

the CESBA

Updater

Fall 2011

FEATURING:

**Discussing the New OALCF With Principals:
Navigating the Conversation**

OALCF Developments and Training Highlights

Communicating Effectively With TCU



Updater

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The Updater is produced twice a year by the CESBA LBS Committee. We welcome your ideas and submissions on topics of interest to LBS program managers and practitioners.

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On the cover

Charlotte Parliament, Literacy and Essential Skills Program Coordinator for the Simcoe County District School Board and Chair of the CESBA LBS Steering Committee

Charlotte is in her sixth year with the LBS program, but has been involved in adult literacy for 10 years. In her role as program coordinator at the Simcoe County District School Board she oversees three sites with eight classes and an additional class in partnership with the Barrie Literacy Council. The LES classrooms are co-located in the board's Learning Centres with adult credit classes, the Personal Support Worker program, English as a Second Language program, Business Pro classes and various other adult learning programs offered by the SCDSB. This co-location provides many opportunities for LBS learners, specifically the opportunity for seamless transition to the Secondary School Credit program. Approximately 85% of the board's LES learners have a 'next step' goal of Secondary School Credit, making this co-location especially beneficial. In partnership with the Barrie Literacy Council a class is also offered at the Central North Correctional Centre providing unique programming opportunities and wrap-around service.

Due to the geographic locations of the SCDSB sites, Charlotte works with three regional networks. She had a great head start developing the update on network training activities related to the OALCF. Charlotte is also a director with the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board and the Vice Chair for the Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network.

In her role as chair of the LBS Steering Committee she always looks forward to hearing from you.

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Championing the OALCF

The notion of “championing” something, an idea, cause or movement is not new but it has recently seen a resurgence of use in educational circles. We hear frequently of those who are advocating for a particular program or policy seeking an advocate or mentor with the means to promote their cause. In CESBA we identify school board superintendents who have a particular affinity for and support adult and continuing education programs, and refer to them as “A&CE SO Champions”. They have proved to be an excellent source of expertise for the organization allowing us to better inform policy and program development.

So it was with humility that I recently discovered that I had been described as “championing the OALCF” at a meeting of my colleagues. I am certainly not denying the descriptor for I truly believe, and have proclaimed publically, that the OALCF is a pathway to improving adult literacy provision in Ontario. I am a believer that the way to strengthen any teaching and learning endeavour is to offer the educators/practitioners in the field authentic curriculum resources and then let them make it work. I am in awe of the research and thoughtful processes that have gone into the making of the OALCF.

My apprehension at being assigned the role of champion is simply that taking the new curriculum framework from a series of binders and web site resources and making it “happen” in

Ontario LBS classrooms must be a shared responsibility. It is not one that requires selected champions but rather it is a task that compels us all to open our minds to the possibilities and find creative solutions. LBS administrators, managers, practitioners and learners working together will be the ultimate champions of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. As we move forward all of the stakeholders will be required to play a critical role in keeping the endurance, interest and viability of framework’s implementation alive and well.

And to do so I offer you a short “champion skill set” that I hope will be helpful. It is a bit of a “cheat sheet” to guide you. A champion of the OALCF must demonstrate:

- self-confidence, **motivation** and leadership
- **realistic time management** for self and others
- facility in setting goals and productive **planning**
- ability to work well with others through understanding and **cooperation**
- **team** membership and **leadership** skills
- capacity to identify and implement long term **strategies** for ongoing success and growth

A champion of any idea, cause or movement is distinguished as being positively proactive. We need to

advocate and appreciate that the OALCF is a bold vision and in its implementation Ontario’s school board LBS programs are on the cusp of a new cycle of opportunity and growth. •



Brenda King
CESBA Executive Director

Further training from MTCU and CLO

From OALCF training materials

Throughout the next few months, as the field prepares for full implementation of OALCF by April 1, 2012, two key training initiatives are being offered.



EOIS CaMS Training and Implementation

The Ministry plans to implement a comprehensive training strategy to support the roll-out of the EOIS-Case Management System to LBS service delivery organizations, starting in April 2012.

- Training for EOIS CaMS will be comprised of a combination of self-directed, computer-based learning and classroom instruction.
- Training will occur January to March 2012 to prepare for use of the system in April 2012.
- Classroom instruction will take place in specific Ontario Public Service (OPS) computer lab facilities. A training calendar will be shared with LBS organizations.
- At present, the ministry anticipates delivering approximately 35 classroom sessions across Ontario. Because of OPS lab capacity considerations and other issues, the ministry will assign locations and seats to LBS organizations.
- Communications to support the implementation of training will be shared with LBS organizations this fall, once logistical challenges are finalized. The ministry states that it will assure organizations that a variety of training and implementation supports will be available to staff.

Webinar: Agency Assessment Strategy (CLO)

Community Literacy of Ontario is developing and field testing online training that will situate milestone task assessment with current assessment tools and practices currently being used in literacy programs. CLO will be field-testing the training in early March 2012 and the final training product will be completed by the end of March 2012.

- The training content will be developed in English and be appropriate for all streams and sectors.
- Training will be based on content and information provided from the milestone task developers including how milestone assessment fits with current practices and how practitioners can situate milestone assessment in the context of their program's overall assessment strategy.
- Training will show how the results from commonly used assessment tools can provide information to practitioners on which milestone tasks a learner may already be capable of.
- CLO is considering developing the training in a webinar format - possibly one webinar or a short series depending on the final content.
- CLO will collaborate with COFA as the training is developed to ensure adequate time is reserved for translation and development of a French version of the same content.

Discussing the new OALCF with principals: Navigating the conversation

Lorraine Cheshire / Program Manager, Core Essentials / Waterloo Catholic District School Board

The wind and the waves are always on the side of the ablest navigators.

Edward Gibbon, author *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

In the rolling sea of literacy, the continuous challenge is to communicate the uniqueness of the LBS program to school board administrators. Now with the new OALCF, program managers need to use some ingenuity to carefully navigate the conversation and connect with their principals.

The purpose of this article is to stimulate your thinking on how you can approach your principal in order to communicate the distinctive OALCF features and paradigm. As most educators know, analogies relay information effectively. The key is to keep them relevant to your audience.

The Approach

Questions to help you plan the conversation:

- 1) What is your principal's paradigm and way of thinking about curriculum?
- 2) What key differences between the OALCF and your principal's understandings do you want to discuss?
- 3) How will you convey the information (i.e., illustrations, materials, analogies, etc.)?
- 4) What results you are looking for (an "a-ha" moment or support during the OALCF transition)?
- 5) When is the best time to have a relaxed conversation?

After sitting down with my principal, I was able to get a glimpse of what other principals might think when they hear us talk about implementing a new curriculum. They

might think about curriculum documents, overall and specific course expectations, levels of education, subjects taught, resources and textbooks needed, etc. Their understanding of curriculum is most often informed by the secondary school system. Keep this mind.

The Dialogue

Based on my own experience, here is how the dialogue might unfold.

PM (Program Manager): Thank you for giving me the time to explain the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. We call it OALCF for short. This curriculum framework will greatly impact our program. Please feel free to ask questions along the way as I explain.

P(Principal): I surely will...

PM: As you know, the LBS program has had their own exclusive scale of literacy levels; LBS levels from 1 to 5.

P: Yes, that's right! I'm still not all that clear what those levels represent, but carry on...

PM: No worries, because beginning April 1, 2012, we will not be using that scale of measurement anymore. There will no longer be LBS levels from 1 to 5.

P: So what will you use to measure students' levels of learning and progress?



PM: The OALCF uses competencies and performance levels to measure student progress. Furthermore, not only will the assessment piece change, but our current skills-based approach will change to a task-based approach.

P: Is there a curriculum guide? Will you be changing your resources?

PM: We have a curriculum framework, and no, we will not necessarily have to change our resources. However, we will definitely have to change the way we do things!

LBS programs will have to change their overall approach to planning, creating learning activities and assessment. We have to learn to look at progress using three levels instead of five, and we will need to learn a new language for discussing learning competencies and task groups. Getting our heads around this is a major challenge.

P: That is difficult to fathom!

PM: I agree, and it has taken 'all hands on deck' to be able to start making our way through this vast sea of change. This fiscal year – April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 - has been designated as a transition year by the ministry. It is devoted to the training of staff and the changeover of approaches. The added challenge is that the OALCF pieces are still being developed as we train.

P: I guess the LBS agencies can take some comfort from being in the same boat together.

The Closure

P: So how can I help?

PM: You have already started. Your time, listening, and support is greatly appreciated. Your continued confidence in me and your availability to me during this transition will be helpful and always appreciated.

Get out there!>

Developing community partnerships

By **Christine Prieur** / Program Coordinator, Doorways / Halton District School Board

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What brought you into the literacy field?

Did you answer: **“Because I love networking!”**

Or perhaps you said, **“To develop strategic partnerships!”**

Probably not. In fact, I’d be willing to bet that most of you got into adult education because you love helping your students.

Here’s the good news: Good partnerships do help your students!

Now that literacy and employment services fall under the same Employment Ontario umbrella, many agencies are beginning to explore the idea of partnership. In recent years, there has been some anxiety around integrating literacy programming into the bigger context of Employment Ontario. Sometimes it can feel like it’s “us” against “them”, or that we’re not even speaking the same language.

“I love the new OALCF!”
“Have you done the WLA training yet?”
“CAMERA is supposed to be good, too.”

The literacy field may have some challenges in trying to integrate into the employment services environment. Literacy programs may be under-resourced, and over-burdened. Practitioners may feel that they have no time to get involved in partnership-building. However, good partnerships can mean good referral paths for students.

First steps can happen at the grassroots level and can be very simple. All it takes is for two people to make a personal connection. While more formal discussions about partnering may happen at the managerial table, there has to be trust and rapport between front-line agency staff and LBS practitioners in order for good, honest, and meaningful referrals to happen.

Here is a top ten list of fun and easy ways to start creating grassroots partnerships with other service providers in your community. The tips below are easy to do, are within the scope of your control, and may even be enjoyable!

I like to call them, **“Ten Sure-Fire Ways to Create Awesome Partnerships in Your Own Back Yard!”**

1. Weasel your way into things.
2. Go to meetings that you don’t really have to go to.
3. Invite yourself to be a guest speaker.
4. Be an advocate for literacy, wherever you go. Don’t be afraid to be obnoxious!
5. Stand around and chat. Say “Hi!”
6. Ask strangers out for a coffee.
7. Bring candy.
8. Put yourself out there! Get out of your comfort zone!
9. Bring “the literacy perspective”...
10. Be the change you want to see in your community.

Now it’s time to make an action plan for your agency. What agencies do your clients need access to? Who are you going to ask out for lunch? Which meetings are you going to invite yourself to? Sometimes it really is as easy as being at the table to provide “the literacy perspective”. After all, if we don’t do it, who will?

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework

Tools & Resources Under Development (2011-2012)

From OALCF training materials

Component	Lead organization	Details
Milestone Tasks	CESBA	Piloted with selected practitioners in fall 2011
Culminating Tasks	CSC	Information will be included in the fall training package: a description of the CTs, how they are intended to be used, and a sample CT. Testing will take place Jan/Feb 2012.
Learner Plan	OLC	Included in fall implementation training
Goal Path Descriptions	OLC	Posted on eopg.ca in the fall and included in fall implementation training
Summary of OALCF resources	OLC	A guide and schematic to help practitioners navigate OALCF documents will be posted on the EOPG website in the fall and included in fall implementation training.
Learner Gains Assessment	COFA	A version of TOWES is being developed to assess learner gains on an aggregate level, using the IALS 500 point scale. Timing of implementation is not yet determined.
Implementation Training	CLO	Training provided to service providers by stream and sector organizations between October and December 2011.
Agency Assessment Strategy	CLO	Webinar that will assist agencies in developing an assessment strategy, including integration of the Milestone Tasks; webinar to be completed by end of March 2012.
Feedback Survey	AlphaPlus	Online survey that will allow the LBS field to provide feedback about various OALCF 'products'. First release in October 2011 and second in Jan. 2012.
Workplace Tasks	Centre FORA	Computer-based learning materials/tasks to help learners prepare for entry-level jobs. Testing in Jan/Feb 2012.
Online Math Modules	Centre FORA	Six interactive modules to help learners move from level 2 to level 3. Testing Jan/Feb 2012.
Volunteer Tutor Training	LLO	Four tutor training modules (on line) and workshops (face-to-face); to be completed in Feb. 2012.
EOIS-CaMS Training	MTCU	Just-in-time training to be delivered at Ontario Public Service lab facilities between January and March, 2012 (combination of in-class and online training).
Resources for Native stream	Ningwakwe Learning Press	Three new learning materials completed and distributed to the Aboriginal literacy field by March 2012
ASL translation of OALCF tools	Deaf Literacy Initiative	Resources to be posted on DLI website by March 2012.

CESBA - Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators

CSC - College Sector Committee

OLC - Ontario Literacy Coalition

COFA - Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes

CLO - Community Literacy of Ontario

Centre FORA - Centre franco-ontarien de ressources en alphabétisation

LLO - Laubach Literacy of Ontario

OALCF DEVELOPMENTS

AND TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Compiled by **Jane Barber** from OALCF training materials

Goal Path Descriptions

The purpose of the five goal path descriptions is to provide literacy learners and practitioners with important information that will both inform the goal-setting process and contribute to the development of the learner plan. Information provided in the goal path descriptions connects Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program service provision with the learner's goal.

An Introduction to Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners is an accompanying document that helps to answer the following questions:

- Does an LBS practitioner need to know all the details of each goal path?
- Who would use the goal path descriptions and for what purpose?
- How are the goal path descriptions organized?
- What other OALCF documents help develop goal-directed programming?

There are five goal path description documents:

1. *Employment*
2. *Apprenticeship*
3. *Secondary School Credit*
4. *Postsecondary*
5. *Independence*

The goal path descriptions provide insights on

- what it means to be employed, an apprentice, a secondary school credit student, a postsecondary student or to handle personal tasks more independently
- resources or websites that help to further understand the requirements of the goal

- resources or websites that help provide goal-directed learning activities
- questions that need to be answered to know if a learner's goal is reasonable, achievable, feasible and appropriate
- other non-LBS services that help ensure that the learner remains in the program long enough to obtain all that is necessary to transition to the goal
- the role of the LBS service provider in preparing the learner for the goal and what other agencies or services will contribute to the learner's positive outcomes

The Learner Plan

There are two important documents related to the new learner plan:

- *The Learner Plan Template*
- *The Instructions for the Learner Plan Template*

The *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template* provides insights on the following:

- the objectives of the Learner Plan and how will it assist learners and LBS service providers as well the LBS field at large
- how to identify the range of other supports that a learner requires to either participate or succeed in an LBS program
- information that needs to be collected and why
- how to collect and enter the data

The *Learner Plan Template* describes the learning and program elements that prepare learners for their next steps beyond the LBS program. It includes the learner's goal, background information, assessment results, tasks, learning activities, program duration, additional supports required by the learner, as well as referral results.

For the learner, the Learner Plan helps to answer the following questions:

- What do I want to do once I complete my (LBS) program? (goal)
- What do I need to learn in order to be prepared? (learning activities for goal path)
- What other (non-LBS) supports will help me prepare to move beyond LBS? (learner supports, referrals to other community services, other training, etc.)
- How will I know if I am ready for my next-step goal? (assessment of learning activities and key tasks)?

For the practitioner, the Learner Plan helps answer the following questions:

- What is the learner's goal that guides me in all programming decisions?
- What are the learning activities that this learner needs to bridge the gaps in literacy and knowledge related to his/her goal path (competencies, skills, content) and what are the appropriate learning materials that I should use?
- What other supports does this learner need to be successful in their next step? How will I ensure that I make appropriate referrals and coordinate the learner's LBS program to other community services? (service coordination and referral)
- What assessment activities will give both me and the learner the assurance that they are ready for the demands of the next step?
- How do I track the resources that I am using with a learner?

The *Learner Plan Template*

- Organizes information in a common format for ease of use between program providers

- Anticipates the kind of information agencies will collect for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' accountability purposes in the near future

There are four sections in the Learner Plan Template:

1. Background

- registration and background information including both education and employment experience

2. Goal

- information about the learner's chosen goal path and key tasks that will support that goal path
- entry assessment information
- information on any other requirements for the learner to be "goal ready"

3. Learning activities and other supports

- learning activities that will help learners develop the necessary skills and content to perform the tasks successfully
- any (non-LBS) supports the learner needs in order to be successful in their LBS program or once they transition beyond LBS

4. Exit, outcomes and follow-up

- information on key task accomplishments, exit assessment, goal readiness and customer service
- information about learner status in employment and education/training

The **Learner Plan** ensures that learners:

- understand the steps that are required to achieve their goal
- have a clear understanding of the sequence for training, and
- understand the time necessary to achieve the learning identified for their goal path

Agencies are encouraged to use the Learner Plan Template now as a means of building capacity for implementation of EOIS/CaMS.

Supporting Learners Through Service Coordination

LBS service providers are required to work with other organizations to better coordinate non-instructional supports for learners.

Supporting learners through **service coordination and referrals** provides insights on the following:

- What is meant by learner supports and service coordination
- Kinds of supports learners may need to be successful in their LBS program and to transition to their goal
- How to use the Learner Plan Template to identify the range of supports a learner requires
- How to work with community partners to make appropriate referrals

Five categories of supports

1. Financial/material supports
2. Academic supports
3. Employment supports
4. Social service supports
5. Health supports

Financial/material supports

- Income support
- Transportation
- Childcare

Academic supports

- Learning disability assessment/programming
- Tutoring/mentoring
- Monitoring/support of program participation

Employment supports

- Job search
- Monitoring/support for entry/re-entry into the workforce (e.g., orientation to workplace, work experience and job coaching, motivation/attitude regarding employment, etc.)

Social Service Supports

- Housing assistance
- Legal assistance (including parole, pardon, custody, CAS)
- Personal/family counselling (including anger management/stress management groups)

- Life/social skills (e.g., time management, interpersonal skills, assertiveness, problem solving, conflict resolution, etc.)

Health Support

- Mental health assessment/support
- Addiction/substance abuse counselling or program
- Food/nutrition

Learner Supports will be tracked on the learner plan.

Milestones

Milestones are goal-related assessment activities.

- Learners will complete milestones to demonstrate their abilities to carry out goal-related tasks
- Successful completion of milestones will provide evidence that learners can perform goal-related activities at given levels
- Milestones will be one way for learners to see that they are developing the abilities necessary to complete goal-related tasks
- Each milestone will correspond to one indicator, task group or competency in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework

60 Milestones have been developed for the field. They are designed for efficient administration and consistent use over time including all the tools necessary to administer, score and interpret learner performance. They draw on authentic materials and situations. Some milestones are specific to one goal path; others apply to more than one goal path. They indicate what competency, task group and level the milestone corresponds to.

- Learners and practitioners will work together to choose milestones that are meaningful and appropriate given the learners' literacy skills and goals
- Milestones will be one way for learners to see that they are developing the abilities necessary to complete goal-related tasks
- Milestones are intended to complement other assessment approaches used in LBS, and are an important indicator of learner progress
- Milestones, integrated tasks, culminating tasks and day-to-day learning activities/tasks allow learners

to demonstrate progress throughout their time in an LBS program

- While a useful source of information, milestone results cannot be used in isolation to determine whether learners are transition-ready

Milestones should be administered when practitioners think that learners are likely to succeed on milestones. Practitioners can make this decision by asking themselves questions such as:

- Has the learner received instruction on similar tasks?
- Has the learner successfully completed similar tasks?
- Does the learner feel ready to try an assessment task?

If the response to these questions is yes, then the learner is ready to try the milestone.

How do I know which tasks I should focus programming on?

Milestone completion is not equivalent to transition-readiness; milestones are only examples of tasks that are goal-related. Practitioners should use learner's needs and interests, the Curriculum Framework, and goal path requirements to decide what to focus programming on.

If a learner completes all selected milestones, is he or she ready to transition?

Milestones will provide evidence that a learner can perform some goal-related tasks. Practitioners should continue to use assessment tools they are comfortable with to determine when learners are ready to transition out of literacy programming.

How will I know if a learner has the ability to perform a task at a given level (i.e., level 1, 2 or 3)?

Providing learners with opportunities to complete numerous tasks at a level, particularly tasks that employ different formats, will provide evidence that a learner has skills at a given level.

Culminating Tasks

What is a culminating task?

- A culminating task is a complex task that incorporates multiple competencies and task groups
- Culminating tasks allow learners to apply their skills and knowledge across competencies in a way that reflects real-life situations
- Culminating tasks represent the end point of a goal path

Milestones, integrated tasks, and day-to-day learning activities/tasks allow learners to demonstrate progress throughout their time in an LBS program. If the learner's plan takes her/him all the way to the goal destination, she/he should be able to successfully complete the culminating task for the chosen goal path. Not all learners will reach the point of attempting and completing a culminating task...and that is okay. There are many other indicators of progress and success for LBS learners. Only those who complete their learner plan and are ready to transition to the goal destination will complete the culminating task for their goal path.

Successful completion of a culminating task is **one more way** for learners to demonstrate that they may be ready to transition to one of five goal paths. They are just one element in a broad assessment strategy. A variety of assessment tools and measures has always been (and remains) a cornerstone of LBS programming.

Culminating tasks do not replace any credentials, courses, or certifications that learners may need in order to access their goal destination. Other requirements may include successful completion of academic courses/credentials, e.g., ACE, GED, OSSD; or work-related certifications, e.g., Smart Serve, CPR/First Aid. It is important to note that culminating tasks do not equate to such credentials or certifications that may be required to enter the goal destination.

...continued on page 16



To begin with, the OALCF website will provide one culminating task for each of four goal paths:

- **Independence,**
- **Employment,**
- **Secondary School Credit, or**
- **Postsecondary**

Apprenticeship will have **two** culminating tasks: one for apprenticeship itself, and one for short-term skills-training.

In coming years, there may be choices of culminating tasks for each of the five goal paths.

Because the elements of individual Learner Plans can be quite varied, even within one goal path, the culminating tasks need to be broad enough to accommodate these differences. In the Employment path, for example, the Learner Plan for a goal of “retail sales” would have some different elements than one for “construction labourer”. Similarly, in the Postsecondary path, the requirements identified on the Learner Plan for a goal of entering the “practical nursing” program would be different from the requirements for a “business-accounting” program. Due to the variety of skills, knowledge, tasks, competencies and credentials that can be required within each goal path, the culminating tasks may place more emphasis on self-management and awareness of the demands of the goal destination and less emphasis on the “content/knowledge” requirements.

What is the difference between a **goal** and a **goal path**?

From OALCF training materials

The **goal** is what the learner wants to achieve once leaving the LBS Program. It is the next step to which the learner transitions after completing the LBS Program. Typically, learners choose one of five destinations, and this is recorded on the Learner Plan as the learner’s goal, i.e., Employment, Apprenticeship, Secondary School Credit, Postsecondary or Independence.

Goal path refers to the steps the learner is required to take in preparation for exit and transition to the goal. If a learner is on the “Employment Goal Path” the learner’s training is specifically designed for employment success.

What? No More Short Term Goals?

Previously, LBS programs worked with each learner to establish a short-term goal that would represent what the learner would work on during LBS training. The difficulty, however, was that there was no consistent understanding program to program of how a short-term goal should be expressed. Some were expressed as tasks; others were expressed as skills, and still others were expressed in terms of LBS levels. As a result, it was impossible to establish a consistent understanding of learner progress.

With the OALCF, programs will no longer use the terms, “short-term” and “long-term” goal. When documenting learning, what happens in the LBS program is related to a goal path that leads to the ultimate goal beyond LBS. Instead of breaking down a long-term goal into short-term goals, programs simply work with the appropriate learning activities for the goal path.

On the lighter side...

How is your stress level?



Claudia Stafford / Practitioner / Simcoe County District School Board

As literacy practitioners, we have to assess and understand our learners' goals, provide appropriate learning resources, and engage our learners. We work hard and we care.

We observe, monitor, study, care, assess, understand, engage, apply, inspire, love, laugh and sometimes cry. We are creative, tenacious, determined, resilient and often stressed. These days, stress may be taking over. Don't let your stress level reach the boiling point. Take a couple of minutes to assess your mental state, and maybe, by having a little laugh, you'll avoid a complete meltdown.

You know when your stress levels are rising when:

- ❑ You edit your email messages at least 10 times before sending them off, and then re-check them *after* you've pressed send
- ❑ You are in an important meeting, and it is all you can do to remain quiet about that grammatical error on the PowerPoint slide, and then you anxiously wait for one of your colleagues to point out the error (one always does) losing complete focus
- ❑ You rewrite all ministry updates and memos using clear writing principles, and then send them back anonymously
- ❑ You correct typos on flyers and lost and found posters posted in your neighborhood— with red ink!
- ❑ You ask your spouse to summarize his or her point of view in writing, and then check the summary for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation
- ❑ You are celebrating a holiday with your family and ask them to calculate the cost of the turkey if it was \$4.99 per kg and weighed 7 kg; and then ask how many people it could serve if everyone had a 500g serving
- ❑ You note your children's Essential Skills when they are cooperating (working together!), talking to each other (oral communication!) and doing homework (continuous learning!), and then discuss their current skill levels in terms of their potential careers
- ❑ You are reading a novel and become aware that you are making a list of metaphors and providing an explanation of their meanings, creating a graph to illustrate the plot line and writing a summary
- ❑ You begin leveling tasks in your head when doing your program work, and catch yourself thinking the following: "I just interpreted a document at Level 2 when I had to read the directions to replace paper in the photocopier!"
- ❑ u fine a sentins lik this an it seams too apeer jus find.

If you have checked more than six of the above statements, it is time for that vacation or a really good laugh with your colleagues.

OALCF training experiences:

Questions from the floor



By **Jane Barber**, CESBA Consultant

The following two questions have been raised in various ways during OALCF training sessions.

QUESTION #1

Nowhere in Competency C of the Curriculum Framework can I find a place that considers tasks related to developing proficiency in mathematics for academic goal paths. This presents a problem for those of us who teach math because we cannot locate what we do within in the curriculum framework. The ability to perform calculations and solve equations in order to meet course requirements in Credit, ACE and Postsecondary programs is essential for success in those particular environments. We devote a considerable amount of time preparing students for higher level math but there are no task categories by which we can account for that work. How are we going to report on learner progress?

RESPONSE:

It is my understanding that the framework was not intended to cover everything that goes on in our LBS programs. This is something we need to keep saying because this very kind of question will, no doubt, come up again and again.

The framework was intended to include the competencies that are found in all goal paths, and that can be taught by all LBS agencies. The curriculum framework is supposed to give us the core of the LBS program; although, depending on stream, sector and goal needs of the learners, more must be taught than what is found in the framework in order to properly prepare learners for their next steps. As the developers discovered in the development phase of OALCF, it is impossible to have a framework that does all things for all people. The decision was made, therefore, that a framework was needed that would do the following:

- a) Focus on competencies not skill development (leaving the nuts and bolts of skill development to the professional judgement of practitioners);
- b) Apply to all service providers regardless of stream or sector;
- c) Describe in a transparent way what could be offered by any service provider in the LBS program;
- d) Provide an accountability framework that could be used by all service providers



LBS managers and CESBA consultants listen attentively to the latest ministry updates during last spring's CESBA Colloquium.

QUESTION #2

In cases where there are no indicators, measures or vehicle for reporting learner progress in a particular area that is critical to learner success, and that constitutes a significant emphasis in LBS programming, how will we report learner outcomes and how will that affect our funding?

RESPONSE:

We (trainers) have been hearing this question in other places too. Practitioners are worried that funding decisions will be based on the curriculum framework alone and they are therefore concerned that what they actually do won't be counted (e.g., academic skill development). Our understanding is that once the ministry is ready to share the measures and indicators that tie outcomes to funding, it will be easier for service providers to see that demonstrating competency using the milestones is just one indicator of learner achievement. But so are gains in skill development, and so is goal completion, which includes all the additional knowledge, content, skills, etc. that learners need for their goal. Milestone achievements, goal completion and skill development are included in a Learner Plan. Decisions by TCU about LBS Program measures and indicators are still being worked on. While the ministry is aware that the curriculum framework does not include all that happens in a program, they would say, we think, that it does include what is common across all service providers regardless of stream, goal or sector. It describes programming in terms of what people can do, not what they are developing. We understand that in time, there will be clear definitions as to how the additional activity that occurs in programs to meet learner and goal-related needs are recognized. This will alleviate much of the anxiety.

Welcome to the program!

Creating an orientation package for learners

Becky Barber / LBS Manager / York Region District School Board

What got us started...

We were finding that when our program had an influx of learners, it was challenging for practitioners to receive several new learners at once, find the time to look at their assessments and provide appropriate and meaningful work for them right away. Typically, adult learners judge a program based on what they experience in the first few hours. They can easily develop a negative mind set if they think the teacher is too busy – or the work isn't at the right level or isn't meaningful and engaging.

Our solution was to create a welcome package that would provide:

- Information about the key concepts of the program and what learners need to know about themselves in order to be successful learners
- Activities that use key concepts to help learners identify their goals and strategies for learning
- Opportunities for self-reflection
- Preparation for the development of an individualized, task-based Learner Plan

The 20-page Welcome Package gives new learners something to work on immediately that is directly related to them personally. This gives practitioners time to observe and get

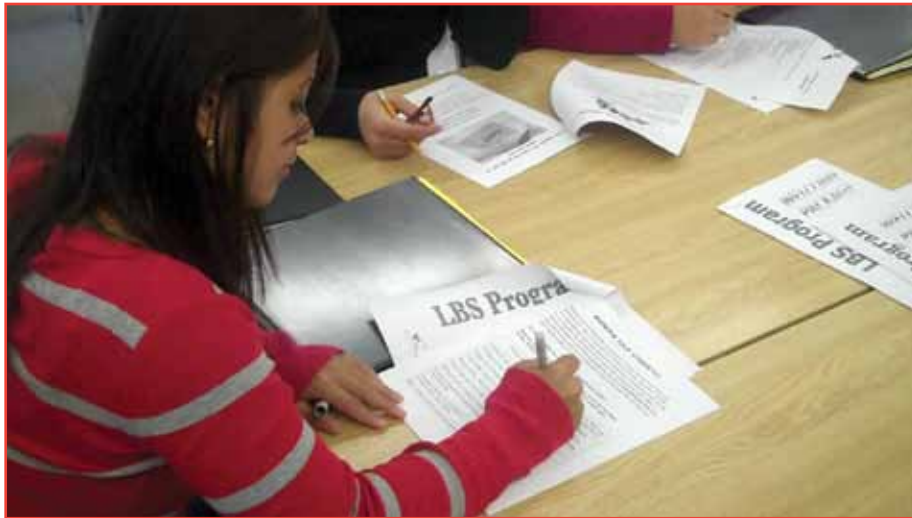
to know each learner. In September, practitioners gave the WP to both new and returning learners because it allowed them to:

- provide an overview of the program
- introduce everyone to new OALCF language
- explain how a task-based approach works
- show how the program is specifically geared to them – their goals, their preferred learning styles and their challenges
- introduce the notion of tasks that are related to individual goal paths
- intrigue and motivate learners to want to learn more

How we use it...

In September, in the large classes, instructors helped learners work on the WP as a group. Now, as learners enter the program, they do the WPs individually. We discovered our first version of the WP was too difficult for some learners to read on their own, so we made a second version that looked the same but used simpler vocabulary. During initial assessment, we gather all the IMS details and learners complete an initial skills-based assessment that includes reading, writing and math. They also identify their chosen goal path. When the skills assessment is marked, we determine which version of the Welcome Package to put into the portfolio for the instructor to give to the learner. Sections in the WP address OALCF competencies, learning strengths, goal-setting, self-reflection and learning experiences, and learning styles.





How it's been received...

The Welcome Package has introduced competency-based language to learners in a consistent way because they are all reading the same thing. It provides key concepts up front that teachers can expand upon later and refer back to when necessary. It is solidifying OALCF language and concepts for the instructors, too. Instructors who used the WP with learners in groups have enjoyed the fact that learners work together and connect with each other. In an individualized program, it's nice to have something learners can do together to make them feel they are part of a class.

What do the learners have to say?

"This new program is amazing as it helps me understand what I can do and work on what I can't do – and it helps me keep organized."

"I'm enjoying the various tasks assigned me as they help me brush up on my skills and learn new skills as well."

"This program will help me in terms of tasks that are given to me to do, and I love the sheets that were given to me in the Welcome Package that were called 'How Do I Learn Best?' to see what kind of learner I am."

"I like this program because we focus on our individual weaknesses and not just everyone working on the same thing."

"This new program can help students improve a lot. When you know what your goal path is, your competencies and tasks help you make a plan. It was challenging for me to understand the idea of the new program, but my instructor made it easy for me and others. She explained all the new words and we felt more comfortable. Step by step we understood more, we

chose our goal paths and looked for our tasks related to our goal paths and our competencies."

"The new program is very useful for me because I know my goal. Every day I learn new things. My goal is employment and my driving test, so my teacher helps me in different ways. I am very happy our teacher helps us. I think this is a very good program."

"About the new program, I think one by one I will learn how to do the things that I don't know or I'm not sure how to do them. Like the task A1.3 – Read a newspaper article to learn about a current political situation. It is challenging to me because the words are new for me and they are not everyday words and also the whole paragraph is hard for me, but with the help of my teacher, I am going to learn and understand it."

"In my opinion the new program is very good. Even though I don't enjoy completing this questionnaire, I realize it is in our best interest because in our class each student has different goals. With the new program, we get to identify what we know and what we have to work on to be able to follow our individual goal paths." •

Communicating

By Brenda King

Effectively with the Ministry

One of the key factors affecting on-going success for LBS agencies is effective communication with the Ministry through their field training consultants (FTCs). Over the years, CESBA and MTCU have enjoyed a positive and productive working relationship, based largely on using well thought out and purposeful communication strategies. The following suggestions represent good practices that the CESBA office employs with success. As agencies continue to work closely with ministry field consultants, some of whom may be new to LBS, these suggestions may provide some helpful references.

- Always make sure you know your school board's policy on communicating with government officials including your LBS field consultant. There may be rules to follow regarding contacting or communicating with the ministry.
- In any call or conversation, always begin by reminding the government person who you are, what program you work in and where it is located. In some cases you may also need to remind the person that your program has been assigned to him or her.
- Less is more... keep your message brief and simple. Busy officials need to capture the message quickly (i.e., they need to quickly understand who you are and what concerns you).
- Limit the number of issues or concerns you plan to address. A good rule of thumb is no more than two issues at any one time.
- Whether in a written or spoken communication always open and close with a positive comment.
- In conversation, have written notes in front of you listing compelling facts giving evidence of how the issue impacts your learners or your program. At the end of the conversation, make sure you note which items you covered so that later there is no confusion about what issues you raised and which were not addressed.
- Always be prepared to clarify your issue, if necessary, with personal experience you have had that is related either to the problem or to your proposed solution. Triangulate your thoughts to share past experiences this way:
 - 1) describe the situation;
 - 2) tell what you did; and
 - 3) say what the outcome was. Then contextualize that past situation to connect to the current issue.
- Be respectful and polite. Avoid negative or critical comments, but feel free to express pleasure or disappointment.
- Be appreciative. Acknowledge previous support and current action.
- Don't pester. If the person does not get back to you as arranged, give it some time and follow-up calmly in the form of a gentle reminder by e-mail if necessary.
- Always be aware that no matter how much you may enjoy interacting with the government official personally, this is not your friend. This is a person you are reporting to. In the best of cases, consider the person as a trusted colleague, but not necessarily a friend.
- When you are closing a meeting, conversation or telephone call remember to FLAP ... "Finish Like A Pro". You really define yourself through your conduct and communication skills in the final minutes. No matter how tired or discouraged you might be, what you say and do at the end of the conversation will be what is best remembered. I like to think that when I am finished communicating with a government colleague that they will look forward to hearing from me again.

- Don't assume FTCs have a full and complete understanding of LBS or why differences exist sector to sector and program to program. Keep written information about your program up-to-date and handy in a form that you can send off quickly by e-mail.
- And finally, if any communication goes wrong or if you have any reason to feel uncomfortable that something was not quite right, document the call and immediately report it to your supervisor (principal or superintendent).



Effective communication is a craft that takes time, patience and careful consideration. The rewards are well worth the effort.

Don't forget to set your password on the CESBA website.

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Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators

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WELCOME TO CESBA
The Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA) was incorporated in 1999, but existed for several decades as an informal association.

LATEST ARTICLES

1. [LBS Update September 2011](#) 03 Oct
2. [PLAR Projects](#) 15 Sep
3. [THE NEW FACE OF LBS TRAINING IN ONTARIO](#) 04 May
4. [Case In Point](#) 04 May
5. [A Story of Collaboration](#) 01 May

Coming Events

07 DEC	Wed Dec 07 @08:00 - 05:00PM Pre-Conference
08 DEC	Thu Dec 08 @08:00 - 05:00PM CESBA Fall Conference
09 DEC	Fri Dec 09 @08:00 - 05:00PM CESBA Fall Conference

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Problems?
Contact:
Dan Walker
(walkerd@thecentre.on.ca)





Network support for OALCF

By **Charlotte Parliament** / Program Coordinator / Simcoe County District School Board

There are 16 regional networks in Ontario. All are funded by MTCU. The networks work with all sectors and streams, and also work collaboratively with other networks to share resources, promising practices and innovative ideas. Overseeing the development of the Literacy Service Plan (LSP) is just one part of the networks' responsibilities in supporting agencies.

Each network received one-time funding to help out agencies with the OALCF. At a recent meeting of the regional networks, the executive directors agreed to share their plans and activities for the Updater.

The following is a summary of some of the projects, workshops and resources that networks have developed or are in the midst of developing. It is important to note that the activities are not necessarily MTCU approved, but all have been developed using OALCF documents and resources, in addition to other resources such as the Essential Skills and LBS Learning Outcomes.

Here is what the networks have done so far...

- Created a poster using the summary page of the framework
- Created a chart showing OALCF competencies in comparison to Essential Skills and LBS domains
- Combined Anglophone, Native and Deaf OALCF selected resources indicating competencies supported by each resource
- Created an OALCF Selected Assessment Tools/Resources summary page indicating what the tool is assessing (skills, tasks, both) and what goal path it supports
- Updated *EmployAbility Success! Using your Essential Skills at Work* with a matrix to identify the relationship between the job tasks used and the competencies in the OALCF
- Developed self assessments and tracking sheets based on task complexity levels and accompanying workshops
- Developed and held a workshop called "Applying Bridges Concepts" for Employment Ontario service providers, including LBS, that looked at the importance of wrap around services and service coordination

- Held a workshop called "Demystifying OALCF"
- Held a workshop on Essential Skills and their relation to the OALCF
- Held a workshop to introduce how to level activities with the OALCF complexity levels and review Essential Skills websites

And here are a couple of future activities...

- Will host a workshop on creating "task banks" (creating and levelling tasks for use in the OALCF)
- Will have a representative from TCU's apprenticeship branch in to discuss identified apprentice needs; participants will discuss ways to meet these needs at the community based, school board and college level
- Will host a workshop with presenters on wrap-around services related to mental health, addictions and family violence, as well as an update on a screening tool being developed by the Ontario Literacy Coalition

For more information regarding a specific resource, contact your network.

NEW OALCF Documents

Instructions for the Learner Plan Template

- This document provides background on the development of the *Learner Plan Template*, as well as step-by-step instructions for completing a *Learner Plan*.

Learner Plan Template 2011 - 2012

- The *Learner Plan Template* is a tool for LBS service providers that can be used with any learner.
- This template is designed to ensure that there are common elements which provide a description of the learners' background, goal path, learning activities, other supports, and achievements.
- This template is designed to be compatible with the MTCU's accountability requirements.

An Introduction to Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners

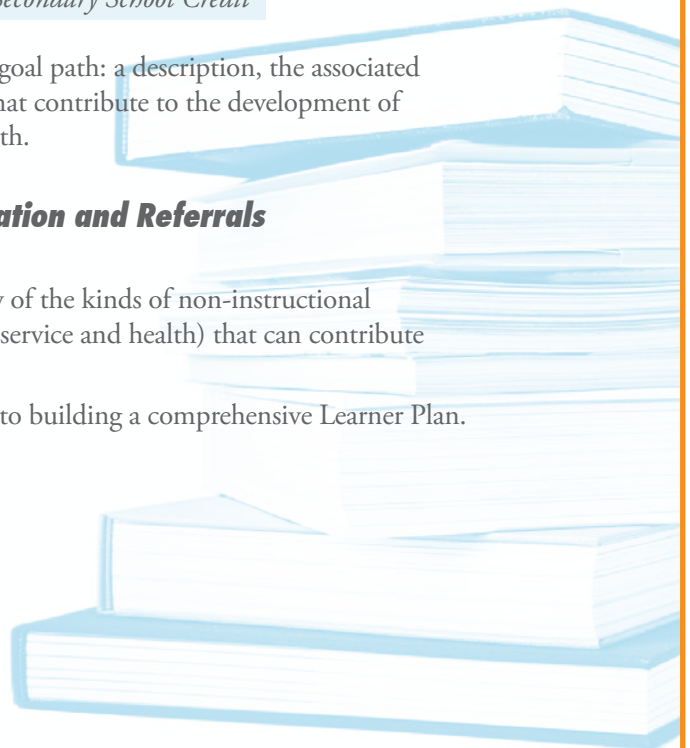
- This document helps practitioners better understand the purpose and organizing principles of the five goal paths for apprenticeship, secondary school credit, postsecondary, employment and independence.
- It also introduces the reader to the common elements of the five goal path documents

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners - Apprenticeship
Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners - Employment
Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners - Independence
Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners - Postsecondary
Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners - Secondary School Credit

- Each of the five documents provides a snapshot of the goal path: a description, the associated requirements, key trigger questions and a set of skills that contribute to the development of the six OALCF competencies in relation to the goal path.

Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referrals

- This document provides practitioners with an overview of the kinds of non-instructional supports (i.e., financial, academic, employment, social service and health) that can contribute significantly to positive learner outcomes.
- It also provides practitioners with a practical approach to building a comprehensive Learner Plan.



What's new on CESBA's practitioner training website?

www.lbspractitionertraining.com

LBS Practitioner Training
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS EDUCATORS IN ONTARIO

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CESBA has added 6 new videos to the library of OALCF training videos.

These include:

1. A quick OALCF refresher
2. Goal paths
3. Learner plans
4. Supporting learners through service coordination
5. Milestones
6. Culminating tasks

New!

A series of short PowerPoint presentations with accompanying sound track provide a comprehensive introduction to the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) and help with first steps in implementation.

Developing Adult Numeracy

A course designed for Literacy and Basic Skills practitioners in Ontario based upon prior project work by OCDSB on practitioner needs and effective professional development in numeracy teaching.

Welcome

This site offers professional support for practitioners who work with adult learners in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program. It provides resources for practitioners, including training materials, downloadable curriculum materials and resources for the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. The foundation modules of PD training are currently being revised and updated with new information and a greater emphasis on service coordination.

These PowerPoint videos with audio sound track provide an orientation to the new OALCF documents recently posted on the eopg website, and are intended to support programs in implementing the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework.

Contact us sometime to let us know what you think. We'd love to hear from you!

A Quick Poll

What do you think about our newly redesigned website?

Like it

So-So!

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Vote Results

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