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**Community Literacy
of Ontario**

**80 Bradford Street
Suite 508**

**Barrie, Ontario
L4N 6S7**

**Tel: 705-733-2312
Fax: 705-733-6197**

[www.nald.ca/
clo.htm](http://www.nald.ca/clo.htm)

clo@bellnet.ca



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Strategic Planning

Community Literacy of Ontario is delighted to announce that we have received funding from the *Ontario Trillium Foundation* to work with our board of directors in year one (April 2006 to March 2007) to develop a strategic plan that will allow CLO to strengthen and increase its organizational capacity to serve its members.

In the second year of the grant (April 2007 to March 2008), CLO will deliver two regional workshops to literacy practitioners on strategic planning in addition to delivering two online training workshops on strategic planning on Centra. These workshops will help literacy organizations engage in strategic planning to build their own capacity.

CLO will also create a web-based, self-directed, online training module on strategic planning in literacy agencies. This training module would be housed on CLO's "Literacy Basics" online training website (www.nald.ca/literacybasics). This module will remain as a permanent, free and publicly accessible resource.

Project work is already well under-way. CLO held an open call for proposals for a consultant and Jane Barber was the successful candidate. In May 2006, the CLO board and staff held a two-day strategic planning retreat where we discussed current and future trends and issues for the literacy field and planned for CLO's role in the future. CLO will hold a follow-up meeting in October 2006 where our strategic plan will be further discussed and adopted.

In 2007, watch for more information on training opportunities and resources to support member programs with strategic planning.

**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**



**LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO**

The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

Hot New Resources

I Opened Up: Exploring Learners' Perspectives on Progress

Parkdale Project Read, in collaboration with Literacy for East Toronto and Action Read, has just completed a two-year ground-breaking research project called; "*I Opened Up: Exploring Learners' Perspectives on Progress.*" For this project, 56 learners from five different community-based literacy organizations were interviewed. The research clearly demonstrated that attending a literacy program provides many benefits beyond acquiring literacy skills. Adult learners identified extensive personal and social benefits such as self-confidence, improved communication and greater control over their lives. To find out more or to download this research report, please visit: www.nald.ca/ppr/researchproject.htm.

Occupational Curricula

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario has recently produced eight occupational curricula on CDs for LBS learners. They include learning activities (and answers) and exit demonstrations based on each occupation's Essential Skills. Each curriculum is in pdf format. Some of the occupations include Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourers, Hospitality, Health Care, and Food Counter Attendants, Kitchen Helpers and related occupations. The complete list of the curricula and instructions for ordering are at: www.lleo.ca/LLEO_assets/pdfs/cd_order.pdf.

Building for the Future: Connecting to Apprenticeship

Building for the Future (BFF) was produced by Preparatory Training Programs of Toronto (PTP). It is designed as a career exploration resource for adults or youth interested in exploring the skilled trades. To order (at a cost of \$64.50) please visit: www.ptp.ca/Publications.htm.

Liability Insurance Toolkit

Getting and keeping liability insurance is an issue for many not-for-profit organizations. To provide support, Imagine Canada has developed a *Liability Insurance Toolkit* that you can find at: www.nonprofitscan.ca/page.asp?liability_insurance_toolkit.



Continuous Improvement Performance Management System

In 2003/2004 MTCU began taking steps to implement the Continuous Improvement Performance Management System (CIPMS). The CIPMS focuses on three core measures: efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction. Early steps towards the CIPMS have included: the revised LBS program monitoring form, revised guidelines for post-training services and the learner satisfaction survey.



More recently, one of the major focuses of the CIPMS has been learner skill attainment. In March 2005 MTCU contracted with Vubiz Ltd. to conduct research and provide advice on the topic of measuring learner skill attainment. This research began in the spring of 2005 and is still in progress, and is intended to assist LBS agencies and MTCU to more effectively measure, document and report learner successes.

This research will build as much as possible on the current assessment approaches of LBS delivery agencies. Vubiz conducted a scan of assessment practices in some LBS agencies by means of a web-based survey that select literacy agencies were asked to fill out. In April 2006, Vubiz also held a provincial focus group to discuss assessment practices and learner skill attainment.

Because of the importance of learner skill attainment under the CIPMS, the board of directors of Community Literacy of Ontario has decided to submit a proposal to MTCU this year which, if funded, would identify and measure success indicators particular to independence goals.

Dr. Pat Campbell has also conducted separate research as part of a study on assessment practices, tools and resources within the Canadian literacy community. This report, "*Student Assessment in Adult Basic Education: A Canadian Snapshot*" has just been posted on NALD at: www.nald.ca/fulltext/snape/cover.htm.

Recent CIPMS initiatives include MTCU exploring the enhanced use of available data from the IMS to begin to formalize measures around efficiency. As well, MTCU will be working with literacy agencies to improve response rates to the learner satisfaction survey and they are encouraging the expanded use of AlphaRoute. CIPMS is also about effective program monitoring, program evaluation, goal setting, documenting activity, and evaluating, recording and demonstrating progress.

Jane Barber has developed a workshop on the CIPMS that has been offered by several regional networks this spring and will be delivered by several other networks this fall. If this workshop comes to your region, do plan on attending as CLO has heard rave reviews about it.

For more information on the CIPMS check with your program consultant or read the MTCU letters on AlphaCom "Info-LBS" dated March 2, 2005, May 12, 2005 and November 23, 2005.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement in Action

By Jane Jackson, Executive Coordinator, North Bay Literacy Council

The North Bay Literacy Council gratefully received funds from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** to fund four projects. One of these projects, the *Student/Tutor Liaison Project*, was about program evaluation and continuous improvement.

The purpose of the *Student/Tutor Liaison Project* was to gather evidence and provide documentation about the effectiveness, efficiency and degree of customer satisfaction with our tutoring program. Within the project, procedures were stream-lined, key areas of information collection were defined, developed and acquired. Training support for tutors was delivered. Additionally, current student achievements were formulated relative to tutor services received. This evaluation process helped to formulate changes in many areas.

The *Student/Tutor Liaison Project* completed the following activities:

1. Reviewed all Student and Tutor file information

This review lead us to develop a new written filing procedure that could easily be used by volunteers, thus freeing up valuable time for the Student / Tutor Coordinator.

2. Updated all file forms for future student intake

This analysis lead to: an overhaul of the complete student / tutor filing system; creation of a check box cover page for quick form completion requirements and the re-design of intake forms to collect more useful information.

3. Updated filing system to hold student and volunteer information

This resulted in our council purchasing a larger filing cabinet, another bookcase and the purging of files.

4. Organized and presented Training Plan information to tutors in a workshop

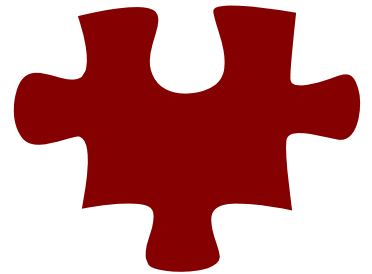
Volunteer tutors gained experience in preparing training plans for their learners.

5. Developed a Student and Tutor Survey for longer-term matches

We created two surveys, one for students and one for tutors. Each questionnaire had 48 questions that were correlated to each other.

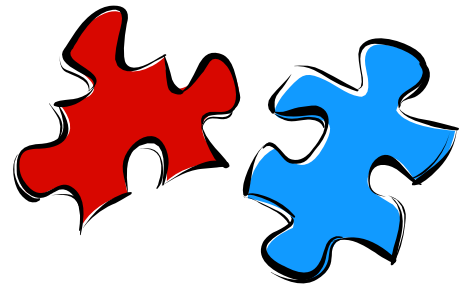
6. Interviewed students for the survey and guided tutors in survey completion

Over a four month period, we interviewed 19 student-tutor pairs that had been meeting for a minimum of at least six months. All of the students were interviewed in person. Tutors completed the survey independently at another time and place.



7. Scored and analyzed survey results

Through this evaluation, the North Bay Literacy Council learned wonderful information about our tutors and students. We found out that 100% of our students were satisfied with the service they received from their tutors. We also learned that our tutors underestimated the benefits of their services to their learners and the positive impact they have on their lives. Tutors need more information and training about “getting to know your student.” Tutors need more information and training about picking learner materials. In addition, we found out that 73% of our students make progress from level to level. And we now know for sure that we make strong student – tutor matches!



8. Submitted project report and recommendations

We presented our findings to the Board of Directors and the general membership at the May 2006 Annual General Meeting and we made the following recommendations: Our council should develop guidelines for tutors to assist their students in the selection of learning materials. We should develop a reference tool (a bookmark) listing questions tutors can ask students to see if the tutoring sessions are having a personal and positive impact. We should also include an overview of the broader benefits of literacy on the bookmark. Our council should plan a writing contest for our students, with the theme being, “How has your tutor helped you?” The winner will receive a \$50 cash prize and we will also publish student submissions.

In conclusion, the North Bay Literacy Council learned many things from this evaluation but one of the most important was that we could not have done this much evaluation with our regular staff. We needed another person (someone paid was great!) to undertake this much work. We also learned that we need to learn how to market our program using the outcomes from this evaluation, and other program evaluations we have undertaken in the past.

Our training team has made significant changes to our tutor-training workshop. We have incorporated more information on training plans, picking additional learner centred materials and focused on ways for our tutors to glean meaningful information from our learners. The bookmark that was developed will be a very useful tool both in our workshops and for our tutors to use as a reminder for checking progress.

The North Bay Literacy Council looks at program evaluation as a very positive experience. We have been surveying our tutors and students for six years at our Annual General Meeting and asking questions about our library, our customer service, our workshops, our office space, our office equipment, our learning materials, our website, our newsletter, the computer literacy levels of our tutors and anything else we need to know. The information we gather helps us improve our program and services.

The North Bay Literacy Council prides itself in delivering quality literacy services and now we have proof through our evaluations!

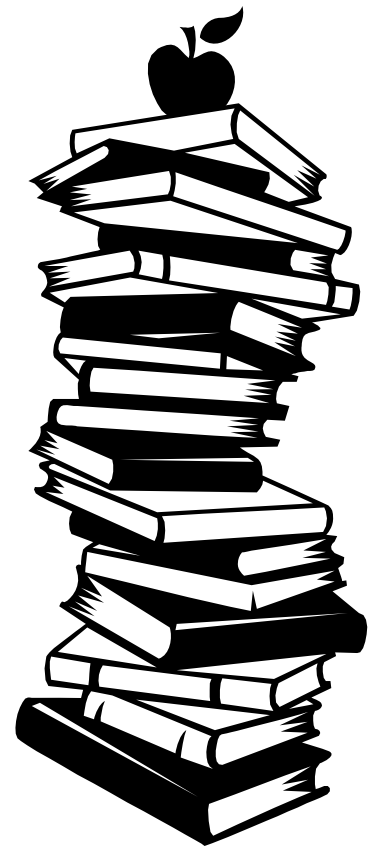
Key Needs of Community Literacy Agencies

Community Literacy of Ontario conducts an annual survey of the needs, priorities and issues facing community literacy agencies in Ontario. Our survey was conducted in December 2005 and January 2006. A total of 75 community literacy agencies responded. This survey provides an excellent and up-to-date survey of the needs of our sector. In this survey, CLO asked its member literacy agencies about their training, support and resource needs. While individual survey responses are confidential, CLO has grouped input and summarized the responses received. Please read below for more information.

Resources and Information

Many requests for information and support were received in these areas:

- ⇒ More information on and analysis of various MTCU initiatives (CIPMS, OneStop, No Wrong Door, LMDF, apprenticeship)
- ⇒ A clearinghouse of information to ensure consistency of information, less duplication and easy access to information
- ⇒ More information on new directions and opportunities for the literacy field
- ⇒ More information on effective resources and tools being used in literacy agencies around Ontario
- ⇒ More information on successful program and project initiatives being implemented around Ontario
- ⇒ Information on affordable, practical and widely-recommended literacy materials, curriculum and resources
- ⇒ Information and resources on effective software; policies and procedures; demonstrations, curriculum, self management/self direction, lesson plans, self-evaluation, learner exits, ESL, adult-related materials, computer resources
- ⇒ Resources for level one learners and learners with multiple barriers
- ⇒ Resources for tutors (print and online)
- ⇒ More chances to share information, resources and best practices on successful programming and resources



Funding Issues

Many requests for information and support were received in these areas:

- ⇒ Stable and increased core funding (for providing enhanced service to learners, resources, training, PD, equipment maintenance; staffing, more program space, increasing contact hours, etc.)
- ⇒ Fundraising ideas and resources
- ⇒ Provincial fundraising initiatives
- ⇒ Ways to show MTCU the many positive outcomes of our programs that are not currently acknowledged

Training

Many requests for information and support were received in these areas:

- ⇒ More online and face-to-face training
- ⇒ Popular areas identified for practitioner training were: best programming practices, marketing, workforce, program evaluation, time management, IMS, instructional strategies, learning disabilities, technology and clear language and design and online training courses for volunteer tutors



Workplace and Workforce

Many requests for information and support were received in these areas:

- ⇒ More information on workforce literacy and workforce initiatives
- ⇒ Information on workforce curriculum used in other literacy agencies
- ⇒ More workforce/ workplace resources for lower level learners
- ⇒ Employment specific assessment tools by level and sector
- ⇒ Information on useful workplace resources used by other literacy agencies
- ⇒ A new module on "Literacy Basics" about workforce literacy
- ⇒ More information on successful workforce initiatives occurring in other community literacy agencies

Marketing, Outreach and Linkages

Many requests for information and support were received in these areas:

- ⇒ Promotional materials for literacy agencies
- ⇒ Resources on learner recruitment and retention
- ⇒ Resources on volunteer recruitment and retention
- ⇒ Help with marketing
- ⇒ Information on best practices in marketing
- ⇒ Province-wide sharing of successful marketing practices
- ⇒ Community Literacy of Ontario was urged to continue to promote community-based issues and programming to MTCU
- ⇒ Support for literacy agencies to approach new areas and make linkages with new partners and stakeholders

Issues Receiving a Single Response

- ⇒ Lack of transportation for rural learners
- ⇒ Staff training in the areas of anti-racism and anti-oppression and working with specific and often marginalized learners re: these issues
- ⇒ Working with the effects of violence on the lives of our learners
- ⇒ Deciding what is the ideal training plan
- ⇒ More effective, practice-based training and application of research (i.e. workshops about practitioner research initiatives in Ontario)
- ⇒ Site that would provide lesson plans on a weekly basis (update to encompass current issues e.g. election lessons) for tutors.
- ⇒ Keeping up-to-date statistics on relevant literacy issues
- ⇒ More vibrant and inspiring community of practitioners



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Carynne Arnold (Kingston)
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- Heather Hufton (Peel)
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OUR STAFF

- Joan Beaudry (Administrative Assistant)
- Jette Cosburn (Co-Executive Director)
- Joanne Kaattari (Co-Executive Director)
- Vicki Trottier (Project Staff)

OUR CORE FUNDER

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OURVOICE NEWSLETTER

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On the Home Front... CLO News!

Annual General Meeting 2006:

Community Literacy of Ontario will be holding its Annual General Meeting on **Thursday, October 12, 2006** from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the Primrose Hotel in Toronto. Extremely popular workshop presenter Garfield Gini-Newman will present a workshop on "Brain Theory" following the AGM.

Mark the date now and watch your email for registration forms and more details in early September!

Some of CLO's current activities include:

- ⇒ On February 23 and March 7, 2006, CLO delivered two online training workshops on "*Outcomes-Based Program Evaluation*" to over 45 literacy practitioners.
- ⇒ On May 16 and May 25, 2006, CLO delivered two online training workshops on "*Learner Recruitment*" to 50 people.
- ⇒ We attended a meeting of the *Ontario Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative* in May and June 2006.
- ⇒ CLO compiled the needs and issues of our member agencies from our members survey and shared this information with MTCU in February 2006.
- ⇒ In May 2006 we consulted with various stakeholders about the *National Foundational Training in Family Literacy*.
- ⇒ At the end of June, we will attend the *Advisory Roundtable* meeting and *AGM* of the Ontario Literacy Coalition.
- ⇒ CLO's board and staff held a three-day strategic planning meeting in May 2006.
- ⇒ In spring 2006, the CLO board and staff planned around ways to support agencies with the *CIPMS*.
- ⇒ In January 2006, we held our 2006 membership campaign.
- ⇒ The CLO board and staff planned and researched project ideas for submission to MTCU and NLS for 2006/2007.
- ⇒ CLO wrote members e-bulletins in January, February, March, May and June 2006
- ⇒ CLO produced *newsletters* in February and June 2006.
- ⇒ CLO moderates an extremely active AlphaCom online discussion group for community literacy agencies. Recent topics include: boards and fundraising, spelling bees, assistive devices, insurance, software, charitable status, websites, plus much more!
- ⇒ Just a reminder to our members about CLO's organizational capacity. Due to funding constraints, all three of CLO's core staff work only part-time.