SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

PHASE TWO REPORT

PRACTITIONER TRAINING STRATEGY

COMMUNITY LITERACY OF ONTARIO

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KEY DEFINITIONS

Accreditation: A term applied to **training programs**, rather than individuals. It usually involves an independent body reviewing the program to ensure that identified standards are met. It is assumed, in most cases, that a person successfully completing the training program will have gained the skills and knowledge identified in the standards.

Certification: The process that **individuals** go through to gain recognition as a **member of a profession**. Built into the process are clearly defined standards of practice and requirements around knowledge, skills training and practical skill application gained through experience, all related to the specific field or profession.

Literacy Practitioner: Facilitator of the learning process (MTCU, 1999); that is, the person that works **directly with learners** through intake, assessment, training plan development, training, and exit activities.

Minimum or Entry Level Skills: The core skills and knowledge that someone should have as he or she begins to work with an adult literacy learner or learners

Recognition: The more formal acknowledgment of achievement, ability or status.

NOTE: Participation in any **certification** or **accreditation** system by our practitioners will be voluntary.

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CHAPTER
ONE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

In 1999 the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) asked each sector (college, school board, and community based[1]) and stream (Anglophone, Francophone, Deaf, and Native) to examine closely the needs of their practitioners within the framework of a five year plan:

To develop an integrated practitioner training and recognition approach that supports high quality delivery of the Literacy and Basic Skills program... ~ MTCU, Practitioner Training Strategy	
PHASE ONE Completed	Identify answers for each sector and stream to the 3 questions:
	1) What are the core skills needed by a practitioner in a given sector or stream?
	2) How are these skills acquired by individuals seeking to work in a given sector or stream?
	3) How is the acquisition of these skills recognized by the sector or stream?
PHASE TWO Completed	Develop methods to implement the three answers in order to satisfy the needs of each sector/stream.
PHASE THREE Begins September 2002	Implement methods in each sector/ stream.
PHASE FOUR (2003-2004)	Monitor agencies in each sector/stream based on the agreed upon standard for practitioner training.

1. Within the community-based sector CLO received funding to conduct research into the skills and training needs of paid staff and volunteer tutors. LLO was funded to do similar work for practitioners within the Laubach system.

The development of a more formal, systematic approach to skills training, and the development of a certification system for all literacy practitioners, have been topics of discussion for many years. The reasons why these discussions have continued, without apparent resolution, for so long are many. The field – the community-based sector in particular – now seems more ready than ever to accept a more formal approach to skills training. As well, attitudes toward certification have shifted and the strength in being seen as "professionals" is rapidly overriding most concerns.

The work completed to date by Community Literacy of Ontario (Phase One, and with this report, Phase Two) reflects and respects the unique characteristics of our sector. It has focussed on determining what adult literacy practitioners **need to know and do** to ensure that learners in community-based agencies succeed. The proposed systems for skills training and certification allow practitioners currently in the field – both **paid staff and volunteer tutors** – the opportunity to explore the skills they have and to demonstrate that they possess the minimum entry level skills needed. (This is a necessary step before practitioners can have the opportunity to develop higher level skills.) The proposed systems introduce standards that can be used to determine the skills possessed or needed by staff and volunteer tutors who enter the field in the future. The standards also provide a tool that practitioners can use to set a training pathway. The proposed systems treat practitioners like adult learners – they ask the practitioner to take responsibility for their own learning.

The recommendations approved by CLO's Board of Directors (see Chapter Four) were approved based on a number of key assumptions: that the systems will be housed within CLO, that no uninformed bodies or persons will review materials, that the systems will, in the long run, preserve and improve current best practices, that the systems will motivate rather than force self-improvement, and finally that the human and financial resources needed to develop and support these proposed systems will be forthcoming.

1.1 PHASE ONE

Overview

The information and recommendations presented in Community Literacy of Ontario's Phase One Report (*Skills for the Future*) are based on solid, substantive research data collected from those who would be affected by the recommendations presented in the report – the practitioners working in the community-based sector. Eighty paid staff and 147 volunteer tutors completed surveys. As well, paid staff and volunteer tutors from around the province participated in focus group sessions. Eleven sessions were held with paid staff (49 participants in total) and 13 with volunteer tutors (67 participants in total). Please see Appendix A for the full list of the minimum entry level skills for both paid staff and volunteer tutors and for the recommendations for skills acquisition (training) and skills recognition (certification) for both.

On October 1, 2000, the Board of Directors of Community Literacy of Ontario accepted and approved **for both paid staff and volunteer tutors** recommendations for:
1. Minimum entry level skills (what are the core skills?);
2. Skills acquisition (how are the skills acquired?); and ,
3. Skills recognition, that is certification, (how are the skills recognized by the sector or stream?).

The Board made an additional recommendation:

> That the Practitioner Training Strategy for community-based literacy delivery agencies in Ontario be phased in over time and that the appropriate support be given to all phases.

As noted in *Skills for the Future*: "Some issues associated with the provision of service delivery in a community-based agency were identified as being beyond the scope of the project. Issues like program management, board development and organizational skills, while important to our sector, **do not fit within the definition of practitioners as provided by MTCU** and will not be addressed by any phase of this Strategy."

1.2 PHASE TWO

Overview
CLO's goals for this second phase of MTCU's practitioner training strategy were to:
1. Develop implementation strategies for skills acquisition and skills recognition for Paid Practitioners who work in our sector;
2. Develop implementation strategies for skills acquisition and skills recognition for Volunteer Practitioners who work in our sector; and
3. Develop a standard for tutor training.

Research
The Phase One Report tells us that 63% of **paid staff** have over four years experience and 25% have worked in the field for ten or more years. A large percentage have some form of post-secondary education and/or extensive training from prior employment. This combination of education, prior employment experience and length of time in the literacy field gives us a core of **paid staff** practitioners who are well-educated and experienced.

The same report tells us that 27% of our **volunteer tutors** have four or more years of experience as tutors. A further 31% have one to three years, while 33% have been volunteer tutors for less than a year. Most volunteer tutors come to tutoring already highly skilled from their employment experience, and 91% have some form of post-secondary education. Many of their employment skills are the same skills that were identified as minimum entry level skills needed by volunteer tutors.

Building on the work of Phase One was the obvious place to start the work of Phase Two. The examination of skills acquisition (training) and recognition systems from around the globe provided a foundation for the development of the systems recommended in this report. Many professions in both the for-profit and the not-for-profit sectors have developed training programs and/or professional certification bodies. This phase of the project benefited greatly from the experience and expertise of these professions.

Field Input
The field was kept informed through the publication of several bulletins sent to all CLO members and messages on AlphaCom. Input from the field was collected in the form of two separate surveys and by the participation of practitioners in two field tests and through the reference group. Prior to being presented to CLO's Board of Directors all the materials developed for both systems were reviewed and discussed by selected field test participants and the reference group. The recommendations made to, and approved by, the Board can be found in Chapter Four.

Project Outcomes

The ***proposed*** systems for skills acquisition (training) and skills recognition (certification) for both paid staff and volunteer tutors are outlined in the following sections.[2] The use of the word "proposed" is intentional as these systems can only be fully implemented and sustained with sufficient ongoing resources. Also intentional is the design of each system. In the event that sufficient funding is not forthcoming beyond Phases Three and/or Four, component parts of each system can be used by the field independently of the system for which it was designed. In Phase Three the systems and their component parts will be intensively field tested with a limited number of community-based literacy agencies.

Paid Staff – Pathways for Training and Certification

Training: A key feature of this system is the development of a standard for training. The standard describes the core elements, skills and knowledge that new staff should have as they begin to work with adult literacy learners. A commitment to ongoing professional development is also a core element of this standard. The standard is built on the minimum entry level skills developed during Phase One and core competencies developed during Phase Two.

A training manual will be developed during Phase Three. The development of some type of training resource for paid staff was recommended by practitioners during Phase One. The need for this type of resource was confirmed by additional research and information gathered during Phase Two.

Certification: While many paid staff practitioners have been in the field for a long time, there has never been a mechanism to allow them to demonstrate that they have a certain set of skills – those skills needed to provide a valuable and credible service to adult literacy learners. The certification system provides the opportunity to do just that in a supportive, positive environment.

Volunteer Tutors – Pathways for Training and Certification and Accreditation of Tutor Training

Training: A key feature of this system is the development of a standard for training. The standard describes the core elements, skills and knowledge that volunteers must possess as they begin to work with an adult literacy learners. The standard is built on the minimum entry level skills developed during Phase One and core competencies developed during Phase Two.

Accreditation of Training: A process has been developed by which programs can demonstrate to CLO that they meet, or even exceed, the core elements of

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2. See Chapters Three and Four respectively for details about each system.

the training standard. The use, by practitioners delivering the training, of a specific tutor handbook and of a specific trainer's guide is recommended.

Certification: We know from our work in Phase One that this type of provincial certification is not a high priority for many volunteer tutors currently in the field. It was equally clear that it could become a valuable asset in the future as it could be used to attract volunteers into literary agencies. More information will be gathered during Phase Three. Again, the purpose of certification is to allow volunteer tutors to demonstrate that they have a certain set of skills – those skills needed to provide a valuable, credible service to adult literacy learners.

More in-depth information about the standard for the training of paid staff, training and the pathways for certification for paid staff can be found in Chapter Two. Chapter Three looks at the standard for the training of volunteer tutors, the proposed accreditation process and the proposed pathway to certification for trained tutors.

CHAPTER
TWO

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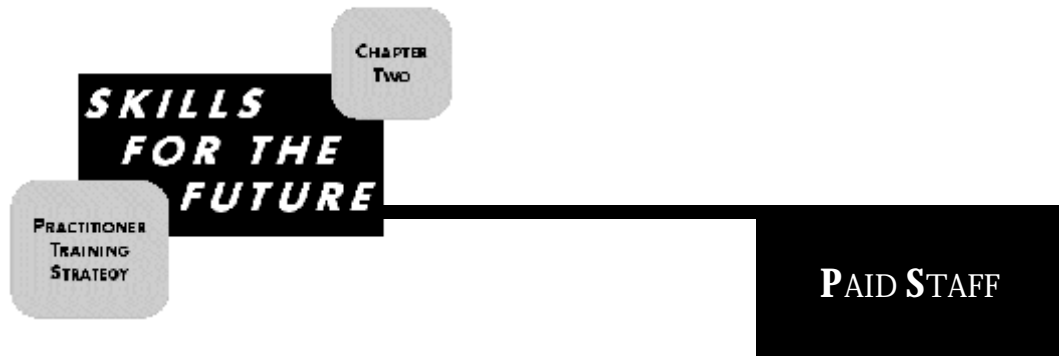
PAID **S**TAFF

OVERVIEW

It was clear at the end of Phase One that any skills acquisition (training) and/or skills recognition (certification) systems developed for paid staff would have to respect the length of time most paid staff have worked in the field, their educational background and the number of work-related training sessions they have attended over the years. Ideally, the systems would also accommodate practitioners who enter the field at some point in the future. Phase One also provided agreement on a set of minimum entry level skills needed by paid staff working in Ontario's community literacy agencies.

The proposed training system incorporates a more systematic, formal approach to skills acquisition. Given MTCU's definition of literacy practitioner, which has been used for this Strategy (see Key Definitions, page ii), a cross-sectoral approach to the development of a skills training system should probably be undertaken in the future. In the meantime, the proposed approach to skills acquisition meets the initial and ongoing professional development needs of paid staff who work in community-based literacy agencies in Ontario.

The development of a certification process speaks to the need, which has been expressed for many years, to develop the community-based sector as a profession.[1] The proposed system for the recognition of skills has been designed to accommodate paid staff currently in the field and those who become paid staff in the future. Initially, certification allows all paid staff to demonstrate that they meet the minimum entry level skills. In the future the criteria will evolve to meet the changing needs of both new and long-time paid staff practitioners.

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1. What is a "profession"? Generally speaking it can be defined as a group of people whose work is based on a body of knowledge (skills and training) and who share common beliefs.

2.1 GETTING SKILLS: PAID STAFF TRAINING SYSTEM

In Ontario, skills training for paid staff – whether initial or ongoing – has not been part of a formal, structured training system. Traditionally, paid staff have gained their skills on the job, with supplemental training being provided by regional and/or provincial literacy organizations. Paid staff have also entered the literacy field with high levels of education and/or skills training from other fields.

Although there is no formal or "recognized"[2] training in existence in Ontario at this time, this does not mean that training – and good quality training – has not been provided. It simply means that there is no universally recognized training pathway by which you can enter the field of literacy or to upgrade your skills as a trained practitioner. It also means that training that is offered by regional or provincial literacy organizations is not linked to a formal, structured training system.

Any system that is developed must work within the challenges and constraints of our field and our agencies. Some of these constraints are: limited financial resources of programs, the part-time nature of many of our workplaces, and the lack of clearly defined requirements (skills and training) for our practitioners. Skills training must be time-efficient, effective and reputable. It must also be easily accessible and meet core training standards. The challenge lies in marrying the traditions of the past with the needs of the future.

Effective practitioners are lifelong learners. Ongoing training/ professional development must be part of the training system. This training, or professional development, will encourage and sustain the continuous professional growth of our practitioners, and it will improve and sustain the capacity of the agency and the field as a whole. To be successful, professional development must be structured, clearly defined and supported. At the program level, effective professional development should:
▸ Teach the practitioner how to focus on helping learners achieve their learning goals and supporting their learning needs;
▸ Be a collaborative effort between all the staff in an agency;
▸ Be supported by the management (e.g. Executive Director) of the agency in terms of cost and time.
There also needs to be support for and a clear understanding at the regional and provincial level of the professional development needs of the community-based sector. Opportunities for gaining skills should be part of a province-wide system of training and professional development.

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2. "Recognized" used here means that it is required by a literacy agency or organization, as a condition of employment, for example. Practitioners, both paid and volunteer, have been able for a number of years to access–through Algonquin, Sault and Conestoga Colleges–the various modules of Adult Literacy Educator Certificate Program (known by some as Learning Opportunities Ontario North, or LOON).

The proposed training system, called "Pathways to Training," recognizes the merit in continuing with the tradition of the "on-the-job" approach to training and it recognizes the need to move to a more formal and systematic way to get the skills needed to become, or continue to be, a literacy practitioner. It builds on the work of the first phase by incorporating the minimum entry level skills identified by the field and approved by the CLO Board (October 2000) and by respecting the recommendations[3] made by the field. It begins the move to a more formal, systematic way to get skills with the introduction of a standard for the initial and ongoing training of staff and with the development of a training manual.

It should be noted that during Phase Three (2002-2003) "Pathways to Training" will undergo further field testing. It is also important to note that the individual parts – the standard and the training manual – of the proposed training system can stand alone. They are, in and of themselves, useful tools for the field. The success of the proposed "Pathways to Training" system is contingent on sufficient funding from either the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities or some other funder.

Minimum Entry Level Skills

The minimum entry level skills for paid staff are shown below. These are the skills that are needed by paid staff when they begin to work with learners. During Phase Two, core competencies were developed for each of the specific skills listed in the table. The core competencies, which play an important role in the proposed training system for both the standard and for skills acquisition (certification), can be found in Appendix B.

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3. See Appendix A for the full list of Phase One recommendations.

Paid Staff – Minimum Entry Level Skills

Information and Referral
▸ Write clearly to express ideas
▸ Speak and listen effectively

Literacy Assessment
▸ Observation skills
▸ Interview and information gathering skills

Training Plan Development
▸ Analytical skills
▸ Organizational and planning skills
▸ Presentation and explanation skills

Training
▸ Facilitate the learning process
▸ Develop and use learning activities with learners

Follow-Up
▸ Report writing
▸ Evaluate training activities
▸ Record keeping

Provincial Training Standard

The development, by Community Literacy of Ontario, of a provincial standard for the training of paid staff is the beginning point of a more formal, systematic approach to skills training. Each of the components that make up the standard relate to a key area of practitioner responsibility, with the focus on delivering service. The standard is detailed on the following pages.

CLO developed this standard based on research conducted and in consultation with the field during Phases One and Two. It is not the intent nor the purpose of the standard to be prescriptive. Rather the purpose is:
▸ To provide a standard that can be used on its own to frame professional development activity for paid staff practitioners;
▸ To support agency activities such as staff recruitment, performance appraisals and the identification of training needs;
▸ To provide a standard that can be used to frame the design of the certification system for paid staff practitioners.

Community Literacy of Ontario's
Standard for the Training of Paid Staff
(Adult Literacy Practitioners)

Part 1: Initial Training

The agency is committed to providing **new** staff members with the opportunity to gain and practise skills. Training will occur on the job and through a formalized system of workshops. All training can be delivered by a variety of methods (e.g., face to face, online, self-directed). Training will cover, at a minimum, the following core components:

Understanding the Need
▸ Defining literacy and the role of literacy in society
▸ Reasons why people come to community-based programs
▸ Factors affecting learning
▸ Effects of low/limited literacy skills on an individual
▸ Awareness of literacy issues in Canada and what this means locally

Understanding the Role of Your Agency
▸ Creating a positive learning environment
▸ Using a learning outcomes approach
▸ Monitoring, evaluating and recording the learner's progress
▸ Commitment to active/on-going learning
▸ Community planning for literacy services
▸ Accessing regional & provincial support/training

Understanding the Role of the Volunteer
▸ Recruiting, training (initial) and supporting volunteer tutors
▸ Training volunteers to work in a one-to-one setting
▸ Training volunteers to work in a small group setting
▸ Providing opportunities for ongoing training and certification

Understanding the Learner
▸ Principles and theories of adult literacy education
▸ Characteristics of adult literacy learners and adult learning principles
▸ Challenges and solutions to learning for our learners
▸ Recognizing and accommodating special needs

Community Literacy of Ontario's
Standard for the Training of Paid Staff
(Adult Literacy Practitioners)

Part 1: Initial Training, continued

Delivering Service
▸ Requirements of the funder (or funders)
▸ Learner intake
▸ Assessment (initial and ongoing)
▸ Training plan development
▸ Training (literacy instruction) topics:
  • Reading theory and application
  • Approaches to writing and spelling
  • Strategies for teaching numeracy skills
  • Learning Styles
▸ Learner exit (demonstrating outcomes)
▸ Using a learner-centred, goal-directed approach
▸ Ensuring learner participation
▸ Using a learning outcomes approach
  • Understanding learning outcomes
  • Appropriate use of all domains and skill levels
  • The role of self-management/self-direction in assessment and demonstration activities
▸ Integrating technology

Outcomes

Initial training will:
a) Give employers and employees (practitioners) a clear understanding of the core components of training needed by new staff;
b) Give employees (practitioners) the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge and provide input into their training through active participation;
c) Allow practitioners to understand the needs and the challenges of the adult literacy learner;
d) Allow practitioners to successfully implement and apply their skills and knowledge to the training of both volunteer tutors and learners.

Community Literacy of Ontario's
Standard for the Training of Paid Staff
(Adult Literacy Practitioners)

Part 2: Ongoing Training
The agency is committed to providing **all** staff members with the opportunity to gain and practice skills, both on the job and through scheduled training activities.

Training will be:
- part of a systematic approach that encourages practitioners to develop a professional development plan that will help meet current and changing learner, program and community needs and goals
- focussed on the continuous improvement of practitioners' skills and knowledge and on the continuous improvement of the field as a whole
- incorporated into the agency's overall strategic and organizational plans
- supported financially and with release time

Outcomes

Ongoing training will:
a) Ensure the delivery of quality instruction to adult literacy learners;
b) Ensure that practitioners participate in ongoing training opportunities;
c) Provide direction to practitioners with regard to ongoing training needs;
d) Help program managers and boards to frame job descriptions and performance appraisals.

Together, the minimum entry level skills, the core competencies and Part One of the Training Standard describe the skills, training, knowledge and abilities that are needed by someone entering the literacy field in our sector. The second part of the Training Standard formalizes our sector's commitment to ongoing training.

Training Manual

Another component of the proposed training system is the development of a training manual. When asked in Phase One for their recommendations for skills training, paid staff noted that common standards and resources for training should be developed and that any course modules be outcomes-based.

The manual, when completed, will provide community-based literacy agencies with a resource that will aid in the efficient and effective training of staff. It will focus on learning and using new skills and will provide a theoretical framework that will incorporate the appropriate methods of good practice. Use of the manual, while voluntary, will hopefully motivate practitioners to explore their own philosophy of adult literacy education, help them inform their practice of adult literacy education and help them develop their skills as paid staff.

2.2 RECOGNIZING SKILLS: PAID STAFF CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

The community-based sector is not the first or only field to look at a certification system for the people who work in that field. The proposed system for skills recognition, called "Pathways to Certification," has been developed based on information collected in Phase One and on research conducted and analysed during Phase Two.

For many years practitioners in Ontario have discussed the need and the desire for the development and recognition of our field as a profession. The establishment of a certification system has been seen as one way to accomplish this. It should be noted that we are talking about professional certification, not educational certification. It is the demonstration of actual skills, not the acquisition of those skills, that form the foundation of the certification system. This means that we are not married to any one skills training system – what is important is being able to demonstrate that you have the necessary skills and knowledge to be awarded the certificate.

The certification system we adopt must be flexible. Firstly, it must provide practitioners who currently work in community-based literacy agencies with the opportunity to demonstrate that they meet the minimum entry level skills for our sector. This is a necessary first step in the establishment of paid staff as "professionals." Secondly, as the system grows and matures, many other benefits of being part of a professional organization can be incorporated.[4] Perhaps, as well, the definition of practitioner can be broadened to accommodate practitioners who work in more of an administrative capacity within the literacy agency.

The proposed certification system was researched, developed and reviewed during Phase Two. A more comprehensive study of the system will be undertaken in Phase Three. This system, or process, requires those who are interested to apply to CLO to be certified. An application package has been developed that clearly defines the process that must be followed and the criteria that must be met.

In addition to providing a Pathway for practitioners who are currently working in the field, the certification process accommodates people who may become practitioners in the future. It also provides a Pathway for the adoption of one or more specific college-based training programs to possibly become one of the requirements of admission to the profession.

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4. It is possible that in the future the system could offer more than one certificate, or a series of graduated certificates. This would allow practitioners to gain recognition for more advanced skills. Many professional associations provide the opportunity, through training events, to gain new or additional skills.

The Pathways are as follows:

1. Those in the field as of the implementation date[5] and who have five or more years of experience working directly with learners in a community-based setting will be required to provide evidence of minimum entry level skills (e.g., a portfolio or supervised practicum).

2. Those in the field as of the implementation date and who one to five years of experience working directly with learners in a community-based setting will be required to provide evidence of minimum entry level skills and will also be required to undergo a supervised practicum.

3. Those who enter the field on or after the implementation date and who have no previous experience or education in literacy, or a related field (e.g., ESL, Adult Education) will be required to provide evidence of minimum entry level skills and will also be required to undergo a supervised practicum. They must wait 12 months after the date of employment before they can apply for the certificate.

4. Those who enter the field on or after the implementation date and who have previous experience or education in a related field (e.g., ESL, Adult Education) will be required to provide evidence that they are competent in the minimum entry level skills and will be required to undergo a supervised practicum.

5. Those who enter the field on or after the implementation date and who have completed an approved college-based certificate program (e.g., Adult Literacy Educator Certificate Program) will be required to undergo a supervised practicum before they can apply for a certificate. Successful completion of the college-based program will be recognized as evidence of the minimum entry level skills.

One of the main goals of the application process will be to allow our practitioners to demonstrate that they are competent in the minimum entry level skills.[6] As mentioned on page 3, core competencies for each of the minimum entry level skills have been developed and reviewed. These competencies can be found in Appendix B. In addition to the core competencies, a list of suggested demonstrations for each skill-competency set has been developed.

The application process for certification will depend on the Pathway under which the applicants fall. Given that 63% of practitioners in the field today have been practitioners for four or more years (based on the survey conducted in

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5. At this time, a date has not been set for the implementation of the Pathways to Certification process.

6. As the skills acquisition (training) system is developed our practitioners can begin to demonstrate a higher level of skill and competency.

April 2000) most will fall under the first Pathway. This means practitioners will provide evidence that clearly demonstrates they are competent in the skills which are considered entry level. The method of providing evidence is not fixed – a portfolio is one way, a video tape of the applicant working with a learner could be another way to provide evidence.

The application package will contain the instructions for completing the process, all necessary forms, sample materials (where appropriate) and any other materials that will make the process as easy as possible to complete. A nominal fee will be charged for the application package.

A Peer Review Panel will play a crucial role in the application and certification process. In the proposed system, the panel will consist of three practitioners who have already met the minimum standards. The Panel will operate within clearly laid-out guidelines. Many of the guidelines were developed during Phase Two. Additional guidelines will be developed during Phase Three.

2.3 STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT: PAID STAFF SYSTEMS

Both proposed systems—"Pathways to Training" and "Pathways to Certification"—are built on research conducted during Phases One and Two, and both respect the recommendations made by the field during Phase One. Both systems will undergo implementation testing during 2002-2003. Neither system can be implemented nor supported over time without human and financial resources.

Recognizing that ongoing resources might not be available, each system is constructed of parts that can stand on their own without additional support. "Pathways to Training" consists of:

▸ A list of minimum entry skills;
▸ A Provincial Standard for the Training of Paid Staff;
▸ A training manual (to be completed during Phase Three).

"Pathways to Certification," while more of a process, does contain stand-alone parts that could be used in programs to hire staff and/or to support professional development activities:

▸ Each minimum entry level skill has core competencies attached to it;
▸ A list of suggested demonstration activities has been developed for each skill-competency set;
▸ Guidelines for preparing a portfolio of documented competencies and experiences have been developed.

VOLUNTEER
TUTORS

OVERVIEW

By the end of Phase One, Community Literacy of Ontario had heard some very
clear messages from volunteer tutors about training and recognition and, while
they were less concerned than paid staff about a more formal province-wide
certification system, they did recommend two very important components for
training:
▸ A set of common standards for tutor training, and
▸ A universal tutor resource manual.
They also recommended that training should continue to be delivered by the
agency.

Many volunteer tutors, at the time, felt it was important to note that
" . . . for them, skills recognition would not be sought for personal goals.
Rather, it could be used to make a point to governments and society about the
collective effort and value of volunteer tutors."[1] They further agreed that being
part of a larger system of training and recognition would benefit everyone –
especially the learner. Younger volunteers felt that being able to access a
certification system would be beneficial for them. A certificate might help them
get a job, or get a better job, or perhaps help them gain entrance to the college
or university of their choice.

This information provided a solid framework for the development of training
and certification systems for the volunteer tutors who work in our community-
based literacy agencies. It was clear that any systems developed for volunteer
tutors would have to be designed to respect the fact that they are **volunteers**
and that, for the most part, they come to the community-based literacy agency
as well-educated individuals. The systems would also need to accommodate
both volunteer tutors currently working with learners and those who are trained
and then matched at some point in the future.

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1. *Skills for the Future*, Phase One Report, page 37.

3.1 GETTING SKILLS: VOLUNTEER TUTORS TRAINING SYSTEM

> "Volunteer tutors bring high levels of education and experience to their volunteer work. We learned that tutors were intensely loyal to the tutor training being offered within the program. They recognize the importance of building rapport with program staff through the program-based training…."[2]

This statement, when coupled with the Phase One recommendations[3] made by volunteer tutors and later approved by the CLO Board of Directors, provided the framework needed to develop the training system. The recommendations acknowledged:

▸ the need for mandatory initial training in the core skills for all volunteers;
▸ the need for a set of common provincial standards for tutor training; and
▸ the need for a universal tutor training manual.

CLO's **proposed training system**, in addition to recognizing that most volunteer tutors (91%)[4] bring high levels of education to the literacy agency, must also be time-efficient, effective and reputable. It must be easily accessible and meet core training standards. It must also respect and support the importance of the working relationship the volunteer and the program staff must establish. This rapport helps ensure that the learning needs of the learner are clearly understood, planned for and met.

CLO's training system supports the continuance of tutor training that is delivered "in-house." At the same time it gives the field a process that will allow **all** tutor training to become part of a more formalized and systematic approach. The system incorporates the minimum entry level skills identified by volunteer tutors during Phase One and approved by the CLO Board (October 2000) into a standard for the training of volunteer tutors and into a process that will allow literacy agencies that are delivering tutor training to apply for tutor training accreditation. The system also recommends the use of a specific training manual.

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2. *Skills for the Future*, Phase One Report, page 26.

3. See Appendix C for these recommendations.

4. Skills for the Future, Phase One Report, page 24.

Minimum Entry Level Skills

The minimum entry level skills for volunteer tutors are shown in the table below. These are the skills they will need when they begin to work with learners. During Phase Two, core competencies were developed for each of the specific skills listed below. The core competencies, which play an important role in both the accreditation of tutor training and in the proposed system for certification, can be found in Appendix C. The competencies will be further reviewed in Phase Three.

Volunteer Tutors – Minimum Entry Level Skills
Information and Referral ‣ Write clearly to express ideas ‣ Speak and listen effectively
Literacy Assessment ‣ Observation skills
Training Plan Development ‣ Presentation and explanation skills ‣ Organizational and planning skills
Training ‣ Facilitate the learning process
Follow-Up ‣ No skills identified by survey respondents

As was noted in Phase One, this set of skills is similar in many respects to the skills needed by paid staff. There are, however, important differences. Tutors indicated in Phase One that assessing/evaluating and monitoring learners' progress, and all of the follow-up activities like report writing, should be the sole responsibility of the paid staff person.

Provincial Training Standard

Community Literacy of Ontario's "Provincial Standard for the Training of Volunteer Tutors" was developed during Phase Two with input from individuals and program staff from across the province. The standard has 10 parts organized under headings that reflect the natural progression of volunteers through the literacy agency. The standard is not meant to be prescriptive. Although details are given about what must be covered, the methodology and depth of discussion are left entirely up to the organization delivering the training. The intent of the standard is to help ensure that learners in community-based literacy agencies are matched with volunteer tutors whose training has given them a core set of skills that prepare them for providing instruction.

While the standard will form the backbone of CLO's proposed "Training of Volunteer Tutors Accreditation Process," it is also a stand-alone resource for agencies. The "Provincial Standard for the Training of Volunteer Tutors" can be found on the following pages.

Community Literacy of Ontario's
Provincial Standard for
the Training of Volunteer Tutors

INTAKE

1) The Agency respects the conventions of the Canadian Human Rights Act by accepting applications from potential tutors without discrimination.
Outcomes:
a) Diversity is promoted.
b) The volunteer base in agencies reflects the community in which they deliver service

2) The agency provides potential tutors with a standard information package that contains: information about the position, the length of the required training, any qualifications or skills needed, any costs associated with training; information about the screening and selection process, and about the types of supports the volunteer will receive from the agency; an application form and a written position description.
Outcomes:
a) Potential tutors have a clear understanding of the position, responsibilities, qualifications and required skills.
b) Standard information allows all potential volunteers to make informed decisions about continuing with the process.

3) The agency provides all potential tutors with an application form that collects at a minimum the following information: name and contact information, education, employment history, relevant skills, availability, and two references; and requires the applicant to provide a writing sample. The application also includes written information about the agency's screening and intake process.
Outcomes:
a) Potential volunteer tutors are given the information they need to make an informed decision about continuing with the process.
b) Completed applications provide agencies with the information to make an informed decision about inviting potential tutors to the initial training.
c) Key information is given to the volunteer about the importance of the learning taking place in a safe, comfortable environment.

4) The Agency delivers, or participates in the delivery of, initial tutor training that respects, supports and builds on the integrity of the core components of training and service delivery.
Outcomes:
a) The quality, effectiveness and consistency of training and service delivery is maintained.
b) Learners are matched with trained volunteers.
c) The credibility of the community-based literacy delivery system is ensured.

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5) The agency is committed to the delivery of initial training that provides potential tutors with the opportunity to gain and practice skills. The training is at least 15 hours in length and uses active learning and a variety of delivery methods to maximize the opportunity for learning.

The core components of the training are:
Understanding the Need
▸ Reasons why people come to community-based programs
▸ Factors affecting learning
▸ Effects of low/limited literacy skills on an individual
▸ Awareness of literacy issues in Canada and what this means locally

Understanding Your Role
▸ Creating a positive learning environment
▸ Using a learning outcomes approach
▸ Monitoring and recording the learner's progress
▸ Commitment to active/ongoing learning
▸ Knowing your responsibilities as a tutor

Understanding the Learner
▸ Characteristics of adult literacy learners and adult learning principles
▸ Accommodating Learning Styles
▸ Understanding and accommodating Special Needs
▸ Goal-setting
▸ Ensuring learner input and participation

Understanding Service Delivery
- ▸ How to get started with teaching Reading, Writing and Numeracy
- ▸ Introduction to the five LBS Levels
- ▸ Using appropriate strategies for teaching Reading, Writing and Numeracy
- ▸ Lesson planning and tutoring with an outcomes-based focus.
- ▸ Finding, creating, and modifying learning materials
- ▸ Using technology appropriately
- ▸ Assessing the learning and providing feedback to learners and the agency
- ▸ Helping the learner move on

Outcomes of the training:
a) Training components are consistent across the province.
b) Participants are given opportunities to gain skills and knowledge and provide input through active participation.
c) Learners are provided with volunteers who have had initial training, who understand the needs and the challenges of the adult literacy learner and who have made a commitment to the agency and the learner.

6) The agency is committed to the delivery of a learner-centred, goal-directed service to adult literacy learners.
Outcomes:
a) Everyone is aware of this commitment and works toward it.
b) The learning needs of adult literacy learners are understood and respected.
c) The aims of the LBS Learning Outcomes Approach are achieved.

7) The agency provides its volunteer tutors with information about the provincial certification process.
Outcomes:
a) Volunteers apply for certification.
b) Availability of certification attracts volunteer tutors.

EVALUATION AND SUPPORT

8) The agency has a policy about its commitment to the ongoing support, recognition and training of its volunteer tutors.
Outcomes:
c) Volunteer tutors get the resources, one-to-one help and ongoing training they need.
d) Agencies are committed to identifying and supporting the ongoing training needs of tutors.

9) The agency provides an opportunity for volunteer tutors to participate in an evaluation process that includes the opportunity to self-evaluate and to receive evaluation feedback from both the learner and the agency.

Outcomes:

a) The process is clearly understood and has a written format.
b) Volunteer tutors are committed to participating.
c) Ongoing training needs are identified.
d) Volunteer tutors' services are recognized and appreciated.
e) Volunteer tutors' confidence in their ability to do the job is increased.

EXIT AND FOLLOW UP

10) The agency has a policy on termination of a volunteer tutor's services with individual learners and/or with the agency itself.

Outcomes:

a) The process for termination is clearly articulated.
b) The rights of the learners, the volunteer tutors and the agencies are protected.

Training Manual

Of the many tutor training manuals and other training materials reviewed during CLO's project, one tutor handbook and its accompanying facilitator's guide stood out. *The Handbook for Literacy Tutors* and the accompanying *Trainer's Manual*, have been produced by the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy, in partnership with People, Words & Change, a community-based literacy program in Ottawa. The handbook and manual have been field-tested extensively across the province by many literacy agencies.

The Handbook for Literacy Tutors is written for both new and experienced tutors and provides reference information about working in adult literacy for both new and experienced tutors. The *Trainer's Manual* is written for trainers of prospective tutors and provides the structure and materials for a comprehensive introductory training program for volunteer tutors. Together these products support a comprehensive **process** for tutor intake, training, placement and tutoring, with emphasis on entry level training. A report on the field testing of these resources can be found in Appendix D.

The use of these resources by agencies applying for tutor training accreditation is voluntary but is recommended by CLO. When delivering tutor training, agencies will have the flexibility of using these recommended resources, of using their own (current) resources or of incorporating parts of the recommended resources into their training.

3.2 GETTING SKILLS: TUTOR TRAINING ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

One of the easiest ways to ensure access to high quality initial training is to implement a system where the training that is provided meets, or exceeds, certain standards. Accreditation has the potential to raise the performance threshold of literacy agencies in Ontario, thus ensuring that all adult literacy learners receive quality literacy and basic skills upgrading from trained volunteer practitioners.

Accreditation

CLO's **proposed accreditation system** will result in the delivery of more effective literacy instruction, will ensure that programs provide tutor training of the highest quality and will allow programs to demonstrate the quality of their tutor training. By applying for accreditation, an agency will demonstrate its commitment to the delivery of high-calibre, high-quality tutor training and to the provision of the best learner-centred, goal-directed programming possible.

As part of the work of Phase Two, a number of program staff reviewed and discussed the proposed accreditation process. It is proposed that applicants (agencies) receive support in the form of self-assessment tools, sample forms and documents, where possible, and examples of evidence. The process will be set up in a three-year cycle and all applications will be reviewed by a panel of three peers. The review panel will work within well-described and prescribed guidelines.

During Phase Three (2002-2003) the "Training of Volunteer Tutors Accreditation Process" will undergo further field-testing. It is important to note that both the long-term support and the ongoing development of this process are contingent on sufficient funding being received from either the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities or some other funder. If, however, funding beyond Phase Three is not forthcoming, the individual components of the system – the minimum entry level skills and attached core competencies, the standard, the training manual and the handbook for tutors – can stand alone. They are, in and of themselves, useful tools for the field.

3.3 RECOGNIZING SKILLS: VOLUNTEER TUTORS CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

While it is important to acknowledge that many volunteers who currently tutor may not take advantage of the opportunity to apply for certification, it is equally important to be prepared to offer that opportunity to those volunteers who want it. Indeed many of the younger volunteers who participated in the focus group sessions in Phase One thought that being able to offer certification would attract volunteers to a literacy program.

> "Many of the same concerns were expressed by individuals in programs across the province. During the focus group sessions many volunteers voiced the opinion that "they" didn't need recognition, although most agreed that other volunteer tutors might find skills recognition useful. Some tutors did feel that a larger system of recognition for literacy volunteering would be important as it would draw attention to the cause of literacy and the collective contribution of volunteer tutors."[5]

Certification

Like paid staff, volunteer tutors will be able to participate in a certification process. CLO's **proposed system for skills recognition**, called "Pathways to Certification for Volunteer Tutors," has been developed based on information collected in Phase One and on research conducted during Phase Two. It should be noted that, as with the paid staff system, we are talking about professional certification, not educational certification. It is the demonstration of actual skills, not the acquisition of those skills, that forms the foundation of the certification system. All applications for provincial certification will be assessed and awarded/declined based on a clearly defined process.

The system we adopt today should be seen as the starting point in the development of the volunteer tutor certification system. The system must grow and change in response to changes in our field. Two distinct groups of volunteer tutors are currently accommodated in this system:

1. Volunteer tutors in the field with three or more years of experience as a volunteer tutor. These volunteers will be required to demonstrate, through a variety of methods, that they possess the minimum entry level skills;
2. Volunteer tutors who have participated in accredited tutor training, have worked with a learner or learners for at least one year, and who meet all other certification criteria set by CLO. These will be volunteers that participate in training once literacy delivery agencies are meeting the standards of the "Training of Volunteer Tutors Accreditation Process."

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5. *Skills for the Future*, Phase One Report, page 36.

Before the accreditation process is in place, the main goal of the certification **process** will be to allow volunteer tutors to demonstrate that they are competent in the minimum entry level skills. This means that these practitioners will provide evidence that clearly demonstrates they are competent in those skills[6]. The method of providing evidence is not fixed. A portfolio is one method. A video tape of the applicant working with a learner could be another method. A formal performance appraisal conducted by the literacy program coordinator is yet another.

As mentioned earlier in this report, any system adopted must in the long run preserve and improve current best practices. In Phase Three the need for and the feasibility of setting up a complete system for certification of volunteer tutors will be further researched.

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6. See Appendix C for a complete list of the skills and accompanying competencies.

3.4 STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT: VOLUNTEER TUTOR SYSTEMS

Both proposed systems – "Training of Volunteer Tutors Accreditation Process" and "Pathways to Certification for Volunteer Tutors" – are built on research conducted during Phases One and Two and respect the recommendations made by the field during Phase One. Both systems will undergo intensive implementation testing during 2002-2003. Neither system can be implemented nor supported without adequate human and financial resources.

Recognizing that it might not be possible to secure ongoing resources, each system is constructed of components that can stand on their own without additional support. "Training of Volunteer Tutors Accreditation Process" consists of:

▸ A list of minimum entry skills;
▸ A Provincial Standard for the Training of Volunteer Tutors;
▸ A recommended manual for tutors and a recommended manual for trainers.

"Pathways to Certification for Volunteer Tutors," while more of a process, does contain stand-alone parts that could be used in programs to select or screen volunteer tutors and/or to support professional development activities:

▸ Each minimum entry level skill has core competencies attached to it;
▸ A list of suggested demonstration activities has been developed for each skill-competency set;
▸ Guidelines for preparing a portfolio of documented competencies and experiences have been developed.
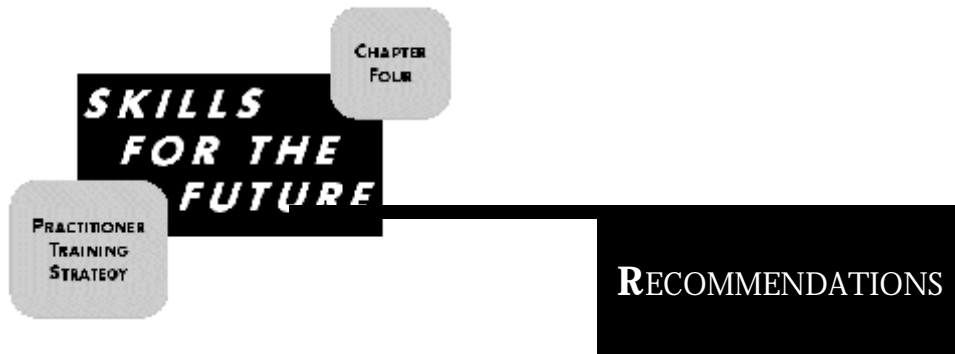
RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to being presented to CLO's Board of Directors, all the materials developed for both the paid staff and the volunteer tutor systems were reviewed and discussed by selected field test participants and the reference group. Recommendations were made to the Board in May 2002 and approved as follows:

1) "That the Board accepts and approves the 'Standard for the Training of Paid Staff.' "

2) "Recognizing that ongoing funding is required for the implementation of the 'Pathways for Certification–Paid Staff' process, that the Board accepts and approves this certification procedure."

3) "That CLO continue to support the development of a training manual for paid practitioners."

4) "That the Board accepts and approves the 'Standard for the Training of Volunteer Tutors.' "

5) "Recognizing that ongoing funding is required for the implementation of the 'Training of Volunteer Tutors' accreditation process for programs/agencies, that the Board accepts and approves of this procedure."

6) "That the Board accepts and approves 'Pathways for Certification–Volunteer Tutors' and the certification process for individual volunteer tutors, conditional upon further investigation in Phase Three about the need for, and feasibility of, this certification process."

7) "That the Board accepts and approves the adoption of the tutor training materials produced by the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy as CLO's recommended resource for the training of volunteer tutors."

8) "That CLO submit to MTCU a request for funding for the purchase

and distribution of "The Handbook for Literacy Volunteers" and the accompanying "Trainers' Manual," produced by the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy, and that these resources be distributed to all Anglophone community-based literacy agencies in Ontario."

9) "Since a permanent training coordinator is critical to the implementation of CLO's accreditation and recognition systems, that in Phase Three the feasibility of securing ongoing funding for this position be explored."

Board members further recommended that at the end of Phase Three all products from CLO's practitioner training strategy (research reports, resources, training, standards, accreditation and certification systems) should be made available, even though their use is entirely voluntary, to all Anglophone community-based literacy programs, including Laubach-based programs.
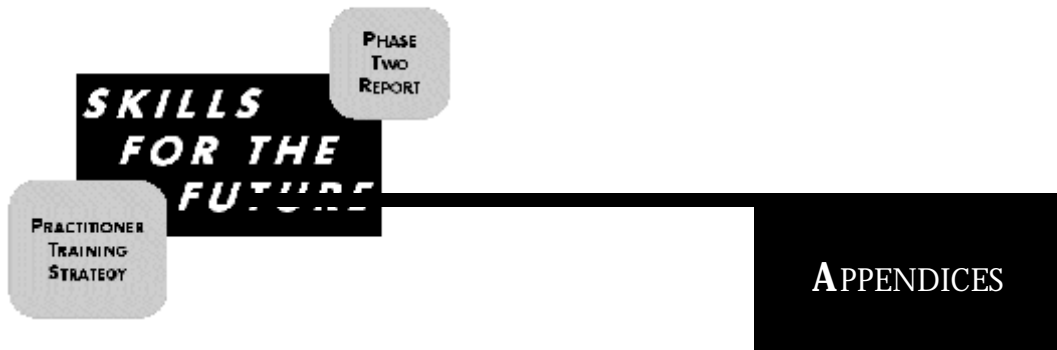
SKILLS
FOR THE
FUTURE

CHAPTER
FIVE

PRACTITIONER
TRAINING
STRATEGY

CONCLUSION
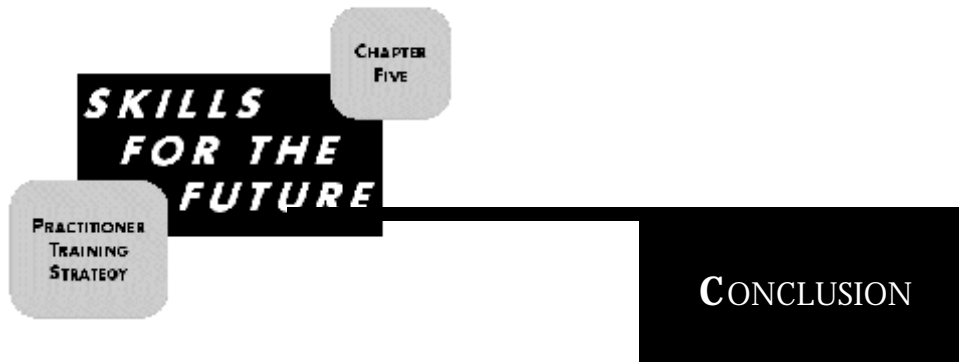
In this second phase of the practitioner training strategy, CLO has:

1) Developed implementation strategies for skills acquisition and skills recognition for Paid Practitioners who work in our sector in the form of a Standard for the Training of Adult Literacy Practitioners (Paid Staff) and a system of skills acquisition and a system for the recognition of our practitioners as a profession;

2) Developed implementation strategies for skills acquisition and skills recognition for Volunteer Practitioners who work in our sector in the form of a process that will allow programs to offer provincially recognized training to volunteer tutors, and a system for the recognition of our volunteers as trained instructors;

3) Developed a standard for tutor training that forms the backbone of the training accreditation process.

The work of Phase Two was guided and supported by the reference group. Additional input into the various components was provided by two different groups of field-test participants. The field as a whole participated in two surveys which were conducted to gain their input into the development of the certification system and the development of the provincial standard for the training of volunteer tutors.

In the event that sufficient funding is not forthcoming beyond Phases Three and/or Four, component parts of each system can be used by the field independently of the system for which it was designed. In Phase Three (2002-2003) the systems and their component parts will undergo further field testing with a limited number of community-based literacy agencies.

APPENDIX #	TITLE
A	Phase One Recommendations for Skills Training and Certification
B	Entry Level Skills and Core Competencies for Paid Staff
C	Entry Level Skills and Core Competencies for Volunteer Tutors
D	Training Resources for Volunteer Tutors
E	Project Goals for Phase Three

Phase One Recommendations for
Skills Training and Certification

PAID STAFF	
Recommendations	Keys to Success
Common standards and resources	▸ These are approved by sector/field and funder. ▸ These are supported by a governing "body" which has (a) clearly defined goal(s).
Voluntary participation	▸ The decision to participate is made by individuals. ▸ Agencies should have the option of using standards as hiring criteria.
A variety of assessment options	▸ The time frame is clearly defined and change is phased in. ▸ Current practitioners should have a number of options.
Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) option	▸ The process which is developed is meaningful to our sector. ▸ Skills are demonstrated through a variety of methods.
A range of delivery options	▸ Self-assessment plays a central role in determining which courses to take. ▸ Access to the system is equitable across our sector.
Outcomes-based course modules	▸ The content and outcomes are well defined.
Involvement of paid staff in all aspects of system	▸ Participation is encouraged and recognized. ▸ Replacement "dollars" are in place.
Multi-faceted access to training	▸ Various learning modes are available.
Reasonable costs for certification	▸ Neither agencies nor agency staff should bear an unreasonable financial burden.

VOLUNTEER TUTORS	
Recommendations	Keys to Success
Common provincial standards for tutor training and certification	‣ Training must respect the time limitations of volunteers.
A universal tutor training manual	‣ Agencies may add components to the manual and may provide training that goes beyond the minimum standards.
Mandatory initial tutor training in the core skills	‣ Training should be provided by the agency and be 15 to 20 hours in length. ‣ Not all initial training needs to be face-to-face.
A standard province-wide certificate	‣ Responsibility for ensuring compliance with common standards rests with the agency providing the training.
"Automatic" certification	‣ Successful completion of all initial tutor training is the only criterion.
A variety of assessment options	‣ The time frame is clearly defined and change is phased in. ‣ Current practitioners should have a number of options.
Individualized support to tutors after initial training	‣ Access to and type of support are provided by a variety of methods.
Low costs for training	‣ Any cost for the provision of training courses must not be borne by the volunteer.

Entry Level Skills and Core Competencies
for Paid Staff

The minimum entry level skills developed during Phase One were approved by CLO's Board of Directors in October 2000. The accompanying "Core Competencies" were created with input from practitioners from across the province and field tested by paid staff from January to April 2002. They were also reviewed and approved by the Phase Two Reference Group.

When coupled with the Training Standard (Initial Training) the skills and core competencies describe the skills, training, knowledge and abilities that are needed by someone **entering the literacy field as a paid practitioner**. Entry level is defined as that point in time when a new staff member begins to work with learners.

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
INFORMATION & REFERRAL	
Speak and Listen Effectively	When dealing with learners: ‣ Presents information clearly and appropriately ‣ Uses empathy, openness and respect ‣ Uses active listening techniques ‣ Monitors the effectiveness of the communication activity
Write Clearly to Express Ideas	‣ Understands and uses clear language and clear design in the creation or modification of written materials ‣ Uses correct grammar and conventions of writing
ASSESSMENT	
Observation Skills	When dealing with learners: ‣ Shows sensitivity to different ways of participation ‣ Understands the role of group dynamics and relationship building (in appropriate situations) ‣ Encourages cooperative decision making ‣ Synthesizes and reports on observations in an objective manner, keeping the focus on the goals of the learner

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
Interview and Information Gathering Skills	When working with a learner: ‣ Creates a positive and trusting environment ‣ Deals equitably and responsibly with all learners ‣ Collaborates with learners in defining objectives and outcomes for learning ‣ Uses intake and assessment forms appropriate to the learner
TRAINING PLAN DEVELOPMENT	
Analytical Skills	When dealing with learners: ‣ Matches teaching materials to learners' needs, learning styles and reasons for learning ‣ Uses multiple lines of inquiry to collect information (open-ended questions, observations, etc.)
Organizational and Planning Skills	‣ Organizes and presents information to serve the purpose, context and audience ‣ Develops an organized approach to activities and objectives ‣ Sets and prioritizes goals
Presentation and Explanation Skills	‣ Presents information clearly and appropriately ‣ Uses a variety of methods to match learners' needs, learning styles and reasons for learning
TRAINING	
Facilitate the Learning Process	‣ Encourages and plans for the active participation of learners in all aspects of the learning process ‣ Encourages independent and self-directed learning ‣ Recognizes, accepts and accommodates diversity in individuals, their motivations, goals, learning styles and behaviour ‣ Incorporates learners' personal and career goals as they relate to learning ‣ Uses a variety of methods to help learners develop reading, writing and numeracy skills
Develop and Use Learning Activities	‣ Encourages and plans for active participation of learners in all aspects of the learning process ‣ Builds on and uses learners' knowledge and experience throughout the learning process ‣ Provides opportunities for feedback on all aspects of learning process

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
DATA COLLECTION and INTERPRETATION	
Record Keeping	▸ Records and reports results of assessment and evaluation accurately, with appropriate evidence ▸ Organizes and relays information in a way that effectively serves the purpose, the context and the audience
Evaluate Training Activities	▸ Uses multiple lines of inquiry to collect information ▸ Critically examines tools and resources ▸ Involves participants ▸ Modifies learning plans and resources to reflect changing needs, interests and circumstances
Report Writing	▸ Organizes and presents information to serve the purpose, context and audience ▸ Prepares written reports, forms and other documents as required, using appropriate clear language

Advanced Skills

The following skills are those skills from the Phase One survey that did not score 85% or higher. These skills scored in the 60 to 84% range. (No skill scored below 60%!) You will see below that there are no skills or competencies for "Information & Referral" or "Training Plan Development." This means that all the skills presented under these headings in our survey scored 85% or higher and were therefore included as part of the minimum entry level skills.

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
ASSESSMENT	
Select and Modify Assessment Tools and Methods	▸ Identifies materials that will useful in the assessment process ▸ Matches assessment process (tools, methods) to the needs of the learner ▸ Uses a collaborative approach when appropriate
Administer Appropriate Assessment Tools and Methods	▸ When dealing with learners: ▸ Shows sensitivity to different ways of participation and creates a safe, orderly and supportive environment ▸ Encourages cooperative decision making ▸ Uses a goal-directed process
Synthesize, Interpret and Organize Assessment Results	▸ Uses data to determine learning priorities, to monitor progress and to help sustain continuous improvement ▸ Interprets formal assessment results for instructional planning ▸ Provides instructors (paid and/or volunteer) with information that encourages cooperative decision making ▸ Synthesizes and reports on observations in an objective manner, keeping the focus on the goals of the learner
TRAINING	
Train Staff and/or Volunteers to Deliver Quality Instruction	▸ Ensures that training encompasses the core components of training (as set by CLO) ▸ Selects, adapts and creates learning materials and resources ▸ Uses a variety of texts, methods and techniques to help learners develop reading writing and numeracy skills

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
Develop and Modify Learning Resources	▸ Selects, adapts and creates learning materials and resources ▸ Uses a variety of texts, methods and techniques to help learners develop reading writing and numeracy skills
Develop and Deliver Learner-Centred Literacy Training	▸ Bases instructional delivery on the results of initial and ongoing assessment ▸ Uses training plans effectively ▸ Uses learner-generated materials ▸ Provides adequate and appropriate teaching materials and learning activities to learners and/or volunteers ▸ Encourages learner input and participation
DATA COLLECTION and INTERPRETATION	
Collect and Record Exit Outcomes	▸ Records and reports the results of assessment and evaluation accurately, with appropriate evidence

Entry Level Skills and Core Competencies
For Volunteer Tutors

The minimum entry level skills developed during Phase One were approved by CLO's Board of Directors in October 2000. The accompanying "Core Competencies" were created with input from practitioners and were reviewed by field test participants from January through to April 2002. They were also reviewed and approved by the Phase Two Reference Group.

When coupled with the Training Standard (Initial Training), the skills and core competencies describe the skills, training, knowledge and abilities that are needed by someone **entering the literacy field as a volunteer tutor**. Entry level is defined as that point in time when new volunteer tutors begins to work with learners.

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
INFORMATION & REFERRAL	
Speak and Listen Effectively	When dealing with learners: ▸ Presents information clearly and appropriately ▸ Uses empathy, openness and respect ▸ Uses active listening techniques ▸ Monitors the effectiveness of the communication activity
Write Clearly to Express Ideas	▸ Understands and uses clear language and clear design in the creation or modification of written materials ▸ Uses correct grammar and conventions of writing
ASSESSMENT	
Observation Skills	When dealing with learners: ▸ Shows sensitivity to different ways of participation ▸ Understands the role of group dynamics and relationship building (in appropriate situations) ▸ Encourages cooperative decision making ▸ Synthesizes and reports on observations in an objective manner, keeping the focus on the goals of the learner

SKILLS	CORE COMPETENCIES
TRAINING PLAN DEVELOPMENT	
Organizational and Planning Skills	‣ Organizes and presents information to serve the purpose, context and audience ‣ Develops an organized approach to activities and objectives ‣ Sets and prioritizes goals
Presentation and Explanation Skills	‣ Presents information clearly and appropriately ‣ Uses a variety of methods to match learners' needs, learning styles and reasons for learning
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN and DELIVERY	
Facilitate the Learning Process	‣ Encourages and plans for the active participation of learners in all aspects of the learning process ‣ Encourages independent and self-directed learning ‣ Recognizes, accepts and accommodates diversity in individuals, their motivations, goals, learning styles and behaviour ‣ Incorporates learners' personal and career goals as they relate to learning ‣ Uses a variety of methods to help learners develop reading, writing and numeracy skills

The following summary was prepared for CLO by Chris Harwood. Chris has been the project coordinator for the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy's volunteer training project.

Volunteer Training Project
Summary written for CLO by Chris Harwood

The Volunteer Training Project was undertaken by the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy in partnership with People, Words & Change, a community-based literacy program in Ottawa. The project coordinator was Chris Harwood. In addition to the contributions of the partners, many coordinators, instructors and volunteer tutors from literacy programs in Ottawa and other parts of the province gave generously of their time. They reviewed and commented on drafts of materials, participated on the reference groups, attended focus group sessions, and/or assisted with activities.

This project supports a comprehensive process for tutor intake, training, placement and tutoring. It provides coordinators of literacy programs with the infrastructure needed to start and maintain a program working with volunteer tutors, with emphasis on entry level training.

Handbook for Literacy Tutors (published March 2001, Grass Roots Press, Edmonton, AB) is written for tutors and provides reference information about working in adult literacy for both new and experienced tutors. One hundred and fifty copies were distributed in the pilot phase and about three hundred copies have been sold since publication.

Trainer's Manual (summer 2002) is written for trainers of prospective tutors and provides the structure and materials for a comprehensive introductory training program for volunteer tutors. The training consists of seven classroom sessions, with homework, a practicum observed by an experienced practitioner and a post-training learning circle. Evaluation of participants is an integral part of the training.

In the sessions, trainers have a menu of activities to choose from, all of which help tutors to meet the learning outcomes outlined in the manual. The learning outcomes were developed from the *Adult Literacy Educator Skills List*, prepared by Mary Ellen Belfiore and the Ontario Literacy Coalition Task Force on Literacy Worker Recognition. Only those outcomes needed at entry level were selected. There are also suggestions to help trainers organize, prepare, administer, conduct and evaluate the training. A section on facilitation skills can

be used by new trainers or as a refresher by experienced trainers.

Information Package for Participants (summer 2002) is for potential tutors who have registered for training. It accompanies the *Trainer's Manual* and presents an overview of the training, learning outcomes, evaluation criteria, case studies and homework assignments used in the training.

Managing the Volunteer Process (summer 2002) is written for coordinators of volunteers in literacy programs and provides guidance on the volunteer process, including intake, training, supervision, motivation, recognition, performance appraisal and program evaluation.

Literacy Volunteer Opportunities (summer 2002) is written for prospective tutors and describes what is involved in volunteering in a literacy program. It helps volunteers to make an informed decision about whether or not to proceed.

>Note: These materials do not include policies and procedures; these have been expertly dealt with elsewhere. An excellent resource is *A Guide for the Development of Policies and Procedures in Ontario's Community Literacy Agencie*s, by Fiona Huebner, CLO, 1999.

Development of the Training Package

At the beginning of the project, the coordinator consulted with literacy programs and volunteer tutors to identify training needs. After the results of the outreach activities were analysed and information gathered on existing training materials, the structure of the *Handbook for Literacy Tutors* was developed and approved by the reference group. The drafts and pilot edition were reviewed by many practitioners and trainers and by new and experienced volunteer tutors. During this phase of the project it became apparent that, while tutors could use the *Handbook* as a stand-alone resource, programs wanted access to structured introductory training. Many programs had training materials that were fragmented and did not include all the information tutors were looking for. Therefore the project was expanded to include development of resources to help programs deliver training and support their volunteer tutors. After extensive research and collaboration with practitioners, the *Trainer's Manual* and *Information Package for Participants* were developed to provide interactive training that models a learner-centred approach. Meeting the outcomes listed in the *Trainer's Manual* gives participants the entry-level skills they need to tutor in a literacy program.

Managing the Volunteer Process was written to provide coordinators with the information they need for working with volunteer tutors. Another need identified by coordinators was for a resource that provided prospective tutors with information about volunteering in a literacy program. *Literacy Volunteer Opportunities* was developed to do this.

Pilot Training using the *Handbook for Literacy Tutors* and *Trainer's*

Manual

Training was held in March 2001 at Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Ottawa. The training was delivered from modules and activities described in the *Trainer's Manual*. It consisted of seven evening sessions. Six prospective tutors participated from three programs in the region. It was also piloted informally at John Howard Society, Ottawa, in 2000/2001 by Jan Goatcher. Literacy Northwest employed a consultant to develop a training package for volunteers. His recommendation was to adopt the OCCL package.

Trainer's Feedback
• It was easy to deliver the training from the information in the *Trainer's Manual.*
• Training was very interactive.
• Everyone was committed to the training – there were no drop-outs.
• The atmosphere was enthusiastic.
• Icebreakers helped to meld the group.
• Group dynamics became stronger every session.
• The activities were effective in teaching the desired learning outcomes.
• The homework reinforced the activities and the participants enjoyed doing it.
• The participants' evaluation of the observation (video of one-on-one tutoring sessions) showed they could recognize best practices.
• All participants succeeded in meeting the outcomes.
• The participants' evaluations of the training were positive.
• The evaluation component added to the strength of the training.

Participants' Feedback
• "Everyone spoke up and was listened to."
• "I enjoyed working on the assignments. They weren't too long or too complicated but they did reinforce what we had learned and prepared us for the next session."
• "The content of the training sessions gave me a very good understanding of what to expect when working with a learner."
• "She incorporated amazing activities which involved the whole group ... [activities were] inspirational in themselves."
• "The techniques for teaching adults were thoroughly explained with many examples."
• "Strong emphasis on relevant materials, resources, soliciting feedback from and involving the student."
• "I found reflection on the case studies useful and the video very useful."

The *Trainer's Manual* has not yet been published, but we have received many enquiries from literacy organizations interested in using it as soon as it is available.

User's Comments on *Handbook for Literacy Tutors*

The *Handbook* is being used extensively in literacy programs in Ontario, including Durham, the QUILL network and Metro Toronto. Here is some of the feedback we have received:

"WOW! I am utterly astounded at what you have gathered here – yet it is uncluttered, readable, attractive and has all the core material. It simply couldn't be better. I cannot imagine that there will be a literacy teacher / tutor anywhere that would not wish to have a copy." Judy Bernstein, Algonquin College, Ottawa

"The Handbook is a fabulous resource for me and the tutors. I am no longer rushing round trying to pull information from all over the place. It is very timesaving. Tutors can have teaching ideas from the get-go." Colleen Cooney, CNIB, Ottawa

"The Handbook is really a very nice piece of work. I will enjoy having it for LBS instructors as well as tutors." Diane Coombs, Literacy and Basic Skills Coordinator, Prescott-Russell

"After reading the manual, I felt very comfortable to know that all this guidance is available, and in such a clear and concise organization." Kathy Boyd, Volunteer, People Words & Change, Ottawa

"I liked the numeracy exercises and examples. There seems to be a lack of basic information in this area so this text was very helpful." Shirley Hollingshead, Walkerton Adult Literacy

"The Handbook saved us a tremendous amount of work. At LINDR, we rewrote our tutor training this year and we built sections of it around your manual. We were delighted to find that much of the key information we wanted to impart already existed in a form very appropriate to our audience." Karen Burwell, Durham District School Board

"Easily accessible info. It is complete. We previously had copious notes on all the subjects but no one complete manual. We were constantly digging through files looking for stuff." Heather Robinet, Clinton Literacy and Numeracy Project

"We developed training around the Manual. We have received very favourable feedback from volunteers about the usefulness of the manual. It is great for locating info in a hurry. The tabs make it especially easy to work with." Jennine Agnew-Kata, Literacy Network of Durham Region

"Honestly, it's great and does exactly what it sets out to do." Trudy Lothian, Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School

Project Goals for Phase Three

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MTCU's Goal – Phase Three:
Implement methods in each sector or
stream.
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Community Literacy of Ontario's goals for Phase Three (taken from the application) are:

▸ To develop and field-test a written training manual to address the core skills needed by paid staff in our sector and circulate this manual to Anglophone community-based agencies and regional networks;

▸ To implement and test CLO's model for accreditation of tutor training with 10 agencies in our sector;

▸ To promote CLO's tutor training standard to our sector;

▸ To implement and test CLO's skills recognition model for staff in 10 agencies in our sector;

▸ To implement and test CLO's staff training standard with 10 agencies in our sector;

▸ To conduct a feasibility analysis of ongoing costs and strategic considerations for an organization to host, maintain and promote the certification and training system for our sector;

▸ To gather input and feedback from our sector via field testing, the CLO board, ongoing information sharing (printed bulletins, e-bulletins and AlphaCom, the CLO conference & AGM, etc.);

▸ To liaise with MTCU and the other sector and stream Phase Three projects;

▸ To promote and market our Practitioner Training Strategy to our sector via bulletins, AlphaCom, and other marketing tools;

▸ To prepare a final research report that details the strategies and supports that will allow CLO's Practitioner Training and Certification System for paid staff and tutors in our sector to support high quality delivery of the LBS program.

SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

PHASE TWO REPORT

PRACTITIONER TRAINING STRATEGY

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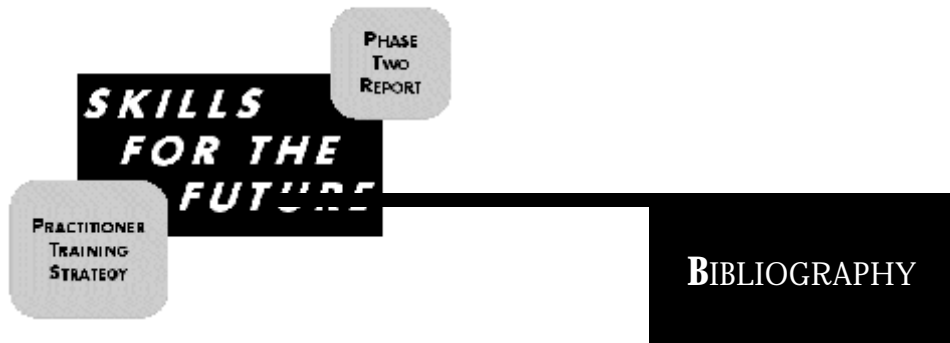
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