



June 2005

Program Evaluation

Community Literacy of Ontario

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Program evaluation is an important issue for many community literacy agencies. While there are many resources on this topic (including CLO's *SmartSteps to Organizational Excellence*) there is nothing better than hearing how the board and staff of a fellow agency tackled this task.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND THE BARRIE LITERACY COUNCIL

By Connie Morgan, Barrie Literacy Council

One of the committees of the board of the Barrie Literacy Council is the Planning and Evaluation Committee. This committee has developed a framework to evaluate our program. The general headings for evaluation in our literacy council include:

Information and Referral

- Outreach Activities
- Giving Information
- Initial Referrals
- Referral to Other Community Services

Assessment

- Initial Screening
- In-Depth Assessment of Skills
- Ongoing Assessment
- Exit Assessment

Learning/Training Plan Development

- Student Profile
- Initial Learning/Training Plan
- Review and Revision of Learning/Training Plans

Training

- Training of Practitioners
- Teaching Strategies and Methods
- Learning Materials and Resources

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Follow-up and Evaluation

- Exit Transition
- 3-month Student Follow-up
- 6-month Student Follow-up

Governance

- Strategic Planning
- Board Functioning
- Purpose/Mission and Vision
- Policies and Procedures (including By-Laws)

Resource Management

- Management of Finances
- Fundraising
- Human Resources (staff and volunteers)
- Physical Facilities



For each component, the Barrie Literacy Council has listed the objective or purpose, the process and tools used, success indicators, measurement tools and who is responsible for the evaluation. For example, when evaluating the component “Board Functioning”, we look at the rate of turnover of Board members, minutes of Board meetings to see if annual goals set have been achieved, and Board performance reviews. We also discuss with Board members questions such as:

- ⇒ Are we fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the Board?
- ⇒ Do we work as a team? Are all voices heard?
- ⇒ Are our meetings effective?
- ⇒ Do we get feedback from our stakeholders?

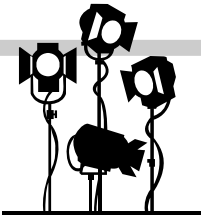
The committee(s) or staff persons involved with each program component compile their findings using the measurement tools listed and compare these findings to the success indicators. They then make recommendations for action based on these findings. This report is submitted to the Planning and Evaluation Committee, discussed by the Committee and then submitted to the Board of Directors.

Our goal is for a full program evaluation of the Barrie Literacy Council to be completed every two years. We are finding that the process of evaluation brings forth ideas for change and improvement, and most of these changes can be implemented immediately by staff. Some recommendations for action involve policy or procedural changes which must be approved by the Board.

Our Board Performance Reviews are completed on an annual basis, usually in the spring. Each Board member completes a self-evaluation, including elements such as:

- ⇒ Attends Board meetings regularly
- ⇒ Comes prepared for Board meetings
- ⇒ Fulfills position description
- ⇒ Demonstrates leadership skills
- ⇒ Participates actively in discussion
- ⇒ Follows through on commitments
- ⇒ Keeps Board information confidential

At the meeting, each Board member is paired with a fellow Board member to discuss the evaluation. The written performance review is then given to the Executive Committee for further review and additional comments if necessary.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Innovation and Volunteers

By Chris Benninger, Chatham Kent Council on Adult Basic Education

A recent CLO survey indicates how the role of volunteers in literacy programs has changed throughout Ontario. While reassuring to know that others are having to adjust how they employ the services of volunteers to deliver programs, it is sometimes difficult to come up with creative ideas to keep the volunteers interested. The Chatham Kent Council on Adult Basic Education is no exception.

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent has a population of 110,000. It is largely rural, with small towns interspersed with large areas of agricultural land. We have an LBS small group of about 18 learners, a one-to-one program, ESL, LINC and sometimes citizenship classes as the need arises. We combine LBS and one-to-one where possible. With just two administrative staff people, one volunteer coordinator and two teachers, volunteers are extremely important to our program.

In our area, volunteer needs have changed. For example, business people are applying to help in whatever capacity, from including learners in their work orientation sessions to giving practical work environment advice. They aren't necessarily interested in tutoring. With declining demand for one-to-one tutoring in our area, we are looking for innovative ways to keep everyone happy.

So, in Chatham, we have looked into our talent cupboard. One-on-one tutors are happy to also work in our small group setting. They help with basic oral reading and writing tasks and provide feedback to the learners, a service that can sometimes become lost in the small group setting. Volunteers also give learners information on entry level positions in their desired field of work. One-on-one learners are invited to special activities with the small group. This has worked exceptionally well and has helped integrate learners who should be in small group for its benefits, but who are not yet ready to jump in with both feet.

Volunteers are playing a larger role in finding authentic materials for workplace/workforce delivery. For example, we have formed a co-dependent relationship with one volunteer in particular who is constantly gathering goal-related items wherever she goes. As well, the pizza guy explained area and circumference and best buy all rolled into one and even added a slice of pizza for everyone! We also had a volunteer from VON present the "Vial of Life" program. She then followed up to assist those with health issues and to help learners fill out forms. Another creative volunteer assignment was having a college student, who wants experience in writing reports and minutes, attend meetings in our stead and report back.

The opportunities are endless for pleasing volunteers, learners and staff!



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Carynne Arnold (Kingston)
- Chris Benninger (Chatham)
- Joyce Bigelow (Sharbot Lake)
- Linda Conley (Picton)
- Jan Goatcher (Ottawa)
- Heather Hufton (Peel)
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- Denise Tremblay (Iroquois Falls)

OUR STAFF

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

OUR CORE FUNDER

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OURVOICE NEWSLETTER

OURVOICE is published three times per year by Community Literacy of Ontario.

Researching, editing and desktop publishing by Joanne Kaattari .

CLO News!

We've had a busy winter and spring in CLO-land. Here are some of the activities CLO has been involved with:

- ⇒ CLO offered four online training sessions on Centra on volunteer management and learner exit and follow-up. These workshops were extremely popular. A total of **90** training seats were offered and each class had a waiting list.
- ⇒ We are gathering information on the Jobs Now pilots (CLO board members work in four of the six pilot communities).
- ⇒ CLO surveyed the sector about volunteer management and one-to-one and small group programming issues.
- ⇒ We contributed to OLC's submission to MTCU on the One Stop Training and Employment System.
- ⇒ CLO offered the national Foundational Training in Family Literacy course via six online training sessions from January to June 2005. Congratulations to the **23** course graduates!
- ⇒ We communicated on an ongoing basis with our members via our newsletter, our e-bulletin, our online discussion group on AlphaCom, our website, our annual members survey and via our provincial board of **12** regional directors.
- ⇒ CLO attended the Ontario Children and Youth Summit.
- ⇒ We attended OLC's symposium on workforce/workplace.
- ⇒ We are members of OLC's Funding Formula Review Committee, Networking Review Committee, Advisory Roundtable and the OLC/MTCU Liaison Committee.
- ⇒ CLO participated in the Innovations in Volunteer Management Conference.
- ⇒ We are proud to have **92** community literacy agencies as formal, paid members of CLO!
- ⇒ CLO met with Kingston Literacy and the community based coordinators in the Literacy Link Eastern Ontario region.
- ⇒ We researched and wrote two bulletins highlighting family literacy partnerships and issues in Ontario.
- ⇒ CLO helped facilitate Domtar's "Paper Christmas for Literacy Project." This resulted in 85 Ontario literacy agencies receiving approximately \$500 worth of paper for a total donation from Domtar of **\$42,500**.
- ⇒ We have been busy developing our wonderful, informative, and user-friendly training website called "**LITERACY BASICS**" - watch for its launch in September 2005!
- ⇒ CLO has been conducting research into the economic value of literacy volunteers and into volunteer management issues in our sector. The research report and volunteer management toolkit will be circulated in fall 2005.
- ⇒ We have submitted four project proposals to MTCU and are expecting to hear whether they will be funded in late June: (1) *Literacy Basics Plus*; (2) *Family Ties: Supporting Parents with Family-Related Goals*; (3) *Exploring Blended Program Delivery* and (4) *Conference 2006 (Workforce)*.