

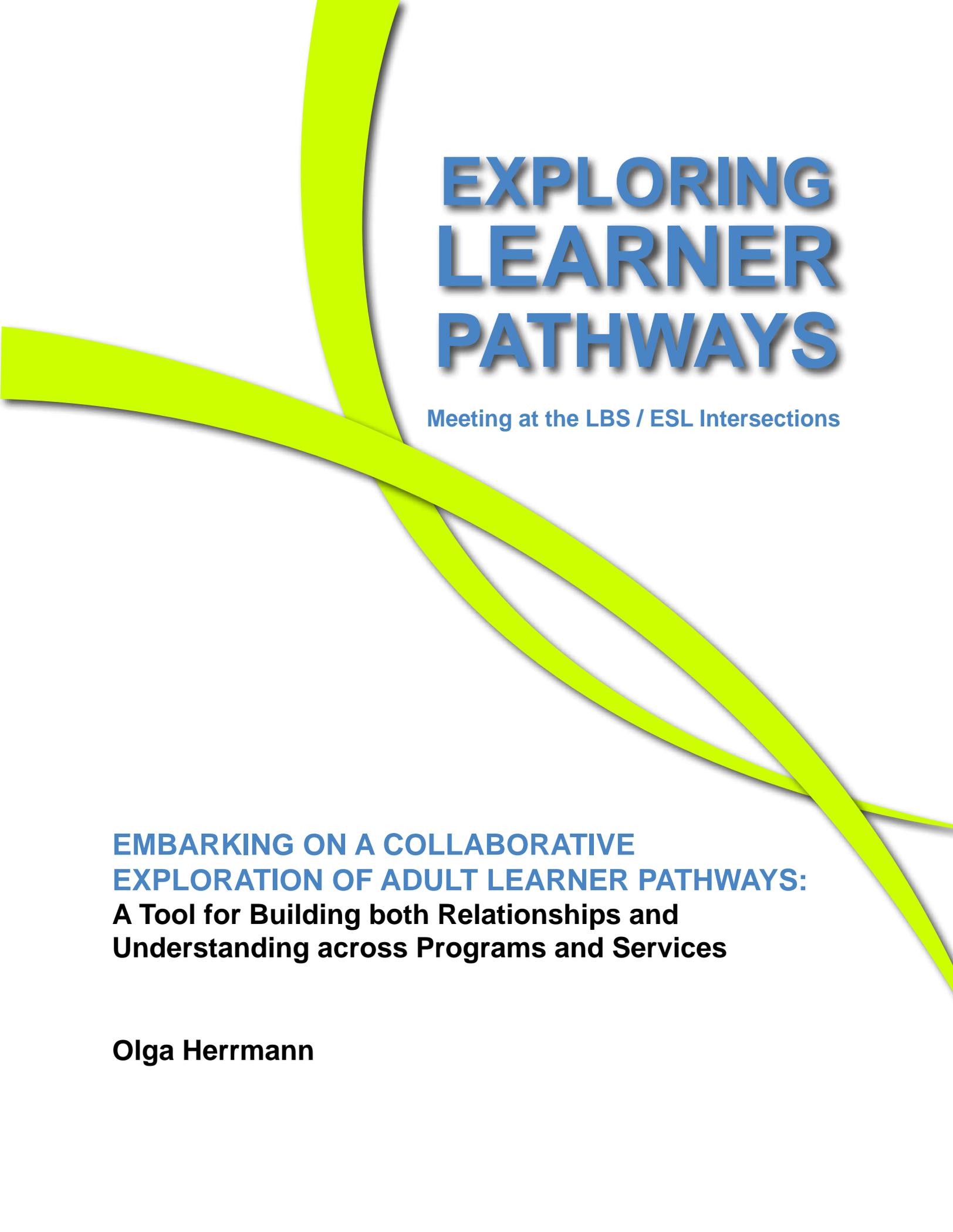
**EMBARKING ON A COLLABORATIVE  
EXPLORATION OF ADULT LEARNER PATHWAYS:  
A Tool for Building both Relationships and  
Understanding across Programs and Services**

**Olga Herrmann**

**EXPLORING  
LEARNER  
PATHWAYS**







# EXPLORING LEARNER PATHWAYS

Meeting at the LBS / ESL Intersections

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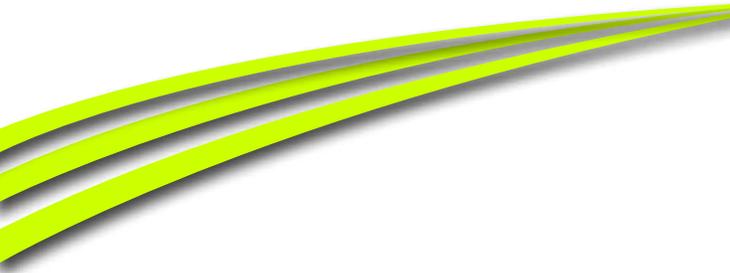
**Olga Herrmann**

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For more information about this and other materials  
related to the Exploring Learner Pathways project, visit  
<http://learnerpathways.wordpress.com>

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Project Manager/Researcher wishes to thank the numerous individuals from Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs across Toronto and York Region – from all three sectors (school boards, colleges and community-based agencies) – who were involved in the project’s consultations and/or who made arrangements for learners, assessors and practitioners to lend their voices to the exploration of learner pathways of second-/additional-language learners with literacy needs. Further thanks go to ESL (credit and non-credit) program managers and staff within the school boards (TDSB, TCDSB, YRDSB, and YCDSB) and LINC Assessment Centre staff who graciously offered their perspectives on the literacy and ESL needs and pathways of adult learners in Toronto and York Region.

The input and guidance of the project’s advisory committee has been invaluable throughout the project. A sincere thank you to all advisory members: Hanna Cabaj, Toronto Catholic District School Board; Guy Ewing, former MTML Executive Director and literacy volunteer; Katrina Grieve, Literacy Researcher; Anne Ramsay, Project READ Literacy Network; Susan Richarz, York Region District School Board; Carol Visser, Toronto District School Board; and Fran Zimmerman, St. Christopher House.

A huge thank you, as well, to AlphaPlus for the technical expertise it provided, and to Monika Jankowska-Pacyna, whose flair for design gave the project its sleek and distinct style.

Finally, deepest thanks go to MTML staff – Chris Beesley, Executive Director and Stephanie Gris, Community Developer extraordinaire – for their direction, advice and encouragement. Your commitment to adult literacy and service coordination in our region is inspiring!

MTML is grateful to Ontario’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), without whose funding and support this important project would not have been possible.

Thank you all!

Olga Herrmann, Project Manager  
Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

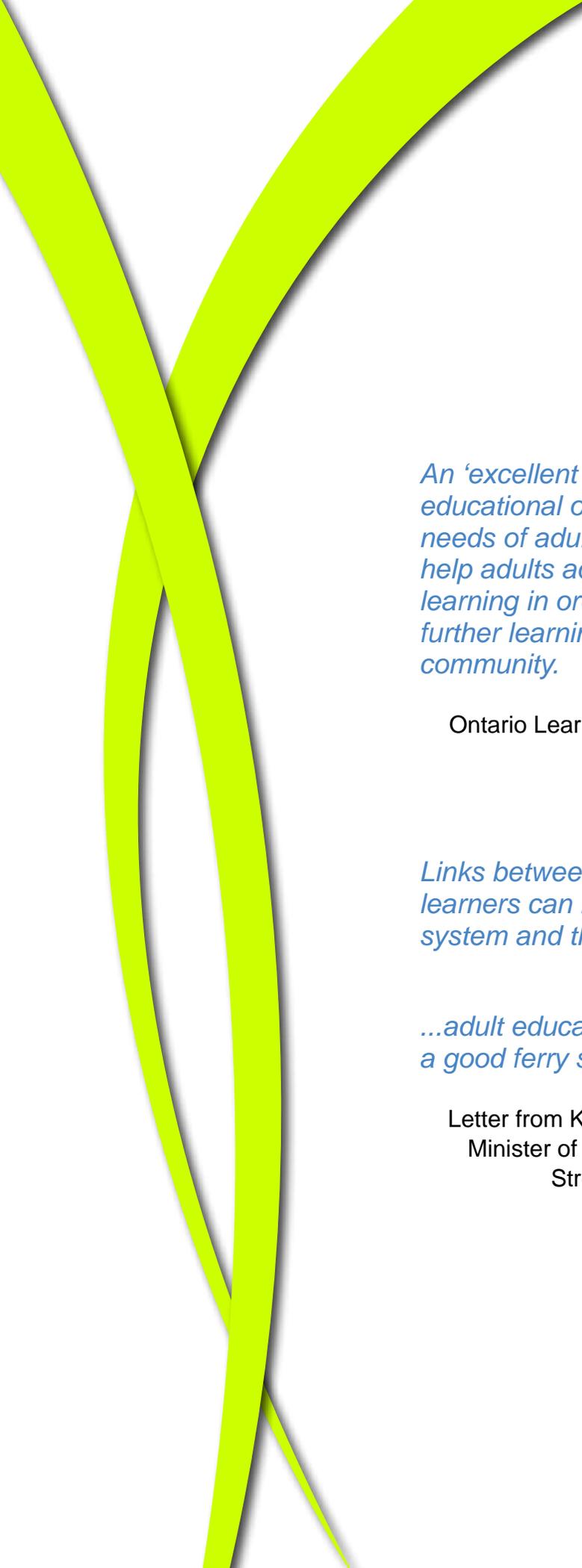
## PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The ***Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections*** project seeks to explore the learning pathways of Anglophone-stream Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) learners whose mother tongue or primary language is other than English. The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML) – the LBS regional network agency for Toronto and York Region – has received funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (TCU) to focus on the needs and pathways of second- / additional-language learners who are enrolled in LBS programs. This exploration supports Ontario’s learning ministries’ (TCU, EDU, and MCI) priority of improving and validating learner pathways and strengthening the coordination between LBS programs and language training programs in Ontario (both non-credit and credit).

This document – ***Embarking on a Collaborative Exploration of Learner Pathways: A Tool for Building both Relationships and Understanding across Programs and Services*** – is just one part of the ***Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections*** project and has been developed to be multifunctional.

It can be used for the following purposes:

- To act as the discussion paper that stimulates dialogue for all those attending the project’s 1-Day Forum in March 2012
- To be used as an information resource by LBS agencies and Language Training providers (ESL non-credit, ESL credit, and LINC) to enhance their understanding of program offerings, eligibility criteria, and new program initiatives
- To be used as a tool for facilitating relationship-building opportunities within local and broader contexts
- To act as an online resource (in its digital format) for front-line staff who are charged with directing or referring adults to literacy and/or English language training programs
- To contribute to broader discussions in Ontario on enhancing learner pathways of second-language learners with literacy and basic skills needs



*An 'excellent system' will ensure that a range of educational opportunities is available to meet the needs of adult learners, and that these opportunities help adults advance through one or more levels of learning in order to get or keep a job, to enter into further learning, or to participate more fully in the community.*

Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System  
(Wynne, 2005, p. 17)

*Links between programs should be stronger so that learners can more clearly see their way into the system and the path forward...*

*...adult education is much like an archipelago without a good ferry system...*

Letter from Kathleen Wynne, Parliamentary Assistant to the  
Minister of Education, which prefaces the Ontario Learns:  
Strengthening Our Adult Education System report  
(Wynne, 2005, p.1)

## INTRODUCTION

The three brief excerpts on the left are taken from the seminal *Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System* (Wynne, 2005) provincial report, which sets out to propose a policy framework for adult education in Ontario and continues to provide direction and inform adult education policy today. Before this document examines the new framework and landscape of adult education in Ontario, you are urged you to digest the quotations above, in the order they have been presented here. You will note the forward-looking optimism in the first statement, the advisory tone in the second, and the unforgiving simile that becomes difficult to dismiss – particularly when embarking on a project that not only seeks to explore the learning pathways of second-language learners with literacy and basic skills needs, but to also build relationships between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs, English as a Second Language (ESL) [credit and non-credit] programs, and Learning Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) programs in Toronto and York Region.

In her 2005 letter to the then Minister of Education (EDU) and Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU), Kathleen Wynne credits former Lakehead University President, Bob Rosehart, for having made the ‘without a good ferry system’ statement in 1994, and she then signals the following to the two learning Ministers: “My advice to you is that we are dealing with much the same situation today” (p. 1).

The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy’s (MTML’s) current *Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections* project began in the spring of 2011 – almost six years after Wynne drafted that letter – and what has become clear in the course of the project is that, at times, a lack of clarity and misinformation exist regarding the range of adult learning opportunities, particularly for “grey area” learners for whom the boundary between ESL and LBS is not always clear-cut (Simpson, Cooke, and Baynham, 2008, pp. 5-6). In fact, because there are a number of nuanced issues that can, and do, arise along the learning pathways of adults with both ESL and literacy needs, some teachers, assessors, program managers, and staff from other referring agencies may not always have a full understanding of all the appropriate learning opportunities available to this group of learners, of the eligibility requirements for the various programs, and of which program could better address their current language and/or literacy needs along their learning path.

# PART 1: SETTING THE STAGE

## SERVICE COORDINATION – PART OF A LARGER INTER-MINISTERIAL VISION FOR ADULT EDUCATION

At the 39th annual TESL Ontario Conference this past October, representatives from each of Ontario’s three ‘Learning Ministries’ – i.e. TCU, EDU and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI); as well as from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), which oversees the LINC program) – presented at TESL Ontario’s sixth annual panel discussion titled *Building Pathways to Learner Success*. In the TESL Ontario 2011 report detailing the panel discussion, Pauline McNaughton, EDU’s Manager of the Adult Education Policy Unit, states: “**It is clear to us all, in all three**

**ministries, that immigrants are in all of our programs. They’re stakeholders for all of us. Their pathway is a critical focus,**” (p. 5). All the panellists also underscored their commitment to inter-ministerial partnerships and collaboration in order to remove barriers along the pathways, ensuring seamless learner transitions.

*It is clear to us all, in all three ministries, that immigrants are in all of our programs. They’re stakeholders for all of us. Their pathway is a critical focus*

The panel discussion referred to above is but one example of how much of an impact the Ontario Learns report has had on the landscape of adult education today. A “commitment to action” that allows programs to respond to the needs of diverse learners requires coordination, linkages and partnerships that address the local needs of a diverse group of learners (Wynne, 2005, p.6). The policy framework proposed in the *Ontario Learns* report is summarized in the chart that follows:

# ONTARIO'S ADULT EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

## THE VISION

Adult education in Ontario is:

- Learner-centred
- Promotes strong communities
- Builds strong people for a strong economy
- Includes roles and responsibilities for:
  - the learner agencies delivering adult education programs
  - community organizations
  - business and labour
  - government

## SIX AREAS OF FOCUS

1. Investment in skills development
2. Learner pathways
3. Accessibility and inclusion
4. Innovation and excellence in teaching and learning
5. Funding and accountability
6. Research

## KEY PRINCIPLES

- Accessibility for and inclusion of all adults
- Co-ordination and integration between and among programs and levels of government
- Innovation and flexibility in meeting learner and community needs
- Accountability and effectiveness in the use of public resources
- Faster integration of new Canadians into the economy

*Adapted from Ontario Learns: Strengthening our Adult Education System (2005, pp. 8-12)*

# CHANGE, TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

## THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

The *Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections* project carried out its exploration of learner needs, pathways and transitions by going straight to the front-lines (focus groups were conducted with learners, teachers/tutors and assessors).

As was previously noted, what surfaced time and again has been the challenge inherent in programs keeping abreast of other adult education offerings and eligibility criteria while seeking to understand at what point a program may best serve the needs of second-/additional language learners at specific points along their English acquisition and/or literacy development. Ironically, as the researchers documented what makes for smoother learner transitions, they had to acknowledge ‘the play within the play’ – i.e. the fact that adult education programs within all the ministries (MTCU, EDU, MCI and CIC) have recently undergone or are still undergoing program transformations, embarking on new initiatives and moving through transitions themselves.

As individuals were asked to reflect on learner transitions, transitions and changes within their own programs could not help but colour the lens through which people considered the learning pathways of low-level literacy adults with ongoing ESL needs.

*In stepping back and taking the time to take a closer look at other programs and other ministries’ initiatives, we realize that there are a number of theoretical, systemic, structural, pedagogical, practical and pragmatic commonalities. This project views these commonalities as the points of intersection where we actually do meet or where we can have a meeting of minds.*

The following are *some* of the chief initiatives, transformations and transitions that are underway or were recently put in place within the various adult education programs that provide services to adult learners with both English as second language and literacy needs:

#### **Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs are:**

- Introducing the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) which shifts the focus from skill development to skill application as it relates to one of five learner goal paths.
- Transitioning to the Employment Ontario Information Case Management System (EOIS-CaMS) with the rollout strategy for future releases to LBS service organizations scheduled for April 2012.

#### **Provincial and federal language training programs are seeing the following changes:**

- The Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) is to be implemented across the province by late 2012. Third party language skills assessments and referrals will be conducted at CLARS assessment centres for newcomers and settled immigrants wishing to attend either MCI's ESL non-credit program or CIC's federally funded LINC program.
- A common centralized database – the History of Assessment, Referrals and Training system (HARTs) – in which each learner accessing CIC or MCI language training will be assigned a unique identifier.
- Revisions to the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBs) and the validation of the CLB theoretical framework will soon be completed.

#### **The Ontario Ministry of Education is focusing its attention on adult education in the following new ways:**

- The Adult Education Policy Unit was created in 2006 with a mandate to view adult education more broadly by focusing on partnering with MCI and TCU.
- Four EDU-sponsored regional partnership projects in Ontario are working together across ministries, sectors and service providers to assist learners in adult ESL/FSL, LBS and ESL credit make smoother transitions.

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*See Appendix 1 on page 35 for helpful website links that provide more detail on the above initiatives.*

# FIRST STEPS TOWARD COLLABORATION

## MEETING AT THE LBS/ESL INTERSECTIONS – CONNECTING THE PIECES

In many ways, the notion of straying outside our own program's preoccupations and gaining a basic understanding of what is taking place in other programs serving adult learners similar to ours is a step towards viewing adult education more holistically. Stepping back to see the big picture or macro-view may help inform service coordination efforts and can help people across the ministries and programs engage in partnerships and collaboration that are effective, flexible and innovative.

Whether we hail from TCU's LBS program, MCI's ESL non-credit programs, EDU's ESL credit program, CIC's LINC program, or external referring agencies (i.e. Ontario Works, Employment Services, etc.) we are all part of the greater adult education puzzle. Although categorically different in some areas, each piece contains one or more similarities that allows for them to be connected to the other pieces. In stepping back and taking the time to take a closer look at other programs and other ministries' initiatives, we realize that there are a number of theoretical, systemic, structural, pedagogical, practical and pragmatic commonalities. This project views these commonalities as the points of intersection where we actually do meet or where we can have a meeting of minds.

*In many ways, the notion of straying outside our own program's preoccupations and gaining a basic understanding of what is taking place in other programs serving adult learners similar to ours is a step towards viewing adult education more holistically.*

## AN APPROACH TO RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

One of the approaches to relationship building that has been employed as part of the *Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections* project involves creating opportunities to build understanding across the programs by revisiting the vision for adult education in Ontario and then offering participants a glimpse – a basic primer of sorts – into adult programs and adult education initiatives they may not be directly involved in, yet may add some context when it comes time to refer learners to other programs. With the assistance of a facilitator, participants engage in a dialogue of discovery in which they identify the commonalities they see across the programs and the common challenges they see that all programs are encountering in the face of change.

Other projects seeking to smooth transitions and strengthen service coordination have identified the fact that **building trust is crucial for moving from simple information sharing toward effective collaboration** (Project READ Literacy Network, 2009; Project READ Literacy Network, 2012). A genuine interest and basic grasp of what is going on in someone else's program can provide a solid foundation for working together to tend to

### INTERSECTIONS AND CONNECTIONS – DIALOGUES OF DISCOVERY

1. Explore Ontario's vision for adult education.
2. Learn about other adult education programs and the changes and transitions those programs are going through.
3. Identify commonalities and shared challenges across the programs.
4. Create opportunities to come together with people from other programs to discuss service coordination, transitions and referral processes.
5. Let others know that you understand their challenges. Let them know about yours. Ask for clarification around aspects of their program you don't fully understand.
6. Collaborate to better serve learners needs and work together to make learner transitions smooth.

the needs of learners who have both ESL and literacy needs. Showing a co-collaborator that you know something about them and about their challenges helps foster trust.

The inspiration for this project’s approach to relationship building and information sharing stems from a conceptual model for cross-disciplinary collaboration in which the “collective thinking... depends on the facility with which collaborators are able to learn and understand each others’ perspectives.” (Pennington, 2008, p.58).

## A KNOWLEDGE ECOSYSTEM

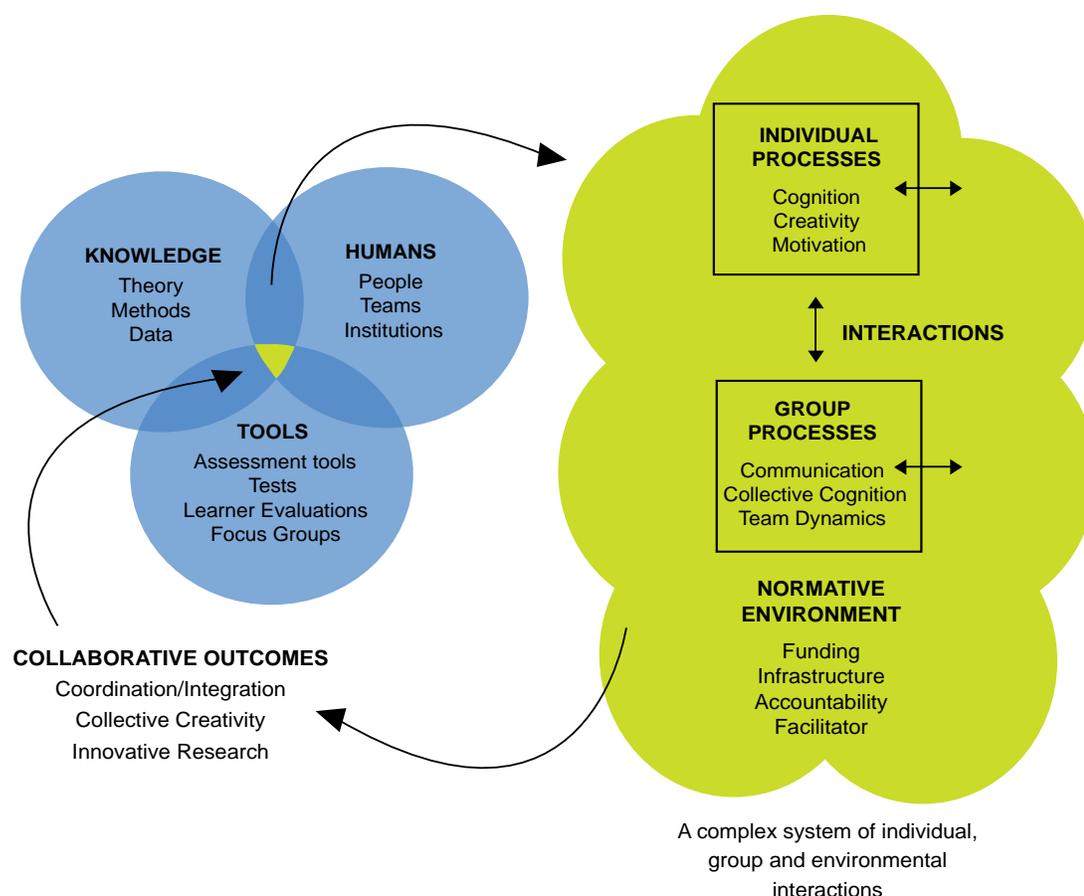


Figure 1: Adapted from Pennington’s (2008) conceptual model of innovation focused on inter-disciplinary collaboration and knowledge integration

Although it is true that LBS, ESL credit, ESL non-credit, and LINC programs are all part of the multidisciplinary field of adult education, there are some moments when the differences in program/workplace culture, in theoretical approaches and teaching methodologies employed, in terminology and in program structures and funding silos, render the attempt to appreciate each other's perspective quite challenging.

Figure 1 represents a conceptual framework of *collaboration as a knowledge ecosystem* from which innovation can emerge (Pennington, 2008). In this model, people with differing perspectives, theories, and tools can come together and strive for collaborative outcomes that are fresh and creative. It is, however, the intangible group of processes to the right – i.e. the individual and group processes that interact with each other and the normative environment – that can make or break collaboration. The best outcomes occur when collaborative efforts engage the individual in meaning-making and the group in dialogue toward shared learning and vision.

*Dialogue has the power to change a group of strangers into friends and a collection of individuals into a team. Dialogue builds coherence around diversity, and trust when suspicion and cynicism threaten to fragment .... The process of dialogue is the vehicle through which knowledge is shared.*

(Simmons, 1999, p. 4).

## A USEFUL DOCUMENT

It is in the spirit of taking the first step toward connecting across the programs that this booklet has been created. Helpful information pieces that were gathered during the project are shared here and are meant to be both ready to use and useful. This document presents some handy digestible charts and information snapshots that are intended to enhance understanding and enrich dialogue. It also includes several guiding questions to encourage dialogues that can help strengthen the foundation for cross-program collaboration, ultimately enhancing adult learner pathways and ensuring smoother transitions.

# PART 2: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND UNDERSTANDING

## SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

Part 2 of this document contains short information pieces and charts that are intended to enhance discussion between individuals across Language Training programs, LBS programs, and referring agencies. The information is not meant to be exhaustive, but offered as a springboard toward greater understanding and discussion on our shared vision toward enhanced service coordination.

### A. ADULT EDUCATION – MAKING CONNECTIONS

#### FOR DISCUSSION

The quotes on page 2 of this booklet pertain to adult education. If you are directly involved in adult education or peripherally involved (e.g. referring adults to various programs) you may have strong opinions of where things stand with respect to the links that exist between programs.

You might want to reflect on your organization's role in seeking to make connections with other programs so as to better direct adult learners along their learning pathways.

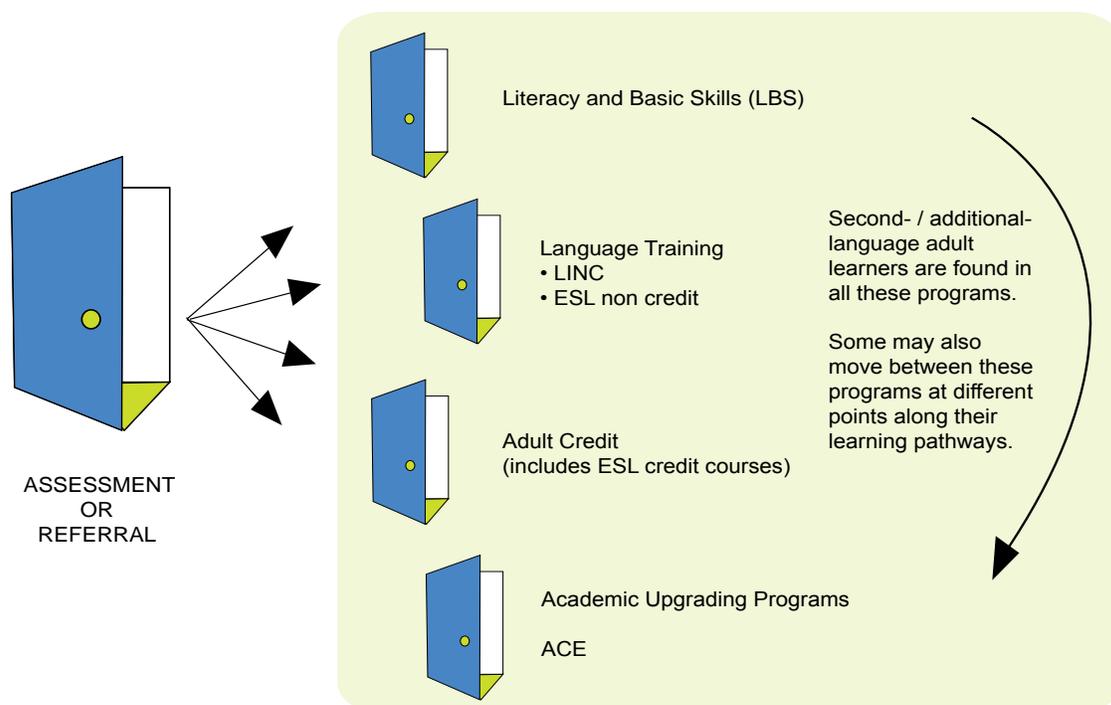
- How would you personally describe adult education in Ontario? Do you agree with the image of 'an archipelago without a ferry system' or do you think coordination across programs has changed since the 2005 report?
- What are the challenges you face in trying to connect with other programs or services?
- If you are a teacher/tutor/practitioner, how often do you find your adult learners ask you for assistance in navigating their learner pathways?

- If you are a referring agency, reflect on how comfortable you feel directing your client to the various programs.
- What has worked well in forging relationships with other adult education programs?
- If you are doing solid work in connecting with education programs across the ministries, what information pieces would you be able to share with smaller community-based agencies?

Use the figure below to help you reflect on the adult learners you encounter in your work with both literacy and language needs.

If they come through your agency's door for a proper referral do you feel you are aware of all the education options available to them?

## ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH LANGUAGE AND/OR LITERACY NEEDS



## B. A QUICK SNAPSHOT OF LITERACY AND LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Now that you've had a chance to reflect on the connections you may or may not have with LBS, ESL (credit and non-credit) and LINC programs, the following basic information about the programs may be of help.

### THE LBS PROGRAM

- Is funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (TCU)
- Is part of Employment Ontario (Training)
- Is adult basic education for adults who have not finished high school or who have low skill levels
- Is implementing the new Ontario Adult Curriculum Framework (OALCF)
- Will be using the EOIS-CaMS beginning April 2012
- Offers goal-oriented instruction
- Creates individualized learning plans for each adult learner focusing on one of the five goal paths (apprenticeship; secondary school credit; post-secondary education; employment; and independence)
- Offers math upgrading and computer skills training
- Has four cultural streams:
  - Native/First Nations
  - Francophone
  - Deaf/Deaf Blind
  - Anglophone
- Has three delivery sectors:
  - School boards
  - Colleges (higher level LBS and ACE)
  - Community-based organizations

## LBS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:<sup>1</sup>

### Adults:

- Who are at least 19 years old
- Who are Ontario residents
- Whose literacy skills fall upon Levels 1 and 2 of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Academic Upgrading falls upon IALS Level 3.
- Who, if not Canadian-born, have demonstrated proficiency at or above Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 6 for speaking and listening and less than the CLB level 6 in reading and writing in English or French

In addition to the above eligibility requirements, program emphasis is on learners who are on social assistance, unemployed, between the ages of 45-64, who have been out of training or education for 6 years or more, who have a history of interrupted education and/or who are a fit in one of the four cultural streams.

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1 Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. LBS Guidelines November 2011. Accessed on December 15, 2011. [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/20111109\\_lbs\\_guidelines\\_2011.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/20111109_lbs_guidelines_2011.pdf)

## LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMS

There are a variety of adult Language Training programs, ESL (credit and non-credit) and LINC, that adults can attend in Ontario. The following chart details the federally- and provincially-funded Language Training options available to adults in Ontario:

LANGUAGE TRAINING FUNDED BY CIC, MCI AND EDU			
PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)</b></p> <p>Basic language skills instruction on a full or part-time basis</p> <p>LINC Literacy to LINC 7 levels.</p> <p>Supports:</p> <p>Child-minding</p>	<p>For adults who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are permanent residents of Canada, Convention refugees, or individuals in Canada whose application for Permanent Resident status is being processed and who have been informed by a letter from CIC of the initial approval of application subject to admissibility assessment</li> <li>• Are legal school-leaving age (18 years old in Ontario)</li> </ul> <p>Have completed an initial assessment through the YMCA assessment centres or Welcome Centres</p>	<p>Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)</p>	<p>School boards</p> <p>Community Agencies</p> <p>Colleges</p> <p>Some private language schools</p> <p>Type of Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom based</li> </ul> <p>LINC Home Study program is offered through distance education</p>

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>English as a Second Language – (non-credit)</b></p> <p>ESL classes ranging in level from ESL Literacy to CLB 8.</p> <p>Full- or part-time programs.</p> <p>The bulk of classes cover the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing). There are also classes for TOEFL and TWE preparation, English for Business/ Computer Skills, Bilingual ESL, and Citizenship Preparation. Some school boards offer ESL for sewing; ESL for women only; ESL for seniors, and ESL for special needs individuals.</p> <p>Check with each school board for more details on the variety of ESL classes they offer.</p>	<p>For adults who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years or older</li> <li>• Immigrants – Canadian citizens; permanent residents; refugee claimants and convention refugees whose first language is neither English nor French</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)</p>	<p>School boards</p> <p>Independent Learning Centre (ILC)</p> <p>Type of Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom based</li> <li>• Online / distance education (ILC)</li> </ul>

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>English as a Second Language – Credit – ILC</b></p> <p>ESL learners prepare to work towards their OSSD.</p> <p>Final test and final mark is recorded.</p> <p>\$40 fee per course</p>	<p>Intended for adults who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 years or older</li> <li>• Not registered in a secondary school</li> <li>• Have someone to act as a volunteer tutor</li> </ul> <p>Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, refugees, or an Ontario resident holding diplomatic visas or ministerial permits</p>	<p>Ministry of Education (EDU)</p>	<p>Independent Learning Centre (ILC)</p> <p>Type of Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online / distance education</li> </ul>
<p><b>English as a Second Language (Credit – School Board)</b></p> <p>These courses contribute towards fulfillment of requirements of an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).</p> <p>There are 5 ESL credit levels (ESL Levels A through E). Proficiency is determined through a language assessment at registration.</p>	<p>Intended for adults who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 years old</li> <li>• Status: Permanent Residents, Canadian Citizens, Convention Refugee or Refugee Claimants with a study permit</li> </ul> <p>Language Assessment tests are given through the registration process for ESL and regular English, Math and Science.</p> <p>Education Ontario Transcripts, or foreign documents, or provincial documents should be brought to intake.</p>	<p>Ministry of Education (EDU)</p>	<p>School Boards</p> <p>Type of Delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom based (day and evening classes)</li> </ul>

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p>Students may substitute up to 3 ESL credit courses for compulsory English credit requirements. Some fees may apply.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Mature students can undergo the Prior Learning Assessment &amp; Recognition (PLAR) process - the formal evaluation and credit granting process whereby mature students may obtain credits for prior learning. This includes knowledge and skills that mature students have acquired in both formal and informal ways, outside of secondary school.</p>	<p>If documents are not available, then the registration assessment is used for placement.</p>		
<p><b>Specialized Language Training (SLT)</b></p> <p>Job-specific language training offered in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Language Training for the Workplace (LTFW)</b> – Offers sector-specific ESL in order to assist immigrants in finding work in a specific field</li> </ol>	<p>Intended for adults who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have minimum CLB level as established by specific program</li> <li>• Have been assessed using a CLB tool</li> <li>• Have a valid SIN (are legally entitled to work in Canada)</li> </ul> <p>May be required to be working in the field.</p>	<p>Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)</p>	<p>School boards</p> <p>Type of Delivery:</p> <p>Programs may be offered at the workplace or include a work placement</p>

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>Specialized Language Training (SLT) - continued</b></p> <p>2. Language Training in the Workplace (LTIW) – helps immigrants who are already employed to improve their language skill</p>			<p>TCDSB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Internationally Trained English Teachers (this particular teacher program is funded from both federal and provincial sources)</li> </ul> <p>TDSB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Sales (CLB 5-6)</li> <li>• Success in Business (CLB 6-8)</li> </ul> <p>YCDSB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Health Care</li> </ul>

## HIGHER LEVEL LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

May be helpful when needing to refer individuals  
who are not a good fit for lower level language and literacy training

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>Enhanced Language Training (ELT)</b></p> <p>Provides newcomers with higher levels of language training in Canada's two official languages. The focus is on job-specific language training.</p> <p>Some ELT programs have bridge-to-work assistance, including mentorship, work placements and other employment help.</p>	<p>Internationally trained professionals who are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent residents, convention refugees, or on a Minister's permit</li> <li>• Have a minimum language level at Canadian Language Benchmark 7-10.</li> </ul>	<p>Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)</p>	<p>Providers include provinces, territories, employers, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, communities, and organizations that help newcomers.</p>
<p><b>Occupation-Specific Language Training (OSLT)</b></p> <p>Occupation-specific language training courses are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offered on a part-time and full-time basis.</li> <li>• About 180 hours in length.</li> <li>• offered at 13 Ontario colleges</li> </ul>	<p>Occupation-specific language training courses are suitable for adults who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have training or experience in one of the specific occupations or sectors</li> <li>• have Canadian Language Benchmark English levels between 6 and 8</li> <li>• are a permanent resident or a protected person</li> </ul>	<p>Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)</p>	<p>College campuses and workplaces</p>

PROGRAM TYPE	ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	FUNDED BY	DELIVERING AGENCIES
<p><b>Ontario Bridge Training</b></p> <p>Programs that help newcomers get their license or certificate in their profession or trade, so that they can work in Ontario. Each Bridge Training program is different, but in general, is designed to provide the learner with and assessment of education and skills, workplace experience, targeted language and skills training, and preparation for a licence or certification exam.</p>	<p>Targets internationally trained professionals</p> <p>Ontario Bridging Participant Assistance Program (OBPA) Bursaries are available to a maximum of \$5,000 for ITPs with financial need.</p>	<p>Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)</p>	<p>Employers, colleges and universities, occupational regulatory bodies, and community organizations</p>

## C. HOW DO YOU DEFINE ESL LITERACY?

Your definition of the term “ESL Literacy” may not be how the term is understood by others. Be sure to ask those individuals from other programs with whom you are trying to form relationships what their understanding of the term is. Sometimes there’s not a clear-cut understanding of what ESL literacy is. Why might this be?

Whether you view things through the English as a Second Language lens or the LBS (adult basic education) lens, what has been underscored by several researchers is the “amorphous nature of the field itself – existing in a grey area between two fields.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Centre for Literacy of Quebec. (2008). *ESL and Literacy: Finding Common Ground*, p. 10.

Folinsbee (2007) asked the following question: “Does there need to be a clear borderline between those fields or should it be porous and ambiguous?”<sup>3</sup> The question was borne out of information gathered from consultations with people across Canada who recognized that the connections between ESL and literacy were quite complex.

The following list may illustrate how the term “ESL Literacy” can morph into a variety of meanings:

## A MULTIPLICITY OF MEANINGS

“ESL LITERACY” is:

- “a program for individuals who are learning English as a Second Language and who are not functionally literate in their own language”<sup>4</sup>
- “a growing field in Canada”<sup>5</sup>
- “the intersection between two fields”<sup>6</sup>
- “a distinct stream of classes separate from mainstream ESL and mainstream literacy”<sup>7</sup>
- how someone involved in LBS programs may identify what they are doing when they are teaching learners in an LBS classroom with ongoing ESL needs

## FOR DISCUSSION

If you are sitting with a group of stakeholders from various adult programs or referring agencies, you may wish to explore how each person views the term “ESL literacy”? Do you view ESL literacy in the same way? Explore any varying definitions of “ESL literacy” that exist in your group and try to discover why there may be some ambiguity with respect to that term.

3 Folinsbee, S. (2007). *Linkages: Connecting Literacy and English as a Second Language – Discussion Paper: What Do We Know about the Connections between Literacy and English as a Second Language?* Movement for Canadian Literacy. p. 9.

4 Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*. p. ii.

5 Bow Valley College. *ESL Literacy Network*. Retrieved August 15, 2011 from [www.esl-literacy.com](http://www.esl-literacy.com)

6 Bow Valley College. (2009). *Learning for LIFE: An ESL Literacy Handbook – Executive Summary*. p. ix.

7 *Ibid.*, p. x.

## D. ESL LITERACY AND THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS

The *ESL Literacy Benchmarks*<sup>8</sup> were designed to be used alongside the listening and speaking Canadian Language Benchmarks. Within the CLB framework, ESL Literacy Benchmarks replace the early levels of the ESL for Adults reading and writing benchmarks. The ESL Literacy Benchmarks also contain numeracy benchmarks.

- ESL non-credit and LINC programs do offer ESL Literacy and LINC Literacy classes when there are adults with ESL literacy needs
- ESL Literacy and LINC Literacy program streams are directly related to the 4-phase ESL Literacy Benchmarks
- There is a Foundation Phase (pre-reading/pre-writing) and three phases (Phases I-III). For more detailed information on the phases access ESL for Literacy Learners document at [http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl_literacy.pdf)

### AN LBS/ESL INTERSECTION POINT

The **end of Phase III ESL Literacy** can be viewed as “a time of transition”<sup>9</sup> – a key intersection point along an ESL literacy learner’s pathway. If the speaking/listening levels are close to their reading/writing levels, a learner can continue on to a regular adult ESL class. For students with a gap between their strong spoken facility and their reading/writing levels, learners may be ready to enter an LBS program. On the opposite page is an example of such a gap that may require the adult learner and those around him/her to consider whether an LBS program would be appropriate at this point.

CLB Level		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ESL Literacy Phases	Foundation Phase	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III			 <p><b>A TIME OF TRANSITION</b> Continue to a regular ESL class or attend an LBS class</p>						

*Adapted from Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners*

8 Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners. Accessed on April 23, 2011 from [http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl_literacy.pdf)

9 Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: ESL for Literacy Learners. Accessed on April 23, 2011 from [http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl_literacy.pdf), p. v.

## MIND THE GAP ...

	STAGE I Beginner Level					STAGE II Intermediate Level			STAGE III Advanced Level			
SPEAKING												
LISTENING												
READING												
WRITING												
CLB LEVELS	1	2	3	4	5	<b>6</b>	7	8	9	10	11	12



## FOR DISCUSSION

How often do you encounter adult learners who have a much stronger facility in their spoken English, yet still find reading and writing quite challenging? What are their academic options if they find the writing and reading demanding, yet have a facility in speaking? What other variables play a role in helping you to guide them toward their next step?

## E. LITERACY AND THE INTERNATIONAL ADULT LITERACY AND SKILLS SURVEY (IALSS) – EXPANDING THE DEFINITION OF LITERACY

Ontario's LBS programs provide opportunities for adults to improve their literacy and basic skills; however, understanding what the term "literacy" and "basic skills" means within the LBS field is crucial for understanding the focus of the Employment Ontario training program. The LBS program offers a hybrid of foundation skills training (reading, writing and numeracy) and Essential Skills training in help individuals move toward further training or employment in a knowledge-based economy.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) define literacy as "**the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community - to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.**"<sup>10</sup> This definition is also the definition used by the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey – the follow-up report to the 2003 Adult Literacy and Life Skills (ALL) study that was carried out jointly by the Government of Canada and the OECD in order to build a national picture of where Canadians' literacy levels stood.

The 2003 IALSS results – which measured the proficiency of 23,000 Canadians (ages 16 and over) in 4 domains (**prose literacy; document literacy; numeracy; and problem solving**) – built on the results from the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS).<sup>11</sup>

Immigrants across Canada also participated in the 2003 IALSS, with 2,600 established immigrants (more than 10 years in Canada) and 1,200 recent immigrants (less than 10 years in Canada) taking part. The survey was administered in English and French.

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10 Literacy Skills for the Knowledge Society: Further Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Human Resources Development Canada and the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada, 1997.

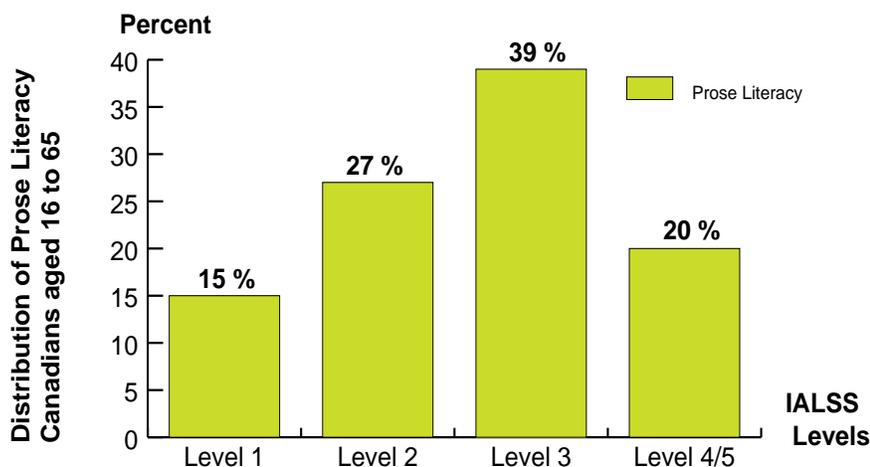
11 ABC Canada (2005) Summary Report: International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS)

## THE IALSS EMPLOYS 5 LEVELS OF LITERACY:<sup>12</sup>

Level 1	People at this level have very poor reading skills and have few skills and strategies to tackle text.
Level 2	People at this level have limited skills and can only deal with simple material that is clearly laid out.
Level 3	This level is the minimum skills level required for coping with the demands of daily life and the workplace in today's complex society. This level is considered to be the skill level required for successful secondary school completion and college entry. It requires the ability to integrate several information sources.
Levels 4/5	People at this level demonstrate a command of higher-order information-processing.

### The key IALSS national findings:<sup>13</sup>

- 48% of Canadians (16 and over) – approximately 12 million Canadians – have low literacy in the prose literacy domain (Levels 1 and 2)
- 42% of working-age Canadians (ages 16-65) – about 9 million Canadians – have low literacy levels (Levels 1 and 2).



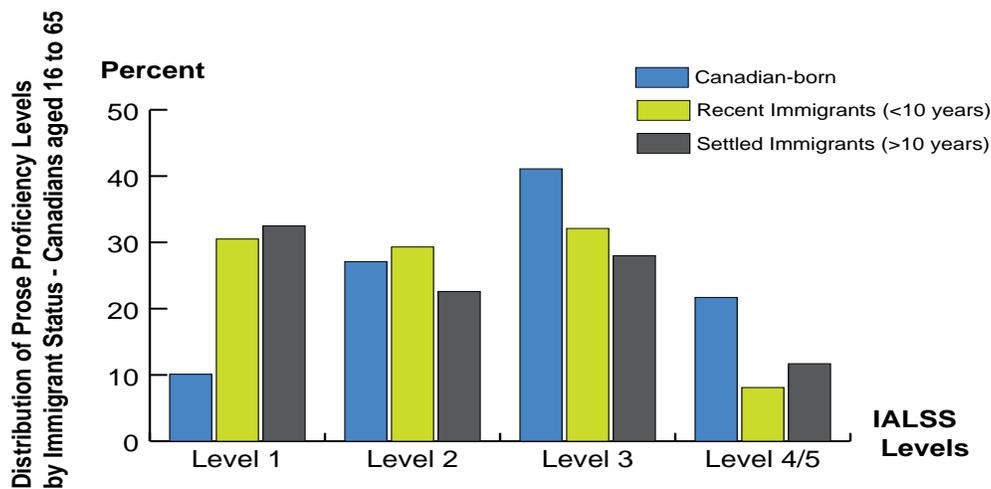
Source: *International Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (2003)*

12 Levels described by adapting material from ABC Canada's (2005) Summary Report: International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS), and Frontier College's Summary of the IALSS 2003. [http://www.frontiercollege.ca/pdf/FC\\_Summary\\_Adult\\_Literacy\\_Skills\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.frontiercollege.ca/pdf/FC_Summary_Adult_Literacy_Skills_Survey.pdf)

13 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada. (2003) Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. Accessed December 12, 2011. <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/booc/booc.pdf>

## IALSS findings associated with the literacy levels of immigrants:

- 60% of immigrants scored below Level 3 in their prose scores (significantly higher than 37% of Canadian-born individuals scoring at Level Levels 1 and 2)
- Immigrants whose mother tongue was not one of the two official languages had lower average scores in all four domains



Source: *International Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (2003)*

## FOR DISCUSSION

Consider the IALSS stats in the two charts above. Whether you are involved in language training, LBS training or are actively involved in referring immigrants to language and training programs, how do you reconcile or make sense of the interplay between English language needs and the need for strengthening the literacy skills required for a global, knowledge-based economy?

## THERE'S A NEW LBS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK...

A SNAPSHOT OF TWO OUTCOMES-BASED LEARNING CURRICULA	
THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS (CLB)	THE ONTARIO ADULT LITERACY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (OALCF)
<p>The Canadian Language Benchmarks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A national framework that employs a descriptive scale of communicative proficiency in English as a Second Language expressed as 12 benchmarks or reference points</li> <li>• A set of descriptive statements about successive levels of achievement on the continuum of ESL performance statements (descriptions) of communicative competencies and performance tasks in which the learner demonstrates application of language knowledge (competence) and skill</li> </ul> <p>Each Benchmark contains the following parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global performance descriptors, which give a brief account of a learner's general language ability in English as a Second Language as revealed in speaking, listening, reading or writing tasks at the Benchmark level.</li> <li>• Performance conditions, which are specific conditions that give us the purpose of communication, setting/place, audience, topic, time constraints, length of task, assistance allowed, etc.</li> <li>• Competency outcomes and standards, which tell us what a person can do, examples of communication tasks and text, plus outcomes that the learner should demonstrate to achieve the Benchmark.</li> </ul>	<p>The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses broad competencies to organize learning content</li> <li>• The task-based nature of the framework supports practitioners as they determine how to teach and assess learning</li> <li>• Describes proficiency using 3 levels of performance</li> <li>• Is organized around the following six (6) broad competencies:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find and use information</li> <li>2. Communicate ideas and information</li> <li>3. Understand and use numbers</li> <li>4. Use digital technology</li> <li>5. Manage learning</li> <li>6. Engage with others</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p>Competencies are organized using task groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• describe the full range of content within each competency</li> <li>• can be taught or selected in any order based on the goals of the adult learner</li> </ul> <p>Learner's developing proficiency in the competencies is described using three levels of performance. (These levels are linked to the first three complexity levels of the Essential Skills scale).</p>

THE CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS (CLB)	THE ONTARIO ADULT LITERACY CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK (OALCF)
<p>Features of the CLB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner-centred</li> <li>• Task-based</li> <li>• Competency-based</li> <li>• Stresses community, study and work-related tasks</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a Second language – for adults, 2000, p. viii</i></p>	<p>Features of the OALCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learner-centred</li> <li>• Task-based</li> <li>• Competency-based</li> <li>• Transition-oriented*</li> <li>• Makes visible the skills, knowledge, and behaviours that adult learners need to fulfill their responsibilities at work, in the community, and within learning situations</li> </ul> <p>*An adult learner works on integrated tasks that are directly linked to one of five goal paths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment</li> <li>2. Apprenticeship</li> <li>3. Secondary School Credit</li> <li>4. Postsecondary</li> <li>5. Independence</li> </ol> <p><i>Source: Employment Ontario (October 2011) OALCF: Curriculum Framework, pp. 2-5</i></p>

## F. A PATHWAYS APPROACH – WE’RE ALL TALKING PATHWAYS...

### CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

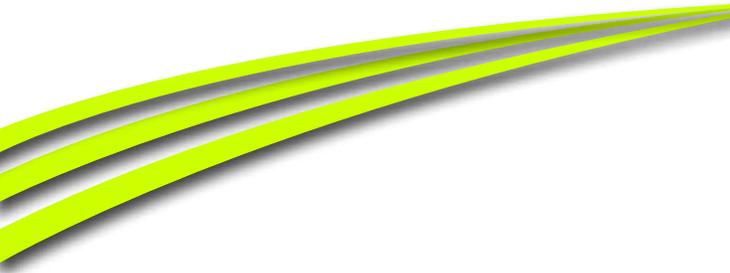
- TCU considers pathways as “routes that students take to move between and among levels of educational credentials, institutions, types of institutions and programs.”<sup>14</sup> The new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) referred to above focuses on moving learners to the next step along their identified goal path.
- As CIC and MCI envisioned settlement and language training strategies under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) signed in 2005, they focused on the pathways of newcomers, stating that “the system will deliver services to newcomers along the full settlement pathway from pre-arrival, arrival, and ongoing. It will incorporate a diagnostic and case by case management approach so each newcomer’s individual pathway is assessed and tailored to his/her evolving circumstances and he/she is provided with guidance along the path.”<sup>15</sup>
- When it comes to the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS), the concept and practice of newcomer pathway management includes a high level needs analysis and goal identification process that will take place at the CLARS centre.<sup>16</sup>

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14 Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Policy Statement for Ontario’s Credit Transfer System. Accessed on February 12, 2012.  
<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/CreditTransferE.pdf> (p.4)

15 Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Consultations on the Settlement and Language Training Service Needs of Newcomers: In Support of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. Accessed February 20, 2012.  
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/settlement/coia-summary.asp> (p. 17)

16 CIC and Province of Ontario Presentation. *Update and Look Ahead for New Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS)*. TESL Ontario Conference, October 28, 2010.



## WE ALL NEED TO CONNECT...

As we all seek to enhance the learning and settlement/integration pathways of the immigrants we encounter in our programs or services, it is imperative we build partnerships, relationships and a common understanding of each other's piece along the way.

Indeed, a quick glance at figures that pertain to population growth and diversity within Toronto and York Region (see Appendix 2 on page 36) underscores the necessity for programs to connect in order to explore together the emerging learning needs of adult learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds, diverse educational backgrounds, and varying levels of English proficiency and literacy levels.

You are encouraged to use this tool/portions of this tool to facilitate discussion and build relationships with other adult education programs and/or with other service providers who direct learners with both literacy and second-language needs to LINC, ESL, or LBS programs.

For further information on the tool or project, please contact the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML) at [admin@mtml.ca](mailto:admin@mtml.ca) or call (416) 961 - 4013.

# APPENDIX 1

## USEFUL LINKS

To develop a greater understanding of the various frameworks and initiatives impacting language training or literacy training in Ontario, visit the following links:

### **Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement**

<http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/publications/strategicplan.shtml>

<http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/keyinitiatives/coia.shtml>

### **Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS)**

<http://www.bettermail.ca/m/530/40145/>

[http://www.teslontario.net/uploads/paneldiscussion/Panel\\_2010.pdf](http://www.teslontario.net/uploads/paneldiscussion/Panel_2010.pdf)

### **Canadian Language Benchmarks**

<http://www.language.ca>

### **Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills**

<http://itsessential.ca>

### **CIC's Modernization Approach to Settlement Programming**

<http://integration-net.ca:81/infocentre/2010/001e.pdf>

### **Employment Ontario Information Case Management System**

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eotransformation/eois.html>

### **Employment Ontario Transformation**

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eotransformation/transformbackground.html>

### **Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)**

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/>

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students (Ontario Secondary Schools)**

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/132.html>

## APPENDIX 2

OUR EVOLVING DIVERSITY QUICK FACTS – POPULATION, IMMIGRATION, LANGUAGE	
TORONTO	YORK REGION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toronto is home to 2,615,060 residents</li> <li>• Between 2006 and 2011, Toronto’s population grew by 111,779 residents – an increase of 4.5%</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2006, 1,237,720 (almost half of the city’s population) was born outside of Canada (up from 48% in 1996)</li> <li>• Toronto is a city of new immigrants – half of all immigrants to Toronto have lived in Canada for less than 15 years</li> <li>• 47% of the population have a mother tongue other than English or French, and 5% of the population had no knowledge of either English or French</li> <li>• In 2006, the top five places of birth of newcomers to Toronto were:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. China</li> <li>2. India</li> <li>3. The Philippines</li> <li>4. Pakistan</li> <li>5. Sri Lanka</li> </ol> </li> <li>• The <b>top five non-official home languages</b> were: Chinese languages, Tamil, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• York Region is home to 1,032,524 residents</li> <li>• Between 2006 and 2011, York Region’s population grew by 139,812 residents – an increase of 15.7% (the strongest growth rate of the GTA Regions)</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2006, York Region was home to approximately 380,500 immigrants (43% of the total population), and an increase of over 96,000 individuals from 2001.</li> <li>• Of the 380,000 immigrants, 54% arrived before 1991; 34% between 1991 and 2000; 12% between 2001 and 2006.</li> <li>• Almost 46% of York Region population have a mother tongue that is neither English nor French, and 3.9% of the population had no knowledge of English or French</li> <li>• In 2006, the top five places of birth of newcomers to York Region were:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. China</li> <li>2. India</li> <li>3. Iran</li> <li>4. South Korea</li> <li>5. Russia</li> </ol> </li> <li>• The <b>top five non-official home languages</b> were: Chinese languages, Italian, Russian, Persian (Farsi), and Tamil</li> </ul> <p><i>Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census</i></p>

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