

Transitions Projects

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Prepared By: Jennifer Kirkham



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Introduction

A number of Regional Literacy Networks in the Southwest Region and Central Region have been working on projects that relate to the transition of learners and clients between Employment Services (ES) and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs. These projects include¹:

- Easing Transitions Project
- Supporting Transitions Project
- The Role of Frontline Practitioners
- Literacy/Employment Joint Service Plan
- The Low Literacy Worker
- The Role of Multi-Service Centres in Assisting Clients without Grade 12 Reach Employment
- Integrating OALCF Task Development within Ontario's Anglophone Literacy Programs (aka Teaching to Fish) Project
- Formalizing Transitions between Employment Services and LBS

The purpose of this report is to synthesize what has been learned about transitions between ES and LBS programs from each of the projects and to share it with the broader field. This report provides information on the following topics:

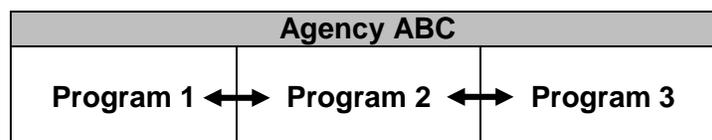
1. Description of transitions
2. Brief description of each of the projects and a link to project material, if available
3. Key learnings from the projects
4. Connections between the projects, with the identification of gaps/areas for further research

Description of Transitions

There are many transition points for learners/clients. These transition points can be within the LBS system (when referring a learner from one LBS program to another), between LBS and ES programs, between ESL and LBS, between LBS and apprenticeship programs, between Employment Ontario programs, etc. A client or learner's path may include many transitions. The solution is to be learner-centred versus program or agency-centred and to employ a coordinated case management approach.

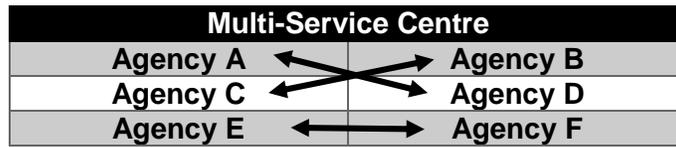
In addition to there being many transition points for learners/clients, transitions/referrals may look very different in each community, depending on the resources available in that community. Different tools, supports and resources will need to be employed to ensure successful transitions based on this. The following four visuals outline potential transition/referral points based on available community resources.

1. One agency in the community providing all services – referrals are made between programs within one agency



¹ Note: There are many other projects underway in Ontario that are looking at the topic of transitions. This report only includes the 2013/2014 projects that are currently focused on Literacy and Basic Skills work.

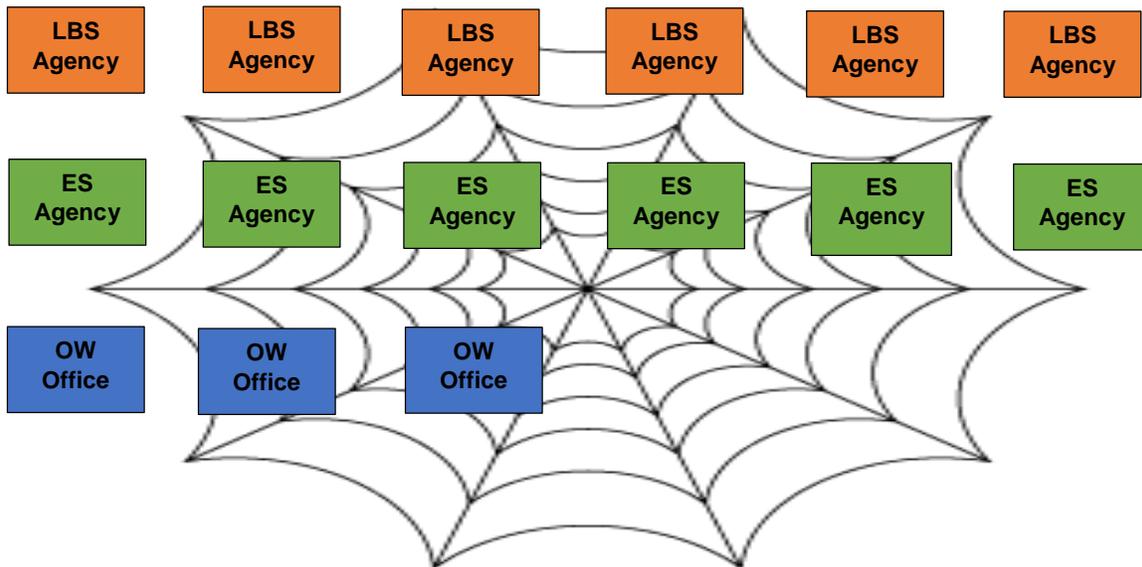
2. Multi-service centre in the community – referrals are made between agencies that are co-located in a multi-service centre



3. Rural community with one agency per sector in the area – referrals are made between each of the LBS, ES, and Ontario Works agencies



4. Urban community with multiple agencies in each sector – referrals are made between many ES, LBS and Ontario Works locations, becoming a much more complex web of referrals



Each of the above four models will have very different needs when it comes to best supporting smooth transitions for clients/learners.

Description of the Projects

The following table provides a brief description of each of the projects included in this report. A link is provide to project material, if available.

| Name of Project and Literacy Network | Brief Description of the Transition-Related Project |
|--|--|
| <p>Easing Transitions Project</p> <p>Literacy Link Niagara</p> | <p>In March of 2009, Literacy Link Niagara completed its Easing Transitions for Clients between EO Agencies Project. The purpose of this project was to better understand the literacy levels required of a learner to fully participate in the employment preparation programs offered in the Niagara Region (to ensure a successful transition between literacy and employment programs). The goal of the project was to ensure that literacy learners referred to employment programs would be more appropriately matched.</p> <p>Final Report http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/wp-content/uploads/ETwebreport.pdf</p> |
| <p>Supporting Transitions Project</p> <p>Literacy Link Niagara</p> | <p>The Supporting Transitions Project was the second phase of the Easing Transitions Project. The goal of this project was to increase referrals to ES and to increase the understanding of a literacy assessment. A number of tools were developed to educate and assist literacy agencies and employment agencies in utilizing each other's programs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An online pre-screening tool to help employment agencies and clients recognize when a client may require literacy services ▪ A web-based information and referral protocol tool designed to help employment agencies and their clients find programs best suited to them <p>Final Report http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/wp-content/uploads/STFinalReport.pdf</p> |
| <p>The Role of Frontline Practitioners (LMP Project)</p> <p>Literacy Link Niagara</p> | <p>This project reviewed the role of frontline practitioners in assisting lower-skilled clients in moving towards employment, including the identification of tools and supports that frontline practitioners need. As part of this project eight local in-demand job profiles were developed (using information from the local training board and the Working in Canada websites) to act as a resource for practitioners to use in literacy classrooms. The profiles include daily tasks, average wage, education required and local availability.</p> <p>Powerpoint from Webinar http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Webinar%205%20Slides%20-Supporting%20LBS%20Practitioners-%20Dec-17-2013%20-%20ABEA%20%2B%20LLN.pdf</p> |

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|---|--|
| | <p>Tools for Transitions Literature Review http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Tools%20for%20Transitions%20Literature%20Review.docx</p> |
| <p>Literacy/Employment Joint Service Plan</p> <p>Literacy Link South Central</p> | <p>The Employment Sector Council of London/Middlesex and Literacy Link South Central worked together to more effectively plan for services that cut across both the employment and literacy sectors. This process was called the Integrating Literacy and Employment Project. The result of this project was a three year integrated service plan for those clients who have both literacy and employment needs.</p> <p>The final plan proposed four models to support more integrated service delivery:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standalone literacy and employment agencies using a series of information tools and referral protocols 2. Co-location of literacy and employment programs 3. Integrated literacy and employment programming 4. Centralized case management <p>Literacy and Employment Integrated Service Plan for London and Middlesex County http://literacyserviceplanning.ca/sites/default/files/2010%20Service%20plan.pdf</p> |
| <p>The Low Literacy Worker (LMP Project)</p> <p>Literacy Link South Central</p> | <p>The purpose of this project was to work with Employment Services (ES) job developers and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) practitioners to explore ways to bring unemployed low-literacy learners with a history of working, but who have a significant amount of time to put in before they could attain a GED equivalency, to employment more quickly.</p> <p>The target client base for the project was those being passed over for employment as a result of the minimum OSSD or GED standards on job applications, but who really need to be working rather than waiting the years it may take to achieve either of those certifications. The project explored how Employment Services and LBS Services could jointly support the clients.</p> <p>Powerpoint from Webinar http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Webinar%201%20Slides%200-%20Dec%209-2013%20-%20Engaging%20Young%20Males%20%2B%20Experienced%20Worker%20with%20Low%20Literacy%20Skills.pdf</p> |

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|--|--|
| <p>The Role of Multi-Service Centres in Assisting Clients without Grade 12 Reach Employment</p> <p>QUILL</p> | <p>This project conducted a literature review and research on how multi-service centres in other jurisdictions in the province successfully serve clients without a grade 12 education and help them to gain meaningful employment. It resulted in a best practices guide for multi-service centres.</p> <p>The Best Practice Guide for Successful Multi-Agency Centres presents information on the impact of multi-agency centres, best practices for multi-agency centres and different models of multi-agency centres. Sources for this guide were drawn from an extensive online search, using key phrases and words related to variations of multi-agency/multi-service good practices.</p> <p>Best Practice Guide http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Webinar%20%20Best%20Practice%20Guide%20for%20Multi-Agency%20centres%20and%20appendices.pdf</p> <p>Powerpoint from Webinar http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Mastering%20the%20Puzzle%20Pieces%20-%20Webinar%20Slides%20-%20Dec-11-2013.pdf</p> |
| <p>Integrating OALCF Task Development within Ontario's Anglophone Literacy Programs (aka Teaching to Fish) Project</p> <p>QUILL</p> | <p>QUILL has been populating a web portal with tasks that LBS practitioners can use within the OALCF Framework. The tasks assist practitioners in preparing learners for their goals and transitioning learners to next steps. The purpose of the Teaching to Fish project is to populate the portal with a further 20 tasks built around local transition points to the ES system. This project is linked to the SMLN project (Formalizing Transitions between ES and LBS)</p> |
| <p>Formalizing Transitions between Employment Services and LBS</p> <p>Simcoe/Muskoka Learning Network</p> | <p>The purpose of this project is to research the ways in which ES and LBS programs have been working together to promote transitions from ES to LBS and from LBS to ES. As part of this research, the project is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documenting and sharing best practices regarding transitions between ES and LBS as well as examples of screening tools and introductory/awareness raising workshops that are in use ▪ Informally piloting some of these best practices in Simcoe/Muskoka ▪ Examining how EOIS-CaMS data and reports can be used to track, compare and project results within the Performance Management Framework ▪ Investigating how the transitioning of clients between ES and LBS can be effectively documented and integrated into the current Literacy Service Planning processes and products |

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| | <p>A number of products are being produced as a result of this project. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Best Practices Guide that documents current best practices related to transitioning LBS learners to ES and ES clients to LBS, along with examples of screening tools and workshops that are in use provincially and beyond, and case studies of any piloted best practices 2. A webinar to share the results of the research 3. Face-to-face training sessions for LBS and ES providers, based on the webinar |

Key Learnings from the Transitions Projects

The following table details the key learnings gleaned from each of the projects. Of note:

- There needs to be a better connection/alignment between the two sectors (ES and LBS), especially around who does what, services being provided and level of materials
- Although tools and information help to ensure an effective/successful transition for a client/learner, relationships between transition partners and the ability to create a level of comfort for the client/learner are the most critical components
- When developing tools, it is important to use language that the other sector understands
- Co-located services make it easier to transition clients/learners between ES and LBS programs



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| <p>Easing Transitions Project</p> <p>Literacy Link Niagara</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A learner would be required to have a literacy level of 2/3 in reading and a 2 in writing to complete and participate in any of the employment preparation programs assessed, with the understanding that there will be an ES staff member guiding the learner through the materials ▪ The top essential skills required by an ES client are: reading, document use, writing, job task planning, finding information, critical thinking, computer use, numeracy, decision making, oral communication, problem solving, and working with others ▪ Clarity of ES material, including language and design, was a concern ▪ Relationship-building and opportunities for dialogue are required between ES and LBS providers |

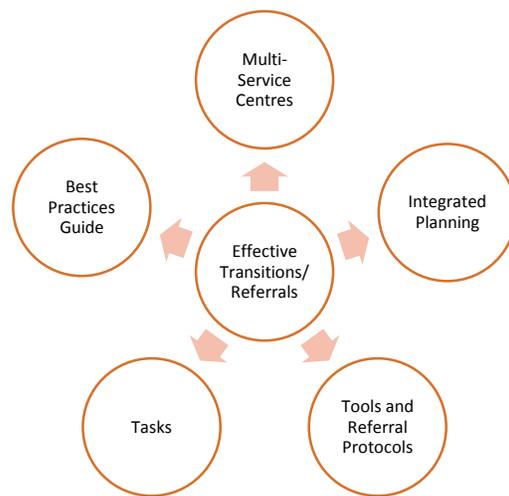
| Name of Project and Literacy Network | Key Learnings from the Transitions Projects |
|---|--|
| Supporting Transitions Project Literacy Link Niagara | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When just starting to work with Employment Ontario agencies you need to build trust with them ▪ It is hard to get people to understand the literacy system. Develop tools that allow quick access to literacy information without requiring background knowledge ▪ In the development of tools, Literacy Link Niagara used the language and style that Employment Ontario staff is used to, allowing for quick understanding and easy use by the clients |
| The Role of Frontline Practitioners (LMP Project) Literacy Link Niagara | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Job ready” differs from client to client ▪ Both LBS and ES practitioners were confused about whose job starts when ▪ Both LBS and ES are not sure when to make transitions ▪ LBS and ES practitioners don’t want tools. They want conversation and relationships ▪ Several potential tools and supports are needed that were suggested by the field to help practitioners support learner transitions to employment /employment programs. These include: easy to use job profiles related to competencies that help clients understand in-demand jobs and their daily experiences, and a coordinated definition of job-ready and transition process by adult literacy and employment services ▪ It is difficult to find up-to-date local information on local labour market trends that include jobs requiring little training or education – most require college or university and are limited to information about emerging industries, not specific jobs ▪ Concerns by programs of disconnect between expectations, processes and timelines of literacy and employment programs |
| Literacy/Employment Joint Service Plan Literacy Link South Central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools, resources and supports were consistently mentioned by both literacy and employment service providers as items which could help to more effectively meet the needs of clients with both literacy and employment needs ▪ Specific program information and how to access the programs is required by both literacy and employment service providers ▪ The first component of having the literacy and employment service systems work effectively for those clients with both literacy and employment needs is to have the two systems develop an integrated plan for these clients |
| The Low Literacy Worker (LMP Project) Literacy Link South Central | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The client experience path is different from employment agency to employment agency. Some of the differences include: the length of time it takes to get an appointment with an Employment Counsellor, how intake is done, the in-house supports available for clients, and the targeted clientele that the agency is “best suited” to support ▪ The process to complete paperwork is different from agency to agency. While all EO funded agencies use the Employment Services Participant Registration form, some have the client fill it out without supervision, some with, and some actually fill much of it out for the client ▪ There are gaps in understanding at both ES and LBS agencies |

| Name of Project and Literacy Network | Key Learnings from the Transitions Projects |
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| | <p>regarding what is available to support clients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Co-located ES and LBS programs feel they are better equipped to support experienced job searchers with low literacy skills ▪ Experienced job searchers with low literacy skills need a shorter turnaround time for services |
| <p>The Role of Multi-Service Centres in Assisting Clients without Grade 12 Reach Employment</p> <p>QUILL</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service providers want to improve how they serve clients and they want to learn more about community partners in order to do that ▪ Multi-service centres have positive impacts on professionals, service users and agencies ▪ There are ten best practices that can assist when setting up/evaluating a multi-service centre: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure appropriate agencies are co-located to match user needs 2. Implement effective planning and organization strategies for the centre as a whole 3. Look for ways resources can be shared and/or pooled amongst all the agencies 4. Ensure there is ease of accessibility of services 5. Secure commitments from partnering agencies 6. Have clear understanding of roles and responsibilities amongst partner agencies and their staff 7. Encourage communication and information sharing amongst agencies 8. Collaborate on activities and ventures when feasible and appropriate 9. Ensure there is a link to employers and/or employment opportunities 10. Implement protocols that enhance referrals and information exchange about shared clients |
| <p>Integrating OALCF Task Development within Ontario's Anglophone Literacy Programs (aka Teaching to Fish) Project</p> <p>QUILL</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project still under development – no learnings to date regarding transitions (see SMLN project below) |
| <p>Formalizing Transitions between Employment Services and LBS</p> <p>Simcoe/Muskoka Learning Network</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transitioning a learner from LBS to ES happens along the whole learner path (a very individualized approach), but the most common transition points were identified as being at the initial intake and when students need income/lose their current job ▪ Clients/learners do not necessarily access ES and LBS services discretely. Many times it makes sense for a client/learner to access these services concurrently ▪ The usual transition points for an ES client being referred to LBS are at intake/first assessment, when the client's goals are |

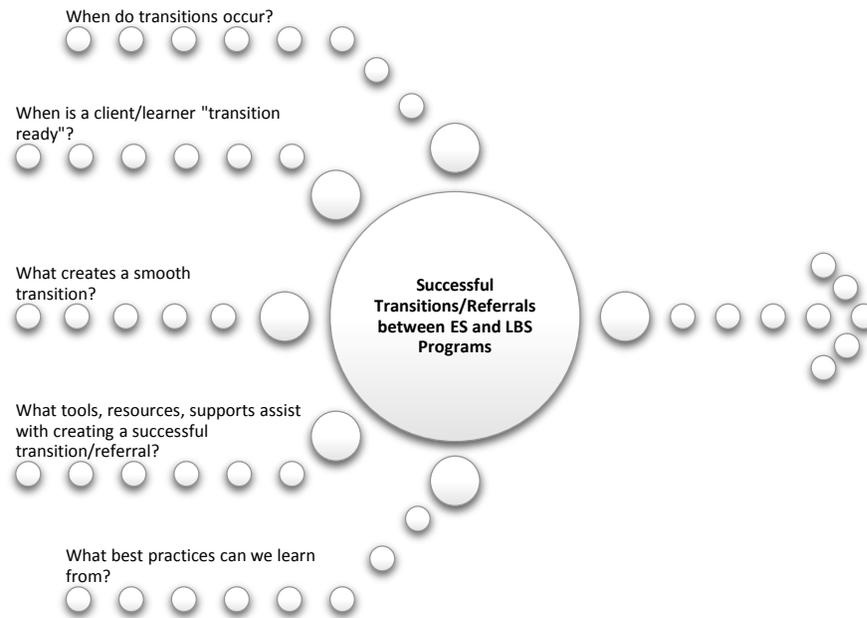
| Name of Project and Literacy Network | Key Learnings from the Transitions Projects |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>identified and through further follow up/observation of the client. ES providers stated that the need to refer a client to LBS is identified usually within two to three meetings with the client</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In order to be “transition ready” LBS learners need the following: essential (basic) computer skills, employment goal, communication and basic problem solving skills, willingness to try something new, life skills, and motivation ▪ In order to be “transition ready” ES clients need the following: have a concrete goal in place, see LBS as part of a bigger plan, basic needs are met, and motivation/commitment ▪ The top two factors which create a smooth transition for clients/learners are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having relationships with the transition partners - Creating a comfort level for the client/learner ▪ Tools, resources and supports that can help to ensure a successful transition for clients/learners are: common referral forms, process; information about services/inventory of services; and, opportunities for interaction, communication ▪ There are six main areas in which best practices and tools or resources appear to be somewhat common. These are contained in the Best Practices Guide. These six areas include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Screening and referral tools 2. Service directories 3. Joint planning and partnerships 4. Networking, workshops and information sharing 5. Co-location 6. Resources targeting employers, employees and learners |

Connections between the Projects

The projects highlighted in this report all help to inform the field about transitions between ES and LBS for clients/learners. The Formalizing Transitions project led by the Simcoe/Muskoka Learning Network and the Role of Frontline Practitioners project led by Literacy Link Niagara draw together some of the foundational questions about transitions/referrals between ES and LBS programs. Many of the other projects provide information and learnings about how to create more effective transitions/referrals.



Through these projects, a number of key research questions have been identified (see visual below) and more still needs to be done.



Areas which require further research include:

- Barriers which impede successful transitions and the solutions needed to address them
- The learner/client perspective on successful transitions/what creates a seamless service experience for them
- Measurement of effective referrals
- How to create incentives for practitioners to refer
- Transitions between ESL and LBS
- Transitions between LBS and apprenticeship

Moving Forward

Over the past number of years, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has been emphasizing the need for a seamless service experience for clients accessing the Employment Ontario system. This shift in emphasis has broadened the focus of service coordination to include consideration and alignment of literacy services with the achievement of Employment Ontario outcomes. Transitions/referrals between programs and sectors is a key part of making this happen.

Regional Literacy Networks have been attuned to this shift and have been engaging in research on how to best create smooth transitions for clients/learners in the Employment Ontario system. More needs to be done from both a research and practical perspective. The findings from the research done to date needs to be implemented more broadly across communities in Ontario and further research needs to be done (see above section for suggested areas of research).

The creation of a seamless service experience for clients is not a simple task, but focusing on transitions/referrals is critical to making this happen.