



Notes from One Goal project consultation held September 24, 2013

Overview

Literacy Link Niagara (LLN) received funding to review the role of frontline literacy practitioners in assisting lower-skilled clients in moving towards employment, including the identification of tools and supports that frontline practitioners need. To complete this project, LLN is taking a community action-research approach. LLN staff are connecting with both practitioners and learners to identify the types of tools that will best support these transitions. This project is one strategy of several being researched by adult regional literacy networks in Ontario. The collection of these projects is called the “Coordinating to Bring Low Literacy and Marginalized Clients Employment” project and is coordinated by Literacy Link South Central.

As part of a round table with literacy practitioners in late Spring 2013, it was identified that a better understanding of employment services and a definition of “job ready” would be beneficial. To help build this knowledge, Literacy Link Niagara held a day of facilitated discussion with literacy and employment services staff on September 24, 2013. The day was called “One Goal” and the notes from the discussions are below.

LBS responses	Responses in common	ES responses
1. What does “job-ready” mean when describing a client?		
Depend on client	Depends on client	Depends on client, job and workplace
Other needs may be more immediate than literacy and employment	Basic needs need to be met first	Basic needs need to be met first – housing, food, safety, support system
Necessary education to prosper		Defined by client

Trend – more college required	What is the client willing to do? Want to do? Have to do?
LBS clients are usually ready for training or employment services after literacy program, not necessarily job-ready	Client must be qualified and willing, not necessarily fully literate
Good employment record, confidence, self management skills	Need a current resume to even apply
Difference between survival and sustainable jobs	<p>Major barriers to employment include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computer literacy and communications skills (not just effective communications but appropriate for employment setting) • problem-solving • critical thinking • poor self-perception • low confidence • negative attitude about the value of work
Getting a client job-ready should be a shared responsibility with employment services	<p>There are gaps in knowledge and education from the formal education system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients may have Gr. 12 but spelling, grammar and math skills may be low • focus is on academics when trades may be the best option
Issue of timelines to get a client job-ready – different targets and expectations by LBS and ES	<p>Service coordination is key – client needs to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand obstacles • be presented with realistic options • make choices
2 When is it time to refer an ES client to LBS? Or vice versa?	
Usually happens at the end of	In tandem In tandem and early on

a program, but should happen at the same time		
Should have fluid transitions between services	Seamless/fluid transitions should be goal	Approach should be seamless not a handoff to another agency
Should have a client-centred approach		Parallel plans well communicated
Connection with ES onsite ideal		Focus first on short-term goals
Does ES see LBS as a step back?		Communication among service providers is key
		Unanswered question: Who is the client's service coordinator if a client is served by ES and LBS? The worker who initiated the service coordination?
		All the more reason for partnerships and co-location
3. What tools do you use to determine when to refer a client?		
Conversations and assessments	Conversations and assessments	Conversations and assessments with client
*LBS group did not have time to discuss this fully		Open-ended questions
		The intake process - qualitative rapport
		Meetings and communication between ES and LBS
		Preparation programs like "Ready, Set, Know"
		Don't need any more forms - we have enough - need tips and best practices shared between ES and LBS
4. Next steps (identified by both LBS and ES)		
	Regional by community service language what we can do for each other at intake	
	Let's start making each others' phones ring with client referrals!	
	Need a common contact list for ES and LBS for referral purposes	
	Have ES and LBS staff meet regionally within common	

**catchment areas (Niagara West,
Niagara Falls, etc.)**

**Use common, practical language
about how we can help each other
in serving client's needs (e.g.
computer training, time
management, goal-setting, etc.)**

**Identify client's literacy and
employment issues at intake**