The ABCs of CIPMS

Continuous Improvement Performance Management System

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Community Literacy of Ontario

The ABCs of
CIPMS

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* excepting inserted documents

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SECTION 1: Introduction to CIPMS

Introduction

The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) introduced the concept of a Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS) to Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) adult literacy delivery agencies in 2001 when it implemented a computer-based Information Management System (IMS).

The idea of CIPMS, however, wasn't new. Performance management has been an important concept in business and government around the world, and MTCU itself had previously implemented CIPMS in Job Connect agencies across the province. Later in this manual, we will look at some examples of how CIPMS has been beneficial for Job Connect and for a number of other organizations.

Since 2001, MTCU has continued to introduce components of CIPMS to the Ontario literacy field. Implementation has varied across the province, so in 2007, MTCU funded Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO), the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC), the Deaf Literacy Initiative (DLI), the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition (ONLC), and La Coalition francophone pour l'alphabétisation et la formation de base en Ontario (La Coalition) to provide CIPMS training to their respective members.

As part of CLO's commitment to providing CIPMS information and training to the Anglophone community-based sector, we have

- delivered introductory training at Laubach Literacy Ontario's annual conference (Kitchener, June 2007; 34 people trained)
- moderated a discussion on AlphaCom (**http://alphacom.alphaplus.ca**) from January to March 2008 (60 people enrolled)
- developed two CIPMS Bulletins (October 2007 and February 2008) **www.nald.ca/clo.htm**. Please click on "Newsletters"
- produced CIPMS e-communiqués (October 2007 and March 2008) **www.nald.ca/clo.htm**. Please click on "E-Communiqués"
- delivered training at CLO's annual conference (Toronto, October 2007;

54 people trained)

- developed and delivered three interactive online workshops (November 2007) that have been recorded and can be accessed at **http://alphalive.alphaplus.ca**. To listen to the recording, log on, select "public recordings" from the menu on the left side, and then search by date (November 8, 2007) or by event (ABCs of CIPMS3). (70 people trained)
- developed a self-directed training module for our **Literacy Basics** (**www.nald.ca/literacybasics**) website; and
- researched, written and distributed this manual; ***The ABCs of CIPMS.***

This manual is designed to provide an overview of what CIPMS is, how it can be an effective process, how it is being used elsewhere, and how MTCU envisions it being used in LBS. It also includes sample tools and resources that can be used in your agency.

CIPMS and Employment Ontario

Employment Ontario, Ontario's Employment and Training Network, was launched on January 1, 2007. This MTCU initiative brings together 20 programs and services, including Literacy and Basic Skills, to provide a one-stop training and employment system for people in Ontario. It includes all of the programs under the Labour Market and Training Division of MTCU together with the federal programs that were transferred to the province's responsibility in January 2001.

The goal of Employment Ontario is to "provide clients with the support and information they need, regardless of their point of entry."[1] By providing a unified network, Employment Ontario hopes to help people in Ontario identify programs that may not have been previously known as government services. Within the new system, it is expected that clients will have

- Access to information about all provincial training and employment services
- Consistent and streamlined intake into all training and employment services
- Consistent and equitable access to a broader range of training and employment services and a
- Consistent approach to service coordination and referral.

There are four main service categories within Employment Ontario. They are:

- Services for apprenticeship
- Services for job seekers
- Services for employers and
- Services for employees.

CIPMS is a critical component of the Employment Ontario Training and Employment System. It is part of an overarching strategy designed to create a cohesive set of policies and improved processes throughout the Employment Ontario system so that programs can better work together to address client needs. Employment Ontario intends to transform the way MTCU delivers training and employment programs to achieve more effective and efficient services and better results.[2]

Beginning in 2008, Employment Ontario will be looking at the program design delivered by third-party delivery agencies with a focus on outcomes-based, client-centred models. The work that literacy programs do with regards to CIPMS by identifying and working towards achieving outcomes will be critical.

For more information, be sure to visit the Employment Ontario Website at **www.ontario.ca/employmentontario** or the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway at **www.eopg.ca**. You can also read more about Employment Ontario and Literacy and Basic Skills at CLO's website at **www.nald.ca/clo**.

What is Continuous Improvement Performance Management?

A study of current Canadian and international business or government operating methodologies will result in countless references to information about performance management, performance measurement, continuous improvement programs and other similar processes.

Although the terminology varies slightly, the intent of CIPMS is the same, i.e., to effectively and efficiently manage organizational performance to achieve specific results, to measure the outcomes or results we are achieving and to continuously strive towards improving management and measurement processes so that we can better meet the needs of the people we work with. In a Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS), core measures and performance indicators are used to provide an overall picture of what a program aims to achieve, what it actually achieves and how well it meets its goals. This can be summed up as **managing for results.**

Performance management and measurement is not an annual event or an occasional check-in. It is an active process that becomes part of the overall organizational culture and informs all management and measurement activities and decisions. It is an ongoing cycle of implementing, monitoring, reacting and measuring. As you achieve success in one area, you will begin to strive for additional success elsewhere. What constitutes success will also change and evolve. The process is continuous.

Managing for results pertains to efficiency and effectiveness and being the best you can be, not just tallying up ever-increasing numbers. It is meant to help us as literacy organizations provide the best possible service within the resources at our disposal.

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Managing for results moves the focus from what you are doing to what you are achieving. Of course, you still have to do the right things, but managing for results involves more than just the processes you use. It is about the results you achieve through those processes. For example, it is important to have an effective way to monitor and measure learner success at exit. We do this mainly through the Learner Exit Survey; some literacy agencies use additional tools as well. However, simply making sure that we give all exiting learners the survey and that we record and tally up the results isn't enough. We have to do more: we need to review what those surveys are telling us and then make appropriate changes in our programs to address any issues that might be raised. Once we make those changes, we need to monitor any impacts or outcomes that result and determine if the changes did indeed make a difference or if we need to take another approach.

One of the risks of managing for results is focusing exclusively on what you are trying to achieve. It is also important to identify efficient and effective processes that will help you achieve the results you are aiming for. Without good processes in place, you could spend unnecessary time and effort achieving or identifying the results you are aiming for. There is a delicate balance between how much time and effort you spend on fine tuning your processes and how much energy you devote to ensuring that you are achieving results. When finding that balance, remember that implementing and using effective and efficient processes is not about the processes themselves, it is about the results (or outcomes) that you achieve.

Managing for results can be compared to a stage production. The result that the producer wants to achieve is a play that the audience will find entertaining. If the play receives a standing ovation or a hearty round of applause, it will be deemed a success. The audience will enjoy the evening and the performances of the actors. However, the audience will not see the planning, monitoring and adjustments that went into the staging of that enjoyable piece of entertainment. To achieve that standing ovation, the theatre company had many rehearsals, planned out each cue and prop placement and made improvements as needed. Test audiences were invited and their reactions taken into consideration, and then further improvements were made. Finally, it was opening night and the result was as planned. However, the director did notice a few minor adjustments that would make the play even better for the next night!

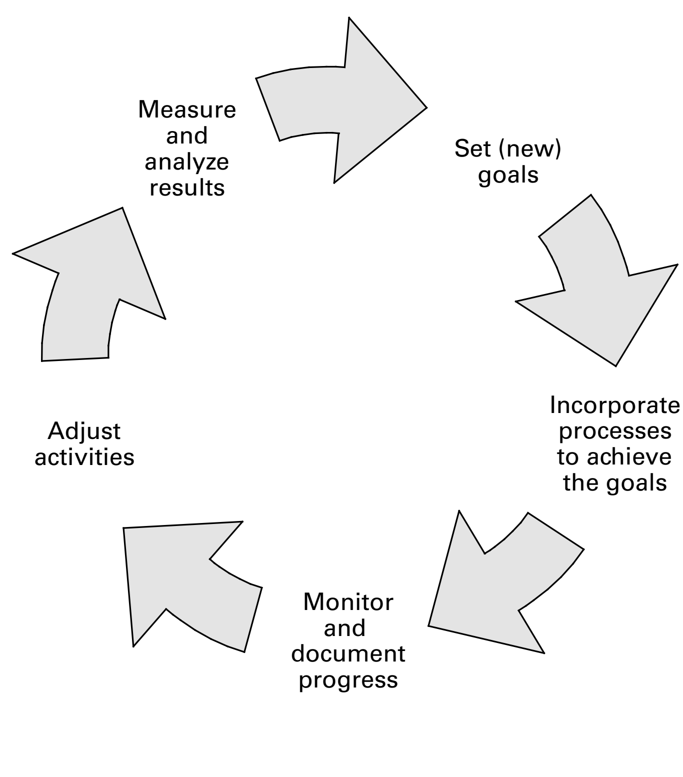
As with the example of producing a successful play, an agency will plan and prepare to achieve a desired result and make adjustments along the way to help ensure that it is still on track towards that achievement. The target "audiences" (e.g., the community, the client) won't see this behind-the-scenes work, but they will judge the agency on the final result. And even if the funder and others indicate that they are quite satisfied with what the agency has achieved, it is likely that someone more integrally involved with the agency will identify one or two adjustments that could make the agency even better.

CIPMS should be a day-to-day operational approach that results in the achievement of stated outcomes, with the focus being on the results, not on how you achieved them.

CIPMS should be a day-to-day operational approach that results in the achievement of stated outcomes, with the focus being on the results, not on how you achieved them. This is a significant shift from current practice where the focus has been on the internal processes, also known as organizational capacity. For the past few years, literacy programs have been developing and fine tuning their organizational capacity and reporting on their efforts through the Program Monitoring Report. However, now that effective processes are in place, agencies need to move on to demonstrate results and work towards continuous improvement. To continue with the earlier example of learner satisfaction at exit, we have been able to implement a successful process.[3] Now it is time to move on, if you haven't already done so, to analyze what learners are telling us and to make reasonable and manageable changes in our agencies to further improve the results we are already achieving.

CIPMS is an ongoing, cyclical process. All of the steps and activities are important and interdependent. In other words, as we evaluate and analyze the results of what we do, we will most likely identify ways that our internal processes (organizational capacity) can be improved to either help us achieve better results or to better showcase the results we are getting.

CIPMS incorporates setting goals/targets, determining the steps necessary to achieve those goals, monitoring and documenting progress towards achieving the goals, adjusting activities as needed and measuring the final results. It is both ongoing and cyclical and includes planning, monitoring and measurement. As goals are realized, new ones are set, monitored and measured. As well, current goals and goal targets may be revised. The following diagram shows how CIPMS can be represented as a continuous cycle.



Things to Think About

An agency can be working towards and monitoring the progress of one goal or of several goals at the same time. Each goal (and its progress) might be at different points in the cycle.

For example, an agency might have an annual target of recruiting 10% more learners than it did the year before. The target date to achieve this goal might be March 31. The agency will be incorporating new recruitment methods to help them achieve this goal throughout the year. They will need to monitor their success on a regular basis. If, for example, they have not increased their enrollment numbers after a few months, they will try some new recruitment methods. They may do this every two months throughout the year. They will document each of the methods they tried and the results they achieved. By March 31, they will know if they have or have not achieved their recruitment goal, and they will have evidence of the processes used and any changes made. They will be able to know which recruitment efforts were successful and which were not.

At the same time, the agency might also have a goal of increasing learner participation in small group sessions over a period of three months, ending December 31. Staff will implement ideas to encourage learners to join small groups and they will monitor the challenges and successes. Although they will be following the same cycle of goal-setting, implementing, monitoring and adjusting activities as they did when trying to increase learner recruitment, they will not be at the same point in the CIPMS cycle for both targets.

The more goals and targets that an agency is working towards achieving, the more complex performance management can become. It is best to start with just one or two manageable targets and become familiar with the process rather than trying to tackle everything your agency would like to achieve all at once! As everyone becomes familiar with the cycle, more targets can be added.

The CIPMS cycle does not just happen. It requires deliberate selection of areas for improvement, incorporation and formal opportunities to review the processes you use, your evaluation, your planning, your review, your agency assessment, your targets, etc. The key to successful CIPMS implementation is deliberate and purposeful action, being aware of where you are in the cycle and ensuring that all of the steps do get done, documented, reviewed and revised.

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The Benefits of Performance Management

Why should an organization worry about performance management? What is the point of a continuous improvement performance management system? What difference will managing for results make?

These questions need to be addressed in order for the transition to a performance management system to be successful. It is important that literacy agencies understand the many benefits that CIPMS can bring and how this system will help programs to do their jobs more efficiently and effectively, ultimately providing better programming for Ontario's adult learners in literacy programs.

An effective performance management system can allow us to take control of the results our agencies achieve by proactively planning and working towards meeting goals and objectives that we determine and that are realistic and relevant for our agencies.

Effectively Showcase Results

Literacy agencies fulfill an important role in our society and a primary benefit of CIPMS is that it allows agencies to showcase results in a quantifiable manner. In the past this has not always been easy for literacy agencies to do. In today's competitive market for government funding, corporate dollars and private donations, it is vital for us to be able to clearly and effectively prove that the services our organizations provide actually make a difference and have a positive impact on the lives of adult learners. We want to be able to showcase our results to our learners, our funders and our communities. CIPMS can help us do that.

It is also important to note that literacy agencies are now part of the Employment Ontario Network. Through Employment Ontario, over 1 200 third-party service providers are offering labour market and training services at approximately 900 locations across the province. Employment Ontario represents a combination of 20 programs and services offered by the Ontario government. Total public investment in Employment Ontario amounts to nearly one billion dollars. Third party service providers include community-based organizations, colleges, school boards, union training centres and private trainers. For more information about Employment Ontario, be sure to visit the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway at **www.eopg.ca**.

…CIPMS will allow literacy programs to clearly demonstrate the results they have achieved and the difference their programs make.

The Employment Ontario network exists to deliver quality programming and to obtain concrete, measurable results. Literacy and Basic Skills programs are part of the Employment Ontario network and therefore are expected to achieve these goals. It is extremely important that results can be demonstrated to stakeholders outside of the relatively small world of literacy. Government will now be looking at the performance results of all delivery agencies, and a functioning CIPMS will allow literacy programs to clearly demonstrate the results they have achieved and the difference their programs make.

Government funds adult literacy agencies to deliver a service. It is up to agencies themselves to demonstrate that the funding they receive is put to good use and that adult learners in literacy programs are reaching their goals. Being able to clearly showcase results will increase the odds that adult literacy programs will continue to receive the support they need from both government and key stakeholders.

In these times of increased public scrutiny and with ongoing demands for accountability, it is important for the literacy field to become part of the bigger picture. The Employment Ontario network, of which we are an important part, will help us be part of that big picture, and it will provide us with an opportunity to work with many potential partner and/or referral organizations. Literacy agencies need to be organizations that talk the same language as other service providers, and many of our fellow Employment Ontario partners have already implemented some type of performance management system.

As literacy practitioners, we need to be able to demonstrate that literacy agencies provide quality services with consistently measurable results. We want to be able to share successes and show the positive impacts and benefits that our programs provide to the thousands of clients that come through our doors each year. CIPMS can help programs to do that. Implementing CIPMS will enable our literacy agencies to benefit by helping our government counterparts demonstrate that the money invested in adult literacy programs is indeed making a difference.

In a presentation held at the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators' (CESBA) pre-conference in December 2006, MTCU described the benefits of a CIPMS as:

- improved efficiency and effectiveness
- consistent quality of service across the province
- results of good practice are recognized and supported
- results are demonstrable to stakeholders outside of literacy
- a system to assess progress and respond to change
- service providers become responsible for service delivery and learner success[4]

Good performance reporting tells how well a program has done and at what cost. Good management requires that a manager know when expectations have been accomplished and be able to demonstrate it. Clear and concrete expectations enable a manager to do this, to know how successful a program has been and where improvements are required.[5]

Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness

Once CIPMS is fully implemented, agencies will be able to work more effectively and more efficiently. Knowing that mechanisms are in place to deliver programming that will encourage and allow learners to achieve their goals is the foundation from which this culture of efficiency and effectiveness can start.

The major change that we are likely to notice when implementing CIPMS is that the focus will be on the results that will be achieved, rather than on the processes being used. For example, in recent years, program monitoring has focused on processes as described in the Program Monitoring Report. The emphasis has been on how we do things. This was an important step, because it is essential to have effective and efficient processes in place in order to achieve optimal results. In the future, program monitoring will shift to focusing on the results that we have achieved. The processes are still very important, but agencies have been developing them for quite some time (for example, outcomes-based learning, demonstrations, etc.). Now it is time to put more emphasis on what is being achieved with those processes. It is also time to be more deliberate and focused in the efforts to document the results those processes bring about.

CIPMS can help agencies identify and correct small areas of concern before they become major ones.

Continuous monitoring and review of goals and performance, at both the agency and learners' level, will provide timely and relevant information that agencies can use to compare what they believe is happening within their programs to what is actually happening at any given point in time. Sometimes your perceptions may not be accurate or you may be unable to determine the reasons why something is or is not happening. CIPMS can help agencies identify and correct small areas of concern before they become major ones.When success is not being achieved, then the daily operations of the agency need to be reviewed and adapted in order to achieve goals. This is all part of a system of continuous improvement and performance management.

With CIPMS, performance management becomes part of daily operations, enabling agencies to identify and evaluate successes and problems. Early awareness of whether or not a program is achieving its objectives leads to improved management and increased accountability. The same thing is true in terms of the ongoing assessment of learner progress and goals. An increased awareness of what learners are achieving will allow programs to evaluate and adjust goals according to actual progress.

Focusing on predetermined goals and objectives, or results, can also help us streamline our activities and become more efficient. Sometimes we are involved in activities that don't actually help us achieve the results that we say we want to achieve! CIPMS can help us determine what activities are the most effective in achieving desired results, and we can focus our efforts accordingly. It can be very helpful to take a step back, look at what we do and ask ourselves why we are doing certain things and what we are accomplishing. We may be able to eliminate or reduce some activities that aren't helping us, or our learners, achieve success.

This concept of focusing on the work that matters most is an important component of CIPMS processes used around the world. It is a concept known as the "vital few" and the "trivial many", the 80/20 rule or the Pareto Principle. In short, only a small percentage of the work we do (about 20%) results in most (about 80%) of the success we achieve. Therefore, to be as efficient as possible when working towards program improvements, focus on the 20% of the work that matters most. This can also be summed up as not just working smart, but working on the right things.[6]

Improved Goal Setting and Programming

Using a performance management system that closely examines measurable goals or outcomes and the progress towards their achievement allows for both positive and proactive agency accountability. By identifying what we want to achieve and taking action to achieve our goals instead of reacting to events, we move towards a system where we can control our results and successes. This allows us to take true ownership of our programs.

Documenting and analyzing results on an ongoing basis provides the required evidence to determine if progress is being made.

Taking the time to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programming will ultimately result in more effective programming. When the monitoring is ongoing and systematic, rather than occasional or sporadic, agencies are better able to make changes and strategize for improvements. Documenting and analyzing results on an ongoing basis provides the required evidence to determine if progress is being made. Successes can be validated and, if necessary, processes and/or targets can be re-evaluated.

As literacy practitioners, we talk to learners about setting goals and measuring achievement towards those goals. We offer opportunities for monitoring those goals through assessment at the beginning, throughout and at the end of the program. We encourage learners to assess their own progress. Learner goal achievement can be reported to the funder, to other training providers, to employers, to family members and to others. Since we want our learners to set goals and monitor their progress, why wouldn't we do the same for our programs?

Who Uses Performance Management?

Performance management is not a new concept. It is not unique to the Labour Market and Training Division, nor to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. It is used by governments, corporations and not-for-profit organizations around the world. In Canada, there is a government-wide shift to results or performance-based management.

As a result of this widespread use, there are many examples of how performance-based management is being used successfully not only in Canada, but globally. In order to better understand the applicability of performance management in literacy programming, it is helpful to examine how it has been implemented elsewhere. One notable example from outside of Canada is the Outcomes and Outputs Framework being used by the Australian government to benchmark and manage the performance results of their main service delivery agencies.

Another good example is the outcomes-based *National Reporting System for Adult Education Programs* that was developed by the United States' Department of Education Division of Adult Education and Literacy. Please see Appendix 2 for more detailed information about this system.

Australia: The Outcomes and Outputs Framework

The Australian government's results-based management system is called the *Outcomes and Outputs Framework*. Benchmarking is a key component of how programs are managed in the main service delivery agencies in Australia, and each government ministry or government-funded agency benchmarks its operating procedures and its results in comparison with other similar agencies or organizations in the private sector.[7]

Individual government departments produce a statement called a Service Charter that highlights their unique information such as mandates, projected activities and what the general public can expect from that particular department. The charters also detail specific benchmarks for the purpose of assessing results. It is interesting to note that the Service Charters also outline how the general public can respond to the information contained in the charters in an effort to improve departmental services and increase accountability.

At the start of the fiscal year, each federal department must submit its budget and its Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) projecting departmental expenses and revenue, timelines, performance indicators of efficiency and effectiveness, and assessment criteria for review by parliamentary committees. All projected expenses must be justified and have a corresponding description of expected results.

Accountability is high as government representatives are legally responsible for the efficient, effective and ethical use of resources. The details included in each PBS are supervised and negotiated by the Australian Department of Finance and Administration, and the effectiveness of internal evaluations are monitored by the Australian National Audit Office. An annual report is presented in the Australian Parliament by each department at the close of each fiscal year.

The Australian Department of Education, Science and Training is one example of best practice in performance-based management as it has also developed its own performance management framework, which identifies strategic priorities and short- and medium-term indicators and links individual performance expectations with its department's business plan.

According to the Australian government's Department of Finance, the *Outcomes and Outputs Framework* has allowed its managers to:

- have a clearer idea of what is expected of them, because government specifies its requirements in terms of clearly articulated outcomes;
- be able to identify what is to be delivered to meet those requirements in a performance management environment, in contrast to earlier inputs-focused arrangements;
- be assessed against agreed performance indicators derived directly from the specific outcomes and outputs for which they are accountable; and
- have greater flexibility in the mix and disposition of the resources (inputs) used to deliver the outputs agreed with government.[8]

Performance indicators are becoming increasingly central to the process of government in Australia.[9] Having readily available information on performance and effectiveness has enabled the identification of trends and weaknesses in the system. These trends and weaknesses would not be as easy to identify in a framework that looked solely at inputs and resources. As a result of the outcomes that are reported for each agency, Parliament is able to identify the results that Government is working towards and determine the appropriate allocation of funds to contribute to those results.

The Job Connect Program

Somewhat closer to home, CIPMS was implemented within Job Connect agencies. Job Connect agencies deliver the following services:

- information and referral services for anyone seeking employment or training
- employment planning and preparation for persons 16 years or older who are out of school and out of work, and not receiving Employment Insurance benefits
- job development and placement support for persons who are at least 16 years of age, out of school, out of work, not currently in a training program, and not receiving Employment Insurance benefits.[10]

The footprint of CIPMS in Literacy and Basic Skills agencies has been determined by the notable success of Job Connect's Evaluation and Compliance Framework and its focus on continuous improvement.

The Job Connect Program, like Literacy and Basic Skills, is funded by MTCU. Various components of a system called the Evaluation and Compliance Framework have been used in Job Connect agencies since 1997. The footprint of CIPMS in Literacy and Basic Skills agencies has been determined by the notable success of Job Connect's Evaluation and Compliance Framework and its focus on continuous improvement.

Like the LBS CIPMS, Job Connect's Evaluation and Compliance Framework document clearly lays out Ministry expectations in terms of standards of service delivery, evaluation criteria, continuous improvement expectations and funding criteria.

CIPMS in Job Connect agencies also:

- redefined services for clarity and has defined clear and understandable program inputs and outputs and the corresponding data that is required for effective evaluation
- identified core measures of success in the three Service Delivery Dimensions: Customer Service, Effectiveness and Efficiency
- developed an information management system that supports consistent program data from all service sites
- introduced a Self-Assessment Tool (and accompanying guide) to help agencies analyze their progress against targets and to build on success for the future

- distributed the guide for Job Connect agencies on the Evaluation Framework
- introduced and integrated contract and guideline compliance as part of the overall MTCU agency review process
- expanded the Job Connect program and
- updated the Evaluation Framework into the Evaluation and Compliance Framework[11]

Through the implementation and management of the Evaluation and Compliance Framework, MTCU has provided consistency for measuring and evaluating performance. Job Connect agencies are empowered as they analyze data and effect change by improving their organizational infrastructure and their capacity for continued improvement in performance.

According to Greg Walsh, formerly working with MTCU on the implementation of CIPMS in Job Connect (currently working with the Ministry of Health), initially only 48% of Job Connect programs were meeting minimum standards based on weighted values of core measures. After two years of working with CIPMS, an amazing 98% of these programs met minimum standards based on the same criteria. The successful increase in meeting the minimum standards was similar regardless of the type of agency that delivers the Job Connect program (large, small, not-for-profit, community-based, school board, university or college).

Canada

Research into performance-based management elsewhere in Canada reveals a number of interesting examples. Please see Appendix 2 for a sampling of how CIPMS is being implemented in different ways across the country, particularly in Ontario.

Things to Think About

Managing for Results – It Works

There are many, many examples of organizational successes in terms of achieving results. As you become more comfortable with the key CIPMS concepts of effectiveness and efficiency, and controlling and measuring results rather than activities, you will start to see performance management everywhere!

For example, most health-related marketing and promotional campaigns are designed to bring about behavioural change. Success is measured by the number of people who change their behaviour or lifestyle. Think of campaigns designed to encourage the public to stop smoking or to buckle up or to "think pink". These, and many other successful marketing efforts brought about major changes in the way Canadians behave: the number of people who smoke has decreased, the number of people who automatically do up their seat belt has increased, and breast cancer awareness is very much on the public radar.

SECTION 2: CIPMS in LBS

CIPMS in Literacy and Basic Skills

From an LBS point of view, MTCU offers the following definition of CIPMS:

CIPMS is a systematic approach for continuous improvement that will allow all delivery sites to provide a high quality standard of service for different communities and clients, while maintaining consistency across Ontario.[12]

Although CIPMS is described in the above definition as being a systematic approach, that does not mean that there will be a specific format or program implementation plan that agencies will be required to follow. CIPMS allows for the differences that are part of literacy programs, i.e., size, learner profiles, levels and so on. CIPMS will provide us with a way that we can systematically identify the areas in our programs that are most important for us to focus on and then monitor and evaluate our achievements in those areas so that we can achieve optimum results within available resources. When we all work together in a systematic approach, we become that much closer to achieving the overall goal of a more literate Ontario.

When fully implemented, CIPMS will consist of the following elements[13] which we will explore in more detail throughout this manual.

1 A performance measurement process. This includes:

- An LBS logic model describing the business of the program (see MTCU's logic model in the following section) and its relationship between activities, expected results and measures for performance in three key areas: efficiency, effectiveness and client satisfaction; and
- Ongoing measurement and reporting on performance in these three key areas by LBS-funded delivery agencies through the LBS Information Management System (IMS).

2 A system for managing performance, based on the measures that support:

- Agency assessment to actively assess progress towards results, evaluate and adjust business practices to improve organizational results, and continuously improve;
- A framework for evaluation that outlines how agency performance is going to be measured by the Ministry and how decisions related to funding will be made; and
- Benchmarking to the literacy systems of other jurisdictions to achieve improvements within LBS over time.

3 A model of continuous improvement that:

- integrates performance management into the daily operations of the LBS Program and delivery agencies in order to continuously seek improvements in the quality of services offered to learners; and
- supports innovation in literacy practice.

Some literacy practitioners are already well on their way to implementing a fully functional CIPMS in their agency. Some are at the initial planning stage. Most of us are probably somewhere in the middle.

Chronology of CIPMS Implementation

MTCU has been gradually integrating CIPMS into Ontario's literacy agencies since 2001.

A fully implemented CIPMS does not happen overnight. MTCU has been gradually integrating CIPMS into Ontario's literacy agencies since 2001. This section will look at the highlights of how that has been happening.

One of the initial steps taken by MTCU to lay the foundation for CIPMS in LBS agencies was the introduction and implementation of the Information Management System (IMS) in April 2001. This computerized systematic collection of common data from all MTCU-funded literacy programs has proven to be an effective way for MTCU to gather and report data province-wide. The IMS allows for the collection of consistent and reliable data, resulting in increased accountability. Reports can be produced both at the agency level and provincially, allowing for comparison of annual results and providing the basis for setting new targets.

In 2003/2004, agencies also saw revisions to the Program Monitoring Report to improve consistency and transparency in the collection and reporting of data. The revised Program Monitoring Report is an excellent example of how CIPMS was introduced and used to help agencies host effective program visits with their MTCU consultants.

The elements of efficiency, effectiveness and client satisfaction were also introduced at this time. The Learner Satisfaction Survey was implemented in April 2003, allowing literacy agencies and MTCU to measure learner satisfaction. The administration of this survey by all LBS-funded agencies also ensures the

Things to Think About

CIPMS: KEY MESSAGES[14]

CIPMS is about assuring the best quality service for our people and communities in a way that is continuously improving.

MTCU is among a large number of jurisdictions that have adopted a Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS) to measure and manage performance of service delivery.

CIPMS consists of Performance Measurement, Performance Management and Continuous Improvement, using existing tools and building on good practices already in place in the literacy field.

CIPMS will allow agencies to monitor their own achievements while improving the LBS system as a whole.

Implementing a Performance Management system will help agencies build their capacity to work towards providing quality services according to their available resources.

One of CIPMS's benefits is that it provides us with a common language and the means to communicate results in a consistent manner to stakeholders outside of the literacy field.

LBS agencies will integrate the culture of continuous improvement in the day to day running of their LBS services. To do this, agencies will further build on their current continuous improvement practices.

The current training is part of the CIPMS process started in 2002. This is an ongoing process, following a continuum that takes time.

All streams have a role to play in the development of the CIPMS training and are working collaboratively on this initiative to maintain the coherence of the literacy sector while respecting its diversity.

LEARNER SKILL ATTAINMENT

Learner Skill Attainment (LSA) was identified as one of the new measures of agency performance. It will track learners' progress towards identified goals on a consistent scale and in meaningful increments that relate to those goals.

Baseline LSA data will start being gathered through pilot projects between September 2007 and March 2008.

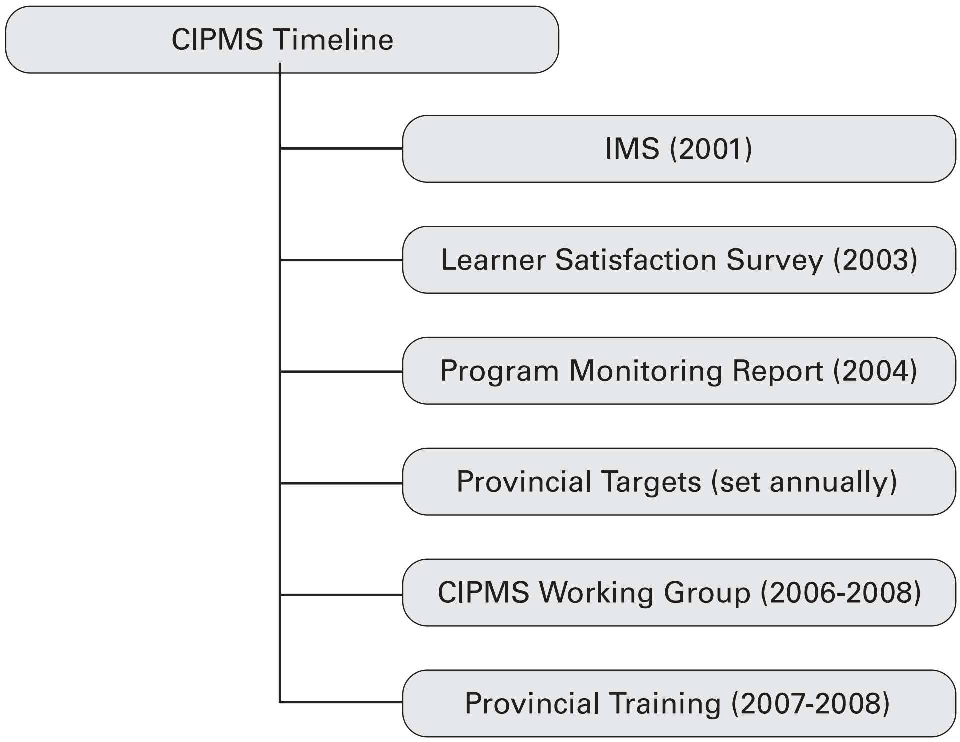
consistency of data which is extremely important for the purposes of comparison and for corporate reporting. It also provides a tool that can be used at the agency level.

Most recently, in late 2006 and early 2007, MTCU brought together literacy practitioners to form a CIPMS working group. This group examined the overall CIPMS dimensions of client satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency and developed associated measures and indicators that will inform the final development of MTCU's CIPMS. Province-wide performance measures and core performance indicators will be an integral component of consistent CIPMS implementation across the province.

MTCU has shared the ongoing progress of CIPMS implementation through a series of postings on AlphaCom's Info-LBS from January 2003 through

September 2007 (See **http://alphacom.alphaplus.ca**). Information and updates have also been communicated in LBS Annual Reports and by field consultants during program visits.

The following chart helps summarize the main points of CIPMS introduction and implementation in the literacy field to date.



MTCU's Logic Model[15]

The Ontario government has made a public commitment to work towards efficient and effective use of resources. A shift to results-based management was seen as the best way to accomplish this. As part of their efforts to make this shift, MTCU did some research into performance-based management and brainstormed how it would best work in the literacy field. During this preparatory phase, MTCU developed a logic model showing how we all, i.e., grass roots agencies, networks and support organizations, and ministerial level staff, fit into overall literacy delivery. This logic model identifies objectives and desired outcomes so that we can measure progress and make decisions on the basis of the results we achieve.

The Ontario government has made a public commitment to work towards efficient and effective use of resources.

At the program level, we are NOT expected to develop our own logic models. It is useful, however, to take a look at MTCU's model in terms of the "big picture" of CIPMS.

This logic model clearly shows the role each type of agency or program plays. The roles and responsibilities listed in the top section of the diagram for each of the LBS Section, LBS Delivery Agencies, and LBS Support and Service Agencies is not new information, but it does clearly lay out the core business for each group and shows how together we are working to achieve the ultimate long-term goal of a more literate Ontario.

Updated LBS LOGIC MODEL (Draft)

Mission

LBS contributes to a skilled workforce and strong communities in Ontario by providing Ontarians flexible and integrated literacy and essential skills programming for transitions to employment, higher skills training and participation in lifelong learning.

Core Business

LBS Section

1. Manages, funds and monitors LBS delivery and support services
2. Develops and supports a CIPMS for the LBS delivery system
3. Leads, develops and supports implementation of policy to support quality LBS delivery
4. Develops, facilitates and maintains partnerships and stakeholder relations
5. Manages, funds, conducts and monitors research and development
6. Leads strategic planning, and ensures human resources and financial management support strategic priorities of Ministry.

LBS Delivery Agencies

I. Deliver a flexible, integrated approach to LBS programming responsive to local needs
2. Deliver quality LBS services to learners that improve over time
3. Develop and maintain effective partnerships with LBS referral, support and transitions partners
4. Develop and maintain effective communication, marketing and stakeholder engagement
5. Integrate and use relevant. quality materials/resources with learners
6. Provide orientation and ongoing PD/training to LBS agency staff
7. Participate, conduct and/or integrate research and development linked to/for supportive of LBS Program

LBS Support and Service Agencies

1. Support LBS funded delivery agencies to deliver co-ordinated, quality services responsive to emerging needs (identified by the community and government) within an integrated training and employment system
2. Provide support for Ministry led initiatives using a model of continuous improvement
3. Develop and provide accessible, quality resources that support LBS-funded agencies to deliver a quality LBS Program
4. Support professional development of LBS-funded agencies to effectively deliver the LBS Program
5. Support the production and integration of research and development results and products that are linked to and support the LBS Program

Core Business Results

- Quality LBS Services for learners that improve over time
- Research and development linked to/supports LBS strategies and innovation
- Integrated approach to LBS Programming
- Effective partnerships with referral, support and transitions partners
- Effective communication, marketing and stakeholder engagement
- Accessible, quality materials/resources across all streams
- Practitioners trained in delivery of LBS Program

Program Results

Medium-term

- Increase the employability of LBS learners
- Increase LBS learners participation in further training and education
- Increase in LBS learners literacy and essential skills
- Increase of learners attainment of their short-term LBS Program goal
- Increase LBS learners participating in the community

Long-term

- More literate Ontario
- More individuals participating in lifelong learning
- A skilled workforce
- Stronger communities

The logic model also shows the shift in focus that CIPMS is bringing. The activities that we are involved in are not changing, but we are shifting our focus from simply monitoring those activities to measuring the results that we are achieving. Therefore, the emphasis will be on our learners – who they are and what they achieve and how we help them realize their goals. We can see this in the middle and bottom sections of the diagram, i.e., the "core business results" and the "program results".

As you become familiar with CIPMS and its various concepts, you will notice many similarities to outcomes-based evaluation. In fact, if you have already been implementing this type of program evaluation, you are well on your way to understanding and incorporating CIPMS in your agency.

For those of you who are familiar with outcomes-based evaluation, where logic models are used regularly, the term "core business" equates to "activities", "core business results" equates to "outputs" and "program results" equates to "outcomes". As you become familiar with CIPMS and its various concepts, you will notice many similarities to outcomes-based evaluation. In fact, if you have already been implementing this type of program evaluation, you are well on your way to understanding and incorporating CIPMS in your agency.

If you are not familiar with outcomes-based evaluation, be sure to visit CLO's **Literacy Basics** *Evaluation* module at **www.nald.ca/literacybasics**. That module provides an overview of outcomes-based evaluation as well as links to many resources including The United Way's well-known resource ***Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*** (2006) which is available through your local United Way.

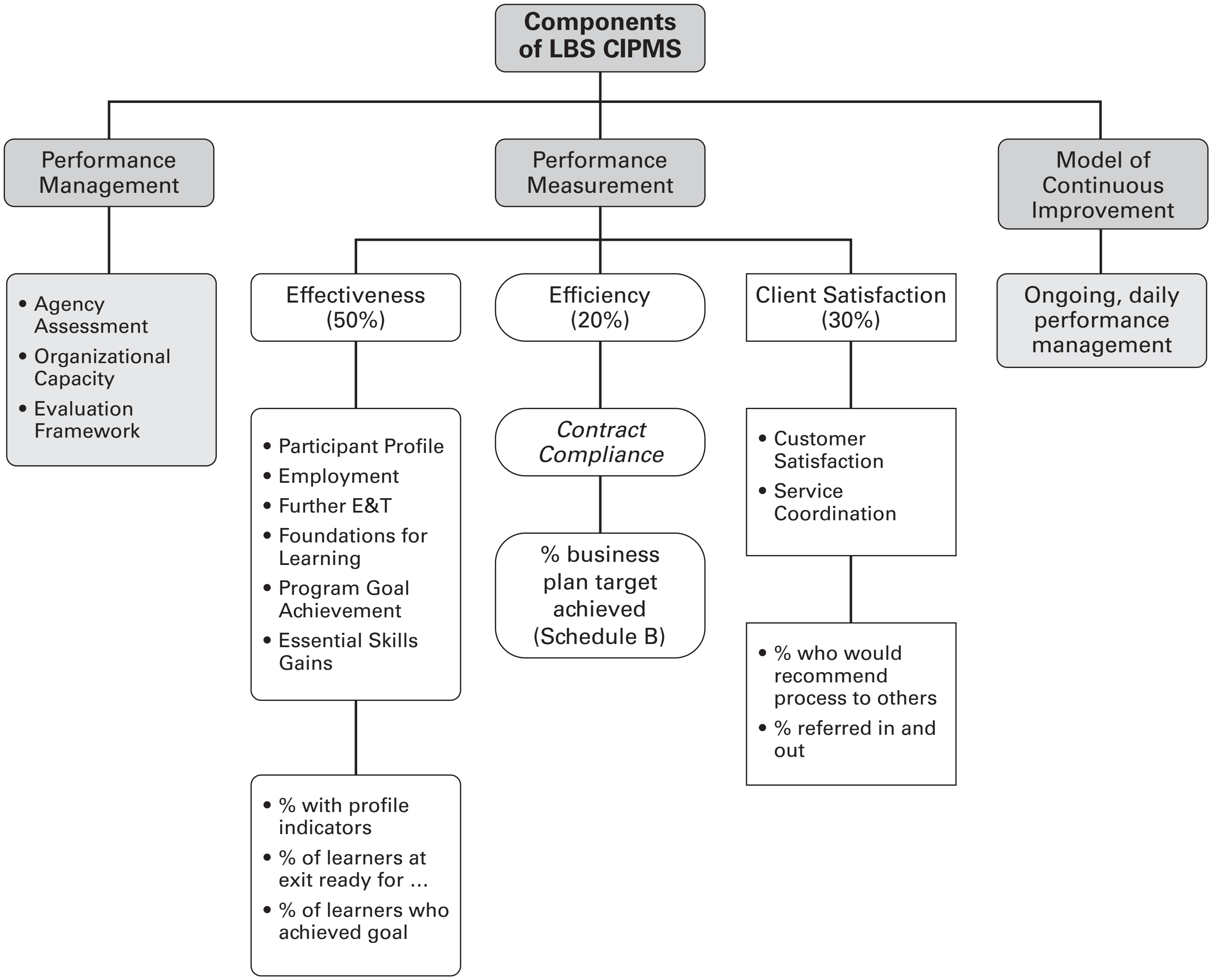
MTCU has already provided some of the components for a fully functional CIPMS, and they will be giving us more (including the Agency Assessment Guide and Tool included with this manual), but literacy agencies have some flexibility as to how to incorporate the various components into their programs. Throughout this manual, and in our **Literacy Basics** online module (**www.nald.ca/literacybasics**), we will be sharing samples of tools and resources already developed in the literacy field and that a number of programs have generously offered to share with the field. You can choose to use these resources "as is", you can adapt them to suit your program's specific needs, or you can create something completely new. Of course, you may prefer to use what you already have in your agency, provided it helps you collect and analyze data for CIPMS purposes.

What CIPMS Will Look Like in LBS

CIPMS is a **framework for program measurement** and **management** within a system of **continuous improvement.**

1 CIPMS is a system for **managing performance.** This includes agency assessment and an evaluation framework. (An evaluation framework is the collection of models, processes and tools that help agencies provide consistent quality service to clients and the community.)

Performance management is the use of performance measurement information to help set agreed-upon performance goals, allocate and prioritize resources, inform managers to either confirm or change current policy or program directions to meet those goals, and report on the success in meeting these goals.[16]



2 CIPMS is a system for **measuring performance.** This includes measuring efficiency, effectiveness and client satisfaction. Measuring program performance can help with:

- identifying and tracking progress of the organization's goals
- identifying opportunities and areas for improvement
- comparing performance against internal and external standards

Performance measurement is a process for assessing progress toward achieving predetermined goals in specific areas of service delivery. In LBS, we are currently using learner status at exit, goal attainment, cost per contact hour, cost per learner, and learner satisfaction rates as performance indicators.[17]

Measurement must lead to program improvement.

A good performance measurement framework focuses on the learner and measures what is important to all program stakeholders, i.e., the attainment of new skills, progress across levels, learner goal achievement, program goal achievement. What is being measured must be meaningful both internally and externally (hence the need for standards). Data must be collected regularly and reliably and on an ongoing basis. Measurement must lead to program improvement.

The *Components of LBS CIPMS Chart* on the previous page includes percentages for each of the performance measurement components of effectiveness, efficiency and client satisfaction. These figures are the weightings by which we will measure performance. Effectiveness at 50% carries the most weight when determining an agency's performance. Previously, contract compliance was more heavily weighted than it will be under CIPMS. This means that the results we achieve in terms of learner skill attainment (learning outcomes) will be more strongly weighted than the results we achieve in terms of learner contact hours. This does not mean, however, that we can ignore performance indicators with lower weightings.

3 CIPMS is a model of **continuous improvement**

Continuous Improvement is an integration of performance measurement into the daily operations of an organization in order to continuously seek to improve the quality of services offered to clients.[18]

The three main areas in an LBS CIPMS are the results we achieve in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and client satisfaction. In order to achieve those results, we must have good processes in place. For the past few years, those processes have been measured by the Program Monitoring Report. Now we are getting ready to move on to focus more on the results themselves.

Effectiveness is the extent to which we meet our intended objectives and produce the results we plan to produce. In other words, are we doing the right things to help learners reach their goals? When we talk about effectiveness, we are focusing on who our learners are, evaluating the delivery of literacy training and measuring learner skill attainment or essential skills gain. Although we have done a lot of work over the past few years in terms of common assessment and getting comfortable with the LBS Levels, work is now being done to more reliably measure learner skill attainment in a way that is commonly understood and communicated in the literacy field.

A performance measure is quantifiable information that provides a reliable basis for assessing achievement, change or performance over time. Draft core measures have been developed for effectiveness (as of winter 2007). Although these measures are subject to change, looking at what is proposed by MTCU can help us better understand how we might measure effectiveness. Each performance measure will also carry a weighting, although this had not been finalized at the time this manual was written.

An agency's ability to deliver services will partially be determined by the percentages of learners in various demographic groups.

- **PARTICIPANT PROFILE:**[19] This includes indicators of barriers to the learner's goal. Participant profiles will be measured according to a learner's current level of education, source of income, barriers to participation, age and other demographic information. An agency's ability to deliver services will partially be determined by the percentages of learners in various demographic groups. This is because some agencies work with harder-to-serve client groups, so the results they achieve will be different from those achieved by agencies that work with other client groups.
- **EMPLOYMENT:** This includes both employed learners and those who are employment ready. Success will be measured according to the percentages of learners who are employed, ready for employment and/or actively volunteering. *(Note: the addition of volunteering as an employment measure is new as of 2007.)*
- **FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** These are learners who are prepared to go on to further training or education; success will be measured by their readiness to enter a variety of program options.
- **FOUNDATIONS FOR LEARNING:** This refers to learners who have a core of foundation or essential skills linked to personal goals and community participation. Success in this area will be measured by the percentage of learners who achieve this foundational level, who report an increase in personal growth, who report an increased involvement in their children's education and/or who complete their short-term LBS goals.
- **PROGRAM GOAL ACHIEVEMENT:** This refers to the successful completion of transition path outcomes or individualized planned outcomes. Success will be measured by the percentages of learners who achieve their stated goal.
- **LEARNER SKILL ATTAINMENT (LSA) OR ESSENTIAL SKILLS GAIN:** This refers to the percentage gain using the Essential Skills scale in areas of Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy. Success will be measured according to that gain. For more information on LSA, please see CLO's December newsletter at **www.nald.ca/litweb/province/on/clo/newslet/dec07/1.htm**.

Efficiency is a measure of whether we are doing things right, i.e., offering programs and services in a way that maximizes the use of available resources. Examining these results can help us understand if there might be different ways to deliver programs and services that still meet client needs, have the effect we are aiming for and also save time or money. It can also mean evaluating the services we provide to see if they are related to our stated goals and objectives.

Performance measures for efficiency can include the number of contact hours we provide, the number of learners accessing our information and referral services, the number of learners enrolled, and volunteer contributions.

Client satisfaction refers to the percentage of participants and referral stakeholders who report satisfaction.

For the purposes of CIPMS, the term "clients" refers to individuals or organizations without whom literacy agencies would not be in business. Literacy agencies are considered to have three client groups: learners, information and referral agencies, and the funder.

For the purposes of CIPMS, the term "clients" refers to individuals or organizations without whom literacy agencies would not be in business. Literacy agencies are considered to have three client groups: learners, information and referral agencies, and the funder. We measure learner satisfaction through the learner exit survey. Of course, we can also use other ways to measure it, for example, during follow-up interviews. Effective information and referral are also part of customer service. We can measure that by following up to find out if people were referred to the right agencies, both from the client point of view and from the agency point of view. We measure funder satisfaction through annual program monitoring. Our annual visits and reports to MTCU let them know if we are doing what we are contracted to do.

Service coordination refers to the agency's success in linking literacy services with other service supports. This will be measured by the percentage of participants referred to services as well as those referred from other organizations. Working with our Employment Ontario partners as well as other community partners will be important in terms of measuring service coordination.

Learner Skill Attainment

Learner Skill Attainment (LSA) is one of the nine core draft measures being developed as part of the Continuous Improvement Performance Management System.

Presently, learner skill attainment is captured across the five literacy levels using a variety of assessment tools and methods and reported electronically through the Information Management System (IMS). In order to make the language of learner skill attainment more transparent to all partners in the broader Employment Ontario spectrum, MTCU is exploring the use of the Essential Skills/ International Adult Literacy Survey scales as a common assessment language for all stakeholders. Currently, MTCU is focusing on three of the nine nationally recognized Essential Skills: Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy.

Learner skill attainment describes learning outcomes in terms of what a learner will be able to do or where a learner will be able to go at the completion of his or her training. Through LSA, learner gains in skills and knowledge will be described in such a way as to be meaningful to key stakeholders such as Apprenticeship, Job Connect, Adjustment Advisory and Ontario Works.

In winter 2007, MTCU funded 17 projects to research and explore learner skill attainment in Literacy and Basic Skills. Representatives from the 17 funded projects and participants from all literacy streams and sectors were invited to participate in the **Learner Skill Attainment Workgroup** led by MTCU.

The College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading has the lead project for developing an overarching **Learner Skill Attainment Framework.** Building on the recommendations made in the Vubiz Ltd. Report (May 31, 2006) (see Appendix 3) and through discussion and consultation with the working group, a "pathway approach" is being used to develop the draft framework. Five learner transition paths have been identified and five organizations (Framework Project Development Team) are working in an advisory capacity to the overarching framework, in addition to developing their independent projects within the specified pathways:

Organization	Path	Project
Community Literacy of Ontario	Transition Path: Foundations for Independence (Home, Community)	*Success Indicators for Independence Goals*
Preparatory Training Programs	Transition Path to Employment	*CAMERA Development*
Centre d'apprentissage et de perfectionnement	Transition Path to Apprenticeship	*Measuring Essential Key Skills: Indicators of Concerted, Uniform Progress*
College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading	Transition Path to Postsecondary	*Academic Upgrading Template Development*
Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators	Transition Path to Secondary Credit	*Strategic Partnerships for Academic Upgrading in LBS*

Community Literacy of Ontario's project, *"Success Indicators for Independence Goals"* focused on the learner pathway of Foundation Skills for Lifelong Learning and involved researching success indicators and transition markers in the domain of independence. As part of our LSA project, CLO assessed where independence fits within the Essential Skills and outlined how/if the framework for identifying and measuring success in the domain of independence could be expressed/articulated to the Essential Skills scale.

The Framework Development Project Team met numerous times in 2007 to discuss how Literacy and Basic Skills could be reconciled with a skill attainment approach premised on essential skills. As the framework evolves, common elements have become evident for each pathway. Currently, each draft pathway includes a description of the core program content and the focus for instruction (personal, workplace, or academic).

Next steps will involve the identification of potential assessment tools that can produce valid and reliable quantitative assessment related to essential skills or the IALS scale for baseline testing.

For more information on LSA, please see CLO's November 2007 newsletter online at **www.nald.ca/litweb/province/on/clo/newslet/dec07/1.htm.**

SECTION 3: Using CIPMS

Preparing for CIPMS in LBS

Many of us have been implementing components of CIPMS, perhaps without realizing that the activities we were undertaking were part of a system. For example, we have been tracking learner contact hours and progress through the IMS. We have possibly been doing some form of program evaluation. We conduct learner exit surveys and make changes to our programs based on the results. Now it's time to be more purposeful about incorporating program policies and procedures into a deliberate and unified CIPMS.

One of the first steps is to plan ahead. When we think of evaluation, we often focus on what we have already accomplished. Within a CIPMS, it is important to look forward and plan the outcomes you would like to achieve. It is difficult to measure outcomes looking backwards, because you have to know what your target outcomes were before you can evaluate if and how you met them! So start at the beginning: set manageable targets for some outcomes related to learner achievement, and then plan how to meet those targets. Implement whatever procedures you think will help you achieve those targets and work towards them over a set period of time (typically a year). Do not wait until the year has passed, however, to evaluate progress. Review your procedures and your progress towards outcome targets at regular intervals (perhaps monthly or bi-monthly) so that you can make adjustments when and as necessary. At the end of the year, you can make a final review to determine the degree to which you met your original targets. Then set new targets for the coming year! This process of setting targets, planning to meet them, monitoring progress and evaluating results is what makes CIPMS an integrated activity in an organization.

Implementing CIPMS in LBS

As part of *The ABCs of CIPMS* project, CLO spoke to numerous literacy practitioners from across the province who have made significant efforts to implement some or all of the CIPMS components in their agencies. These people were kind enough to share their experiences, successes and challenges with us and with the literacy field across Ontario.

Throughout this section, we will be incorporating some sample tools and resources, many of them shared by these practitioners. You are free to use or adapt these tools as you see fit.

Before we examine specific tools and resources, however, here are some ideas to help you get started:

Collect only the information that you need, know why you are collecting it, and use it.

- **STREAMLINE!** Make data collection instruments, forms, reports, and all documentation serve more than one purpose if at all possible. Literacy practitioners are busy people, so avoid setting up a system that requires the same information to be collected more than once and/or to be reported on more than once. Collect only the information that you need, know why you are collecting it, and use it.
- **USE INFORMATION FOR MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE.** Strategic planning, for example, is part of CIPMS. Rather than set up two processes (planning, carrying out an activity, monitoring, adjusting and evaluating) for both CIPMS and strategic planning, combine them. Similarly, if marketing your program or services is part of your target outcomes, you don't need to set up a separate marketing planning activity. Bring everything together.
- **USE WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE.** You are probably further along in the process than you realize! For example, a lot of the data you will be using is on the IMS. You have been working towards CIPMS for a number of years without knowing it! So do not despair, you're already on your way. However, now you need to get more deliberate about it. Look at the forms and processes you are already using; you might only need to tweak what you are already using.
- **REMEMBER THAT IMPLEMENTING A NEW SYSTEM OR ADAPTING AN EXISTING SYSTEM WILL TAKE TIME.** There is always a learning curve as everyone gets used to a new way of doing things. However, as it becomes more systematic and more habitual, the time spent will decrease and it won't be as much work.
- **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TAKES TIME.** You need to be able to review information over a significant period of time before you can identify trends. CIPMS doesn't happen overnight.
- **YOU DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN.** Setting targets isn't a random activity. Use what you have documented to analyze trends and set realistic goals. When trends change, analyze why—is it something within the agency's control or is it something the agency can/should respond to?
- **TRY TO THINK AHEAD.** What information are you likely to need in the coming months? What goals are you trying to achieve and what data will you need to demonstrate that you have met those goals? What are the likely next steps of the work you are doing now?

- **ALWAYS KEEP THE QUESTION "HOW DO YOU KNOW?" IN MIND.** Whenever you cite a statistic or make a claim about what your program has accomplished, be prepared to answer that question.
- **ALSO ASK YOURSELF "WHAT DO WE WANT TO KNOW?"** For example, what do your IMS numbers mean? It's not just about collecting data, it's about using it to improve your programming.
- **GET ORGANIZED.** Set up a system and use it. Try coloured file folders, binders, an accordion file or whatever works for you. You can file by month, by referral source or by report type, but stay consistent. With time, the system will become second nature. (Note: many practitioners report that colour coding is very helpful!)
- **COLLECT DATA AS YOU GO.** Don't wait until the end of the year and try to gather it then. Ongoing data collection becomes a good habit and takes less work than trying to track what happened months ago. What might seem like a lot of work at first may well end up saving you time later.
- **START SMALL.** Set up targets and data collection processes that are manageable. As you become comfortable with the process, you can take on bigger challenges. You don't have to measure everything all at once or even every year. Set priorities and work towards them. Remember the CIPMS cycle!
- **KEEP IT MANAGEABLE FOR YOUR AGENCY.** Achieving a fully functioning CIPMS will happen at different times depending on where an agency is starting from, number of staff, number of learners, etc. Remember that there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach or set of expectations.
- **USE A TEAM APPROACH.** Planning and evaluating isn't just one person's responsibility. Board members, staff, learners and volunteers can all be involved. Everyone needs to be on board and understand the benefits of a CIPMS.
- **REVIEW PROGRESS REGULARLY.** It is easier to make small adjustments than large ones. Adjust your plan accordingly. Respond to issues. It's not enough to just document issues, you need to take action. If something isn't working, you don't have to wait until a specific date to make changes—adjust and adapt as you go.
- **SET TARGET DATES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.** Do not try to start/finish everything on the same date or the workload can become overwhelming. You can be at different points in the CIPMS cycle for different targets. Some targets naturally lend themselves to a particular timeline, such as attendance which traditionally increases in the fall and decreases in the summer.
- **DOCUMENT.** No one can remember everything. Do not document more than you need, but use what you document. Remember to document the smaller decisions or actions that are taken; they are just as important as the larger ones.
- **IT IS WORTH IT!** Everyone we interviewed said that becoming more deliberate and focused about working towards a CIPMS was a good thing.

Everyone we interviewed said that becoming more deliberate and focused about working towards a CIPMS was a good thing.

CIPMS in Action in LBS

Agency assessment is the extent to which an agency is able to meet the articulated needs of its clients.[20]

Agency assessment is an important component of CIPMS. In fact, research shows that it is a key element of best practices for CIPMS. Agency assessment was first introduced to the literacy field via the Train Ontario project in 2005. It incorporates many of the activities we have already been doing, such as data collection, data analysis, outcomes-based evaluation and strategic planning into one process. Instead of a group of isolated activities, all of these components of program management come together to form a cohesive process that ensures careful planning happens, the appropriate activities are put in place, goals are set, the results of those activities are monitored and evaluated, changes are made as needed to bring about improved efficiency and effectiveness, and new goals and targets are set as needed.

Research, and the Job Connect experience, have also demonstrated that agency assessment can improve the quality of services offered. A common assessment method can help establish a province-wide analysis and provide comparative data. An assessment tool can help us identify areas of concern and initiate change when needed. It also shows successes and provides a way to document our processes and procedures rather than just having a "sense" that it is time to make a change.

Agency assessment is not new. Literacy practitioners often discuss what is happening in our programs, what we are achieving, what we would like to achieve and how we can get better results. Using a specific assessment tool, however, like so much of the overall CIPMS process, turns this informal action into a deliberate, purposeful and documented effort.

Some agencies have had continuous improvement processes in place for some time now. Others have not. Agencies who already have a process in place can continue to use their current practices if they are effective. To help those agencies who have not yet established a process, MTCU released an *Agency Assessment Guide* and an accompanying *Agency Assessment Tool* in Fall 2007. These documents can be found in their entirety at the end of this section, beginning on page 53.

The Agency Assessment Tool can be used "as is" or it can be adjusted to suit the needs of individual agencies. However, whatever process is used, it must:

- Be dynamic and include a system for continuous progress toward quality improvement objectives
- Include direct consultation of clients (including learners, MTCU, partners and stakeholders) and staff, and
- Ensure that the Plan for Improving Results (Step III in MTCU's Guide) has identified one area of strength and two areas for development/improvement[21]

MTCU estimates that this assessment process should take approximately 25 hours each year, broken down as follows:

- 2 hours of preparation time
- 3 to 4 hours of preliminary analysis
- 2 hours for brainstorming
- 3 to 4 hours to document the plan
- 1 hour per month to review the plan

The purpose of agency assessment is to:

- support delivery agencies in their efforts to continuously improve the quality of services they offer,
- establish a consistent system-wide process of analysis, and
- obtain a clear, unbiased view of an agency's performance

There are four steps to agency assessment:

1 **Understanding your program outcomes, or results.** The objective of this step is to obtain a clear understanding of the agency's actual results, its strengths and areas that need improvement. This can be done by reviewing performance results against a minimum standard or baseline, annual agency targets and provincial LBS targets. Feedback from learners, partners and other stakeholders is also important. Although anecdotal evidence is valuable, it must be combined with more reliable evidence such as survey results and performance data.

2 **Understanding "cause", i.e., management processes or steps that can be changed to improve outcomes.** This may be the most difficult, yet most important step! It requires research and creative thinking. The overall objective of this step is to understand why you are achieving the results you are. You need to be able to identify what is happening in your agency and what could happen if you make changes. Cause should be within the control of the agency and have a clear link to desired outcomes. So, for example, while a plant closure is not a cause (it is beyond the agency's control), the agency's RESPONSE to the plant closure may be a cause. MTCU's draft documents include some sample exercises to help identify cause.

3 **Planning to improve outcomes (results).** This includes defining desired measurable outcomes, listing alternative approaches to changing probable causes and developing a concrete plan with measurable targets, milestones and timelines.

4 **Continuously and regularly reviewing progress and adjusting activity accordingly.** The objective here is to assess progress toward desired outcomes and take corrective action as necessary. Key activities include reviewing progress at pre-established milestones and developing adjusted action plans. This is critical to a continuous improvement process. Constant review and adjustment is the key to seeing real results.

Constant review and adjustment is the key to seeing real results.

Throughout this four-step process, proper preparation and organization is key. In the Assessment Guide, MTCU suggests creating a committee or group made up of staff, volunteers and board members. However, this may be difficult for smaller programs. In that case, you could get together with your LSP partners to brainstorm some ideas.

Prepare and Organize: Data Collection

The first step in the agency assessment process is to collect and organize the information you will need to determine what areas of your program could be improved. The MTCU guide suggests the following information be gathered:[22]

Information Needed	Source Examples	Available (✓) or Plan to Obtain
Understanding Results	*List the sources of the information you will use*	*Tick if information is already available. If not, outline the plan to obtain it.*
Expectations: • MTCU provincial targets for performance measure, e.g., Status at Exit • Agency targets (previous year — e.g., 06–07) for each performance measure • Learner expectations • Partner and key stakeholder expectations	• Literacy Services Plan (LSP) • Agency's annual MTCU business plan • Schedule B (LBS Contract appendix) • Program Monitoring Report • Agency strategic plan • LBS Program Guidelines • MTCU letters to field • Learner Satisfaction Survey • Partner survey	
Outcomes: • Agency performance on MTCU targets (year to date) • Agency performance on other performance measures • Feedback from learners, partners, stakeholders and staff	• LBS-IMS activity reports • Agency database • Learner Satisfaction Survey reports • Program Monitoring Report • Client follow up surveys • Client suggestion box • Client complaints logs • Community partners survey • Staff/Volunteer survey • Board Member survey	

Literacy practitioners have been collecting data for many years. However, that data has been used to varying degrees in terms of program planning and evaluation. Implementing CIPMS requires literacy agencies to become more

Implementing CIPMS requires literacy agencies to become more deliberate and focused about how they are collecting data, what kind of data they are collecting and how they are using the data they collect.

deliberate and focused about how they are collecting data, what kind of data they are collecting and how they are using the data they collect.

Full implementation of a CIPMS does not happen quickly. It takes time to collect enough data to provide a proper analysis of an agency's performance. As your agency works towards full implementation of CIPMS, you can approach this in a number of ways. Here are some suggestions:

1 Your agency can start collecting and tracking data in a deliberate and consistent manner and be prepared to start analyzing it and responding to your findings at some time in the future (three months, six months, a year, etc.). This doesn't mean that you are delaying CIPMS involvement but rather that you believe you do not yet have enough data to analyze and to set targets. Your plan of action for the immediate future may be to improve your data collection techniques and/or the recording of that data.

2 Alternatively, you can look back at the data you have already collected and identify trends and issues based on past data, determine your response to your findings, develop an action plan and begin monitoring and working with that plan now. This will take a focused effort and considerable time because you will have to go back in the records, and you may or may not have collected and tracked data in a consistent manner. However, this approach will provide you with past statistics and trends that you can use immediately to set targets and to begin to take steps towards program improvement. The point here isn't simply to collect data, but rather to use information that you already have to help you make decisions about program improvements.

3 The third option falls somewhere between the first two approaches. You might not be prepared, or able, to analyze past data for all areas of program accountability. Therefore, you might choose one or two areas of concern (e.g., learner recruitment, learner attendance or volunteer recruitment) to examine based on past results, while choosing one or two other issues to start focusing on from this point forwards.

How you choose to work towards more fully implementing CIPMS in your agency will depend on where you are now, available staff time and your main areas of focus for the coming year. Whichever you choose, remember to keep it manageable and to give yourself time to incorporate new processes and procedures into the daily operations of the agency where you work.

There are four main areas of focus in data collection:

1 Who came to the program? (straightforward statistics, i.e., age, source of income, gender)

2 What did they do while they were at the program? (attendance reports, progress reports, learner skills gains, other learner achievements)

3 Where did they go when they left the program? (referral statistics, exit and follow-up statistics)

4 What difference (impact) did the program make? (harder to quantify, because it is longer-term, and includes other influences beyond the literacy agency)

To address these four areas, you will need a variety of information including quantifiable information, such as statistics, that you will track at the program level. You will need accurate records of learner numbers, attendance, contact hours, information and referral, exit and follow-up and so on. This data is very important and can be readily tracked in a variety of manageable and creative ways, but it only tells part of the story. In the next section, we will look at some of the ways to track this data.

You also need to track less quantifiable information such as the impact your program has. To get this data, you need to look both internally (within the program) and externally, i.e., talking to stakeholders, partners, other agencies, and the community in general. You are probably already tracking much of this information anyway for the IMS. However, what you need to do is "flesh it out" and/or analyze correlations in areas such as percentage of attendance compared to rate of progress. We will look further at data analysis later in the manual.

Asking the right questions

Now it's time to think about the best way to collect data about the results your agency is achieving. Will you send out a survey, lead a focus group, conduct one-to-one interviews or will you combine these methods? What types of questions will you ask (i.e., multiple choice, yes/no, open-ended)? Will you use paper-based survey tools or will you ask questions orally?

One of the key areas of CIPMS is measuring the results your agency achieves in terms of learner success. Interviews, focus groups or surveys done with students can help you determine how those students are using their new skills. Sometimes it can be difficult for students to articulate the impact that literacy training has had on their lives. You need to think carefully about what questions you can ask to help you get this information. You might need to provide specific examples. For example, you might ask if their enhanced literacy skills mean that they can read the newspaper or complete an application form on their own. You might also ask them if friends or family members have noticed any changes. You can ask very direct questions about the type of things they are reading and writing or how they use their literacy skills at work, at home or at school. You can ask if they are better able to understand what they read, if it takes them less time to read something or if they are reading different types of things such as novels or newspapers or magazines.

One of the key areas of CIPMS is measuring the results your agency achieves in terms of learner success. Interviews, focus groups or surveys done with students can help you determine how those students are using their new skills.

For example, you could ask if they have started volunteering or if they find it easier to go shopping. You could ask if they are more comfortable speaking in a group or if they use a computer more often than in the past. You could ask if they now use the library regularly or if they can use a banking machine independently.

You could ask students to share stories about how their new skills have made a difference. Ask them if others have noticed or commented on changes they have seen. Follow up with questions like "how does that make you feel?" You can continue the conversation by asking other questions such as:

- Has coming to this program made a difference in your daily life? How?
- Has this program helped you set new or different goals?
- Has this program helped you see things in a new way? How?
- Has this program helped you make positive changes in your life?
- Do you feel more self-confident now than you did before?
- Do you find that you don't need as much help from other people as you used to? Are you doing things more on your own?

These questions can provide you with a good sense of the collective impact the program has had on learners. The responses will provide you with both statistical and anecdotal evidence.

Remember, learning achievements include not only skills but attitudes and beliefs. You could ask learners, staff and volunteers about attitudes towards learning. Have they changed since being in the literacy program? Are students more or less motivated than they were? Do they want to continue learning or have they learned what they needed to know?

Staff and volunteers might report that attendance has improved. This is an example of an indicator that could be used for an outcome about attitude. It can be documented from the IMS or attendance records.

You could also seek information from other agencies. You have to be careful here about confidentiality, but you could ask the college instructor if the students you referred were able to keep up in their class. Try to get specifics, though, not just rely on anecdotal evidence. For example, ask the college instructor "of the 10 students we referred to you last year, how many are still in the class?" or "how many required additional help?" or "how many were able to complete assignments on time?" You could also ask how many have moved on to something else and how many were not able to cope.

Learner Exit Interview

North Channel Literacy Council staff conduct an exit interview that supplements the information they collect on the mandatory survey. It also summarizes the learner's progress, so it incorporates a lot of information on two pages. Again, this is a good example of tracking multiple data on a single document.

LEARNER EXIT INTERVIEW

Thank-you for completing this survey. Your comments will help us to continue to meet the programming needs of our clients.

Centre:____________________ Date:_______________

To be filled out by the Practitioner

Name:		**Start Level:**	
Goal Path:		**Exit Level:**	
# of Training Plans:		**Link:**	
Start date of latest plan:		**Short Term Goal:**	
Exit date:			
Status at Exit:	□ Attained Goal □ Learner Initiated □ Agency Initiated		

1. Did you achieve what you had hoped to when you started with us?
   □ Yes □ No

2. Would you recommend this program to someone else in need of upgrading?
   □ Yes □ No

3. Did you receive enough feedback from your tutor(s) on how you were doing and how you were progressing towards your goal?

   □ Yes □ No (Explain)

4. Were your daily activities directly related to your training plan? If you were unclear as to the link, please explain.
   □ Yes □ No

5. Has the practitioner explained to you your options for your next step?
   □ Yes □ No

6. What do you plan to do in the next year?

7. At 3 and at 6 month mark after you leave our program, we will be calling to see how you are doing. What is your phone #: _______

8. Did you receive enough supported learning from your tutor(s). If no, please explain what you would have like to have seen done differently.

□ Yes □ No

9. Did you find the environment of the Centre (set up, noise level, materials, hours, location) a good one for learning? If no, please explain.

□ Yes □ No

10. Other comments:

Thank-you for your comments.

Focus Groups

If properly conducted, a focus group can be a very effective way to gather information about learner achievement or other program-based results.

Sometimes it is easier for people to participate in a group rather than a one-on-one survey because they may feel less intimidated among friends. Feedback from focus groups can also be richer as people get to hear the ideas of others and share their own input.

The first thing to do when setting up a focus group is to identify its purpose. In this case, that would be to gather information about a particular result that you are evaluating.

Effective facilitation of a focus group is key. As the facilitator, you are there to ask the key questions. However, be sure not to direct participants, offer your own opinions, or influence the group's comments. You are there to stimulate discussion, not direct it. So try to listen as much as possible and only offer comments that will stimulate discussion or make people feel comfortable in sharing their opinions.

It will also be important to try not to let one or two people dominate the focus group and to try to bring in quiet participants. Also validate that all comments are welcome: there are no wrong answers.

Be sure to set a welcoming and comfortable environment for participants. If possible, serve snacks! And find a quiet, private location where you won't be interrupted.

You also need to think about who you are going to invite to participate in the focus group. For example, if you are collecting data about enhanced writing skills, you would not invite learners who did not have improving their writing skills as a goal because they probably are not going to be able to provide you with very relevant information and feedback. Perhaps you would also conduct a separate focus group on this same topic with tutors or instructors as well.

You also have to determine how many people you would like to take part in the group — too large of a group can inhibit conversation, but so can too small of a group! Five to nine is generally a good number.

You also have to determine how many people you would like to take part in the group — too large of a group can inhibit conversation, but so can too small of a group!

When you are thinking about what questions to ask in your focus group, remember to keep them focused on the reason you are holding the group. Be sure to ask yourself: What information do we need from participants? What information can we get from a focus group that we cannot get from other sources? What questions can we ask to get the information we need?

Use clear and simple questions. If you are collecting data about the outcome of enhanced writing skills, don't get sidetracked by asking questions about working with fractions. It is always a good idea to test out the questions ahead of time to see if they are clear and if you are getting relevant responses. Try to make the questions as specific as possible. For example, instead of asking "how are you using your new literacy skills?" you could ask "do you find yourself writing notes and memos on the job more often than you did before?"

Another thing to think about is taking notes during the focus group. It can be difficult for the facilitator to take notes because he/she should be listening carefully to the responses and encouraging discussion. Therefore, it is a good idea to have someone appointed as a notetaker. Often, that person does not actually participate in the focus group so that he/she can concentrate on taking the notes.

Surveys

There are a variety of ways that you can conduct a survey. You can administer surveys one-on-one, either in person or over the telephone. You can create a print-based survey and distribute it by mail. Or you could invite a group of people to come into the literacy centre and complete a print-based survey there. If you want to use technology, you can create an online survey. If you do an Internet search on survey creating, you will find many free sites to help you create, administer and tabulate your surveys online. Two examples are **www.zoomerang.com** and **www.surveymonkey.com**.

When you are designing your survey, it is important to remember what information you want to collect. Just as we discussed about focus groups, remember to keep your questions focused on the topic at hand. And again it is a good idea to test out the questions ahead of time to see if they are clear and if you are able to gather useful results. Try to keep the survey as short as possible; people quickly tire of long and repetitive surveys.

Basically, there are two types of questions that can be asked. The first type is "closed" questions. This type of question provides a series of choices as answers and allows responses to be tracked on a scale. For example, you could ask if someone is writing more often, less often or the same as they were before they enrolled with your agency. You can expand the scale by adding qualifiers such as "much more often" or "a little more often". The choice is up to you. However, giving people at least three choices, but no more than five is probably ideal in most cases.

The benefit of closed questions is that they provide more reliable data than open questions because you are limiting the choice of responses. This makes the responses easy to tabulate. However, we have probably all tried to answer a question and thought "I wouldn't pick any of those choices", so you might also want to include the option for people to provide additional comments.

You can also use "open" questions which allow the person to respond any way they choose. However, it's important to design these questions so that the question you are asking is clear. Ask one question at a time; avoid multi-part questions. For example, instead of asking "do you find that you are writing letters more often and if so, who do you write these letters to and why?", you could ask respondents to "please give examples of times when you find yourself writing a letter".

Whether you are conducting a survey or a focus group, it is also important to assure the participants that their responses will remain confidential. You should explain why you are asking the questions and remind participants that you are not evaluating them; you are evaluating the program. Let them know how important their honest feedback is and how it can help the program to improve its services to learners. And be sure to thank them for their time and effort!

Internal and External Surveys

It is important to collect objective data from both within the program and external to the program.

It is important to collect objective data from both within the program and external to the program. Within the literacy agency itself, one of the first places to start is with the staff … what impacts do they notice? Be sure to also check in with your volunteers about this.

Of course, you will also want to survey learners about what works and what doesn't. You can design a simple survey about just one thing (e.g., the availability of computers) or about all aspects of your programming. The example on page 41 is a survey about textbooks used at the Manitoulin Island site of Cambrian College. That agency uses the results of this survey to help them determine learner satisfaction in terms of the textbooks that are used and to decide if they will continue to use those texts or find something else.

In terms of external sources, think about other stakeholders, i.e., the agencies learners work with, other education and training providers, even family members. Of course, you have to take confidentiality into account, so you may have to ask general questions about literacy learners rather than about specific individuals.

The example on page 42 is a simple survey that Northern College in Kirkland Lake sends to agencies who may have referred clients to their program.

Northern College also has a questionnaire for faculty members so that the literacy program can assess how former literacy learners are doing in post-secondary courses. Please refer to page 43.

TEXTBOOK EVALUATION

TEXT: ____

Put a check mark in the box to show your opinion of each statement.	**Yes**	**Usually**	**No**
1. I understand almost everything that I have read in this book.	☐	☐	☐
2. The material in this book is clearly explained.	☐	☐	☐
3. The material in this book is presented in an order that seems logical to me.	☐	☐	☐
4. There are enough examples showing how to do things.	☐	☐	☐
5. There are enough practice questions for me to try	☐	☐	☐
6. There are too many practice questions to do.	☐	☐	☐
7. I have enough time (target dates) to do the work in each chapter.	☐	☐	☐
8. The answer keys in this book are correct.	☐	☐	☐
9. I can see how this book will help me in the future.	☐	☐	☐

List any chapters in this book that you had problems with: ____, ____, ____, ____

List any chapters that you think should be allocated more time: ____, ____, ____, ____

Rate the text by circling the best description:

Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Comments: ____

____

____

____

Program Evaluation – Survey for Sponsoring Agencies

1. Has your agency sponsored clients into NAME OF LITERACY PROGRAM?
   Yes ________________ No ____________

   If you answered 'yes', continue to question 2.
   If you answered 'no', go to the end of the survey.

2. Please rank your agency's satisfaction level with the program's service to clients on the scale below.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Comments: ____

   ____

3. Please rank your satisfaction level with the program's service to your agency on the scale below.

   1 2 3 4 5

   Comments: ____

   ____

4. What program improvements do you suggest to help the program better support your agency's requirements?

   ____

   ____

   ____

Thank you for your contribution. Please return to ______________________________

Program Evaluation – Survey for College Faculty

Please complete one survey per faculty, regardless of the number of students you teach.

1. In what program do you teach? ___________________________

2. Please consult the attached list of students who attended NAME OF LITERACY PROGRAM. Are you teaching any of these students?
   Yes ____________ No ____________

   If you answered 'yes', continue to question 3.
   If you answered 'no', go to the end of the survey.

3. Generally, how would you rate their/his/her learning skills? (notetaking, test-taking, self-management, computer literacy including Blackboard)

   👍 1 2 3 4 5 👎

4. In your opinion, were these students prepared academically (math, communications, science prereqs) for your course(s)?

   Yes ____________ No ____________

   Comments: ____
   ____

5. What program improvements do you suggest to help the program better prepare students for your program/course?

   ____
   ____
   ____

Thanks for your contribution. Please return to ____________________

Step One: Understanding Results

Tracking where learners go after they leave the program is also important. Do they indeed go on to further education and training, or employment, if that is their goal? How do you know? And if they go, do they finish the course they started, or are they employed long-term? We have to track exit and follow-up statistics, so again CIPMS is not requiring that you do additional work, but it does require that you spend some time analyzing what the numbers mean. If people don't complete college courses, for example, does it mean that they weren't adequately prepared? On the positive side, if course completion rates are high, then it most likely does mean that your agency has done a good job of preparing people for further education and training.

A good place to start analyzing program impact is with the information you collected for exit and follow-up. Start with the mandatory learner satisfaction exit survey and use it to ask other questions … you are not restricted to just asking six questions! For example, you could ask learners to identify one thing they can do at exit that they were not able to do when they started. Gathering this information from a number of learners could also result in or provide information for a very valuable marketing tool!

The exit surveys give you a starting point to evaluate program impact, but they are fairly immediate results. You will also want to know more about longer-term outcomes. This information can be harder to quantify, but it speaks to the results your program is achieving, i.e., the impact on learners, their families and the community. Gathering this data takes more thought and creativity, but it can be done.

The Espanola site of North Channel Literacy wanted to know if its employment preparation modules were providing learners with the skills they needed to find and maintain employment. Staff went back through their records to find out. They tracked the information in chart form, and the resulting document provides a wealth of data that can be used to clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of their modules. Staff could use these statistics for recruiting both learners and tutors as well as for seeking funding. Over time, staff will continue to develop further evidence as to the success of their modules and the success of the learners who use those modules.

This type of data tracking can clearly show that results were achieved and how the program knows that they were achieved. Although it can take some time to set up this type of tracking, once it is in place, it simply becomes a matter of keeping it up to date and adding information on a regular basis. This is a sample of what Espanola's tracking form looks like.

Learner Employment Tracking Sheet

(Learners exited from the LBS program who attained their short-term goals and gained employment)

Name	Start Date	Start Level	LBS Outcomes	Workforce Literacy Module	Date Exited	Level at Exit	Place of Employment	Position	Length of Time Employed
	Aug. 1/04	2	Reading Writing Numeracy	Small Engine Repair	May 1/06	5	Bob's Engine Repair	Engine Repair Assistant	4 weeks
	Feb. 17/04	1	Reading Writing	Customer Service	Jan. 20/06	3	Wendy's	Food Server	5 months
	Sept. 23/04	3	Reading Writing	Employment Readiness	Nov. 9/05	4	Joe's Construction	Road Crew	7 months
	Jan. 31/05	2	Speaking & Listening	Customer Service	Nov. 28/05	4	Variety Store	Owner	6 months
	Apr. 11/05	2	Reading Writing	General Construction	Feb. 16/06	4	Joe's Construction	Truck and Plow Operator	3 months
	May 3/02	2	Reading Writing	Skills at Work Customer Service	Current	3	Dollar Store	Stock Shelves	15 months
	Sept. 20/04	2	Numeracy	Office Procedures	May 26/05	4	Office	Office Assistant	12 months

This chart shows an example of how North Channel tracks results for their learners with employment goals over a long term. They can use this information to analyze how long former (and current) students are employed at the same place, if they found employment related to the workforce module they studied and so on. This type of chart could be adapted to also track learners with goals relating to further education and training or with independence goals. Here's a sample of what that might look like.

Name	Start Date	Start Level	Module	Exit Date	Exit Level	Now at ...	Doing ...	For how long
Fred Flintstone	Aug. 1/04	2	Small Engine Repair	May 1/06	5	Bob's Engine Repair	Engine Repair Assistant	4 weeks
Betty Rubble	Feb. 17/04	1	Customer Service	Jan. 20/06	3	Wendy's	Food server	5 months
Wilma Flintstone	May 31/02	2	Skills at Work / Customer Service	Current	3	Wal-Mart	Stocker	15 months
Homer Simpson	May 31/02	1	Family Budgeting	Dec. 18/02	3			
Bart Simpson	Dec. 1/01	1	Personal Banking	May 1/02	3			
Buzz Lightyear	Sept. 3/05	2	Report Writing / Reading for Meaning	Dec. 15/06	4	College	Personal Support Worker	6 months

Because you are involved with learners on a regular basis, you probably already have a good sense of how things are going, but you cannot just rely on your intuition or your perceptions. You need hard data to back that up. Anecdotal evidence is very helpful because it provides real-life stories that can illustrate your results and put a human face on the statistical information, but great stories about learner successes are not enough. You still need to collect hard data to back up those stories and provide clear evidence that your literacy agency is making a difference.

When collecting data about program results, we are looking to determine the impact the program has made, and continues to make, in the lives of students. The data that you collect for exit and follow-up is a good start for subjective evaluation from the learners themselves. After all, they are going to be the best source of information about how their enhanced literacy skills have impacted their lives!

Step Two: Understanding Cause

Although understanding results and understanding cause are shown in the Agency Assessment Guide as two separate steps, they really happen at the same time. Analyzing the results of your data collection and understanding what brought about those results should go hand in hand.

Through the various tracking mechanisms and data collection instruments we use, we gather a significant amount of information. For example, we know

- how many learners we work with
- how many contact hours we have
- how many volunteers we have
- what learners have generally achieved in our programs
- how many learners leave our program
- what learners are doing three and six months after they leave us.

At this point in the agency assessment process, you should be able to use the information you have gathered and analyzed to help you determine your strengths and weaknesses.

However, we do not always deliberately tie all of this together in a cohesive, comprehensive way so that we can tell other people clearly and succinctly what we do, what learners achieve, and how we verify information. When we do not take the final step of analyzing the information, we cannot confidently demonstrate that we do make a difference in our communities and how. A coordinated, deliberate CIPMS can bring this all together and give us the tools to do that.

At this point in the agency assessment process, you should be able to use the information you have gathered and analyzed to help you determine your strengths and weaknesses. If you don't have enough information, or if there are gaps in your analysis, you may need to gather further data to fill those gaps. The information you collected and your analysis should begin to help you identify what areas of programming are bringing you the greatest successes (the vital few) and areas where there is room for improvement.

Things to Think About

When thinking about your strengths and weaknesses and what outcomes you will want to improve, here are some questions to ask yourself.

1. Who is our client group (our learners) and what do they need from us?
2. How do we currently help them meet those needs?
3. What gaps are there and how might we address those gaps?
4. If we can't help them meet all of their needs, can we refer them to another agency? If so, which one?
5. How do we know that we are successful in helping our learners meet their stated needs?
6. What is the most effective and efficient way to help our learners meet their needs and goals?
7. How can we let our learners, our funders, our community, our referral partners and other stakeholder know about our successes?

Step Three: Improving Results

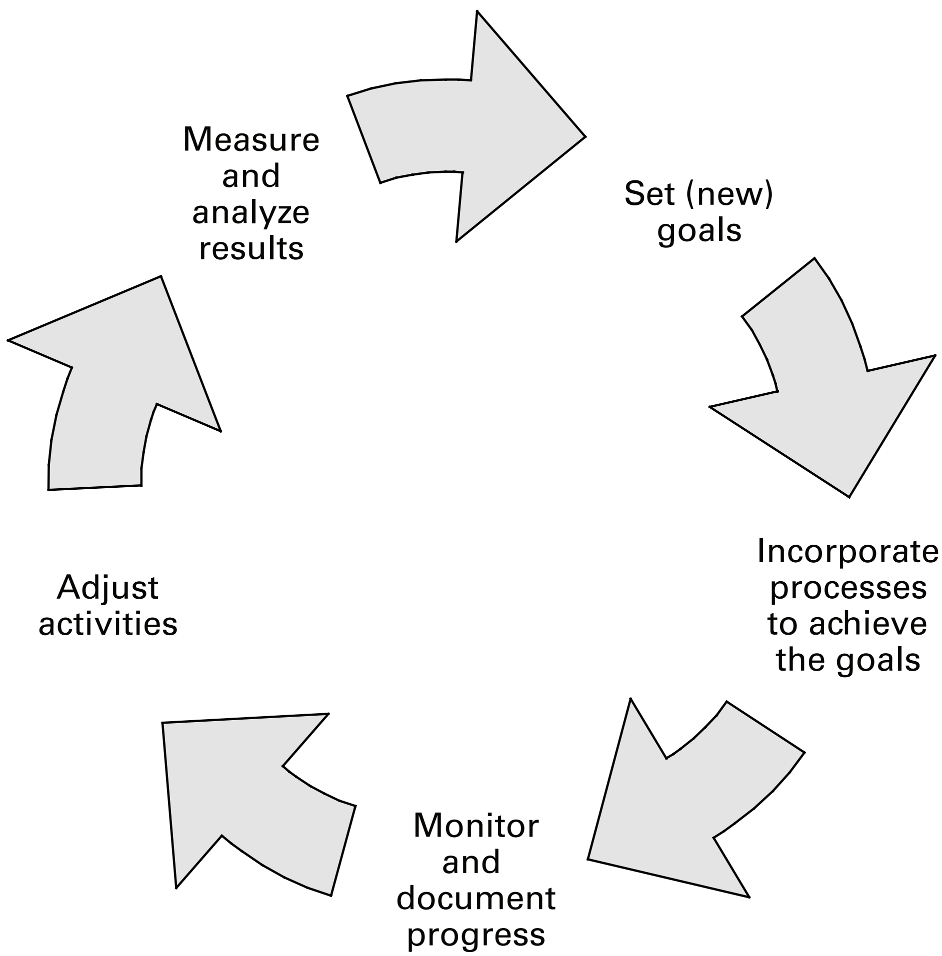
Looking at the results of what we achieve in our programs is part of CIPMS. But it is not enough to just look at those results; we have to use them to help set next year's targets, revise expectations and tell people what we do and how we do it. We can use the results to clearly and definitively show the impact we are making and how we contributed to that impact. We can show clients and stakeholders our processes and our CIPMS plan, but all of that just says what we expect and hope will happen. What we really need to tell them is what did happen and why we know that it did, and how we contributed to that. What evidence can we use to answer those questions? Good tracking and documentation can help you do this. Anecdotal evidence is also important because it helps you tell the story.

Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres in Eastern Ontario has developed an excellent CIPMS planning tool that has proven to be very helpful. The tool is based on MTCU's Program Monitoring Report and clearly lays out what the agency needs to accomplish for each of the criteria and how they will demonstrate that they have met expectations. This document clearly identifies what will be evaluated, how the agency will demonstrate what it has achieved, who will do what activities and when. We have included this document in the Resources and Appendices Section.

Although this type of plan may seem overwhelming at first, it is important to remember that you don't have to do everything all at once. Choose one or two areas that are priorities or that are within your current capacity to achieve and focus on those. With experience, you will be able to manage multiple goals and targets but always remember to keep it manageable. For MTCU, the Program Monitoring Report is the opportunity for us to tell our story and to highlight our results and achievements.

The Renfrew County District School Board has put a lot of effort into implementing CIPMS throughout its agency. Staff feel that the efforts have been well worth it, and they are confident that their programming has improved and that learners are reaping the benefits. They have worked towards clearly summarizing their activities, goals and objectives, action plans, results and timelines. Because it is difficult to plan until you know what you have already achieved, this agency went back into its records and documented what had already been accomplished. Although this required a significant time commitment from everyone involved, they all agree that it was time well spent and has helped them move forward.

The following chart is based on information provided from the Renfrew County District School Board. It shows how they documented some of their CIPMS efforts. This type of chart can help organize data, planning, goals, results and any needed changes into one document. It also relates directly to the CIPMS cycle introduced earlier and shown below.



Set goal(s)	Incorporate processes	Monitor and document progress	Adjust activities	Measure and analyze results
Support for Practitioners: PD for all instructors (to have instructors that can deliver quality programming to meet the exemplary standards required by MTCU)	Arrange minimum of 2 PD days/year, either in house or send practitioners to regional or provincial events	Two instructors attended Essential Skills workshops; ES now being incorporated into lesson plan development Inhouse PD day held to review procedures for development of training plans, reporting of progress	No adjustment needed; goals are being met	Instructors are better prepared and able to meet MTCU and program expectations
Marketing and Outreach: Meet all workers for OW, EI, Job Connect, Employment Services by March 31 to encourage referrals and enhance current relationship	• Contact agencies by telephone by Sept. 30 to set up times • Develop presentation • Gather learner testimonials • Gather data to highlight program achievements & successes	• Presentations made to OW, EI and Job Connect by January 31 • Unable to set a time with Employment Services as of Jan. 31; will continue to work towards this	• Identify another contact at Employment Services • Update presentation to reflect current statistics and data	• Met new staff at OW • Increased referrals from Job Connect • Streamlined report process for EI • Agencies reported better understanding of what program offers and students achieve

Setting Targets

In order to measure results for CIPMS and plan for improvements, you need to set targets. The following chart can help you with looking at the results you have achieved in the past in your agency and in setting targets for the results you plan to achieve in the coming year.

Client Satisfaction			
Y/E March 31/06	**Y/E March 31/07**	**Y/E March 31/08**	**Target 2008/9**
Insert the results of your learner exit surveys in this row. Include both percentages and numbers.			Based on previous performance, what is a reasonable target? Why? What factors influenced previous results? What can you do to bring about improvements?
Effectiveness			
Insert the number and percentage of learners in employment, education & training or volunteering in this row.			Based on previous performance, what is a reasonable target? Why? What factors influenced previous results? What can you do to bring about improvements?
Insert the number and percentage of learners who met their goals in this row.			Based on previous performance, what is a reasonable target? Why? What factors influenced previous results? What can you do to bring about improvements?
Efficiency			
In this row, insert the number of learners enrolled in your program and the number you had committed to on the Schedule B. Also include the number of contact hours achieved and the number committed to.			Based on previous performance, what is a reasonable target? Why? What factors influenced previous results? What can you do to bring about improvements?

When determining what your target outcomes will be, it is important to remember to keep goals and objectives measurable, manageable and realistic. The plan you develop should include not only your targets, but it should also identify milestones along the way so that you can measure your success in reaching that target at specified points along the way. You also need to include timelines. Some goals will take a few months to achieve; others may take a year or more.

Step Four: Review and Adjust

We need to continuously improve and make adjustments as we go. Whether you make any changes to your programming will depend on the current situation at your agency. It is not likely that agencies have extra money to start adding additional programs or to hire new staff. The key is to keep changes manageable … sometimes a small change can have a large impact. For example, a change in scheduling might increase attendance without increasing costs.

If you do not think the need you have identified is something your agency can ever implement, you could take your findings to the Literacy Services Planning table and see if some other group in the community could meet the need, or you could bring it to the broader community. That could even be the beginnings of a new partnership!

Remember that sometimes change takes time: by working together with your Literacy Services Planning Committee or with other agencies in your community, you may be able to fill gaps that have been identified or to address other needs.

It is important to remember that if you don't achieve the results you expected, it does not mean that the program is doing a bad job. Many factors, or causes, can influence what results are or are not achieved. That's why understanding "cause" is such an important step of the agency assessment process. You can use your findings to revise expectations or to take steps to lessen the influence of some or all of the contributing factors over which your agency has some control.

When you can accurately demonstrate how you make a difference, instead of just saying that you do, you have a very powerful tool at your disposal.

You can also use the findings from your data collection efforts to compare current results to those from previous years. This in turn demonstrates the effects of last year's program improvement efforts and can help you document what changes worked and what didn't.

Your findings can also be used for recruitment and promotional purposes. Tracking and identifying the results you achieve and ongoing program improvement can make a program attractive to potential volunteers, participants and funders as well as the general public. When you can accurately demonstrate how you make a difference, instead of just saying that you do, you have a very powerful tool at your disposal.

Finally, analyzing the results your agency is achieving this year can help in future program planning. For example, this year's achievements can be used to set next year's targets. Reviewing the improvements made in your agency this year could help determine where your efforts should be focused the following year. Simply put, the results will tell you what you have done so far, and you will use them to determine what should (or should not) be done differently in the future to improve your program.

The results of the agency assessment process probably won't be a surprise. When deciding where to focus your program improvement efforts, don't choose only those areas that you know will show you in your best light! Of course you want to highlight what you do well, but you also want to identify areas where you could make improvements.

Agency assessment is not about proving we are perfect. It's about discovering what works and what doesn't work in your agency. And it's about responding to your findings by allocating your resources so that your agency is the best that it can be. Assessment is an opportunity for growth and a way to improve your program. Ultimately, our reason for being is to deliver quality literacy programming: agency assessment can help us do that to the best of our abilities and within the resources available to us.

SECTION 4: Agency Assessment

Employment Ontario's Agency Assessment Guide

Please refer to pages 54-66.

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Ontario's employment & training network

AGENCY ASSESSMENT of organizational capacity

GUIDE

FOR

LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS (LBS) DELIVERY AGENCIES

Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity
For Literacy and Basic Skills Agencies

To successfully implement a performance management system, an agency must have the organizational capacity to plan, track, organize, analyze and evaluate the results of its day to day operations. It does this to determine what needs to be changed - or improved - to achieve the agency's intended results in the most efficient and effective manner.

This guide, Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity, is intended to provide information for Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) funded agencies about what organizational processes need to be in place to implement a continuous improvement performance management system (CIPMS). It is intended to help you determine the extent to which your agency is ready to fully implement CIPMS.

LBS service providers range from large institutions in urban settings to small not for profit agencies in rural areas, using both paid and volunteer staff. Despite this range, all LBS funded agencies are strongly focussed on client services, and sometimes the organizational capacity of the agency is not the top priority. While we realize that each agency differs, and that one system will not fit all, we hope that this guide will give you an easy template to use as you work toward making improvements. Our goal is to assist you by providing you with tools that will help you in your efforts to improve the quality of service provided to all LBS clients and to create a well integrated system-wide analysis of results.

Some agencies have developed continuous improvement processes and are already managing their agency growth in this way. They can adjust this guide to suit their needs or continue to use their current practices provided that:

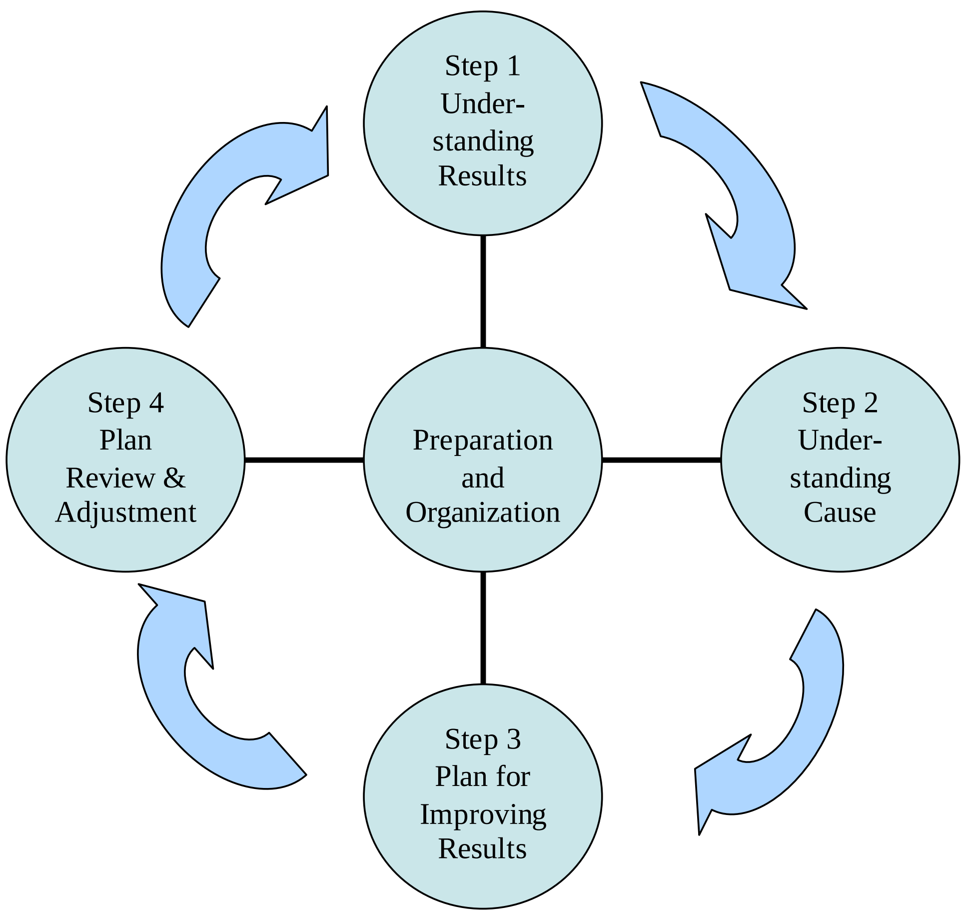
- ***The process is dynamic and includes a system for continuous progress toward quality improvement objectives***
- ***Direct consultation of clients (including learners, MTCU, partners and stakeholders) and staff is completed***
- ***Step III – Plan for Improving Results has the same information available to analyse***

The Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity has a focus on:

- ***Clients and their needs***
- ***Current results***
- ***A plan for future improvement.***

The continuous improvement process is part of an agency's annual work plan; progress is measured against the targets set, and the plan is refined based upon the success in meeting the targets. The needs of learners and the community change over time, and approaches to deal with their issues are adapted. The Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity will be an easy task for agencies which have previously tracked performance on the measures and obtained regular feedback from clients, whether those clients are learners, community partners, employers or other stakeholders.

Steps in the Assessment Process of Organizational Capacity



Preparation & Organization

At the heart of the implementation of a performance management system is excellent preparation and organization. Preparation refers mainly to the data you need to collect and the mechanisms or tools and processes you will use to collect it. Organization refers mainly to who will collect the data, when it will be collected and how it will be used.

To begin:

- ***create a group or committee to work on this process including staff, volunteers and board members who would be interested in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of your organization***
- ***Collect and organize the information necessary, as this will save you much time later. To assist you, a sample chart is included. This can be modified to reflect the special circumstances of your agency, and the types of information which you use now.***

Information Needed	***Source Examples***	***Available (√) or Plan to Obtain***
1. Understanding Results	*List the sources of the information you will use*	*Tick if information is already available. If not, outline the plan to obtain it.*
Expectations: • *MTCU provincial targets for performance measure, e.g., Status at Exit* • *Agency targets (previous year- e.g. 06-07) for each performance measure* • *Learner expectations* • *Partner and Key stakeholder expectations*	*- Literacy Services Plan (LSP)* *- Agency's annual MTCU business plan* *- Schedule B (LBS Contract appendix)* *-Program Monitoring Report* *- Agency strategic plan* *- LBS Program Guidelines* *- MTCU letters to field* *- Learner satisfaction survey* *- Partner survey*	
Outcomes: • *Agency performance on MTCU targets (year to date)* • *Agency performance on other performance measures* • *Feedback from learners,*	*- LBS-IMS activity reports* *- Agency database* *- Learner Satisfaction Survey reports* *-Program Monitoring Report*	

partners, stakeholders and staff	*- Client follow up surveys* *- Client suggestion box* *- Client complaints logs* *- Community partners survey* *- Staff/Volunteer survey* *- Board Member survey*	

Tips on surveying Clients, Partners and Stakeholders

- ***Preparation** – assemble information which might be useful as you conduct the assessment. This may include: information at hand, other information you will collect and feedback from past consultation. This should be done before you start to survey or interview.*
- ***Participation** –create a multi rater assessment (MRA) of the organization. MRA is a process which allows a person, team, organization or other entity to receive performance-related feedback anonymously from peers, supervisors, subordinates or other interested parties and compare this data with their own self-ratings. The feedback from all the raters is merged, and used to generate one report. This ensures that the confidentiality of each individual reporter is protected, while the person or entity being assessed receives candid feedback. This information is then used as a source to help develop action plans for continuous improvement.*
- ***Setting Up the Multi-rater Assessment***
    - *Standardized procedures for collecting and storing information should be used to help you keep organized*
    - *Learners can be surveyed on an ongoing basis, (learner satisfaction surveys, exit interviews, 3 and 6 month follow-up); however, after the preparation phase there may be some client based questions which were not posed earlier. These questions can be asked in a specialized survey or focus group.*
    - *Stakeholders who refer clients to you, share learners or form the next step in the learning plans of learners can provide feedback on how your organization meets their expectations. While you may have received anecdotal information, the most useful information will come from structured interviews conducted by a 3rd party or a survey designed to solicit specific feedback.*
    - *The process can be expanded to include other stakeholders in your community, such as partners and community groups and other LBS deliverers, if you wish.*
    - *There are many books and internet resources available with information on how to set up the surveys, questions to ask and how to analyse the results. Other agencies in your community, sector or stream may also have samples to share with you.*

Regardless of the details of the survey or focus group which is set up, here is a list of criteria for any good assessment.

- ***Objectivity-** to allow those surveyed to give their honest opinions, use anonymous feedback or use 3rd parties to obtain information*
- ***Reliability-** standardized survey and interview processes. Ask the same questions in the same format to all participants (e.g. All written responses, or all oral responses)*
- ***Leadership-** Choose a leader from among your committee members. This person should be in charge of leading the assessment process; however, implementing changes at the agency should follow your normal business processes*

Step 1 – Understanding results

Once preparation has been completed and all the questions asked, the assessment may begin. Use the chart below, listing performance measures and the information requested. New core measures have been drafted, but they have not been distributed yet. Therefore, below are the performance measures which will be used until changes are implemented:

- ***Learner status at exit***
- ***Lost contacts at exit***
- ***Number of learners in program***
- ***Learner satisfaction rate***
- ***'Learner Satisfaction Survey' completion rates***

Those measures link to provincial targets set for 2007-2008:

- ***70% of exiting LBS and AU learners should be employed, in further education or training or volunteering upon exit***
- ***a maximum of 12% lost contacts at exit***
- ***51,000 learners receive LBS and AU training***
- ***85% of exiting learners report overall satisfaction with LBS training***

A tip - information which you obtained in your survey of partners, stakeholders and the funder is not a part of the chart below. You should compile it separately, as it will be part of the information that your will use later, in your analysis.

Complete the chart
Calculate Column F (D/C x 100), expressed as a positive or negative %
Rank your agency's performance – best ranked 1st, poorest ranked last.

STEP I Understanding Results

Perform. Measure	Provincial Target	Provincial Minimum Standard (Baseline)*	Agency Target (Expected Result)	Agency Current Result	Fulfillment of Expectations (D) ÷(C)	Rank
Effectiveness Status at exit	70% in E + FE/T + V		Available off biz plan	Available off Activity Report	%	
Effectiveness Lost contacts	< 12% at exit		"	"	%	
Efficiency # of learners	51,000		Available of Schedule B			
Client satisfaction Learner Satisfaction Rate	85%		Available off biz plan	Available off last LSS report	%	
Client Satisfaction LSS completion Rate	N/A				%	
	A	B	C	D	E	F

**for future use*

The Vital Few

The concept of the "Vital Few" and the "Trivial Many" is the foundation of Continuous Quality Improvement processes used in business and industry worldwide. Scientists noticed that a small portion, usually around 20 percent of the work, products, people etc. is always responsible for about 80 percent of the success. (20% of the products result in 80% of the profits; 20% of the salespeople create 80% of the sales, etc). This also became known as Pareto's Principle or the 80/20 Rule. To create improvement you can focus on the 20 percent of your work which matters most. The concept is "Don't just work smart, work smart on the right things".

We can concentrate on changing just a few strategic items and make a large impact. This process provides us with a way of focussing on the vital few so that we create the greatest return from our efforts.

The process is as follows:

- ***The leader of the Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity completes a preliminary analysis, using all information gathered, and develops a tentative list of strengths and weaknesses. The leader can seek feedback from clients, partners and staff to solicit possible causes and suggestions for change, if necessary.***

- ***Additional information may be required at this stage, so that staff and the Board can begin to understand the causes. Determine what is required and try to obtain it prior to the meeting.***

- ***A meeting should be organized for the committee and additional agency staff, board members and volunteers.***

  - ***A summary of all information gathered and the tentative list of strengths and weaknesses should be given to all attendees prior to the meeting***
  - ***Seek feedback on the findings***
  - ***Obtain confirmation/validation/clarification of the proposed vital few***
  - ***Brain-storm possible causes and solutions to improve outcomes***

- ***To begin selecting the Vital Few and choosing one Strength and two Areas for Improvement as a focus for your change efforts:***
  - ***Review the agency performance against provincial targets, business plan targets and rank your agency outcomes from exceeding expectations to furthest below targets***
  - ***Rank client feedback on programs and services from most to least satisfied***
  - ***Look for patterns in the results***
  - ***Consider opportunities and threats – changes in the community such as plant openings or closures, staffing changes, new agency partnerships***
  - ***Choose the Vital Few, selecting those which would have the most impact in resolving weaknesses or boosting outcomes***
  - ***Document the Vital Few in the chart below***

THE VITAL FEW: (Place these in the First Column in Steps 2 - 4)

Strength	
Areas for Improvement 1	
2	

Step 2 – Understanding Cause

Usually, Step 2 will be completed concurrently with Step 1. Understanding results and understanding cause is an artificial division, and the organization and preparation for both steps can be completed concurrently.

To understand the results that you have achieved, and the strengths and weaknesses that you have documented, you must look for the cause. Further, understanding the cause of your strengths and weaknesses allows you to plan where and how to focus your efforts for change and improvement. This requires research and creative thinking.

Causes are management or business processes which are within the control of the agency and, if changed, can improve outcomes. They include such things as allocation of resources, training of staff, access to services, and location of services. When a problem is identified you must drill down from the problem itself to the underlying cause that is responsible for the outcome. You may have to brainstorm possible causes before selecting the most probable. While the initial work may be conducted by the assessment team and some possible causes can be suggested, it is important that a broad selection of staff or volunteers is engaged in this process.

To determine the issues and the causes, there are a number of techniques which can be used. You can go back to client groups or stakeholders and do in-depth interviews or focus groups, develop flow charts or analyse performance information. Tools to assist with determining, analysing and improving performance are available.

The key activities include:

- ***Identify the probable causes (done by the work group, or by a group of staff in a brainstorming session)***
- ***Assemble circumstantial evidence to make the case for the probable causes identified***
- ***Choose one of the probable causes, the cause which the group feels is the most significant***
- ***Build a plan of action for changing the chosen probable cause. Choose to change things that you feel will produce positive results, and keep in mind the idea that you should concentrate on the 20% of the work that produces the highest return.***
- ***Developing agreement to finalize the causes***
  - ***Develop a probable cause for each area of strength or weakness***
  - ***Ensure that each probable cause is within your agency's control***
  - ***Seek concurrence from the management of the agency and the board of directors***

- *Enter in Step 2 – Understanding Cause Summary*

Step 2 – Understanding Cause Summary

Vital Few from Step 1	Probable Cause(s)
Strength	1.
	2.
	3.
1st Area for Improvement	1.
	2.
	3.
2nd Area for Improvement	1.
	2.
	3.

Step 3 – Improving Results

With a goal to developing a plan to improve results by building on strengths and improving areas of weakness, the key activities in Step 3 include:

- *Define the desired outcome in concrete terms*
  - *Make it measurable, manageable and realistic*

- *List ways to change the probable causes and to create the desired improvement using the following methods, as appropriate:*
  - *Brainstorming*
  - *Consulting the "Best Practices" of other service providers*
  - *Discussing possibilities with the MTCU consultant*

- *Develop a concrete plan with measurable targets, milestones and timelines*
  - *Start with the formula:* ***Desired outcome – Current Results= Desired Improvement*** *(expressed on a yearly basis)*
  - *Create Milestones that can be broken down into concrete, measurable and manageable pieces so that you can see progress toward the desired outcome as you move through the year. One method is to divide the* ***Desired Improvement*** *into 4, and express it as quarterly Milestones.*

- ➢ ***Schedule a review of the milestone at the end of each quarter (June 30, September 30, December 31 and March 31) or at mid-year***

- ❖ ***Create a step by step action plan: select the actions from the choices generated above which have a high probability of achieving the desired outcome***
- ❖ ***Document on the Step 3 chart, below***
- ❖ ***Circulate the Step 3 chart within the agency to ensure agreement, including the Chair of the Board or agency manager, as appropriate.***

STEP 3 - Plan for Improving Results Worksheet

Vital Few from Step 1	Agency Current Result	Desired Outcome (i.e. Agency Target)	Milestones	Steps in the Action Plan
Strength			• • •	• • •
1st Area for Improvement			• • •	• • •
2nd Area for Improvement			• • •	• • •

Step 4 – Review the Plan and Adjust

The process of regularly reviewing and adjusting is the key to creating improvements. Progress toward the goal is assessed and corrective action is taken, as necessary. Seeing the actual improvement as it happens will motivate your organization to continue its efforts and will remind everyone of your commitment to quality.

Results are reviewed and conclusions drawn about agency performance. This review of progress is scheduled at, or around, the milestone dates and results in appropriate action:

- *Below the target – less than 100% fulfillment of the Milestone – the cause of the difference is determined and a revised plan to achieve the target needed. Note: Sometimes performance may be so far off target that no adjustment will enable the agency to achieve the original target, and a new target must be discussed with the funder and included in the adjustment plan*
- *On the target – 100% fulfillment of the Milestone – no adjustment is needed*
- *Above the target – greater than 100% fulfillment of the Milestone – no adjustment is needed*

Complete the chart below at each milestone date, noting where you have met your targets and making an adjusted plan, where necessary. This will assist your agency to operate more efficiently.

STEP IV - Review and Adjust Action Plans Worksheet

Vital Few from Step I	Milestone Target	Current Result on Milestone	% Fulfillment of Milestone (B) ÷(A)	Cause(s)	Adjusted Action Plan (New milestones as needed)
Strength			%		
1st Area for Improvement			%		

2nd Area for Improvement			%		
	A	***B***	***C***		

APPENDIX A

Possible online resources:

- ***www.charityvillage.ca***
- ***http://www.nald.ca/clo/publications.htm***
- ***www.muttart.org***
- ***onestep.on.ca***
- ***npgoodpractice.org***
- ***forbesfunds.org***
- ***www.irdc.ca in the books section a book titled Organizational Assessment – a framework for Improvement, Chapter 6***
- ***http://www.skymark.com free tools with simple explanations of how they are used and in what circumstances. Under management resources, go to Classic Tools.***

Employment Ontario's Agency Assessment Tool

Please refer to pages 68-73.

Agency Assessment Tool

For Literacy and Basic Skills Agencies

Assessment Steps	*Guide Pages*
1. Understanding Results	*5– 7*
2. Understanding Cause	*8 – 9*
3. Developing Improvement Plans	*10 – 11*
4. Review and Adjustment	*11 - 12*

Notes:

1. *This Tool can be used on its own or can be incorporated into existing self-assessment and continuous improvement processes already in place in your organization. The accompanying 'Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity Guide' is a resource providing more detailed instructions and examples to support the use of the Agency Assessment Tool.*
2. *Steps 1-3 are performed during your initial assessment. Step 4 is to check progress on the improvement plans identified in Step 3. This is normally repeated every 3 months after the initial assessment process is completed.*
3. *The focus of self-assessment is on an agency's own results vis-à-vis its own targets. Progress is measured by continuous improvement in those results. Provincial targets are provided as reference points.*

STEP I Understanding Results (Guide pages 5-7)

Performance Measure	Provincial Target	Provincial Minimum Standard (Baseline)*	Agency Target (Expected Result)	Agency Current Result	Fulfillment of Expectations (D) ÷(C)	Rank
Effectiveness Status at exit	70% in E + FE/T + V		Available off biz plan	Available off Activity Report	%	
Effectiveness Lost contacts	< 12% at exit		“	“	%	
Efficiency # of learners	51,000		Available of Schedule B			
Client satisfaction Learner Satisfaction Rate	85%		Available off biz plan	Available off last LSS report	%	
Client Satisfaction LSS completion Rate	N/A				%	
	A	B	C	D	E	F

*for future use

1. ***Determine the variation of your actual result from target in Column E as a positive or negative percentage.***

2. ***Next, rank the order of your organization's performance in Column F: the best achievement ranked first and the poorest ranked last.***

THE VITAL FEW: (Place these in the First Column in Steps 2 - 4)

Strength	
Area for Improvement	
Area for Improvement	

STEP II   Understanding Cause Summary *(Guide pages 8-9)*

First list the "vital few" (i.e. one strength and two areas for Improvement identified in Step I). From the list of probable causes identified from your exercises, select 3 for each strength and improvement area over which you have control.

Vital Few from Step 1	*Probable cause(s)*
Strength	1.
	2.
	3.
1st Area for Improvement	1.
	2.
	3.
2nd Area for Improvement	1.
	2.
	3.

STEP III *Plan for Improving Results Worksheet* *(Guide pages 10-11)*

Vital Few from Step 1	*Agency Current Result*	*Desired Outcome (i.e. Agency Target)*	*Milestones**	*Steps in the Action Plan*
Strength			• • •	• • •
1st Area for Improvement			• • •	• • •
2nd Area for Improvement			• • •	• • •

** Reference the example in Step III of the Guide to calculate*

STEP IV *Reviewing and Adjusting Action Plans Worksheet* (Guide pages 11-12)

Vital Few from Step I	*Milestone Target*	*Current Result on Milestone*	*% Fulfillment of Milestone (B) ÷ (A)*	*Cause(s)*	*Adjusted Action Plan (New milestones as needed)*
Strength			%		
1st Area for Improvement			%		
2nd Area for Improvement			%		
	A	*B*	*C*		

Conclusion

Through CIPMS, we can effectively and efficiently plan, track, organize, analyze and evaluate the work we do. We can then use our findings to better promote our programs and highlight our successes to our learners, our funders and our communities.

Continuous Improvement Performance Management may be new terminology to many of us in the literacy field, but the concepts are not new. CIPMS is a way of bringing a number of good management processes together in one comprehensive and deliberate system. Through CIPMS, we can effectively and efficiently plan, track, organize, analyze and evaluate the work we do. We can then use our findings to better promote our programs and highlight our successes to our learners, our funders and our communities.

Although many literacy agencies already engage in some or all of the processes included in CIPMS, we do not always do so in a deliberate and purposeful manner. Sometimes our efforts are more informal than formal. The tools and resources that have been introduced in this manual will help literacy agencies to more formally document the work that they do.

Implementing and working with a formal, deliberate process will be new to many of us. We will require some time to become familiar with the various steps in the process. It is important to remember that goals and objectives need to be not only measureable and manageable but also realistic. We can start small and learn as we go.

This manual and the CIPMS training that is being provided by CLO and other funded projects are introductory. As we learn and become more familiar with CIPMS, we will be better able to share successes and newly developed processes. We hope, however, that this manual will provide you with effective tips and tools to get started.

SECTION 5: Resources and Appendices

Resources

Through our research, CLO has gathered a number of data collection forms that programs have found useful. Practitioners have told us that the key to forms is keeping them simple and making them serve more than one purpose if possible. Don't track data that you don't need, but use the data you collect.

The forms included in this manual are just a sample of what is being used in the field. You are free to reproduce or adapt any of these forms for use in your agency. CLO thanks the many literacy agencies and practitioners who took the time to assist us in our research and were willing to share their forms and resources.

Monthly Activity Report

One example of a way to keep track of the quantitative information in your agency is a summary of activity. North Channel Literacy Council is a multi-site agency in Northern Ontario, and it is important that the main administrative centre is able to keep track of what goes on at each of the sites. Therefore, each site in the agency submits monthly summaries of information. There is a wealth of information available from the reports that the sites send in.

Although this example is from a multi-site agency, this type of document can easily be adapted for a single agency as well. It is an excellent example of how to summarize a wide variety of information on a single document. Please refer to pages 76-78.

MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Month: ____________________

SITE: ____

A: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

# of Carried Over Learners	# of New Learners	# of Exited Learners	# of Learners who attained goal	Total # of active learners on register	Total Contact Hours	# of Assessment Hours	# of Training Plan Dev. Hours	Total Hours for the month

FOLLOW-UP TRACKING:

Comments:

No. at EXIT who found employment	
No. at FOLLOW-UP who are still employed	

B: SUMMARY OF HOURS PER LEARNER

(ALPHABETICAL - LAST NAME, FIRST NAME)

Name	Goal	Status	Hours	Name	Goal	Status	Hours	Volunteer Hrs: By Name & Hrs.
								TOTAL HRS: ___________
								% Behind:
								% Ahead:
				GRAND TOTAL HOURS:				% On Target:

PRACTITIONER TOTAL HOURS: ___________

C: ASSESSMENT, TRAINING PLAN DEVELOPMENT, FOLLOW-UP & INFO/REFERRAL HOURS

ASSESSMENT				TRAINING PLAN DEVELOPMENT				FOLLOW -UP			
Name	**Hours**	**Name**	**Hours**	**Name**	**Hours**	**Name**	**Hours**	**Name**	**Exit Level + Date**	**3 or 6 mo.**	**Status**
		GRAND TOTAL				GRAND TOTAL		INFORMATION & REFERRAL HOURS			
TOTAL PRACTITIONER HOURS:				Comments:				Hours		# Clients:	

STATUS: E=Employed, NE= Not employed OLBS= Other LBS training
T/E=Other training/education V= Volunteer work LC= Lost contact

**NOTE: The number of direct assessment hours the practitioner records should NOT match the total number of hours the learners record since most of the assessment time is independent work

Learner Progress tracking

Tracking learner progress over time can also help you articulate the overall results your program is achieving in terms of the time it takes for learners to progress from one skill set to another, to complete learning modules and so on.

You also need to track learner progress. You need to know where learners started, how close they are to reaching their goals, when they have demonstrated new skills and so on. Tracking learner progress over time can also help you articulate the overall results your program is achieving in terms of the time it takes for learners to progress from one skill set to another, to complete learning modules and so on.

For example, Skills for Employment, Life and Family (SELF) in Peel shared the following combined learner self-assessment and progress report. The full document is 22 pages long, because it covers a wide range of skills and levels. We have included just a few pages here. If you would like to see the full document, please contact SELF at 905-273-5196. The full document will also be available on CLO's **Literacy Basics** website (**www.nald.ca/literacybasics**) in Spring 2008.

Please refer to page 80-82.

Name: Initial Assessment Date:

Learner Progress

Reading, level 1

Put a tick in the box that is right for you.	***Date when I can do this***	***Date achieved per assessor***
Reading Strategies		---
I know the sounds the letters in the alphabet make.		
I can sound out two letters together (such as ch, br, sh, st)		
I can sound out some difficult words.		
I can figure out the meaning of some difficult words by what the text is about.		
Comprehension		---
I can read signs that I see when I go out.		
I can read words without sounding them out.		
I can read sentences or a short story.		
I can say what the story was about.		
I can say what I think about the text.		
Research		---
I can find people and places in an index.		

Name: Initial Assessment Date:

Learner Progress

Reading, level 2

Put a tick in the box that is right for you.	***Date when I can do this***	***Date achieved per assessor***
Reading Strategies		---
I can sound out some difficult words.		
I can figure out the meaning of some difficult words by what the text is about.		
I can read 3 or more paragraphs.		
Comprehension		---
I can say what the story was about in my own words.		
I can find the main idea. I can also show something in the text that shows it is the main idea.		
Some answers are not in the text. I have to figure them out by reading the text. I can do this.		
I can answer questions asking *who, what, where, when, how, why*		
I can figure out if the story is true or not true.		
I can say what I think about the text.		
Research		---
I can find people and places in an index.		
I can look at pictures, charts, maps and titles to find what I want.		

Name: Initial Assessment Date:

Learner Progress

Reading, Level 3

Put a tick in the box that is right for you.	***Date when I can do this***	***Date achieved per assessor***
Reading Strategies		---
I can sound out some difficult words.		
I can figure out the meaning of some difficult words by what the text is about.		
Comprehension		---
I can quickly find the answers to some questions by scanning the text. I don't have to reread everything.		
I can find the main idea and write down the summary.		
I can find words and sentences from the text that support my answers.		
Some answers are not in the text. I have to figure them out by reading the text. I can do this.		
I can figure out why the author wrote the text or why the person in the story did something (the purpose of the text)		
I can say what I think about the text and explain my reasoning		
Research		---
I can take notes about what I read.		
I can compare the information from more than one source.		
I can look for information in a lot of different places.		
I can decide what information is good and what is not.		

North Channel Literacy Council in Elliot Lake also shared a one-page tracking form for learner progress. This type of document can be used to summarize a learner's achievements, while the previous example provides a detailed listing of accomplishments.

Please refer to page 84.

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

SITE:____________________ PRACTITIONER:___________________________

Month:	**Short-term goal:**	Learner:
Estimate date to complete short-term goal:		

ATTENDANCE : List the actual number of hours attended per day. If the learner was absent from a scheduled day, put AB in that box.

MON	**TUE**	**WED**	**THUR**

SELF-MANAGEMENT & SELF-DIRECTION	Poor	Fair	Good
Attendance			
Calls in when they cannot make it			
Follows Instructions			
Cooperative			
Follows Rules			

Progress made this month:

	Target	Update on Progress
Oral Communications:		
Reading:		
Writing		
Numeracy:		
Computer:		
Learner's or Tutor's Comments:		

PROGRESS TOWARDS SHORT TERM GOAL

Behind: On Target: Ahead:

Practitioner/Tutor Signature Date Learner Signature Date

Learner self-assessment is an important component of learner progress. CLO's **Literacy Basics** website (**www.nald.ca/literacybasics**) and *Together We Can Do It: The Role of Volunteers in the Assessment Process* (available online at **www.nald.ca/CLO/resource/together/cover.htm**) both provide some detailed information about learner self-assessment. We have also included other samples here, with thanks to Cambrian College and to Skills for Employment, Life and Family.

Please refer to pages 86-87.

STUDENT EVALUATION Please check the appropriate box: Fall ☐ Spring ☐

Put a check mark in the box to show your opinion of each statement.

		Yes	Usually	No
1.	My attendance is excellent.	☐	☐	☐
2.	I arrive to class on time.	☐	☐	☐
3.	If something the teacher says is unclear, I ask questions.	☐	☐	☐
4.	If I have worked on a problem or idea for a while, but it is still not clear, I ask for help.	☐	☐	☐
5.	When I have something about school on my mind, I talk to the teacher about it.	☐	☐	☐
6.	I write point form notes in my own words about the important ideas and procedures in the texts.	☐	☐	☐
7.	If I skip a section in a book, I tell the teacher what I am skipping.	☐	☐	☐
8.	I study for post-tests before I write them.	☐	☐	☐
9.	When the post-tests are returned, I make sure I understand any mistakes or corrections.	☐	☐	☐
10.	Every day, I try to use the ideas we have covered in Study Skills	☐	☐	☐
11.	I make excellent use of class time to do class work.	☐	☐	☐
12.	I work on my studies at home.	☐	☐	☐
13.	I have a long term goal.	☐	☐	☐
14	I am working as hard as I can to reach my goal.	☐	☐	☐

Overall, I would rate me, as a student, as (please circle)

Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Comments: ____

____

____

____

Name ____

Self Management and Self Direction

Skill Sets:

- **Problem solving / Thinking skills**
- **Self assessment**
- **Self confidence**
- **Time management**
- **Working with Others**
- **Continuous Learning**

Criteria	Can Do	Need to Work On	Comment
Self Management and Self Direction			
I know where I have problems and I try to find ways to overcome them			
I check to see if solutions work and try to improve them			
I can take critique of my work			
I know what I am good at and where I have difficulties			
I know it is up to me to get my work done			
I can work independently			
I feel good about myself and I feel confident			
I feel comfortable doing something new and difficult			
I take responsibility for my own work			
I am on time for class, work, appointments			
I finish my work on time			
I know how I learn best (seeing, hearing, doing - circle one)			
I take part in activities at the program and at work			
I can work with people even if I don't like them			
I can work independently and as part of a team			
I know how to cope if I get stressed			
Goal Setting Skills			
I have set long-term goals			
I have set short-term goals			
Some of my short-term goals are related to my long-term goals			
I have a plan how to reach my goals			
I re-evaluate my goals once in a while			
I ask for help when goal-setting and planning			
I sometimes re-evaluate my progress towards my goals			
I have an idea how long it will take to reach my goals			

Rev. Nov 1, 2006

Learner Follow-up and exit

Literacy and Basic Skills agencies are required to follow up with learners at three and six months after they exit the program. The following form is an example of how to keep track of when to track learners and of where they are. This type of form can easily be set up using either word processing software (Microsoft Word or WordPerfect) or in a spreadsheet format like Excel. You could add additional columns depending on the needs of your agency.

Learner	Date Exited	To follow up	Contact Information	Status at 3 months	Status at 6 months
A	March 15, 2006	3 months: July 2006 6 months: October 2006	555-121-2121 Address	Employed	Employed
B	March 22, 2006	3 months: July 2006 6 months: October 2006	555-121-2121 Address	In school	Graduated, looking for work
C	April 2, 2006	3 months: July 2006 6 months: October 2006	555-121-2121	Volunteering	Lost contact

Consolidated Tracking

Different programs will have different tracking needs. The following examples are some ways that programs have tried to consolidate a variety of learner information in one place. Rather than creating a huge pile of forms and paperwork, making one form serve many purposes can be both effective and efficient, two important CIPMS principles. Thanks to the North Channel Literacy Council and Cambrian College.

Please refer to pages 89-90.

LBS LEARNER STATISTICAL TRACKING SHEET

GENERAL INFORMATION

Name:	**Previous Last Name:**
Mailing Address:	
Postal Code:	**Phone Number:**
E-mail Address:	
Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female	**Date of Birth:**
Income Source ☐ OW ☐ ODSP ☐ EI ☐ Employed ☐ WSIB ☐ Other	
Referred to Program by ☐ OW ☐ EI ☐ Other (specify):	

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Date:	**Communications Level** 3 4 5 IV	**Math Level** 3 4 5 IV
Long Term Goal ☐ Employment ☐ Training/Education		☐ Independence
Anticipated Start Date:		☐ None
Reason for Delay ☐ Wait List ☐ Client Delay		☐ No Show

RE-ASSESSMENT

Date:	**Communications Level** 3 4 5 IV	**Math Level** 3 4 5 IV

REGISTRATION

Date:	**Status** ☐ Full Time ☐ Part Time _____ hours per week	
Short Term Goal ☐ Employment	☐ Training/Education	☐ Independence
Revised: ____________ ☐ Employment	☐ Training/Education	☐ Independence
☐ **LBS** - Date :_________________	☐ **OBS/ACE** - Date: _______________	☐ **Other**

EXIT

Date:	**Communications Level** 3 4 5 IV	**Math Level** 3 4 5 IV
Reason	☐ Left after assessment ☐ Learner initiated	☐ Attained LBS goal ☐ College initiated
Status ☐ Lost contact	☐ Other LBS ☐ Employed	☐ Training or Education ☐ Not employed ☐ Volunteer

3 MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Date:	☐ Other LBS	☐ Training or Education	
☐ Lost contact	☐ Employed	☐ Not employed	☐ Volunteer

6 MONTH FOLLOW-UP

Date:	☐ Other LBS	☐ Training or Education	
☐ Lost contact	☐ Employed	☐ Not employed	☐ Volunteer

CONSOLIDATED SITE ANALYSIS
From ___________ to _______________

DATE

				Site				
	Site	**Site**	**Site**	**Location**	**Location**	**Location**	**Total Site**	**TOTAL YTD**
Contracted Hours								**0**
YTD Hrs- Learners								**0**
YTD Hrs- I/R & F/E								**0**
Total YTD Hours								
Targeted YTD Hours								**0**
Variance from Target								**0**
No. of Months Completed								
No. of Months Remaining								**0**
Average Hrs Needed/Mo.								**0**
Contracted No. of Learners								
YTD- No. of Learners	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD- No. of New Learners	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD - No. of Attained Goals	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD- No. of Exits	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD- No. of Active Learners	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Volunteer Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
GOAL AREA: (same # as YTD Learners)								
YTD Employment	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Further Train/Ed.	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Personal	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
INCOME SOURCE: (same # as YTD Learners)								
YTD OW	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD EI	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
Exit Status: (same # as YTD Exits)								
YTD Employed	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Train/Educ.	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Other LBS	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Not Employed	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Lost Contact	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
YTD Volunteer Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
No. at Exit who found employment	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
No. of Follow ups still employed	0	0	0	0	0	0	*0*	**0**
Action Plan/Comments								

Program Evaluation

Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres has developed an extensive program monitoring and evaluation form that is being used by a number of agencies across the province.

Please refer to pages 92-102.

Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres
CIPMS Program Monitoring Evaluation Plan 2007/08

What are we evaluating? **(Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)**	**What will be the evidence ?** **(Proof)**	**How will we find it?** **(Tools)**	**Who will do the gathering/evaluation?**	**When?**	**Action Req'd**
ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY					
Action items from previous Monitoring Visit adequately addressed within indicated timelines	Email or letter responses to MTCU	Copies kept	-E.D.		
Agency delivers activities appropriate for LBS funding.	Client Files Learning Activity Samples	-Client File Checklists & internal file audit results -Copies kept -Visual during site visit	-staff/Eval. Comm. -various staff		
Learners meet LBS eligibility requirements.	Client Files	-Client File Checklists & internal file audit results	Staff/Eval. Comm		
Actual # of learners and contact hours represent 100% of Schedule B targets. Any variance below targets is limited to current year and does not represent long-term trend.	Stats submission Stats submission	-Copies of IMS print-outs & comments on comparisons -Copies of IMS print-outs & comments on comparisons	-E.D./Board -E.D./Board		
Financial Documentation shows expenses linked to LBS activity. Expenses are consistent with proposed budget. Variances explained. Accounts are kept up to date.	Monthly financial and variance reports.	-Copies kept	-E.D./Board		
Financial reports submitted on time and meet MTCU, requirements. **Financial reports** and data are analysed. This information contributes to program evaluation and business planning.	-MTCU? -Budget adjustments, Board & Committee discussions	-Copy of cover letter (courier or fax proof?) -copies of budgets, variance reports and minutes	-E.D./MTCU -E.D./Board		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
Training Support is distributed and documented according to written policy that meets LBS Guidelines. **Training Support** to OW clients is tracked separately.	- Policies & procedures. - Training Support Agreements, proof of need and T4A's -IMS -IMS printouts -Travel Sheets -Agreement with Ontario Works	-Copies kept -Available for review -Printouts monthly	-Intake Clerk/E.D. - " - "		
Monthly IMS transmissions are done on schedule, with up to date, accurate data. **Paper files verify all IMS data.** IMS **mandatory fields and agency site profile** are entered and up to date. Latest version of IMS or patch is installed Backup procedures for data are in place	-Sent on time. IMS program & monthly reports showing date. -Reviewed monthly by Executive Director & quarterly by Evaluation Committee & Board - Staff monthly stats record input sheets. -Changed when applicable (procedure) -Install when Alpha notifies of change - backed up on thumb drive (procedure)	-Copies of reports & charts -Minutes -Copies kept for review - copy of procedure. Visual check of IMS (screen print) - version shows on IMS entry page (screen print) - copy of procedure.	-E.D./Eval & Prog. Comm./Board -Intake Clerk/E.D. Intake Clerk Intake clerk Intake clerk		
Learner documentation contains required elements; profile, assessment information, training plan, demonstrations. Information is current.	-Client files	-Client File Checklist & results of file audit	-staff/Eval. Comm.		
Program policies & procedures are written, current and reflect LBS Guidelines.	-Policy & Procedure manuals -Ongoing updates -Committee specific to this issue	-Manuals available for review -Committee plan & minutes	-E.D./Policies Comm./Board		

What are we evaluating? **(Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)**	**What will be the evidence ?** **(Proof)**	**How will we find it?** **(Tools)**	**Who will do the gathering/evaluation?**	**When?**	**Action Req'd**
Program Evaluation strategies in place,. Agency can demonstrate improvements in services to learners or program accountability as a result. Evaluation activities target priorities identified by MTCU staff, learners, and agency personnel. Data related to learners Status at Exit is analysed and used for program improvement.	- Client Follow-up Questionnaire (while in program) and Exit Interviews (includes Learner Satisfaction Survey), Monthly Action Plans, and Evaluation Committee activities.	-Tally of questionnaires, surveys & interviews -Monthly Action Plans -Minutes of Evaluation Comm.	-various staff/E.D./Eval Comm./Prog. Comm.		
Backup (information) for Agency 2006-2007 Field Support Investment matches Section 2 of Agency 2007-2008 Business Plan.	Purchases compared to copy of business plan Section 2	Copies of invoices and business plan Section 2	Executive Director		
Employment Ontario signs are displayed according to Ministry standards.	-Signs in place -Marketing materials approved by Ministry staff.	Visual Emails	Executive Director		
PROGRAM DELIVERY					
ASSESSMENT					
Assessment process includes initial, ongoing and exit assessments as well as goal setting..	- Client files	-Client File Checklist & results of file audit	-various staff/E.D./ Eval. Comm.		
Overall literacy level is determined within 20 contact hours of entry into program.	? (Maybe no "A"s on IMS - this would show it was done within month)	-IMS monthly reports	-E.D.		
Staff have received training in use of assessment tools and interpretation of results.	-records of training taken - " " " " , Assessor Meetings with other LSPs	-Staff portfolios ? -Minutes of Assessor Meeting -Discussions with Staff	-Various Staff/ E.D. -Assessor/E.D.		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
Agency has validated assessment tools through common assessment process.	-Use CABS, CAMERA, Common Writing Assessment, CAAT, Quick Screen, etc. -Assessor meets with Kingston LSP assessors to ensure validation and improvement.	-Client Files - Assessment paper work -Copies of assessor meeting minutes	-ED/Eval Comm -E.D.		
Demonstrations for assessment purposes are being used.	-sample demonstrations. Use of Demonstrations Ontario website. Assessor meetings. - Form E and RAL Certificate forms - Client Files & completed demonstrations	- Samples available for review -Client File Checklist & results of file audit -Available for review	-Various staff -Assessor -Eval. Comm.		
Demonstrations show learner progress.	-IMS Progress Reports and Success Stories -Demo Memos samples and in client files	-Stats input sheets -IMS check - samples and file review	-Instructors, Assessor, Intake Clerk		
Strategies are in place to help **learners understand the assessment process.**	-Part of intake process & "Directions" training. Monthly group assessment activity. -Self-assessment training included in "Directions" & ongoing part of training. -Demo memos	-Responses to "Directions" training - Learner interviews -Journals and client activity report sampling - samples and file review	-Workshop Coordinator -Various other staff -E.D./Eval. Comm - Instructors		
TRAINING PLANS					
Training plans are completed for all learners within 4 weeks of start date and are revised at appropriate intervals.	-Dated Training Plans in Client Files -Reminders on files to review	-Client File Checklist & results of file audit	-staff/Eval. Comm		
Learners indicate that they understand their training plans.	- Regular review of training plans with learners. Learners have own copy of plans.	To be determined			

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
Training Plans contain all key elements.	-Client Files	-Client File Checklist & results of file audit	-staff & Eval. Comm.		
TRAINING DELIVERY					
Agency provides learning **activities appropriate to adult learners** and that accommodate various learning styles.	-Samples of activities -Activity sheets & work samples in files. -All clients are offered different styles of learning from book-style exercises, to real-life activities, to computer-based, workforce related, etc. Instructor, self-paced, tutor, group, work placements, etc.	-Representative samplings -Client File Checklist & results of file audit	-Various staff & E.D. -staff & Eval. Comm.		
There is a direct link between assessments, training plans and training delivery.					
Training links directly to **learner goals**.	-Use of tools such as Essential Skills Profiles for workforce, connecting with future training providers, discussion with client, etc. - We use occupational curricula, participatory learning, real-life activities, computer-based learning, links to employment goals, etc	-Client File Checklist & results of file audit -Resource purchases -Program planning	-staff/Eval. Comm -ED		
Training activities show a **balance** of core and individual learning activities	Use both "curriculum" type materials such as Customer Service, the Dryden packages, the Essential Skills/Occupational Curricula and individualized materials gathered to meet learner's goals				
Learners have **access to computers**. Computer-based activities, such as AlphaRoute, enhance learning opportunities and contribute to learners' attaining their goals.	-All clients are offered computer-based learning and Introduction to Computers, word processing, spreadsheets and graphics courses	--Client File Checklist & results of file audit -Visual observation -Resource library and purchases	-staff/Eval. Comm. -ED/MTCU -ED		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
The schedule and method of training is congruent with agency's business plan as per the commitment of the business plan.					
FOLLOW-UP					
Proper procedures are in place to ensure post-training services are delivered.	Policy and Procedure -Status print-outs for 3 & 6 month follow-ups from IMS	-copy of Policy and procedure -copies of print-outs	- Intake Clerk - Intake Clerk		
Targets for improving follow up contact rates are established and a plan is in place to achieve them.	Follow-up procedure in place. Follow-up rates are reviewed monthly by Executive Director to ensure that they meet business plan targets. All lost contacts must have received numerous approaches of contact.	Procedure Notes on IMS LBS Activity Report and Exit/Follow-up print-outs	- Intake Clerk, instructors and ED		
(M) Proper procedures are in place to ensure timeliness and efficiency of follow up..	Monthly IMS printout of exits used as worksheet to gather 3 & 6 month follow-up status. Class recorded to log time and individual files & IMS records updated.	Statistic file IMS Client Files	- Intake Clerk and staff, ED to review		
(M) Data collected **contributes to program evaluation** in a meaningful way..	Statistical review of IMS Follow-up status is analysed by Evaluation Committee along with Exit Status and Exit Interviews (Learner Satisfaction Survey). Results are forwarded to Staff, Program Comm. and Board as appropriate.	Evaluation Committee minutes	-ED and Evaluation Committee		
Agency has procedures in place to ensure reasonable effort is made to have learners complete the learner satisfaction survey.	Policy and procedures in place. Survey to be done in person or telephone, when client advises of exit, as first option. Telephone track-down or mail-out as next option.	Policy and procedures Notes in file Results (low percentage of no surveys)	- Intake Clerk, instructors and ED		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
Results of Learner Satisfaction Survey are sent to MTCU on schedule.	- Reminder on office electronic calendar. - Included in Intake Clerk procedures - Record of emails	Record of reminder in calendar Procedure Copy of emails	- Intake Clerk and ED		
COMMUNITY LINKS					
INFO & REFERRAL					
Referrals to and from other Employment Ontario agencies and community partners are documented	-Staff all attended Employment Ontario and Apprenticeship information sessions. -Agency also funded to provide Employment Assistance Services at both sites. -Both sites also act as a host for JobConnect, native employment and mental health employment services ,when they are visiting our communities -Attendance at regular meetings of service agency Directors, OW/Core Partners and Inter-agency. -Community Living, library and school board staff are on our Board of Directors. -Referral info on IMS and in client files Partnering policy in place. Protocols ongoing development -Referrals to our Academic Upgrading Partnership at both sites	-Staff files -calendar notations Meeting minutes Board membership -Files and IMS checks - Policy and protocols copies - Client files	-ED - Intake Clerk -ED -ED		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
There is a **marketing and outreach** strategy that results in **appropriate clients** entering the program**.**	Developed community info brochure and client referral sheets Marketing Policy in place with annual strategies/plan decided by Marketing Committee, which includes "target group(s)" based on prior evaluative information, labour market information, community input and current MTCU key inititatives. Hosted project "Coordinating Education and Employment Services in Addington Highlands" through Job Creation funding, which increased understanding of "who does what" in community. Includes chart of services.	-brochure and referral sheets -Policy and annual strategies - Project report and agency referral guide.	-ED -Marketing staff rep.		
Information and referral **protocol** in place and agreed upon by all LBS agencies in community.	Only member of LSP, however assessor meets regularly with Kingston area assessors to ensure common processes and referrals to agencies in neighbouring LSP's. Written protocol to work with distance literacy program in Addington Highlands. -Written protocols for	-Assessor meeting minutes	-Assessor		
LOCAL COORDINATION					

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
Agency participates in the activities of the local planning process**.**	Only member of LSP. Agency meets regularly with HRSD, Ontario Works and other social service agencies to ensure needs of community are met. Community members of volunteer Board of Directors reflect geography and socio-economic breakdown of community.	-minutes of meetings - Director profiles	- ED		
Agency **shares program data** with other local providers.	Statistical data, etc. shared through network, Ontario Works/LBS meetings and CLEO.	- minutes of meetings, stats sheets	-ED		
Agency is working with other LBS service providers on **current LBS program initiatives** such as common assessment and workplace/workforce literacy initiative.	Assessor meets regularly with Kingston area assessors to ensure common assessment criteria; professional development and resource purchases are aimed at workforce literacy and learning outcomes; and regular attendance at network meetings such as Field Development, CLEO, LLEO & CLO Boards of Directors	- Assessor meeting minutes, - Personnel files include copy of P.D. attended -Resources check - minutes of meetings	-Assessor - ED -library -Field Dev. rep & ED		
PARTNERSHIPS					

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring “Meets Requirement” Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req’d
Agency has **contacts with employment preparation** partners to benefit learners.	Agency is funded to supply Employment Assistance Services to community. -Both sites also act as a host for JobConnect, native employment and mental health employment services ,when they are visiting our communities Monthly reviews of labour market info. Participation in Training Board strategic planning sessions. - LMI and Ess. Skills Profiles info is used to help clients set realistic goals for further education or for employment. Local educators and employers provide learning materials, work placement opportunities and career info.	- contracts -calendar notations - LMI files - Meeting notes, emails, etc. - Client files and interviews - Resources check, client files, client interviews	- ED - ED -ED - Assessor & Instructors - All LBS staff		
Training plans, learning activities and demonstrations for learners with employment goals incorporate the literacy and numeracy skill requirements of the learners’ employment goal.	- Use of Essential Skills Profiles and Occupational Curricula - Developed lists of learning resources for top ten entry-level jobs in our community as part of strategic plan and ensured that they were sufficient. - Ongoing - employer Essential Skills Inventories (ESI) being completed to determine local needs	- Client files/Training Plans and learner interviews - Lists - Copies of ESI’s	- Instructors/Assessor -Intake Clerk - Special Literacy Activities Coordinator		
(M) Agency has good working relationship with local OW agency as evidenced by # of referrals and improved services to learners.	Protocols established and quarterly meetings attended. Executive Director tracks referrals to ensure numbers are reasonable or analyses any other pattern.	-OW file and minutes of meetings - IMS tools	- ED		

What are we evaluating? (Monitoring "Meets Requirement" Outcome)	What will be the evidence ? (Proof)	How will we find it? (Tools)	Who will do the gathering/evaluation?	When?	Action Req'd
LEARNER FEEDBACK					
Learners are available for interviews.	Ensure a reasonable sampling of learners is available for Ministry monitoring visit.		- instructors		
Learners are well briefed on purpose of monitoring visit and learner interviews.	Provide ongoing "training" to learners regarding our funder, the purpose/guidelines of LBS training, and the need for MTCU monitoring.	To be determined	- instructors with guidance from ED		
Learner interviews will serve to verify information gathered during previous part(s) of the monitoring visit or identify items to be examined more closely in subsequent part(s). Interviews include discussions on learner involvement in program evaluation strategy, learners understanding of short term goals, training plans, demonstrations, etc.	As in the previous two criteria	- ongoing discussion with learners	- instructors with guidance from ED		

Learner Feedback

The Agency Assessment Guide encourages LBS agencies to gather stakeholder feedback when developing their CIPMS plan. The following are some examples of ways to gather learner feedback. Thanks to Cambrian College and Northern College.

Please refer to pages 104-111.

PROGRAM EVALUATION Please check the appropriate box: Fall ☐ Spring ☐

Put a check mark in the box to show your opinion of each statement.

		Yes	Mostly	No
1.	The information I received prior to enrolling was complete and accurate.	☐	☐	☐
2.	The assessment process was too stressful.	☐	☐	☐
3.	The process for getting travel assistance is fair and reasonable.	☐	☐	☐
4.	The amount of travel assistance is adequate.	☐	☐	☐
5.	When I started, I knew which subjects I would be working on.	☐	☐	☐
6.	When I started, I knew why I would be working on each subject.	☐	☐	☐
7.	My Individual Training Plan is useful.	☐	☐	☐
8.	The material that I first started working on was too hard.	☐	☐	☐
9.	The material that I first started working on was too easy.	☐	☐	☐
10.	The classroom furniture and equipment is adequate.	☐	☐	☐
11.	The classroom arrangement is appropriate.	☐	☐	☐
12.	Once I had attended classes for a short time, I understood the policies and procedures for the class.	☐	☐	☐
13.	The class policies and procedures are fair and reasonable.	☐	☐	☐
14.	The daily class routine is comfortable and conducive to learning.	☐	☐	☐
15.	The schedule for classes is appropriate (five hours a day, four days a week, 38 weeks a year).	☐	☐	☐
16.	I am relaxed and at ease in the classroom.	☐	☐	☐
17.	I am able to learn in the classroom.	☐	☐	☐
18.	I feel that I am making progress.	☐	☐	☐
19.	I will be able to use what I am learning in further studies.	☐	☐	☐
20.	I will be able to use what I am learning in employment.	☐	☐	☐
21.	I will be able to use what I am learning in everyday life.	☐	☐	☐
22.	Since starting this program, I have gained new skills or improved existing skills.	☐	☐	☐
23.	Since starting this program, I have a more positive attitude about learning.	☐	☐	☐
24.	Since starting this program, I have more confidence in my abilities.	☐	☐	☐

Please suggest any improvements that could be made to the program components mentioned on the previous page:

Overall, I would rate the program as (please circle)

Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

Please complete the following statements:

Subjects, topics or activities I would like to see **removed** from the course:

Subjects, topics or activities I would like to see **added** to the course:

I would get more out of this program if

Program Evaluation – Survey for Exited Learners

1. Did you achieve your goal? For example, did you complete the communications, math, and/or science requirements to get into the program you chose or to get the job you targeted?
   Yes ____________________ No _____________

   Sort of (please explain): ___________________________________

   ____

2. If you answered 'yes' or 'sort of' to question 1, answer this question.
   How did your experience with College and Job Preparation help you achieve your goal?

   ____

   ____

   ____

3. If you answered 'no' or 'sort of' to question 1, answer this question.
   What prevented you from meeting your goal? How could your experience with College and Job Preparation have helped you improve your result?

   ____

   ____

   ____

4. What do you suggest to improve the College & Job Preparation program?

   ____

   ____

   ____

   ____

5. Think back to your first few weeks in the program. What would make the adjustment to the classroom and program easier for new students?

____

____

____

6. Rate the following program elements for their usefulness to you as a post-secondary student:
Use a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 is 'get rid of it', 2 is neutral, and 3 is 'double up!'

____ S4R Notetaking
____ Activities in Blackboard
____ Reading exercises
____ Paragraph development
____ Grammar
____ Business correspondence
____ Emphasis on attendance and punctuality
____ Testing
____ Self-Evaluation

Your comments and reflections are welcome:

____

____

____

____

____

____

Please return to ________________________

TEACHER EVALUATION

Please check the appropriate box: Fall ☐ Spring ☐

Put a check mark in the box to show your opinion of each statement.

		Yes	Usually	No
1.	The teacher attends classes as scheduled.	☐	☐	☐
2.	The teacher appears to be knowledgeable in the subject matter.	☐	☐	☐
3.	The teacher appears to be well prepared for each class.	☐	☐	☐
4.	The teacher is interested in the subject matter.	☐	☐	☐
5.	The teacher presents the course material in a clear and effective manner.	☐	☐	☐
6.	When necessary, the teacher explains material in different ways to help me understand it.	☐	☐	☐
7.	When I have difficulties, the teacher provides additional materials for me to read, watch, or do.	☐	☐	☐
8.	The teacher helps me with problems in subjects in a patient and courteous manner.	☐	☐	☐
9.	With the teacher, I feel free to ask questions.	☐	☐	☐
10.	With the teacher, I feel free to express my opinions.	☐	☐	☐
11.	The teacher is available outside class time.	☐	☐	☐
12.	The teacher returns tests within two days and written assignments within one week.	☐	☐	☐
13.	I understand how the teacher marks my tests and assignments	☐	☐	☐
14.	The teacher treats each student in a fair and consistent manner.	☐	☐	☐
15.	The teacher seems genuinely interested in my academic progress.	☐	☐	☐
16.	The teacher creates an orderly learning environment.	☐	☐	☐

Overall, I would rate the teacher as (please circle)

Unacceptable	**Poor**	**Satisfactory**	**Good**	**Excellent**
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Comments: ____

____

____

SUBJECT EVALUATION

SUBJECT:____

Put a check mark in the box to show your opinion of each statement.	Yes	Mostly	No
1. The course outline explained everything about the course.	☐	☐	☐
2. The mark record sheet was easy to follow.	☐	☐	☐
3. What I was expected to understand and do was too difficult.	☐	☐	☐
4. What I was expected to understand and do was too easy.	☐	☐	☐
5. The text book was a good method for me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
6. The one-to-one help was a good method for me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
7. The group activities (classes) were good methods for me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
8. The software tutorials or supplementary subject software helped me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
9. The supplementary videotapes or audiotapes helped me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
10. The supplementary handouts helped me to learn the material.	☐	☐	☐
11. The self-tests helped me prepare for the post-tests.	☐	☐	☐
12. The post-tests were fair and accurate measures of my skills and knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
13. The demonstrations (assignments) were fair and accurate measures of my skills and knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
14. The demonstrations helped me to see how my skills and knowledge could be applied to different settings.	☐	☐	☐
15. I understand how my final grade was calculated.	☐	☐	☐
16. The final grade is a fair and accurate indicator of my skills and knowledge.	☐	☐	☐
17. I feel that I have learned a great deal in this subject.	☐	☐	☐
18. I can see how the material I learned will be useful for further studies.	☐	☐	☐
19. I can see how the material I learned will be useful for employment.	☐	☐	☐
20. I can see how the material I learned will be useful for everyday life.	☐	☐	☐

Lee/02

Page 2 - SUBJECT EVALUATION

Topics or activities I would like to see **removed** from the subject:

Topics or activities I would like to see **added** to the subject:

Overall, I would rate this subject as (please circle)

Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Comments:

APPENDICES

Page No.

Appendix 1 – Definitions and Glossary[23]

Accountability:

Is the obligation to answer for one's responsibilities. Accountability can be shared (but is not easily relinquished)

Accountability has three parts:

- Beforehand - stating the objectives (outputs/outcomes).
- Providing the rationale (logic, linkages) for the objectives.
- Afterwards, reporting what happened.

Responsibility is the obligation to act whereas accountability is the obligation to answer for an action.

Activity:

What is done during the course of the program's operation. (meeting, training delivering session).

Agency Assessment Process:

The act of comparing the organization's outcomes to the articulated needs of its primary customers; identifying variances from objectives; the causes of those variances; developing and continually monitoring a plan to produce results that better meet the needs of customers.

Attribution:

The demonstrable assertion that a reasonable connection can be made between a specific outcome and the actions of a government policy, program or initiative.

Baseline data:

The level of results at a given time that provides a starting point for assessing changes in performance and for establishing objectives or targets for future performance. It is the initial collection of data to establish a basis for comparison.

Benchmark:

The highest level achieved of a particular core measure in the LBS Program; therefore a standard that all agencies will seek to reach over time. A benchmark that is verifiable and that has resulted by design and all other measures meet at least minimum standard. Very simply put Benchmark is a numerical/empirical total, average or mean of a 'what is'. It is a programmatic outcome.

Success:

Success is defined as not achieving the benchmarks per se but continually getting closer to them. The benchmarks change and improve effectiveness and efficiency over time.

Cause:

A factor within the control of the organization, which if changed, will produce the desired outcome.

Continuous Improvement:

Is the way in which we integrate the use of performance measurement for system improvement into the fabric of the organizational infrastructures. It does so in a clear and consistent manner where even the best agencies continue to improve.

Customer Satisfaction/Learner Satisfaction:

The degree to which the intended recipients or beneficiaries of a product or service indicate that the product or service meets their needs and expectations for quality and efficiency.

Effectiveness:

The extent to which an organization, policy, program or initiative is producing its planned **outcomes** and meeting intended objectives.

Efficiency:

The extent to which an organization, policy, program or initiative is producing its planned outputs in relation to expenditure of resources. Efficiency speaks to the process with which resources are transformed into goods and services. Efficiency is most often a measure of program activity.

Indicator:

A statistic or symbol for understanding results achieved.

Performance Indicator:

It should be noted that the words indicator and measure are often used interchangeably. For our purposes the measure is what we wish to assess and indicators are the variables used to assess. (How).

Effectiveness – Outcome Indicator examples: the percentage of clients employed, percentage of employers satisfied with the service or percentage of learners reaching LBS goals.

Efficiency – (Input) Indicator examples: number of workshop hours, number using Information referral services.

Customer Service (Output) Indicator examples: percentage of learners satisfied with the LBS services received.

Key Performance Indicator:

Measurable factor of extreme importance to the organization in achieving its strategic goals, objectives, vision and values, if not implemented properly, would likely result in a significant decrease in customer satisfaction, employee morale, and effective financial management.

Inputs:

Resources (human, material, financial, etc.) allocated to carry out activities, produce outputs and/or accomplish results.

Logic Model:

The logic model:

- Drives the measures not vice-versa.
- Is driven by clear understanding of what a program intends to accomplish.
- Is about the causal sequence of outputs and outcomes.

Measure:

A measure is one of several measurable values that contribute to the understanding and quantification of a key performance indicator. Good measures should follow the **SMART** rule. **(Specific, measurable, accurate, reasonable, timely)**

Core Measures:

They are the essential factors of measurement which demonstrate achievement of the organizational or program goals. Ex. Data collection elements from the LBS system could be used to calculate a core measure.

Milestone:

A Milestone is an interim target that measures progress toward the ultimate goal.

Minimum Standard:

The minimum level of achievement on a core measure that MTCU requires a delivery agent to achieve. This is also called the Baseline Standard.

Monitoring:

The process of collecting and analyzing information to track program outputs and progress towards desired outcomes.

Outcome:

The actual effects/impacts or results of the outputs. Outcomes provide relative information, for example: "Percentage of total cases resolved to client satisfaction within "x" weeks."

Benefit to participants during or after participating in the program. What changes occur in level of participation? There can be three types of Outcomes:

- **Short-term Outcomes** – changes occurred in level of participation, capacity of partner supports.
- **Intermediate Outcomes** – changes seen in perceptions, attitudes, knowledge of skills among people or groups in contact with the program.
- **Long-term Outcomes** – changes happening at a higher level, social, political, technological, economic, and environmental.

Output:

The products or services that result from activities. Outputs are often expressed as, "Number of "x", for example: number of learners taught.

Partnership:

Partnership describes any formal shared service delivery arrangement, either within the delivery of LBS programmes and or services in the community.

Percentage Fulfillment:

This is the degree to which the expected result or target has been achieved.

Performance Measure:

A performance measure is quantifiable information that provides a reliable basis for assessing achievement, change or performance over time.

A process of assessing progress toward achieving predetermined goals. This includes:

- Information on the efficiency with which resources are transformed into goods and services (outputs).
- The quality of those outputs (how well they are delivered to clients and the extent to which the clients are satisfied).
- Outcomes (the results of a program activity compared to its intended purpose).
- The effectiveness of government operations in terms of their specific contributions to program objectives.

Performance Management:

The use of performance measurement information to help set agreed-upon performance goals, allocate and prioritize resources, inform managers to either confirm or change current policy or program directions to meet those goals, and report on the success in meeting these goals.

Reliability:

Refers to the degree to which measurement techniques reveal actual performance changes and do not introduce errors of their own.

Results-based Performance Measurement:

Theoretically, it is a systematic feedback approach to measuring outcomes that relies on strategic thinking and planning, teamwork, and positive reinforcement of achievement and measuring of results. In other words focusing on what organizations do and how they do it as much as it is about measuring what is done.

Results:

A condition (outcome) or product (output) that exists as a consequence of an activity.

Stakeholder:

A stakeholder is a partner or constituency that has an interest in the activities of the organization but who is not necessarily a primary customer.

Standard:

This is the reference point from which other things can be evaluated. For our purpose the minimum acceptable level of performance (standard) would be the average of any of the indicators. A standard is derived from historical/experiential data for which there is usually consensus as to its validity. Baseline standards are based on actual full year results at the start of implementation.

Service Quality Standard:

Viewed as a reference point from which the whole agency/site can be evaluated. It is the minimum acceptable level of overall performance for an agency/site.

Target:

A clearly stated objective or planned result – which may include outputs and/or outcomes to be achieved within a stated time, against which actual results can be compared.

Variance:

A variance can be described as the difference between the organization's outcomes and the articulated needs of its primary customers as expressed by targets, standards, or benchmarks.

Appendix 2 – CIPMS Used Elsewhere

United States: National Reporting System

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an outcomes-based reporting system for the federal adult education and literacy program in the United States.

There was a trend towards greater accountability for educational and employment programs in the United States in the early1990s and federal agencies were required to develop strategic plans to demonstrate that they were reaching their goals. In 1995, the adult education program faced the possibility of being integrated into a general system of workforce development as they had difficulty providing data on their program's effectiveness.

In response, the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) developed an accountability system that includes measures to describe adult education students, program participation numbers, and the impact of adult education instruction. Methodologies for collecting the measures, reporting forms and procedures, training, and technical support for collecting the measures were also developed as part of this project.[24]

State adult education directors and DAEL work together to manage the NRS. The NRS was successfully implemented in 2000 and provides adult education agencies with the means to collect data that effectively demonstrates their impact in the education system.

For more information on the NRS, please visit **www.nrsweb.org**.

National Reporting System (NRS) in the United States[25]

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an outcomes-based reporting system for the State-administered, federally funded adult education program. Developed with the support of the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL), the NRS continues a cooperative process through which State adult education directors and DAEL manage a reporting system that demonstrates learner outcomes for adult education. The project is being conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, DC.

The NRS established a national accountability system for adult education programs by identifying measures for national reporting and their definitions, establishing methods for data collection, developing software standards for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education, and developing training materials and activities on NRS requirements and procedures. The NRS meets the accountability requirements for the adult education program in Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

The NRS will improve the public accountability of the adult education program by documenting its ability to meet Federal policy and programmatic goals. The collection of State outcomes data will enable States to correlate practices and programs with successful outcomes, and also will assist States in assessing progress in meeting their adult education goals. For local providers, the NRS will help instructors and administrators plan instructional activities and services to enhance student outcomes and to relate effective practices and programs with successful outcomes.

The NRS has core and secondary measures. The core measures apply to all adult education students receiving 12 or more hours of service. There are three types of core measures: Core Outcome Measures (which include 5 measures); Core Descriptive and Participation Measures (which include 10 measures); and the Secondary Outcome and Student Status Measures which are optional for reporting and include 19 measures.

Outcome measures include educational gain, entered employment, retained employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or general education development (GED) certificate, and placement in postsecondary education and training.

Descriptive measures include student demographics, reasons for attending, and student status.

Participation measures include contact hours received and enrolment in instructional programs for special populations or topics, such as family literacy or workplace literacy.

The NRS secondary measures include additional outcome measures related to employment, family and community. Adult education stakeholders believe these are important to understanding and evaluating adult education programs. States are not required to report on the secondary measures and no performance standards are tied to them.

The five Core Outcome Measures of the NRS are:[26]

1 **Educational Gain -** The percentage of adult learners in basic and English literacy programs who acquire the basic or English language skills needed (validated through standardized assessment) to complete the educational functioning level in which they were initially enrolled.

2 To measure educational gain, the NRS established a hierarchy of six educational functioning levels, from beginning literacy through high school-level completion, and six levels for English literacy, from beginning literacy level to high advanced. The levels are defined through reading, writing, numeracy and functional and workplace skills (and, for English literacy, speaking and listening skills) at each level. Included for each level is a corresponding set of benchmarks on commonly used standardized assessments, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), as examples of how students functioning at each level would perform on these tests.

3 **High School Completion** – The percentage of adult learners with a high school completion goal who earned a high school diploma or recognized equivalent.

4 **Entered Postsecondary Education** – The percentage of adult learners who established a goal to continue their education at the postsecondary level and who entered postsecondary education or training after program exit.

5 **Entered Employment** – The percentage of unemployed adult learners (in the workforce) with an employment goal who obtained a job within one quarter after program exit.

6 **Retained Employment** – The percentage of adult learners with a job retention goal who (a) entered employment within one quarter after exiting and (b) were still employed in the third quarter after program exit.

States also may identify additional performance indicators for adult education and literacy activities and incorporate these indicators, as well as corresponding annual levels of performance, in their state plans.

To measure educational gain within the NRS, States are required to have a written assessment policy for its local programs. The assessment policy must identify 1) the tests to be used to measure educational gain for both ABE/ASE and ESL students, 2) when pre- and post tests are to be administered, and 3) how tests scores are to be tied to the NRS educational functioning levels for initial placement and for reporting student advancement across levels. The assessments allowed by the State must conform to standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability and must meet the standards provided by DAEL.

The NRS requires that local programs assess and place all students into an educational functioning level at intake and at least one other time during the program year. Programs should administer the initial assessment at intake or within a short period thereafter and administer follow up or post test assessments according to State policy. The follow up assessment should occur after a set instruction time, either in hours (e.g., after 50 hours of instruction), or months (e.g., the last 2 weeks of November or the last week of instruction), and should conform to the test publisher's guidelines for the amount of time needed for a student to show a meaningful gain. If more than one assessment is administered, then the program should use the last assessment given as the basis for determining the educational level.

The Government of Canada

The federal government has a Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) that specifies that public service managers are expected to define strategic outcomes, continually focus attention on results achievement, measure performance regularly and objectively, learn from this information and adjust to improve efficiency and effectiveness.[27]

The RMAF encourages a consistent collection of information for the purposes of monitoring ongoing performance measurement, developing performance indicators and implementing ongoing evaluation.

Quebec

Quebec's *Public Administration Act* (2000) established a new results-based management framework that is very similar to the Service Charters being used by departments within the Australian government.

Every governmental department or other external organization that delivers services directly to the Quebec population must provide a statement of services that clearly outlines the objectives and quality of services that they commit to deliver. A detailed strategic plan is submitted that provides details such as the mission, objectives and activities, anticipated results and the performance indicators that will be used to assess the results. An accompanying annual expenses management plan is also required.

The Quebec government has also developed a performance and accountability agreement that is established between an individual service agency and the government department to whom the agency is responsible. The agreement includes:

- the organization's mission statement and strategic plan
- an annual action plan describing the organization's objectives and the steps that will be taken to achieve these objectives, and the available resources
- the performance indicators that will validate the results obtained
- a commitment to produce a management report on what results were achieved and how these results compare with the performance of other similar organizations[28]

An agreement that details the management framework for all resources (human, financial, material and information) of the individual service agency is also required between the government department responsible for the service agency and the Quebec Treasury Board.

An annual management report is submitted to the Quebec National Assembly by the minister responsible that details the results achieved based on the strategic plan's objectives and that attests to the reliability of the data included as stated by the deputy minister or the head of the organization concerned.

Alberta

The government in Alberta is required to develop a three-year business plan geared to results and performance measurement based on government objectives in the three fields of public interest: People, Prosperity and Preservation.[29]

An annual report is submitted at the end of each fiscal year and compares the goals set in the business plan to the results achieved.[30]

The Ministry of Finance also developed four "reconciled reports" on all government activities: the *Consolidated Fiscal Plan* (budget), the *Government Business Plan* (activity plan), the *Consolidated Capital Plan* (deficit reduction plan) and the *Consolidated Annual Report.* The business plan and deficit reduction plan are published at the start of each fiscal year and are part of the three-year budget.

One-year *Ministry Business Plans* are also developed and include a statement of the Minister's accountability, an outline of the Ministry's vision, mission, challenges, opportunities, strategic priorities and goals; performance assessment tools and targets; objectives for each goal; a summary of anticipated revenues, expenditures and capital investments; and any other information deemed relevant by the Minister or Treasury Board. Deputy ministers and managers are responsible for implementing the performance management system at the ministry level. Performance measurement components include results, efficiency and effectiveness measurements, policy and program impacts, a combination of quantitative and qualitative measurements as well as other performance indicators.

Ontario

There are many examples of results or performance-based management in Ontario. We will look at two prime Ontario-based examples:

- the Ontario Provincial Police who have been working with a system called PRISM since 2004, and
- the Ontario Ministry of Health which has been working with performance-based management since 2000

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)

An interesting example of a performance-based management system is the Ontario Provincial Police's Performance Reporting and Information Systems Manager, or PRISM.

PRISM is a performance measurement and evaluation system that enables managers, policy planners and analysts to assess the success and effectiveness of current programs, identify new service and program requirements, plan for future needs and implement an accountability framework.[31] Having access to performance indicator data allows the OPP to track changes in the data and focus on areas that require improvement.

Ontario Ministry of Health

In September 2000, each of Canada's provinces and territories committed to performance-based management by agreeing to report on a number of common indicators, thereby ensuring accountability in Canada's health care system. As with MTCU's CIPMS, common data allows for the comparison of performance and the opportunity to learn between programs individually and provincially. Monitoring overall provincial results enables the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) to evaluate the impact of this initiative on the health of Ontarians.

An excellent example of the MOHLTC's commitment to the process of performance-based management is the development of a client-centred system of services and supports in the mental health system, which will be monitored through a Mental Health Accountability Framework. It is comprised of the following components:

- performance domains, indicators and measures
- agreements between the MOHLTC and transfer payment agencies
- operating manual for mental health and addiction agencies, and
- hospital accountability mechanisms[32]

According to the MOHLTC's Mental Health Accountability Framework document, the next steps in implementing their system include the development of outcomes-based performance measures, data collection requirements, benchmarks and standards for service user outcomes, services and supports. Their programs and organizations will be accountable through measurable and evidence-based results to demonstrate that their funding is effectively and efficiently achieving their predetermined goals or outcomes, thereby contributing to meeting system-wide goals.

The goals of this framework are extremely similar to CIPMS as it is currently being implemented in Ontario's literacy organizations. "Through a continuous process of setting expectations, monitoring performance, reporting on outcomes, and making improvements, organizations/programs and services/supports can be as efficient and effective as possible and can contribute to meeting system-wide goals."[33]

Appendix 3 – Vubiz Ltd. Report

This report was commissioned by MTCU in 2006.

Please refer to pages 128-138.

Learner Skill Attainment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program

Prepared by: Vubiz Ltd.

Prepared for: The Literacy Development Unit
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
May 31, 2006

Executive Summary
The Learner Skill Attainment Project

Introduction

This document presents the results and recommendations of the Learner Skill Attainment project. The central purpose of the project was to develop an assessment approach that was appropriate for the goal directed, outcome-based nature of the LBS program while at the same time balancing the need for valid, reliable and practical assessment practices.

Methods

The methodology for the project consisted of:

- Key informant interviews with selected personnel from a sample of literacy agencies across Ontario;
- A literature review;
- An environmental scan using a web-based, self-report survey of a sample of literacy agencies in Ontario;
- Preparation of working papers;
- A day-long focus group with selected literacy practitioners in Ontario; and
- Extensive consultation with the project Steering/Advisory Committee.

The conclusions and recommendations that follow are based on a synthesis of the findings from all above methods.

The LBS Learning Outcomes

The language in the LBS Learning Outcomes Matrix does not directly relate to adults and their learning needs or goals. It is not very relevant for learners and employers and interferes with attempts to encourage the learner to be an active member of the assessment process.

The success and transition markers don't represent significant points of learning nor do the success markers represent a progression to more complex skills. This, in part, is why the field is using a plethora of assessment tools to measure progress. Agencies have created simple skills checklists or have used other methods such as the OLC Level Descriptors, as they found they were more appropriate for adults, goal setting and training plan development.

The Adult Learner in the 21st Century

Over the past ten years, international efforts have been underway to better define the skills needed for adults to effectively function as parents, workers, and citizens in the 21st century. The most notable example of this is Equipped for the Future (EFF) in the United States. EFF is developing, refining and validating frameworks for content and performance standards. The foundations of the framework are role maps that describe what adults need to know and be able to do to carry out responsibilities as citizens/community members, parents/family members, and workers. This knowledge goes beyond the basic academic skills that have traditionally been targeted by LBS.

The Strategic Direction of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) is committed to developing the best workforce in North America to ensure a competitive advantage in the knowledge economy by creating accessible, affordable and high quality learning opportunities and systems with enhanced accountability.

This direction supports the delivery of programs and services that improve labour market outcomes for Ontarians and supports economic growth; works with partners to develop standards and engage employers in supporting a growing and flexible apprenticeship program; works with employers and other stakeholders to address emerging skills needs; prepares unemployed Ontarians to enter higher skill training or employment; encourages employers to hire summer students; provides literacy and basic skills upgrading to assist entry or re-entry into the workforce; provides adjustment services to companies and communities experiencing significant economic downturns; provides labour market information; and, provides policy, planning, research and evaluation leadership on labour market and training matters.

To further improve labour market outcomes for Ontarians, the MTCU is building a fully integrated, One-Stop Training and Employment System, by combining federally funded training and employment programs with Ontario's own training and employment programs. Clients will receive better access and expanded opportunities in apprenticeship, other skills training as well as labour market services.

According to the Canada - Ontario Labour Market Development Agreement, the objectives of the One-Stop System are to:

- provide comprehensive employment and skills-related services to improve outcomes in the labour market for Ontarians;
- provide equitable and convenient access to customer services in communities across Ontario with services also available by telephone and through the Internet;
- provide no wrong door – all individuals are provided with information on the full array of services and receive supported access to services they need to achieve labour market goals;
- provide flexible and innovative approaches to labour market and community needs through the provision of a broad range of services, including labour market information, job matching, employment counselling and information on training options;

- provide specialized assistance to enable those facing particular barriers to training, employment and re-employment, such as new immigrants, long term unemployed, Aboriginal peoples and older workers, to receive the assistance they need;

- expand services to help employers find the people and skills they need and to encourage them to increase their own investments in skills development;

- utilize a single, effective system for managing performance of the third party agencies delivering training and employment programs across Ontario.

The literacy field's difficulty using the matrix in conjunction with these new directions and initiatives now provide LBS with the exciting opportunity to redefine itself with respect to where it is situated in the broader training delivery system in Ontario.

Traditionally LBS has been focused on the learner. The One-Stop program dictates a more holistic view of the learner and the need for LBS to develop linkages with other agencies serving Ontario adults. It is time for LBS to become more dynamic and responsive by developing meaningful exit points that not only reflect the needs of the learner but also fit the needs of the other key players in the training delivery system. The current LBS system does not encourage these relationships or referrals.

Other Models

A number of skill assessment models external to LBS are also emerging as important paradigms among literacy practitioners in Ontario. The federal government has invested significant resources into the development of Essential Skills and the provincial government has developed the Ontario Skills Passport. Key literacy stakeholders are becoming more familiar with the aforementioned models and their language, and are integrating them into their work. LBS needs to seriously consider examining the relationships and/or articulating the outcome matrix more formally with Essential Skills, the Ontario Skills Passport and IALS.

These models describe skill attainment in terms of what a learner needs to be able to do for a particular job. To facilitate the linkage, LBS should also consider describing learner outcomes in terms of what a learner will be able to do or where a learner will be able to go at the completion of their training.

The Paradigm Shift

This is a distinct and exciting paradigm shift[1]offering the following advantages:

- It would clarify the language used to describe learner success in LBS in a way that is meaningful to all key stakeholders;

- It would better describe LBS's role in skill attainment in relation to the broader "training" system (Apprenticeship, Job Connect, Adjustment Advisory, Ontario Works, Ministry of Education) and would more clearly link LBS to the other models in use. It is time to bring the key players together to clarify the linkages and develop a common language.

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[1]Paradigm Shift: a change from one way of thinking to another; a revolution, a transformation, a metamorphosis. It just does not happen but is driven by agents of change.

- It would also renew and enhance the relevance of LBS as a key player in skills training in Ontario.

Transition Readiness Paths

Given the above, this project identified the new concept of Transition Readiness Paths (TRPs). The criteria defining the TRPs included:

1. Learner Goal
2. Level (e.g., LBS, Essential Skills)
3. Learning Profile (Strengths and challenges of learner)
4. Next Step Expectations (The essential skills, soft skills, knowledge, aptitudes, behaviours, proficiency, and fluency that learners need in order to go into the area they want to go into and that link with the intake and outcomes of other key players in the training delivery system.)

Given the paradigm shift, the skills required to transition out of each TRP will need to be described, and in many cases will involve skills outside of the LBS program. The additional skills will include personal attitudes, behaviours, and other proficiencies that when mastered, will enable the learner to move on.

In addition, as stated by EFF, "What adults need to know and be able to do to meet the demands of life in the 21st century involves a broader range of skills, more complex skills and deeper content knowledge". This does not mean that LBS practitioners will need to become proficient in teaching these additional skills but that the LBS system will now need closer relationships with and referrals to other agencies that can teach the additional skills and consider closer articulation with models like Essential Skills.

The TRPs also have the potential to bring agencies together to develop common curriculum, best practices and measures that will allow for relative comparisons among agencies who train learners for the same TRP.
In consultation with literacy practitioners, the project identified the following initial TRPs.

1. Personal Goals/Foundation for Literacy
2. Direct to Work
3. Training to Work/Apprenticeship/Co-Op
4. Further Education

LBS will need to consult with the other central players in Ontario's training system to determine how the TRPs fit their intake and outcomes and to bring better skill attainment measures into the system.

Assessment Approach

Given the many uses made of assessment, the difficulties in using the matrix and the fact that practitioners developed most of the approaches to assessment in Ontario, LBS agencies now use a variety of assessment tools and methods. As mentioned, the assessments lack a firm and common theoretical foundation (except for the learning outcomes) and are not standardized with respect to their administration and assessment protocols; nor has there been any strong consideration for the psychometric quality of the tools being used.

In addition, most assessments are done for the initial assessment. Far fewer are done at the completion of the learning. The field lacks the tools and the comprehension need to do accurate exit assessments.

Literacy agencies would welcome enhancements and additional structure related to assessing learner success that reflects validity, reliability and management. However, any enhancement to the assessment process needs to consider the following.

- Enhancements need to be developed with clear language for both the learner and practitioner.
- Given the paradigm shift, learner assessment now needs to be linked to the exit criteria or skills required to transition to the next destination. For example, success or skill attainments for learners in the Personal Goals TRP will, in many cases relate more to changes in life skills and self-esteem and less to changes in traditional “skill” levels. At this level, the approach to measuring skill attainment should consider the personal successes. In “higher” skill sets, the personal skills have been attained and the measurement is focused more on skill attainment.
- It is also suggested that the Ministry consider developing a method to measure the percentage change in the critical mass of skills achieved in each TRP. This would most likely involve a pre/post test on a sample of learners in each TRP.
- In addition, we recommend a review and rethink of agency performance measures to create measures that reflect the redefined collaborative/referral role that agencies may have.
- The enhancements need to be underpinned by a common provincial assessment approach: including validating the TRPs over time, performance standards, identification of appropriate tools or creation of same for each TRP, provincially developed examples and demonstrations that reflect each TRP, and assessor protocols to ensure reliable measurement.

Tools

As stated earlier, the literacy field is currently using a variety of tools to measure skill attainment. Depending on the skills being measured, the tools can range from paper-pencil tests to more complex demonstrations. In working through the paradigm shift, and once the exit criteria for each TRP are defined, it will be important to identify the following in relation to measuring skill attainment for the TRPs.

- The modality of the measurement. In other words, what is the best method of measurement to assess this skill or set of skills? Is it a written test, a portfolio, a demonstration etc?
- The tools currently being used. What tools currently being used can accurately measure the skills attained? What are the psychometric properties of these tools?
- Gaps in skill attainment measurement. What are the gaps in measuring learner skill attainment?
- The tools to be discovered or created. Are there tools elsewhere that could fill the gap? If not, what tools need to be created?
- Current Assessment Protocols. How, exactly, are assessment being done? What are the current assessment protocols?

Curriculum

Aside from clarifying the tools to be used, consideration will need to be given to examining and possibly aligning curriculum to the TRP skills as well as exit assessments.

Reporting Results

Although evident at the onset of the project, the current practice of reporting movement from one LBS level to the next is not effective in measuring learners' skill attainment as it does not demonstrate the actual learning that is taking pace. In addition, there are different reporting requirements in tracking and reporting progress to learners as opposed to tracking and reporting progress to the MTCU.

Currently, LBS goal achievement is tracked with respect to the number of learners who achieved their goals of employment, training and education, and independence. However, it is generally agreed that this information lacks validity.

The MTCU needs to consider how the assessment results will be used and to review and revise its "reporting requirements" as part of the paradigm shift with consideration for the following two concepts already mentioned:

- Incorporating a percentage change in the critical mass of skills within each TRP using a pre and post-test. This will allow the MTCU to compare agency performance within each TRP over time; and

- Incorporating a measure or measures that reflect literacy agencies' linkages and referrals to other organizations.

Governance

In the long term, Ontario's literacy agencies and sectors will need to be supported with an overarching, provincial coordination function that ensures:

- a common language is used to describe learner attainment in each TRP;
- the new assessment approach is straightforward, meaningful and manageable;
- all sectors are linked and coordinated with respect to the exit criteria from one TRP and its relationship to the entrance criteria for another;
- appropriate training for assessment is delivered;
- learners' assessment are being done consistently within each TRP and sector;
- the reporting and tracking of assessment results are also consistent, meaningful and use state-of-the-art technology; and
- an understanding of the different resource requirements across sectors and the provision of appropriate financial support to transition agencies to the new paradigm.

The Process to Get There

This section of the report presents recommendations related to the suggested process that could be implemented to move the LBS program through the paradigm shift. A key principle of the process is to ensure that any change in the LBS program and the assessment approach be developed in consultation with the literacy field in order to enhance its ultimate acceptance. The process outlined below covers all the tasks necessary to move the LBS program through the paradigm shift. The actual sequencing of the tasks will be described in the final section.

The approach has been developed with reference to the creation of other models of learner skill attainment and assessment; most notably Equipped for the Future in the US.
The process covers the following:

- Confirming the TRPs;
- Confirming the exit criteria or transition skills;
- Confirming the current approaches to assessment and tools in use;
- Describing the new approach to assessment; and
- Developing a process for regular reporting of assessments results

Resourcing, Governance and Coordination Committee

1. We recommend that the MTCU form a Resourcing, Governance, and Coordination committee to oversee, manage, resource and coordinate the tasks involved in the paradigm shift. Membership on this committee would include key MTCU/LBS personnel, an assessment training expert and literacy field representatives. The terms of reference for this committee would include:

   i) Finalizing the work plan to implement the new approach;

   ii) Identifying the assessment training requirements necessary to implement the approach;

   iii) Identifying the financial and human resources required;

   iv) Creating mechanisms to ensure the shift is undertaken in a coordinated and deliberate way; and

   v) Overseeing and managing the tasks and activities required to actually implement the paradigm shift.

Confirming the TRPs

2. We recommend that the MTCU convene at least two additional focus groups with a sample of literacy agencies who train learners across all the TRPs previously identified in this project. The purpose of these focus groups is to further confirm the four TRPs and to identify any others that may arise. The key questions for the meetings could be similar to those already defined.

   - For the purposes of providing the Ministry, the program deliverer and the learner with a meaningful assessment result of learner attainment, does it make sense to assess the skills, knowledge and behaviours according to the criteria of TRPs?

- If so, do the TRPs represent key points of transition in learners' programming in LBS? Are there any others?
- What names should be given to the TRPs such that they are commonly understood by learners, agencies, employers, the MTCU and other key stakeholders?

TRP Working Groups

3. Having finalized the TRPs , we recommend the MTCU form TRP working groups made up of selected representatives of the literacy field who work with learners situated within each TRP. The terms of reference for each TRP working group would include:

   i) Further clarifying the name of the TRP to achieve a mutual understanding among all key stakeholders;

   ii) Further confirming and identifying the exit criteria or transition skills (skills, self management/self direction, knowledge, and experience) required to make a successful transition from the TRP;

   iii) Identifying critical stakeholders within and outside LBS and the role they would play in helping the learner achieve a successful transition from the TRP;

   iv) Documenting the assessment approaches and protocols currently used to assess learners; and

   v) Documenting the current tools in use for measuring the TRP exit criteria and how they are used.

Expert Advisory Committee

4. We recommend that the MTCU form an expert advisory committee made up of academic and practitioner representatives with expertise in CIPMS, LBS, Essential Skills, Ontario Skills Passport, other relevant skill assessment models, education, curriculum development, assessment, assessment training and information technology. For each TRP, the terms of reference for this committee would include:

   i) Evaluating the quality of the assessment protocols, measurement modalities and tools currently in use with respect to their ability to validly and reliably measure a learner's readiness to make the transition from a TRP. This would include:
      . the quality of current the assessment protocols
      . the psychometric properties of tools in use and their comparability

   ii) Identifying gaps in current assessment protocols and tools and recommending changes to the assessment protocols, new protocols, proper uses of current tools, and/or the creation of new measurement modalities and tools.

   iii) Describing a new approach to assessment of the readiness to transition referencing current professional standards of educational measurement while remaining consistent with the principles of the LBS program.

iv) Clarifying and documenting the linkages, impacts and implications this approach will have on current literacy training curriculum.

v) Designing a process for agency execution and regular reporting of the assessments results with consideration for:
- CIPMS
- the resources of the agencies
- MTCU use of the results
- comparing agency TRP skill attainment results over time

5. We finally recommend that the MTCU form a Practitioner Committee of literacy field representatives to act as a sounding board, touchstone and conduit to the field in relation to the above tasks. The committee would represent the field and inform the MTCU with advice, guidance and insights to help implement a smoother transition.

Initial Workplan

Although the above may seem overwhelming, we are suggesting that the MTCU initially take a careful and deliberate approach to the task. We are initially proposing the following phases to structure the work plan.

- A Design/Confirmation Phase; and
- A Pilot Phase

The Design/Confirmation Phase

The essential purpose of this phase is to form the Resourcing, Governance and Coordination Committee, finalize the work plan and confirm and document all TRPs. The tasks for this phase include the following.

Task 1 Identify membership of the Resourcing, Governance and Coordination (RGC) Committee

Task 2 Convene the RGC Committee

Task 3 Finalize the work plan

Task 4 Determine the cost of implementing the work plan

Task 5 Identify participants for TRP confirmation focus groups

Task 6 Convene at least two TRP confirmation focus groups

Outcomes: Identification and description of all final TRPs

Pilot Phase

This phase will involve the creation and pilot testing of the new approach for one TRP. It includes the following tasks.

Task 7	Decide on one TRP to pilot test
Task 8	Identify participants for the TRP working group
Task 9	Convene the TRP working group
Task 10	Document outcomes of the TRP Working Group
Task 11	Identify the expert committee
Task 12	Recruit members to the expert committee
Task 13	Convene Expert Committee and assign tasks
Task 14	Document outcomes of the Expert Committee
Task 15	Share results with Practitioner Committee
Task 16	Design pilot implementation plan for the TRP
Task 17	Pilot Test the new Approach in a sample of agencies
Task 18	Undertake a formative evaluation of the Design and Pilot phases
Task 19	Prepare implementation plan for the additional TRPs

Endnotes

1 MTCU, *Employment Ontario Brand Kit Info Sheet for Third Party Service Providers*, December 2006.

2 MTCU, *DRAFT Agency Assessment of its Organizational Capacity Guide*, June 2007.

3 Some LBS programs continue to struggle with learner exit interviews. For strategies on increasing the rate of return for learner exit interviews, please visit CLO's **Literacy Basics** "Exit and Follow-Up" module at **www.nald.ca/literacybasics**.

4 MTCU: Presentation to the CESBA Pre-Conference LBS Managers, December 2006.

5 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Reporting on Outcomes: Setting Performance Expectations and Telling Performance Stories*. **www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/other.nsf/html/200305dp1_e.html#hd3c**

6 Employment Ontario. *Agency Assessment of Organizational Capacity Guide for Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Delivery Agencies*. September 2007, pg 7. For more information about the Pareto Principle, see Wikipedia at **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareto_principle**.

7 **www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/html/p132/9_e.html**

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22 Ibid., pgs 3-4.

23 MTCU, Key Definitions, 2007

24 **www.nrsweb.org/about/history.aspx**

25 MTCU, Additional Key Terms for LBS CIPMS, 2007

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27 *Guide for the Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks*. August, 2001. **www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/rmafcgrr05_e.asp**

28 *Good Practices in Organizations other than the Government of Canada*: Parliamentary Accountability, Results-Based Management and Management Competency Development Strategies Canada School of Public Service Website. **www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/html/p132/9_e.html**

29 For more information, see The Alberta Science and Research Authority's website at **www.asra.gov.ab.ca**

30 Op. Cit., *Good Practices in Organizations other than the Government of Canada*.

31 Ibid.

32 **www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/mh_accountability/mh_accountability_e.pdf**

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