
COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO STANDARD FOR THE TRAINING OF PAID PRACTITIONERS

September 2003

The information included in Community Literacy of Ontario's "*Standard for the Training of Paid Practitioners*" is intended to assist agencies by supporting and increasing professionalism in the literacy field. This Standard is geared towards practitioners: those who work directly with learners in some capacity. CLO hopes that this Standard will also be a useful tool in assisting agencies in the complex area of practitioner training.

The use of the standard is strictly **voluntary** and agencies should feel free to make allowances where necessary to allow for the range of experience that paid practitioners may already have when they join your agency. It is also recognized that agencies are organized in different ways. It is hoped that agencies will strive to meet the full standard wherever possible, making adjustments as necessary to fit the uniqueness of individual community agencies.

Part 1: Initial Training

The agency is committed to providing staff members with the opportunity to gain and practise skills. Training can be delivered by a variety of methods (e.g., on-the-job, face to face, online, self-directed, workshops, manuals). Training should cover the following core components:

Understanding the Need

- Defining literacy and the role of literacy in society
- Understanding the reasons for poor literacy skills
- Understanding the role of community literacy agencies
- Including the reasons why people come to community-based programs
- Examining the factors affecting learning
- Looking at the effects of low/limited literacy skills on an individual
- Broadening the awareness of literacy issues in Canada and what this means locally

Understanding the Role of Your Agency

- Understanding service delivery in Ontario
- Understanding the LBS Program
- Creating a positive learning environment
- Monitoring, evaluating and recording the learner's progress
- Supporting a commitment to active/on-going learning
- Examining community planning for literacy services
- Accessing regional and provincial support/training

Understanding the Role of the Volunteer

- Understanding the importance of volunteer involvement
- Recruiting, screening, supporting, evaluating and recognizing volunteers
- Providing initial and ongoing training to volunteers

Understanding the Adult Learner

- Understanding the principles and theories of adult literacy education
- Highlighting the characteristics of adult literacy learners and adult learning principles
- Examining challenges and solutions to learning for adult learners
- Recognizing and accommodating special needs

Delivering Service

- Information and referral
- Learner intake
- Assessment (initial and ongoing)
- Training plan development
- Training (literacy instruction)
 - Lesson planning
 - Reading theory and application
 - Approaches to writing and spelling
 - Strategies for teaching numeracy skills
 - Learning styles
 - Record keeping
- Learner exit and follow up
- Using a learner-centred, goal-directed approach
- Ensuring learner participation
- Using a learning outcomes approach
 - Understanding learning outcomes
 - Appropriate use of all domains and skill levels
 - The role of self-management/self-direction in assessment and demonstration activities

Benefits

Initial training of paid practitioners can:

- Support the delivery of quality instruction to adult literacy learners;
 - Give employers and employees (practitioners) a clear understanding of the core components of training needed by new staff;
 - Give employees (practitioners) the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge and provide input into their training;
 - Allow practitioners to understand the needs and the challenges of the adult literacy learner;
 - Allow practitioners to successfully implement and apply their skills and knowledge to the training of volunteers and learners.
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Part 2: Ongoing Training

The agency should be committed to providing all staff members with the opportunity to gain and practice skills, both on the job and through a variety of training activities. Ongoing training can be delivered by a variety of methods (e.g., on-the job, face-to-face, online, self-directed, manuals, and at conferences or workshops). Ongoing training can enable community literacy agencies to further strengthen and support their paid practitioners.

Ongoing training should:

- Encourage practitioners to develop a professional development plan that will help meet current and changing learner, program and community needs and goals
- Focus on the continuous improvement of practitioners' skills and knowledge and on the continuous improvement of the field as a whole
- Be incorporated into the agency's planning process
- Be supported financially and with release time, within individual agency's means

Benefits

Ongoing training can:

- Support the delivery of quality instruction to adult literacy learners;
- Support practitioners to participate in ongoing training opportunities;
- Move practitioners forward personally and professionally;
- Provide direction to practitioners with regard to ongoing training needs;
- Help program managers and boards to frame job descriptions and performance appraisals.

CLO Publications
