Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework

Implementation Training Guide

FALL · 2011

Compiled by Community Literacy of Ontario — February 2012

COMMUNITY LITERACY
OF ONTARIO

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Fall 2011 Implementation Training Guide

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Project Host:	Community Literacy of Ontario
Compilation:	Karen Farrar
Original Workshop Development/Delivery:	Robyn Cook-Ritchie
Project Manager:	Jette Cosburn
Content Editing	Jette Cosburn
Copy Editing:	Tamara Kaattari

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Foreword

The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) has generated a variety of training opportunities for Ontario's literacy practitioners. Perhaps you have participated in face-to-face or online training or, perhaps you have viewed a PowerPoint presentation on the OALCF. No doubt you have received handouts, web addresses and a copy of the Framework. With all of this new information, it's easy to lose sight of the goal of the OALCF and its place in your program. It's also easy to forget parts of the training, and you might feel that you need a refresher on a specific topic.

Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) has produced this training guide based on OALCF implementation training that was delivered to Ontario's literacy field in the fall of 2011. This resource also contains some revised content where changes have been made to the OALCF since the delivery of the original training. This resource is an additional training enhancement and will be beneficial as a refresher for those who were able to attend training.

You can use this guide for review and reference, and you can also use it for new staff and volunteers who are not familiar with the OALCF. This training guide can also help you to explain OALCF concepts to other stakeholders, including Employment Ontario partners.

The OALCF has changed the way we think about and deliver our programming. At the same time, it has underpinned LBS philosophy and supported its outcomes. A deep understanding of the OALCF concepts will help practitioners to ensure learners derive the maximum benefit from the Framework.

We strongly encourage practitioners to visit the OALCF website on the Employment Ontario Partners' Gateway (EOPG) to keep apprised of changes to the OALCF and its resources. The link is www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/

A Brief Introduction to the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework

What is the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework?

The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) is a foundational multi-part Framework that supports and strengthens the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs' delivery of task-based programming to learners. It provides tools that help LBS practitioners strengthen programming that is already in place. The OALCF also allows the field to be more precise and transparent with goal-directed, learner-centred programming. It enhances the LBS vision of learner-centredness because it provides for cultural considerations, enabling programs to understand and deliver appropriate and relevant programming for culturally diverse populations. Goal-directed programming is enhanced by placing a greater emphasis on the specific tasks related to learner goals and those tasks become the focal point for learning. The OALCF is based on the recognition that learners' participation, persistence and success improve when literacy programming links to learners' goals and takes into account their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The OALCF is transition-oriented and this foundation of contextualized programming combined with goal-directed learning and coordinated learner supports and services is a critical feature of the OALCF.

What is the purpose of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework?

The purpose of the OALCF is to improve the transitions of adults through Employment Ontario (EO) and the broader education and training system. It was developed to strengthen and support Literacy and Basic Skills programming in Ontario.

- The OALCF **provides criteria** against which learning achievements can be articulated in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) delivery system.

- The OALCF makes LBS services and client outcomes **more transparent** for referring EO partners by shifting from a skills-building approach to the performance of tasks needed for meeting the learner's goal.

- The OALCF **supports the current mission** for LBS and strengthens the field's ability to work towards this mission.

- The OALCF **provides a clear goal path** for learners, enabling them to transition to their next destinations.

Goal Path Supports

When practitioners are working with learners to set goals and develop the Learner Plans, they will find the five goal path description resources, as well as *An Introduction to the Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners* to be very useful. These are all available at the OALCF website at www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/

What is the difference between a goal and a goal path?

The **goal** is what the learner wants to achieve after leaving the LBS Program. The **goal path** refers to the preparation – the goal-related programming including learning activities – required to exit LBS and transition to the goal. It is delivered by an LBS service provider and is the focus of a program. The terms short- and long-term goal are no longer being used. Rather, what happens in the LBS program is the goal path and the goal is beyond LBS.

An Introduction to the Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners helps practitioners to differentiate between the goal path and the goal. It provides an understanding of the purpose of the goal path description documents and what goal path descriptions include. This resource outlines how the goal path descriptions improve learner outcomes. It explains who uses the goal path descriptions and how the goal path descriptions are organized.

The *Goal Path Descriptions* help practitioners and learners make good decisions about the selection of a goal, learning activities and assessment methods and about other supports that might be necessary for learners' successful transitions to their goals. The *Goal Path Description* documents were developed through research related to each path, key informant interviews and a cultural review. The goal path descriptions were also informed by a review of publicly available information related to each goal. Interviews were conducted with key informants to determine other important information on how LBS learners can access their goal. Requirements may differ according to the community, institution or the personal circumstances of the learner. Therefore, both the practitioner and learner must ask additional questions to see how the publicly available information applies to the learner's unique situation. To ensure the cultural appropriateness of each goal path description, reviews were conducted by literacy practitioners working with Anglophone, Deaf, Francophone and Native adult learners.

The purpose of these *Goal Path Descriptions* is to inform the goal-setting process, to aid in the development of the Learner Plan and to connect the LBS program to the learner's goal. They suggest non-LBS support services that can help ensure that the learner remains in the program long enough to obtain all that is necessary to transition to the goal. The *Goal Path Descriptions* outline the role of the LBS service provider in preparing the learner for the goal and suggest other agencies or services that will contribute to the learner's positive outcomes.

Each *Goal Path Description* includes the following information:

- a description of the goal
- eligibility and entrance requirements, as well as other considerations for participation, such as costs or special equipment
- options for how to achieve the goal
- a description of how achievement is recognized once the goal is reached
- suggested resources for learners and practitioners to use for further information and research

The *Goal Path Descriptions* also suggest some key questions that the learner and practitioner might ask when selecting the learner's LBS goal, for example, identifying supports a learner may need to ensure program persistence and successful transition and identifying appropriate referrals to other non-LBS services. The questions are examples of what the practitioner or learner might want to ask when choosing a goal or developing a Learner Plan. They are not intended to be prescriptive or mandatory.

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners: Employment

This guide describes employment as an activity for which an individual seeks to earn a wage or salary. Activities that lead to employment and are similar to work, such as volunteering, internships and community placement are also part of the employment goal path description. Individuals with an employment goal spend time in job search, developing employability and job retention skills or learning how to advance at the workplace. The information in this goal path description will assist LBS service providers to give learners the appropriate supports, tools, and referrals to assist them in reaching their employment or career goal(s).

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners: Apprenticeship

The apprenticeship goal path description outlines on-the-job workplace-based training programs for a career in the skilled trades. The apprenticeship goal path description also includes information on skills training programs (hands-on, job-specific training).

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners: Secondary School Credit

This goal path description outlines the various options available to learners for completing individual credit courses or obtaining their full Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). This information will help LBS service providers give learners the appropriate support and guidance they need to transition to secondary school credit courses.

Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners: Postsecondary

This goal path description outlines the formal education opportunities (college and university) for which high school completion or its equivalency is the normal entrance requirement.

The independence goal path description outlines four broad areas that contribute to personal independence: managing basic needs, health, personal issues and relationships, and participating in the community. The independence goal does not have standard requirements or eligibility criteria due to the many purposes for which independence is required. The description illustrates key skills for preparation and supports many learners need.

How do the *Goal Path Descriptions* improve learner outcomes?

The *Goal Path Descriptions* will help the learner and the practitioner make appropriate choices as they develop the Learner Plan by providing an understanding of all aspects of the goal including: expectations, requirements, accessibility and desirability. Understanding the *end point* – the goal which the learner wants to achieve – is the LBS service providers' *starting point* for designing and delivering a goal-directed, contextualized program. By linking learning activities and content to the goal, learners are more likely to remain motivated to succeed. LBS service providers have the flexibility and mandate to provide learners with targeted services that will maximize program persistence and successful learning outcomes.

Goal path descriptions will also help practitioners make better referrals to non-LBS supports and services. Understanding the non-LBS related features of the goal will help the LBS service provider identify and make timely referrals to the other supports and services that learners need to maximize their chances of being successful in both the LBS Program as well as in their next step(s). These supports can include financial aid and material supports, health supports, academic supports, employment-related supports and other social services.

Learners and practitioners can determine if there are cultural and language considerations for successfully navigating the goal path and achieving the goal. LBS service providers serve many kinds of learners, including those who are Anglophone, Francophone, Native and Deaf. For example, a learner may be improving French literacy skills through the LBS Program because she wants to become an apprentice. The learner needs to know if the in-school portion of the selected apprenticeship training program is available in French. If not, the Learner Plan will have to outline how the learner will obtain the necessary English skills to access the trade's training program.

Should an LBS practitioner know all the details of each goal?

The LBS practitioner is an expert in providing learner-centred, goal-directed and transition-oriented literacy programming and is *not* expected to be aware of all the details for each goal. The LBS practitioner does need to understand the general scope of the goal and needs to know what questions to ask of whom in their community. There are specialized services in many communities, such as educational counsellors at colleges; Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) consultants for apprenticeship programs; school board principals for Adult Credit programming; and Employment Service Centres for career exploration and job search.

The goal path descriptions provide high-level details of each goal that can point the learner and practitioner towards additional information that they should consider to make the best possible goal and programming choices.

Which questions do the *Goal Path Descriptions* help to answer?

The goal path descriptions clearly explain the goal path so that both the learner and the practitioner understand what it means to be employed, an apprentice, a secondary school credit student, a postsecondary student or independent and able to handle personal tasks. The goal path descriptions direct learners and practitioners to resources or websites that will help them understand the requirements of the goal and provide goal-directed learning activities.

The goal path descriptions also help to answer questions about whether or not the goal is reasonable, achievable, feasible and appropriate. They clarify the role of the LBS service provider in preparing the learner for the goal and identify other agencies or services that can contribute to the learner's positive outcomes.

Who can use the Goal Path Descriptions?

Learners use the goal path descriptions to:
- set a realistic goal
- understand the gaps between abilities and goal requirements
- understand how to bridge the gaps in their literacy and numeracy abilities for goal path achievement

Practitioners use the goal path descriptions to:
- help learners set a goal
- develop the Learner Plan
- choose appropriate content
- ensure that learners will apply their learning in meaningful, goal-oriented ways

Employers and other Stakeholders use the goal path descriptions to:
- understand how LBS prepares learners for specific goals
- Other stakeholders include: adult secondary school staff, postsecondary institution counselling services staff, Employment Service providers, social support services (such as Ontario Works), MTCU staff and others.

Learner Plan Supports

MTCU has developed two resources that are related to the Learner Plan: the *Learner Plan Template* and *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template*.

The *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template* will help practitioners to understand the objectives of the Learner Plan and how will it assist learners and LBS service providers as well the LBS field at large. It helps identify the range of other supports that a learner requires to either participate or succeed in an LBS program. It also details the other information that needs to be collected and why. And, the *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template* gives instructions on collecting and entering data.

The *Learner Plan Template* describes the learning and program elements that prepare learners for their next steps beyond the LBS program. It includes the learner's goal, background information, assessment results, tasks, learning activities, program duration, additional supports required by the learner, as well as referral results.

The *Learner Plan Template* and the Learner

The *Learner Plan Template* helps learners to understand their goal as well as the LBS learning activities that will ensure goal path achievement. It lists other (non-LBS) supports that will help the learner prepare to move beyond LBS. The *Learner Plan Template* can help learners to discern whether or not they are ready for their goal through assessment of learning activities and key tasks.

The *Learner Plan Template* and the LBS Practitioner

The *Learner Plan Template* offers a clear vision of the learner's goal that guides all programming decisions. It records the learning activities that this learner needs in order to bridge gaps in literacy and knowledge related to their goal path (competencies, skills, content) and the appropriate learning materials that should be used. Should they be necessary, the template lists other supports the learner needs to be successful in their next step. It helps to ensure that the practitioner makes appropriate referrals and coordinates the learner's LBS program to other community services. The *Learner Plan Template* outlines assessment activities that give both the practitioner and the learner the assurance that they are ready for the demands of the next step.

The *Learner Plan Template* also provides a common format and a common language to organize learning activities. Therefore, it is also a tool to collect data to support accountability and program improvement. The template gives LBS service providers help to further the objective of building a more integrated system of service provision.

The *Learner Plan Template* was developed with practitioner consultation, a review of current learner plans and in consultation with MTCU. LBS practitioners from all regions, delivery sectors and cultural streams were consulted through preliminary and follow-up interviews. A wide range of learner plans were examined and practitioners shared the processes they used to complete their learner plans. Consultations with Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) staff contributed important insight into how learner data on activities and outcomes serve both accountability and program improvement purposes.

How is the *Learner Plan Template* organized?

The *Learner Plan Template* organizes information in a common format for ease of use between program providers.

The *Learner Plan Template* has four sections:
   A.   Background
   B.   Goal
   C.   Learning Activities/Other Learner Supports
   D.   Exit, Outcomes, and Follow-up

A. Background – The first section includes a limited amount of registration and background information including both education and employment experience.

This section operates as a registration or intake form that includes the learner's personal information, education background and employment history. For Section A1, you may wish to ask for a Driver's License or other identification that would help you to easily fill out the information required.

B. Goal – The second section is focussed on the learner's goal path, which is the LBS programming leading to the goal. It includes information about the learner's chosen goal path and key tasks that will support that goal path. It records entry assessment information as well as any other requirements for the learner to be "goal ready."

The goal section would generally be started after initial discussion with the learner to identify their goal. Ongoing data entry (e.g., end dates and outcomes) for key tasks would occur as each key task is finished. There are also questions about how much time the learner expects to commit to LBS activities. Practitioners list the tasks which are important for learners to be able to do as a result of programming activities. Practitioners also identify the assessment tool(s) used to determine the learner's starting point. In addition to listing the tasks associated with the goal path, the formatting of the template provides for start and end dates, and for recording the "outcome" of the task; that is, whether or not it was completed, if it is still in progress or if it was not attempted.

In April 2012, "milestones" will take the place of the "tasks" included in this template.

C1. Learning Activities – The "tasks" (and, in April 2012, "milestones") lead to the third section of the template where practitioners list learning activities that will help learners develop the necessary skills and content to perform tasks successfully. It provides information on learning activities and their outcomes, including modes of delivery and their duration.

This section would be completed after initial discussions with the learner to jointly decide which learning activities will assist in achieving the key tasks. Ongoing data entry (e.g., end dates and outcomes) for learning activities occurs as each is finished.

This section includes all learning activities, some of which may not be tied to competencies but to other goal requirements, such as specific subject content. Mode of delivery, resources, how the activity will be assessed, its duration and whether it was successfully completed are also tracked here.

Note: Learning activities can be identified as those activities directly related to the tasks, those activities which build skills to help learners be "transition ready" but are not directly related to the tasks, and those activities which focus on academic content necessary for learners to progress.

C2. Other Learner Supports – The practitioner identifies any supports the learner needs to be successful in their LBS program or once they transition beyond LBS. Information will include what supports are being provided, who is providing support, referral status, the duration of support and outcomes. The supports section would be completed after initial discussions with the learner to jointly decide upon which supports would facilitate achieving key tasks, learning activities and transition to the goal.

Ongoing identification of supports and data entry (e.g., end dates and outcomes) would occur as each support is finished. This would include information on supports that the learner has either been receiving prior to joining an LBS program and/or the ones that were referred by the LBS service provider after joining an LBS program. Practitioners can also list who is providing each type of support, any referrals the practitioner makes, the duration of the support, as well as its outcome. The information included here distinguishes between those supports which are accessed through a referral from the LBS service provider and those which the learner accessed through other means (e.g., Ontario Works). This distinction is important since referrals to other services are an important indicator of service coordination under Employment Ontario (EO).

There are no specific directions on what tools or approaches to use for deciding which supports are needed by learners and how to refer them. Each LBS service provider makes these decisions according to their own available resources and the community service coordination protocols that are in place in their community.

D. Exit, Outcomes and Follow-up – The fourth section of the template tracks the outcomes the learner has achieved: completion of the tasks identified, assessment results and the learner's destination on exiting this LBS program.

This section includes information on key task accomplishments, exit assessment, goal readiness and customer service. In time, the "culminating task" will be one indicator of transition readiness. This section is completed after the program is finished, typically during the last session. The follow-up section is completed typically three months and/or six months after the LBS program exit date. It can include information about learner status in employment and education/training.

How to use the Learner Plan Template

Step 1
Print and fill in the template manually and then later enter the data into a Microsoft Word document **or** enter data directly into a Microsoft Word document. Either way you choose to collect the information, it must be entered into the electronic Microsoft Word *Learner Plan Template* document.

For each of the sections, an effort has been made to use "drop-down" menus to make data entry easier.
- If you are filling out the form by hand on paper, please refer to Appendix A in the *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template* document for the list of possible answers.
- If you are filling out the Word form, click to the right of the grey shaded rectangle beside the questions, and a small arrow pointing downwards ↓ will appear.
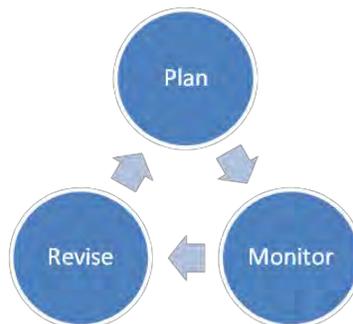- Click on the arrow and the drop-down list will appear.

Step 2
Save the document with a unique file name for each learner.
The first thing you need to do for a new learner is to rename the Word document using a unique filename, for example, including the learner's name, "Learner Plan Andrew Smith.doc."

Step 3
Print and file the Learner Plan and also print a copy for the learner.

The *Learner Plan Template* is a tool for the practitioner to use to plan, monitor, and revise the activities of learners.

The plan ensures that learners:

- understand the steps that are required to achieve their goal
- have a clear understanding of the sequence for training
- understand the time necessary to achieve the learning identified for their goal path

Integration with EOIS Case Management System

The Learner Plan will be integrated into the accountability system being implemented by MTCU in April 2012. The elements of the *Learner Plan Template* are consistent with future data requirements that will be tracked by service providers in April 2012, with several exceptions noted in the *Instructions for the Learner Plan Template*.

Service Coordination and Referrals Support

There are two important features of an adult literacy program that contribute significantly to positive learner outcomes:

1. Quality instruction for an adult to gain the needed literacy skills and competencies.
2. Timely access to needed supports and services.

LBS service providers are required to work with other organizations to better coordinate non-instructional supports for learners. Most literacy learners are people who need additional supports in order to succeed. LBS service providers are primarily resourced and mandated to provide quality literacy instruction and use service coordination and referral as the way to link learners to the other non-instructional supports they need. Learners are best served when all services and programs work seamlessly together.

A resource that clearly explains learner supports and service coordination has been developed to help practitioners with the important function of service coordination and referrals. The resource *Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referrals* outlines the kinds of supports learners may need to be successful in their LBS program and to transition to their goal. It explains how the *Leaner Plan Template* is used to identify the range of supports a learner requires. *Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referrals* suggests ways to work with community partners to make appropriate referrals.

There are five Categories of Supports that contribute to learner success: financial, academic, employment, social service and health. All supports will be tracked on the Learner Plan.

Financial/material supports include:
- income support
- transportation
- childcare

*Traditionally, LBS provided financial/material supports through "Training Supports" funding.

Academic supports include:
- learning disability assessment/programming
- tutoring/mentoring
- monitoring/support in program participation

Employment supports include:
- job search
- monitoring/support for entry/re-entry into the workforce (e.g., orientation to workplace, work experience and job coaching, motivation/attitude regarding employment)

Social Service supports include:
- housing assistance
- legal assistance (including parole, pardon, custody, CAS)
- personal/family counselling (including anger management/stress management groups)
- life/social skills (e.g., time management, interpersonal skills, assertiveness, problem solving, conflict resolution)

Health supports include:
- mental health assessment/support
- addiction/substance abuse counselling or program
- food/nutrition

Deciding which supports are needed

The best way to determine needs is based on trust, that is, the willingness of learners to disclose the challenges they experience and for which they need some support. Trust is only developed over a period of time and is underpinned by a face-to-face relationship between a learner and a staff member. An understanding and sympathetic relationship helps in the assessment of a learner's challenges. The identification of needed supports will likely occur when the learner feels that the service provider is trying to address challenges and solve problems and is not judging the learner. It is important that learners understand that not all challenges can be addressed within the LBS Program and that staff will facilitate the necessary referrals to other service providers.

There is no one tool or approach to identify the challenges that a learner is reluctant to disclose or that arise unexpectedly. Practitioners will become aware of the need through a more informal process which includes a regular review of learner progress and a supportive relationship.

It is important that all LBS service providers and practitioners are aware of the resources available in the community and have the ability to work with a range of community service providers. Strong working relations with community partners will help in the development of the tools and processes that identify (a) which learners might require specific support and (b) options for providing these supports. Regional networks have an important role to play in facilitating an increase in knowledge of community information and strengthening service coordination.

Service coordination and referral approaches

Four approaches to service coordination and referral are discussed in the *Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referrals* resource. These are: active case management, interagency cooperation, integrated programming and a community-wide approach. LBS service providers can build capacity in the area of service coordination even though these service coordination and referral approaches are not yet fully in place.

In the interim, two priority areas ought to be 1) building awareness of community resources, and 2) developing working relationships with other service providers.

Active Case Management

The client deals with a single point of contact, and it is the case manager's responsibility to provide support and to coordinate the necessary services. Employment Service providers under Employment Ontario currently use this approach to service coordination. Eventually LBS practitioners will oversee the identification of a learner's needs, coordinate referrals to the appropriate services and monitor the provision of the supports and their effectiveness in meeting the learner's needs. It can strengthen a program's capacity to assess learner barriers and provide referrals or direct services more efficiently. However, this is a longer-term goal of program integration under Employment Ontario. It will take some time to reach this goal.

In the interim, LBS service providers can continue to work with other non-LBS providers to refer learners to the supports needed for success. The Learner Plan can help practitioners identify the need for more intensive case management by tracking learner supports and referrals and analyzing how receiving supports influences positive learner outcomes.

Interagency Cooperation

In this model one agency typically deals with a specific aspect of programming, e.g., assessment. Interagency cooperation occurs when agencies are able to cooperate to ensure that learner supports are in place. For example, an agency might provide all the assessment services in a community and track the effectiveness of referrals.

Cooperation might be either formal or informal, and involve different agencies (or distinct departments within a complex organization such as a college or multi-service agency) sharing responsibility for learners' programs by offering different elements which, taken together, provide a broader range of supports.

Integrated Programming

In this model the client accesses a range of services at the same agency where a combination of services can be provided concurrently, ideally through a single service provider. The most common form of integrated programming involves literacy and vocational skills training. Community-based agencies might integrate LBS and employment supports, while school boards may integrate literacy and credit courses. As another example, colleges might integrate LBS and pre-apprenticeship programs through a PLAR process.

A Community-Wide Planning Process

This is similar to the Literacy Services Planning process but expanded to include a variety of service providers in the community. Community service providers cooperate to ensure that their services are accessible to learners and effective in meeting their range of needs. While LBS agencies have long participated in a literacy services planning process, a broader community-wide process would link LBS service providers with providers of a range of other services and supports such as health or social services. Many regions are currently expanding their LSP process to include Employment Service providers as a first step towards a community planning process.

Milestones

Milestones are goal-related assessment activities. Learners will complete milestones to demonstrate their abilities to carry out goal-related tasks. Successful completion of milestones will provide evidence that learners can perform goal-related activities at given levels. Milestones will be one way for learners to see that they are developing the abilities necessary to complete goal-related tasks. Sixty milestones will be developed using task and performance descriptors from within a task group and level. Each milestone will correspond to one indicator, task group or competency in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework.

A *Milestone Selection Guide* will provide guidelines to help learners and practitioners choose appropriate and meaningful milestones. Learners and practitioners will work together to choose milestones that are meaningful and appropriate given learners' goals and literacy skills upon program entry.

Milestones will include all the tools necessary to administer, score and interpret learner performance. These will include administration instructions, inputs (e.g., documents, texts, writing prompts), items (questions), scoring notes, evaluation criteria and exemplars where appropriate. Each milestone will also include details to help practitioners interpret learners' results.

Milestones have been developed in consultation with the literacy field. Early in the development process, practitioners representing the different goal paths were asked to review milestones under consideration to determine the extent to which they describe goal-related tasks. As the development of milestones progresses, a selection of practitioners and learners will test the milestones to determine whether any instructions, items, prompts or scoring notes are unclear or misleading. A group of practitioners will be selected to review each milestone to identify any cultural bias. Practitioners will also be asked to help determine what constitutes success on each milestone.

Authentic documents, texts, situations and interactions will form the basis for milestones. Learners will be required to demonstrate their ability to meet task demands by working with materials in the ways they would outside literacy programs. Milestones will be chosen by learners and practitioners because of their relevance to learners' goals and interests. For example, a learner whose goal is apprenticeship will select milestones relevant to that goal path. Milestones are intended to reflect the types of tasks learners are likely to perform once they transition. However, milestones alone do not define the complete set of tasks that learners will work towards in literacy programs. Practitioners will continue to use their expertise to make programming decisions to help learners achieve their goals.

Milestones are considered one measure of progress towards learners' goals. But it cannot be concluded that individuals are ready to transition because they have successfully completed their selected milestones. As just one assessment tool in the LBS system, milestones will work within a broader assessment system.

Programs will continue to use other assessment tools they are familiar with and that they believe furnish valuable information for programming purposes. It is the sum of information collected through all assessment that will help practitioners determine when learners are ready to transition out of literacy programming.

Milestones are designed for consistent use over time. All milestones will have administration instructions and evaluation criteria. In some cases, evaluation criteria will include exemplars, which are illustrative examples of successful performance. Milestones will be administered and scored in such a way that interpretations of results are consistent between assessment sessions and amongst different assessors.

To ensure that learners' experience with milestones is the same regardless of when and where they are administered, milestones will need to be kept secure. On a practical level, this means storing milestone documentation, including learners' results, in secure locations. Milestones should be accessible only when learners are completing the tasks.

Milestones are designed for efficient administration. It will be possible to administer most milestones within 30 minutes or less, and to more than one learner in a group setting. In some cases, milestones will function similarly to assignments that take place over an extended time period; however, the intention is to keep assessor time requirements to a minimum.

How are milestones to be used within LBS?

Practitioners will use the *Milestone Selection Guide* when working with learners to choose milestones that represent the kind of tasks that will be needed once learners transition out of LBS. In group settings, learners may select some milestones in common with their peers, while others may be unique to individuals. Learners will receive instruction and programming consistent with their literacy skills and goals. After a period of upgrading, practitioners can administer milestones to learners. Milestones are intended to show learners, practitioners and TCU the progress made while in the LBS program.

Milestones should be administered when practitioners think that learners are likely to succeed in performing them. Practitioners can make this decision by asking themselves questions such as:

- Has the learner received instruction on similar tasks?
- Has the learner successfully completed similar tasks?
- Does the learner feel ready to try an assessment task?

If the response to these questions is yes, then the learner is ready to try the milestone.

Milestone completion is not equivalent to transition-readiness; milestones are only examples of tasks that are goal-related. Practitioners should use learner's needs and interests, along with the Curriculum Framework, to decide what to focus programming on. Providing learners with opportunities to complete numerous tasks at a level, particularly tasks that employ different formats and genres, will provide evidence that a learner has skills at a given level.

Milestone activities are scored and the results are provided to learners. When relating results, practitioners will need to ensure that specific milestone content is not discussed with learners and that learners are not shown the completed milestone again.   This will help ensure that milestones are kept secure. Instead, practitioners should provide general information about what learners have demonstrated and what they still need to work on.

Learners' successful results are recorded in EOIS-CaMS (LBS practitioners will be trained to use EOIS-CaMS). In cases where milestone attempts are unsuccessful, learners may retake the same milestones after a period of time. Successful completion of milestones will provide evidence that learners can perform goal-related activities at given levels. Milestones will be one way for learners to see that they are developing the abilities necessary to complete goal-related tasks.

Milestones are intended to complement other assessment approaches used in Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills Program and are an important indicator of learner progress. Milestones, integrated tasks, culminating tasks and day-to-day learning activities/tasks allow learners to demonstrate progress throughout their time in an LBS or Academic Upgrading (AU) program. While a useful source of information, milestone results cannot be used in isolation to determine whether learners are transition-ready. Milestones will provide evidence that a learner can perform some goal-related tasks. Practitioners should continue to use assessment tools they are comfortable with to determine when learners are ready to transition out of literacy programming.

Culminating Tasks

A culminating task is a complex task that incorporates multiple competencies and task groups. Culminating tasks allow learners to apply their skills and knowledge across competencies in a way that reflects real-life situations.

Milestones, integrated tasks, and day-to-day learning activities/tasks allow learners to demonstrate progress throughout their time in an LBS/AU program. If the learner's plan takes them all the way to the goal destination, they should be able to successfully complete the culminating task for the chosen goal path. Culminating tasks represent the end point of a goal path.

Not all learners will reach the point of attempting and completing a culminating task, which is perfectly acceptable. There are many other indicators of progress and success for LBS/AU learners. Only those who complete their Learner Plan and are ready to transition to the goal destination will complete the culminating task for their goal path. Successful completion of the culminating task is just *one indicator* that the learner may be ready to manage the next step of life, learning, or work as they transition to the goal destination. Culminating tasks are just one element in a broad assessment strategy; using a variety of assessment tools and measures has always been (and remains) a cornerstone of LBS/AU programming.

Culminating tasks do not replace any credentials, courses, or certifications that learners may need to access their goal and are just one indicator of readiness for transition. Others may include successful completion of academic courses/credentials, e.g., ACE, GED, OSSD; or trade-related certifications, e.g., Smart Serve, CPR/First Aid. It is important to note that culminating tasks are not equivalent to such

credentials or certifications that may be required to enter the goal destination. Nonetheless, culminating tasks may be useful in service coordination with other Employment Ontario stakeholders because, ideally, the culminating tasks provide a way to partially describe what a person can do when he or she is ready for transition.

There will be **one** culminating task for each goal path except Apprenticeship, which will have **two.** Apprenticeship will have one culminating task for apprenticeship itself and one for short-term skills training. In the future, there may be a choice of culminating tasks for the five goal paths.

Current working titles for the culminating tasks are:
- Independence – Creating a Simple Budget
- Secondary School Credit – Preparing for Further Education
- Employment – Communicating and Problem-Solving in the Workplace
- Apprenticeship – Analyzing and Completing Trade-Related Documentation
- Skills Training – Completing Trade-Related Documentation
- Postsecondary –Reading, Thinking and Writing Critically

Culminating tasks will be representative of the five goal paths in the OALCF because the elements of individual Learner Plans can be quite varied. Even within one goal path, the culminating tasks need to be broad enough to accommodate these differences. For example, in the Employment path the Learner Plan for a goal of "retail sales" will have some different elements than one for "construction labourer." Similarly, in the postsecondary path, the requirements identified on the Learner Plan for a goal of entering the "Practical Nursing" program will be different from the requirements for a "Business-Accounting" program.

The culminating tasks may place more emphasis on self-management and awareness of the demands of the goal destination and less emphasis on the "content/knowledge" requirements due to the variety of skills, knowledge, tasks, competencies and credentials that can be required within each goal path.

Each culminating task will have five elements:

1. **Overview for Practitioners –** This section provides a description of the purpose and context of the culminating task. It outlines the steps a practitioner needs to take to prepare to administer the culminating task. It describes how to score and interpret the results and explains the debriefing protocol.

2. **Chart –** This section outlines the competencies, task groups and levels the culminating task draws upon.

3. **Marking Scheme/Rubric –** This section will include answers or criteria for each question.

4. **Overview for Learners –** This section is where the task is explained to the learner. It provides detailed instructions including what materials are required.

5. **Task –** This is the actual culminating task that the learner needs to complete.

Culminating tasks are developed in consultation with the literacy field, including practitioners, cultural streams and LBS/AU programs. Practitioners with expertise in the five goal paths will be involved in the development of the culminating tasks. Each of the culminating tasks will be reviewed by cultural stream representatives who have expertise and familiarity with the following elements: the goal path for the culminating task under review, the cultural needs of learners in their stream and the operational realities of program delivery in their stream. Once a draft version of each culminating task is completed, a selection of LBS/AU programs across streams/sectors will conduct a field review. Those reviewers will be asked to respond to a series of specific questions with respect to the five elements listed above. They will also be able to make other comments. Revisions will be made accordingly.

How are Culminating Tasks to be used within LBS?

When a learner has completed all elements of their Learner Plan, they may be required to attempt a culminating task for their goal path. This determination needs to be made by the practitioner. The practitioner and learner agree on the time and location for completing the culminating task. There is a suggested time estimate for completion, but there is not a specific time limit. Practitioners will need to use discretion and common sense in allowing learners sufficient time. At the agreed-upon time, the learner receives the culminating task package. They are provided with a quiet, supervised location to complete the task. When the learner is finished, they return all materials from the package to the practitioner for assessment/scoring. After the culminating tasks are scored, the practitioner debriefs with the learner regarding their results.

The results are recorded as required, and the culminating task package and scoring records are stored securely as per agency policies. Successful completion of a culminating task will be tracked for accountability purposes. Service providers will be asked to report on whether the learner has successfully completed the goal path specific culminating task, and only a yes/no answer will be required.

Culminating tasks need to be kept secure. Like milestones, culminating task packages and the learner results should be stored in a secure location. Programs will need to determine the most practical way to access and store both the task packages and the learner results. They will also need to follow the administration protocols to ensure consistency in the delivery and scoring of the culminating tasks.

How do culminating tasks fit with other elements of LBS programming in the OALCF?

Within the context of the OALCF, LBS/AU programming for learners includes day-to-day learner activities/tasks, milestones and culminating tasks. The culminating task for a learner's goal path brings together many elements of the Learner Plan. The day-to-day programming for learners includes a wide variety of learner-centred, goal-directed activities, assignments, resources, tasks, and assessments which allow learners to acquire the skills, knowledge, and behaviours that they need for their goal. In some cases, these program elements may also lead to a credential required for the goal destination. All of these elements of program activity will be outlined on the OALCF Learner Plan.

Relationship to integrated tasks

Integrated Tasks vs. Culminating Tasks

Integrated Tasks	Culminating Tasks
Complex Tasks	Complex Tasks
Involve multiple competencies and task groups	Involve multiple competencies and task groups
Assessment	Assessment
Represent various points along the goal path	Represent the end point of the goal path

Like culminating tasks, integrated tasks are complex tasks involving multiple competencies and task groups. But while culminating tasks represent the end point of a goal path, integrated tasks represent various points throughout a learner's progress along the goal path. In some ways, integrated tasks and culminating tasks are similar to the LBS demonstrations that have been in use for many years because both require a learner to integrate and apply knowledge and skills.

Five sample integrated tasks were posted on the OALCF website in April 2011, one per goal path. Using integrated tasks with learners is a good way to practise for a culminating task because both are similar in design.

Relationship to milestones

Successful completion of selected milestones will allow learners to demonstrate that they can apply their skills and knowledge to relevant, goal-related tasks. Milestones are used during progression along the goal path. Culminating tasks are used at the end point of a goal path.

Our Future with the OALCF

When will milestones and culminating tasks roll out?

The Ministry will provide LBS programs with the milestone learning activities, *Milestone Selection Guide* and administrative instructions in time for use in April 2012. Culminating task will also be finished in March 2012. Neither the milestones nor the culminating tasks will be posted on eopg.ca or on any other public website because the content must be kept secure by the service provider.

More training in 2012

A webinar will be delivered in 2012 that will help LBS service providers to situate the milestones and culminating tasks in their organization's overall assessment strategy. The milestone assessment package introduction will provide service providers with the training they need on how to use the milestones.

MTCU expectations

The Ministry expects agencies to improve their capacity to implement the OALCF, according to Section 5 of their business plan and in consultation with their Consultant. LBS agencies are expected to be sufficiently comfortable in using the OALCF to begin reporting on learner progress using OALCF milestones and culminating tasks in April 2012.

Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework Resources

There are many resources available to practitioners on the OALCF website located at www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/   The following is a summary of the MTCU-produced OALCF resources as of the Fall of 2011. Be sure to view the website regularly for tools, resources and updates.

Checklist for Evaluating Learning Materials

This template is a checklist that practitioners can use when evaluating their own program's collection of resources to better understand how they fit with the competency-based approach of the Curriculum Framework. It includes thirteen questions that a practitioner might ask when evaluating a resource.

How to Use the Checklist for Evaluating Learning Materials

This "how to" resource helps answer why a practitioner would use the *Checklist for Evaluating Learning Materials* by taking authentic learning materials and walking the practitioner through how the checklist can be used to evaluate the materials.

Curriculum Framework Master Document

The *Curriculum Framework* is the key OALCF resource for literacy practitioners. It provides a clear understanding of the Curriculum Framework within the context of the OALCF initiative. It explains the Framework features, including competencies, levels and indicators. It explains how these elements are organized and how they work together.

The components of the Curriculum Framework (the introduction and six competencies) can each be accessed online individually or as a whole. The introduction outlines the elements of the Curriculum Framework (competencies, task groups, indicators, levels, performance and task descriptors and example tasks) and describes how the Framework is organized. The example tasks in the Curriculum Framework reflect what a learner can do at the end of each of the three levels and are organized by goal path.

Foundation Documents

These foundation papers provide background information on key concepts that informed the development of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework. They provide brief descriptions of the theoretical underpinnings of key concepts, how the OALCF products were developed, and how these concepts will contribute to stronger learner outcomes.

- **Curriculum Framework Conceptual Foundation**
  This paper helps answer the questions about the background and purpose of the Curriculum Framework as well as its key features, levels of performance and potential applications.

- **Foundations of Transition-Oriented Programming**
  This paper answers questions about transition-oriented programming, including its relationship to goal-directed and contextualized learning. It also helps to explain the role of non-academic support and service coordination in successful learner transitions.

- **Foundations of Assessment**
  This paper defines assessment within the context of the OALCF. It discusses the reasons for assessing learning and how these results are used, and it looks at some OALCF research activities in assessment.

- **Foundations of Learning Materials**
  This paper discusses how the Curriculum Framework can be used to level materials, who develops materials and why materials are developed.

Glossary

The *Glossary* is a listing of key terms and acronyms used in OALCF resources and papers.

Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners – Employment, Apprenticeship, Secondary School Credit, Post Secondary, and Independence

These documents provide a snapshot of each goal, providing a description, the associated requirements, key trigger questions and a list of skills that contribute to the development of the six OALCF competencies and are important for the transition to the goal.

An Introduction to Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners

This document helps practitioners better understand the purpose and organizing principles of the five *Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners* for apprenticeship, secondary school credit, postsecondary, employment and independence. The Introduction also describes the elements of *Goal Path Descriptions for Practitioners and Learners* and how they can help improve learner outcomes.

Integrated Tasks by Goal Path

The *Integrated Tasks by Goal Path* resource features one sample integrated task for each of the five goal paths. Integrated tasks are complex tasks and include at least two or more competencies that are often at varying levels of complexity. Each sample integrated task includes a number of suggested learning activities that illustrate how a practitioner would prepare a learner for completing the task. This resource also explains the differences between integrated tasks, example tasks and supplemental tasks.

Learner Plan Template 2011 - 2012

The *Learner Plan Template* is a tool for LBS service providers that can be used with any learner. The Learner Plan Template ensures that there are common elements which provide a description of learners' background, goal path, learning activities, other supports and achievements. The template is designed to be compatible with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' (MTCU) accountability requirements.

Instructions for the Learner Plan Template

This document provides background on the development of the *Learner Plan Template* as well as step-by-step instructions for completing a Learner Plan*.*

OALCF Tools and Resources Summaries

This resource provides a brief description of the documents that have been developed as of November 2011, as part of OALCF. With so much information available, it is a useful resource to have on hand for quick reference. You can print it out in a PDF format directly from the OALCF website.

Practitioner Guide to Task-Based Programming

This guide is a practical tool to help practitioners understand the elements of task-based programming: goal setting, requirements of the goal, balance of skill development and literacy use, creation or selection of appropriate tasks, levelling a task and developing learning activities to prepare for doing a task. In addition, this guide defines what a task is, answers how and why a learner's program should be organized around tasks, and outlines the difference between a skills-based program and a task-based program.

Selected Assessment Tools

This resource discusses appropriate assessment tools for learners. It explains how current assessment tools relate to the OALCF and some other assessment tools you may want to consider. It includes 25 English and 11 French language tools and provides practitioners with practical direction on how to use a variety of assessment approaches to collect information about learning – information that learners and practitioners need for program development and accountability. The collection of assessment tools is organized by the four aspects of literacy learning: Skills, Tasks, Practices, and Changes in learners' lives. A fifth category, Learning Disabilities, is also included.

The information will give practitioners strong direction in developing an assessment strategy for their agency.

Template to Describe Assessment Tools

This template can be used by practitioners to analyze the assessment tools that they use. This template helps assess the appropriateness of an assessment tool for particular learners. Each of the assessment tools included in *Selected Assessment Tools* uses this document to provide key information to the practitioner (where to access, potential purchase costs, comments on usefulness, etc.).

Selected Learning Materials Lists

The five selected materials lists each include approximately 30 learning materials organized by competency and goal path, one each for the five streams: Anglophone, Deaf, Francophone, Native and Academic Upgrading. Each learning material is briefly described and information is provided on how to access or purchase the materials.

The materials were selected by practitioners who found these materials useful when used with Anglophone, Francophone, Deaf, Native and Academic Upgrading students.

Selected Learning Materials helps build an understanding of how individual learning materials relate to the OALCF competencies and to the cultural and linguistic background of the learner. In addition to being a good source of learning materials, this resource can be used to determine whether or not the materials that practitioners are currently using are a good fit with the OALCF.

The materials included in the lists are not meant to be prescriptive nor do they serve as a recommended list. They are meant to provide good examples of how current materials can still be used with the Curriculum Framework.

Supplemental Tasks by Goal Path

The Supplemental Tasks for Practitioners resource provides examples of tasks that are organized by literacy stream; however, unlike the sample tasks in the *Curriculum Framework* which are representative of what a learner can do at the end of a level, these tasks represent what a learner can do within a level. Included in this listing of tasks are notes on the cultural considerations a practitioner must keep in mind when working with learners who are Anglophone, Deaf, Native or Francophone. This resource also explains how the supplemental tasks were developed, how they are organized and how to use the examples of supplemental tasks.

Supporting Learners through Service Coordination and Referrals

This document provides practitioners with an overview of the kinds of non-instructional supports that contribute to positive learning outcomes. Through a discussion of service coordination and referrals, this document provides practitioners with a practical approach to building a comprehensive Learner Plan. The coordination of financial, academic, employment, social service and health supports can contribute significantly to positive learner outcomes.

Conclusion

This concludes Community Literacy of Ontario's synopsis of the Fall 2011 OALCF Implementation Training. For more information about the OALCF, please visit the OALCF webpage at the EOPG website at www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/tools-and-resources.html .