

OVERVIEW OF 15 OCCUPATIONAL CURRICULA USED IN LBS AGENCIES



Acknowledgements

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Organization	Interviewee	Curriculum
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Brant Skills Centre	Lori Bruner, Executive Director	Health Care Preparation
Community Learning Alternatives	Stacey McQuoid, Program Coordinator	Call Centre Training
Connections Adult Learning	Jim Tysick, Instructor	Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper
Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres	Anita Hillis-Krause, Executive Director & Kay McPherson, Senior Instructor	Cleaner
Hamilton Literacy Council	Helen MacLeod, Executive Director	Janitorial
Kingston Literacy & Skills	Martha Rudden, Manager of LBS Programs	Clerical Curriculum
Literacy Link Eastern Ontario	Doug Noyes, Executive Director	18 Curricula
Literacy Link South Central	Anne Marie Curtin, Director of Community Relations/Project Coordinator	Apprenticeship Modules
Literacy Network Northeast	Tanya Venne, Executive Director, & Debera Flynn, former Executive Director	Connecting to Workplaces Series
Prince Edward Learning Centre	Lori Farrington, Program Coordinator	Skilled Trades Helper
QUILL Learning Network	Debera Flynn, Executive Director	Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal
Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network	Stephanie Hobbs, Executive Director	Bridging the Employment Gap Series
Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre	Mike DeGagné, Instructor	Retail Training
Tri-County Literacy Council	Carolyn Eva, Administrative Assistant, & Carol Anne Maloney, Instructor and Coordinator of Volunteers	Landscaping & Grounds Maintenance

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Introduction

Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) is a provincial network of community-based Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) agencies. We are located in Barrie, Ontario. You can learn more about our organization by visiting our website and following us on Facebook and Twitter.

As part of our 2018/2019 business plan, Community Literacy of Ontario decided to research and compile a summary of how literacy educators are working with occupational curriculum in diverse LBS agencies. We've consistently heard that this type of curriculum is popular with learners who have employment goals, and practitioners have often told us that they would like to know how this curriculum is used in other agencies and how they can access it.

Accordingly, CLO conducted internet research, developed a survey (32 LBS organizations responded), conducted a focus group, and held 22 key informant interviews. Based on this research, we wrote a helpful guide that explores the use of occupational curricula in 15 different LBS agencies and regional networks in Ontario. Thank you to everyone who so kindly supported and participated in our research!

Community Literacy of Ontario is very pleased to share our newest resource:

“Overview of 15 Occupational Curriculum Used in LBS Agencies”



Barrie Literacy Council

Introduction



The Barrie Literacy Council (BLC) is a community-based agency providing Literacy and Basic Skills programming. They help adults improve their skills in order to find employment, move on to further schooling, enrol in apprenticeships, reach their goals for everyday living and more. The Barrie Literacy Council was founded in 1979.

Thank you to Karena Persaud, Student Tutor Coordinator, for sharing the Barrie Literacy Council's experience in delivering the Ready for Work curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Ready for Work

Curriculum Development

The Ready for Work occupational curriculum was developed by the Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network in 2008. It is part of the Bridging the Employment Gap curriculum.

The Barrie Literacy Council found that many of their students had the need for job readiness training, but at the basic level. These students needed foundational skills training and were often seeking entry level positions and needed “work readiness” training.

The Barrie Literacy Council found that the Ready for Work curriculum can be embedded into many different goal paths. The Council tends to use bits and pieces of the curriculum as needed, according to the needs and goals of the students. The curriculum is divided into distinct units, making it easier to pull out needed “chunks” of material, based on student needs and interests.

Curriculum Content

Ready for Work covers many of the basic skills needed for entry into the workforce. It focuses on finding and applying for work, filling out forms, understanding pay, using the bus, and telling & managing time.

The whole curriculum, Bridging the Employment Gap, has the following units: Ready for Work, Grounds Maintenance, Retail, Kitchen Help, Clerical and Janitorial. The Barrie Literacy Council has used pieces of various units including counting money, learning measures, and learning basic WHMIS.

When did you start using this curriculum?

The Barrie Literacy Council started using the Ready for Work curriculum when it was first created in 2008.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

The Barrie Literacy Council found this curriculum to be helpful for students with low literacy skills, who had either employment or independence goals. It is full of helpful content that can be used “as is” or to supplement other existing learning activities. This curriculum can be easily divided into chunks/units to augment other curricula.

The Council used to have more students with low literacy levels in the past. They are still using it, just less frequently.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Ready for Work curriculum is most useful for students with basic/foundational skills, and for people who have never had a job before.

Curriculum Delivery

The Barrie Literacy Council has delivered the Ready for Work curriculum both in small group and one-to-one formats. It is easy to tailor to group or individual needs, and to augment learning activities.

Length of Delivery

Typically, the Council does not deliver the Ready for Work curriculum as a whole course as often anymore. Instead, they often use relevant units to augment other curricula. Therefore, it is difficult to set a specific delivery length, as the length varies depending on which/how many units are being delivered. Further, delivery length depends on the needs of the individual students.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

The students react positively to the Ready for Work curriculum. The Council finds that this curriculum is not overwhelming for students with low level literacy skills. It is well divided into specific topics making it easy to “pick and chose” based on individual and group needs. It breaks down tasks and starts at the basics. The Barrie Literacy Council has experienced much success in delivering it.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

The Barrie Literacy Council has not encountered any challenges with using this curriculum.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Karena recommended that literacy educators take a close look at the Ready for Work curriculum. She noted that it is a very versatile curriculum, so read it through and become familiar with each unit and how the material can be used to augment your other learning resources. There are many pieces and components that will support a wide variety of students with varying needs and goals.

Curriculum Access

The Ready for Work curriculum is freely available for downloading via the Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network’s website at: http://literacynetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/bridgegap_manual_ready.pdf

It is part of the “Bridging the Employment Gap” curriculum available at: <http://literacynetwork.ca/resources/bridging-the-employment-gap/>

Brant Skills Centre

Introduction



Brant Skills Centre is a community-based Literacy and Basic Skills agency, formed in 1984. Brant Skills Centre provides free and confidential literacy and essential skills training for adults and older youth so that they may increase their independence, go on to further education and training, or obtain and maintain employment.

Thank you to Lori Bruner, Executive Director, for sharing Brant Skills Centre's experience in delivering the Health Care Preparation curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Health Care Preparation

Curriculum Development

Brant Skills Centre started to deliver PSW preparation program in response to a partnership created with Ontario Works (OW).

Originally, OW would refer clients directly to PSW certificate programs and pay for the course. OW found that participants weren't very successful in a PSW program without having participated in a preparation program first. Prior to the preparation program being utilized, there had been a high drop out rate.

In order to help learners increase their literacy skills so that they could be successful in completing the PSW program, OW approached Brant Skills Centre to deliver a Pre-PSW program for OW clients. There is a screening process through OW and Brant Skills Centre to determine readiness/qualification for the Pre-PSW program. If the assessment results reveal literacy levels to be too low, Brant Skills Centre recommends to OW that the learner complete traditional LBS programming first.

Brant Skills Centre started out using the Health Care curriculum produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO). Recognizing that this curriculum was created in 2005, Brant Skills Centre continues to use LLEO's curriculum in part, while utilizing their own modules developed based on learner feedback and the need for updated and relevant content. This included increased writing opportunities/activities and incorporation of a Microsoft PowerPoint workshop.

This curriculum is currently being adapted and updated by Brant Skills Centre in partnership with Community Literacy of Ontario.

Curriculum Content

The units in the original Level 2/3 Health Care Preparation program include:

- Exploring Essential Skills and Job Descriptions
- Soft Skills
- Classroom Skills: study skills, note taking, etc.
- Communication and Presentation skills
- The Human Body
- Illnesses and Diseases
- Essay Writing
- Health and Safety: workplace safety, WHMIS, etc.
- Customer Service

The units in the new Health Care Preparation Level 1 curriculum include:

- What is a PSW?
- Essential Skills for Personal Support Workers
- Soft Skills
- Communication Skills
- Dates, Times, and Schedules
- The Human Body
- Illnesses and Diseases
- Health and Safety

When did you start using this curriculum?

The Brant Skills Centre has been using the Level 2/3 Health Care Preparation curriculum for the past six years.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Three factors played a role in Brant Skills Centre's decision to deliver a Pre-PSW program:

- Awareness that employment within the health care sector (specifically PSWs) was growing in demand.
- Learners had often expressed an interest in this career.
- OW had approached Brant Skills Centre to deliver a Pre-PSW preparation program to their clients.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The current Health Care curriculum was written for Level 2-3. The revised Health Care Preparation curriculum currently being written will be at a Level 1/low Level 2.

Curriculum Delivery

Brant Skills Centre has been delivering Health Care curriculum since 2012 in a small group format only. They will be utilizing the new Health Care Level 1 curriculum in 2019 for lower level literacy learners whose goal path is becoming a Personal Support Worker.

Length of Delivery

The in-class portion of the Level 2/3 Health Care Preparation curriculum is typically delivered for 3 hours per day, Monday to Friday, for four weeks (or 60 hours in total). There is also homework above and beyond the in-class hours of 2 to 4 hours per week. The program is offered once per year in partnership with Ontario Works with 10-12 learners in each cohort.

Ontario Works asked Brant Skills Centre to try to deliver a compressed program. It was delivered for 6 hours per day, Monday to Friday for two weeks (60 hours in total). During the program, they discovered this format was not in the best interest of the learners or the instructor.

The newly developed Health Care Preparation Level 1 curriculum is recommended to run between 24-36 hours in length. As with most programs delivered to LBS learners, Brant Skills Centre recommends that lessons be no longer than three hours in length, and could be shortened to two hours should the group require shorter learning sessions. The recommended break down would be eight 3 hour sessions. The class units may not necessarily correspond to the lessons, and can be shortened or expanded, based on learner requirements.

The Level 1 curriculum emphasizes homework and independent study far less than the Level 2/3 program. Brant Skills Centre recommends that learners take time between lessons to review past content, look at images in the manual, and review vocabulary as needed.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

Brant Skills Centre has seen huge successes with the current Health Care preparation curriculum! Learners are completing the curriculum, entering and graduating from PSW programs, and becoming employed as PSWs.

Occasionally, learners realise that becoming a PSW is not a suitable career for them. As a result, they are able to move on to other employment or training options that suit them better, without having to invest considerable time and money in a PSW program.

Brant Skills Centre believes in holding the learners to a high standard of achievement. By the end of the course, learners who were reluctant in the beginning end up thanking the instructors for believing that they could achieve so much.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

There is always some learner push back and protest about the time commitment, the homework requirement, the rigid schedule, etc. Some learners indicated that the course was more rigorous than they thought it would be when they signed up. For some, taking this program was a big adjustment for them. However, most learners adapted, and in the end, indicated that a rigorous curriculum and schedule set them up for future success in a PSW program and employment.

There is also a challenge occasionally of a learner that requires additional support. In both manuals used, there are instructor notes at the beginning of each unit. Within these notes, there are suggestions for connections with other service providers as well as e-Channel opportunities. Instructors may use these as needed to support learners.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Brant Skills Centre noted that it is important to have all learners complete a full assessment including a computer basics assessment. It is beneficial for learners (if need be) to participate in a computer basics course before the Health Care Preparation program. Brant Skills Centre offers an 18-24 hour computer basics course (including internet use, email, and Word) that meets this need.

In the Level 2/3 Pre-PSW course, digital skills are integrated into the program, and learners are able to improve on existing digital skills while working through the course. In the newly developed Health Care Preparation curriculum, digital skills are not required, and the learners are not assumed to have strong digital skills to participate in the program. Learners will understand, though, that digital skills are required when working as a PSW and they will be introduced to digital learning opportunities throughout the course.

It is important for LBS practitioners to know the needs of their group, so the initial assessment should evaluate all of the essential skills for the applicable program to best serve their learners.

Curriculum Access

The original curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO's Health Care curriculum by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html

Thanks to support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Community Literacy of Ontario received funding in 2018/2019 to develop/adapt curricula. As part of this initiative, CLO engaged the team at Brant Skills Centre to update and adapt the Health Care Preparation curriculum for use with literacy learners working at Level 1/2 who have a goal of working in health care sector.

The new Health Care Preparation curriculum will be freely available on CLO's website in March 2019 via this link: www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/resources/publications/#Curriculum

Community Learning Alternatives

Introduction



Community Learning Alternatives (CLA) is a community literacy organization providing Literacy and Basic Skills programming in Belleville and surrounding area. Community Learning Alternatives provides upgrading, essential skills training, and employment preparation training for adult learners with employment and education goals.

Thank you to Stacey McQuoid, Program Coordinator at CLA, for sharing her organization's experience in delivering the Call Centre curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Call Centre Training

Curriculum Development

The Call Centre curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by Quinte Adult Day School, now known as Community Learning Alternatives.

This course provides learners with the opportunity to explore the Call Centre occupation and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Call Centre occupational curriculum include:

- Introduction to Call Centres
- Professionalism – attitude, appearance and grooming, attendance and working as a team
- Customer Service – what is customer service, good vs. poor service, types of service, customer needs and the upset customer
- Telephone Skills – the art of listening, phone etiquette, phone anxiety, opening a call, logging a call, closing a call
- Computer Skills – basic hardware and software, the Internet and email
- Health and Safety – laws and legislation, human rights, health concerns, ergonomics, and worker's compensation
- Call Centre Terminology – list of key terms

As well, Community Learning Alternatives augments the curriculum with relevant resources. They also have a guest speaker come in twice a year from S&P Data (a local call centre) to tell learners about the call center industry and what the jobs are like.

When did you start using this curriculum?

CLA started using the curriculum when it was first written, in 2004.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Community Learning Alternatives offered the Call Centre curriculum because it effectively met the needs of learners with employment goals in this field.

Further, CLA saw a substantial need for this curriculum, specifically because of S&P Data, a local call centre. S&P Data has been referring existing staff and new hires to CLA for the Call Centre course. S&P Data does their own 3 to 4-week onboarding/training and will send any employees or new hires that need additional training to CLA.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Call Centre curricula is written for high Level 2, or Level 3.

Curriculum Delivery

Community Learning Alternatives delivers this curriculum in a one-to-one format based on individual need. However, the curriculum was designed for use in a small group format.

Length of Delivery

The Call Centre curriculum is designed to provide roughly 100 hours of curriculum. However, it can be offered in less time, based on the needs of the students. Typically, CLA delivers this curriculum over a four-week period, with the student attending full time.

Community Learning Alternatives finds that when a student has a job waiting for them (for example, at S&P Data), then they are very inspired to complete the course as quickly as possible, and they typically have good attendance and effort.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

Students appreciate this practical and employment-focused curriculum. As a result of taking this curriculum, students get jobs and stay employed. In just one example, a former learner has been employed for 2.5 years at S&P Data, and has been promoted to the sales department!

As well, new partnerships have developed and CLA's community profile has increased because of their use of this curriculum.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Because the Call Centre curriculum was written over ten years ago, it has become dated. CLA supplements the curriculum with more recent materials. Also, websites referenced in the curriculum were often out of date, with dead links; however, LLEO has provided CLA with updated links.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Stacey noted that incorporating real-life learning by linking with employers and relevant resources is key. Be sure to understand the needs of your learners and local labour market conditions before getting started.

Community Learning Alternatives is a proponent of experiential learning, and they therefore recommend encouraging learners to do their own computer research and troubleshooting when there are dead or missing web links in the curriculum in order to build their computer skills.

Stacey also thinks that if you are delivering the Call Centre curriculum in a group setting, make sure everyone has a similar level of computer skills for computer portions of the curriculum.

Curriculum Access

For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's Call Centre curriculum by clicking here: <http://www.lleo.ca/resources.html>.

Connections Adult Learning

Introduction



Connections Adult Learning is a community-based agency providing a wide range of learning opportunities for adults. Connections Adult Learning is a registered charity, founded in 1988. It provides free literacy and essential skills training to adults, including post-secondary and apprenticeship readiness programs.

Thank you to Jim Tysick, LBS Instructor, for sharing Connections Adult Learning's experience with delivering the Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper

Curriculum Development

The Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by Northern Connections Adult Learning Centres.

This curriculum provides interested learners with the opportunity to explore employment opportunities in the food services sector. It also helps learners to develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in related positions.

Food Counter Attendants may be employed by restaurants, fast food outlets, hospitals, etc. They assist cooks and other food industry personnel.

This curriculum is currently being adapted and updated by Connections Adult Learning in partnership with Community Literacy of Ontario.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helpers curriculum include:

- Exploring Job Opportunities
- Workplace Rights
- Food Safety and Sanitation
- Food Preparation
- Setting Temperatures: Burners and Ovens
- Customer Service

When did you start using this curriculum?

Connections Adult Learning started using the curriculum when it was first written, in 2008.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Connections Adult Learning found that this topic was a good fit with the goals of some of the learners in their program. They were looking for employment in this field, and to be able to upgrade their literacy skills in combination with learning about an occupation that interested them was very motivating for these learners.

It gave interested learners an introduction to working in the food services field, before having to fully commit. Further, the goal of some learners was to continue on to college programming in food services, and they needed pre-food services training in order to be able to reach this goal.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The original Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum was written at high Level 2 or Level 3.

The revised curriculum is being written at Level 1/2.

Curriculum Delivery

Connections Adult Learning is located in a rural area. Their learners tend to have unique goals, making small group delivery difficult. Therefore, typically, they delivery this curriculum in one-to-one format based on individual need.

However, the Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum is well suited to either one-to-one, small group, or classroom delivery.

Length of Delivery

The Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum is designed to provide roughly 40 hours of curriculum. This curriculum can easily be expanded by adding in supplementary content. Or, since it is designed in a modular format, it can be offered in less time, based on the student's needs. It is easy to pick and choose just the modules that will be helpful to each learner.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

Many successes were noted by Connections Adult Learning through delivering the Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum. Staff found that when learners have an end goal of a specific employment opportunity, then they are more motivated to learn.

The curriculum helps learners to build their resumes, by giving them concrete skills to add. And, it increases their self-confidence via learning and practicing real world activities. Learners often go on to find jobs or attend college programming.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Learner motivation varies based on whether they were attending voluntarily, or whether they were sent to Connections Adult Learning by an external organization such as Ontario Works. Drop-out rates were higher when participation was not voluntary.

As well, the curriculum has become dated over the years, and requires supplementary activities and the inclusion of digital resources.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Staff at Connections Adult Learning noted that it is important to set up a clear learning plan and schedule with each learner, to help keep them accountable and progressing in the curriculum. However, they recommend setting a schedule that is not overly rigorous and rapid, as most learners are facing many barriers and need time to absorb the course content. It's important to remember that learning is a journey not a destination.

They also recommend keeping the curriculum current by updating the learning activities as needed, and suggested including digital activities to help attract younger learners.

Curriculum Access

The original curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO's Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html

Thanks to support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Community Literacy of Ontario received funding in 2018/2019 to develop/adapt curricula. As part of this initiative, CLO engaged the team at Connections Adult Learning to update and adapt the Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum for use with literacy learners working at Level 1/2 who have a goal of working in food services.

The new Food Counter Attendant & Kitchen Helper curriculum will be freely available on CLO's website in March 2019 via this link:
www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/resources/publications/#Curriculum

Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres

Introduction



Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres (HNLC) works with adults to improve their quality of life through increased literacy and math skills and employment preparation. Services are free and confidential to adults 19 years and older.

Thanks to Anita Hillis-Krause, Executive Director, and Kay McPherson, Senior Instructor, for sharing Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres' experience in delivering the Cleaner curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Cleaner

Curriculum Development

The Cleaner curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) in 2008. This curriculum provides learners with the opportunity to explore the Cleaner occupation and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position.

Cleaners may be employed by companies or be self-employed. They clean hotels, hospitals, schools, homes, ventilation systems, etc.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Cleaner occupational curriculum include:

- Cleaner Essential Skills
- Cleaning 101
- Thinking Skills
- Customer Service
- Health and Safety
- Numeracy

When did you start using this curriculum?

Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres started using this curriculum in 2015.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

In the past few years, there have been several students at Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres who were interested in finding jobs as cleaners. Staff believed that this occupation-specific curriculum would help these students to build their skills, increase reading comprehension and help students learn more about the job so they can decide if it is a good fit for them.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Cleaner curriculum has been written at High Level 2 / Low Level 3. However, it can be adapted for learners studying at lower levels. It is useful for both LBS and ESL students.

Curriculum Delivery

Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres is located in a rural area. Therefore, they use this curriculum in a one-to-one format, based on individual student need. However, it can also be used in a small group format.

The staff at HNLC feel that this curriculum can be delivered either with paid staff or by volunteers, as it is very self-directed, user-friendly and clearly written.

Length of Delivery

It would require approximately 200 hours to complete the Cleaner curriculum in full. However, the length of it can be adapted to meet the needs of individual learners. There are certainly plenty of materials to draw from this this curriculum!

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

Learners find the Cleaner curriculum to be practical, user-friendly and helpful. It is well linked to the world of work and seems to hold the interest of learners.

When students have a specific goal such as being a cleaner, learning via practical materials is very motivating for them and retention is higher.

Haldimand-Norfolk Learning Centres also found that adding supplementary materials and newer resources can increase engagement.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Because the Cleaner curriculum is fairly long, it can be difficult to keep students on track and moving through it.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Staff recommend holding a pre-assessment with learners prior to starting the Cleaner curriculum, to ensure that learners are able to do the work required. Creating tracking sheets to help monitor progress and encourage the learners is helpful.

Other recommendations were being sure to chunk out the material so it doesn't seem daunting, as well as finding engaging ways to keep learners motivated and moving ahead.

Curriculum Access

For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's Cleaner curriculum by clicking here: <https://www.lleo.ca/resources.html>.

Hamilton Literacy Council

Introduction



The Hamilton Literacy Council is a community literacy organization that was founded in 1973. The Council offers free one-to-one tutoring and small group classes for basic reading, writing, math, computer skills, and workplace essential skills to help adults reach their goals of employment, further education and increased independence.

Thank you to Helen MacLeod, Executive Director, for sharing the Hamilton Literacy Council's experience in delivering the Janitorial curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Janitorial

Curriculum Development

The Janitorial curriculum was researched and written by the Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) in 2008. This curriculum is part of their "Bridging the Employment Gap" series.

The Janitorial curriculum provides learners with the opportunity to explore this occupation and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position. The curriculum will help learners to gain the skills to work as a cleaner.

Cleaners may be employed by companies or be self-employed. They clean hotels, hospitals, schools, homes, offices, etc.

The Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network developed this curriculum with the support of an advisory committee made up of literacy educators, Ontario Works, curriculum developers and other community partners.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Janitorial occupational curriculum include:

- Safety
- Understanding Hazardous Product Labels
- Understanding Signs
- Garbage Bags and Recycling
- Floors, Tables and Windows
- Cleaning the Washroom

The Hamilton Literacy Council uses the modules and components of this curriculum that are relevant to the needs of their learners. The council also includes an experiential learning component whenever possible either through paid or volunteer work.

Since their primary mode of delivery is currently one-to-one, the Council takes the parts of the curriculum that are relevant to the student, and then adds in additional resources and curricula as needed.

When did you start using this curriculum?

The Council has used this curriculum intermittently, since it first came out, in 2008.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Over the years, various learners have identified finding work in the cleaning services industry as their specific employment goal, so the curriculum was a natural fit for them.

Staff from the Hamilton Literacy Council attended a presentation by the Simcoe-Muskoka Literacy Network on their occupational curriculum and they were convinced of how valuable it would be for their students. They could see how practical the curriculum was and how it would suit the goals of their learners in an engaging manner.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Janitorial curriculum was designed with tasks at both Essential Skill Levels 1 and 2, making it flexible enough for delivery in multi-level small group classes. Activities at both skill levels also makes it a simple matter to customize the curriculum for individual learners by selecting tasks consistent with the learner's skill levels across respective competencies.

Curriculum Delivery

Currently, the Hamilton Literacy Council delivers this curriculum in a one-to-one format, on an “as needed” basis.

Some years ago, they delivered it in a small group format as well, in partnership with local social service agencies. At that time, they supplemented the curriculum by bringing in guest speakers who were knowledgeable on the topics areas.

Length of Delivery

When the Hamilton Literacy Council delivered this curriculum in a small group format in years past, they offered it for a half day, five days per week, for 8 weeks.

More recently, however, they offer the Janitorial curriculum on a one-to-one basis, and length is determined by individual needs and goals. The Council is also discussing partnering with another social service agency and offering a group program in the next fiscal year.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

There have been many repeat requests from students and community partners to deliver the Janitorial curriculum. It is a practical and engaging curriculum. Students have found jobs and received job promotions. The Council has also developed new partnerships.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Sometimes, it can be difficult to engage staff and volunteers in delivering this curriculum, because they may not have experience with this topic. Janitorial skills are very specific and staff may not have these skills. Typically, however, staff came to enjoy delivering this curriculum as they became more familiar with it.

Helen noted that it takes considerable time to deliver this (or any) curriculum for the first time. It’s a big investment of time initially, but it becomes easier with time and experience.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Helen recommends finding community partners to help deliver practical applications of the curriculum. Students value supplemental learning opportunities from people with direct topic knowledge in the form of guest speakers or tours.

It is also important to remember that students also learn what they are interested in, in a low-stakes, user-friendly manner, by taking occupational curriculum.

Helen notes that this curriculum can be effectively used in both small group and one-to-one formats.

Curriculum Access

The Janitorial curriculum is freely available on the website of the Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network at: http://literacynetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/bridgegap_manual_janitorial.pdf

It is part of the “Bridging the Employment Gap” curriculum available at: <http://literacynetwork.ca/resources/bridging-the-employment-gap/>

Kingston Literacy & Skills

Introduction



Kingston Literacy & Skills (KL&S) is a community-based literacy organization founded in 1977. Kingston Literacy & Skills delivers literacy upgrading and workforce preparation programming to adults in Kingston and surrounding communities.

Thank you to Martha Rudden, Manager of Literacy and Basic Skills Programs, for sharing Kingston Literacy & Skills' experience in delivering the Clerical Occupational curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Clerical Curriculum

Curriculum Development

The original Clerical curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by Connections Adult Learning in 2008. KL&S has adapted and augmented this curriculum over the years, based on the needs of learners.

This curriculum provides learners with the opportunity to develop their skills and explore employment in the clerical and administrative fields. There has always been a high level of interest in this curriculum amongst adult learners at Kingston Literacy & Skills.

This curriculum is currently being adapted and updated by Kingston Literacy & Skills in partnership with Community Literacy of Ontario.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Clerical curriculum include:

- The Essential Skills involved in clerical work
- The types of activities and tasks required in this line of work
- The basics of different types of office equipment
- Thinking skills (including decision making, memory use and job task planning)
- Different types of documents encountered (like forms, graphs and charts)
- How to handle important information (in paper and digital formats)
- Appropriate communication skills for the workplace
- Soft skills around working with others and customer service

When did you start using this curriculum?

Kingston Literacy & Skills started using the curriculum when it was first written, in 2008.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Many learners who attend KL&S are interested in finding a job. And clerical work is sought after by learners and is also a needed occupation in the community. It is their second most popular curriculum, after Pre-PSW.

The staff at Kingston Literacy & Skills also found that it was easier to recruit – and retain – learners when learning materials more closely matched their employment goals.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Clerical curriculum was originally written at High Level 2 / Low Level 3. However, it has now been updated for low Level 2.

Curriculum Delivery

The staff at Kingston Literacy & Skills deliver this curriculum in a small group format in a time-specific period.

Further, many learners are impacted by low self-esteem and anxiety issues. This curriculum (and all other learning materials at KL&S) are taught in a supportive environment.

Length of Delivery

The Clerical curriculum is a 36-hour course, delivered two days per week over either a 9 or 12-week timeframe.

Learners are typically taking other classes as well with KL&S, for example, literacy and/or computers. Learners have to finish this course within the prescribed deadlines, which helps them with time management and professionalism for their future office environments. This also gives them more credibility with employers and Employment Services.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

Typically, learners find the The Clerical curriculum to be engaging and helpful in assisting them to reach their goals. Kingston Literacy & Skills gives certificates based on learners completing the course to a certain standard.

Typically, learners also complete a variety of other courses based on their individual needs. This could include courses via Good Learning Anywhere, the Learning Hub, Contact North, and GCF Learn Free.

Martha has noticed that learners demonstrate an increase in self-confidence, skills, and a knowledge of the next steps they wish to take in their learning/employment/life journey.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Some of the students think they are at a higher skill level than they are, and subsequently, they try to rush through the learning materials and practice exercises. In these cases, staff encourage them to slow down and take their time, and to learn, practice and really engage with the curriculum.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Martha recommends that LBS agencies look over the curriculum carefully to assess whether it is suitable to the needs of their students and community. She also recommends developing a clear plan of action before getting started.

To fully engage the students in learning and skills building, be sure to supplement the curriculum with newly available learning materials, office equipment and digital technologies.

Be sure to help students connect with their next step at the end of the course, whether that is a visit to an Employment Service agency, further education and training, or exploring a volunteer position. Don't let their momentum lapse when the course is finished!

Curriculum Access

The original curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO's Clerical curriculum by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html

Thanks to support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Community Literacy of Ontario received funding in 2018/2019 to develop/adapt curricula. As part of this initiative, CLO engaged the team at the Kingston Literacy & Skills to update and adapt the Clerical curriculum.

The new Clerical curriculum will be freely available on CLO's website in March 2019 via this link: www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/resources/publications/#Curriculum

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario

Introduction



Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) is a regional literacy network providing adult upgrading information and referral services to residents and agencies in Southeastern Ontario. Their office is located in Kingston, Ontario.

Thank you to Doug Noyes, Executive Director, for sharing Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's experience with occupational curricula.

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario has in-depth experience with creating occupational curricula and is considered as a strong leader in this area.

Curricula Overview

The following are the occupational curricula developed by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario and its regional adult Literacy and Essential Skills service providers.

- Call Centre
- Cleaner
- Clerical
- Daycare Worker
- Essential Skills for the Trades
- Food Counter Attendants
- Food Processing
- Grocery Clerks and Store Shelf Stockers
- Health Care / Pre-PSW
- Hospitality
- Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourers
- Material Handler
- Printing Machine Operator
- Public Works and Maintenance Labourers
- Retail
- Service Station Attendant
- Skilled Trades Helpers and Labourers
- Truck Driver

Curricula Development

In 2004, Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, in partnership with regional LBS agencies, believed that developing curricula focused on occupational training and building Essential Skills would be of great value to adult learners with employment goals. Such curricula would also support practitioners to better understand the Essential Skills (which were newly developed at this time) and also provide practitioners with valuable learning materials for learners.

In order to select the topics of the curricula, LLEO and its partners researched what were the most popular entry-level occupations in their regions for job seekers. They also researched what occupations were in high demand by employers.

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario received funding from the Federal Government to develop the first five curricula, and later received funding from the Provincial Government to develop the remaining curricula. LLEO researched and wrote the curricula over an 8-year period, starting in 2004 and ending in 2011.

In 2012 LLEO received provincial funding to align ten of their Occupational Curricula with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).

Curricula Level, Length and Delivery

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's occupational curricula are written at OALCF Levels 1-3. Practitioners can adapt each curriculum to meet individual learner needs.

The occupational curricula can be delivered in a group setting, or via individualized learning. The curricula vary in length but most can be covered in 200 hours (8 weeks at 25 hours/week). Each curriculum includes Practitioner Notes, Learner Content, and Activities and Answers to the activities.

LLEO's occupational curricula is widely used across Ontario and is highly respected by practitioners. The curricula can be easily adapted, and supplementary resources can be added in. Because they are set-up in a modular format, it is easy to pick and choose which modules each learners might benefit from. It is not necessary to use a curriculum in its entirety.

Curricula Access

Literacy Link Eastern Ontario's occupational curricula is available on its website. For a fee of \$15, you can order an occupational curriculum CD from Literacy Link Eastern Ontario by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html.

As well, the charts aligning ten of LLEO's Occupational Curricula with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework are freely available on the above website.

Literacy Link South Central

Introduction



Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) is a Regional Literacy Network supporting literacy programs and learners in the City of London and the counties of Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk.

Thank you to Anne Marie Curtin, Director of Community Relations/Project Coordinator, for sharing Literacy Link South Central's experience in curriculum development.

Curricula Overview

Apprenticeship Modules:

- Exploring Food Trades
- Exploring Automotive Trades
- Exploring Construction Trades

Curricula Development

In 2014, Literacy Link South Central created the curriculum for three Apprenticeship Modules. LLSC selected these three particular trades based on:

- Reviewing the top five trades in Ontario
- Reviewing the top trade registrations and completions tracked by Statistics Canada
- Assessing which trades ranked highest in terms of employment
- Learning in which trades apprentices struggle the most with the in-class portion

Robyn Cook-Ritchie, Curricula Researcher/Writer for LLSC, developed the three modules. As well, Literacy Link South Central set up an advisory committee to provide guidance throughout the development process. In addition, the modules were piloted at three service delivery agencies by a variety of learners and practitioners.

Curricula Level, Length and Delivery

These apprenticeship modules are written at OALCF Levels 1-2 and incorporate a variety of competencies. There are 13-14 task-based activities in each module (with 30+ sub-tasks).

The modules can be completed by individual learners or delivered in a group setting. It takes between 6 to 12 hours to complete each module.

Curricula Access

The Apprenticeship Modules are freely available on Literacy Link South Central's website at:

Exploring Food Trades

- <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/1a9192fe/files/uploaded/LBS%20Apprenticeship%20cirr%20Food.pdf>

Exploring Automotive Trades

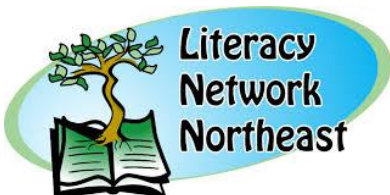
- <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/1a9192fe/files/uploaded/LBS%20Apprenticeship%20Cirr%20Auto.pdf>

Exploring Construction Trades

- <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/1a9192fe/files/uploaded/LBS%20Apprenticeship%20cirr%20construction.pdf>

Literacy Network Northeast

Introduction



Literacy Network Northeast (LNN) is a regional literacy network located in Timmins, Ontario. LNN supports Literacy and Basic Skills programs in Northeastern Ontario, including the communities of Attawapiskat, Chapleau, Cochrane, Fort Albany, Hearst, Iroquois Falls, Kashechewan, Kapuskasing, Kirkland Lake, Moose Factory, Moosonee, Temiskaming Shores, Timmins and Wawa.

Thank you to Tanya Venne, Executive Director, and Debera Flynn, former Executive Director, for sharing Literacy Network Northeast's experience in developing occupational curricula.

Curricula Overview

The following are the occupational curricula developed by Literacy Network Northeast as part of its "Connecting to Workplaces" series.

- Chambermaid
- Florist Assistant
- Forestry Worker
- Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Guide
- Laundry Worker
- Nanny
- Pet Groomer
- Security Officer
- Taxi Driver

Curricula Development

Literacy Network Northeast received funding to research and collect authentic workplace documents to create a library of resources for the LBS Service Providers in the region.

When that project was complete, the Network investigated creating curricula for the most advertised jobs in the area. Thus, in 2007-2008, the above nine curricula were researched. Literacy Network Northeast created curricula that provided learners specific knowledge about jobs that they were interested in. It was felt that learners could share the results of learning via the occupational curricula with employers when applying for jobs. The project was supporting the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' workplace literacy initiative, "Learning Works!"

In addition to benefitting from the knowledge and skills of a diverse team of highly experienced literacy practitioners, project staff were fortunate to be able to access

information directly from employers. The Far North East Training Board was a valuable partner connecting the Network to employers.

The curriculum includes tips and notes for practitioners for each lesson, along with the answer key for the learning activities.

Curricula Level, Length and Delivery

Literacy Network Northeast's curricula is based on an older model of Literacy and Basic Skills programming when results spanned over five levels and demonstrations were used. The material would need to be updated to the OALCF Levels 1-3 and the material would need to be articulated to task-based activities to be relevant in the LBS world we work in now.

These curricula are written for LBS Level 2 to 3, depending on the demands of each occupation. However, they can be tailored by literacy instructors to meet the needs of learners.

LNN's occupational curricula can be delivered in a small group setting, or via one-to-one learning opportunities.

The nine occupational curricula are substantial and contain much valuable information, content and resources. The curricula vary from between 132 to 257 pages in length.

Curricula Access

The nine occupational curricula developed by Literacy Network Northeast are freely available on the LNN website at: <https://northernliteracynetworks.ca/connecting-to-workplaces-building-curricula-for-validated-demonstrations/>

Prince Edward Learning Centre

Introduction



Prince Edward Learning Centre (PELC) is a community literacy organization that helps adult learners acquire the skills needed to achieve their personal learning and employment goals. PELC provides programming for employment readiness, trade school readiness, post-secondary preparation, and more. Thank you to Lori Farrington, Program Coordinator, for sharing PELC's experience in delivering the Skilled Trades Helper curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Skilled Trades Helper

Curriculum Development

The Skilled Trades Helper curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by Prince Edward Learning Centre and Community Learning Alternatives in Belleville. In fact, Lori Farrington was the lead researcher and writer! Along with benefiting from the expertise of literacy instructors, local construction businesses were also asked to give input into this curriculum.

This curriculum has been extremely popular over the years with learners at PELC, although it has been used less often in recent years.

This course provides learners with the opportunity to explore the Skilled Trades Helper occupation and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position. Skilled Trades Helpers work with skilled trades people at construction sites and in industrial settings.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Skilled Trades Helper curriculum include:

- What Employers Want in a Skilled Trades Helper
- Communications
- Equipment & Materials
- Numeracy
- Health & Safety

Based on learner needs, PELC will augment the Skilled Trades Helper curriculum with other tools, resources and/or additional curricula, as required.

When did you start using this curriculum?

PELC started using the curriculum when it was first written, in 2008.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

Prince Edward Learning Centre dealt with many young men who needed literacy upgrading. However, as with many young men, they were not interested in traditional literacy programming. PELC found that they could engage them in upgrading their literacy skills if they used the skilled trades curriculum as part of their learning plan.

The skilled trades are also an “in-demand” job in their area. After this course, people are ready to attend trade school, start the apprenticeship process, or be hired to work without a formal trade certificate.

This curriculum is highly appropriate for learners with goals of employment, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Skilled Trades Helper curriculum was originally written at Level 3. However, it has now been updated for Level 2 or 3.

Curriculum Delivery

Since Prince Edward Learning Centre is located in a rural area, they deliver this curriculum in a one-to-one format based on individual need. However, the curriculum was designed for use in a small group format as well.

Length of Delivery

The Skilled Trades Helper curriculum was originally designed for a specific number of hours to be delivered over a set amount of weeks or months. However, for PELC, this curriculum is not used that way. Instead, it is delivered based on the student’s needs and at their own pace, so it can take any length of time to complete. However, if the student is at Level 3 and attending class full time, they should be able to complete the curriculum in about three to four weeks.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

The Skilled Trades Helper curriculum has been used with great success at Prince Edward Learning Centre and the students go on to be employed or enrolled in post-secondary programming.

This curriculum inspires a lot of students to enroll in post-secondary, apprenticeships, etc. and plan their futures and set goals to work towards. This curriculum engages students with its practical application.

As well, PELC built connections with local employers who would refer students for skills/literacy training. This included both job applicants who weren't ready to work because they lacked skills, or new hires that needed upgrading.

PELC used to have a Trails to Literacy program which included a woodshop. Students would work in the woodshop to build picnic tables, birdhouses, crafts, and they even worked with the County of Prince Edward to re-cover bridges on a walking trail in the community. The experiential learning made it much easier and more interesting for the learners to work through the curriculum.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

This curriculum is overly paper-based and relates just one learning style. It doesn't adequately reflect the hands-on reality of skilled trades. In a similar manner to high school, if a learner already had issues with that learning style they would run into the same issues again.

The curriculum worked really well when they had a woodshop. For adult students who are working towards their high school diploma, PELC has been able to partner with local school boards to offer co-op components. That really helps to add in this practical component.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Lori highlighted that it is important to be flexible with the curriculum and learner needs. She tries to “think outside the box” for ways to keep learners engaged and make the curriculum accessible and meaningful to them. It’s helpful to use the curriculum to inspire the bigger picture – to help learners decide their future plans, education, jobs, etc.

Lori recommends sending the student to interviews at local construction companies in order to build interview and communication skills while using their new skilled trades literacy skills.

As with most learning materials in the literacy field, it’s important to find ways to add to the curriculum and to not use it in isolation. There are tons of great teaching materials out there. Try searching for skilled trades entry exam preparation courses or math for trade schools. YouTube videos add a visual and auditory component. It helps to embed great external resources and real life learning that will help students with their future goals.


Curriculum Access

This curriculum was created by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO’s Skilled Trades Helper curriculum by clicking here:
www.lleo.ca/resources.html

It is also available for free download at:
[http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/lleo/skilled trades/skilled trades learner/skilled trades learner.pdf](http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/lleo/skilled%20trades/skilled%20trades%20learner/skilled%20trades%20learner.pdf)

QUILL Learning Network

Introduction



QUILL Learning Network (QUILL) is a Regional Literacy Network located in Walkerton. QUILL supports Literacy and Basic Skills programs in the counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron, Perth, and South Georgian Bay.

Thank you to Debera Flynn, Executive Director, for sharing information about QUILL’s Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal.

Overview and Development of the Portal

The Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal was created for Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) practitioners in Ontario. It contains task-based activities to use with adult learners. The Portal is an amazing resource to support curriculum development and instruction in the LBS classroom.

All the materials have been aligned to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). The activities are versatile and cover all five goal paths; preparing learners for test taking, using workplace authentic documents, post-secondary academics, and for living independently. The activities will also help practitioners to prepare learners to complete milestones.

The development of the Portal was a collaborative effort, involving LBS programs, Regional Networks, literacy practitioners and other diverse partners. The Portal was truly “built for the literacy field, by the literacy field”.

Activities on the Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal are available in English, and include materials for the Francophone, Native, and Deaf streams. Some resources, were recast from demonstrations and activities submitted to the Portal by LBS programs from all sectors, streams and regions. The majority of task-based activities were created through project funding. All materials must go through a peer-review process in order to be used on the Portal. Materials are also reviewed for plain language and re-cast into OALCF language.

QUILL Learning Network’s Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal was funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. You can learn more about the Portal, and how it was developed and who was involved [here](http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/about).
(<http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/content/about>)

There has been an **overwhelmingly** positive response to the Portal from the LBS community.

Level, Length and Delivery

Currently, there are 570 task-based activities on the Portal, including thousands of tasks. The materials on the Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal are written at a variety of levels and are suitable for diverse goal paths and needs.

These resources can be used in classrooms, small groups, or via one-to-one individualized learning, depending on the needs of the learners.

Portal Access

QUILL Learning Network's Task Based Activities for LBS Online Portal is freely available at: <http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/>

Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network

Introduction



*Simcoe/Muskoka
Literacy Network*

Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) is a Regional Literacy Network providing information and referral services about adult upgrading to residents and agencies in Simcoe County and the Muskoka region. Their office is located in Orillia, Ontario.

Thank you to Stephanie Hobbs, Executive Director, for sharing Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network's experience in developing occupational curricula.

The Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network is one of the provincial leaders in creating and supporting occupational curricula.

Curricula Overview

The following are the occupational curricula developed by Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network as part of its "Bridging the Employment Gap" series.

- Clerical
- Kitchen Help
- Grounds Maintenance
- Retail
- Janitorial
- Ready for Work

Curricula Development

In 2008-09, Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network was funded by the National Office of Literacy and Essential Skills to complete a series of six occupational-related curricula called "Bridging the Employment Gap". These curricula were designed to help learners at Essential Skills Level 1 to upgrade their literacy, numeracy and other essential skills in an entry-level occupational context.

By placing clients at the centre of a network that includes Literacy and Basic Skills practitioners, employment support agencies, and employers all working together, the "Bridging the Employment Gap" curricula are designed to help clients with low literacy skills develop key Essential Skills and succeed in finding and keeping work.

In 2012-13, SMLN received funding from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in order to align their occupational curricula with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).

Curricula Level, Length and Delivery

Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network’s occupational curricula are written at Essential Skills Level 1 and some at Level 2. However, they can also be used with adult learners with higher level literacy skills.

SMLN’s occupational curricula can be delivered in a group setting, or via one-to-one individualized learning. The six occupational curricula vary in length, but each is between 350 pages to over 800 pages long. “Ready for Work”, which focuses on a wide variety of soft skills, is the longest, at 822 pages.

These curricula are designed in a modular format, making it easy for practitioners to adapt the curricula to individual needs. SMLN’s recommends chunking out the curriculum, based on the needs of learners. Not every module will be relevant to every learner. Therefore, the length of the curriculum is hard to estimate. Each curriculum manual includes a module with information for the practitioner about Essential Skills.

Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network’s curricula are extremely popular across the province. They are highly adaptable, and relevant resources and tools can be easily added in. “Bridging the Employment Gap” is used by a wide variety of stakeholders, in diverse settings. These curricula are very user-friendly and practical for adult learners.

Curricula Access

Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network’s six occupational curricula, as well as the charts aligning their occupational curricula with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework, are freely available on the SMLN website at:
<http://literacynetwork.ca/resources/bridging-the-employment-gap/>

Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre

Introduction



The Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre (SVRC) is a charitable organization established in 1986 in response to restructuring that was occurring in the mining industry. Now, SVRC provides a broad array of educational and workplace training opportunities, including Literacy and Basic Skills training, Pre-GED and GED preparation programs, college upgrading and pre-apprenticeship programs, computer skills programming, and workplace training programs.

Thank you to Mike DeGagné, Instructor, for sharing SVRC's experience in delivering the Retail curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Retail Training

Curriculum Development

The original Retail curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by the Prince Edward Learning Centre in 2008.

The Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre has adapted and augmented this curriculum over the years, based on changing technologies, and the needs of learners and their community.

The Retail curriculum provides learners with the opportunity to explore the retail sector and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position.

This curriculum is currently being adapted and updated by the Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre in partnership with Community Literacy of Ontario.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Retail curriculum include:

- What Does It Mean to be a Retail Associate?
- Customer Service
- Tools of the Trade
- Store Procedures
- Retail Math
- Health and Safety

When did you start using this curriculum?

The Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre started using the Retail curriculum in 2012.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

In the Sudbury area, learners are often seeking jobs in the retail sector. Also, there is a consistent demand by employers for employees with these skills. It is also a good entry level position for learners who may not have much employment experience.

This curriculum also provides broad-based skills that would be useful in many sorts of jobs, for example, customer service skills.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Retail curriculum was originally written at Level 3. However, many learners are SVRC are working at Levels 1 and 2. Therefore, SVRC staff have adapted the curriculum based on the skills and needs of learners, and supplemented it with relevant materials and resources.

The revised curriculum is being written at Level 1/2.

Curriculum Delivery

The staff at the Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre typically deliver the Retail curriculum in a small group format in a time-specific period.

The curriculum could be also offered on a one-to-one basis.

Length of Delivery

The Retail curriculum is offered by SVRC for 15 hours per week, over a 4 to 6-week period. The SVRC offers flexibility and will work around learner schedules. Learners taking the Retail curriculum are in the same classroom as those who may be studying GED, learning independently, or upgrading for post-secondary.

The SVRC offers continuous intake for the Retail curriculum.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

The Retail curriculum is popular. Almost all learners who have completed this curriculum find jobs. This training builds their skills *and* their confidence. Further, many of the skills that they learn are transferable to other interests or jobs that learners may wish to pursue. Learners find this curriculum to be very practical and a great way to build their skills.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

Wages in the retail sector are often low, which is challenging for learners who are often already low income. There used to be a stigma attached to retail, but that has disappeared as many people, of all skills and education levels, now work in the retail sector.

There are some concerns that retail is a dying field, as more and more people do their shopping online. However, people are transferring retail skills to other domains.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Mike recommends showing patience and flexibility with learners, and tailoring the Retail curriculum to individual needs. It's important to show empathy and understand that everyone learns differently. Mike also notes that it is important to supplement the curriculum with local information and updated resources.

Curriculum Access

The original curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO's Retail Training curriculum by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html

Thanks to support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Community Literacy of Ontario received funding in 2018/2019 to develop/adapt curricula. As part of this initiative, CLO engaged the Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre to update and adapt the Retail curriculum for use with literacy learners working at Level 1/2 who have a goal of working in retail services.

The new Retail curriculum will be freely available on CLO's website in March 2019 at: www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/resources/publications/#Curriculum

Tri-County Literacy Council

Introduction



Tri-County Literacy Council (TCLC) specializes in addressing adult literacy needs in the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry counties of Ontario. This free training includes:

- Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) upgrading
- General Educational Development (G.E.D.) Preparation
- Apprenticeship Preparation
- Basic Computer training
- Occupational training for entry-level positions

Thank you to Carolyn Eva, Administrative Assistant, and Carol Anne Maloney, Instructor and Coordinator of Volunteers, for sharing Tri-County Literacy Council's experience in delivering the Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum.

Name of Curriculum

Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance

Curriculum Development

The Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario (LLEO) and developed by Tri-County Literacy Council in 2008.

Tri-County Literacy Council supplements the curriculum with additional materials (for example videos), guest speakers and by asking each student to complete a final project.

This course provides learners with the opportunity to explore the Landscaping & Grounds Maintenance Labourer occupation and develop the entry-level Essential Skills required to be successful in this position.

Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourers are employed by lawn maintenance companies, golf courses, Parks and Recreation departments, etc. They may also be self-employed.

Curriculum Content

Key topic areas covered in the Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance occupational curriculum include:

- In the Workplace
- Working with Plants – Getting Around
- Working with Plants – Plant Names
- Working with Plants – Planting
- Safety on Site – Basic Safety Rules
- Safety on Site – Working Outdoors
- Safety on Site – Equipment
- Landscape Math - Counting
- Landscape Math - Line Measures
- Landscape Math - Spatial Measures
- Landscape Math - Paperwork
- Grounds Maintenance – Site Check-up
- Grounds Maintenance - Lawn Care

When did you start using this curriculum?

Tri-County Literacy Council started using this curriculum in 2010.

Why Did You Decide to Deliver This Curriculum?

The Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum was a good fit with the needs of students and their community.

A number of students at their literacy council were seeking employment in this field. There is a relatively high demand for landscaping and ground maintenance skills in their areas, and it is reasonably easy to find a job, which is the goal of many students. Some students had the goal of self-employment in this field.

What Level is the Curriculum?

The Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum has been written at Level 3.

However, with some adaptation, it can be used with learners with lower skill levels.

Curriculum Delivery

Tri-County Literacy Council delivers the Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum in a small group format, in a classroom style. Typically, there are 10 to 15 students enrolled.

Occasionally, they offer this course on a one-to-one basis, based on student need, but they definitely prefer the small group classroom format whenever possible. TCLC believes that learning together and learning from one's peer and from the community greatly enhances the curriculum.

Length of Delivery

The course runs for eight weeks, three hours per day, four days per week. They run the course from January to March, in order that students will be completing the course just as local employers are hiring for the spring and summer season.

What Successes Have Resulted from Delivering this Curriculum?

In order to bring "learning to life", Tri-County Literacy Council brings in guest speakers from various parts of their community, including the local Horticulture Society, Home Depot's garden centre, the local vegetable market, the City of Cornwall's Landscape Division, Job Zone (Employment Services), and more.

The Council also requires each student to complete a final project that allows them to showcase their skills and knowledge. Each student creates a garden plan. This project allows for creativity and the application of practical knowledge. The students then present their projects in class. This builds confidence and creativity and also gives the students a tangible product to demonstrate their knowledge.

What Were Some of the Challenges?

It is time consuming to market the program. Because Tri-County Literacy Council seeks to enrol a minimum of 10 students per course in a largely rural area, sometimes it can be difficult to recruit enough students.

What Words of Advice Would You Give to Your Fellow LBS Practitioners Delivering this Curriculum?

Tri-County Literacy Council strongly recommends bringing in guest speakers from the community. This brings the curriculum to life, and also helps learners to make new connections in their community.

The Council also notes while marketing can be difficult, it's important to engage in new ways of reaching potential students. TCLC found that by using this curriculum (and others) that they have reached new partners, students and supporters.

Curriculum Access

This curriculum was produced by Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. For a fee of \$15, you can order a CD of LLEO's Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance curriculum by clicking here: www.lleo.ca/resources.html



Conclusion

We hope you've enjoyed CLO's "**Overview of 15 Occupational Curriculum Used in LBS Agencies**". CLO trusts that this unique collection of how occupational curricula is being used in diverse agencies across Ontario will provide readers access to new insights, ideas, resources and strategies.

If you have additional curriculum resources or ideas to share, please send us an email.

CLO's greatly appreciates the important work that our member agencies do for adult learners!