Revised
Guide to Current and Emerging Practices in Transition

Staff and Client Perspectives

Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network

Revised March 2015

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Note: the practices, tools and resources in this section were drawn from various sources. We do not guarantee their accuracy or completeness. In compiling this information, Simcoe/Muskoka Literay Network does not assume any responsibility or liability. All website links were valid and active at the time of publishing.

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Introduction

For many years, Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Employment Services (ES) programs have been working together in communities across Ontario. Because there has been no official direction on how to specifically work together, communities have taken an organic approach – doing "what they can with what they have" – to try to serve clients more effectively.

In 2013-14, the Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) received funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) to research how Employment Service Providers (ES) and Literacy and Basic Skills Service Providers (LBS) have been working together to help clients and learners transition from ES to LBS and from LBS to ES. This project was called **Formalizing Transitions Between Employment Services and LBS**. One aspect of this project was to document and share best practices regarding transitions between ES and LBS.

The first guide, **Current and Emerging Practices in Transitions,** documented service provider perspectives and practices related to transitioning LBS learners to ES and ES clients to LBS. It also provided examples of screening tools, workshops and other resources that are in use provincially and beyond.

In 2014-15, the Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) received another grant from MTCU to study effective referral and transition from the perspective of clients and learners. This project was entitled "Enhancing Transitions – Client Perspectives". This revised Guide builds on the original guide to include key findings from the second project.

Please note: In this revised Guide
- **Phase One** refers to the original project, "Formalizing Transitions Between Employment Services and Literacy and Basic Skills"
- **Phase Two** refers to the second project, "Enhancing Transitions – Client Perspectives"

- the term "**Clien**t" applies to both Clients (in Employment Services) and Learners (in Literacy and Basic Skills)
- "learner" or "student" refers to someone receiving literacy and essential skills upgrading
- findings from Phase Two appear in sections with this symbol

Method and Purpose of Phase Two: "Enhancing Transitions – Client Perspectives" project

The "Enhancing Transitions – Client Perspectives" project aimed to learn more about the clients' experience of transition or referral from one EO agency to another. What worked? What could improve? What advice can clients give us about making the transition process as smooth as possible?

Nine focus groups with a total of 80 clients were conducted over the month of November, 2014. Four groups were held in the Simcoe Muskoka region, four in Metro Toronto and one in the Niagara Region. The experiences of different cultural streams were explored: 3 focus groups were conducted with participants from the Deaf stream, 2 with Francophone clients and 3 with Anglophone clients.

Focus group host sites, streams and numbers of participants were
- Alpha Toronto (Francophone) – 14 participants
- La Clé d'la Baie en Huronie, Penetanguishene (Francophone) – 9 participants
- District School Board of Niagara (Deaf) – 6 participants
- Canadian Hearing Society (Deaf) – 6 participants
- George Brown College (Deaf) – 7 participants
- Centennial College (Anglophone) – 12 participants
- YMCA – Huntsville (Anglophone) – 4 participants
- Barrie Career Centre (Anglophone) – 15 participants

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- Frontier College (Anglophone) – 7 participants

Some of the focus group participants were clients of employment services (ES), some were Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) clients, and some were clients of a youth employment program not funded by Employment Ontario.

Each focus group lasted about an hour and a half. Participants were aware that their responses would be anonymous, and the names of focus group members would not be collected or used in any reports.

Each group discussed the same questions:
a) What job would you like to have at the end of your upgrading/training?
b) How did you find this program? What other programs are you currently using?
c) What do these services do for you? How do they help you reach your goals? ES and LBS? Others?
d) How was your transition experience?
e) What did this program do to make the referral/transition experience smooth? What could be better?
f) Other comments about transition and referral.

Key Findings and Summary from Phase One

Transition Points

Phase One, the first Transitions project, found little in the literature review identifying specific transition points between the ES and LBS systems. In fact, the literature and applied learnings identified the interconnectedness of literacy and employment preparation. For learners in adult literacy and upgrading programs, transitions are

learner-centred and driven by the goal of the individual[1,2]. Community Literacy of Ontario states that transition planning is part of the training plan and should be student-focused[3]. Connecting literacy services with employment preparation is best done by ensuring that literacy programs are directly linked to work by using a practice-based approach that recognizes that literacy learning and work learning are not discrete activities[4].

Project READ's **Enhancing Pathways** project in 2012 investigated linkages between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and English as a Second Language (ESL). One of the pilot sites looked at initiating steps to co-ordinate and align the three existing language and literacy systems: LBS, ESL and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) to enhance learner pathways and transitions[5]. This project said the following about transitions:

> **"transitions happen when we provide Educational Pathways Assessments to Employment Services…they love the educational plan and clients seem more willing to attend LBS when they see an actual time lined plan with their end goal as the outcome. The biggest problem for [literacy services] is the ES need for "tickies" in the EOIS/CaMS…they seem to be focused on efficiency and not service, so that's a big hurdle to overcome."** (Quote from Waterloo-Wellington)

From the research conducted through SMLN's first Transitions project, many noted that learners transition from LBS to ES along the whole learner path (a very individualized approach). However, the most common transition points identified were: 1) at the initial intake, 2)when students need income or lose their current job, and 3) when a student completes the LBS program. They also noted that the usual transition points for an ES client transitioning to LBS are: 1) at intake/first assessment, 2) when the client's goals are

[1] Pinsent-Johnson, C. 2008.Connecting Literacy, Learning & Work.

[2] Essential Skills Ontario. From Better Skills to Better Work. How Career Ladders can Support the Transition from Low-Skill to High-Skill Work. Becoming State of the Art: Research Brief No.3

[3] Community Literacy of Ontario. Transition Planning.

[4] Pinsent-Johnson, C. Op. Cit.

[5] Kata, J. A., Curtin, A. M., Gill, S., Ramsay, A., Sauve, L., Shulman, M., Tuer, J. Project READ. March 2012. Enhancing Pathways Phase 2: The Literacy and Language Continuum. Final Project Report: Five pilots for Facilitating Service Coordination.

identified, and 3) through further follow-up or observation of the client. ES providers stated that they can usually tell within two or three meetings if they need to refer a client to LBS.

To better understand what could help clients/learners in the transition from one service to the other, the project asked participants to help identify when a client/learner is "transition ready" – when are they ready to move from one service to the other? Table 1 below highlights the essential factors that would make a client/learner transition ready. Participants felt that both ES clients and LBS learners need to be motivated to be transition ready. However, it is interesting to note the difference in the factors for ES and LBS. The factors for ES clients tend to be about having a goal in place and understanding the value and benefits of LBS (recognizing how LBS is a stepping stone in a bigger picture and that improving skills is linked to getting a job). The factors for LBS learners tend to be more skill-based.

Table 1: Essential factors that influence transition readiness

ES Clients to Transition to LBS	LBS Learners to Transition to ES
- concrete goal in place - if it is part of a bigger plan/has value (e.g. Second Career) - basic needs are met - motivation/commitment - it is the best path for the client "open" attitude to the support/comfort level	- essential (basic) computer skills - employment goal - communicating with others - basic problem solving skills - trying something new, conquering fears and anxiety - life skills - motivation

Key Findings and Summary from Phase Two – Client Perspectives

While agency staff described transition readiness in terms of observable client skills, motivations and attitudes, clients described their readiness for transition in terms of program features and practices that would ease their transition.

Clients that participated in the focus groups described the following factors that matter to them and contribute to a smooth transition.

A) Co-location and partnerships

Focus group members described these two program features as having the greatest value to their experience as clients. Agency staff in Phase One also identified co-location and partnerships as best practices.

Clients identified the following best practices for co-location and partnership. Agencies should
- have knowledge of other community agencies to refer the client – within and beyond Employment Ontario – including wrap-around services such as health, transportation, housing and financial assistance
- provide a comprehensive directory of diverse services that clients may need to access while in an agency or when they leave
- have space for staff from other agencies to meet with clients
- offer guest speakers regularly on topics relevant to clients' needs and next steps
- organize client tours of other agencies so that clients can better understand their options and next steps
- consider co-location within the same building with other agencies and services vital to the clients' needs, including employment, health, child care and others

- use a similar or the same intake and/or assessment form and process as other service providers, so that clients don't need to provide the same information repeatedly

B) Learning environment

Clients want a safe, welcoming, relaxed and comfortable setting where agency staff members are professional, respectful and personable. They stated that agency staff need to recognize that as adults, family and emotional states affected the clients' ability to reach goals. An environment that is "casual, comfortable and compassionate" is important to build trust and encourage learning.

Participants described the value of a single point of contact when contacting a new agency, so that returned calls and future communications would be with the same person. They emphasized the importance of prompt responses to requests for information or to book a meeting with their next step – whether it is another agency or employment.

C) Service delivery

Clients described the importance of a client-centered approach in programming that addresses clients' basic needs and provides one-to-one attention, even in a classroom or group setting. Participants value self-paced learning and customized training plans built on their personal, learning and employment goals and unique circumstances. They stated that personal and career goals could not be separated, and agencies need to deliver programming that helped both types of goals.

Improving strategies to heighten client self-awareness is a critical feature of quality adult programming. Clients explained that understanding their strengths, assets and challenges helps them form a realistic self-perception and be better prepared for the next step.

Many clients felt it is important that instructors share regular progress reports with them, so they can celebrate their successes and recognize their challenges. They also value receiving certificates for completing certain workshops or modules or to recognize other accomplishments.

D) Accommodations

Focus group participants discussed two types of accommodations that help them:
a) accommodating client schedules and service preferences
b) accommodating physical and other needs, through specialized equipment or technology, or language and culture

Factor b) was most often identified by Deaf and Francophone focus group participants.

Most participants, regardless of stream, did not identify any barriers to their transitions **into** current programming. When discussing **anticipated transitions out of** current programming to either another agency or service, or to employment
- most Anglophone participants did not identify any specific barriers
- many Francophone and Deaf participants did.

Whether the next step was to new service or to employment, many clients anticipated they would face a lack of knowledge about accommodations or a lack of desire to provide them. Accommodations needed include
- preferred language for communications (ASL or French)
- preferred method of communications (text, e-mail, phone)
- cultural sensitivity
- equipment, technology and other resources to support learning and communications styles and needs
- internal agency policy or protocol to appropriately accommodate clients or employees and to meet or exceed the legal standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

A comparison of staff perspectives from Phase One with Client perspectives in Phase Two is summarized in the following chart (table 2).   The chart notes three main areas of agreement between clients and staff:

1. **A safe, welcoming, respectful environment where a client can thrive.**
2. **Personalized, practical, flexible, goal-directed programming**
3. **Concrete plans, realistic goals and information access to next steps.**

The chart also notes differences between client and staff perspectives. Further analysis of the data collected and recommendations emerging from the project are in the final section of this **Guide**.

Table 2: Comparison of staff perspectives to client perspectives

Common Findings: staff and clients "What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition Staff described it this way	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition Clients described it this way	Factors identified by clients - not staff What do clients think is important that staff don't?	Factors identified by staff - not clients What do staff think is important that clients don't?
A safe, welcoming, respectful environment where a client can thrive.	**Client readiness** • "open" attitude to support, comfort level • basic needs are met • trying something new, conquering fears and anxiety • client motivation & commitment	**Learning environment** • safe, welcoming, relaxed, comfortable • professional, respectful, personable • recognize family/emotional issues • "Treats us like adults - training wheels are off" • "Casual, comfortable, compassionate" • single point of contact, timely	Single point of contact at new agency Timely communications	Client readiness – attitudes, motivation, commitment

Common Findings: staff and clients	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition	Factors identified by clients - not staff	Factors identified by staff - not clients
"What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"	**Staff described it this way**	**Clients described it this way**	**What do clients think is important that staff don't?**	**What do staff think is important that clients don't?**
Personalized, practical, flexible, goal-directed programming	**Client skills** • essential (basic) computer skills • employment goal • communicating with others • basic problem solving skills • life skills • client-focused transition plan • concrete goal in place	**Aspects of service delivery** • customized to each client • client-centered approach (one-to-one, even in classroom) • self-paced • focus on client self-awareness – strengths and challenges • goal-directed • meaningful for life and work • show progress, give certificate	Clients value learning AND life impacts and effects Accommodations – schedule, technology, policies, communication – are important	Concrete skill acquisition

Common Findings: staff and clients **"What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"**	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition **Staff described it this way**	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition **Clients described it this way**	Factors identified by clients - not staff **What do clients think is important that staff don't?**	Factors identified by staff - not clients **What do staff think is important that clients don't?**
		Accommodations • flexible times/days • accessibility (more than physical) • equipment and technology to support learning needs/styles • appropriate communication preferences (e.g. text/e-mail rather than phone) • knowledge of accommodations needed		

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Common Findings: staff and clients	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition	Factors identified by clients - not staff	Factors identified by staff - not clients
"What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"	**Staff described it this way**	**Clients described it this way**	**What do clients think is important that staff don't?**	**What do staff think is important that clients don't?**
Concrete plans, realistic goals and information access to next steps.	**Effective Practices for Transition** • screening and referral tools • service directories • joint planning and partnerships • networking, workshops and information sharing • co-location	…and resources available • policy/protocol for providing accommodations **Partnerships** • facilitated referrals • knowledge of other community agencies beyond EO • directory of services • itinerant offices • guest speakers • tours of other agencies	Explicit suggestions for inclusion of Wraparound services – focus on "what" is needed Common intake procedure	Focus on "how" transition is facilitated and tools to aid transition

Common Findings: staff and clients	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition	Factors identified by clients - not staff	Factors identified by staff - not clients
"What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"	Staff described it this way	Clients described it this way	What do clients think is important that staff don't?	What do staff think is important that clients don't?
	• resources targeting employers, employees and learners	**Co-location** • beyond EO – health, food, child care, etc. • simplify referrals • next steps identified and accessed without travel/time • common intake/assessment process • efficient and effective – seamless for clients **Labour market information (LMI)** • data on local jobs and who	Labour market information to identify jobs	

Common Findings: staff and clients	Phase 1 - Factors influencing client transition	Phase 2 - Factors influencing client transition	Factors identified by clients - not staff	Factors identified by staff - not clients
"What do staff and clients agree is important during client transition?"	**Staff described it this way**	**Clients described it this way**	**What do clients think is important that staff don't?**	**What do staff think is important that clients don't?**
		is hiring • knowledge of emerging and declining industries • provide wage expectations • understand training and credentials needed • LMI from other communities/provinces		

Summary of Tools, Resources, Workshops and Current and Emerging Practices

The Phase Two perspectives of both EO agency staff and clients are summarized in Table 2 above. From a summary checklist of leading practices, we created a user-friendly practitioner tool – the "EASE plan. (Figure 1, below).

The review conducted in Phase One identified six main categories in which current and emerging practices and tools or resources appear to be somewhat common, and these are used in this Guide to Current and Emerging Practices in Transitions. These six categories are:

1. Screening and referral tools
2. Service directories
3. Joint planning and partnerships
4. Networking, workshops and information sharing
5. Co-location
6. Resources targeting employers, employees and learners

The sections of this Guide following Figure 1 are organized by category, as identified in Phase One. The categories were not pre-assigned but emerged from the information received. Each category outlines the sites where the tools are housed, a brief description of the tools and a link (where applicable) to the tools.

Figure 1: **My Plan To Ease** tool

Screening and Referral Tools

A number of organizations and communities have developed screening and referral tools, checklists and other supports to help them decide when to make a referral to either Employment Services (ES) or Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and/or how to refer to other services. Some of these tools also provide documentation of the referral for their files and information management systems. The table on the following pages outlines a sampling of these tools in use across the province.

Screening and Referral Tools		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	Links to Learning An on-line information and referral tool for clients. Based on the goal selected (Literacy & Basic Skills, Grade 12 & Equivalent or On-line Learning) and answers to a series of questions, individuals are given a listing of all programs in their area that match the criteria.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Literacy%20Link%20Niagara%20Ontario%20Tools_2.docx
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	Literacy Needs Quick Screen Tool This pre-screening tool is administered on-line through Survey Monkey. Individuals answer a series of questions to help determine if literacy programs could help them achieve their goals.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/LLN%20Literacy%20Needs%20Quick%20Screening%20Tool.docx
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	Sensitive Language for a Sensitive Topic Provides language suggestions for working with a client who has potential literacy issues.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/initial%20screening%20tool%20sensitive%20language%20for%20a%20sensitive%20topic.pdf
Durham (Literacy Network of Durham Region)	Language, Literacy and Employment Awareness Guide This Guide can be used by any ES, LBS, ESL, LINC program or any other community agency with a generic intake process. It includes a series of questions for clients to help determine which service is most	Durham Region Language Literacy Employment Awareness Guide

Screening and Referral Tools		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
	appropriate for the client. The questions are intended to augment existing client intake assessment or screenings.	
Durham	Client Criteria Flow Chart The one-page flow chart provides service providers with a decision-making tree, according to client eligibility and program entry criteria. It outlines requirements for participation in the three goal areas of: English Language Skills, Education and Employment.	Durham Service Chart
Durham	Employment-Literacy Referral Guide This Guide outlines the referral protocol, and includes a referral form and inventory of ES and LBS programs and services. The inventory includes services provided, hours of operation and contact information.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Durham%20Referral%20Protocol%202013.docx
Peterborough	Common Referral Form This is a common referral form that was first developed through the local employment services and then expanded to include literacy programs. It is continuously being refined.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/community%20referral%20tool%20peterborough.docx

Screening and Referral Tools

Site (Source)	Description	Link to Tool
Northern Ontario (Literacy Northwest)	Assessment and Training Referral Guide for Northwestern Employment Ontario Service Delivery Partners The toolkit includes a referral protocol process, common referral form and initial screening tools.	NWO Referral Protocol Process (http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/nwo%20referral%20protocol%20process.docx) NWO Common Referral Form (http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/nwo%20common%20referral%20form.docx)
Northern Ontario (Literacy Northwest)	Literacy and Essential Skills Awareness Guide An adaptation of the original guide developed by Literacy Ontario Central South, Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy and Literacy Link Eastern Ontario. Its purpose is to help service providers determine whether or not their client may need Literacy and Essential Skills training. It includes signs your client may need literacy and essential skills training and questions to help guide a conversation with your client.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/initial%20screening%20tool%20lesa%20guide.pdf

Screening and Referral Tools

Site (Source)	Description	Link to Tool
Northern Ontario (Literacy Network Northeast)	Essential Skills Checklist A checklist to determine if your client could benefit from a skills training program. The checklist asks questions in the areas of document use, reading, writing, numeracy, oral communication and computer use.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/initial%20screening%20tool%20essential%20skills%20checklist.pdf
Mid North (Mid North Network)	Inter-Agency Client Referral Form This is a French/English client referral form for Employment Ontario partners that was produced by the Mid North Network.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/mid%20north%20network%20referral%20form%202012.docx
Waterloo-Wellington (Project READ)	Referral Toolkit The Toolkit includes guidelines and forms for making referrals in Waterloo Region and Wellington County. It includes a "Decision-Making Process" as well as "Screening Questions for Effective Referrals."	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/waterloo-Wellington%20Referral%20Toolkit.docx.pdf
Sudbury (Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre)	Common Electronic Referral Form A common referral form for Ontario Works, ES and LBS providers.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/sudbury%20E%20-REFERRAL%20to%20EWT_Sept%202011.docx
Ottawa (Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy)	Working Together A pamphlet intended to help anyone who might refer a client to one of Ottawa's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs or to an ACE (Academic and Career	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/ottawa%20working%20together%20pamphlet.pdf

Screening and Referral Tools		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
	Entrance) program. It provides information about the signs your client may need LBS, the benefits of LBS, eligibility criteria for LBS programs, and contact information.	
Tillsonburg (Multi-Service Centre)	<u>Literacy and Employment Services Integrations Options Guide</u> The multi-service centre uses this policy to identify and implement ways to integrate services for clients who need both literacy and employment services.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/MSC %20ProPrac%20- %20Literacy%20%20E mployment%20Services %20Integration%20Opt ions.doc
Tillsonburg (Multi-Service Centre)	<u>Referral Protocol Policy</u> A policy followed at the multi-service centre to provide appropriate literacy services and supports to students. The policy identifies client and program factors to consider when making a referral.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/MSC %20referral%20protoc ol.doc
Simcoe County	<u>Electronic Referral for Services form</u> The County of Simcoe Ontario Works developed this common referral form in consultation with employment and training providers. Employment Ontario partners, Ontario Works and a variety of other community service providers use this form. The form has a second worksheet that lists agency names, type of service, and contact information.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/Simc oe%20Electronic%20Re ferral%20for%20Servic es%20Form.pdf

Screening and Referral Tools

Site (Source)	Description	Link to Tool
Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network	<u>Common Referral Form</u> Developed with LBS and ES providers in Simcoe County and Muskoka, this form is available in English, French and bilingual versions. It is used by Employment Ontario (EO) and other community service providers in Muskoka and by Francophone services in Simcoe County.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Simcoe%20Empl-Training%20referral%20tracker%20form.Aug.2013..docx
OK Learn	<u>Transition Points</u> OK Learn has produced three charts that help you to identify when adult learners may be able to transition to specific programs and next steps. The charts include ▪ key transition point for the ESL Literacy learners to other programs ▪ the English language proficiency required to access adult education programs ▪ the credentials and language levels that are needed to move to other programs and next steps	ESL Literacy Learner Transitions (http://oklearn.ca/pdf/4_ESL_LITERACY_LEARNER_TRANSITIONS.pdf) English Language Proficiency and Access to Programs (http://oklearn.ca/pdf/6_English_Language_Proficiency_and_Access_to_Programs.pdf) Transitions Credentials and Levels Attained (http://oklearn.ca/pdf/5_Transitions_Credentials_and_Levels_Attained.pdf)

Screening and Referral Tools		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Literacy Link South Central	Compass This booklet provides tips to help identify clients who need to improve their literacy and essential skills. It includes questions to ask clients and information to help guide your interpretation of their responses.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/Lite racy%20booklet%20Co mpass%20FINAL.pdf
Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network	Indicators Checklist for Literacy/Essential Skills Needs Provides a checklist of items that may indicate that your client has literacy/essential skills issues.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/Indi cators.gen.SMLN.docx
Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network	Reality Checklist This checklist presents a number of perceived barriers to entering Literacy and Basic Skills programs and provides the "reality check" for each of these issues.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/REA LITY%20Check%20List. 2012.docx
Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network	Working with Clients who might benefit from an Upgrading Program but who may be somewhat reluctant to do so This document provides five detailed tips on how to work with clients who might benefit from an upgrading program, but who may be reluctant to go to this type of program.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/SML N%20Working%20with %20Clients%20who%2 0might%20benefit%20f rom.docx

Screening and Referral Tools		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Simcoe/Muskoka (Gateway Centre for Learning)	<u>Referral Card</u> Gateway Centre for Learning has developed a generic referral card that they use when they refer a learner to a community service. The learner can take the referral card with them. The card provides the learner with something tangible to take to the referral agency that explains why the referral has been made.	http://literacynetwork. ca/pdf/transitions/Gate way%20Referral%20Ca rd.pdf

Service Directories

The service providers we consulted mentioned that they like to have information about the services offered by other organizations. It is easier to create a smooth transition for the client/learner if service providers understand

- the services provided by the other agency
- the formal pathways between the services and the process and procedures used at the other agency.

For example, if they refer someone to another agency, it is helpful if the service provider can explain to the client/learner what to expect when they go to that agency.

The following table provides some examples of tools developed by organizations to help with this.

Service Directories		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Waterloo-Wellington (Project READ)	Directory of Programs This directory of services includes both LBS and ES agencies along with other supports and services. The agencies promote the directory jointly.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/waterloo-wellington%20directory%20of%20programs.pdf
Durham	Employment-Literacy Referral Guide This Guide contains an inventory of ES and LBS programs and services, including services provided, hours of operation and contact information.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Durham%20Referral%20Protocol%202013.docx
Sudbury	Referral Indicator and Directory Tool This tool provides a matrix of information about LBS, employment and self-employment programs, including the organization, services available and contact information. The matrix was developed in partnership.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/sudbury%20agency%20directorymatrix.docx
Tillsonburg (Literacy Link South Central)	Oxford Learning Paths and Employment Paths This is a double-sided resource that offers information about LBS and employment services in Oxford County.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/MSC%20Oxford%20Learning%20Paths%202013.pdf
London/ Middlesex (Literacy Link South Central)	The Placemat This is a double-sided resource that offers information about LBS services in London/Middlesex.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Literacy%20Service%20Providers%20in%20London%20FINAL.docx

Service Directories		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Eastern Ontario (Literacy Ontario Central South)	Video Literacy Ontario Central South has created a video that profiles community-based LBS agencies in Eastern Ontario.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6X5nlMvcDjU

Joint Planning and Partnerships

Some communities are putting a concerted effort into joint service planning between ES and LBS. Others are working in partnership to provide programs and services to clients and learners. The following table provides a sample of some of these initiatives.

Joint Planning and Partnerships		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Red Lake (Red Lake Employment and Literacy Network)	<u>Employment and Literacy Network</u> This network is an unstructured group consisting of representatives from: Contact North, Confederation College, Red Lake Career and Employment Services, the training program within the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre and the Red Lake District Adult Learning Centre. An MTCU representative attends when available. This network meets quarterly to exchange information. There are no defined terms of reference, mandate, or any real structure and a chairperson is delegated to move the meeting along. This group - discusses what programs are doing and trends and issues observed in the community - identifies any training or education gaps and how best to address any concerns - refers clients on a regular basis, again quite informally	http://www.redlakeadultlearning.org/html/about_us.html
Cornwall (Tri- County Literacy Council)	<u>Occupational Training</u> LBS offers an occupational training program in the logistics sector. To develop the curriculum, they connected with employers and with Job Zone (ES) to identify employer needs and include job-site visits.	http://www.cornwallseawaynews.com/Business/2012-07-05/article-3023635/Tri-County-Literacy-targets-niche-market-for-area-employers/1

Joint Planning and Partnerships		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Cornwall (Tri-County Literacy Council)	<u>Essentials for Work</u> Tri-County Literacy Council has developed a course, Essentials for Work, Get Ready, Get Set, Go to Work, for the hardest to serve Ontario Works participants. This is a four-week training program that aims to provide individuals with the hard and soft skills needed in today's workplace. Modules look at creating a readiness to work, setting oneself up to work and then moving into work.	http://tricountyliteracycouncil.wordpress.com/learners/essentials-for-work/ http://tricountyliteracycouncil.wordpress.com/
London/ Middlesex (Literacy Link South Central)	<u>Literacy/Employment Joint Service Plan</u> Literacy Link South Central and the Employment Sector Council of London/Middlesex worked together to more effectively plan for services that cut across both the employment and literacy sectors. This process was called the **Integrating Literacy and Employment Project**. The result of this project was a three-year integrated service plan for those clients who have both literacy and employment needs. The final plan proposed four models to support more integrated service delivery: 1. Stand-alone literacy and employment agencies using a series of information tools and referral protocols 2. Co-location of literacy and employment programs 3. Integrated literacy and employment	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/LLSC%20ESCLM%20Integrated%20Service%20Plan.pdf

Joint Planning and Partnerships		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
	programming 4. Centralized case management	
Simcoe County and Muskoka (Simcoe/ Muskoka Literacy Network)	Expanded Literacy Service Planning and Co-ordination (LSPC) Committees The LSPC committees have been expanded to include ES providers and OW representatives as regular members. This has proven beneficial to all involved. It allows for regular information sharing and fosters closer connections and understanding among providers. The LSPC members work as a team with other community providers that support EO clients and learners. The committees have taken initial steps towards joint planning of programming and potential case management, for their shared clients.	www.literacynetwork.ca

Networking, Workshops and Information Sharing

Having relationships with the transition partners and creating a comfort level for the client/learner were identified as factors that create a smooth transition between ES and LBS services. Networking, workshops and information sharing are ways through which relationship building can occur. The following table provides some examples of how this is happening in communities across Ontario.

Networking, Workshops and Information Sharing		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Windsor-Essex-Lambton (Tri-County Literacy Network)	<u>Getting Connected Initiative</u> Since 2006, the Tri-County Literacy Network has been organizing "Getting Connected" events for Employment Ontario and Ontario Works staff in the tri-county region (Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex). The purpose of these forums is to build rapport among service providers to increase and improve referrals, and to discuss future relationship building.	Getting Connected (http://tcln.on.ca/)
Durham (Literacy Network of Durham Region)	<u>Joint Training Days</u> Literacy Network of Durham Region (LiNDR) partnered with the Durham Region Local Training Board to host two training days open to all community service agencies. LiNDR surveyed Employment Ontario service providers to identify topics of interest. These included mental health and customer service, Bridges Out of Poverty, and Learning with Swagger.	http://www.lindr.on.ca/
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	<u>Joint Training Events</u> Three or four times a year, Literacy Link Niagara organizes joint training events to educate LBS agencies about the programs of employment agencies and vice versa. Agendas usually include a guest speaker on a relevant topic (e.g. mental health, referrals), time for program updates, and formal and informal networking. Employment Ontario front-line staff and managers attend, along with staff from other community organizations (i.e. mental health,	http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/contact-us/

Networking, Workshops and Information Sharing		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
	computer programs, other employment organizations such as YWCA and March of Dimes).	
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	Cupid's Card Swap Cupid's Card Swap is a speed networking event envisioned by Literacy Link Niagara (LLN). The event would allow Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) practitioners and Employment Service (ES) staff the opportunity to meet face-to-face in a casual environment, such as a restaurant. Consultation with both LBS and ES agencies indicated that when people get a chance to meet in person, they are more comfortable and therefore more likely to make a client referral. Participants would register beforehand and identify the types of referrals that would be helpful for their clients. This data would be used to match people for three rounds of networking, followed by more informal networking. The event has not yet been held.	http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/contact-us/
Tillsonburg	Joint Presentations and Workshops The Adult Literacy Program Co-ordinator presented the OALCF (Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework) to Employment Services and Literacy Basic Skills staff together. Also, on occasion, workshops are held for literacy volunteer tutors and ES staff are invited to these. A recent example of this is a workshop about the software "Dragon Speak".	

Networking, Workshops and Information Sharing		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Simcoe/ Muskoka Literacy Network	<u>Information Sharing at Service Provider Team Meetings</u> LBS providers meet with local ES service providers at ES team meetings, at least once a year. This allows front-line staff to ▪ meet each other ▪ provide updates on programming and services ▪ discuss any emerging needs of clients ▪ address any questions around referrals. Similarly, LBS providers meet with their local OW front-line staff at team meetings.	
Project Findings	At all of the face-to-face workshops conducted over the course of the Phase One project, participants identified a number of activities they undertake to help transition a client/learner to a new service. These include ▪ calling the new agency on the phone to make the first appointment while the client/learner is with them ▪ going with the client/learner to the new agency and introducing them to the new service provider ▪ explaining to the client/learner what to expect at the new agency ▪ following-up with the client/learner to see how the appointment at the new agency went	

Co-Location

Being located in the same building creates a great opportunity for smooth transitions for clients/learners between ES and LBS services. The following resources provide examples of how this has happened.

Co-Location		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre	<u>Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre</u> The Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre includes Employment, Literacy and Home Support Services. It is housed within the Livingston Centre, a fully-integrated, multi-organizational building that houses five partners and 11 associated agencies under one roof. This holistic approach to service delivery provides easily accessible services, and cost-effective linkages among health, education, training, and employment. The multi-service centre helps referrals. For example, if a person is interested in one service but assessment suggests another service, it is easy and quick to refer to the other service because it is in the same building. Staff can personally introduce the person to the other staff. Co-location helps service providers identify common clients, plan the client's path together and co-ordinate support of the client as they progress. Identification of common clients often happens incidentally through conversation because the services are in close proximity and share information.	Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre flyer (http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/tillsonburg%20multiservice%20centre%20flyer.pdf) Livingston Centre brochure (http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/LivingstonCentreBrochure%202013.pdf)

Co-Location		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
QUILL Learning Network	A Best Practice Guide for Successful Multi-Agency Centres This Guide presents information on the impact of multi-agency centres, best practices for multi-agency centres and different models of multi-agency centres. This guides used sources drawn from an extensive on-line search that used key phrases and words related to multi-agency and multi-service good practices.	http://www.llsc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Webinar%202%20Best%20Practice%20Guide%20for%20Multi-Agency%20centres%20and%20appendices.pdf
Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre	Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre The Sudbury Vocational Resource Centre includes Employment Services, Education and Workplace Training (LBS), and a Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Program. There is one central administrative office and one Executive Director supporting all three services. The business plans for each of the individual program areas are aligned and developed in communication with each other. Staff of the three programs present information to each other's clients and staff, and hold staff meetings together. They also put effort into building and maintaining relationships with other LBS/ES services that are not co-located.	http://www.svrc.on.ca/

Co-Location		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Durham (Literacy Network of Durham Region)	Co-location The Literacy Network of Durham Region has been co-located with their local Workforce Planning Board for over a year. The co-location opportunity allows for more funding to be directed to training resources and curriculum. The Literacy Network provides the Workforce Planning Board with literacy intelligence and recommendations, connects them with LBS partners, and provides support such as volunteering time to administer surveys. They have found that the partnership is crucial to build on existing community resources (share the work), and that clients and literacy staff have access to more local labour market information.	http://www.lindr.on.ca/
Collège Boréal – Barrie Campus	Co-Location At Collège Boréal, both ES and LBS services are under the same roof and there is one team offering both services. This means that all staff members are very aware of what is going on within each of the services. ES and LBS staff have regular meetings during which the progress in both programs and strategies are discussed to achieve mutual objectives. At a new ES client's first appointment with an employment counsellor, they also see an LBS staff member who explains the LBS services. This way, the client knows how LBS can help	http://www.collegeboreal.ca/accueil

Co-Location		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
	them prepare better and increase their chances to secure employment. The same thing happens with any LBS client. If, during their first interview, they say they are looking for employment, a meeting with ES staff is arranged. The client learns how employment services can fit with the upgrading they need.	
Project Findings	Many communities provided examples where agencies co-locate services on a smaller scale. Instead of physically co-locating on an ongoing basis, one organization provides programs/ services for specific days (or half-days) and times at another organization whose clients need the services. This can be a regularly timed arrangement (e.g. weekly) or when there are a large number of clients needing the services.	

Resources Targeting Employers, Employees and Learners from Phase One

A number of communities have developed resources to support employers, employees and learners with both ES and LBS skills. The following table provides a sample of some of these resources.

Resources Targeting Employers, Employees and Learners		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Kingston	Paving the Way to Lasting Employment **Paving the Way to Lasting Employment** is a series of Essential Skills training videos. They help employers and/or employees find the most current tools to strengthen Essential Skills. The videos help employees improve the soft skills involved in working with others, oral communication, and thinking skills.	Kingston Paving the Way http://www.klandskills.ca/proj/PavingTheWay.pdf
Eastern Ontario (Literacy Link Eastern Ontario)	Aligning Ten Employment Services Workshops with the OALCF Literacy Link Eastern Ontario surveyed regional ES agencies for the top ten workshops they provide to clients. The materials, handouts and workshop activities and tasks were then aligned with the competencies, task groups and complexity levels of the OALCF. The resulting charts help LBS learners to know when they have the competencies and levels to be successful in the workshop.	Aligning LLEO's Assessment Tools User Guide (https://www.lleo.ca/pdf/alat/Aligning-LLEO's-Assessment-Tools-User-Guide.pdf) CABS on-line alignment (https://www.lleo.ca/pdf/alat/CABS-On-line-Alignment.pdf) CABS CAES alignment (https://www.lleo.ca/pdf/alat/CABS-CAES-Alignment.pdf) WESA alignment (https://www.lleo.ca/

Resources Targeting Employers, Employees and Learners		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
		pdf/alat/WESA-Alignment.pdf)
Niagara (Literacy Link Niagara)	Job Profiles LBS and ES providers used data from the Local Training Board and workingincanada.ca to jointly create job profiles of some up and coming jobs in the Niagara Region. The job profiles provide learners with a snapshot of each job.	http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/wp-content/uploads/Profilesmerged1.pdf
Literacy Link South Central	Connecting Literacy and Employment through Essential Skills Literacy Link South Central developed a set of seven workbooks that embed Essential Skills activities within employment-readiness tasks. These workbooks are useful for people who want to look for employment while strengthening their Essential Skills. They are most successful when used in a facilitated group setting. You can download the workbooks or use them on-line.	http://www.llsc.on.ca/node/99
(Stratford) Partners in Employ-ment	Videos for Clients Partners in Employment in Stratford provide a number of videos on their website which outline the services they provide. Video topics include a. How do I find out about training/Second Career? b. How do I get a résumé? c. How do I get on the job bank? d. How do I get an e-mail account?	http://www.partnersinemployment.on.ca/resource_centre.php#resources

Resources Targeting Employers, Employees and Learners		
Site (Source)	**Description**	**Link to Tool**
Literacy Link South Central	Ready to Learn Literacy Link South Central developed this handbook to help learners explore areas in their life that may be affected by the decision to return to learning.	http://literacynetwork.ca/pdf/transitions/Final%20_Ready%20to%20Learn.pdf

Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Phase One

Creating smooth transitions between ES and LBS services for clients/learners is paramount to achieving MTCU's goal of producing an integrated training and employment system that supports seamless client pathways.   The findings of Phase One made it clear that there are two key things that make this happen:

1.   Having relationships with transition partners, and
2.   Creating a comfort level for the client/learner

This has ramifications in terms of how service providers can "formalize" transitions between the ES and LBS system of services. Formalizing transitions is not just about developing and putting in place common referral forms and processes or about knowing what programs and services are offered in your community. Service providers need to augment these tangible tools of formalization with the intangible tools of building and maintaining relationships.

Some communities have recognized this and are creating opportunities for front-line service providers to interact, talk and network. Participants in the five workshops were overwhelmingly enthusiastic and hungry for dialogue on this topic. We need to bring ES and LBS service providers together regularly to discuss this topic and identify solutions that will work at the local level. The Ministry of Training, colleges and Universities (MTCU) could play an increased and key role in reducing barriers that exist within Employment Ontario – barriers that prevent clients from making smooth transitions.

Phase Two

The objective of Phase Two was to gain the perspectives of Employment Ontario (EO) clients who have experienced referrals and transition between Employment and Literacy services, and to better understand what worked best for them when referred and/or transitioned to another service provider.

In Phase One, agency staff identified these factors as indicated above:

1.   Having relationships with transition partners
2.   Creating a comfort level for the client/learner

Clients in Phase Two also identified both of these factors, in addition to those listed in Table 2: Comparison of staff perspectives to client perspectives. It is not at all surprising that, given their differing points of view, EO agency staff and clients described these factors differently. Agency staff members have multiple accountabilities – to the client, the funder and the agency itself – and their comments reflect leading practices in service delivery, performance management and formalizing transitions. Clients are accountable to only one party – themselves. Their comments reflect leading practices that benefit them as individuals, satisfy their emotional needs and prepare them for the next steps.

The results of client consultations were remarkable.

1.   Focus group participants did not identify their own skills, attitudes or motivations as factors in the transition process.

In Phase One, when identifying key factors influencing clients' transition from one service to another, most EO agency staff members described client readiness in terms of observable client skills, attitudes and motivations.

In Phase Two, none of the 80 focus group participants identified their own readiness as a key factor influencing their transition from one service to another. This may be because clients

- are firmly entrenched and focused on priorities within the agency in which they are currently receiving services
- may not be aware of the mandate or limits of service of the agency where they are currently receiving services
- may not be aware of appropriate options for their next steps
- may believe that when transition to another program is appropriate, it is the agency's responsibility to guide them
- may lack the introspection to understand their own strengths, challenges and readiness for next steps.

2.   Clients were very clear in describing agency features and practices that would ease their transition experience.

Focus group participants described practices in communications, accommodations and environments that aided in their transition into current programming. They described effective service delivery features, strategies and tools that informed and motivated them toward their next steps. They identified the importance of a single point of contact and timely communications as key factors in easing their transition to the next step, a factor agency staff did not identify.

3.   Clients described the importance of their feelings, generated in a safe, welcoming, client-focused agency.

Focus group participants validated the principles of respectful, compassionate, client-focused services, emphasizing the importance of programming that enhances their self-awareness. They identified the importance of understanding their strengths, weaknesses

and monitoring their progress toward goals – goals that improve their personal lives in addition to learning or employment opportunities.

4.   Clients want to understand all the options available to them.

Focus group participants described co-location and partnerships among agencies as an important element in easing their transition. They identifed not only the value of having a variety of diverse services ("a one-stop shop") in the same building, but also the opportunity to tour other agencies. Clients want to know that their chosen learning or employment goals are realistic in their chosen labour markets.

5.   Clients in the Francophone and Deaf streams identified numerous barriers in their transition to the next step, whether to another service provider or to employment.   Clients in the Anglophone stream did not identify any such barriers.

Participants in Francophone and Deaf focus groups identified common barriers in some workplaces and service provider agencies. They said that communications were often not available in the appropriate language (ASL or French) or in their preferred modes (text, e-mail or phone). They described "revolving" or "closing doors" because some services and employers are unaware of what accommodations were necessary, available or legally required. They identified the lack of knowledge and resources (money, staff, and time) as underlying reasons that accommodations were not made. They also felt that organizations and businesses need to have policies to ensure that accommodations are made.

Based on the findings of this project are the following **recommendations** for Employment Ontario (EO) and other service providers:

1.   Actively engage clients in their own learning and self-exploration, recognizing and tracking progress both informally and formally.

2. **Provide an environment of care, compassion and outstanding customer service.**

3. **Explore and build partnerships with other agencies, within and beyond EO.**

4. **Gather, provide and use labour market information when helping clients set goals, develop service/learning plans and transition to the next step.**

5. **Examine your communications and accommodations policies to ensure you are meeting your clients' needs and preferences, and meeting legal standards.**

The comparison of client perspectives to staff perspectives from the earlier project shows both commonalities and differences. We can still learn more from the experiences of both parties. Through ongoing discussions and active listening about their mutual needs and priorities, the perspectives of Employment Ontario staff and clients will more strongly align.