

# Way to Go!

A bulletin of  
the Ontario  
Literacy Coalition

Written for LBS Learners

Issue 4 of 4, July 2001

What is the next step  
in my learning journey?



**Way to Go! Written for LBS Learners** is a series of four bulletins published by the Ontario Literacy Coalition. Funding for this project was provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, Literacy and Basic Skills Section, and by the National Literacy Secretariat.



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Ontario Literacy Coalition acknowledges the valuable support of MTCU staff Douglas Perry and Audrey Anderson.

# What is the next step in my learning journey?

The agency where you are now learning is one step along the way. It is not the destination itself. There is a bigger journey ahead.

Each of you will have a different reason for participating in the LBS program, and a different destination. You might be taking part to become independent in your everyday life -- to be able to do more things on your own.

You might be learning the skills needed to enter another training or education program. You might be improving your reading, writing, and math to use in your job, or to get a new job. All goals are important!

This final issue of Way to Go! looks at the next step in your learning journey. It offers tips for researching your next step, and ideas for getting ready to take it.

We asked LBS learners from across the province to tell us their next step, and how they are getting ready. You can read their answers in the "Wise Words".

It takes courage to keep travelling along your learning journey, and perseverance to realize your dreams. That's why we've brought you the story of Karen Cayer. Be sure to read it at the back of this issue. And may YOU, too, reach your destination!

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## Wise Words

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

*Alan Key, computer scientist*

# Focusing on your destination

Whether you've just started at your agency, are in the middle of your time there, or are nearing the end of it, you'll want to keep focused on your destination.

You'll want to keep your eye on the next step of your long-term goal. That way, you can be sure you're ready to take that step when the time comes.

## Stepping into your future

Figuring out the next step is part of what the staff at your agency will help you do. They will:

- ✓ **Help you gain the skills you'll need.**
- ✓ **Help you research your goal.**
- ✓ **Help you get in touch with the agencies and services that can assist you to take the next step towards your long-term goal.**

## What's your destination?

Each adult learner will have a different reason for participating in the LBS program, and a different destination.

The next few pages look at some of these destinations. They describe the stories of four adult learners on different learning paths, and the next steps they plan to take on their journey.

The articles also offer tips for your own journey. So read on!



### Wise Words

"I will talk to some people and do more research on what type of career I want and need, because I still haven't found the one I like."

*Debbie, LBS learner  
Thunder Bay*

# When your next step is independence

## Jenny's story

Jenny wanted to get better at reading so she could read storybooks to her son. She was matched with a tutor, and they met every week for a year.

Jenny now reads to her son every night at bedtime. She knows that reading to him is the best way to make sure her son is ready to learn to read when he goes to school next year.

Jenny also applied for a library card. On a recent visit to the library, she read a poster on the bulletin board about a Mom and Tot Story Time. She is excited about going with her son.

### Jenny's learning path

1. Goes to an LBS agency
2. Works one-to-one with a tutor
3. Uses her reading skills every day:

gets a library card  
reads storybooks to her son  
takes part in programs at the library  
gets books for home

The librarian told Jenny that a local charity was holding a used book sale. Jenny bought books for herself and her son. She continues to practice and improve her reading, even though she has now left the LBS program.



### Wise Words

"Keep striving. It's tough, but if I can make it, anybody can! Just don't give up!"

*Karen Cayer, former LBS learner  
Cambridge*

### Tips!

- **Use your reading, writing, and math skills to try new things! Look up personal interest courses. Maybe there's a course you'd like to take at a local community centre.**
- **Check the Community Calendar section of your local newspaper. Read public bulletin boards and posters. Is there an event you'd like to go to?**
- **Get involved! Volunteer! Here's one idea: read newspapers to residents at a retirement home.**

# When your next step is looking for a job

## Jim's story

Jim wants to find a job as a shipper/receiver. He has experience, but needs to upgrade his writing and math to qualify for a job.

Jim enters the LBS program offered at a local adult day school. The assessor helps him figure out the reading and math skills he needs to learn, and he works on these skills in his classes.

As part of his learning, Jim researches community agencies that can assist him with his job search. His teacher helps him contact the Employment Resource Centre. He also finds out about the HRDC Job Bank, where he can look up job listings.

### Jim's learning path

1. Enters LBS program
2. Upgrades reading and math to find a job
3. Researches agencies to help with job search
4. Registers with Employment Resource Center

Jim has worked hard on his writing skills in his LBS classes, and feels confident enough to take a workshop at the Employment Resource Centre, where he writes a resume.

To take the next step towards his long-term goal of finding a job, Jim's teacher helps him set up a meeting with an employment counselor to plan a job search. He's well on his way!



### Wise Words

"I plan to be a tow motor driver. But what keeps me going, even when things get tough? I have people to talk to when I am down. My friends and teacher help."

*Linda, LBS learner  
Cambridge*

### Tips!

- **Practise writing job application letters. That way you'll learn how letters are set up.**

- **Research different jobs. What are the requirements? What training is needed? What are the job prospects? Ask the staff at your agency for help about where to find the information.**
- **Research agencies in your community that can help you with a job search.**
- **Pick samples for your learning portfolio based on the job you'd like to find. How will you need to use your reading, writing, and math skills to do that job? Take your learning portfolio to a job interview to show what you can do.**

## Surf these sites

Check out the Human Resources Development Canada Job Bank:  
<http://jb-ge.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/>

Research job profiles at the Human Resources Development Canada web site:  
<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/menu/jobs.shtml>

## If you already have a job....

Talk to your teacher, tutor, or coordinator about how you use reading, writing, and math in your job. Bring samples to your sessions. How do you need to improve your skills to be better at your job? Together make a plan.



### Wise Words

"I want to go into mechanics. I just like to work on cars."

*Dean, LBS learner  
Sudbury*



### Wise Words

"I plan on trying to get a job at The Building Box when I am through with the LBS program. I am working to update my resume and cover letter."

*David, LBS learner  
Cambridge*

# When your next step is training or education

## Gwen's story

In the future, Gwen wants to get her high school diploma. She feels it will make her more employable, and encourage her children to continue with their own education.

Gwen currently attends an LBS agency that matches up adult learners with volunteer tutors. Next, she plans to enroll in a class offered by the school board.

### Gwen's learning path

1. Goes to an LBS agency
2. Works one-on-one with a tutor
3. Joins a small group
4. Enrolls in a school board class

The staff at the LBS agency suggested that Gwen join the small group that meets to work together with an instructor. It's been a great stepping stone to help Gwen get ready for learning in a classroom.

She doesn't need as much help any more to get tasks done, and can work for longer periods on her own. She feels confident about taking her next step!

## Self Check:

Are you ready for learning in a class?

- I can work on my own while the teacher is busy helping someone else.
- I can work in a group where other people are doing different tasks.
- I can work with other people as a team and get along with them.
- I can carry out simple instructions.
- I can organize myself to get things done.
- I can get myself to class on time and attend regularly.



### Wise Words

"I would like to get into chef training. That's once I'm all done with my upgrading."

*Justin, LBS learner  
Sudbury*

## Garth's story

Garth has been working in a college LBS program for the past 6 months. He started off researching his long-term goal to become an industrial maintenance mechanic.

His instructor helped him get in touch with the teachers of the industrial maintenance mechanic program. From there, Garth learned what it takes to be admitted into the training. He then worked to improve his math skills so that he could qualify. Now Garth is ready to try the entry exam!

### Garth's learning path

1. Enters LBS program at college
2. Researches long-term goal
3. Upgrades math skills
4. Enrolls in Industrial Maintenance Mechanic course

Garth passes with flying colours, thanks to the preparations he's made in the LBS program. In the fall, Garth will start training to become an industrial maintenance mechanic.

### Tips!

- **Does the new program offer the training or education you need to reach your long-term goal?**
- **Are you working towards the skills you'll need to meet the entry requirements?**
- **Get brochures. What does the new program offer?**
- **Take a tour. Watch how the program is run. Do you think you can learn there?**
- **Talk to people who are currently taking the program. What do they say about it?**

### Question and Answer

Q: Do I need a secondary school diploma to take a college course?

A: Not necessarily. Ask the staff at your agency about the entry requirements.



## Wise Words

"I'm planning to take a course in dress design. I have done some research of a couple of the colleges that offer this program."

*Veronica, LBS learner  
Mississauga*

# Timeout!

In a perfect world, your learning would go just the way you planned it. But life doesn't always work that way...

Sometimes adult learners have to leave their programs early. Perhaps it is childcare issues, or employment, or health, or family problems, or a move.

## If this happens to you:

- ✓ Don't give up on your goals. You can still achieve them.
- ✓ Talk to your teacher or other staff at your agency. Make a plan together for continuing your learning when the time is right. Don't just drop out of your sessions.
- ✓ Get back to the program as soon as you are able. Enroll again.
- ✓ Keep working on your skills. Look for things that you can read, write, and calculate EVERY DAY to keep your skills sharp.

## More tips

If you're working in a class and have to leave, see if there is a one-to-one tutoring program you can join to keep up your skills. Or maybe there is a place that offers a literacy drop-in program in the community. Talk to the staff at your agency to find out what's available.

## I'm moving

Community groups, school boards, and colleges offer the LBS program across the province. There are also adult educational programs across the country, and in other countries, too.

Ask the staff at your agency about adult educational programs in the community where you are moving, and how you can get in touch with them.



### Wise Words

"Life is trying things to see if they work."

*Ray Bradbury, science fiction writer*

# Use it, don't lose it

You know what they say about riding a bike. Once you know how, you never forget. Reading, writing, and math aren't the same.

Here are some ideas to keep your skills sharp after you leave the LBS agency - and even while you're there!

## Read!

- Read to your children (it'll help THEIR learning, too!)
- Read the bulletin board at work, the grocery store, community centre - anywhere.
- Read a newspaper or magazine.
- Do a crossword puzzle.
- Go to the library. Borrow a book or magazine and read it.
- Read the brochures in your doctor's and dentist's offices.
- Read flyers that come in the mail.
- Read greeting cards that you get, or even those still in stores!

## Write!

- keep a journal.
- Write letters to friends, family, pen pals.
- Write grocery lists, telephone messages.
- Leave notes around the house to remind your family of things to do.
- Answer surveys.
- When you look at family albums, write captions or stories about the photographs.
- Volunteer to be the secretary of a committee that you believe in.
- Use the library computer to practice e-mailing and Internet skills.

## Do math!

- Estimate the total cost of items you pick up as you shop. Do the math in your head.
- Take a calculator with you to buy groceries. Practise your calculator skills.
- Figure out how many gallons of paint you need to paint your kitchen.
- Figure out the tax on something that you want to buy.
- Figure out how much change you'll get back when you get coffee or fast food.
- Convert the temperature outside from Celsius to Fahrenheit.
- Convert miles to kilometres for a trip.
- Fill out the deposit or withdrawal slips before you go to the teller when banking.

# Knowing when you're ready to move on

How will you know when it is time for you to leave the LBS agency because your learning there is done?

How will you know when you're ready to take the next step in your learning journey? Here are some suggestions to help tell when the time is right.

## Helpful hints

- ✓ Take a look at your Training Plan. It will list the skills you set out to learn in the LBS program. Have you learned them?
- ✓ Talk to your teacher, tutor, or coordinator at your agency. Discuss what you've learned. Decide together if you're ready to move on to your next step.
- ✓ Look at the requirements of your next step. Are you prepared? Is there something that the LBS agency can do to help you get ready?
- ✓ Try your exit demonstrations. What do the results tell you?

## What are exit demonstrations, anyway?

Decide with the staff at your agency what tasks will show you've learned the skills you set out to learn in the LBS program. Pick tasks that combine these skills, and apply them in ways that are related to your goal. These are your exit demonstrations.

Successfully doing exit demonstrations tell you that you're ready to move on.

Exit demonstrations are also useful to let you know when you're not quite ready. They will give you guidance in that last bit of learning you have to do before you take your next step.



### Wise Words

"I plan to enroll in the Fish and Wildlife Program. I have researched all there is to know about the course, the employment trends in that field, and the job potential for 2003."

*Mark, LBS learner  
Timmins*

## Hi! How's it going?

When you leave the LBS agency where you are now working, you'll be contacted down the road to see how the next step in your learning journey is going. The staff at the agency will get in touch with you 3 months after you leave, and then again at 6 months.

## Are you travelling toward your goal?

The person who calls will ask how you're using the skills you learned in the program. For example, are you using them in a job or volunteer work? Have you enrolled in another learning or training program? Are you using the skills in your day-to-day life?

## Please help!

What you say will help the staff at the agency make the program better for other adult learners just starting out on their learning journey. Your ideas and experiences are important, so please give a few minutes of your time to share them!

## Can we help you?

Maybe you've had some time away from your learning, and would like to get back at it. Maybe your plans have changed, and you'd like help figuring out what to do next, or what agency or service is best to help you pursue your goals. Feel free to ask!



### Wise Words

"My next step is to get a job, and be more independent, and go on with my life."

*Ida, LBS learner  
New Liskeard*



## A profile of an adult learner

"I started in the LBS program about 2 years ago. I had just moved to the city. Trying to fit in was the hardest thing that I found. Every night I pushed myself doing hours of homework. I still made time for my son. I'm a single mom.

If it weren't for the teachers, I would have quit many times. Home problems, everything in general, I was frustrated. They encouraged me. They gave me telephone numbers to contact people. If I had trouble with my homework, they would help me.

I always wanted to work with the elderly and handicapped. I failed trying to get into the Personal Support Worker program the first time. But the second time, I got 80% on my exam.] never thought I'd make it through the course, but each module got a little easier. Now I have a job as a Personal Support Worker.

Today I went shopping, and it felt great because I paid for the clothes on my own. I used to go with a few bucks in my pocket. Today I had \$100!

Going back to school gave me back my independence. Having a job gave me even more independence. When I first started coming to school, I had a purpose to get up in the morning. Now that I'm working, that purpose is even greater.

I accomplished everything I set out to do. I'm on top of the world. School gave me back my life."

Karen Cayer



### Wise Words

"Life is full of sweat and tears, but you get back what you put into it!"

*Karen Cayer, former LBS learner  
Cambridge*

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