Performance Management Support

Literacy Link South Central is committed to providing performance management assistance to LBS service providers. Through this newsletter, LLSC will share tools and resources gathered from our partners around the province that can be used to impact your organization's performance management. If there are specific topics you would like to see in upcoming issues, please contact Literacy Link South Central at literacylink@gmail.com

Common Assessment for the OALCF – PD Session

On March 11, 2015, Literacy Link South Central hosted a full-day training workshop on behalf of Literacy Northwest (the literacy network serving Thunder Bay and area). The workshop focussed on Common Assessment for the OALCF goal paths and was facilitated by Wendy Olson of Dryden Literacy Association. The purpose of the workshop was to assist programs in finding appropriate goal path-specific assessment resources, as well as to share information on curriculum, running a literacy program, information and referral (service coordination), and boutique programming.

This newsletter contains the summary notes from the roundtable discussions that were held during the afternoon of the workshop. If you would like to obtain a copy of the workshop slides, please contact Literacy Link South Central and we would be happy to provide these for you.

Curriculum – Summary of Discussion

1. What do you currently use that you find useful? Why?

Employment workshops were developed in 2014 to bridge LBS & ES, which included tasks, milestones, and culminating tasks.

- Culinary
- Customer Service
- Trades/Labour

DVDs for gardening, cooking, etc. were created in 2007 and have been pulled out to use again.

OALCF Implementation Guide

Recognizing Life's Work (QUILL) – comfortable for low level learners, independence goal path

Learning with Swagger (Project READ)

Hosted workshops with subject matter experts

- Manners
- Dental care
- Appearance/hygiene and employment

Challenger for Lower Skill Levels – word comprehension, vocabulary for Low Level 1/High Level 1

Cultural workshops

The method that the Maker Curriculum follows is useful

Learner Goal Plans – goals for the week and accomplishments hoped for

Story Telling – listening, speaking, cultural expectations

One program created their own task-based activities binder, including index of tasks – available to staff by level or goal path

Pre-loaded e-readers based on level – available for learners to check out

Golden Oaks donates $140 in books each year to help build the library

Newspaper subscription for the class

Oracle group to help with speech – learners read to each other

Math Matters, Math Sense, Make Math Work, Math Manipulatives, spectrum

- These include practical visuals – e.g. teaching fractions to potential mechanics through use of wrenches (1/8, 1/16, etc.)

Breakthrough to Math (up to college level)

Math Skills for the Workforce – includes real workplace applications at the end

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's workplace documents

- Geared toward certain occupations

Task-Based Activities for LBS Portal

ESKARGO resources

CABS (Common Assessment for Basic Skills) – can do online by registering each learner (short registration process)

- Authentic documents
- Relevant to learners' lives

Mavis Beacon – typing resource (up to college level)

The Typing Web – easy process and tracks progress

Sense – language, typing, games, etc.

PowerPoint/Microsoft Office training manual

2. What else do you think you need? What are the challenges in this area?

Practitioners don't know what's available or how to find useful resources

- Resources from other networks are not always shared far and wide
- Recommendation for a newsletter outlining new resources

Time is a challenge because it's hard to know what's effective/applicable without looking at each resource (this was mentioned multiple times)

Printing or purchasing resources is too costly for many programs (this was mentioned multiple times)

- Learners have difficulty using resources online

There is no money in the budget for technology/tech support/maintenance

Memberships are expensive (e.g. UnLondon Lab – 121 Studios)

Where can we find information on boutique programming/soft skills training?

- Recommendation for a boutique programming portal

E-learning/blended learning is great for some learners, but challenging for others

Learners need to be prepared differently if they are using online learning

- There won't be an immediate response to questions
- We often recommend this for learners who don't have transportation

Preparing learners for workplace programming – need more resources created for partnering with workplaces

The culminating tasks are not the end-all for learners

Learners don't understand why the milestones are necessary

We need to find activities to support reaching milestones to match the framework

CaMS doesn't allow practitioners to report the reality of their learners' progress

Long-term programming isn't always desirable for learners

An increase in mental health issues means an increase in harder to serve populations

- Too much paperwork at intake
- Learner doesn't always give accurate information for participation form (e.g. receiving OW)
- Learners aren't as engaged if they are forced to attend the program

More curriculum is needed for the Use Digital Technology competency

Learning has changed a lot over the years

- A lot of high school education is going online for adult learners (credits only online in Haldimand-Norfolk)
- Online credits are free, and cost $25-60 for in-person (varies by area)
- Becoming "paperless"

Instructors are unsure what to do with learners who can't go on to high school or college

- GED takes 2+ years

It is hard to get LBS learners ready for credit, especially math

Many learners come to programs with Grade 10, but they can't do basic math – instructors are left to pick up the slack

Trades people need to know math very well, but often have low or no math skills

- Capacity needs to be built in the Apprenticeship goal path

The Developing Tasks resource is not useful yet as programs are still using tasks that have already been developed

Terminology changes often and there are new introductions to programming on a regular basis

Difficulty with finding competencies/task groups from cultural workshops (brought up by a Native literacy practitioner)

Most materials are not accessible for Deafblind learners

- Tasks that were developed for this stream still includes things like "listen to the audio"
- .pdf files are not editable – JAWS/assistive technology can't read them

Plato uses Flash, which is incompatible with assistive technology

- Plato licenses are very expensive ($10,000 for 20 licenses) and there is no phone support
- Plato requires specialized training, as does CAMERA

Many learners don't have internet/computer access at home, which makes homework a challenge

Per MTCU, the only way to do an exit assessment is by using culminating tasks

There is no documented assessment strategy

Most resources require language pre-knowledge of terminology

"We are relieved to know that everyone is in the same boat!"

How to Run a Literacy Program – Summary of Discussion

- Many of those in attendance on March 11th are practitioners. They are not responsible for the implementation of succession planning, risk mitigation, performance management, etc. However, some of the practitioners said that they would like to know more about what their managers must contend with.

- We discussed EOIS-CaMS and the importance of data integrity – not all practitioners understand the connection between data integrity and what happens with the EOIS-CaMS reports.

- The Enhanced Learner Plan – some practitioners have tried to use the Enhanced Learner Plan – others would like to, but they're not quite sure how. There seems to be an issue or concern with the transference of data.

- Some practitioners are not aware of what percent of learners are to be on each goal path – what the organizational targets are. This is quite an oversight, given that many practitioners are actively involved in marketing and intake.

- Q. What are practitioners touching (touch points) that may make an impact on EOIS-CaMS?

- In terms of promoting apprenticeship, what about connecting with local unions? How many unions are there within LLSC's territory? It would be good to find this out…send out some communication on behalf of adult literacy providers.

- Succession planning – is largely off the radar of practitioners. Some managers are making strides in this area. It's difficult for some agencies to determine where to begin. Perhaps LLSC could take a stronger role in this area – beyond showing agencies where our resources on Succession Planning are. Maybe we could select 3 agencies and work with them on beginning/augmenting their succession plans.

- Practitioners would like to develop a better understanding of reports that come from EOIS-CaMS. Could be a topic for Performance Management. What information do managers most wish practitioners *did* understand from EOIS-CaMS?

- Some organizations have begun to link Performance Reviews for staff to Report 64.

- Program staff would appreciate a workshop that is specific to EOIS-CaMS. We need CaMS experts to help us problem solve and interpret.

- Some agencies are looking to develop policies and procedures that are specific to LBS. As part of a multi-service environment, the LBS agency thought it was covered by the broader organization, but it needs LBS-specific policies.

- In Performance Management – it can be challenging to implement continuous improvement. Be careful that you don't aim too high, but look at your SQS – and the provincial score.

- Customer service – what else, if anything, are people asking of learners? Maybe LLSC could gather different questions that agencies are asking and share them back with the field.

- Agencies should also be aware of compliance issues re: AODA.

- Succession planning – practitioners could be ensuring they have up-to-date job descriptions and that important referral sources and protocols they have in the community are documented.

- One agency (a large one) asked staff to do a job description weekly, monthly and annually. It also asks staff to pinpoint anticipated retirement dates and budgets 1 day/month for PD/EOIS-CaMS discussions.

- Under technology – programs are interested in how others are using SMART Boards (if they have them).

- One agency develops an annual PD plan – quality control, data integrity, interpretation.

- Plan ahead – integrate technology planning with succession planning.

- Consider the use of e-Readers on site.

- Nowhere in EOIS-CaMS does it show that someone has been referred to do their GED…

Information and Referral – Summary of Discussion

Uses

Tri-county area has an Excel sheet that's been developed by Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN). All literacy programs in the Tri-County area use it, all OW offices also use it, and now Employment (Goodwill) is starting to use it. Only TCLN can make changes to it. It has numerous drop-down windows with program contact info and so on. In the end, when you print this out, only the selections you made show up. Service Providers print two pages-one that gets signed (consent to share info with referral site) that goes in the learner file and a second copy goes with the learner. Service Providers are very happy with the usefulness and simplicity of this form. They also use it for referral between literacy programs.

ATN has an inter-agency referral and consent form. Interestingly, it contains a 6-week "bridge consent" meaning the consent is meant to help bridge/ support the client while accessing the referred service. Consent does stand beyond the 6-week period.

One practitioner meets with School Board and College (individual instructors) and shows them student materials so they have an idea of what student is a good fit for her program, and vice versa. She says they will also mini case conference on occasion to decide what's in the best interest of an individual. In this case, the service provider comes to the program for the discussion. (This service provider is co-located with several other service providers).

Two practitioners expressed a wish that something like this existed in the LLSC area and also stated that they've been trying to get one in place for a long time now.

Likes
From the resources on the table, people liked the LNW common referral from found in the Assessment and Training Referral Guide for Northwestern Ontario Employment Ontario Service Delivery Partners (2102).
One practitioner indicated that she liked the idea of the wraparound charts!

Needs

A checklist from entry to exit that follows the life of a learner; a face page for the front of the learner file

One place where literacy programs can share tools; seems like they are all needing and creating the same things - example: Screening tools

Other conversations and items of interest

- Literacy programs: "training dollars" can be used to cover the transportation cost for learner to go for their **FIRST** visit **TO** a referral site.

- Confusion around when a referral counts: Does it count when you make the referral or when the learner arrives at the referral site? One practitioner's ETC said she isn't responsible to make sure that someone follows through on a referral. This statement alone can be interpreted in a couple of ways, hence the confusion.

- One practitioner keeps an updated binder with local services, job postings and events in her class for service providers to access and for learners to use.   She gets a summer student to update the binder at both locations.

- One participant is creating a Gant chart to track timelines and put all tasks on a list (reports due, QSARS and so on). He oversees 13 programs including LBS, ESL.

- One programs has a dedicated person who reviews CaMS data and reports on it at each staff meeting

- A useful resource called Difficult or Disability- link below:
  http://www.lindr.on.ca/resources/learning_disabilities/difficult_or_disability_res_guide.pdf)

Boutique Programming – Summary of Discussion

1. **What resources under this category have you / do you find useful? Why?**

- Good response to the ES Workbooks series. All 4 breakout groups shared feedback on the workshops, but most said they use them more as a resource then as structured piece of training. Several comments made about the fact that some of the links included are broken - **could we provide a 1-page update with accurate links?** There was also an issue reported for those using the online system, that if you don't sign on to the program at least weekly, the program loses their password and they have to start all over again. I asked the last time that someone had that experience, and they said 9 months ago, but they haven't used it online since.

- Bridging the Employment Gap series is well received too - several have seen them and think they're good

- The SMOW program has been seen and used, but garnered a mixed response at the table. Those who were less positive said it was "not cool enough - no buy-in from my learners." One practitioner said their learners thought they were being talked down to.

- A Dream that Walks (goal setting) was used and appreciated

- LLEO Essential skills training books are wonderfully specific, and the learners like them, but the instructors find them very time-consuming and therefore, difficult to manage

- One practitioner mentioned the Arducopter & MaKey courses

- One practitioner mentioned that she's seen mental health, health, and budgeting workshops, which lead to a discussion on what is a workshop vs. what is a boutique program?

- One practitioner mentioned a 9-week computer skills course for job readiness their program ran. Very well received. Included Word, PowerPoint and Excel

- One practitioner in a Native literacy program mentioned her 6-week program on Anishnabe life skills, which was then adjusted to include language skills as well

- One practitioner shared information about her G1 boutique course, which got a very good response from learners. She tied in her ET dollars to help client pay for the test.

- Budgeting in the 21st century is used at one program

- One practitioner mentioned their self-developed Computer Skills for Job Search program

- One school board program mentioned that they ran a blueprint reading & WHMIS boutique program for low-German learners on site at a fabrication plant. Twice a week for a semester – very positive response.

2. What else do you think you need / what challenges do you find in this area?

Practitioners would like boutique programs on the topics of:

- WHMIS & workplace safety

- Digital technology in general

- Programs to help learners develop the skills that will allow them to successfully complete online learning in the future

- Effective communication skills in the workplace

- Computer skills for independence as well - seniors a big draw here

- Math for the workplace

- Essential skills for apprenticeship and preparation for testing and the educational components of the program (and the C of Q exam)

- Basic computer boutique programs that MTCU supports

- Life skills boutique program

- Trades programming - some seen at today's session they already want to roll out

- Boutique programs that can bridge to milestones for Competency D. There was a note that we need more Competency D milestones, especially for lower level learners.

- Algebra piece – one program who works with learners who have disabilities could maybe help develop a boutique program

Additional suggestions to help boutique programming be successful within the LBS environment:

- Create a brief Boutique Programming Guide - a definition of what boutique programming is, how to use it, and share resources (example: ABEA's resource). Talk about stats - who benefits from the referral (svc coordination & learner #)?

- Know where to get it and what's available - and could there be a feedback option for those who have tried a boutique program re: how it worked?

- Issue - lots of paperwork for short programs... And having to follow up with learners @ the 3-6-12 months is a pain as Boutique Suitability factors may be a concern – one practitioner asked if programs could talk to one another before sending clients just to be sure that they don't negatively affect stats.

- There were several requests to send ABEA document on available boutique programing out to programs once it's completed

- Reduce paperwork for boutique programming and reduce follow-up calls for boutique. Could there be a release of information form so learners don't have to fill out the paperwork twice when accessing a boutique program?

- A better understanding / marketing of how boutique programming can help programs reach their numbers

- Consider income issues when developing boutique programs – don't incorporate a lot of technology that those battling poverty cannot afford to access

- Hands-on really helps

- Concerns over whether there's time to develop boutique programming lead to a discussion about not "recreating the wheel" - sharing boutique programming throughout programs in our communities.

- Work on a community schedule so no programs duplicate their boutique offerings, and work as a team to provide boutique programs in a rotational fashion

- A challenge: learners may not like being sent to another place for boutique programs - and once they go out the door you may lose them. Coordinating a central location (like a library) for a boutique program hosted by a literacy agency that the learners from several other agencies could also attend would be helpful to overcome that

Additional Information

Literacy Northwest compiled a document called *A List of Tools and Resources Available to Support LBS Service Providers in Ontario.* This resource is available upon request from Literacy Link South Central.

Questions about this newsletter? Please contact us at 519-681-7307 or literacylink@gmail.com