

## Completion of Goal Path Questions and Answers

### Interviewers: Jane Tuer, Leah Morris

- A. Conestoga College, Waterloo (Thanh-Thanh Tieu and Brian Hofstetter)
- B. Waterloo Region District School Board – Essential Skills Upgrading (Linda Brooks)
- C. L'ABC Communautaire-Welland (Normand Savoie)
- D. District School board of Niagara-Niagara Adult Literacy for the Deaf (Shirley Henley)
- E. Unemployed Help Centre (Vanessa Soulliere)
- F. College Boreal-London (Philippe Morin – Kim sat in for Philippe)
- G. London District Catholic School Board, Center for Lifelong Learning (Jill Slemon)

#### 1. How do you prepare a learner for doing a culminating task?

##### A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- Frame it as a longer milestone to learners, which they've been completing regularly, and makes it less intimidating
- Embedded in a place in the curriculum where they've already attained the necessary skills to be successful
- Teachers have a good idea of learners' readiness and won't have them write a CT unless they feel confident that the learner will be successful

B. Like Conestoga College, using a check list, we will have the milestone after a certain activity that needs to be done and at the end we will have the CT. One of the things we try to do is have them do the CT a week or two before they are leaving, it can be stressful/emotional the day they are leaving, and when they do the CT a little bit ahead of their transition, they often have a bit of a boost knowing that they succeeded in this and should be able to move onto my next steps.

C. Once our learners have achieved all their LA, tasks and adequate preparations to achieve their goal, we then administer the CT before they leave the program. It is a question of good rhythm and common sense.

We start every Monday morning with a staff meeting and talk about every learner and of course the lower level learners are always a challenge in many ways. It takes more time as long as we can have evidence if TCU is questioning why it takes more time, we are going to get better results, and then we feel fine about it.

D. Sound issues – comments in text chat. *(Jane read: Identify CT on learner plan at the beginning so the instructor knows all the skills required to successfully complete the CT.*

- E. We ensure that the required level to complete CT are achieved, but generally as soon as our teachers think that the learner is ready and capable, we give it to them.
- F. We use assessment, LA and milestones, and speak with the learner and the coordinator and if there is agreement, we do the CT.
- G. Manager:** Teaching to the test is important in this sort of system. My hope is that the OALCF would communicate the key concepts a learner must know in order to write and pass the culminating task (as well as the studying and time management skills required for success. A mirrored task should be first administered to determine readiness (but not until the learner felt ready to attempt the task and the teacher was certain the outcome would be likely be successful).

**Teacher:** I break down what is tested on the culminating, and review these concepts with the Learners. What is tested on the Culminating is not new material for the learner, but they do need a refresher of this material since they are tested on multiple competencies at once. After reviewing the material, we spend some time on the areas they struggled the most with. After reviewing and more practicing, I provide them with a Mock Culminating Task. Review their attempt with the Learner and if necessary, review difficult concepts again before administrating the culminating task. I have only had 2 students complete the culminating task, I feel that this answer will develop and grow as more students complete the task. All our students are unique, and have a preferred learning style. I would try to tailor their preparation in the style they find most effective. But I would always give them a mock culminating test, allowing them to anticipate what will be tested and lower their anxiety.

2. What kinds of learning activities do you report within EOIS – CaMS?

A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- Any science topics
- Anything beyond OALCF level 3 (e.g., advanced math topics, advanced communications)

B. We don't use the LA part of CaMS very much...just those things over and above OALCF, otherwise it is listed in one of the competencies. We don't use them very much, it's not needed at the levels we are serving, as we forward people onto employment or Conestoga College. Mostly 1 and 2 levels.

C. All LBS materials as well as learning workshops we have with learners, plus numeracy, reading writing computer activities are reported.

D. We set up our learner plan with 4-5 skills per LA, so we will have actual things like making a list. Most of our learners are low level, so we tend to have a lot of LA in our CaMS, to keep our learners active until they can do a milestone.

- E. Our teachers report LA that are related to the GED, i.e. algebra, but it isn't in the OALCF. Any extra assignments developed to target certain issues, so they can reach their goals—then we would put those in.
- F. The LA that we report are main learning activities, like French, Math and Science. Because we have heard about entering all LA, it is not good because it is too much info for TCU, so normally report our main activities.
3. In what way(s) can learners who are at a low level one best show success?
- A. Conestoga College, Waterloo
- N/A
- We do levels 2& 3 learners
- B. We have our basic training plan that we use, but we also have smaller training plans, with steps, so people can see they are completing milestones, and moving towards transition—a checklist, (short-term training plan) to help show that. Let them know in the language—you don't have to get 100% in this....if you got 80% in school would you not be happy with that. Some learners think they have to get 100% in milestones. Ties in with sometimes we just have to look at the language of this milestone or CT, use that so they hear these terms a bit more—not really teaching to the test but some might argue with me. If someone goes to work, they will get trained in their employers' jargon, so that's what we do.
- C. When they are able to do some tasks, such as making a phone call. It is important to know all of the milestones.
- D. After a lot of non-successful CTs, we regrouped to see what was going on and what we could do, so we looked at the work we do in the classroom, to use similar format (spacing, font size, wording) to CTs and milestones. The most success has been found with the independence CTs...simplest ones. Even more successful if there were more lower level CT for employment goals.
- E. At the very basic level, developing relationships, trust building, builds confidence and they feel like they are part of something, this usually equates to a development of competence, and if they see they can pass a milestone.
- F. Agree with others. We work on low level so we try to adapt our curriculum and classes to the show progress as fast as possible. Use adult materials.

G. **Teacher:** I see success in our students every day. Attending classes on time, establishing routines, using class time effectively are all important skills that many of our Learns lack before entering the program. Completing homework, trying new concepts, studying, showing growth and progress no matter how low of a starting level all are means to demonstrate success. For some students, we spend weeks learning how to add, but each day, I see a little more improvement. It's important to accept and understand that everyone learns differently and at different rates, and it is our job as educators to help facilitate the knowledge to our students in a way that is effective and meaningful for them.

4. At what levels do learners start doing culminating tasks?

A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- We deal with Levels 2-3
- We pretty much start a CT as soon as they show skills acquisition.
- Varies depending on goal and learner. Quite a discrepancy between a post-secondary CT and an Independence CT.

B. I would say by and large, Level 2, but I did appreciate what Shirley said about diving right in. If you have low level learners to maybe not be so rigid and try to do a CT.

C. Most CT are achieved by Level 2-3 learners. More challenging for level 1...certain areas of tasks can be done for Level 1. Many other organizations locally also believe CTs are too hard for Level 1 learners. We believe it can be done, but not all of it and not for every learner. Some believe we should wait until Level 2.

D. We start people at Level 1. At the beginning of CT time, we didn't try with many of our lower level learners. We feel that some of the independent CT are easier than some of the milestones so just dive right in.

E. Depends on the learner, and also the CT. An independent CT could be completed by Level 1 but if Post-secondary, level 3.

F. It really depends on the CT for sure, but also depends on the learner and their level and their goal. They are all different.

G. **Teacher:** I will not have a learner complete a CT until they are a level 3. I feel they need to be a level 3 in most competencies to be successful completing a CT. Writing answers in full sentences and showing their step-by-step solution is not required in the milestones, which ultimately make the CT more challenging.

5. In your experience, how likely is it for level one learners to complete a culminating task? What factors influence their success?

A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- N/A
- Likely reading levels are a factor
- I would think it would be difficult for Level 1 to do CTs. Level 2 already have challenges with CTs. The Independence CT is simpler than the others, so zero into the skills needed to be successful. Reading levels, document use too low for Level 1 to do a CT.

B. Most of ours would do it at mostly Level 2, but I agree the Independence one, knowing what's in there and knowing what your learner can do is really key in getting this done.

C. With the right timing, they should be able to do it at the end of level 1. Once we feel they have a certain level of reading and writing (put an ad in the paper, do a simple budget) we feel they might be ready. They need the right motivation and on a good day. Most of our learners are dealing with all kinds of social issues, so make sure they don't have a lot on their mind when doing a CT. If all these factors are positive we figure they are ready to do it and might have a chance to be successful.

D. 50% of our learners could do an Independence CT, and maybe 5% could do an employment CT because the skills are unrelated to the jobs they get. Some of the factors are the learner plan and the staff awareness of the skills required. Ensure the learner is ready.

E. Agree with Shirley. For us Independence is extremely likely. Success comes from realistic goals and goal path setting, perseverance and practice with multi-step group work to build confidence.

F. Present the CT as a goal to complete. Prepare them for the steps and the process. Preparing them for it based on the learner's needs

**G. Teacher:** I have never provided a level 1 learner with a CT, I do not want to overwhelm my students and set them up for failure. Knowing my students, if I gave a level 1 learner a CT, they would not even attempt to answer the majority of the questions.

Student success can be influenced by the following factors: self-confidence, the right time in a students' life, proper help and guidance, positive relationships with instructors and peers, breaking learning into to steps making it more tangible and less overwhelming.

5. What training, if anything, do you or your network provide staff on completion of goal path?

A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- Webinars
- CSC annual conference provides PD
- In-house training and consultation to plan when is most appropriate to deliver learning activities and culminating tasks based on curriculum

- Coordinators of each campus meeting monthly to share what is working, what isn't working.
- We have working groups (math, communications, computers) to go over curriculum, sharing info, resources.

B. We have regular staff meetings...but our staff have been there for quite awhile now. The network does provide excellent training. A lot of inhouse PD. Our PD budget is next to nothing, but we go to the network meetings as often as possible. Self-study on our own hours. Webinars.

C. Our staff received excellent training by COFA. Staff meeting every Monday morning, where we share info.

D. My staff were having difficulty with CT because we do low-level learners, some with special needs. At a staff meeting we assigned and analyzed a CT and shared results amongst each other. Did some mind-mapping. Some staff were doing level 3 CT, while someone was doing filling out a medical form for an Independence CT. It was interesting to compare the levels. Our regional network is having an upcoming meeting about successful completion of CT.

E. I don't have much to add to this, but similarly we do have opportunities for PD and webinars. I find that just reading the OALCF ministry documentation/guidelines help me understand better. Our teachers are good at teaching themselves. I would participate in PD if it were available and the funds were there.

F. Monthly meetings, webinars, LBS community.

6. What supports does your network/LSP or support organization give you in meeting completion of goal path requirements?

A. Conestoga College, Waterloo

- See above
- Shared learners for individuals who are various levels for different subjects

We answered this in the previous question. The Quill portal is helpful. The LSP meetings to clarify which organization is dealing with what level which helps with referral processes when sharing learners. We have 4 sites, and 2-3 LSP tables, we find the informal discussions useful. Also, we have discussions among ourselves to get difference perspectives.

B. If we didn't have the support of the networks, it would be an overwhelming job to have people reach their goals. The networks really help build that cohesion and help us carve out the niches.

C. Common frontline meetings are a good avenue. The online training offered by COFA is very helpful.

- D. Our network sends out resources and PD that is available and we often do things with ABEA in Hamilton, so that's good...useful information.
  - E. They offer Taskbased activities for LBS portal, and various links to websites and PDF documents.
  - F. Workshops, exchanges between sites, webinars
7. What would you say are the best practices for having learners complete their goal paths?
- A. Conestoga College, Waterloo
    - CT's are embedded in curriculum, toward the middle to end
    - Try not to leave the CT to the absolute end as many students may not stay to complete it or will rush through it
    - Emphasize to the learner the purpose and importance of completing the CT
  - B. A lot of it comes back to relationships with people, and a good learning environment Let them know from the beginning that they are doing CTs to get to their next step. People know they are working towards something so that helps them. People from community agencies and employment services come in to talk, so learners don't feel isolated. We say if this activity doesn't work, we will try a different one.
  - C. Give ongoing support. Make sure there is consistency in their learning environment. Praise achievement. Ensure positive learning environment.
  - D. We haven't talked about the time factor for CT. That can be an issue for some of our learners, so we are trying to make them comfortable with the timing. It is a challenge that they don't get stressed out.
  - E. Delivering milestones in a timely manner, and offering lots of opportunities for success regularly.
  - F. Ensure all the progress in learning activities and milestones are discussed with the learners and the instructors and the coordinator
8. What final comments or advice would you give other agencies planning to improve their completion of Goal Path numbers?
- A. It sounds like we are all doing similar things. We may have different level learners which can bring complications, but continuing to improve our program, looking at the CTs and the types of learners we have. Zero in on the skills they need to attain the goal that is theirs. Be very upfront with them at the beginning...letting them know what to expect with milestones and CTs.
- Take a learner-centred approach so learners can learn at their own pace, and advising them ahead of time what to expect.

- B. Overall training plan as well as a short-term training plan so the learner can see their progress as they go along, without it be overwhelming. Trying a CT more often rather than saying no one can do it, you are going to see some benefit.
- C. No one size fits all. Learners have different needs that have to be addressed differently. In order for us to be effective we need to understand that.
- D. If we use a learner plan format that is user friendly and present it as a package, which includes milestones and CT identified. ..smaller learning activities and integrated tasks, so every learner knows what to expect.
- E. We need to choose realistic goal paths with our learners. Allow for better matching of the goals to the CT.
- F. have a lot of discussion with learners and provide them with referrals; adapt the learning activities to meet their needs and provide encouragement to keep the communications open for follow ups
- G. **Manager:** Establish a process that will ensure success and support the learner. We have an 8.5 week module. If the learner is going to exit that module, he/she should attempt the test at the beginning of the term. If not successful, then they could rewrite end of term while re-learning the material. All of this would have to be discussed with them during the midterm and final appraisals in the earlier module so that they started to think about the transition. (In other words, lots of preparation and reminders-we also have a parallel task although the data and writing task will differ.)

**Teacher:** It is most important to help learners build self-confidence, if they feel they cannot be successful, why would they try? I think it is very important to build a strong relationship with your students and to make the classroom a place students want to be. I would also suggest making the learning relevant for students. Provide them with tasks that are meaningful to them. We have found that learners do not like work that is not directly related to their needs.

### Questions/Answers

Linda Brooks. Once you have exited someone you can go back in and say yes they did the CT. It could be cumbersome. Has anyone else any experience doing this?

Charlotte: By the time the cb learners leave, they couldn't do a CT, but then went to a school board and did a CT. So can the cb program say they did the CT too?

One of the 2 changes you can do but you have to have some kind of system outside the EOIS, and get info from the next step organization...extra admin.

Charlotte: Great idea...didn't know that was possible. Maybe the networks can look at – ask a question about how to make that happen. It may depend how long it has been. Really good point.



Jane – something to discuss at the LSP. Ask MTCU if there is a way to make that happen.

Leah--There will be some tip sheets created from what was discussed.

Jane will send info how to access the recordings. Also the transcripts will be put on the LNO website.