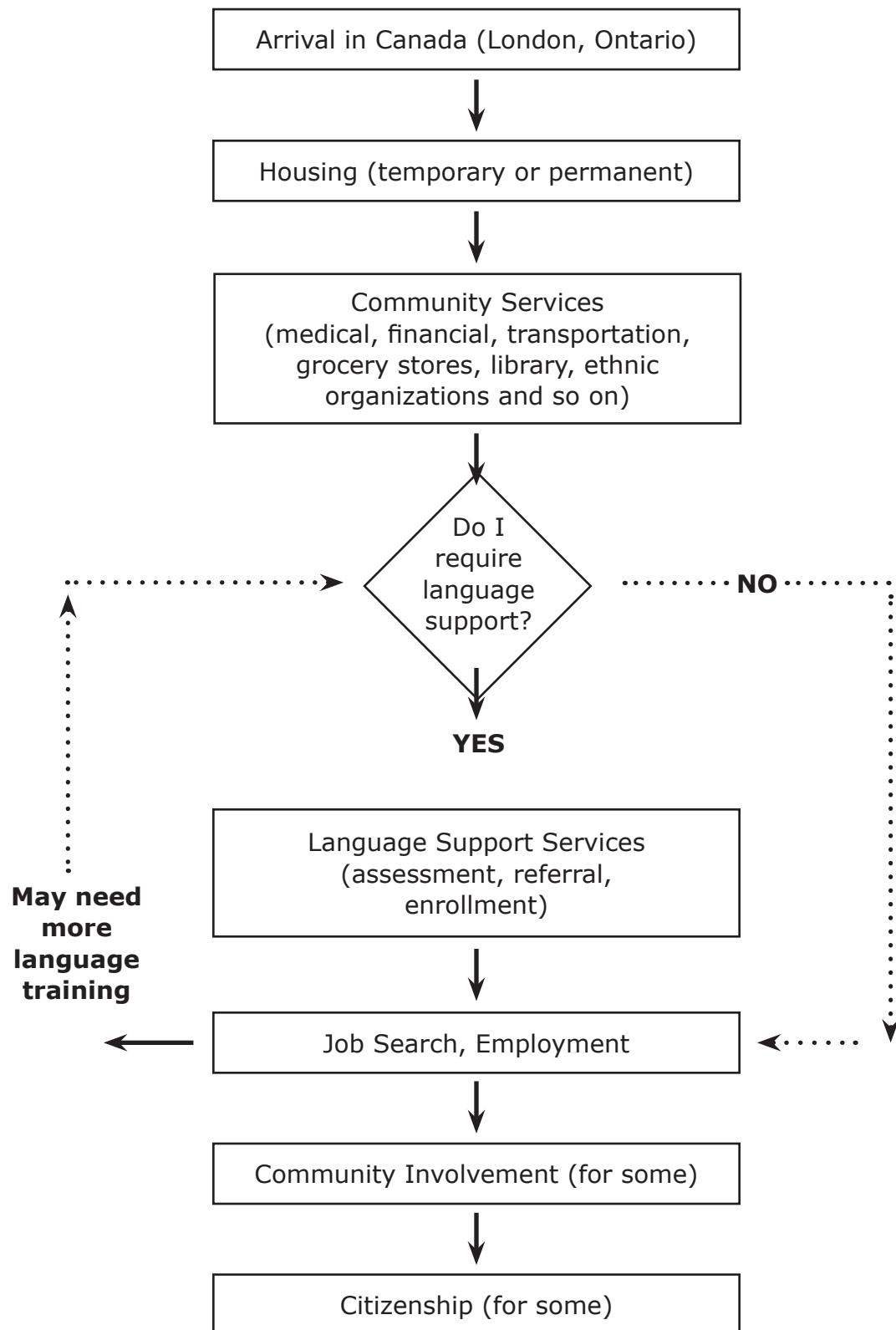
Source: Canadian Language Benchmarks www.language.ca (CLB 2000: ESL Literacy for Learners)

Beyond these definitions the group regularly found themselves needing to clarify terms and acronyms that were industry-specific. Of special interest to the group were the terms "pathways" and "transition points." These terms seemed common to both the language and the literacy field. A meeting was set in place to explore these concepts further.

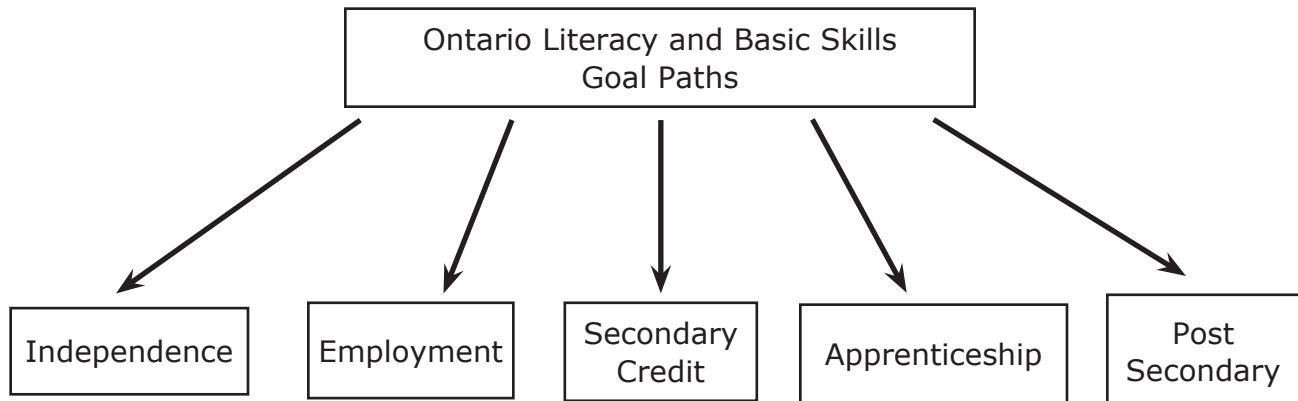
Transition Points and Pathways

The group came up with flow charts that represent how Newcomers and literacy learners might pass through a variety of milestones and services in our community. It was an opportunity to explore the differences and similarities in each system. By mapping out these progressions, it became visually clear where client needs met and where programming could be enhanced.

Newcomer Transitions Learner Pathways (Literacy)



In the Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills programs, the learner pathways include 5 routes:



During the conversations that resulted from this exercise, some interesting questions surfaced. These questions showed us where people could fall into a gray area in our community (is the best fit a literacy program or a language program?).

- What if people just need help with writing?
- What about people who are ESL but have good speaking and listening skills?
- What about people who graduate from ESL (CLB7/CLB8) but want to move on to Apprenticeship or Post Secondary?
- What about people who graduate from ESL (CLB7/CLB8) but don't have language skills at a level to get or maintain employment?

It was evident from this process that we could benefit from more discussions about literacy and language program eligibility and the referral processes. Only through these types of discussions and through a deeper understanding of the literacy and language systems could effective referrals take place. Fortunately, the group's workplan had tools and avenues to continue this discussion.

The Workplan

The following is a chart of previously identified activities from the workplan that the working group had set in place. Success indicators were also considered to address the "so what" piece of this activity. How will we know that we achieved what we set out to do?

Activities: identified in the workplan /Success Indicators/ Evaluation Tools

Activity	Success Indicator	Tool Development	When
Indicator checklist (to determine if client is best suited for literacy, ESL or ESL literacy services)	Checklist is introduced, disseminated, piloted and satisfaction has been measured	1 pager with scale to measure satisfaction with the tool	Distribute at roundtable 1
Map literacy, ESL and ESL literacy services	Completed map of services	List of efforts made to unearth all potential services	January/12
	Services will feel consulted in the development of mapping; potential gaps have been identified	Facilitated discussion	Roundtable 1
	Services are more integrated to leverage resources	Feedback from LM LIP group and Project READ	
	Evaluator report documents the mapping process and its results		End of Project March 2012
Bring together all service providers (ESL, literacy and ESL literacy) for 2 round tables	Providers feel better informed about the 3 services; Participants provide input into expectations for the mapping process; Increased networking to facilitate referrals	Part of overall focus group evaluation	Roundtable 1

	Providers can better differentiate between the 3 services for the purposes of referral ; more buy in and ownership for working together	Part of overall focus group evaluation	Roundtable 2
Definitions	Key terms have been identified and shared widely	State each definition at roundtable and invite feedback	Roundtable 1
Develop orientation session on literacy ESL and ESL literacy for roundtable and use on other occasions fro staff in-house training	Workshop are consistent, concise portable	(PowerPoint presentation)	Roundtable 1
	Workshop can be delivered widely		
Communicate Information about the mapping process and results with funders	Relevant funders have been identified and invited to roundtable discussions	Communication plan (add funders)	Roundtable 1
	LMLIP Mapping °Sub-Group provides regular updates to funder group		
	Funders are engaged with relevant and timely information		
	Funders will be more informed re: resources required to fill gaps in and among these language systems		
	Funders indicate satisfaction with the process and the products re: mapping		

Overall Evaluation	Project funder satisfaction	Overall final report	End of project March 2012
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Tool Development

The funding resources from the second *Enhancing Pathways project* allowed the working group to develop the tools in the workplan. These tools could provide the foundation for a deeper understanding of each other's services. Through this our community would benefit from a more effective and efficient referral process. This would also help to make the work done during the *Enhancing Pathways project* sustainable beyond March 31, 2012 (project end date).

Indicator checklist (referral questions) Although the smaller working group determined a few questions they would ask to make a referral decision, it soon became clear that this was not an easy tool to develop. Our *Enhancing Pathways project* partners in other regions of the province had also developed referral questions. We reviewed these and decided that it was the end user, our literacy and language program staff, who should determine what these questions might be. To this end, we assigned note takers during our first roundtable session to record the questions service providers asked when making referral decisions. These questions would then be used as the indicator questions for the referral tool we wanted to develop.

The following was given in advance to the note takers so they would know what we hoped to accomplish.

Tip Sheet for Case Scenario Note Taking

The discussion that occurs during this group work will help to inform tool development on the *Enhancing Pathways project*. We are especially interested in the thinking process that service providers go through to decide how to refer someone to a language or a literacy program. As a result of collecting this information, we will be able to create a comprehensive list of questions that service providers can use to help them make referrals within the 3 systems (ESL, LINC and LBS).

Please listen and record:

- Questions they ask each other (ex. "Do you think he has a learning disability?")
- Information they wish they had to help make decisions (ex. "I'm not sure how far he went in school")
- Assumptions they are making (ex. "He must be a Canadian citizen if...")
- Reasons why they wouldn't refer someone to a certain program

Thank you for helping!

As we anticipated, participants asked a wide variety of questions before determining where a person should go for programming. The questions reflected how complex each scenario can be when considering personal goals and needs vs. program options and eligibility criteria. The following are just a sample of the questions that were recorded by the note takers during the small group activity.

- What is his goal? (ex. If he wants a job, what type of job does he want? If it's post secondary education, what institution does he want to attend?)
- Does he want to attend training?
- What's his language skill level?
- Does he need an assessment? What kind of assessment (language or literacy)?
- What services is he already involved in? (ex. Does he have a settlement worker?)
- Is he Canadian-born?
- Does he have money to pay for a tutor or other services?
- Does he need employment counseling? Is he eligible for employment programs?
- How much time can he spend on learning? When is he available?
- Does he have transportation?
- Does he have an interpreter? If not, where can he get one?

It became clear to the roundtable participants that the goal of a client needs to be clear before any referral begins and wrap around supports need to be in place. (The specific case scenarios and referral options are covered later in this report. See **Roundtable #1**)

Going forward, these questions will be incorporated into referral resources that have been developed by the other *Enhancing Pathways* pilot sites. By the time we have a second community gathering (Roundtable 2 is set for February 2012) we will present this tool as a guide to help participants make referral decisions during group activities. We will gather feedback about its usefulness and accuracy and make suggested revisions. Once again, the end users will have input in to this valuable tool—a tool that they will soon be able to use.

Program Mapping

By the end of the project we would like to have a directory of language and literacy services in and around the London area. This comprehensive list of programs will also contain information that addresses the needs of individuals. From a wide variety of potential variables, the working group decided the following information was most

important:

Agency name	Location	Areas served	Contact person
Contact information	Hours offered	Client eligibility	Registration process
Program models	Fees	Daycare	Physically accessibility

Bus route number

Other (Participants of a roundtable session identified "Parking" as important information as many clients have cars.)

The group also suggested that the information contain definitions of program models such as "small group," and "1:1." At the roundtable session service providers indicated that they were interested in a hard copy directory of language and literacy services. We are also exploring how to house this information online. There are a variety of groups that are collecting similar information in London that we may be able to partner with.

Communicating Information

The *Enhancing Pathways* project coordinator regularly distributed newsletters (see appendices for examples). These newsletters had several purposes:

- to engage the community in the process of exploring the relationship between language and literacy programs
- to continue the conversation between roundtable sessions
- to share information and resources
- to provide an opportunity for suggestions, questions and feedback
- to let a wider community know about the project

The communication list included:

- Local field consultants in MCI, MED and MTCU
- Local CIC project officers
- LBS programs in London Middlesex
- English language programs in London Middlesex
- LMLIP Education Subcommittee
- Project READ

Orientation Materials

As part of the workplan the group hoped to develop a general orientation package that could be used with various audiences. The working group meetings helped to determine and clarify the content that was used to develop the orientation sessions. This information was put into a PowerPoint presentation and was used during the first community roundtable session as an introduction to all 3 systems (LBS, ESL and

LINC). The orientation materials contained basic topics such as definitions, program eligibility criteria and fundamental differences. This presentation formed the basis of the roundtable discussion. It is attached as an appendix.

Roundtable Session #1

The community roundtable event was the first of two that are planned. It was designed to introduce the 3 systems (LBS, ESL and LINC) to an audience of language and literacy service providers. This roundtable session helped to increase the knowledge of the participants and also helped them to see that there are referral options they may not know about, in the areas and literacy or language. Of course, some clients have obvious language issues and others have obvious literacy issues, but what about the ones who have both needs? Most activities focused on real scenarios that reflected typical clients with complex needs.

The roundtable target population included frontline service providers in English language and literacy programs and anyone who has an interest or need to distinguish between the 3 systems (ESL, Literacy and ESL Literacy). We also explained that this roundtable would be of interest to anyone who makes decisions about where clients should go to for services.

Close to 30 service providers from language and literacy programs participated.

Case Scenarios - icebreaker activities

Participants at the roundtable were each given a case scenario (the scenarios we used were taken from the first *Enhancing Pathways project report*). There were 6 different case scenarios in the room. Participants were asked to pair up, read their case scenarios to each other and make a decision as to where they would refer the individual. They had 2 minutes to complete each pairing.

The following table details the suggested referrals for each of the case scenarios.

Frank	Josephine
<input type="checkbox"/> CLARS Centre (language assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Employment programs (Lutherwood) <input type="checkbox"/> LBS program for an assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> LBS program <input type="checkbox"/> Wheable PLAR assessment <input type="checkbox"/> WIL Counselling <input type="checkbox"/> GED preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Centre for Lifelong Learning PLAR assessment <input type="checkbox"/> ATN learning assessment

<p>Charles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized Language Training (SLT) for health care professionals <input type="checkbox"/> Conversation circles (CCLC) <input type="checkbox"/> Access Centre <input type="checkbox"/> LBS program <input type="checkbox"/> Private college training programs <input type="checkbox"/> LARS assessment 	<p>Cindy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ESL <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> CLARS
<p>Jack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> LBS program <input type="checkbox"/> ACE <input type="checkbox"/> WIL employment agency <input type="checkbox"/> London Employment Help Centre <input type="checkbox"/> Welding ticket <input type="checkbox"/> Fanshawe <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ops 	<p>Larry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> LBS program <input type="checkbox"/> ESL one to one program <input type="checkbox"/> ESL literacy class

Learnings from the Case Scenarios

Participants were asked what learnings, surprises, etc. they gleaned from the icebreaker exercise. Comments included:

- Need to self-identify our own biases (we can be the best solution for our own clients)
- If you are born in Canada it is felt that you should just get a job. People don't realize you need a functional level of literacy
- Need to broaden our horizons/knowledge base about what's out there
- Lots of options out there
- One shoe doesn't fit all people
- How likely is it that we can know enough about each other to make the right referral
- Important to have the expertise/it's about trust
- Is there common information we can gather to make the right referral? (centralized assessment can make a difference)
- Things change regularly – it's hard to keep up
- Lots of overlap and confusing
- There are gaps because some things have closed

Case Studies-small group exercise

As the main activity of the session, participants split into 4 groups and worked on a series of 3 case studies. These case studies were generated by the local CLARS site. For each of the case studies the groups discussed where would they refer this person and why.

Case Study #1

Amal is a 24-year-old Canadian citizen. Although he was born in Canada, at the age of three his parents returned to their homeland, taking Amal with them. Recently, Amal returned to Canada, having completed university in Egypt. He speaks very little English and has a great deal of trouble reading and writing in English. As a Canadian citizen, he is not eligible for federally-funded English language training. As a native-born Canadian, he is not eligible for provincially-funded English language training. In order to continue his education or find work, he needs to improve his English language proficiency.

How can he be helped?

Case Study #2

Manuel is a 56-year-old labourer from Portugal. He has lived in Canada for over 30 years, in a community where Portuguese is the first language. He has experienced little need for English in his years in Canada, since he lives and works in a Portuguese-speaking environment. He is now experiencing difficulty in finding work in construction, his only occupation, due to his age and health and lacks the basic language skills to find employment outside of his community or to get training in a new field.

How can he be helped?

Case Study #3

Ping Yan is a 45-year old, Mandarin-speaking woman from the People's Republic of China. She has been in Canada for three years and is planning to apply for citizenship as soon as possible. In China, she was a civil engineer and holds a Master's degree from Beijing University. She is proficient in reading and writing English but is extremely hesitant to use her oral skills, which are much more basic. She is willing to take on a career change but feels unable to attempt a job search with her current level of English proficiency.

How can she be helped?

The following table details the suggested referrals for each of the case studies.

Amal	<input type="checkbox"/> Interpreter <input type="checkbox"/> One to one LBS (10% exception rule) <input type="checkbox"/> LBS program <input type="checkbox"/> WIL for employment	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ for ESL <input type="checkbox"/> Fanshawe (OSAP for ESL) <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation <input type="checkbox"/> Library online learning
Manuel	<input type="checkbox"/> Language or employment? <input type="checkbox"/> Training within the community? Unions? <input type="checkbox"/> Employment sector (WIL)	<input type="checkbox"/> SLT (Bridging program) <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment (CLARS) <input type="checkbox"/> Health
Ping Yan	<input type="checkbox"/> Holistic approach <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship classes <input type="checkbox"/> Oral communication <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Access Centre (to access the mentorship program at WIL)	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input type="checkbox"/> Toastmasters <input type="checkbox"/> Work placement program <input type="checkbox"/> Employment preparation programs

Learnings from the Case Studies

Participants were asked what learnings (including identification of community strengths, needs, gaps and tools and supports that would be helpful) they gleaned from the case studies. Comments included:

- Gathering of minds produces a better result (Ideas: NIC – Networking for an Inclusive Community, online tool, wiki)
- Directory/contact information
- Online supports for ESL, LINC and literacy clients
- All learners come with the same issues and baggage
- Share the spreadsheet
- Know eligibility for all programs
- Decision making tree (what information do we need to make decisions?)
- List of employment programs that exist
- Who has the responsibility to make sure people don't fall through the cracks? (from system to system)
- Gap – Canadian citizen who has left the country for a period of time (no funding for programs)
- Hard to make referrals – complicated cases get bounced back and forth
- It is client choice
- Gap – ESL program with one to one tutoring
- Online centralized system...London portal (include parking and hours open)
- Remember confidentiality
- Know the transition points that exist between ESL, literacy and LINC

Roundtable #1 Summary

The gathering was positive and productive. The participants from literacy and language backgrounds worked well together trying to determine the best fit for the clients in the case scenarios. In the end, the overall sense was that there is

still much to learn. Much like any learning curve, the more questions you ask, the more questions you have. Participants were surprised at how many programming options were available in their community that they didn't know about. Often this was due to misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about program eligibility. Those who attended the roundtable session enjoyed the case scenarios and asked for more in the future. They also wanted more details on program eligibility. In general, they were enthusiastic participants that were grateful to have the opportunity to explore the language and literacy systems. Many look forward to second roundtable session, in February 2012. (Roundtable feedback can be found in the appendices.)

Roundtable #2

After having looked at *referrals* to programs, during the next roundtable session we'll look closer at *transitions* between programs. Now that we have a better understanding of when to send someone to a literacy or a language program, it's time to explore how someone moves within the language and literacy systems. A person's learning needs don't begin and end in one program. As they develop their skills, there will be a change in their learning goals and their corresponding learning needs.

Transition: A passage from one stage, subject or place to another.
(www.merriam-webster.com)

How do you know if your client is ready to move out of your program? What's the best program for them to move to as they work towards their goals? What skills does your client need to be successful in the next program?

Roundtable # 2 will help service providers explore the learning pathways their clients take. Case scenarios will play a large role during this session as well. This will naturally lead us to taking a closer look at program eligibility criteria, beyond the general government guidelines. By the end of the session, we hope to collectively have a greater understanding of movement within the literacy and language continuum.

Gaps, Needs, Issues, and Challenges

Changing times for programs

Both the language and literacy fields were undergoing significant change during this project. This was especially true in the literacy field. The new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) was unfolding over the course of this project. It brought with it new curriculum, reporting mechanisms and accountability criteria. While we were teaching others about our field of work, were also learning about it ourselves. As literacy staff were feeling the pressures related to this change, it might not have been a good time for them to participate in activities related to the *Enhancing Pathways project*. Fewer literacy service providers attended the roundtable session than did language service providers. Under different circumstances, would more literacy service providers have participated in the roundtable discussions?

However, we also saw this time of change as an opportunity. The tools and processes that were considered during the *Enhancing Pathways project* could help to alleviate

the stress of confusing referrals. This would also be a good time to incorporate new ideas and processes with other new initiatives.

Need for a coordinated system

Although we are grateful for the opportunity to explore the literacy and language continuum in our area, it feels like we've just begun. To establish strong and ongoing working relationships, there needs to be a consistent and long-term focus.

An individual's learning needs can be varied and complex. The language and literacy systems can also be complex as they respond to these individual needs. As we saw with the case scenario exercises during our first roundtable event, there are several places a person might be sent in pursuit of their goals. Herein lays the potential for a system-wide community issue. With several programs in the community lacking knowledge of each other's services, it is foreseeable that an individual could get bounced from agency to agency in search of services that fit their individual needs. There may also be overlap or redundancy in programming. There needs to be long-term and concentrated effort in place that focuses on promoting more collaboration between literacy and language services. It would be more beneficial to our community to have an ongoing platform to continue bringing literacy and language service providers together. This could result in:

- A deeper community understanding of what each system offers
- An opportunity to identify gaps in services
- An opportunity to collaborate and respond to identified gaps
- A well-coordinated language and learning continuum
- Effective and efficient referrals to literacy and language programs
- Ease of transition for clients through the literacy and language continuum
- A more efficient use of financial resources intended for programming

The community would benefit from an intentional and planned continuum of services between agencies and programs.

Recommendations for engaging your literacy and language programs in similar conversations:

Start small

There are many community services and programs that can benefit from exploring referral protocols to literacy and language programs. It could be overwhelming to think of all the agencies that may be involved, especially if you are a large urban centre. If it makes sense for your geographical area, start with a small working group to help you determine your community needs.

Establish a common understanding of definitions

As a group, come up with a common understanding of key words, terms, phrases, and acronyms/abbreviations. This helps to ensure that you are all working from the same basic terminology. It could also help to avoid misunderstandings.

Be clear on goals

Establishing group goals from the onset helps to promote a positive approach. Through this approach, anyone who participates knows what you hope to achieve during meetings and community forums. We also felt it was important to emphasize that the *Enhancing Pathways Project* was a pilot project to explore referral options and “Enhance the Pathways” of clients in our community.

Set up an opportunity for ongoing conversations

There are several tools that could be used to promote ongoing conversations with program service providers. There are numerous online devices and packages that are designed to promote community collaboration. We chose to develop newsletters to keep connected between meetings and forums. We are exploring the possibility of an *invitation only* site where local service providers can post referral scenarios that challenge them. Here others could provide referral suggestions. We learned during the roundtable sessions that the more people who had input into a referral, the more effective it was.

Attend community events

The *Enhancing Pathways Project* Coordinator had an opportunity to profile the project at a booth during a community event. The target population included a high portion of Newcomer families. It was a great opportunity to speak to Newcomers about their experiences when accessing and attending community programs. It also became an opportunity to network with service providers, many of whom work with Newcomers (ex. Settlement Workers). This helped to establish connections for future outreach and partnerships.

Use case scenarios

Real case scenarios can be used to motivate your community to participate in your initiative. The stories can help to show that there are service gaps in your community that need exploring. The scenarios can also be used as activities to promote creative resolutions. As we experienced during our roundtable session, the case scenarios can help bring gaps in services to life.



Pilot Report

Literacy Network of Durham Region



Regional Context

The Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR) was one of five regional literacy networks involved in the second phase of the *Enhancing Pathways - Literacy and Language Continuum Project* spearheaded by Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington. This initiative was a continuation of the first phase project carried out in 2010 by Project Read and Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network that addressed the needs of language and literacy clients.

LiNDR is a regional literacy support network that covers the geographic territory known as the Regional Municipality of Durham.

The Region of Durham is situated in the highly developed and populated economic centre of Ontario that stretches from Oshawa to Niagara Falls. Durham Region lies immediately to the east of the City of Toronto within the Greater Toronto Area and encompasses an area of approximately 2,590 square kilometres (1,000 square miles). The area is characterized by a variety of landscapes and communities. A series of major lakeshore urban communities contrast with a variety of small towns, villages, hamlets and farms which lie immediately inland. Here the Municipality spreads into the prime recreational lakelands of Simcoe, Scugog and the Kawarthas.

The Region lies along a continuous urbanized lakeshore and shares prime access to the Great Lakes and northeastern markets of the continent, encompassing some 120 million persons. The area is well known for the strength of its manufacturing sector which is continually undergoing rapid diversification. Durham is endowed with a young, skilled labour force. It has all the utilities, transportation and social infrastructure associated with modern metropolitan communities. The single most significant economic factor for the Region has been the dramatic increase in residential development. A local community college and two universities - one being the newly incepted University of Ontario Institute of Technology - provide post secondary training in the area.

A recent report by the Region's Planning Department estimates that the population of the Region of Durham was 531,000 in May 2001. The population is 760,000 people in 2011 and has been estimated to increase to 970,000 by the year 2021 - more than double the 1991 population. (Region of Durham <http://www.durham.ca>)

Durham is comprised of a mix of urban and rural communities that have been impacted by the needs of steady immigration and settlement population growth for more than a decade. Furthermore, the immigrant population in Durham is anticipated to continue to grow steadily. A conservative estimate predicts that the immigrant population in Durham Region will increase at a yearly rate of 3% over the next 25 years, outpacing the annual growth of the population overall (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2009).

Currently, immigrants make up 20% of the total population in Durham. Immigrants also represent a significant proportion of regional population growth, accounting for 34% of the total increase that occurred in Durham between 2001 and 2006. Of this

group, 53.5% were recent immigrants, having arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006. This trend is expected to climb as mentioned above, outpacing the annual growth of the regional population. (*"Towards an Integrated Immigrant Services Delivery System in Durham Region Research and Considerations for Moving Forward"* August 2010. Community Development Council Durham.)

Historical and expected immigrant and settlement growth in the area has seen Durham establish a long-standing history of service provision for newcomers as well as to local citizens requiring language instruction. In recent years, these services have been enhanced through an ongoing local commitment to networking, information sharing and agency cooperation. As a result, the needs of newcomers have strongly shaped the region's delivery of community, training and employment services as well as language programs. Through a variety of mechanisms, the wider Durham social service community is actively working to better coordinate existing service streams for newcomers, immigrants and other second-language clients in order to ensure effective and efficient access. This coordination has traditionally included English as a Second Language (ESL), Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Employment Services (ES) as well as a larger community network of service delivery agencies representing income support, health and community services. The region has furthered such coordination in recent years by developing an Immigrant Services web portal, www.durhamimmigration.ca and opening two new immigrant welcome centres in Ajax and Pickering.

Facilitative Process and Agencies Involved

The Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR) acted as a pilot site for the second phase of the *Enhancing Pathways – Literacy and Language Continuum project* in order to help meet the language and literacy needs of the Durham community. Specifically, LiNDR implemented similar facilitation techniques as were developed in the Waterloo/Wellington area during the first project phase with Durham's already established consortium of service providers. The results of this facilitative process in Durham were the publication of the *Enhancing Pathways Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide* and an accompanying language, literacy, employment client criteria flow chart.

The target audience of the project results were those individuals determined in the first project phase as "grey area clients" - clients who had English language, literacy and employment issues, and who were sometimes ending up in a program that did not best meet their needs. Both the guide and the chart are intended to be used by front line agency staff, the first point of contact for people seeking English language, literacy and employment services.

In carrying out its deliverables, the Literacy Network of Durham Region identified three key local priorities through this pilot:

- Increase the knowledge of client eligibility/criteria, assessment tools and program features amongst front line deliverers of Literacy and Basic Skills

- (LBS), Employment Services (ES), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
- Introduce consistent standards of practice and protocols to existing information and referral activities between local LBS, ES, ESL, LINC programs including identifying pathways and transition points
 - Support and expand the existing network of EO and immigrant service provider stakeholders by introducing models of service coordination and ongoing partnership

In order to conduct its pilot activities, LiNDR utilized a representative steering committee to frame the needs of the awareness guide and pathway chart as well as utilizing several local training events to present, validate, adjust and provide training on the results. The creation, validation and training related to the guide were carried out with key stakeholders already assembled in the community to address cross-sector referrals.

At the time of the pilot, LiNDR had the unique opportunity to tap into several established, long-term partnerships within the region. Namely, the Durham Region Immigrant Service Provider committee (DRISP), Literacy Service Planning committee (LSP) and Employment Ontario Service Provider Integration Team (EOSPIT). Also, for several years LiNDR has worked closely with the Durham Region Local Training Board to plan Employment Ontario (EO) stakeholder forums and community training sessions. These relationships permitted LiNDR to begin to develop concrete referral protocol activities by leveraging existing networks and meeting teams without having to first pull together and orient a suitable group of stakeholders. Outlined below are EO, ESL and LINC program contacts that LiNDR had already developed in the community over several years of local networking and development.

Durham Region Immigrant Service Providers (DRISP):

Settlement and language instruction have been a long-standing provision in the Durham community and intersect with literacy, employment and secondary/post secondary education programming. While no formal service coordination body exists to support these programs, they have traditionally organized themselves locally into a structured networking group. The most current manifestation of this group is called the Durham Region Immigrant Service Provider (DRISP) committee. The DRISP committee meets quarterly to enhance and improve services for immigrants in Durham Region by offering training events and support to front line agency staff. Prior to the inception of DRISP, LiNDR was a member of the Immigrant Services Network hosted by the Social Development Council of Durham.

For the past 15 years, LiNDR has been involved in these ESL, LINC and settlement network groups to promote greater referral accuracy and information sharing across both the literacy and language service streams. This pilot helped LiNDR work with its existing partner agencies within DRISP to continue to refine protocols and improve awareness of services across the EO service spectrum.

As a direct result of this project and a most certain added benefit to the community, LiNDR has taken over the responsibility for facilitating the DRISP networking group made up of representatives from the ESL, LINC, settlement, education, employment and local service provider community including:

Ajax Public Library
Clarington Public Library
Community Development Council Durham
Durham Catholic District School Board ESL/LINC/LBS
Durham College
Durham District School Board ESL/LINC/LBS
Durham Region Local Training Board
Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
John Howard Society Durham Community Employment Resource Centre/Learning Alternatives Program
Northern Lights Canada
Oshawa Chamber of Commerce
Oshawa Public Library
Regional Municipality of Durham
Service Canada
Trent University
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Whitby Public Library
YMCA Durham Employment Services

Employment Ontario Stakeholders (EO)

The Employment Ontario stakeholders funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges & Universities (MTCU) includes Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), Employment Services (ES) and Apprenticeship. Durham Region has a full compliment of EO services across the geographic community including several co-located LBS, ES agencies. These EO providers have worked together locally under the leadership of several networking organizations including the Literacy Network of Durham Region, Durham Region Local Training Board (DRLTB) and Durham Region Employment Network (DREN). LiNDR in partnership with DRLTB and DREN coordinates biannual meetings of all local EO programs including other service providers representing income support, mental health and housing to facilitate ongoing information sharing, community planning and staff training. Outcomes of one of the last EO stakeholder meetings included multiple requests for LiNDR to host an information session focusing on ESL and LINC program criteria.

Literacy Service Planning (LSP)

Literacy and Basic Skills programs are delivered to adults in the Durham community who require assistance with communication and math skills in order to pursue further education and training, employment or personal independence goals. Local programs are organized under the umbrella of the Literacy Network of Durham Region, one of 16 regional support organizations in the province.

LiNDR facilitates 10 Literacy Service Planning Committee meetings each year with its LBS programs in order to facilitate service coordination, provide organizational capacity building and maintain support to delivery agencies funded by MTCU. LiNDR has played this role since 1994. Currently the literacy programs that make up the LSP committee include:

Durham Catholic District School Board
Durham College
Durham Deaf Services
Durham District School Board Continuing Education
John Howard Society Durham Learning Alternatives Program
Literacy Council of Durham Region

Employment Services (ES)

Employment Services are offered through various organizations throughout the region to provide support and resources to local job seekers. While local ES agencies do not fall under the support of an MTCU-funded network, traditionally the Durham Region Employment Network (DREN) has supported information sharing and training for this sector.

For the past two years, DREN has facilitated local Employment Ontario Service Provider Integration Team (EOSPIT) meetings. These meetings are hosted locally in order to better coordinate the services of Employment Service providers. LiNDR attends all of the EOSPIT meetings to provide an LBS perspective for the group. ES programs in Durham involved in this process are:

Canadian Hearing Society
Centre d'emploi francophone de Durham
Durham College Community Employment Resource Centre
Durham Deaf Services
Durham Region Local Training Board - Tradeability
Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
Essential Communications Inc.
John Howard Society Durham
Meta Vocational Services
Northern Lights Canada
Vocational Pathways Inc.
YMCA Durham Employment

All of the committees listed above played a key role in helping to develop the final project products - namely the Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide and client criteria flow chart. Existing DRISP, LSP, EOSPIT and all stakeholder EO meetings were utilized in order to meet several needs of the project:

- Collect feedback on the requirements of the guide

- Provide feedback on the initial draft version of the guide
- Provide validation on the final version of the guide

These networking groups pre-existed the project and were found to be keenly receptive to mobilizing around the need for the guide, providing many valuable opportunities for concept generation, data collection, content feedback and product validation. As an unanticipated benefit, many productive discussions resulted in the identification of additional community gaps and needs. Most of these sessions took the form as facilitated focus groups or round table discussions.

Since the completion of the guide, LiNDR has received many requests for ongoing training on the final version that have been booked well in to 2012 with both EO and DRISP agencies.

To ensure that the toolkit could be validated by the wider service provider community - beyond even the scope of the DRISP, LSP and EOSPIT teams - LiNDR partnered with the Durham Region Local Training Board (DRLTB) to host two training days open to all community service provision agencies across the region. These training events provided an opportunity to orient the wider community on the Enhancing Pathways awareness guide while also obtaining feedback on necessary content adjustments and revisions. Representatives from ES, LBS, LINC, ESL agencies participated as well as front line staff from the mental health, developmental services, income support, housing, addictions and library fields.

The oversight of the creation of the Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide was provided by an exemplary project advisory committee comprised of:

Adrienne Haight, Northern Lights Canada

Cathy Sain, Durham Catholic District School Board ESL/LINC

Christina Barrow, John Howard Society Durham Community Employment Resource Centre/Learning Alternatives Program

Diana Petre, Durham Catholic District School Board LBS

Heather McMillan, Durham Region Local Training Board

Mike Willoughby, Literacy Network of Durham Region

Patricia Liang, Community Development Council Durham

Valerie Mason, Durham District School Board ESL/LINC

In order to carry out its obligations as one of several pilot sites in the Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 project, LiNDR met regularly with Project Read and the provincial team to share information, coordinate activities and refine project direction. This process proved to be a tremendously valuable opportunity to expand learning from all sites and integrate activities and materials as well as providing a model for future cross regional project coordination. The pilot consortium was able to disseminate research findings, best practices, materials, approaches, challenges and solutions on a regular basis to enable all sites to better inform and coordinate their own independent activities. With an agreement to openly share the deliverables, tools and materials

across the pilot group, all were able to leverage the successes across the province in their own region. This considerably increased both the value and benefit of all final outcomes of the project as well as providing an excellent model for future provincial project coordination.

Existing Coordination and Referral Practices

Ongoing information and referral has taken place in a relatively well-coordinated manner between LBS and ESL/LINC programs offered by the Durham District School Board and Durham Catholic District School Board for more than 16 years, largely as a product of co-location of services. However referrals between non-school board LBS agencies and ESL/LINC programs have not been supported by robust, formal protocols. To aid the process of cross-sector referral, LiNDR has always fully participated in the two immigrant services networking groups established in Durham – the former Immigrant Services Network and the current Durham Region Immigrant Service Providers committee.

Typically formal referral protocols documented by LiNDR have existed only between Employment Ontario (EO) programs - both LBS and ES and to some extent Apprenticeship. These have tended to be defined by the need to account for client traffic between EO programs and are characterized by basic client contact information and defined by program criteria. Ongoing discussions in the community allow for a common understanding among EO agencies of LBS levels and assessment results. Biannual all-stakeholder meetings provide training on existing services and protocols as well as permitting for adjustments to the local referral process.

Certainly the referral process amongst literacy programs exclusively has been more substantial - comprised of common assessment articulation, referral protocol tracking and annual service planning/coordination commitments. This process of referral amongst literacy programs in the region actually predates the inception of LiNDR itself - with the first group of literacy programs meeting in the region as early as 1991 to coordinate services.

Referrals into LBS and ES agencies from non-EO agencies such as LINC and ESL have been traditionally approached on case-by-case informal basis. The successful referral of any client between language and literacy and other community programs has been largely contingent on three informal factors:

- Information sharing at the DRISP network group
- Co-location of LBS, ESL and LINC services at school board programs
- Personal relationships established between LBS, ESL, LINC and other community program staff

It was widely acknowledged during the investigation phase of the project that all language, literacy and employment services carried out similar intake processes and asked similar questions of their clients upon first contact in order to determine eligibility and suitability. What was not clear was how different sector staff deconstructed and

interpreted client responses - in other words, how responses actually informed the provided referral. The awareness guide took shape partly upon the rich information gleaned from front line providers on what additional questions if asked would best identify a "grey area" client. This was a departure from the typically procedure-driven protocols that existed to refer clients between programs and sectors.

The Enhancing Pathways Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide has now become part of the overall package of inter-program/inter-service referral protocols and tools supported and promoted by LiNDR and its community partners.

Gaps, Needs, Issues/Challenges

Gaps: Grey Area Clients

The facilitation of programs in Waterloo/Wellington that took place in the first phase of the Enhancing Pathways project was to some degree already under way in Durham Region. LiNDR has a 15 year history of working collaboratively, occasionally somewhat informally, with immigrant and settlement services including ESL and LINC. Similar to the first phase experience, all ESL, LINC and LBS programs have historically reported that they continually struggle to identify the most appropriate pathways for learners whose first language is not English – the so-called "grey area" students.

For the purposes of LiNDR's second phase engagement, "grey area" clients represent a portion of all people seeking English language, literacy and employment services.

Criteria for participation in the local language and literacy service stream requires that clients are:

- engaged and interested in taking advantage of available services
- likely to be eligible
- likely to demonstrate progress, complete the program in the prescribed period and be available for three and six month follow up
- can deal with the limitations imposed by individual programs such as the time of day they are available and where they are located

Prospective clients may be approaching service providers for the first time, or may have participated in one or more services earlier.

In addition to the above, "grey area" clients are those whose first language is not English, and who therefore may need additional English language skills, but who also may have issues related to literacy and basic skills, and/or employment, such that it is difficult to determine which service they should access first.

"Grey area" clients were for the most part born in non-English speaking countries, although some may have been born in Canada and raised in another language. Some will have a Canadian work history. They may also experience additional barriers that can be difficult to assess on first contact, such as learning disabilities.

Need: Program Criteria

While referral protocols - informal and formal - existed amongst the language, literacy and EO spectrum, there has been nothing to date that pulled all sectors together into one key document. Furthermore, confusion regularly existed among EO agencies in regards to the criteria for both ESL and LINC programming such as citizen status.

Challenge: Guide Scope

With many stakeholders to include in the key resource, it proved challenging to develop a guide that would provide exhaustive advice and protocol in regards to referral on language, literacy and employment services for the whole region as well as a quick flip document that could provide a client pathway through various services. To date, additional agencies have come forward and expressed a desire to be included in the awareness guide including mental health programs. Although LiNDR has pledged to update the guide on an ongoing basis, it will be difficult to increase its content scope without additional resources.

Need: Learning Disability Identification

A community need that has been addressed through this process is the necessity to find ways of obtaining psycho-educational and cognitive assessments at no or low cost for adult language and literacy learners in the community. The impact of undiagnosed learning disabilities on all types of service provision was a key challenge identified by the LSP committee, all stakeholders EO forum and DRISP committee in 2011. In order to address this challenge, LiNDR utilized these findings to apply for and secure a project with the Ontario Trillium Foundation over 18 months to undertake an investigation into the funding of assessments.

Recommendations & Next Steps

There has been much positive local feedback on the awareness guide and service chart developed through this project. It is LiNDR's anticipation that the information in these materials will be updated and maintained on the LiNDR website. In addition, LiNDR will continue to offer training on the Enhancing Pathways Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide and has sessions booked with the Durham Region Immigrant Services Provider group as well as local Employment Service programs into 2012.

LiNDR collected feedback on recommendations and next steps at four junctures: the initial launch of the toolkit in June 2011, the two trainings held in October and November 2011 to validate the toolkit, subsequent discussions with members of the Durham Immigrant Service Provider group and direction from the Enhancing Pathways local project steering committee.

Recommendations for this project report include the following:

- Sustain and further disseminate local Enhancing Pathways project results (the Language Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide and client pathway chart) through regular local training opportunities
- Provide training to library, employment and community agency staff on the difference between language and literacy program needs

- Provide training on cultural sensitivity when approaching language clients about issues such as learning disabilities and mental health
- Investigate ways to improve access to psycho-educational and cognitive assessments for adults in the language and literacy sectors
- Facilitate biannual cross-sector networking including LBS, ESL, LINC, ES and other service providers
- Host discussions and additional training around literacy program options for clients for ESL and LINC staff
- Provide training or mentoring opportunities on “building rapport with clients” for new service provider workers in all sectors
- Share cross-regional coordination process with other regional literacy networks

Learner Pathways, Outcomes and Profiles

Assessment Tools and Practices

The awareness guide includes a series of client questions that can be utilized by any ES, LBS, ESL, LINC program or any other community agency with a generic intake process. The questions are intended to augment existing client intake assessment or screenings. For the purpose of this project, LiNDR did not address assessment tools or practices however the awareness guide and pathways chart will be amended in 2012 to reflect changes to the local introduction of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) process.

Client Eligibility and Program Entry Criteria

In order to articulate client eligibility and criteria, LiNDR chose to develop a client pathway chart. This one page document to date has been well received and deemed as highly useful. It provides service providers with a decision-making tree that outlines various client requirements for participation in LINC, ELS, LBS and ES programs.

Mode of Delivery - Program Models and Teaching Practices

As opposed to creating a mode of delivery, LiNDR developed a document and client pathways chart known as the Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide. The purpose of the guide is to address challenges faced by people identified in the first phase report as “grey area” clients, those who had English language, literacy and sometimes employment issues, and who were ending up in a program that did not best meet their needs. It is intended to be used by the front line staff that are the first point of contact for people seeking English language, literacy, employment or other community services to ensure “grey area” clients find the best service option and thereby optimize their prospects for success. The guide will reduce the number of situations in which a person utilizes a service that does not produce the desired results. It is important that local learners be ensured a greater degree of referral accuracy when navigating Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), Employment Services, (ES), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs. Stated another way, the purpose of the toolkit is to get the right person to the right service the first time.

The guide is made up of three components:

- Questions a front line staff person can ask that will help identify “grey area” clients and the best service option for them
- A referral chart that outlines the process for determining the best option for a “grey area” client in easy-to-read graphic form, to be used by front line staff in conjunction with the questions noted above
- More information about specific English language, literacy and employment services in Durham Region that can be provided by the front line staff person and that will help the “grey area” client choose the best program option, once the most appropriate service area has been identified

The Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide will be used when the potential “grey area” client first approaches a LBS, ES, ESL or LINC service provider in Durham Region. It can also be utilized in any other community service delivery setting that has an intake process.

The Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide is designed for staff that are the first point of contact for such potential “grey area” clients related to literacy, language, employment and community services. Initial contact may come from the person themselves, a family member, a friend, or another service provider such as Ontario Works. Aspects of the guide, such as the questions, may be conducted in person or by phone. The contact person may have some knowledge and exposure to the community services available and the providing organization, or may not.

As well as meeting the above purposes, the guide conforms to the following:

- Can be used over the phone as well as in person
- Questions represent a menu, not a script
- Is adaptable to situations where initial contact is from another person acting on behalf of the potential client
- Facilitates the principle of “no wrong door”
- Delivers clear, easily understood information on client eligibility criteria and program features of English language, literacy and employment services, in a useful way, to front line staff
- Provides enough direction to ensure consistency in referral activities between service areas
- Prevents the creation of unrealistic expectations
- Takes account of the fact that:
 - o Self-disclosure of diagnosed learning disabilities may be extremely helpful for instructors because some services providers have resources that can be accessed to assist, and that no money is available for diagnosis or accommodation otherwise
 - o Assessments are only done on those who are going to enter a literacy program, which speaks to the value of appropriate referrals
 - o While employment programs provide the same array of services across providers, literacy and basic skills programs are unique to each organization, for example focussing on current skill level, exit criteria

- and instruction methodology
- o Service spaces in some programs such as literacy are at a premium, so it is important that the right candidates take advantage of them

The awareness guide endeavours to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase the knowledge of client eligibility/criteria and program features amongst front line deliverers of Literacy and Basic Skills, Employment Services, English as a Second Language and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
- Introduce consistent standards of practice and formal protocols to existing information and referral activities between local LBS, ES, ESL and LINC programs
- Support and expand the existing network of Employment Ontario and immigrant service provider stakeholders by introducing models of service coordination and ongoing partnerships
- Meet the recent request of Durham Region's Employment Ontario stakeholders (ES, LBS and Apprenticeship) to receive more front line training on immigrant services and language instruction programs

Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

At the beginning of the project, specific evaluation criteria were set out to gauge the success of the pilot sites Enhancing Pathways activities. The project's effectiveness was to be determined on the accomplishment of the following outcomes:

- Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver Literacy and Basic Skills, English as a Second Language and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada –Tool: Project Evaluation Survey - 60% of participating agencies will report satisfaction with the coordination process and an increased understanding of the literacy and language programs
- Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between the programs Tool: Project Evaluation Survey – 60% of participating agencies report an increase in their knowledge of transition points and pathways
- Increased awareness and trust amongst educators about each programs in order to promote referrals Tool: Project Evaluation Survey – 60% of participating educators report increased satisfaction with their interagency relationships
- Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination practices between literacy and language programs Tool: Presentation Evaluation Form – 70% of regional networks report increased knowledge of coordination practices

At each session where the toolkit was presented there was a corresponding evaluation process. Below are the results of feedback taken at the preliminary launch of the toolkit and subsequent validation/training sessions. Most notably, it was at the June 2011 session that LiNDR collected data to indicate that its activities were on track to

meeting the overarching project objectives:

- 87% of respondents were satisfied with the coordination process and had increased their understanding of language, literacy and employment programs
- 77% felt they had increased their knowledge of transition points and pathways
- 85% had increased their satisfaction with interagency relations

Feedback collected in October and November 2011 at the validation events was collected and utilized primarily to fine-tune the awareness guide and client pathway chart as opposed to evaluating the overall project.

Literacy Network of Durham Region Professional Development Event

Evaluation Results Summary June 23, 2011

Participation rate = 60% return rate

1. This session met my expectations.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	24	27

2. I would implement the Enhancing Pathways Referral Protocol toolkit in my program delivery.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	1	25	27

3. (If you are funded by MTCU) This training helped me to meet MTCU's requirements for Continuous Improvement Performance Management.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	4	17	22

4. I am satisfied with the coordination process of this event and have an increased understanding of local literacy, employment and language programs.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	6	20	27

5. I have increased my knowledge of program transition points and pathways.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	11	15	27

6. I have increased my satisfaction with interagency relationships.

Total Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2	6	19	27

Comments:

1. Question 5 is perhaps premature. I would expect that this would be detailed at subsequent training sessions once this is complete.
2. Like toolkit name but perhaps name it Service Provider Referral Toolkit.
3. More active participation of employers in ESL, ED, Employment.
4. Great work! Very comprehensive, well done. Excellent discussion around questions and the potential for dialogue.
5. Suggestion: more networking opportunities.
6. Great open conversation in a non-judgemental environment. Wonderful opportunity to share strategies.
7. Great session. A lot of good input into the process and I believe this resource kit will be very helpful in guiding participants to appropriate services.
8. Very informative workshop! Incredible way of sharing and discussion!
9. Excellent session, any type of discussion or coordination between organizations from different organizations and sectors.
10. The toolkit is extremely helpful in terms of information and examples. The feedback by community partners was interesting and valuable!
11. Excellent opportunity to brainstorm ideas to contribute to the needed progress to help not just the vulnerable population but also for all our clients that come through the door.
12. Great work! Thank you all!
13. Dialogue was extremely helpful.
14. Great job! I am looking forward to utilizing tool.

Durham Region Local Training Board Employment Services Professional Development Event

Evaluation Results Summary October 12, 2011

Return rate not verified

S33: It became clear that discussions and additional training around literacy and referrals is needed.

S6: LiNDR presentation while enjoyable did not allow for conversation prior before reporting back.

S8: It may have been beneficial to have had a group session process related to the pathways documents for the group to have time to review and discuss & then provide feedback to LiNDR & Jennine & Tom.

S36: LiNDR info session was the most informative.

S37: Tom Little – CMCS Consultants. I was expecting to explore “assisting clients. overcoming barriers to employment” – The presentation focused on 6 questions for referral.

Durham Region Local Training Board

Employment Services Professional Development Event

Evaluation Results Summary November 17, 2011

Return rate not verified

S59: Would have liked overview of current Durham Region literacy programs.

S46: Ontario Shores was not listed as an Employment Service & Educational Service listed in the Enhancing Pathways packages / handouts.

S42: Best Part – ESL vs. Literacy. This will surely prove to be useful in providing enhanced services to community members.

S57: Today's presenters were very professional and knowledgeable. Made the time spent so worthwhile.

S60: Excellent PD. Very informative. Very well organized. Very Impressed! Thank you.

S63: Overall a wonderfully, very well arranged and conducted event.

89% felt the Professional Day met their expectation.

Appendices:

Toolkit and Chart



Pilot Report

Peel-Halton-Dufferin Network



Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Final Report

– PHDALN

Part 1

Regional Context

Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network (PHDALN) participated in the first phase of the Enhancing Pathways Project. In Phase 1, we used a real community scenario that illustrated one of the overlap points of the language and literacy continuum. As a result of this work, our project partners had the evidence and opportunity to apply for funding for a training program that would demonstrate how careful coordination and pathway planning can work for certain literacy and language program clients.

We were pleased that our project partners successfully demonstrated that coordination of literacy and language programming can produce successful outcomes. However, we did not want the takeaway from this project to be that this type of coordination could only occur with project funding and take place outside of the traditional literacy and language programs, such as those LBS and ESL programs that receive ongoing government funding.

In Phase 2 of Enhancing Pathways, we set out to illustrate that pathways can be built between existing literacy and language programs for the learners that already participate in those programs.

Facilitative Process & Agencies Involved

One of our LBS project partners from phase 1, Halton Catholic District School Board, learned firsthand of the benefits of coordinating services and bringing those enhanced pathways to the clients. They were eager to explore the possibilities for service coordination within their own organization's Thomas Merton Centre for Continuing Education, an Adult Learning Centre with locations in Oakville, Burlington and Milton, Ontario.

The Adult Learning Centre in Oakville provided a sensible test site for coordination between language and literacy programs. This location houses a blended LINC and ESL program, an LBS program and an array of adult credit classes and other alternative learning opportunities. Making this site a more robust test case is the fact that all of the programs have different managers. This is an important factor when making the case that this model is exportable to other communities where services are not necessarily delivered by one organization.

Since there were three program areas (led by three different people), PHDALN facilitated the initial project introduction and coordination discussions. These early meetings were needed to build rapport, find common interests and set agreed upon objectives. Once sufficient buy-in was established, the three parties worked together to find ways to achieve project objectives.

Service coordination and pathway planning was established more quickly between

the LBS program and Credit classes. This was the case for a variety of personnel and program related reasons. The program leaders had an existing professional relationship and the LBS program had recently redesigned its focus to serve learners with secondary school credit goals. Coordination between the LBS and LINC/ESL programs was slower to develop due to recent changes in program leadership.

By the end of the official pilot timeframe, much coordination had been achieved and a working agreement was established to continue working together.

Existing Coordination and Referral Practices

Despite the co-location of these three programs, there had been little coordination or client referrals between the programs. However, this should not be viewed as a critique of these programs. For many years the LBS program focused exclusively on working with Community Living clients who were preparing for supported employment programs. In addition, the LINC / ESL program predominantly served middle age and older newcomers at lower CLB levels.

This nicely illustrates an important point about service coordination. It does not always make practical sense coordinate services for which the whole would not be greater than the sum of its parts. In some cases, there is no natural intersection point between different programs and groups of clients. Throughout the two phases of the Enhancing Pathways project, a good rule of thumb we have learned is that we should not force service coordination to happen if greater or more efficient client outcomes are not a possibility.

Only in the last two years has the Board's LBS program expanded to serve new client groups and the LINC / ESL program seen different demographics and goals among its clients. The Adult Learning Centre and some of its clients are only now in a position to benefit from program coordination and pathway planning.

Gaps, Needs, Issues/Challenges

In the discussions between the program leaders at the Adult Learning Centre most confusion and hesitation about possible intersection points emerged from a lack of common terminology and understanding. This seems to be one of the biggest hindrances to developing well coordinated services and pathways. The lack of a common vocabulary masks what is likely to be both overlap and gaps between programs. The abundance of assessment tools, various categories of knowledge and skills and different approaches to evaluation of achievements all make conversations about the exact details of coordination time consuming and intellectually demanding.

Program leaders also cited system changes on the horizon as an issue that at times stalled progress. Whether it's the introduction of CLARS, OALCF or new program guidelines, the tendency to want to wait for change rather than proactively make change lingered in the background of most discussions. Service providers need to see themselves as designers of their own future and explore the built-in flexibility of their own program frameworks.

Recommendations & Next Steps

Service coordination and pathway planning between literacy, language and other education programs is entirely within the realm of possibility. In fact, the program leaders at the Adult Learning Centre have achieved a fairly sizeable degree of coordination between their services and have identified concrete steps to achieve greater coordination in the months ahead.

Here is a sampling of in-progress and future work agreed to by the program leaders:

- Intake and Referral

LBS will provide screening assessments for learners returning to complete their secondary school credit but are identified as requiring additional training before successful transition to secondary credit program.

- Assessment

Develop in-house blended assessment tool for LBS and ESL

- Client Coordination

Credit and LBS staff together will hold regularly scheduled student conferences to discuss progress, identify barriers and make appropriate referrals.

- Client Transition

Pre-register LBS students transitioning to PLAR course to ensure an efficient transition to secondary school credit program.

- Program Coordination

Meet with secondary school credit teachers to ensure LBS curriculum prepares for successful transition.

LBS and ESL / LINC programs will create tasks and ongoing assessments, in consultant with next step partners, to ensure the program prepares learners for successful transition to secondary school credit.

Establishing milestones / checklist for ESL / LINC learners transitioning to LBS

- Pathway Planning

Provide a seamless and embedded system of training within the adult learning centre which supports learners identified as having literacy needs and work together to assist transitioning learners to next steps.

Part 2

Learner Pathways, Outcomes and Profiles

The ESL and LINC programs at the Adult Learning Centre already operate seamlessly. A blended master schedule of classes exists which eliminates program access barriers caused by eligibility requirements.

While some pathways at the Adult Learning Centre must still be designed, one new major pathway was developed during the course of this project: A secondary school credit stream of LBS interwoven with the adult credit program. The following outline traces the embedded pathways in the Adult Learning Centre.

1. Client contacts ALC and books appointment with guidance office
2. Client meets with credit counselor to review transcript, discuss options using a checklist with program entry decision making criteria
3. Proceed with program placement
 - a. Registration into credit
 - b. Literacy screening for LBS
 - c. Referred to LINC / ESL for assessment / placement
4. Program
 - a. Credit classes
 - b. LBS classes
 - i. Fast Track (preparation for PLAR / credit classes)
 - ii. Concurrent LBS / Credit (Fast Track class + credit electives and / or adult coop)
 - iii. Skills Development (general upgrading)
 - c. LINC / ESL classes

This approach allows the client to see an entire pathway from the beginning which can be very motivating. The development of the LBS Fast Track class allows successful learners to be ready for the PLAR process. The intake strategy of the Fast Track class focuses on clients who can upgrade quickly in preparation for credit. The Fast Track class is scheduled in blocks throughout the year to align seamlessly with the starting dates of PLAR courses. This reduces learner idling time between transition points which leads to better skill retention and learning outcomes.

Assessment Tools & Practices

Here is a current snapshot of assessment tools in use at the Adult Learning Centre.

	Intake	Ongoing	Exit
LINC / ESL	CLBA for LINC ESL Assessment	Summative Assessment Manual for Canadian Language Benchmarks (SAM)	In house tools
LBS	In house tools	In house tools	Credit placement tests; OALCF milestone and culminating tasks
Credit	Review of transcripts; literacy screening if issues suspected	In-class evaluations and exams	Course completion

The ESL / LINC program is looking forward to the introduction of CLARS into Oakville, which could take place as early as February 2012. It will improve on the current ESL placement assessment which is not always a reliable predictor of achievement.

Client Eligibility & Program Entry Criteria

Here is a current snapshot of client eligibility in the programs at the Adult Learning Centre.

	Client Eligibility
LINC / ESL	Newcomers 18+ years of age with the following immigration status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent Resident 1. Convention Refugee or Convention Refugee Claimant 2. Government Assisted Refugee 3. Canadian Citizen 4. Provincial Nominee 5. Live-in Caregiver
LBS	19+ years of age
Credit	18+ years of age

Mode of Delivery – Program Models and Teaching Practices

The predominant philosophy guiding program models is choice. All three programs offer a variety of classes and times designed to suit different client needs. Morning, afternoon and evening classes are scheduled to accommodate busy family lives and non-traditional work schedules. Secondary School credits can be obtained in class, online, independently, on the job and overseas! The LINC / ESL program builds its course schedule from scratch every year to address changing demographics and client needs. The LBS program adapts to emerging gaps in the continuum of LBS services in the community.

Choice and organizational flexibility are the attributes that have driven this process of service coordination and pathway planning.

Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

We did not investigate this area in our discussions, but none of the program leaders indicated that their respective accountability parameters would impose any major constraints on the continued coordination of their services within the Adult Learning Centre.



**Enhancing Pathways Phase 2
Final Report
Waterloo Region and Wellington
County Pilot Report**

**By Lorri Sauvé
December 2011**



Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Final Report

Waterloo Region and Wellington County Pilot Report

Part 1

Introduction

In 2010, Project READ Literacy Network (PRLN) explored a process to enhance an adult's learning path in an effective and efficient manner. Over that year, PRLN sought to bring agencies that provide literacy and language training together to enhance communication and referrals among agencies. The goal of the project was to begin to coordinate and align the three existing language and literacy systems to enhance learner pathways and transitions. The three systems included:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities

Project outcomes included:

- Increased understanding among the agencies of the three systems including the structure and content of each system
- Enhanced knowledge of transition points and efficient pathways for learners
- Identification of gaps and needs within the current continuum of language development
- Increased knowledge among various Employment Ontario partners of the coordination among LBS, ESL, and LINC programs

Members of the Working Committees found that there were commonalities that emerged from this pilot project. They included:

- Learners had a lack of power, whether involved in a language or literacy program because many live in poverty
- Providing the learner with positive outcomes in the learning process was essential
- All three systems (ESL, LINC, and LBS) were undergoing program reform so there was inconsistent attendance based on other priorities
- Attendance at regular Working Committee meetings enhanced communication among agency staff which will likely resulted in better client/learner referrals in the future, thus reducing learner frustration

- Having flexibility within the programs to adapt to client needs, resulted in programs moving further along a continuum towards a service-based framework of program delivery
- Keeping learners' best interests was paramount. "No matter which point of access the client enters the system, they are the reason for us to be here. This is essential for us to continue to be learner-centred and outcomes-based. We want clients to have access to what they need and we want to help them make an informed decision." (Enhancing Pathways Working Committee Member, Phase 1)
- Being client-centred included meeting the client to find out what s/he wants, providing the client with the available information, and encouraging the client to choose the programs or services needed and wanted based on the information given (Ramsay, Sauvé, and Shulman, 2010).

Regional Context

This second phase of the Enhancing Pathways Project, provided an opportunity to build on the seminal work done in Phase 1 by not only informing policy makers about the best practices for enhancing learner pathways, but also for continuing to build relationships and provide networking opportunities for practitioners working in language, literacy, employment, credit and other programs in both Waterloo Region and Wellington County. During Phase 1, both language and literacy programs were in the initial stages of program reform. In 2011, when Phase 2 began, program reform was well underway in both language and literacy programs. Additionally literacy programs had been under the umbrella of Employment Ontario for a year and were beginning to have training for implementation of the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). The Language Assessment Centre in Waterloo Region was a pilot site for the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS). What this meant for these Working Committees was a willingness to keep the client's needs at the centre of the discussions, as in Phase 1. Additionally, in Waterloo, 2011 saw unemployment reach a more manageable level, however, language and literacy programs were still over capacity and many programs had wait lists. This meant that regionally, programs were over-stretched in terms of capacity and were definitely willing to refer learners to other programs where space existed.

Project outcomes for Phase 2 included:

- Build capacity in Waterloo and Wellington by expanding the model to include representatives from Credit Programs and Employment Services
- Develop referral protocols among the various agencies in Project READ and document learner pathways among and between programs
- Develop presentations for educators and workers in all programs (LBS, ESL, LINC, Credit, Employment Ontario, Other) to build understanding about learner/client pathways including intersections and program structure (including teaching methodologies) in each system

- Conduct a survey with a sample of adult students within ESL and LBS programs and with adults outside the system (potential students) to ask for their perspectives on program delivery in Waterloo and Wellington
- Create a website to share the coordination model (including tools and processes) and presentations developed in both Phase 1 and 2 with the broad range of delivery agencies across Ontario

Facilitative Process and Agencies Involved

Project Goal: This project will build on our current Enhancing Pathways Phase 1 project results and will engage in a knowledge transfer phase to share and build the coordination capacity of programs funded by Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (TCU), Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and Human Resources Services Development Canada (HRSDC).

In both the Waterloo Region and Wellington County pilot areas, the facilitative process involved various community partners from many different agencies. The initial meeting was a joint meeting of both Waterloo and Wellington Working Committees. The final 6 meetings were held separately, 3 in Waterloo Region and 3 meetings in Wellington County for a total of 7 meetings between both Working Committees.

The approaches and models used include asset-based models. These models include:

- Partnership and collaboration building including multi-lateral partnerships (consultation and engagement with community agencies)
- Capacity-building with the hope of creating referral systems and processes, increasing agency staff skills and knowledge, as well as providing networking opportunities
- Community development
- Service coordination and planning to identify needs within the community by having agencies develop, modify, and enhance their services to meet the needs

Step Summary of Facilitative Process

6. Create Working Committee Plan for all Enhancing Pathways 2 meetings
7. Create list of potential Working Committee members to ensure representation from language, literacy, credit, employment, and other wrap around services
8. Send an explanatory email and/or phone call to set up individual meetings with new members to establish a common philosophy of learner-centred services
9. Meet with all new potential members in person to discuss the project, their involvement, explain what the opportunity for them would be
10. Set up and invite all potential Working Committee members to initial meeting
11. Create background documentation, power point presentation, as well as handouts for initial combined Waterloo Region and Wellington County Working Committee meeting
12. Facilitate one Waterloo Region-Wellington County combined Working Committee meeting
13. Set dates for upcoming meetings in both Waterloo Region and Wellington County
14. Facilitate 3 separate Waterloo Region Working Committee Meetings and facilitate 3 separate Wellington County Working Committee Meetings
15. Share updates on a regular basis with other pilot sites from London, Hamilton, Peel- Halton-Dufferin, and Durham Region

The Step Summary above shows the general facilitative process taken in this phase of the project. At the initial meeting, the Enhancing Pathways Phase 1 Report was shared and findings were explored by all. Additionally, the Project Goal and Outcomes, Performance Indicators, Role of the Working Committee and time commitment were explained and discussed with participants. The benefits and opportunities of participation were also discussed. Then a vision for this phase of the project was collectively created as well as a snapshot of the current climate. Finally gaps and opportunities were stated and future meetings were planned. Even in this second phase of the Enhancing Pathways project, partnerships needed time to develop and grow since there were definitely new staff who joined as members in Phase 2 who were not members in the initial Phase 1 Working Committees. As well, new staff from additional agencies including Employment, Credit, and other Wrap Around Service agencies joined both Working Committees.

Agencies were interested in collaborating and wanted bi-monthly meetings to stay informed about each others' programs and services. As in the first phase of this project, Committee members did not want the project to end. They saw value in the

meetings and wanted them to continue. Formative evaluations following each meeting detailed the eagerness on the part of committee members to attend and participate at the meetings.

Working Committee Membership – Waterloo Region

Committee membership was comprised of 22 individuals who attended fairly consistently. This is a slight increase in membership from Phase 1 because in that phase, there was not a consistent Employment representative nor representatives from Credit Programs or other wrap around services. In Phase 2, there were many representatives from Employment agencies and a few from wrap around services. Please note that the tables below detail the agency plus the area or system represented for both Waterloo County and Wellington Region.

Legend

Acronym	Area Represented
LA	Language Acquisition either ESL or LINC
LBS or AU	Literacy and Basic Skills or Academic Upgrading
E	Employment
O	Other Wrap Around Services

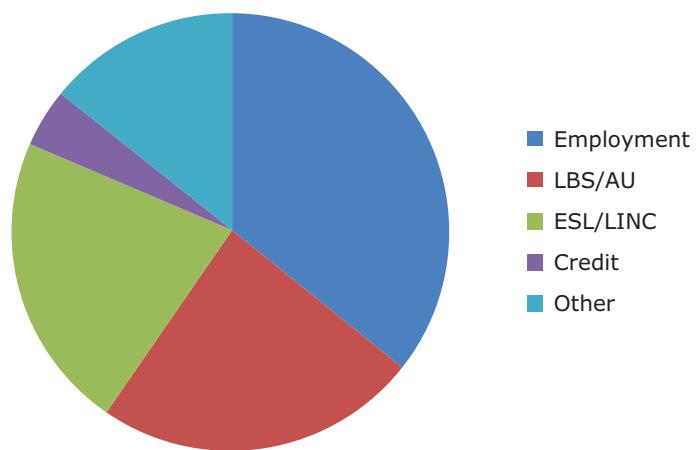
Waterloo Region Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Working Committee Membership

Anishnabeg – E Canadian Mental Health, Bridging Employment Supports – E, E Conestoga College – AU Francophone Employment Centre – E Kitchener Public Library – O Lutherwood – E Lutherwood – O Northern Lights – E Project READ Literacy Network - O	Region of Waterloo – E St Louis Adult Learning Centre – LA, LA, LA St Louis Adult Learning Centre – LBS St Louis Adult Learning Centre – Credit The Literacy Group – LBS, LBS The Working Centre – E Waterloo Region District School Board, ESU – LBS, LBS YMCA Language Assessment Centre and Newcomer Employment Centre – LA, LA, LA Community Member - O
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Committee membership is comprised of:

- 34% from Employment agencies (8 members)
- 25% from LBS/AU agencies (5 members)
- 25% from ESL/LINC agencies (5 members)
- 4 % from Credit agencies (1 member)
- 12% from Other agencies (3 members)

Membership Composition - Waterloo Region



Working Committee Membership – Wellington County

Committee membership was comprised of 13 individuals who attended fairly consistently. This is also a slight increase in membership from Phase 1 because there was not a consistent employment representative nor representatives from Credit Programs or other wrap around services in Phase 1. In Phase 2, there was always an Employment representative and a Credit representative. Please note that the table below details the agency plus the area represented.

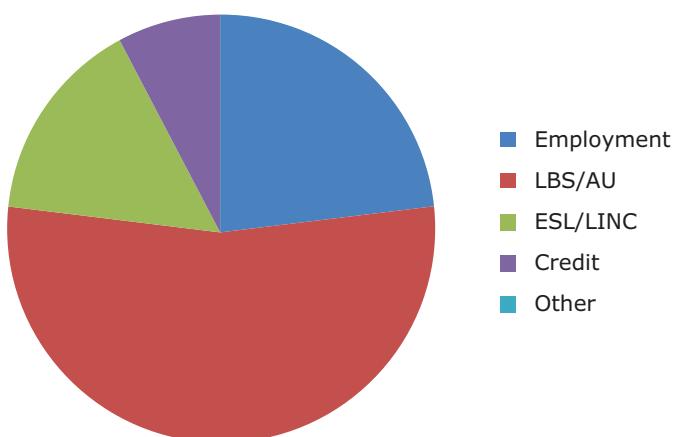
Wellington County Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Working Committee Membership

Action Read Community Literacy Centre – LBS, LBS Conestoga College – AU County of Wellington - E Immigrant Services, Guelph-Wellington – LA Lutherwood - E	Second Chance – E Upper Grand District School Board – LA Upper Grand District School Board – LBS, LBS Upper Grand District School Board – Credit Wellington County Learning Centre – LBS, LBS
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Committee membership is comprised of:

- 24% from Employment agencies (3 members)
- 53 % from LBS/AU agencies (7 members although 2 only attended one meeting)
- 15% from ESL/LINC agencies (2 members)
- 8 % from Credit agencies (1 member)
- 0% from Other agencies (0 members)

Membership Composition - Wellington County



Committee Meetings

The initial meeting included members from both Working Committees and was held in April 2011. The purposes of this meeting were many. First, it was to provide content and set the context for all future meetings. Next, a focus was on relationship and trust building and getting to know other committee members. Finally, a third purpose was for identifying the gaps and opportunities for future work. Products developed for and from this meeting included a summary power point presentation of Phase 1 and meeting notes.

The second committee meetings were held in June; Waterloo Region in the morning and Wellington County in the afternoon. The purpose of these meetings was to learn about program models and services available, refine the terms commonly used, and determine program niches. All meetings also had a purpose of building relationships and networking since they are vital to collaborative partnerships. Products from this meeting included the beginning of the Program Referral Charts, albeit in a different format than what was first created in Phase 1, as well as the Common Language Work Sheet.

The third committee meetings were held in October 2011 with Waterloo in the morning and Wellington in the afternoon. These meetings focused on the grey area clients including who they are and what services they accessed. Additionally, we wanted to modify the 6 Key Screening Questions and continue the Community Planning Process. Networking was still an integral part of each meeting. Products from these meetings include a Referral Toolkit that includes a decision-making process, more pathways information, refined definitions, and 10 Key Screening Questions. A comment that was included on the formative assessment from this meeting showed that members really found the Working Committee meetings and the process worthwhile. Understanding and respecting each others' niches allows focus." During this phase of the pilot, at all meetings the facilitator found that members were much more open with each other and trusting and felt that they saw the meetings as an opportunity to do better planning and avoid service duplication.

The fourth and final committee meetings were held in November 2011 and were purposed to finish the community planning process and plan for the next steps including recommendations and exploration of the case studies. What occurred was that the 10 Key Screening Questions were decreased to 5 Key Screening Questions plus 2 additional questions if needed. Referral Forms were added to the Referral Toolkit and a lot of discussion about tweaking the Referral Charts with Individual Program Data occurred. Finally agencies anonymously completed an Agency Self-Assessment to show where they were towards being ready for transition-oriented programming. This document comes from the tools developed for implementation of the OALCF. A total of 14 participants from both Waterloo and Wellington Working Committees completed this form. It was exciting to see that 5 self-assessed that they had policies, practices, and programming that support successful learner transitions with equal in either "Somewhat in Place" or "Mostly in Place." 5 agency staff chose "Mostly in Place"; 1 chose "Fully in Place" and only 1 chose "Not in Place." See Appendix 1 for the template used.

Although the facilitator had more activities and discussion planned for some of the meetings than what occurred, much discussion at meetings allowed the data to be much richer than planned. Therefore, the meetings accomplished their purpose. All products from these meetings can be found in Part 3 - Referral Toolkit: Guidelines and Forms for Making Referrals in Waterloo Region and Wellington County. If this project had another phase, it would be important to know the customer life cycle of all clients and learners. That is, knowing exactly how they get to the locations, all the people they meet in order to find the program they want. Additionally, we only began discussing how agency staff knows when the clients are ready to move on to the next step. This is all around transition readiness and needs to be explored more fully at a later date.

Existing Coordination and Referral Practices

Within Waterloo Region there are some existing coordination committees that exist. In the Language Acquisition area, the Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC), funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is in its infancy. The purpose of this council is to develop a collaborative strategy that includes solutions for successful settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in Waterloo Region (LIPC, 2010). There have been community information sessions and sub-committees begun in order to move this work forward. As well, LINC managers meet regularly to discuss programming, promotions, and other needs. Provincially, LINC and ESL practitioners and managers meet at an annual conference to share best practices and innovations.

In the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) area, Literacy Service Planning (LSP) committees comprised of Managers and Supervisors meet on a monthly basis to plan for Literacy program delivery in both Waterloo and Wellington. These administrators identify gaps in service and respond to the changing needs in the community. Facilitated by Project READ Literacy Network, this service coordination has been evolving since 1993. Over the years, this process has shifted from being responsive to changing community needs to now having agencies examine their collective effectiveness to meet the literacy training needs of adults in Waterloo Region and Wellington County (Project READ Literacy Network, 2008). Also, LBS practitioners can attend training opportunities locally, and provincially. There are various Anglophone-sector agencies that deliver training, host conferences, and do project work to move the LBS sector forward.

Employment agencies meet with their own agency staff to coordinate their interagency programs. Additionally, in both Waterloo Region and Wellington County, there is an employment committee, made up of various employment agencies, that meets regularly to identify gaps and plan for the future.

Gaps, Needs, and Challenges

Gaps

- Blended programs and shared delivery programs are a gap. We need to know what is supported by policy so that we can be flexible within the structure of the funding.

- Learners with many needs require more time. Such learners could include but are not limited to learning disabled adults and learners with an absence of literacy skills within their own languages. It is not reasonable to expect speedy transitions from one level to the next for these learners.
- There is a gap in that no future Enhancing Pathways Working Committee meetings are planned for 2012. We need to continue to meet in order to maintain the relationships built and to use the new Referral Toolkit.
- Second Career and Skills Development are areas not easily understood by non-Employment workers. This is an area of knowledge that needs to be expanded.
- Some programs are only offered in certain cities or areas of the cities and not in the rural areas.
- Programs for young people who have graduated from basic programs but still do not have adequate skills to function well in society.

Needs

- The tracking system under Employment Ontario does not allow clients to access more than 1 service or program at a time. There needs to be a way that learners can be registered in both programs so that the learners can have the programs that meet their needs the best. For example, taking a computer course with The Literacy Group while being in a Credit Math program in the afternoon.
- A system, tool, or method to be able to track and show progress in a client who has an undiagnosed learning disability.
- Clarity around CLARS and how it will fit within the entire Language system.
- Inconsistency exists in protocols for meeting new participants. A process is needed for improved customer service, across all agencies.
- Regular contact with agencies is critical for referrals to continue and for clients to access the program that they need and want.
- Phase 3 Project to pilot and evaluate the Referral Toolkit over 2012 as well as continue to network with agency staff and identify new gaps in service delivery. Make sure the project continues as an essential service.
- Add OW caseworkers, TCU, MCI, and CIC representatives as attendees to some of the Working Committee Meetings.
- Have community forums to share the Referral Toolkit and our process of creating it with other agencies.
- When certain programs are only offered in certain areas, transportation can be an issue.

- An understanding and common language around mental health issues.
- 1. A need for an assessment tool for mental health issues in the ESL population (in various native languages).

Challenges

- The Multi-Agency Referral Process is just beginning. Time is needed to test the Referral Toolkit with Front line staff, both experienced and novice to see if it really works and to make refinements based on the feedback provided.
- Having multiple agencies from all areas implement and use the Referral Toolkit that we developed.
- Agencies that have intermittent funding (i.e. they are going contract to contract) are not able to do long-term planning well.
- The full suite services are not able to deliver all assessments (i.e. Learning Disabilities, English as a Second Language, Assessment for clients with other barriers)
- Eligibility is sometimes too stringent and keeps clients out who would really benefit from a particular program or resource.
- Budgets are not increasing yet the number of clients has continued to increase in our region.
- Clients with mental health issues may have behaviours that mask learning needs. How do we work with these clients and where do we refer them first?

Recommendations and Next Steps

This list of recommendations arose from the meetings held in Phase 2, April – November 2011) in both Waterloo Region and Wellington County. These recommendations are not listed in any particular order but rather are listed under common headings.

Continue to Have Working Committee Meetings

- Continue to meet on a regular basis (3 to 4 times per year) because interpersonal connections are key to effective referrals. Members feel the need to keep up to date with each other because programs and trends are constantly changing. Regular contact with agencies is critical to referral.
"I am now comfortable and able to call people at other agencies. These discussions around referral pathways are vital to what we do on a daily basis."
- Ministry consultants should be included at these meetings so that they have more of a "buy in" and can provide immediate feedback to program staff on what is going on at their level.
- Have some meetings where only management staff are present. Others

where front line staff are present. Others with all staff.

- Think about and discuss what you deem is good customer service. Then improve upon what would be better or the best service to clients.

Fund a Phase 3 Project

- A Phase 3 is needed so that the Referral Toolkit can be piloted and tested. Phase 3 should be an implementation and an evaluation of implementation. It would be great to see if agencies are using the toolkit, how they are using it, and what needs to be changed (if anything). This pilot should include a 6 and 12 month follow up to ensure the Referral Toolkit is still being used.
- Practitioners need to be able to evaluate the toolkit and identify continuing or new gaps as policy changes occur. Also remember that front line staff include volunteers, receptionists, etc.
- Screening needs to be kept simple so as to lighten the load for front line staff. In this toolkit we have attempted to create processes and tools that are simple and effective to use.

Innovative Programming

- Explore more shared delivery type programs. Some members are still unsure of what is allowed.
- Explore the CLARS model for LBS. Perhaps have the LBS assessor co-located at the CLARS centre so that there is a one-stop shopping for assessment. This would provide clear, unbiased, third-party assessment. Locate CLARS centres throughout the Region and County.

Training and Professional Development for Professionals from the Community

- Have community forums to share results.
- Provide ongoing PD regarding referrals and the use of the toolkit. Don't assume that doing it once will suffice since there is always a turnover of staff.

Policy

- Allow time and provide funding to make referrals an important part of the planning process.

Part 2

Learner Pathways, Outcomes and Profiles

During the first phase, 8 case studies (learner profiles) were created to find out whether agency staff would have a typical process for referring clients. It was discovered that depending on the area that the staff worked in, would determine the pathway (s)

that s/he most likely would feel comfortable referring and have knowledge about the programs available in that area (Ramsay, Sauvé, and Shulman, 2010). To learn more about these case studies, refer to the Phase 1 report entitled: *Enhancing Pathways: The Literacy and Language Continuum Project Report*.

Following the Phase 2 pilot, located within the Referral Toolkit is a "Decision-Making Process" as well as "Screening Questions for Effective Referrals." Working Committee members spent a lot of time discussing the importance of making the learner feel at ease, listening to their stories, and then gathering information in order to provide the learner with information so that they can choose the best program for themselves. The lesson learned from this process is that the better information that one gathers during the initial contact with the learner, the higher likelihood that a better referral will be made. It is our hope that we can pilot test the Referral Toolkit with frontline agency staff to see if it is effective in getting learners to where they need and want to be the first time.

Please see the following example of how the Referral Toolkit, including the Decision-Making Process and the Screening Questions can be used. We are showing Case Study #1 from the Phase 1 report, *Enhancing Pathways The Literacy and Language Continuum Project Report*.

Case Study # 1

Frank arrived in Canada in 1992 from Poland at the age of 22 where he took ESL classes on and off for 8 months. He has a good grasp of Polish and graduated from College in Poland. While in a language training program, he got a job at a corner store. He stayed in the language training program for 2 more months before he burned out with working full-time and going to school full-time. He quit his language classes. He recently moved to Kitchener, is now married with 2 children and is unemployed again. He has come through your agency's doors. Where should he be referred? This case study had six approaches detailed in the Phase 1 report. 2 were from a language acquisition perspective, 2 from an employment perspective and 1 from a non-literacy or non-language perspective.

We would welcome the client and establish the clients need by using the Decision-Making Process and sample script found in the Referral Toolkit on pages 4 through 7. We would also be using the Screening Questions for Effective Referrals found on page 8 in the Referral Toolkit.

After listening to Frank for a few minutes, the receptionist was able to complete this form without much difficulty. She did not need to ask questions 6 and 7, as Frank had good facility in English speaking and listening skills. She then completed the "Client Information Form: Referral to a Community Partner" and gave him information on the various Employment program options in Kitchener.

Screening Questions Interview Form Waterloo Region and Wellington County

Date: December 6, 2011	Client/Learner Name: Frank
Address: 123 Anywhere Street, Kitchener, ON	Telephone: 519 123-4567 Email: frank@goodemail.ca
<p>1. Can you please tell me why you are here today? Or What brings you here today? I want to improve my English skills to get a job.</p> <p>2. Why have you chosen this agency? I found out about you from my friend who came here for ESL classes in 2009.</p> <p>3. What program are you looking for? I think I am looking for a program that will give me a better job than what I've had. I want to do something that uses my brain but my writing skills aren't good.</p> <p>4. Describe your current situation Or "Tell me what is happening in your life right now?" I have just moved here from Toronto with my wife and 2 kids. I want a good job.</p> <p>5. Can you tell about the programs or services that you are accessing now or that you have accessed in the past?" I took ESL classes for 2 months through the Toronto District School Board but with my job and family, I couldn't keep up so I just went to work. Now I know I need to have good writing skills to work anywhere.</p> <p>Optional Questions:</p> <p>6. Are you comfortable communicating in English?</p> <p>7. Have you had difficulties in school?</p> <p>Additional Information: Has a College Diploma from Poland in Electronics Can communicate fairly well in English, is fairly confident</p> <p>Pathway: Employment</p> <p>I am going to give Frank information on The Working Centre, Northern Lights, and the Lutherwood Employment Programs. A counsellor there can help him figure out his employment goal and a training plan for how to reach it. The counsellor will also know whether or not Frank qualifies for Second Career, Skills Development or other programs that may sponsor his education</p>	

Assessment Tools and Practices

Assessment tools in both language and literacy programs have been in a constant flux in 2011. In language acquisition programs, CLARS has been and is being piloted. CLARS was initiated by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Ontario (MCI) and piloted in 3 areas in 2011 including Waterloo Region as one of the pilot locations. The vision of CLARS is to have a coordinated assessment and referral system, using the standardized tools and protocols based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Framework. The vision of CLARS is to provide consistency, better use of resources, better knowledge of needs, and is based on the “One Door Principle” in that potential ESL and LINC learners (Language Acquisition Learners) need only go to one third party site for assessment and referral. There are three types of assessment which are done only by assessors at the CLARS centres that include:

- Initial
- Reassessment
- Change of level (demotion or moving down one level is done at the assessment centre)

Referrals are done at the assessment centre by assessors. If a client has decided which agency to attend, enrolment can happen at the same time if there are available spaces. If no spaces are available at the site chosen by the client, s/he is placed on a wait list. If a client defers their referral, they will self-refer once they decide which agency they want to attend.

Other functions of CLARS centres are to report statistics on numbers, immigrant category, levels, and languages on a monthly basis, together with a narrative report on achievements and challenges.

After the initial piloting period, the CLARS Centre in Waterloo Region reported that demand for service is steady with a wide range of eligibility and database issues being clarified.

Placement guidelines include giving first consideration to listening and speaking scores rather than reading and writing in order to allow learners to participate in the classroom. This will ultimately build learner success by ensuring that students can communicate orally in class (CLARS Presentation, October 2011).

Programs that provide Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) training or Academic Upgrading have now one of the services provided under Employment Ontario. What this means is that not only has the curriculum been modified under the OALCF, but also assessment tools and practices, tracking, and definitions have been modified. Instead of learners working at certain levels (the LBS matrix included 5 levels), learners in LBS will now do tasks at certain levels that will be aligned with the Essential Skills. Learners in either LBS or AU programs will fall within levels 1 – 3. The LBS system has changed to learning pathways, not literacy levels. You can see examples of

some of the learning pathways in the Referral Toolkit. In preparation for this program transformation, LBS agencies have been moving towards working with and being comfortable with Essential Skills.

The tracking of statistics will also be different in that agencies will be responsible for tracking different data on each learner and within each program within the Employment Ontario tracking system. All of these changes are being implemented in 2012 but in 2011, much training of agency staff has been undertaken. 2011 and 2012 will be transition years for staff in LBS and AU agencies. Therefore, information was changing rapidly between meetings and staff from other areas were anxious to learn as much as they could at the meetings. Many LBS staff were also anxious to learn the new information.

Common Themes that Emerged from the Working Committee Meetings

Programs are learner centred and provide free tuition and/or programs for eligible learners. All programs stated that the curriculum used is flexible and not static. Although learners are diverse, agencies stated that learners have:

A. Motivation for further training. This motivation may include:

- Becoming employed at the end of or during the training
- Functioning better in society by increasing language or literacy skills
- Being able to help a child with homework or read a book to him/her by increasing language and/or literacy skills
- Retraining for other jobs so a variety of programs are needed

B. Diverse range of language and literacy skills

C. Limited time available to retrain

D. Maturity and experience (often)

E. Other needs such as additional supports (e.g. transportation, child care, flexibility in program times)

It is not a linear pathway from training to employment. Instead, many adult learners have jagged profiles. That is, they are in and out of education programs. Many learners in language programs work while attending training. Some learners in LBS programs also work while attending training.

Client Eligibility and Program Entry Criteria

LBS (Literacy and Basic Skills)/AU (Academic Upgrading)

LBS is open to:

- A person 19 years or older (some exceptions of those 16 – 18)
- Out of school
- Able to show progress

The focus is on:

- Adults who are unemployed, especially those on Ontario Works
- Adults who have a speaking facility in English or French

Participants must be able to show progress. The goal of LBS is to increase foundational Essential Skills.

ESL

English as a Second Language is open to:

- Those who are 18 years or older or have a high school diploma
- Any person interested in learning English (landed immigrants, convention refugees, refugee claimants, Canadian citizens)
- Work/study Visa holders and international visitors, however, both must pay tuition fees to attend
- Temporary residents who have work permits through the live-in caregiver program may attend without paying tuition fees

The goal of ESL is to improve the communicative competency of adults.

LINC

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada is open to:

- Those who are 18 years or older and are not Canadian citizens
- Permanent residents of Canada, including persons determined to be convention refugees
- Protected persons
- Persons whose applications for permanent resident status are being processed

Participants can attend LINC from 3 years from the time they begin the LINC program.

The goal of LINC is to improve the communicative competency of adults.

Specialized Language Training Programs

- Those who are 18 years or older or have a high school diploma
- Any person interested in learning English (landed immigrants, convention refugees, refugee claimants, Canadian citizens)

- Temporary residents who have work permits through the live-in caregiver program may attend without paying tuition fees

The goal of SLT programs is to support English language acquisition for a specific job for which the person has already been trained.

ELT (Enhanced Language Training)

ELT provides language training based on a specific training such as Enhanced Language Training for Engineers. These courses provide higher level language training to permanent residents and convention refugees who are 18 years of age or older

OSLT (Occupation Specific Language Training)

OSLT courses require higher level language skills (Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 6 or higher). The goal of OSLT programs is to provide “work-related” language training, appropriate for the learner’s future job.

Bridging Programs

These programs are of a shorter duration and are created for Internationally Trained professionals. They require a minimum of a CLB 7.

Mode of Delivery and Program Models and Teaching Practices, Accountability Parameters and Statistical Reporting

In Waterloo Region and Wellington County, numerous program models and teaching practices exist (refer to *Enhancing Pathways: The Literacy and Language Continuum* for more information, Appendix 2). These programs have models ranging from one-to-one, small group, and large classrooms that can be held in community centres, schools, community colleges, and other agency locations. Also, please note that not only are there various program models and locations, but there are various times of the day, days of the week, and duration of classes. It appears that the programs available are geared to local needs in the communities. Please refer to the Referral Charts located in the Toolkit (Part 3) for further information on Language, Literacy, Credit, Employment, and Other Programs.

Summary

This project has been highly successful and has met its intended outcomes although there is still more work to be done. Although the Referral Toolkit, found in Part 3 can be used in the future for referrals, there is time needed to train staff on its use and time to evaluate its effectiveness. Additionally, this project uncovered some gaps and challenges that were different from Phase 1 and deserve time to be explored further.

The underlying premise of literacy, language and employment going hand-in-hand which was stated in Phase 1, still exists. In Phase 1, participants on the working committees stated that they wanted to work together better and stated that they liked the process used in Phase 1. We continued to use that process in this phase. This process is a compilation of:

- Partnership and collaboration building including multi-lateral partnerships (consultation and engagement with community agencies)
- Capacity-building with the hope of creating referral systems and processes, increasing agency staff skills and knowledge, as well as providing networking opportunities
- Community development
- Service coordination and planning to identify needs within the community by having agencies develop, modify, and enhance their services to meet the needs

Partners want to continue to meet on a regular basis.

It was exciting that while this project was developing a Referral Toolkit, at the same time Employment providers were also developing a Referral form that they shared with us and we were able to incorporate into our Referral Toolkit.

In conclusion, this pilot has allowed both new partnerships to develop and strengthened other partnerships that developed in the first phase. It was great to have representation from language, literacy, employment, library services, mental health, and assessment at the meetings. That consistent attendance allowed us to create a Referral Toolkit and to engender relationships among agency staff that attended. More time is needed to continue to inculcate these relationships as there will always be new staff coming into these areas. Should these meetings continue in the future, the result will be referrals occurring and blended programs being created within and across agencies.

Appendix 1 Agency Self-Assessment Tool for Transition Oriented Programming

Transition Oriented Programming

Description: Agencies have policies, practices and programming that, first and foremost support successful learner transitions.

Not in Place	Somewhat in Place	Mostly in Place	Fully in Place
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency currently has little to no evidence of regular or recent communication with next step destinations There is little to no up-to-date information available on next-step requirements. Documentation related to goal setting that identifies the learner's chosen transition destination or path is mostly missing from learner files. Curriculum planning and daily program activity do not reflect or relate clearly in some way to transition requirements. Follow up does not reveal awareness on the part of learners, of any direct link between transition success and programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency provides some evidence of regular or recent communication with next step destinations Some information is available on next-step requirements. Learner files give evidence of some work on goal setting but quite a few files are incomplete i.e. transition path is not identified. Emphasis on preparing for successful transitions is not very evident in learner's daily activity in the program. Follow up produces evidence that a few former learners attribute transition success to what they learned in the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency builds strong reciprocal connections with next step destinations Agency has a fairly good working knowledge of the requirements for successful transitions based on recent information on next-step destinations. Most learner files identify the transition path based on goal setting. Program delivery demonstrates clear connections between requirements for transition, curriculum planning and the learner's daily activity in the program. Follow up shows that many exited learner's link transition success to transition-oriented programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency maintains strong working relationships with next step destinations through regular communication. Learner files and other program documents demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of learner next steps based on current information, documents and communication with external agencies. Curriculum planning and daily activities are clearly informed by next step requirements. Follow up results show that most learners make the connection between their program and their transition success.

Adapted from OALCF documents

References

- Project READ Literacy Network. 2008. *Waterloo-Wellington Literacy Service Plan for 2009-2010*. Kitchener, ON.
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- Waterloo Region Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC). 2010. *Final Report*. Waterloo, ON.

Appendices

Appendix #1 – Common Language Sheet (Glossary of Terms)

Appendix#2 - Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Survey Report of Learners in ESL and LBS and Non-learners in Waterloo-Wellington

Tools and Resources developed by each Pilot Site

– Please visit the project website: www.enhancingpathways.ca

Appendix #1
Common Language Work Sheet (Glossary of Terms) June 2010

Term	Meaning
Accountability	Accountability is a framework and process for measuring the achievement of pre-set outputs and outcomes within the aspects of effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service/satisfaction.
Assessment	Identification of present skill levels and knowledge.
Bridging	Language programs in which international students can take language skills related to their occupation; require CLB 6 or better
Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB)	Canadian Language Benchmarks is a national skill standard and is divided into 12 levels. This standard is used in both ESL and LINC classes. The main purpose of the CLB is to provide a measure that can be used to describe communicative ability in English as a Second Language. It addresses four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.
Client/Learner	An individual receiving services at any agency or business; have been used interchangeably in this document
Collaboration	The continued process to construct and maintain shared goals and values
Communicative Competency	Communicative competency is having language learning taking place in an integrative manner through an emphasis on making meaning by unconscious assimilation of knowledge through practice.
Document Literacy	The knowledge and skills required to understand and appropriately use written information such as graphs, charts, and application forms. (IALS)
English Language Studies (ELS)	Specific studies for those with a career goal and language training is a prerequisite
Enhanced Language Training (ELT)	Training in any field of engineering with language proficiency of CLB 6. Funded by CIC.

Essential Skills	<p>Developed in 1994 by Human Resources Development Canada (now HRSDC – Human Resources Skills Development Canada). These are the skills necessary for work, learning, and life and it is a national skill standard. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading text • Document use • Writing • Numeracy or math • Oral Communication • Working with others • Continuous Learning • Computer use • Thinking skills which include problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, job task planning and organizing, significant use of memory and finding information.
Language Acquisition	A natural progression or development in the use of language. Second language acquisition is the process by which people learn a second language in addition to their native language.
Language Development	The process by which people acquire their first language.
LBS Programs	Literacy and Basic Skills programs; known as Academic Upgrading in the College system. It means having minimal literacy skills to approximately a grade 9 equivalency. There are 5 levels of LBS in Ontario at present.
Learning Path	This is the path that a learner may choose on the way to obtaining or accomplishing his/her goal.
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada. Newcomers to Canada are individuals who do not have their Canadian citizenship. LINC classes follow the CLB benchmarks.
Literacy	The ability to communicate including reading, writing, math, self direction and all the Essential Skills by HRSDC.
Literacy Learners	Individuals enrolled in LBS programs.
LSP (Literacy Services Planning)	LBS Managers meet on a monthly basis to identify best practices, needs and gaps, examine service delivery and determine the best provider to meet identified needs. The LSP is coordinated in Waterloo and Wellington by Project READ Literacy Network.
OSLT (Occupation Specific Language Training)	Specific language training in any field of study with language skills of CLB 6 or better
Prose Literacy	The knowledge and skills required to understand and appropriately use information from print materials. (IALS)

Quantitative Literacy	The knowledge and skills required to understand and appropriately use math information. (IALS)
Second Language Learner	A learner whose first language is neither English or French. Also sometimes referred to as an English as a Second Language Learner.
Specialized Language Training	Programs for SLL that incorporate specialized English language skills needed for certain professions.



Appendix # 2

Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Survey Report of Learners in ESL and LBS and Non-learners in Waterloo-Wellington

Prepared by
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Final Version: January 2012



Executive Summary

As part of Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 2, a survey was conducted of English as a Second Language (ESL) and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) learners as well as individuals who were not engaged in ESL or LBS classes (non-learners). This survey sought to provide information on program design from a learner perspective that could be compared to practitioner and administrator perceptions from Phase 1. The survey was not an evaluation of specific program quality or program delivery. The Participants in ESL programs were recruited from school board programs in Kitchener and Guelph. LBS participants were obtained from community based programs, public and separate school board programs and college sector programs in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph and surrounding areas. Non-learners were accessed through the Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Areas in Kitchener and Cambridge or were solicited by the survey consultants independently.

Individuals were surveyed using a variety of tools and methods: online and paper format survey, one-to-one interview and focus groups.

In total, 160 people completed the Enhancing Pathways survey: 34 people responded to the online survey, 51 people took part in focus groups and 75 people completed a paper copy of the survey. Survey response totals from each of the above groups are as follows: 91 respondents were registered in LBS programs, 50 respondents were from ESL programs and 19 were not registered in any program at the time of the survey. Of the 19 non-learners surveyed, 9 were interviewed in person at Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Areas in Cambridge and Kitchener. The remainder completed the online survey or were interviewed over the phone. All respondents lived in Waterloo Region or Wellington County.

Results

- When analyzing the survey results the following primary results were noted:
- When analyzing the survey results the following primary results were noted:
- ESL and LBS learners thought it was easy to sign up for a program
- More ESL learners join a program to gain “independence” over any other factor
- LBS learners join an upgrading program to improve their skills for more schooling over any other reason
- LBS & ESL learners feel they are moving toward their goals
- LBS learners value transportation supports more than ESL learners
- ESL learners value childcare supports more than LBS learners
- LBS learners value free resources & computer/internet access more than ESL learners
- ESL learners are less interested in taking computer classes than LBS learners

- ESL learners would prefer more class hours per week, smaller classes and more time with their teachers
- LBS learners feel they get enough time with their teachers but would prefer a more flexible schedule
- LBS learners want to register in a program by meeting with a person
- ESL learners would prefer to register online or over the phone
- LBS learners prefer programs with continuous intake
- LBS learners have clear impressions of what they need from a program location
- ESL learners are not interested in program location as long as there is adequate and free parking
- LBS learners are more apt to take self-directed classes
- Both ESL and LBS learners want greater inclusion of real-life documents in their programming
- LBS learners are more apt to want recognition of their achievements
- If ESL learners want recognition, it is likely to take the form of formal certification

Recommendations

- Based on the results of the survey and the survey process, the following recommendations have been made.
- Better program promotion and advertising directly to learners and to learner advocates or support programs
- Lower student-to-teacher ratio within programs
- Improve “next steps” processes to include more personalized contact during transitions
- Clarification to learners of financial supports eligibility and availability prior to program intake and during participation in program
- Develop more opportunity for learners to give feedback to programs
- Further needs analysis of non-learners
- Further needs analysis of evening program participants
- Further needs analysis of Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs
- Further needs analysis of Ministry of Education funded program participants: specifically adult secondary or continuing education programs.

What learners are saying about ESL & LBS programs in Waterloo-Wellington

"I wish I had known about it sooner.
It would have changed my life."

"The relationship with your teacher is the most important factor:
"The experience of the teacher is the second most important factor"

Discretion and compassion are the most important things.

"One call changed my life"

"I felt equal to all the other students"

"I get training for living in Canada; not just English"

"What makes it work is the people. Without them you'll be stuck they take the time to understand where you came from to get you where you need to be.
There's no judgement."

"I like teachers that have respect and spend time with you to help you, and have understanding."

"The teachers help. They do their job (with love) that makes me learn better. The one on one is what I needed."

"I'm not the only person that hasn't been in school in years and re-attending"

"The program is designed for you. It only focuses on your needs."

"I actually "LOVE" the fact that the instructors are so passionate about creating an environment of focus and determination to learn skills in order to obtain employment or furthering your education."

I like the "attitude & respect, kindness & respecting boundaries"

"You need the perfect teachers. (Teachers) who have the love to teach, know how to deal with different cultures, know how hard it is to learn a different language from scratch (no English background at all) A teacher who will make you feel good in class and gives you the positive outlook on your own future. Someone who doesn't let you say the word "quit".

Introduction

In 2010, the Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 1 sought to explore and report on the process of enhancing learner pathways between LBS, ESL & LINC programs in order to assist adults to reach their employment and training goals in an efficient manner. This was achieved by: the striking of an Advisory Committee, conducting research, and the creation of a Working Committee of agency representatives to identify current pathways, transition points, gaps and needs and recommendations. The information was disseminated to Employment Ontario agencies and other interested community agencies via two “Sharing the Results” presentations.

Based on the success of Phase 1 and the resulting recommendations, Phase 2 was piloted in five locations across Ontario including: Adult Basic Education Association (ABEA), Literacy Link South Central (LLSC), Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR), Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network (PHDALN), and Project READ Literacy Network (PRLN). The goal of the Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 2 was to build on Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 1 results by engaging in the transfer of knowledge to share and build the coordination capacity of programs. As part of Phase 2, a survey was conducted of ESL and LBS learners as well as individuals who were not engaged in ESL or LBS classes to gather their perspectives of programming.

In Phase 1, information on program design was gathered from practitioners and administrators. In Phase 2, this survey sought to provide information on program design from a learner perspective that could be compared to practitioner and administrator perceptions from Phase 1. Non-learners were interviewed in order to get an understanding of why prospective learners are not accessing programs. For the purposes of this survey, program design was defined as elements or factors in programs that “work” for the learner; and services or supports that attract or retain learners. The survey elicited opinions on where programs could or should make changes to benefit learners and what elements should remain. The survey was not an evaluation of specific program quality or program delivery.

In addition, the results of the survey support achievement of Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 project outcomes.

The following measurable outcomes were identified for this project:

1. Increased understanding among the participating agencies that deliver programs funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU), the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) and the Ministry of Education (EDU) regarding literacy and language program delivery.

The survey contributes to this outcome by clarifying learner values and priorities in program delivery in MTCU and MCI programs.

2. Enhanced knowledge among educators and workers regarding learner pathways and transition points among and between programs.

The survey contributes to this outcome by providing information on what learners and non-learners need and want at various transition points.

3. Increased awareness and trust among educators about each program in order to promote referrals.

The survey contributes to this outcome by communicating the learner perspective of the program environment and available supports in order to facilitate better learner/program fit.

4. Increased knowledge among regional networks regarding coordination between literacy and language programs.

The survey contributes to this outcome by explaining what learners want and expect from the communication and coordination between programs.

Survey Scope

It was established at the outset of the survey process that the scope of the survey would be limited to participants in LBS and ESL programs in urban and rural Waterloo Region and Wellington County. The Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 Project includes LINC programs and Adult Secondary School programs but data from participants in these programs was not collected in this survey. The survey was made available as an online tool to all Employment Ontario partners participating in this project but face-to-face surveys were only conducted at Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Areas in Cambridge and Kitchener. The survey was conducted from June 6, 2011 to October 5, 2011 and collation and analysis of data took place from October 6 to November 1, 2011.

Survey Methodology & Tools

The Enhancing Pathways Phase 2 survey was originally designed as a single online survey tool that could be accessed online by the participant or printed to be used in paper format in one-to-one interviews or very small focus groups of two to five individuals. Participants filled in the paper version with assistance from the survey consultant and additional notes were captured by the survey consultant to be incorporated into the survey report. The survey process started on May 30, 2011 and the first face-to-face interviews took place on June 6, 2011. Initially, the survey was to conclude on August 31, 2011 but, in an effort to increase the number of participants from ESL programs, the timeline was extended and the last interviews took place on October 5, 2011.

Special considerations were made when designing the survey tools so they would be accessible to participants who struggle with language and literacy skills. The tools were reviewed by a clear language specialist prior to dissemination. Subsequent changes to the survey tools were also guided by clear language principles. Because of the varying levels of language or literacy skill among the respondents, some participants asked for help from the survey consultant in order to complete the survey. In addition, if respondents were clearly struggling to complete the survey, the survey consultant guided completion by providing help with open-ended questions. This assistance took the form of: acting as a scribe, providing help with spelling and

asking the learner to clarify their responses verbally before writing them down. At no time did the survey consultant translate the information or coach the respondents to answer in a particular way.

Within the first month of the survey process, difficulties arose in accessing certain programs, classrooms and individuals. Recruiting one-to-one interviews and classroom focus groups in ESL programs proved difficult. After four classroom visits to promote the survey in Wellington County only four individuals had been surveyed. From a list of eight prospective ESL focus group participants in Kitchener, only two could be contacted. E-mails to Employment Ontario (EO) partners did not garner any non-learner participants for one-to-one surveys or focus groups so on-site canvassing was discussed as an option. As a result, the survey was modified into two additional versions for participant convenience (faster/shorter survey) and to facilitate larger focus groups. Additional promotion to ESL programs and EO partners was initiated.

Each survey version collected the same demographic information: age, sex, first language, duration of Canadian residence, source of income and location of residence. The remaining questions asked learners to identify: program location, reason they joined a program, valued program supports, and how they found out about the program. Additional questions asked participants to rate their satisfaction with: class size, contact hours, class availability, resources and delivery methods. The last section of the survey asked learners how they would build a perfect program for themselves if they had control of program design. Learners were given an opportunity to choose from a list of design elements but were also asked to contribute their own ideas for the creation of a “perfect program”.

Each version of the survey is discussed in detail below.

Survey Version 1. 34 Respondents online (Appendix 1)

75 Respondents on paper (Appendix 2)

This survey was the original survey offered online and used in printed format for one-to-one and very small, facilitated focus groups of learners in ESL and LBS programs. Logic was built into the survey to omit non-relevant questions based on previous answers. Ten non-learners completed this survey online. Two ESL learners completed this survey as a one-to-one phone interview. More than 15 individuals completed this survey in face-to-face interviews with the survey consultant. One class of six LBS learners individually completed the online survey in their LBS computer class. This particular focus group was facilitated by the survey consultant with the use of the program’s Smart Board. Focus groups at school board programs used this version of the survey and participants wrote their own answers with help with phrasing or spelling from the survey consultant. Individuals from programs logged onto the online survey from program sites or from home and completed this survey independently. The demographic information and feedback from this version of the survey has been correlated to give further detail on which elements of program design are valued by specific groups of individuals.

Survey Version 2. 50 Respondents (Appendix 3)

This survey was designed for LBS & ESL large focus groups of more than 12 participants. The survey took approximately 45 minutes for all 12 participants to complete rather than one hour for each participant. Demographic questions were given in paper format to respect the privacy of the participants and these responses were entered manually into the online survey tool for statistical analysis. Questions on program design were asked verbally and a tally of responses was taken by the survey consultant. Additional comments were recorded to reflect the whole group and were entered into a spreadsheet manually. Correlation of demographic information (questions 1-7) and feedback from questions 8-52 are not possible in this group.

Survey Version 3. 9 Respondents (Appendix 4)

This survey version was designed to be used with participants not currently registered in any training programs and was delivered at both Cambridge and Kitchener sites of the Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Area. The participants were referred to during the survey as "non-learners". Non-learners were selected only if they had never participated in any programming and as such, a large portion of the survey was deemed inappropriate for these participants.

It was determined that a long survey, even more than five or ten minutes, would not be feasible for this group. These individuals were being recruited at Employment Resource Areas where they had time limits on computer use and were focused on job-search tasks. Initial consultation with these individuals proved difficult when they were asked to commit to a one-hour interview or focus group. Even when Survey Version 3 was used, more than half the individuals approached said they did not have time for or were not interested in a ten-minute conversation. As such, only demographic information and questions on "Designing Your Perfect Program" were asked. The information was manually entered into the online tool for statistical analysis and was partially correlated to feedback.

Survey respondents were recruited by e-mail, by word of mouth and by posted flyers. Program managers and instructors were asked to circulate and post flyers to encourage learners to call or e-mail the survey consultants to arrange a one-to-one interview or register for a focus group. (Appendix 5)

As an incentive for participation, participants were entered into a draw for a \$50.00, \$30.00 and \$20.00 shopping mall gift card. All interviewees and focus group participants received a thank you gift (a 2GB Project READ USB storage drive, a \$5.00 Tim Horton's gift card or a Project READ book bag).

Survey Results

In total, 160 people completed the Enhancing Pathways survey. 34 people responded to the online survey, 51 people took part in focus groups and 75 people completed a paper copy of the survey. Some respondents who completed the survey by paper copy had help from the survey consultant writing additional comments when answering

survey questions. These individuals were from lower level LBS or ESL programs and had difficulty with spelling, word choice or summarizing their thoughts. The survey sought to gain knowledge about program design by surveying learners in Literacy and Basic Skills programs, learners in English as a Second language programs and non-learners: people not currently registered in any programs. Survey response totals from each of the above groups are as follows: 91 respondents were registered in LBS programs, 50 respondents were currently registered in ESL programs and 19 were not registered in any program at the time of the survey. All respondents lived in the Waterloo Region or Wellington County.

The primary results obtained from the overall survey data, including ESL, LBS and non-learner participants, are as follows:

(Please note: respondents may not have answered all questions and may have given multiple answers to some questions, therefore, percentages will not add up to 100%)

- 31.9% (51) of respondents were male and 68.1% (109) were female
- The largest group the learners (48 or 30.0%) were between the ages of 25 to 34. There were 74 learners (46%) between the ages of 35 and 54.
- 34% (55) of respondents reported that their source of income was Ontario Works. 25%(40) reported being supported by their spouses. Only 1.9% (3) were on Employment Insurance.
- 80% (128) of respondents live in Urban Waterloo. An additional 10% (16) live in Urban Wellington County
- 52.5%(84) of respondents reported that English was their first language and 45%(72) reported that English was a second language for them. Of those who reported English as a second language 10%(16) reported Spanish as their first language and 7%(11) Chinese languages
- 46%(74) of respondents reported always living in Canada, 28.7%(46) reported living in Canada under 5 years and 18.1%(29) report living in Canada for more than 10 years.
- 56.3%(91) of respondents were attending LBS programs, 31.3% (50) were attending ESL programs and 11.9% (19) were not attending any program at the time of the survey.
- 33%(52) of all respondents were taking classes through a school board program, 14%(22) were taking classes through a community agency and 10% (15) through a local college.
- 34.4%(55) of respondents in programs reported that they were "not sure of level" of instruction they were receiving.
- The majority of respondents reported finding out about the program they were taking through either "other agencies" 31.3% (50) or through "friends/neighbours" 20% (32).
- 45% (72) of respondents reported joining the program to prepare for "more school", 41% (66) for more independence, 36%(57) for work and 27%(43) for a

certificate or diploma.

- 65% (104) report that it was easy to sign up for the program and 9.4% (15) reported some difficulty
- 76.9% (123) of respondents feel that the activities they work on in class keep them moving toward their goal
- Respondents report that the following supports make it easier for them to attend the program: 27%(43) transportation support, 24.4%(39) free parking, 27.5% (44) free resources, 21.9%(35) computer access and 19.4%(31) internet access
- 45%(72) report the location of their current program as "great" or "good" while 26.9%(43) rate it as "okay". Only 2%(3) rate the location as "poor" or "bad"
- 52%(83) rate the time of day that their program runs as either "great" or "good" with 17%(27) rating it as "okay" and 2.6%(4) rating it as "poor" or "bad"
- 60.7%(97) rate the days of the week they attend as "great" or "good" while 21.9%(35) report the days being "okay"
- 43.7%(70) report the number of hours they can attend the program as "great" or "good". 13.1%(21) state the number of hours are "okay" and 5.7%(9) state the number of hours are "poor" or "bad"
- 29.4%(47) rate the amount of time they spend with their teacher as "great" or "good", 23.8%(38) report that it is "okay" and 26.9%(43) rate the amount of time as "poor" or "bad"
- 58.2%(93) rate the relevance of class resources as "good" or "great", 10% rate it as "okay" and 4.4%(7) rate their class resources as "poor" or "bad"
- Of respondents 43.8%(70) report being in a "large group" or "regular class", 18%(29) in small groups and 4.4%(7) report being in one-to-one tutoring
- When rating their class size, 47.5% (76) reported that their class had the "perfect number of people" in it for them. 18.1% (29) reported that there were "too many" people in their class and 5.7% (9) reported "not enough" people in their class

When asked to design their own "perfect program" respondents answered with the following:

1. To join a program, 44.4%(71) report wanting the program to "start any time", 36.9%(59) want to be able to book an appointment to start a program, 26.9%(43) would prefer that it started on specific days, 18.1% (29) would prefer to join a program by phoning to register while 16.3% (26) would prefer to register by just going into the program
2. Regarding the location of the program, 41.3%(66) want the program to be in the city centre, 27.5%(44) want the program to be close to home, 23.1%(37) want it to be located on a bus route, 16.3%(26) want it to be in a small office building, 16.3%(26) would rather it was located in a large institution and 15%(24) want their perfect program to be located in a community centre.

3. 45%(72) of respondents answered that they would like to attend classes all year, 40.6%(65) want morning classes, 38.1%(61) want full-time day classes and 29.4%(47) want afternoon classes. In addition, 33.1%(53) want to study at home with books, 26.3%(42) want to study at home with a computer, 26.3%(42) would like a program that offers drop-in help.
4. When discussing the amount of hours respondents want to attend their perfect program, 23.1%(37) reported that they want to attend class 20 to 24 hours per week, 18.1%(29) reported that they would like to attend 25 to 30 hours per week, 13.8%(22) want to attend 10 to 14 hours per week, 11.9%(19) want to attend 15 to 19 hours per week, 11.3%(18) want to attend 5 to 9 hours per week, only 6.3% reported wanting less than 5 hours a week in class and only 2.5%(4) want more than 30 hours per week.
5. When discussing the type of program delivery respondents want in their perfect program 32.5%(52) stated they want one-to-one tutoring, 47.5%(76) want small group classes, 18.8%(30) want larger group classes and only 8.1%(13) report wanting regular classes. 25.6%(41) want self-directed learning, 38.8%(62) want teacher delivered learning, 18.8%(30) want group activities included, 39.4%(63) want tutoring available and report wanting 31.3%(50) want homework.
6. When choosing subjects to upgrade in their perfect program 58.8%(94) want to improve their reading skills, 65%(104) want to improve their writing skills, 55.6%(89) want to improve their math, 36.3%(58) want to improve their document use skills, 49.4%(79) want to improve their speaking skills, 48.8%(78) want to improve their listening skills, 65%(104) want to improve grammar skills, 57.5%(92) want to improve their pronunciation, 50%(80) want to improve their computer skills, 41.9%(67) want to improve their problem solving and thinking skills, 35.6%(57) want to improve their teamwork skills, 38.1%(61) want to understand how they learn best and 44.4%(71) want to improve their job search skills.

Additional Findings

It is important to note that there are several similarities between respondents regardless of which programs they are attending.

ESL learners and LBS learners report the same relative experiences and desires when asked the following questions:

How easy was it to sign up for the program?

78%(39) ESL learners and 71.4%(65) LBS learners reported that it was easy to sign up for the program

- What does the program offer that makes it easier to attend?
Free parking: 30%(15) ESL learners and 26.4%(24) LBS learners; on-site

childcare: 8%(4) ESL learners and 0%(0) LBS learners; and babysitting money: 4%(2) ESL learners and 1.1%(1) LBS learners

- Rate your program location: "good" 40%(20) ESL learners and 45.1%(41)LBS learners
- Rate the times the program is offered: "good" or "great" 54%(27) ESL learners and 51.6%(56) LBS learners
- Rate the days of the week the program is offered: "good" or "great" 74%(37) ESL learners and 66%(60)LBS learners

Both ESL and LBS learners equally value the following aspects of program design:

- Both groups of learners want to join a program by starting on specific days 24%(12)ESL and 26.4%(24)LBS and sign up by phone 12%(6)ESL and 14.3%(13)LBS
- Both groups want to attend a program weekdays (all day) 42%(21)ESL and 38.5%(35)LBS, weekday mornings 44%(22)ESL and 39.6%(36)LBS, all year round 42%(21)ESL and 53.8%(49)LBS and to study at home on-line 18%(9)ESL and 22%(20)LBS
- Both want upgrading in: speaking 56%(28)ESL and 51.6%(47) LBS, listening 56%(28)ESL and 49.5%(45) LBS and pronunciation 56%(28)ESL and 64.8%(59) LBS
- 46%(23) ESL learners and 44%(40)LBS learners want a program that offers learning activities using real life documents

Onsite counselling supports were seen as highly beneficial by all groups, regardless whether it was for personal (49.6% LBS & 22.0% ESL), academic (57.1% LBS & 42.0% ESL) or career (70.3%LBS & 46.0% ESL) purposes. When asked for suggestions as to how that could be achieved, both ESL and LBS learners thought that even if the services were available one day per week by appointment, they would access the services.

It is also crucial to note that there are some striking differences between the needs of ESL and LBS learners. When joining programs, ESL learners cited "independence" as one of their reasons nearly twice as often as LBS learners. (64.0% compared with 37.4%) Interestingly, the survey data shows that in community-based LBS programs, those which provide LBS level 1 & 2 programming, the percentage of LBS learners with an independence goal is much closer to the ESL numbers (66.7%)

When discussing their progress toward their goal, almost all LBS and ESL learners felt they were moving toward their goals but 82.4% of LBS learners felt they were always doing so, as opposed to only 28.0% of ESL learners feeling that way. When asked why they felt this way, ESL learners pointed to two factors that impacted this progress: large class size and blended classes with more than one level. When questioned further, ESL learner were unanimous in their view that their answer would change to "always moving toward my goal" if class sizes were smaller and more

specific to their CLB level.

ESL and LBS learners described their skill levels differently. ESL learners were very aware of their CLB levels(96.0%), no doubt, in part because their classes are labelled by CLB level. Of the LBS learners who were surveyed however, 33.1% did not know their LBS level. Others who said they knew their level often quoted grade level, book number or level or other measurement. It appears that, in conversation with the instructors and/or program managers in LBS programs, there is an unofficial practice of not using LBS levels or using the term "literacy" when speaking with learners. This decision is made consciously by practitioners to limit stigma and improve the confidence of the learner. Other measures of success are used in each program and the learners can usually describe and quantify their success despite not using Literacy and Basic Skills terminology or language.

ESL learners and LBS learners cited different available resources provided by their programs. LBS learners cited more access to transport supports (39.6% v.14.0% for ESL) (bus tickets, bus passes etc...), free stationary resources (40.7% v. 14.0% for ESL) and computer and internet access (37. 4% & 33.0% v. 2. 0% & 2.0% for ESL). Whether these supports are available or whether there is a distinct difference in support eligibility has not been determined by this survey. Learners from both programs were often unclear as to why some individuals (whether in the same program or another program) were getting supports that they were not. Other learners cited choosing one program over another because childcare was available in one program but not another.

74.4% of LBS learners are generally happy with the amount of time they are able to spend working with their instructor with 37.4% rating great. Whereas 64.0% of ESL learners rated the amount of time they could spend with their teachers as either poor or bad. When asked for further details, the ESL learners cited class size as the main factor. 54.0% of ESL learners cited being in a class of 16 or more learners and 42.0% cited attending classes of 9-15. In contrast, LBS learners were more apt to be part of either 1-to-1 tutoring (7.7%) or small groups (31.9%). The 23.1% of LBS learners in larger groups of 9-15 cited that their numbers varied drastically depending on class attendance and they often had less than nine individuals in class.

When asked for their impressions of their day-to-day class size, 48.0% of ESL learners said there were too many learners in the class. 71.4% of LBS learners felt their classes had "the perfect number of learners". 22.0% of ESL learners felt their classes were the perfect size. It is impossible to tell from these survey tools whether this 22.0% represents the ESL learners in the blended classes who are at the higher CLB level.

When asked how they would like to register for a program, there were significant differences between ESL and LBS learners. ESL learners did not want to come into a program, meet with staff or book an appointment. Only 6.0% of ESL learners approved of this method as opposed to 73.6% of LBS learners who would prefer to either book an appointment or go into the program to register.

When asked what their preferred mode of registration would be, 26.0% of ESL learners said they would like to register online. Many (approximately 50%) said they would appreciate being able to try one ESL class before they register to make sure that they "liked it" or felt it was appropriate for them.

LBS learners had a lot to say about the location of their programs. 56.0% wanted programs to run in a down-town area, and 33.0% wanted the program to be conveniently on a bus route. Views were divide equally among LBS learners as to the type of environment the program would be in with 20.9% opting for a community centre, 24.2% for a large, multi-program institution and 24.2% would prefer a smaller space that was more "office-like". Few ESL learners even answered this question. When pushed for more information, they cited that they really didn't care where the building was located. They just wanted to make sure there was adequate and free parking. Of those that did answer the question, only 10.0% thought the program should be on a bus route.

When looking at learners' preferences as to program schedules, LBS learners were more in favour of evening classes (24.2% v. 4.0% in ESL) and making their own schedule (30.8% v. 6.0% in ESL). ESL learners showed particular preference for day classes and had no preference as to mornings or afternoons but would prefer to be in class 20-24 hours per week (52.0%). LBS learners preferred morning over afternoon classes by over 17% and were looking for a large range in class availability and scheduling. It is important to note that focus groups for all classes were held during the daytime. It is not clear how many surveyed individuals are currently attending evening classes. The number is likely very small.

When asked to prioritize the type of program delivery they preferred, both ESL and LBS learners said they were looking for variety but their views differed when it came to "self-directed" learning. 37.4% of LBS learners would like a program to offer self-directed learning as one of many delivery methods but only 4.0% of ESL learners were interested in self-directed learning. There was a slight inverse correlation between ESL & LBS views on teacher delivered classes and tutoring. 48.0% of ESL learners want teacher delivered classes and 34.0% want tutoring while 36.3% of LBS learners want teacher delivered classes and 47.3% want tutoring.

LBS learners and ESL learners are looking equally for instruction in language areas but LBS learners appear to have a greater desire for grammar instruction (78.0% v. 54.0%) It is not clear whether this reflects greater need in the individual or that learners are expressing a greater need compared to the amount of grammar instruction that they currently get: (i.e. do ESL classes currently teach more grammar?) There is a striking difference in the reported need for computer instruction. 70.3% of LBS learners are looking for not only access to computers in the classroom but are also looking for training and upgrading of their computer skills. This compares to only 16.0% of ESL learners looking for computer classes. When asked why they did not see computer classes as a priority, most of the ESL learners cited that they were comfortable with the computer skills and many had taken formal computer classes prior to their immigration to Canada.

47.0%-62.6% of LBS learners cited wanting to improve other skill areas (problem solving, teamwork, self-assessment and job-search) while only 10.0-28.0% of ESL learner would like to focus on these areas. When asked to clarify their views, ESL learners said that is was not that they didn't see these areas of improvement as important, they just saw their language acquisition as being a much greater priority "for now".

When discussing the types of resources to be used in classrooms, there was a very clear difference between ESL and LBS learners. Not only were ESL learners more approving of a small fee (up to \$30.00 per year) for photocopying, they were also less vocal about the types of resources they would like to see in the classroom. LBS learners said that resources should remain free and they would like to see a broad array of resources from very traditional textbooks and workbooks to greater use of non-traditional media like videos, internet & computer software. LBS learners were more likely to embrace use of technology to help with reading, writing and learning challenges (approximately 20% v. approximately 3% in ESL)

When asked what supports should be included in a "perfect" program, LBS learners were more likely than ESL learners to want transport supports (65.9% v. 10.0% in ESL), free materials (61.5% v. 14.0% in ESL) and personal & career counselling (49.5% and 70.3% v. 22.0% and 46.0%) in LBS ESL respectively.

When capturing an image of what success meant and how to measure that success, ESL learners and LBS learners are looking for the same thing: recognition of their skills and hard work. LBS learners are more apt to want a certificate (56.0% v. 34.0% in ESL) and a portfolio of their best work (34.1% v. 0.0% in ESL) It is not clear whether ESL learners are introduced to portfolios in their programs. ESL learners often cited wanting certification or documentation that employers would recognize as opposed to a certificate of completion that had no meaning beyond the program.

Meta-Evaluation

There are elements that made surveying learners and non-learners a challenge for the purposes of this project. Some of these elements resulted in disproportionate representation of certain jurisdictions, programs or demographic groups. Other elements resulted in changes to the surveys which weakened the ability to correlate results with demographic information. These reasons are outlined below.

Survey Timing

The survey project was approved and begun on May 16, 2011. It took over a month to define survey parameters, design the survey, and make initial contact with LBS & ESL programs. Since some programs were closing for the summer in mid-June, those programs' participants were surveyed first in the first two weeks of June. Programs that run year-round were to be surveyed later in the summer. It was unknown to the survey consultants that Conestoga College's Guelph campus would be closed during

the summer. As a result, their learners were not given the opportunity to participate in this survey. Additionally, night classes in Waterloo Region were not represented in this survey as the night classes started summer holidays earlier than day classes.

Accessing non-learners at employment resource centres proved impossible during the summer as originally planned. Getting authorization to survey on Region of Waterloo premises was not possible till the beginning of September, due to staff vacations. Request for permission to survey on Wellington County property was not acknowledged by Wellington County representatives. As a result the numbers of non-learners surveyed is both low, and only represents Waterloo Region.

In addition to the summer closures and vacations, an additional complicating factor of timing involved the change in management of the ESL program in Kitchener in late June. Communication was interrupted and the surveying the learners could only be accommodated in a limited way. As a result, the ESL numbers in Kitchener were very low (2). Additional contact was made with the program in September and the survey project was extended to accommodate 2 ESL class focus groups.

Access to participants

At the outset of the survey process, e-mails were sent by Project READ's Executive Network Director to LBS and ESL program managers, EO partner administrators and other stakeholders. This e-mail outlined the purpose of the survey and made it clear that; this process was not to evaluate program delivery, teachers or instructors, no additional workload would be put on teachers or instructors, and the format of the survey could be flexible to suit each individual class. The e-mail introduced the two survey consultants to ESL, LBS and EO administrators with the intent that all further communication be with the survey consultants.

Accessing LBS classes did not pose any issue in Waterloo Region. This may be, in part, because both survey consultants were known to the program managers and staff of the LBS programs. As such, there was a level of understanding already in place with these agencies. It was more difficult getting access to Wellington LBS classes as program management had some concerns that required consultation with Project READ's Executive Network Director. Once these concerns were addressed, one focus group/ class visit was arranged.

Accessing ESL learners proved to be more challenging. As stated previously, there were management changes in Kitchener which may have resulted in this survey not being a priority for the program. Initially, no access was given to the classrooms nor did teachers introduce the survey to the ESL learners. The survey consultant was responsible for recruiting ESL learners while they were on their break between classes. A list of 8 prospective learners was created, 2 were contacted for interview. The learners on the list either did not have voice mail, did not pick up their phone or did not understand spoken English well enough to arrange a meeting for an interview.

Only one telephone interview and one online survey were completed as a result of this recruitment process.

In order to improve the process, when approaching ESL programs in Wellington it was made clear that a 10 minute visit in the classroom would be required to promote the survey. Learners would be able to meet privately with the survey consultant the same day or one week later at the school during their break. It is not clear whether program management, staff or teachers promoted the survey to the learners and encouraged them to participate. This process resulted in 4 surveys being completed.

In September, ESL programs in Kitchener were contacted again in an effort to improve the representation of ESL learners in the survey. The prior efforts were described and the survey consultants petitioned for a radical change to the ESL surveying protocol. ESL managers approached their staff and it was agreed that the survey consultant could visit 2 ESL classes in Kitchener. Initially, it was to only be for 10 to 20 minutes to collect as much information as possible but in discussion with the teachers and the learners, the survey consultant was permitted to stay for an hour or more in each class. As a result of these two focus groups, 39 surveys were completed and the survey consultant is now able to make valid comparisons between program participants and their needs. When surveying any learner, it is important to gain the buy-in of program management but perhaps more importantly it is crucial to be able to work with teachers who have that all-important relationship with the learners. Without the teacher as an intermediary, it is very difficult to engage the ESL learner in the process.

When accessing non-learners for the purpose of this survey, the links to the online survey were forwarded to Enhancing Pathways committee members and EO partner agencies. It is not clear how or if this information was disseminated to their clients. When accessing non-learners at the Region of Waterloo Employment Resource Centres, clients were hesitant to participate as they were preoccupied with other tasks and had time-limits for computer use. The survey was adapted to take no more than 10 minutes for these individuals but some chose not to participate in the survey. Future surveying of these individuals should be considered and alternate recruitment tactics should be employed. Consultation with EO Partner staff would be highly recommended to improve participant numbers.

Changes to survey format

Originally designed as an interview survey or online/paper format questionnaire, the survey was intended to provide detailed information that could be correlated several different ways. As access to certain groups became more problematic, the survey was altered. Large focus groups in ESL and college sector LBS programs completed only the first 7 questions as individual participants. The remaining questions were answered as a group and their responses were tallied. As a result, some data correlation (source of income: supports valued or age of respondent: choice of resources) is not

possible and details of the needs of specific demographic groups is limited in the ESL population and in the LBS level 4/5 population.

The initial intent of the survey was to collect comparisons on program design from those individuals who had attended more than one program. Since the surveys were becoming more large-format focus groups of 8-20 individuals, in the interest of time the questions comparing present and previous program experiences were dropped. A few individuals who participated online or in one-to-one interviews answered those questions but the responses were not particularly informative. More work in this area could be of benefit.

Learners have diverse needs regardless of whether they are in LBS or ESL classes. They were often encouraged throughout the survey to check multiple boxes to indicate which resources or supports they valued. What is not clear from the way the survey was written is how much they valued one element over another. ESL learners were more likely to choose a few options. LBS learners were more likely to choose more or all options. Because the ESL survey results cannot be correlated in the same way as the LBS results, it is not clear if these findings represent socio-economic trends or whether they are indicative some other factor. In future surveys, learners should be asked the question twice. 1. Which resources are important? (check as many options as you like). 2. Prioritize your top 3 choices.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that arise as a result of this survey that can directly effect change in program design. Some may be easier to implement than others as funding and ministry mandates may conflict or present as significant barriers to program delivery changes.

The following elements are discussed in detail below.

- Advertising
- Lower student-to-teacher ratio
- Better “next steps” transitions
- Clarity of available financial supports
- More opportunity for learners to give feedback
- Further information gathering

Advertising

There is considerable evidence from the survey that speaks to a weakness in the advertising of LBS programs. ESL learners tend to know what they want and how to access it but many LBS learners reported that they, their caseworkers or advocates either did not know specific programs existed or did not understand how to access the program that was the “best fit”. When learners cited an “easy entrance” to a program, they also cited that they had been referred by another program or individual. Usually,

the referring agency was Project READ Literacy Network, an LBS agency or an EO partner like Northern Lights. There were conflicting reports about the consistency of Ontario Works referrals and the knowledge of LBS programs by caseworkers. It is crucial that continued efforts be placed on advertising, networking, and dissemination of current program offerings as well maintaining the excellent referral processes that have already helped learners. Further dissemination of program information and referral processes should be considered, particularly to Ontario Works. Learners recommended that learner You-Tube testimonials be used as well as promotion of adult LBS programming through Kindergarten or primary schools.

Lower student-to-teacher ratio

While class numbers in both ESL & LBS programs are linked to funding and ministry guidelines, there is a clear demand for a lower student-to-instructor ratio in the classroom. When this issue was broached in ESL and LBS classes, learners understood that money was an issue and offered up various options that included: high-school volunteer tutors, mentorships and drop-in options for one-to-one extra help. Learners in ESL classes were more apt to discuss the option of peer mentorships and went as far as to describe a situation they called "ESL Big Brother". The ESL group proposed mentors or "Big Brothers/Sisters" from the community who would engage with the ESL learners to converse in English, answer questions on cultural and language differences, and assist with "non-professional" cultural immersion. LBS learners were hesitant when discussing peer mentorship and cited privacy and embarrassment as reasons to keep their literacy skills to themselves and their teachers.

Better "next steps" transitions

Learners in both ESL & LBS described feeling lost at the end of their programming. The confidence they have built during their classes is very fragile and easily undermined during change. Both groups prioritized better "next-step" processes that focused a personal involvement with the next step program. Learners want the opportunity to meet with a program representative or visit the site of the next program. Learners want virtual tours of the facility and learner testimonials rather than by program staff.

Clarity of available financial supports

Learners have varied sources and levels of income. Their ability to attend and commit to their programs is directly affected by their finances. Better clarity regarding supports is required so as to limit the perceived inequality between programs and individuals in those programs who are receiving supports. Many learners cited that they had no idea that various supports were available. One group of learners suggested: "a large prominent sign that says ~Ask me about... with a list of available supports".

Further information gathering

Of the 141 learners in LBS & ESL classrooms, this was the first survey they had completed that asked detailed questions about program design. Many learners reported that this was the first opportunity to give feedback of any description about their program. Learners were keen to answer questions and give their opinions and spoke candidly about the pros and cons of their programs. Learners were very appreciative of the opportunity and while large surveys like this one can only be repeated periodically, it would be helpful if smaller surveys could be disseminated and used internally by programs and also collated with other programs over a period of months.

There are several recommendations that arise from this survey process that can effect change within the Enhancing Pathways Project Phase 2, promote discussion for further phases of this project or inform other projects that seek to access diverse populations in varied programs.

- Promote program buy-in
- Include additional survey questions
- Expand the scope of the survey

These recommendations are discussed below:

Promote program buy-in

When surveying learners, it is of utmost importance that not only do program managers buy into the process but that instructors do too. ESL and LBS learners, by their own admission, are very influenced by their instructors. If collecting data is seen as an intrusion or of low importance by the teacher, the learners will be less apt to participate. When accessing ESL learners, it is crucial that the survey be completed during class time. Trying to encourage learners to participate in after-hours focus groups or phone interviews garners very few or no participants. Despite taking an hour of their class time, ESL learners were keen to participate and many reported that they viewed the discussion process as part of their speaking and listening training.

Include additional survey questions

There was information not adequately gathered in this survey. Due to the timing of the survey, some groups are underrepresented by the data. Evening and weekend classes were not surveyed. Wellington County college sector programs and non-learners were not accessed due to either summer program closures or lack of contact from Wellington County staff to authorize surveying on county premises. Further needs assessment of non-learners in Waterloo-Wellington should be performed. Because there are many highly trained, unemployed individuals accessing employment resource centres, the survey tool should include questions on level of education in order to exclude those individuals who are not eligible for LBS or ESL programs.

Expand the scope of the survey

Other groups that were not included in the scope of this survey were students in Ministry of Education funded secondary credit classes and language learners in Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs. The survey should be repeated to focus on these individuals.

It is recommended that the information in the survey be used by members of the Enhancing Pathways Working Committee to identify areas for further discussion. The information can also be within programs to better assist clients and learners who are transitioning to other programs. Elements of program design that have worked well for one program's learners can be used as a model for change within other programs or as a springboard for further program design and development.