Final Report

In December 2010, the CSC (College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading) **received funding for the "Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom"** project. Support for this project was provided by the Ministry of Training, **Colleges and Universities' Literacy and Basic Skills Research and** Development fund. The project commenced in December 2010 and concluded in January 2012.

There is considerable interest in blended or hybrid delivery among college educators, but faculty and managers are challenged to find the time and resources to explore this increasingly popular and successful delivery mode. The CSC, as is often the case, agreed to research and to **do the "legwork"** for AU/LBS staff at all 24 colleges. This project provided college AU/LBS faculty and managers more information and resources to support the development of additional flexible learning opportunities. It sought to develop resources for blended or hybrid delivery based on primary and secondary research, as well as college-based pilots. Training and workshops for interested practitioners were also developed.

The Project Deliverables:

1. Literature Review - *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom - Blended Delivery: A Literature Review*, published in May 2011.

   Based on extensive research of current findings in Canada, the United States and internationally, the literature review provides a definition of blended delivery, the rationale for using blended delivery for adult learners, as well as considerations and challenges for students, faculty and administrators. In addition, tools and resources for faculty and an extensive bibliography are included. The Literature Review was sent to all college AU/LBS managers for distribution to faculty and staff, as well as to those responsible for organizing and delivering professional development (Professional Development staff) at each college and was posted to the CSC website. Appendix A

2. College Surveys *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom – Blended Delivery: Report of Survey Results*

Ontario's colleges are constantly focused on providing the best learning experiences for a growing number of adult learners. Like other postsecondary institutions, colleges are investigating and adopting

strategies which will support student success and increased access within a context of funding constraints. This is true not only for traditional postsecondary programs, but also for specially funded programs such as Academic Upgrading and Literacy and Basic Skills.

Some colleges have announced strategies which include an increase in blended or hybrid delivery. Courses that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning and reduced classroom contact hours (reduced seat time) are known as blended delivery or hybrid courses. There are two main reasons for offering blended or hybrid delivery courses: (1) to optimize student learning and (2) to maximize physical resources.

In order to assess or "take a snapshot" of the current state of blended delivery in college based AU/LBS programs, three surveys were conducted in February and March 2011. These included a survey of college AU/LBS practitioners, a survey of college Professional Development staff and a survey of AU/LBS students at six colleges. Based on these results, it is clear that:

- ➢ Blended delivery and the use of technology is the way of the future
- ➢ Students want and are prepared for flexible course delivery options
- ➢ There are challenges to developing and implementing blended delivery courses
- ➢ There are supports in place at most colleges and within the CSC network to assist AU/LBS practitioners to move forward.

This report provides an overview of the survey results. The survey instruments and a summary of all responses are also included. The survey report was distributed to all college AU/LBS managers, college Professional Development staff and was posted to the CSC website. Appendix B

3. <u>Technology Workshops at June 2011 Provincial CSC Conference</u>-

Two workshops were offered to the participants at the annual provincial CSC conference and were included in the conference overview. Each workshop provided an overview of blended delivery, the rationale for using this delivery method and the considerations for students, faculty and managers. As well, suggestions for the blended

delivery resource guide were sought from the participants. The workshop for faculty had 23 participants and the workshop for managers had 5. The workshop presentations, worksheet and evaluations are included in Appendix C.

It should be noted that in addition to these workshops, a three day training session was held for the teachers involved in the delivery of the blended courses/modules. This intensive, practical, hands-on training session was held at Niagara College in June 2011 and was facilitated by a noted expert in blended delivery, Sandra Watson. Based on the feedback from the teachers involved in the training and their subsequent experiences with the pilots, this training session could form the basis of future training sessions for LBS faculty at more colleges. Future training could be delivered in a blended format using both in person and online resources, thereby modelling the blended format and allowing faculty to experience blended delivery as learners.

4. Development of a How to Manual - *Blended Delivery Resource Guide, January 2012*

Ontario's colleges are known for their student focus and responsiveness to changing students' interests and needs. As students express a greater desire for education and training that is more flexible and convenient, colleges are determined to develop more flexible learning opportunities and options. Several colleges now offer programs and courses in blended or hybrid delivery mode, combining traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with integrated online learning activities. It is anticipated that this trend will increase. **This Resource Guide is one component of the project "Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom". The primary purpose of this** Blended Delivery Resource Guide is to serve as a basic, p**ractical "how to" guide for program managers, faculty and support staff in AU/LBS** programs who are considering a transition to blended delivery. It provides definitions and information about required resources, including extensive online resources. Section 5 provides specific information for faculty considering course redesign for blended delivery.

For those considering blended delivery, it is important to access the resources at their college. All colleges have instructional support units or Professional Development departments that can provide the initial and ongoing support required for the successful transition to blended delivery. The Blended Delivery Resource Guide was distributed both electronically and in print to all college AU/LBS managers, college Professional Development staff and was posted to the CSC website. Appendix D

5. <u>Report on Pilots with recommendations</u> *Blended Delivery: What We Learned from Pilots at 6 Colleges*

The primary purpose of the pilots was to provide an opportunity to faculty and students to participate in a blended delivery course or module and to assess the overall satisfaction with the pilot. This report details information about the pilots including training and preparation, feedback from students, faculty and managers and recommendations. Overall, the results of the pilots are very consistent with observations and considerations gleaned from the project literature review.

a) The majority of students were satisfied with the blended delivery course/module, citing flexibility and convenience as two of the factors contributing to their satisfaction. A small minority of students was not satisfied with the pilot and indicated a preference for teacher-led, traditional classroom activities. Both of these findings reflect experiences at other institutions and are identified in the literature review.

b) Technology – access to computers and the internet, as well as technical support- was a factor in the overall satisfaction of both students and teachers. Unfortunately, the college support staff strike in September 2011 affected the availability of technical support, causing difficulties and delays for teachers and students alike.

c) All colleges have an LMS- Learning Management System- which serves as the web-based platform that provides teachers with a way to create and deliver content, monitor learner participation and assess performance. While all postsecondary students and teachers have access to the LMS, through our pilot, we've learned that not all college AU/LBS programs provide LMS access to their students and staff. This unexpected barrier to access

required resolution in order to commence with the blended delivery pilots. Not all teachers could resolve this issue immediately and, therefore, three teachers withdrew from the pilot.

d) Training and development are critical success factors for the successful transition to blended delivery. This project provided a specific but limited training opportunity and teachers felt that additional training would have been beneficial. The requirement for additional onsite support and time for course redesign were also cited by the pilot teachers and some administrators. Again, these findings are consistent with those identified in the literature review. *Appendix E*

6. Project evaluation

Opportunities for evaluation were included throughout the project. The Project Advisory Committee, comprised of college faculty and managers, as well as CSC staff regularly provided feedback regarding each aspect and every deliverable of the project. Regular communication, primarily via email, and scheduled conference calls allowed for input and discussion.

Participants of the two workshops held at the CSC's annual conference provided feedback.

All 24 colleges provided information for various aspects of the project. Feedback regarding the documents and reports was generally received via email.

More than 120 learners provided feedback about their blended delivery pilot course experience.

Managers (4) and teachers (13) provided an evaluation of the blended delivery pilot projects.

Appendices

Appendix A: *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom - Blended Delivery: A Literature Review*, published in May 2011.

Appendix B: *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom – Blended Delivery: Report of Survey Results*

Appendix C: Technology Workshops –Description, presentation power point, workshop evaluations

Appendix D: Blended Delivery Resource Guide

Appendix E: *Moving the Technology into the AU/LBS Classroom – Blended Delivery: What We Learned from Pilots at 6 Colleges*