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As part of its 2022-2023 business plan, QUILL Learning Network and its partners; Community Literacy of Ontario, Literacy Link South Central, Project Read Learning Network, and the Tri-County Literacy Network, will hold three meetings of community-based LBS programs in Southwestern Ontario. These meetings are designed to support programs and build capacity. After each meeting, a Resource Bulletin will be shared.

During the first meeting, held June 22, 2022, QUILL and partners hosted three guest speakers on the topic of Employment Ontario's Employment Services Transformation, its impact on Literacy and Basic Skills programs, and the speakers' learned experiences as prototype sites.

QUILL is now pleased to present **Resource Bulletin #1**. It aims to share resources and experiences concerning the EOES transformation process, as well as links, tips, and recordings that we hope are valuable to all who are navigating their own EOES transformation process.

We are grateful to all the organizations who shared their resources with us, and we hope that these resources are helpful to you.

~ Heather Robinet, Executive Director, QUILL

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Resource: June 22, 2022 Meeting Recording

The first meeting of community-based LBS programs in Southwestern Ontario was held on June 22, 2022 and included three guest speakers: Matt Shulman (PHDALN), Sara Gill (ABEA), and Carrie Wakeford (LOCS). Each guest speaker is an Executive Director of a learning network that was part of one of the three prototype sites for the Employment Ontario Employment Services Transformation to System Service Managers (SSMs). The guest speakers shared their experience, their key findings, and their advice & tips for others who will undergo EOES transformation in the future. This meeting is a valuable resource with rich discussion on the topic of EOES transformation and we recommend that everyone watch the recording in addition to reading this summary bulletin. You can find the recording of the meeting in its entirety here: <https://youtu.be/qeTxTrQnLDC>

Resource: Career Ladders

“Career Ladders are series of connected literacy, language and skills training programs that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational cluster and allows them to advance to high levels of education and employment.”

Emerging career ladder frameworks have shown success in the US, Australia, the UK and other countries. Career Ladders’ goal is to help workers move up a career ladder after they enter employment, not before. Working together, Ontario’s training system can achieve better employment and career advancement results for lower-skilled adults who are either on income support or are in low-wage jobs.

ABEA reported that their Career Ladders project was of great interest to the System Service Manager (SSM) in the Hamilton region as it identified in-demand sectors and the resulting programming often had shorter training times.

<http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/career-ladders/>

FACTS

Career Ladders helps move those who have low educational attainment or may be vulnerable in other ways to fully participate in the labour market.

Programs and agencies that are part of a career ladders system will often concentrate on sets of occupational skills related to a specific industry or occupation that is growing in their local community.

Career ladders typically provide numerous entry and exit points in order to address challenges faced by part-time and itinerant workers.

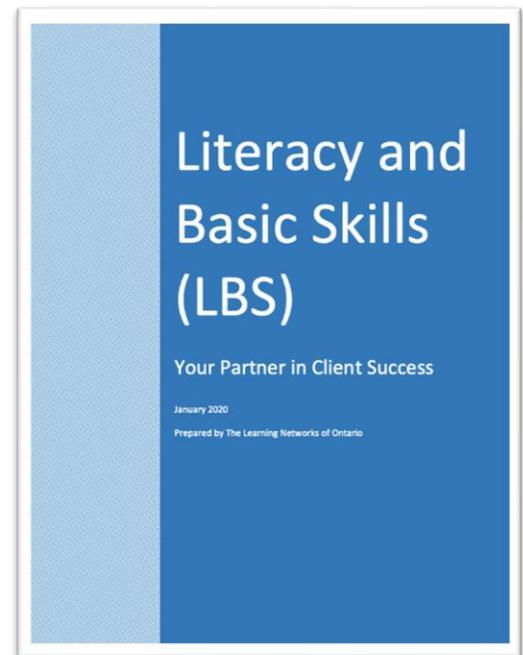
Since 2001, in the United States alone, 28 states and hundreds of community colleges and programs have started career ladder initiatives.

Although not yet evaluated in depth, there is a general consensus that Career Ladders have significantly increased industry engagement and participation in training at both regional and local levels.



Resource: LBS – Your Partner in Client Success

The Learning Networks of Ontario (LNO) developed a booklet titled “Literacy and Basic Skills – Your Partner in Client Success”. This booklet can be used as a valuable education piece when building relationships with new or changing stakeholders during EOES transformation. The booklet is freely available on the LNO website: <https://learningnetworks.ca/wp-content/uploads/Resources/LNO-LBSInfoDoc-Jan2020.pdf>



Resource: WE Data Tools

WE Data Tools offers innovative, place-based data tools that transform how jobseekers look for work, while giving you real-time insight into the supply and demand of your local workforce.



Planning boards across the province have integrated these tools on their websites. ABEA (Hamilton Region) is working with a developer to create another WeData tool for the Career Ladders Project. This tool will highlight in-demand, entry-level jobs in the region. It will also highlight the skills and training needed for these jobs and connect to LBS.

<https://www.wedatatools.com/>

Training video from the Workplace Planning & Development Board:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9t84N_VmT4



Tip: Things Will Change

All three guest speakers reported how things changed during the EOES transformation process, over the first year and beyond. Across the board, the transformation was dramatic and resulted in key changes during the initial stages:

- OW referrals stopped suddenly due to a new directive to refer everyone to the SSM
- Radio silence from ES during the initial months of transformation
- General disorientation for most stakeholders as they acclimated to new structures and roles
- New and different reporting requirements – this can mean that teams spend more time on internal training in the early stages and less time working together with other stakeholders

It was also reported that after the initial changes, many stakeholders were open to collaboration and made efforts to do so.

Tip: Speak the Same Language

During the EOES transformation, there may be new or changing names and definitions, and there will likely be new or different stakeholders who may use different names or definitions. It was reported by all three prototype sites that it was important to pay close attention that you are speaking the same language as the SSM and all stakeholders. For example, looking at the phrasing used in the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) allowed for Sara in the Hamilton region to identify areas where LBS would fit in, but had not been included.

Tip: Don't Assume LBS has Been Included

In the Hamilton region, the Common Assessment Tool (CAT) used triggers that would automatically refer clients to necessary supports. Upon inspection, it was found that the literacy question in the CAT did not have referral triggers, which resulted in a loss of referrals. It is recommended to take a close look at the new systems and procedures being put in place to ensure that LBS is being included where it should be.



Tip: Network & Stay In Touch

It was reported by all prototype sites that it was important to keep the lines of communication open during the EOES transformation process. It is recommended to make an effort to connect with key stakeholders and then continue to network with the community navigators & stakeholders throughout the process. As mentioned earlier, things will change, and other stakeholders may be in a state of confusion for a period of time as they define their new operations. By staying connected, you will share knowledge, support each other, and ensure LBS is being considered in the transformation process.

Tip: Preserve Institutional Knowledge

All prototype sites reported that it was important to preserve institutional knowledge during the transformation process. In the Peterborough region it was reported that the SSM lead had previous experience with ES and LBS and this was a clear benefit in their particular case. In other regions, this was not the case and efforts needed to be made to advocate and educate around the importance of LBS in the EOES transformation process.

It was also reported that during the transformation there will be many changes in personnel: people will transition to new roles and there may be staff turnover during the process. It is recommended to work to preserve institutional knowledge when people move out of roles or leave the organization.

Tip: Make Referrals in the new System

It was reported that many stakeholders found that after the initial restructuring, there was a desire for collaboration and an understanding that all stakeholders are needed to succeed in the new system. Making referrals was reported to help build and strengthen relationships in the new system. It was also reported to not forget your community partners. LBS is known for its community ties and these can prove helpful in building referrals in and out of the new system.



Tip: Identify Your Strengths in the New System

It is recommended to identify the unique strengths of LBS within the new system and position yourself to support the clients, and work symbiotically with the new structure of stakeholders. It was reported that in the new system, Stream C focuses on supporting clients with more complex needs and LBS was identified by the SSM as an ideal support for this stream. In addition, it was identified that EOES's new funding is tied to the length of employment that a client maintains, and thus focusing on supporting clients maintain employment strengthens the relationship with EOES.

Tip: Programming That Worked During the Transformation

All three prototype sites reported having to shift or change their programming to meet the changing needs of the new system. All three sites provided their recommendations of what types of new or different programming was successful or needed in their region.

- Digital literacy
- Micro credentialing, pre-requisites, short programs
- Soft/Employability Skills (socio-emotional skills)
- Supporting applications for the Better Jobs Ontario Readiness Program
 - The client would be referred from ES and then back to ES upon completion
- Financial literacy
 - It was reported that how to read a pay cheque was a popular module as it could help clients stay in employment longer, which in turn benefited ES through their new funding model.

