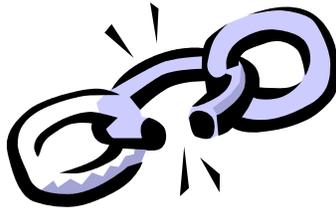# Lost Contacts: How to Prevent Them

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Introduction

The present document is connected to the project "Guide des pratiques exemplaires en ce qui concerne le suivi assuré."

During a consultation with two representatives of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the objectives initially identified in the project proposal were modified. The project adopted the following three objectives as a result:

- To analyze the data relating to lost contacts within the four Ontario literacy streams (Anglophone, Native, Francophone and Deaf).

- To consult literacy providers in the field in order to achieve the following:

  o Identify the reasons for which contact is lost with certain learners.

  o Identify the practices in use that can limit or reduce lost contacts.

  o Identify the procedures used to perform student follow-ups; three months and six months; after students have exited from the Literacy and Basic Skills Program (LBS).

- To identify for the benefit of literacy providers the practices that can limit or reduce lost contacts as well as the practices that ensure follow-ups are performed with students three months and six months after they have exited the LBS program.

The present document is organized according to the three stages of the project. The first part presents the statistical analysis pertaining to departures and lost contacts. The second part focuses on the consultations completed in the field. The last part deals with the practices that can limit or reduce lost contacts, as well as the practices that ensure follow-ups are performed with students three months and six months after they have exited the LBS program.

(The present document is a translation of the French language report entitled "Les contacts perdus : comment les éviter.")

Analysis of Statistical Data on Departures and Lost Contacts

Preliminary Comments

The statistical data pertaining to lost contacts used in this project was supplied by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. These statistics include all the departures identified by the field in its monthly reports for two years, 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

The statistical data provided by the Ministry is organized in the following categories: exit date, intake date, sector, network, local training board, age group, initial assessment level, assessment level upon departure, gender, source of income, status at exit, reason for leaving, and status after 3 months and 6 months. These categories represent variables that can be cross referenced to bring out the particulars related to departures and lost contacts. The tables below, containing statistical data, illustrate several cross references of these variables.

Given that the statistical data is limited to two consecutive years, it is not possible to speak of tendencies. The question of tendencies is best dealt with within the context of several years. This being said, the following observations can nevertheless be made.

LBS Program Registrations

Table A: Total Number of Learners Registered in the LBS Program in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

Year	Total for the Province	Anglo-Phone	% of total	Native	% of total	Franco-phone	% of total	Deaf	% of total
2002-2003	46033	40887	89%	1342	3%	3390	7%	414	1%
2003-2004	43553	38552	89%	1307	3%	3322	8%	372	1%

(<u>Note</u>: The "% of total" represents the registrations for a stream as a percentage of all registrations in the province for the given year).

Observations

- This table illustrates the context in which the departures and lost contacts are considered. The larger number of registrations in the Anglophone stream is worthy of note.

Provincial Totals for Departures and Lost Contacts

Table 1: Departures and Lost Contacts for Ontario as a Whole in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

Province	Year 2002-2003		Year 2003-2004	
		CP % de TD		CP % de TD
Total Departures (TD)	24399		23404	
Total Lost Contacts (LC)	5172	21%	3425	15%

Observations

- There is a slight drop (995 learners) in departures for the second year compared to the first year 24,399 departures for 2002-2003 and 23,404 for 2003-2004. The numbers for the two remain comparable, however.

- The percentage of departures that are lost contacts for 2003-2004 has clearly decreased in comparison to the percentage for 2002-2003: 21% in 2002-2003 and 15% in 2003-2004.

Question To Examine

- How do the departures and lost contacts compare across the four literacy streams?

Provincial Totals by Stream of Departures and Lost Contacts

Table 2: Departures and Lost Contacts by Stream for the Whole of Ontario

STREAM	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	(LC % of TD) – 21%		LC % of TD	(LC % of TD) – 15%
TD Anglophone	21821			21085		
LC Anglophone	4737	21.7%	1%	3158	15%	0%
TD Native	745			628		
LC Native	194	26%	5%	119	19%	4%
TD Francophone	1652			1594		
LC Francophone	223	13.5%	-8%	137	8.6%	-6%
TD Deaf	181			97		
LC Deaf	18	10%	-11%	11	11.3%	-4%
TD non Anglophone	2578			2319		
LC non Anglophone	435	16.9%	-4%	267	11.5%	-3%

(<u>Note</u>: **TD** means "total departures." **LC** means "lost contacts." **LC % of TD** means "lost contacts as a percentage of total departures in a stream." **(LC % of TD) – 21%** or **15%** means "the difference between the percentage for the stream and the provincial percentage." **TD non Anglophone** and **LC non Anglophone** are "the statistical data for all streams combined but not including the Anglophone stream.")

Observations

- The number of departures varies significantly from one stream to another. The Anglophone stream accounts for 89.4% of departures in 2002-2003 and 90.1% of departures in 2003-2004. The Deaf stream, however accounts for 0.74% of departures in 2002-2003 and 0.41% of departures in 2003-2004.

- The percentage of departures within a stream that are lost contacts varies considerably from one stream to another. Only the percentage belonging to the Anglophone stream (22%) approaches the figure for the whole province (21%, all streams combined). The provincial percentage cannot, therefore, be relied on because it does not reflect the reality in the Native, Francophone and Deaf streams. Streams should, therefore, be considered separately from one another.

- All streams, with the exception of the Deaf stream, show a significant drop in the percentage of departures that are lost contacts for the year 2003-2004. The percentage belonging to the Deaf stream increases slightly to 11% in 2003-2004 relative to 10% in 2002-2003.

Question to Examine

- How do departures and lost contacts compare across the sectors of activity for each of the streams?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for Each Stream by Sector

Table 3: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Anglophone Stream by Sector

ANGLOPHONE STREAM/SECTOR	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo
TD Anglo/college	8077			7335		
LC Anglo/college	1112	14%	5%	691	9%	3%
TD Anglo/community	5887			5732		
LC Anglo/community	1415	24%	7%	713	12%	3%
TD Anglo/school board	7857			8018		
LC Anglo/school board	2210	28%	10%	1754	22%	8%

(Note: **LC % of TD** means "lost contacts as a percentage of departures for the sector in question, for the given year". **LC % of TD Anglo** means "the lost contacts for the sector in question as a percentage of total departures for the Anglophone stream, for the given year".)

Observations

- All departures, including lost contacts, are distributed as follows in 2002-2003: colleges – 37% of all departures in the stream; community-based establishments – 27%; school boards – 36%. They are distributed as follows in 2003-2004: colleges – 34.8%; community-based establishments – 27.2%; school boards – 38%.

- The percentage of departures that are lost contacts is not as high in the college sector as in the other two sectors for the two years in question: 14% in 2002-2003 and 9% in 2003-2004. The school boards however have the highest percentages of the three sectors: 28% in 2002-2003 and

22% in 2003-2004, considerably higher than the 21.7% for the Anglophone stream combined in 2002-2003 and the 15% for the Anglophone stream combined in 2003-2004 (see Table 2).

- The decrease in the percentage of departures that are lost contacts in 2003-2004 is apparent across all three sectors, but is most significant in the community sector: 24% in 2002-2003 and 12% in 2003-2004. The latter figure approaches that of the college sector (9 %).

Table 4: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Native Stream by Sector

NATIVE STREAM/SECTOR	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native
TD Native/college	16			8		
LC Native/college	5	31%	1%	0	0%	0%
TD Native/community	729			620		
LC Native/community	189	26%	25%	119	19%	19%
TD Native/school board	0			0		
LC Native/school board						

Observations
- The majority of Native persons who are departures are registered in the community establishments: 97.9% in 2002-2003 and 98.7% in 2003-2004. There are no departures in the school board sector.

- The percentage of departures that are lost contacts decreases in the college and community sectors in 2003-2004 relative to 2002-2003. Though the reduction in the college sector is pronounced, the limited number of departures in this sector (16 in 2002-2003 and 8 in 2003-2004) limits any interpretation.

Table 5: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Francophone Stream by Sector

FRANCOPHONE STREAM/SECTOR	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco
TD Franco/college	480			332		
LC Franco/college	82	17%	5%	32	10%	2%
TD Franco/community	1083			1159		
LC Franco/community	137	13%	8%	96	8%	6%
TD Franco/school board	89			103		
LC Franco/school board	4	4%	0%	9	9%	1%

Observations

- All departures, including lost contacts, are distributed as follows in 2002-2003: colleges – 29.1% of the departures in the stream combined; community establishments – 65.6%; school boards – 5.4%. They are distributed as follows in 2003-2004: colleges – 20.8%; community establishments – 72.7%; school boards – 6.5%.

- The percentage of departures that are lost contacts decreases in the college and community sectors. The reduction is very pronounced in the college sector: from 17% in 2002-2003 to 10% in 2003-2004. The percentage increases, however, in the school board sector: from 4% to 9%. It is necessary to be cautious, however, when interpreting these last figures, given the small number of departures in the school board sector.

Table 6: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Deaf Stream by Sector

OFAF STREAM/SECTOR	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf
TD Deaf/college	35			27		
LC Deaf/college	0	0%	0%	1	4%	1%
TD Deaf/community	137			70		
LC Deaf/community	17	12%	9%	10	14%	10%
TD Deaf/school board	9			0		
LC Deaf/school board	1	11%	1%			

Observations

- Given the limited number of departures in the Deaf sectors, it is necessary to be cautious when interpreting the data posted: 181 departures in 2002-2003 and 97 departures in 2003-2004.

- An increase in the percentages of departures that are lost contacts can be noticed in the college and community sectors in 2003-2004 relative to the percentages for 2002-2003. There are no departures in the school board sector.

Table 7: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Combined Non-Anglophone Streams by Sector

COMBINED NON-ANGLOPHONE STREAMS/SECTOR	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Non-Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Non-Anglo
TD non-Anglo/college	531			367		
LC non-Anglo/college	87	16%	3%	33	9%	1%
TD non-Anglo/community	1949			1849		
LC non-Anglo/community	343	18%	13%	225	12%	10%
TD non-Anglo/school board	98			103		
LC non-Anglo/school board	5	5%	0%	9	9%	0%

Observations

- This data supports the fact that the data from the four streams cannot be combined to obtain overall values. Furthermore, even when data from the Anglophone stream is subtracted, the data from the three remaining streams cannot be similarly combined because the values thus obtained do not reflect the particular reality of each stream.

Question to Examine

- How do the departures and lost contacts compare across the LBS levels for each of the training streams?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for Each Stream by LBS Level

Table 8: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Anglophone Stream by LBS Level

ANGLOPHONE STREAM/LBS LEVELS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo
TD LBS 1 Anglophone	3761			3176		
LC LBS 1 Anglophone	1095	29%	5%	503	16%	2.4%

	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
TD LBS 2 Anglophone	5453			5287		
LC LBS 2 Anglophone	1244	23%	5.7%	978	18%	4.6%
TD LBS 3 Anglophone	5981			5749		
LC LBS 3 Anglophone	1224	20%	5.6%	882	15%	4.2%
TD LBS 4 Anglophone	3128			2766		
LC LBS 4 Anglophone	577	18%	2.6%	381	14%	1.8%
TD LBS 5 Anglophone	1728			1706		
LC LBS 5 Anglophone	261	15%	1.2%	168	10%	0.8%
TD OBS IV Anglophone	977			1086		
LC OBS IV Anglophone	98	10%	-0.4%	62	6%	0.3%
TD A Anglophone	793			1315		
LC A Anglophone	238	30%	1.1%	184	14%	0.9%

(Note: **A** refers to "individuals who registered in the training program but did not undergo an initial evaluation".)

Observations

- Lost contacts, expressed as a percentage of departures, show a decrease across all LBS levels in 2003-2004 relative to 2002-2003.

Lost contacts, expressed as a percentage of departures, seem higher in LBS levels 1, 2 & 3 than in the other LBS levels for the two years in question.

Table 9: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Native Stream by LBS Level

NATIVE STREAM/ LBS LEVELS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native
TD LBS 1 Native	89			103		
LC LBS 1 Native	33	37%	4.4%	29	28%	4.6%
TD LBS 2 Native	112			148		
LC LBS 2 Native	33	29%	4.4%	32	22%	5.1%
TD LBS 3 Native	260			186		
LC LBS 3 Native	76	29%	10.2%	36	19%	5.7%
TD LBS 4 Native	146			93		
LC LBS 4 Native	33	23%	4.4%	11	12%	1.8%
TD LBS 5 Native	53			59		

LC LBS 5 Native	9	17%	1.2%	4	7%	0.6%
TD OBS IV Native	0			0		
LC OBS IV Native:						
TD A Native	85			39		
LC A Native	10	12%	1.3%	7	18%	1.1%

Observations

- Lost contacts expressed as a percentage of departures show a decrease across all LBS levels in 2003-2004 relative to 2002-2003.

- Lost contacts expressed as a percentage of departures seem higher in the first three LBS levels relative to the other levels for both years in question.

- There are no departures for the OBS level, the training level exclusive to colleges.

Table 10: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Francophone Stream by LBS level

FRANCOPHONE STREAM/ LBS LEVELS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco
TD LBS 1 Francophone	175			198		
LC LBS 1 Francophone	33	19%	2%	33	17%	2.1%
TD LBS 2 Francophone	276			338		
LC LBS 2 Francophone	43	16%	2.6%	24	7%	1.5%
TD LBS 3 Francophone	598			542		
LC LBS 3 Francophone	80	13%	4.8%	47	9%	2.9%
TD LBS 4 Francophone	279			265		
LC LBS 4 Francophone	29	10%	1.8%	14	5%	0.9%
TD LBS 5 Francophone	233			153		
LC LBS 5 Francophone	18	8%	1.1%	9	6%	0.6%
TD OBS IV Francophone	61			67		
LC OBS IV Francophone	14	23%	0.8%	4	6%	0.3%
TD A Francophone	30			31		
LC A Francophone	6	20%	0.4%	6	19%	0.4%

- Lost contacts expressed as a percentage of departures show a decrease for all LBS levels in 2003-2004 relative to 2002-2003.

- The frequency of lost contacts seems higher in the lower training levels than in the higher levels, with the exception of the OBS IV level in 2002-2003, which shows the highest frequency of all levels for that year.

Table 11: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Deaf Stream by LBS Level

DEAF LEVEL/ LBS LEVELS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf
TD LBS 1 Deaf	88			42		
LC LBS 1 Deaf	11	13%	6.1%	8	19%	8.2%
TD LBS 2 Deaf	57			38		
LC LBS 2 Deaf	3	5%	1.7%	3	8%	3.1%
TD LBS 3 Deaf	20			12		
LC LBS 3 Deaf	1	5%	0.6%	0	0%	0%
TD LBS 4 Deaf	11			2		
LC LBS 4 Deaf	1	9%	0.6%	0	0%	0%
TD LBS 5 Deaf	1			1		
LC LBS 5 Deaf	0	0%	0%	0	0%	0%
TD OBS IV Deaf	0			0		
LC OBS IV Deaf:						
TD A Deaf	4			2		
LC A Deaf	2	50%	1.1%	0	0%	0%

Observations

- An increase in the lost contacts expressed as a percentage of departures is evident in LBS levels 1 and 2 for 2003-2004. These two levels represent 80% of departures in 2002-2003 and 83% of departures in 2003-2004.

- The frequency of lost contacts is higher for the first level of training than in the other levels for the two years in question.

Question to Examine

- How do departures and lost contacts compare by gender across the training streams?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for Each Stream by Gender

Table 12: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Anglophone Stream by Gender

ANGLOPHONE STREAM/ GENDER	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo
TD Anglo/female	11818			11292		
LC Anglo/female	2192	19%	10%	1494	13%	7.1%
TD Anglo/male	10003			9793		
LC Anglo/male	2545	25%	11.2%	1664	17%	7.9%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is higher for men than for women in the Anglophone Stream for the two years in question.

Table 13: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Native Stream by Gender

NATIVE STREAM/ GENDER	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native
TD Native/female	420			358		
LC Native/female	94	22%	12.6%	68	19%	10.8%
TD Native/male	325			270		
LC Native/male	100	31%	13.4%	51	19%	8.1%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is much higher for men than for women in the Native stream for 2002-2003. The frequency is the same, however, for the two groups in 2003-2004.

Table 14: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Francophone Stream by Gender

FRANCOPHONE STREAM/ GENDER	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco
TD Franco/female	1107			1063		
LC Franco/female	148	13%	9%	90	8%	5.6%
TD Franco/male	545			531		
LC Franco/male	75	14%	4.5%	47	9%	2.9%

Observations

- There is very little difference in the frequency of lost contacts between men and women in the Francophone stream for the two years in question. The frequency is slightly higher for men compared to women.

Table 15: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Deaf Stream by Gender

DEAF STREAM/ GENDER	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf
TD Deaf/female	110			47		
LC Deaf/female	10	9%	5.5%	5	11%	5.2%
TD Deaf/male	71			50		
LC Deaf/male	8	11%	4.4%	6	12%	6.2%

Observations

- There is very little difference between men and women with respect to lost contacts in the Deaf stream for the two years in question. The frequency of lost contacts is slightly higher for men than for women.

Question to Examine

- How do the departures and lost contacts compare by gender and by age group between the literacy streams?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for Each Stream by Gender and by Age Group

Table 16: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Anglophone Stream by Gender and by Age Group

ANGLOPHONE STREAM/ GENDER/ AGE GROUP	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo
TD Anglo/16-18/female	318			294		
LC Anglo/16-18/female	66	20.8%	0.3%	39	13.3%	0.2%
TD Anglo/16-18/male	385			329		
LC Anglo/16-18/male	92	23.9%	0.4%	49	14.9%	0.2%
TD Anglo/19-24/female	2637			2743		
LC Anglo/19-24/female	574	21.8%	2.6%	405	14.8%	1.9%
TD Anglo/19-24/male	2898			2886		
LC Anglo/19-24/male	746	25.7%	3.4%	570	19.8%	2.7%
TD Anglo/25-44/female	6550			6066		
LC Anglo/25-44/female	1240	18.9%	5.7%	855	14.1%	4.1%
TD Anglo/25-44/male	5042			4851		
LC Anglo/25-44/male	1424	28.2%	6.5%	841	17.3%	4.0%
TD Anglo/45-64/female	2071			1935		
LC Anglo/45-64/female	283	13.7%	1.3%	183	9.5%	0.9%
TD Anglo/45-64/male	1536			1563		
LC Anglo/45-64/male	267	17.4%	1.2%	189	12.1%	0.9%
TD Anglo/65+/female	242			254		
LC Anglo/65+/female	29	12.0%	0.1%	12	4.7%	0.1%
TD Anglo/65+/male	142			164		
LC Anglo/65+/male	16	11.3%	0.1%	15	9.1%	0.1%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is higher for men than for women, for the two years in question, in all age groups, with the exception of individuals 65 years or older for 2002-2003. In this case, women show a higher frequency of lost contacts compared to men: 12% for women and 11.3% for men.

- In those cases where the frequency of lost contacts is higher for men than for women, the difference between the two genders is generally more than 3%.

- A decrease in 2003-2004 in lost contacts, expressed as a percentage of departures, shows in all age groups for both genders.

Table 17: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Native Stream by Gender and by Age Group

NATIVE STREAM/ GENDER/ AGE GROUP	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native
TD Native/16-18/female	7			9		
LC Native/16-18/female	2	28.6%	0.3%	1	11.1%	0.2%
TD Native/16-18/male	23			7		
LC Native/16-18/male	9	39.1%	1.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%
TD Native/19-24/female	99			93		
LC Native/19-24/female	32	32.3%	4.3%	14	15.1%	2.2%
TD Native/19-24/male	86			87		
LC Native/19-24/male	33	38.4%	4.4%	16	18.4%	2.5%
TD Native/25-44/female	237			182		
LC Native/25-44/female	52	21.9%	7.0%	45	24.7%	7.2%
TD Native/25-44/male	173			123		
LC Native/25-44/male	46	26.6%	6.2%	29	23.6%	4.6%
TD Native/45-64/female	65			68		
LC Native/45-64/female	6	9.2%	0.8%	8	11.8%	1.3%
TD Native/45-64/male	42			50		
LC Native/45-64/male	12	28.6%	1.6%	6	12.0%	1.0%
TD Native/65+/female	12			6		
LC Native/65+/female	2	16.7%	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
TD Native/65+/male	1			3		
LC Native/65+/male	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Observations

- The age groups from 16 to 18 years and 65 years or more show very few departures. Interpretations of the numbers belonging to these groups should be made with caution.

- The three age groups from 19 to 64 years include the majority of departures. It can be noted that the frequency of lost contacts within these groups is higher for men than for women with the exception of the group 25 to 44 years old for 2003-2004, where the frequency for men is 23.6% compared to 24.7% for women.

- A decrease in 2003-2004 in lost contacts expressed as a percentage of departures holds for all age groups, for both genders, with the exception of two cases, that of women 25 to 44 years of age and that of women 45 to 64 years of age. In the first case, the frequency of lost contacts increases from 9.2% to 11.8%; in the second case, it increases from 21.9% to 24.7%.

Table 18: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Francophone Stream by Gender and by Age Group

FRANCOPHONE STREAM/ GENDER/ AGE GROUP	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco
TD Franco/16-18/female	33			34		
LC Franco/16-18/female	6	18.2%	0.4%	4	11.8%	0.3%
TD Franco/16-18/male	22			33		
LC Franco/16-18/male	5	22.7%	0.3%	2	6.1%	0.1%
TD Franco/19-24/female	178			139		
LC Franco/19-24/female	36	20.2%	2.2%	18	12.9%	1.1%
TD Franco/19-24/male	116			128		
LC Franco/19-24/male	25	21.6%	1.5%	15	11.7%	0.9%
TD Franco/25-44/female	572			481		
LC Franco/25-44/female	65	11.4%	3.9%	41	8.5%	2.6%
TD Franco/25-44/male	241			202		
LC Franco/25-44/male	31	12.9%	1.9%	18	8.9%	1.1%
TD Franco/45-64/female	253			328		
LC Franco/45-64/female	24	9.5%	1.5%	18	5.5%	1.1%

TD Franco/45-64/male	125			129		
LC Franco/45-64/male	9	7.2%	0.5%	7	5.4%	0.4%
TD Franco/65+/female	71			81		
LC Franco/65+/female	17	23.9%	1.0%	9	11.1%	0.6%
TD Franco/65+/male	41			39		
LC Franco/65+/male	5	12.2%	0.3%	5	12.8%	0.3%

Observations

- It can be noted that in half of the cases, the frequency of lost contacts is higher for men than for women.
- A decrease in lost contacts during 2003-2004, expressed as a percentage of departures, holds across all age groups for both genders.

Table 19: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Deaf Stream by Gender and by Age Group

DEAF STREAM/ GENDER/ AGE GROUP	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf
TD Deaf/16-18/female	0			1		
LC Deaf/16-18/female	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
TD Deaf/16-18/male	0			2		
LC Deaf/16-18/male	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
TD Deaf/19-24/female	24			9		
LC Deaf/19-24/female	2	8.3%	1.1%	2	22.2%	2.1%
TD Deaf/19-24/male	9			16		
LC Deaf/19-24/male	1	11.1%	0.6%	2	12.5%	2.1%
TD Deaf/25-44/female	51			23		
LC Deaf/25-44/female	5	9.8%	2.8%	1	4.3%	1.0%
TD Deaf/25-44/male	38			19		
LC Deaf/25-44/male	5	13.2%	2.8%	2	10.5%	2.1%
TD Deaf/45-64/female	29			12		
LC Deaf/45-64/female	2	6.9%	1.1%	1	8.3%	1.0%
TD Deaf/45-64/male	22			11		
LC Deaf/45-64/male	1	4.5%	0.6%	2	18.2%	2.1%
TD Deaf/65+/female	6			2		

LC Deaf/65+/female	1	16.7%	0.6%	1	50.0%	1.0%
TD Deaf/65+/male	2			2		
LC Deaf/65+/male	1	50.0%	0.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Observations

- The small number of departures in the age groups 16 to 18 years of age and 65 years of age or more limits any interpretation made of the numbers belonging to these age groups.

- It can be noted that the highest concentration of departures occurs in the 25 to 44 years age bracket (49% in 2002-2003 and 43% in 2003-2004) for the two years in question. It can also be noted that there is a significant decrease in the frequency of lost contacts in 2003-2004 in this age group. This is not the case, however, for the two other age groups showing large concentrations of departures: in the case of the age groups from 19 to 24 years of age and from 45 to 64 years of age, the frequency of lost contacts increased for both genders in 2003-2004.

Question to Examine

- How do departures and lost contacts compare when the reason for leaving is taken into consideration?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for Each Stream by Reason for Leaving

Table 20: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Anglophone Stream by Reason for Leaving

ANGLOPHONE STREAM/ REASON FOR LEAVING	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Anglo
TD Anglo/agency initiated	3895			2709		
LC Anglo/agency initiated	1677	43.1%	7.7%	851	31.4%	4.0%
TD Anglo/attained LBS goal	6465			8020		
LC Anglo/attained LBS goal	117	1.8%	0.5%	106	1.3%	0.5%
TD Anglo/learner initiated	9169			7943		
LC Anglo/learner initiated	2498	27.2%	11.4%	1801	22.7%	8.5%

TD Anglo/left after assessment	2292			2413		
LC Anglo/left after assessment	445	19.4%	2.0%	400	16.6%	1.9%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is the highest in the case of departures initiated by the agency: 43.1% in 2002-2003 and 31.4% in 2003-2004.

- The frequency of lost contacts is the lowest of the four frequencies in the case of departures taking place after learners have attained the LBS goals: 1.8% in 2002-2003 and 1.3% in 2003-2004.

- Of the four cases, possible reasons for leaving are : lost contacts as a percentage of departures show a decrease in 2003-2004.

Table 21: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Native by Reason for Leaving

NATIVE STREAM/ REASON FOR LEAVING	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Native
TD Native/agency initiated	102			118		
LC Native/agency initiated	25	24.5%	3.4%	55	46.6%	8.8%
TD Native/attained LBS goal	149			125		
LC Native/attained LBS goal	3	2.0%	0.4%	1	0.8%	0.2%
TD Native/learner initiated	463			345		
LC Native/learner initiated	153	33.0%	20.5%	53	15.4%	8.4%
TD Native/left after assessment	31			40		
LC Native/left after assessment	13	41.9%	1.7%	10	25.0%	1.6%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is the lowest of the four frequencies when learners have attained LBS goals for the two years in question: 2% in 2002-2003 and 0.8% in 2003-2004.

- Of the four frequencies of lost contacts in 2002-2003, the frequency is highest when the learner has left after assessment: 41.9%.

- The frequency of lost contacts is higher in 2002-2003 when the departure is initiated by the learner compared to the situation where the departure is agency initiated: 33% when the departure is learner initiated and 24.5%

when the departure is agency initiated. The opposite holds true, however, in 2003-2004: 15.4% when the departure is learner initiated and 46.6% when the departure is agency initiated.

- Of the four possible reasons for leaving, only the lost contacts, as a percentage of departures, only agency initiated shows an increase in 2003-2004: from 24.5% in 2002-2003 to 46.6% in 2003-2004. In the other three situations, there is a decrease in the frequency of lost contacts for 2003-2004.

Table 22: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Francophone Stream by Reason for Leaving

FRANCOPHONE STREAM/ REASON FOR LEAVING	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Franco
TD Franco/agency initiated	185			191		
LC Franco/agency initiated	80	43.2%	4.8%	14	7.3%	0.9%
TD Franco/attained LBS goal	702			540		
LC Franco/attained LBS goal	14	2.0%	0.8%	9	1.7%	0.6%
TD Franco/learner initiated	698			703		
LC Franco/learner initiated	126	18.1%	7.6%	106	15.1%	6.6%
TD Franco/left after assessment	67			160		
LC Franco/left after assessment	3	4.5%	0.2%	8	5.0%	0.5%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts, when the learner left after assessment, is the only frequency that increased in 2003-2004: It increased slightly from 4.5% in 2002-2003 to 5% in 2003-2004. The three other frequencies of lost contacts decreased in 2003-2004.

- In 2002-2003, the frequency of lost contacts, when departures are agency initiated, is the highest of the four frequencies: 43.2%. In 2003-2004, the frequency of lost contacts, when departures are learner initiated, is the highest of the four frequencies: 15.1%.

Table 23: Departures and Lost Contacts for the Deaf Stream by Reason for Leaving

DEAF STREAM/ REASON FOR LEAVING	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Deaf
TD Deaf/agency initiated	41			20		
LC Deaf/agency initiated	7	17.1%	3.9%	6	30.0%	6.2%
TD Deaf/attained LBS goal	21			32		
LC Deaf/attained LBS goal	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
TD Deaf/learner initiated	115			41		
LC Deaf/learner initiated	10	8.7%	5.5%	3	7.3%	3.1%
TD Deaf/left after assessment	4			4		
LC Deaf/left after assessment	1	25.0%	0.6%	2	50.0%	2.1%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts, when learners have attained the LBS goals, is the lowest of the four frequencies: 0% for the two years in question.

- The frequencies of lost contacts, when the learner has left after assessment and when the departure is agency initiated, increased in 2003-2004: from 25% in 2002-2003 to 50% in 2003-2004 in the first case; from 17.1% in 2002-2003 to 30% in 2003-2004 in the second case.

- The frequency of lost contacts, when departure is learner initiated, decreased in 2003-2004: from 8.7% in 2002-2003 to 7.3% in 2003-2004.

Question to Examine

- What is the frequency of lost contacts at the time of the three-month and six-month follow-ups?

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for the Province as a Whole after Three Months

Table 24: Departures and Lost Contacts after Three Months for the Province as a Whole in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

Province : 3-month follow-up	Year 2002-2003		Year 2003-2004	
		LC % of TD		LC % of TD
TD not lost contact	14513		15260	
LC after 3 months	861	6%	547	4%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is by far lower after three months compared to the frequency of lost contacts at departure for each of the years in question. For the two years, the frequencies at departure are 21% in 2002-2003 and 15% in 2003-2004 and after three months, 6% in 2002-2003 and 4% in 2003-2004.

Question to Examine

- How do departures and lost contacts after three months compare across the streams?

Provincial Totals by Stream for Departures and Lost Contacts

Table 25: Departures and Lost Contacts after Three Months by Stream for Ontario as a Whole in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

PROVINCE BY STREAM AFTER 3 MONTHS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Province		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Province
TD not lost contacts/Anglo	12961			13657		
LC 3 months/Anglophone	789	6.1%	5.4%	491	3.6%	3.2%
TD not lost contacts/Native	418			416		
LC 3 months/Native	30	7.2%	0.2%	13	3.1%	0.1%
TD not lost contacts/Franco	999			1119		
LC 3 months/Francophone	42	4.2%	0.3%	43	3.8%	0.3%

TD not lost contacts/Deaf	135			68		
LC 3 months/Deaf	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Observations

- It can be noted that the frequency of lost contacts decreases for the Anglophone, Native and Francophone streams in 2003-2004 and that the frequency in the Deaf stream remains at 0% for the two years in question.

- It can be noted that the differences between the lost contact frequencies in the Anglophone, Native and Francophone streams are greater in 2002-2003 than in 2003-2004: The numbers in 2002-2003 are 6.1%, 7.2% and 4.2% respectively and they are 3.6%, 3.1% and 3.8% respectively in 2003-2004.

Total Departures and Lost Contacts for the Province as a Whole after 6 Months

Table 26: Departures and Lost Contacts after Six Months for Ontario as a Whole in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

Province : 6-month follow-up	Year 2002-2003		Year 2003-2004	
		LC % of TD		LC % of TD
TD not lost contacts at departure and after 3 months	9388		9650	
LC after 6 months	391	4.2%	265	2.7%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts is by far lower after six months compared to the frequency that occurs upon a learner's departure for each of the years in question. It is also lower than the frequency that occurs after three months.

- It can be noted that the frequency of lost contacts after 6 months decreases in 2003-2004 to 2.7% when compared to 4.2% in 2002-2003.

Table 27: Departures and Lost Contacts after Six Months by Stream for Ontario as a Whole in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004

PROVINCE BY STREAM AFTER 6 MONTHS	Year 2002-2003			Year 2003-2004		
		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Province		LC % of TD	LC % of TD Province

TD not lost contacts/Anglo	8386			8602		
LC 6 months/Anglophone	361	4.3%	3.8%	239	2.8%	2.5%
TD not lost contacts/Native	243			345		
LC 6 months/Native	9	3.7%	0.1%	13	3.8%	0.1%
TD not lost contacts/Franco	665			650		
LC 6 months/Francophone	20	3.0%	0.2%	13	2.0%	0.1%
TD not lost contacts/Deaf	94			53		
LC 6 months/Deaf	1	1.1%	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Observations

- The frequency of lost contacts decreases in 2003-2004 for the Anglophone, Francophone and Deaf streams. It increases slightly in the Native stream.

Conclusion

The following highlights the main points arising from the statistical data in the above tables:

- The statistical data from each of the streams cannot be combined to produce meaningful provincial data because each of the streams is distinct.

- A general decrease in the frequency of lost contacts in 2003-2004 is noticeable across all streams with the exception of the Deaf stream where the frequency increases.

- The frequency of lost contacts is by far lower in general after three months and after six months compared to the frequency that occurs at the departure of learners for each of the years in question.

- In the four streams, the frequency of lost contacts is higher for men than for women. When the data for both genders is broken down by age group, this observation does not always hold.

- It can be noted that the frequency of lost contacts is higher in general in the lower levels of the LBS program than in the higher levels.

- When the frequency of lost contacts is analyzed according to reason for leaving, it can be noted that the frequency of lost contacts in the case of

the learners who have attained the LBS program goal is not only very low but it is by far lower than the frequencies shown in the other cases.

Consultations with Literacy Providers in the Field

Preliminary Comments

A rather informal survey of literacy providers in the four literacy streams (Anglophone, Native, Francophone and Deaf) and in the three sectors of activity (colleges, community-based programs and school boards) was completed. More than 25 persons participated directly and indirectly. Direct consultations consisted of contacts in person, on the telephone or via e-mail. Indirect consultations were done through intermediary literacy providers who consulted their colleagues and then communicated the results of their consultations via e-mail to the project consultant.

The consultations had the following goals:

- To identify what a lost contact means in the field.

- To identify the reasons why contact is lost with certain learners.

- To identify the practices in use to avoid losing contact with learners.

- To identify the procedures in place to perform follow-ups three months and six months after learners have exited from the LBS program.

Questions Asked

Four basic questions were at the heart of the consultations with literacy providers in the field. Being rather informal in nature, the consultations also addressed related issues that were of interest to the literacy providers. The four basic questions were formulated, more or less, as follows:

1. What does a lost contact mean to you in practice? At what point do you decide that you have lost contact with a learner?

2. What are the reasons for which you lose contact with certain learners?

3. What do you do or what do you suggest doing to avoid or reduce the incidence of lost contacts?

4. Do you have a procedure in place to ensure follow-ups with learners three months and six months after they have exited from the LBS program? Can you describe this procedure?

The related issues dealt mostly with the following:

- The reasons why contact is re-established with some learners previously identified as lost contacts.

- The best success indicator for training provided (for example, three-month and six-month follow-ups or the evaluation of the program done by the learner at exit).

- The lack of time and resources needed to do follow-ups.

- Comments on the statistical data relating to departures and lost contacts. (Statistical data was given to those literacy providers who were interested in such information.)

Responses to the Questions Asked During the Consultations

Question 1: What does a lost contact mean to you in practice? At what point do you decide that you have lost contact with a learner?

The question was formulated so as to identify what a lost contact meant in practice to the field. It is sometimes the case that what is stated in principle does not conform to what is done in practice. It was therefore judged appropriate to inquire as to what a lost contact signified in the field.

Generally speaking, irrespective of the stream or sector of activity, a lost contact seems to signify the following:

- A lost contact is a person who cannot be reached in person, by telephone, by e-mail, by regular mail or through a contact person.

- A lost contact is a person who cannot be reached after a reasonable period of time. For some organizations, a reasonable period of time can signify three months or six months.

- A lost contact is also a person who does not return calls.

Question 2: What are the reasons for losing contact with certain learners?

There are two perspectives to this question. It is because communication generally goes two ways. Therefore, there are two sets of motives to consider, namely, what motivates a literacy program to maintain contact with learners and what motivates the learner to stay in contact with his or her literacy program.

Generally speaking, LBS program literacy providers make a lot of effort to maintain contact with their learners. They have put in place procedures to minimize breaks in contact. This being said, it is necessary, however to highlight the fact that during the consultations, it came to light that some establishments in the community-based sector do not possess the human resources to communicate regularly with learners no longer attending the program. It is, therefore, possible in some cases that too much time goes by before communicating with learners. This results in lost contacts that could have been avoided had communication been attempted more expeditiously.

If the question is now considered from the perspective of the learner, it can be seen that, generally speaking, the responses to the question are similar no matter the stream or the sector of activity. The different groups of learners (Anglophone, Native, Francophone and Deaf) echo one another in terms of motivation and circumstance. Contact with learners is lost, generally speaking, for the following reasons:

- The learner has moved without providing his or her new address.

- The learner is in prison.

- The learner is deceased.

- The learner is absent because of financial or domestic difficulties.

- The learner is no longer receiving money from social services or the Ontario Works program. (Ontario Works does not contact a literacy program to inform it that benefits for one of its learners have been terminated.)

- The changes in the teaching staff of the program attended by the learner discourage him or her and consequently, give the learner reason to leave without notice.

- The learner is obliged to take courses (by an organization from which he or she receives benefits) but is not really interested in doing so, which leads him or her to quit without notice.

- The learner finds a job and leaves without giving notice.

- The learner simply does not want anyone to communicate with him or her.

- The learner is too busy to return calls.

- The learner is not in the habit of staying in contact with the training program.

Though the different groups of learners (Anglophone, Native, Francophone and Deaf) resemble one another with respect to motivation and circumstance, certain particularities can be noted. These particularities are as follows:

- It has been noted in a Native program that lost contacts occur more frequently among non-Native learners than among Native learners. This is attributed to the fact that links within the Native community are stronger than the links in the non-Native community. Therefore, there is less tendency to lose contact with a Native person. (Native programs are allowed to register a certain number of non-Native learners.)

- It is noted, for example, that links are tighter in small Francophone communities. It is, therefore, easier to avoid lost contacts because it is always possible to encounter someone (at the supermarket or on the street) who knows a learner who is no longer showing up for class.

- It is noted that a move without notice in the Native stream can indicate that the learner in question has returned to his or her reserve. A representative of the reserve can, therefore, be contacted in order to reconnect with the learner.

- It has been noted in the Native stream that some lost contacts result when family members contacted, in order to reach a learner, do not speak English.

- It has been noticed that lost contacts are more frequent in urban settings than in rural settings.

- It has been noticed that the frequency of lost contacts is higher in the lower levels of training than in the more advanced levels of training. (This observation is supported in the statistical data appearing at the beginning of this report.)

Question 3: What do you do or what do you suggest doing to avoid or reduce the incidence of lost contacts?

This question raises another that is worth addressing first. The question of concern is whether or not the frequency of lost contacts in the four streams across the three sectors is too high.

The statistical data presented at the beginning of this report does not offer criteria or a standard by which to evaluate the significance of the frequency of lost contacts across the four streams and the three sectors because such criteria or standard does not exist at this point in time. An idea of such a standard can be had, however, given the fact that the statistical data presented demonstrates that the frequency of lost contacts is not homogeneous across the four streams and the three sectors. The frequency of lost contacts in the Francophone stream in 2003-2004, for example, was 8.6%, whereas the frequency of lost contacts in the Anglophone stream was 15%. Furthermore, it can be observed that a reduction in the frequency of lost contacts occurred in 2003-2004 across the three streams with the highest number of learners (Anglophone, Native and Francophone). Improvements can therefore be hoped for, in certain future situations. For example : better and more frequent staff training, understanding the importance of tracking, new strategies, more support from MTCU.
It is also important to emphasize at the start that the motivation for the present project comes from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Those responsible at the Ministry would like the frequency of lost contacts to be reduced as much as possible. The follow-ups done after three and after six months are important to the Ministry in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the LBS program. Though the frequency of lost contacts does not seem very high in some cases, it is the Ministry's opinion that greater efforts on behalf of all concerned would benefit the literacy environment as a whole. This being said, what suggestions does the field have to reduce or avoid lost contacts?

The practices already in place or suggested to reduce lost contacts are varied and are the common sense approach of the literacy providers. Here is a summary of such practices:

- It is necessary to develop a strong relationship with the learner throughout his or her training. The ties that develop in this way have a greater chance of lasting after the learner has left the program; the learner is thus more likely to stay in contact with the training establishment. Such a solid relationship should develop, it is said, if respect is shown to the learner, if he or she is encouraged to propose ways of improving the training program and if genuine concern is demonstrated for his or her progress.

- It is necessary to explain to the learner the importance of follow-ups (after three months and after six months) for the training program and for the learners yet to come. This should be done at the beginning of his or her training.

- It is necessary to obtain, at the beginning of the learner's training, his or her commitment to stay in contact with the establishment after exiting the program, as well as at the time the establishment does the three-month and six-month follow-ups. His or her commitment could be obtained by using a learning contract that includes not only the training outline but also a commitment to the welfare of the establishment.

- It is a good idea to set up at the beginning of training an e-mail account for the learner with Yahoo and Hotmail. The Yahoo and Hotmail services are accessible from any computer connected to the internet (computer at the library or in a cyber-café), and even those learners with a rather nomadic lifestyle have a tendency to keep up their accounts with these services.

- It is necessary to obtain from the learner, at the time of registration, the names and telephone numbers of two to four contact persons. Even if the learner moves without giving his or her new telephone number and address, chances to reach the learner are increased with the help of these contact persons.

- It is necessary to telephone a learner after two or three absences and not to let too much time go by after his or her last visit to the establishment. It is also necessary to call often when the learner cannot be reached.

- It is necessary to make time to communicate with learners who are absent without notice or who have left the program. To achieve this, a workplace policy or procedure can be very useful.

- It is necessary to develop a network of contacts between the training establishment and a learner, his or her family and the support services where he or she is registered. This network could be relied upon eventually to re-establish contact with the learner, should he or she leave without providing a forwarding address or telephone number.

Question 4: Do you have a procedure in place to ensure follow-ups with learners three months and six months after they have exited from the LBS program? Can you describe that procedure?

A common procedure does not exist across the networks and the sectors to ensure that follow-ups are made after three months and six months. Some establishments do them in a formal way whereas others do them when time permits. The latter are organizations that do not have sufficient human resources. This being said, the following are some of the procedures used in the field.

- A three-ring binder can be divided into sections corresponding to the twelve months of the year. When someone leaves, sheets or forms for follow-ups after three months and after six months are inserted in the appropriate sections. For example, if an exit from the program takes place in January, the three-month follow-up occurs in April and the six-month follow-up in July. Once completed, a follow-up is entered in the Ministry database (IMS). This procedure means that follow-ups are done on a regular basis throughout the year.

- Follow-ups can be done every three months starting in September. Follow-ups are therefore done in September, December, March and June. In practice, this means that follow-ups after an exit occurring in April will be done in September (three-month follow-up) and in December (six-month follow-up).

- A report can be generated on a regular basis from the Ministry database (IMS) that indicates the names and exit dates of learners having left the LBS program. Decisions can be made as to whom to contact, based on the information in the report.

First Related Issue: Why is contact re-established with some learners previously identified as lost contacts?

It happens sometimes that contact is re-established with a learner who has been labelled a lost contact. Some of the reasons why contact can be re-established are as follows:

- The learner realizes that he or she needs to upgrade knowledge and skills in order to make life changes. The learner is therefore ready to take responsibility for doing so.

- The learner decides to return to the LBS program at the request of another program like Ontario Works, without which his or her benefits will be terminated.

- The learner registers in another training establishment, which then communicates with the previous establishment where he or she received training.

- The learner is somewhat capricious and has a tendency of coming and going as he or she pleases.

- The learner has overcome some difficulty and is consequently able to return to the training program.

Second Related Issue: Which is the best success indicator for training provided? (For example, three-month and six-month follow-ups or the evaluation of the program done by the learner at exit.)

The best success indicator of the LBS program seems to be the exit questionnaire for the training establishments. This questionnaire asks, in detail, the opinion of the learner concerning the training he or she has received. The three-month and six-month follow-ups are also indicators of success to the extent that they reveal if the learner has found employment or has decided to further develop his or her knowledge and skills. The field seems to be waiting to see what the Ministry intends to do with the data collected during follow-ups and entered in its database (IMS).

Third Related Issue: The lack of time and resources needed to do follow-ups.

The issue of limitations in human resources was raised a number of times. This issue is of particular concern to the small, community-based establishments that don't always have the time to do follow-ups. In light of this issue, another issue was also raised concerning the fact that the attention focused on lost contacts might result in diverting the attention of literacy providers from the delivery of the basic services of the LBS program, which remains their primary responsibility.

Fourth Related Issue: Comments on the statistical data relating to departures and lost contacts.

Certain individuals consulted expressed interest in examining the statistical data on departures and lost contacts for the years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, the two years for which the Ministry provided data to the project consultant. What follows are three comments regarding this statistical data made during consultations:

- The decrease in the frequency of lost contacts in 2003-2004 can be attributed to two facts: the fact that the Ministry database (IMS) users were not comfortable with it in 2002-2003 and could not use it properly, and the fact that literacy providers were more aware of the focus brought to bear on lost contacts in 2003-2004. The literacy providers thus became more methodical with respect to doing follow-ups and entering data in the database in 2003-2004.

- The very low value of the frequency of lost contacts for the situation where the learner has attained the LBS goal in comparison to the three other reasons for leaving (agency initiated, learner initiated and left after assessment) might be due to the fact that literacy providers are more inclined to follow-up with these learners (it is with the learners who have attained their objectives that literacy providers want to measure the success of the LBS program). Furthermore, it is understandable that the value of the frequency of lost contacts is high when departure is agency initiated because this situation includes learners who leave on bad terms (as a result of disciplinary measures, for example).

- The higher frequency of lost contacts in the lower levels of training, in comparison with the higher levels of training, might be due to the fact that learners in the first levels of training do not communicate as well as the learners in the higher levels of training. However, it could be that these learners are again faced with a failure (having dropped out of the program) they would rather not address and consequently, avoid communicating with the training establishment.

Summary of Practices Capable of Reducing Lost Contacts

Preliminary Comments

The question of lost contacts is intimately connected to the question of learner retention. The notion of learner retention concerns those learners who refuse to remain in the LBS program and drop out before achieving their goals. The question of learner retention deals, therefore, with the commitment of the learner to his or her learning. The premature departures of certain learners (with or without loss of contact) might thus indicate a lack of commitment on their part to the learning that they had decided to undertake. It could also derive from personal situation, (illness, loss of family members, family issues, relocating…) Alternatively, it might also be a case of the establishment not being able to hold on to learners within the program. The following summary looks at suggestions made to ensure the retention of learners in the LBS program.

What follows also examines the question of customer loyalty, a notion of great importance to enterprises offering services and products in the marketplace. Customer loyalty deals with what an enterprise does to help a consumer commit to its products or services. Although literacy programs do not place their services in the marketplace and do not perceive themselves as businesses per se, it is nevertheless the case that their learners are also clients and that these learner-clients are consumers of literacy services. It is therefore plausible to think that the questions of customer loyalty and learner retention might have things in common.

Practices to Reduce Lost Contacts

When surveying literacy providers working within the LBS program, several suggestions concerning the reduction or prevention of loss of contact with learners were put forward. Some of these were already in practice while others were to be put into practice. The following examines these suggestions as well as some others that were made in the Ontario Literacy Coalition report entitled "Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey."

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Suggestion 1: It is necessary to develop a strong relationship with the learner throughout his or her training.

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This suggestion is probably obvious to everyone concerned. It deserves some consideration, however, because although it might be evident in principle, it is not

always so in practice. What does a strong relationship with the learner mean in fact?

A strong relationship between a literacy provider and a learner is a relationship where both parties are committed to achieving the goals set in the training plan drafted at the beginning of training. Since the learner is an adult, the relationship must conform to adult learning principles. Briefly put, these principles imply the following:

- That the adult learner be encouraged to become aware of his or her need to know more. It is important to show to the learner the link between his or her learning practices and their real life experience.

- That the learner's capacity to self-direct be recognized and nurtured. It is therefore necessary to create learning situations where the learner is encouraged to take charge of himself or herself.

- That the learner's life experience be recognized. It is therefore necessary to emphasize experiential learning techniques that involve real life situations, group discussions and problem-solving activities.

- That what motivates the adult learner be recognized, namely that he or she wants to learn what allows him or her to accomplish tasks or resolve problems arising from his or her life situation. It is therefore necessary to create learning situations that are very specific. In practice this means that a text writing activity, for example, might become an activity to learn to write business letters, or that an activity involving the addition of numbers be an activity involving the addition of the costs related to purchases the learner might want to make at the grocery store.

- Adult learners are motivated in great part by internal factors, such as the desire to improve their lives or to raise their self-esteem. It is therefore necessary to practice the above-mentioned adult learning principles and to encourage learners to develop positive values with respect to themselves, in particular and with respect to reality in general.

Suggestion 2: **It is necessary to explain to the learner the importance of follow-ups for the training program and for future learners.**

Suggestion 3: **It is necessary to obtain, at the beginning of the learner's training, his or her commitment to stay in contact with the establishment after exiting the program.**

These two suggestions go together. In both cases, it is a matter of obtaining from the learner, a commitment to the welfare of the training establishment. The literacy providers must, consequently, ask themselves why it would be in the learner's interest to be concerned with the welfare of the establishment and how to foster such a concern.

With regards to staying in contact with the establishment, the case to make to the learners is that their feedback is valuable to future learners just as the feedback of previous learners was of value to them. To demonstrate this fact, it is necessary to be prepared to explain how past feedback was used to improve the program and the establishment. Since the learners' commitment toward the establishment comes from their sense of responsibility, it is necessary to encourage the development of a sense of responsibility throughout their training. To accomplish this, it is necessary, for example, for the learners to see that their opinion of the LBS program and the establishment is of value and that their suggestions throughout their training are taken seriously, without which it is impossible to expect a solid commitment on their part.

A good suggestion for formalizing the learners' commitment is to put into writing in their training plan or learning contract their promise to maintain contact with the establishment. It must not be forgotten, however, that a contract goes two ways. If the learners' commitment is to be counted on, the establishment cannot fail to honour its promises to the learners.

Suggestion 4: **It is a good idea to set up, at the beginning of training, an e-mail account for the learner with Yahoo and Hotmail.**

Suggestion 5: **It is necessary to obtain from the learner, at the time of registration, the names and telephone numbers of two to four contact persons.**

These two suggestions go together. It is necessary to obtain from the learners the information required to maintain contact with them. It is the establishment's responsibility to keep this information up to date.

Suggestion 6: It is necessary to develop a network of contacts between the training establishment and a learner, his or her family and the support services where he or she is registered.

This suggestion complements the two preceding suggestions. However, it goes further. It is a matter of expanding the list of contact persons in order to include the contact information of the learner's family members and the organizations with which the learner is in regular contact. Such a network can prove useful in maintaining contact with the learner.

Suggestion 7: It is necessary to telephone a learner after two or three absences so that too much time does not go by after his or her last visit to the establishment.

Suggestion 8: It is necessary to make time to communicate with learners who are absent without notice or who have left the program.

These two suggestions underscore the establishment's responsibility in maintaining contact with its learners. Once everything has been done to obtain the learners' commitment to the establishment, it must not be forgotten that in the final analysis, the training establishment has the primary responsibility for staying in touch with its learners. It must put in place a procedure for maintaining these contacts in an efficient and economical way.

To this list of suggestions, the following can be added from a report produced by the Ontario Literacy Coalition and entitled "Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey."

Suggestion 9: It is necessary to make sure that the learner has the support he or she needs to be able to join the training program: daycare services for children and financial help to cover transportation costs. (Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

Given the limited financial resources of certain learners, it is important to make sure that they have access to the support that allows them to participate in the LBS program. Daycare services for children and financial assistance to cover transportation costs are a major support for these people.

Suggestion 10: A reason must be given to the learner to stay in contact with the training establishment after his or her departure. Learners could be allowed to use the establishment computers provided that they update on a regular basis the contact information contained in their file. (Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

For some literary providers, the idea of dangling a carrot in front of the learner so that he stay in touch with the training establishment goes against the concept of universal access to the program and its services. Not everyone supports this idea.

Suggestion 11: It is necessary to consult the mid-year statistics issuing from the Ministry database (IMS) to check the progress made with respect to lost contacts. (Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

This practice is one way for the training establishment to stay focused on the goal of reducing lost contacts.

Suggestion 12: It is necessary to formalize the exit of a learner from the program by setting new goals for the learner; by referring the learner to other organizations that can assist him or her in achieving the new goals set; and by encouraging the learner to keep the training establishment informed of his or her progress. (Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

By thus formalizing the learner's exit from the LBS program and by encouraging future feedback on his or her subsequent progress, the chances of the learner staying in touch with the establishment are increased. It is also suggested that learners without telephones be provided with call-me-cards.

Suggestion 13: Different means of communication should be used in following up on a learner: regular mail, telephone and e-mail. Calls should be made at different times. Postage-paid envelopes with the address of the establishment should be used to encourage responses. (Lost Contacts and Learner Satisfaction Survey, Ontario Literacy Coalition)

This suggestion supports other suggestions underscoring the responsibility of the training establishment to maintain contact with learners. In the final analysis, it is always the establishment that is mainly responsible for maintaining contact with learners.

Learner Retention Strategies

The retention strategies listed below come from a document produced by Community Literacy Ontario (CLO) and entitled "Learner Retention and Recruitment." It is obvious that in some cases, the strategies suggested echo comments made above concerning practices to reduce lost contacts. CLO's inclusion in this reports is not redundant, however, because they are formulated in different terms, terms that allow for a more complete appreciation of the context in which to apply practices or strategies to reduce lost contacts.

Strategy 1: It is important to thoroughly inform the learner at the beginning of training in order to help the learner understand what is expected of him or her and what he or she must do to succeed in a literacy program. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

With respect to reducing lost contacts, this strategy implies "explaining to the learner the importance of staying in contact with the training establishment in a general sense but, in particular, at the time of the three-month and six-month follow-ups."

Strategy 2: It is necessary to assess not only the learners' academic skills but also their learning style, their motivation, their previous school experience, their socio-economic situation, as well as any disabilities they might have, in order to identify the barriers that might impede their progress. Learners must actively participate in the assessment process. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

This strategy supports the adult learning principle to always take into consideration the learner's life experience in the planning and the delivery of training.

Strategy 3: It is necessary that the learners have the social support they need. This support can be provided by means of support groups and peer tutoring. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

The training establishment is a place where learners experience all kinds of feelings about themselves, their goals and their reality. The possibility to share experiences with peers is important to better understanding themselves and to not feel isolated.

Strategy 4: It is necessary that the learner be an active participant in the learning process. An approach focused on the learner is recommended to enable the learner to become an active partner in his or her learning. The program must assist the learner in defining his or her goals and in clearly identifying the steps leading to his or her achievement. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

This strategy is in harmony with the adult learning principles listed above.

Strategy 5: It is important to provide the learner with continuous feedback regarding his or her progress. This encourages the learner to persevere. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

This strategy is important in developing a solid relationship with a learner. It demonstrates that the literacy providers are particularly interested in the learner and concerned with his or her eventual success.

Strategy 6: It is necessary that everyone in the training establishment, including the learners, get involved in the retention activities. (Learner Retention and Recruitment, Community Literacy Ontario)

A retention activity is one whose goal is to strengthen the participation of learners in the program. Providing the learner with the opportunity to share with peers his or her learning experiences is such an activity. During these sharing sessions, the learners can give each other encouragement, thereby strengthening their will to persevere.

Customer Loyalty Strategies in the Private Sector

It is said that it is much easier to keep a current client than to acquire a new one. In many industries, a customer turnover rate exceeding 5% is considered too high. Many enterprises put a lot of effort, therefore, in consolidating the relationships with clients they already have. It is acknowledged that a satisfied customer is a customer who will probably make more purchases in the future. A lot of effort is made to get to know this client, to satisfy him or her and to solve his or her problems quickly. But what does this mean in terms of practices and strategies, that is to say, strategies that are relevant to the field of literacy?

Strategy 1: To build customer loyalty, it is necessary to have staff that is just as loyal to the company. If staff turnover is too high, it is difficult to develop a personal relationship with customers. (12 Laws of Customer Loyalty, Jill Griffin)

This strategy echoes clearly a problem acknowledged in certain community-based literacy programs : there are learners who become discouraged and drop out when the training staff changes too often. Furthermore, customer loyalty is like learner retention to the extent that both depend on a solid relationship, in the first case between the customer and the salesperson and in the second case between the learner and the literacy provider. It must not be forgotten, however, that although the question of learner retention is similar to that of customer loyalty, the former anticipates a relationship of limited length (the length of the training program) while the latter favours a long relationship (the duration of the customer's life in some cases).

Strategy 2: It is necessary to recognize the level of loyalty of the client because customer loyalty is a feeling that evolves with time, from the stage where the client is not yet a client to the stage where the client is an advocate of the company. (12 Laws of Customer Loyalty, Jill Griffin)

This strategy could easily be adapted to the field of literacy. It is a matter of taking into consideration how the learner feels about the training establishment and its program, and responding accordingly.

Strategy 3: It is necessary to offer the client a service that is pleasant, productive and personalized, otherwise he or she will simply go elsewhere. (12 Laws of Customer Loyalty, Jill Griffin)

This strategy echoes the adult learning approach where training is learner-based in order to, among other things, increase the chances of retaining the learner in the program.

Strategy 4: It must be easy for a client to complain and all complaints ought to be taken seriously. Only ten percent of complaints are expressed directly; the other ninety percent are expressed indirectly by way of non-payment of bills and aggressive behaviour toward company staff. (12 Laws of Customer Loyalty, Jill Griffin)

This strategy can be easily adapted to the literacy field where dissatisfaction can also express itself indirectly in the form of absenteeism and criticisms behind the backs of literacy providers. It is necessary to give the learner, on a regular basis, the opportunity to give feedback on the services offered to him or her, and it is necessary to take what the learner says seriously.

Strategy 5: It is important to understand what the client values. It is necessary to do research in order to understand the extent to which what is offered is of value to him or her. (12 Laws of Customer Loyalty, Jill Griffin)

This strategy is in accordance with the adult learning principle to ensure that the learner remain at all times an active participant in the training offered to him or her. It also underscores the importance of getting to know the learner through surveys (research) such as the evaluation requested of him or her upon exit

regarding the quality and usefulness of the services he or she received and through the feedback asked of him or her during training regarding the method and the material used.

Conclusion

There are two basic approaches to use to avoid or reduce lost contacts. One is proactive in nature; the other is reactive in nature. The proactive approach encompasses all that is done to engage the interest and participation of the learner and all that is done to meet his or her needs and expectations in a satisfactory manner (offering services of quality and of value to the learner, using an adult-learning approach). This approach is based on the premise that the learner who is satisfied with the services given is a person less likely to drop out and leave the LBS program without notice. The reactive approach is all that is done to reconnect with a learner who has left the program and is no longer in contact. It is obvious that the first approach is the more important of the two. The second approach is the one to use as a last resort.

The proactive approach is one where the learner remains the focus of attention and interest in the training establishment. The learner is, therefore, never taken for granted. Just as a company must satisfy its clients to survive, a literacy establishment must recognize the importance of the learner to its reason for being and must do everything to retain that learner, otherwise the learner will turn away from its services, leave without notice and become a lost contact.

Practices to Ensure Follow-ups after Three Months and after Six Months

With respect to the follow-ups done after three months and after six months following the departure of learners, the main point to underscore is that it is necessary to be organized in order to do them. Lack of organization is one the main reasons why follow-ups become burdensome to do. So, how can an establishment proceed in order to accomplish them?

- First of all, it is necessary to dedicate human resources to do follow-ups. In the community-based programs where human resources are scarce, follow-up tasks could be assigned to a volunteer.

- A procedure must be put in place to do follow-ups:

  o The example of a binder organized according to the months of the year has already been discussed. When a departure takes place, a follow-up sheet for each of the three-month and six-month follow-ups is inserted in the appropriate sections of the binder. For example, if a departure takes place in February, the three-month follow-up is to be done in May and the six-month follow-up in August. Once a follow-up has been done, it is entered in the Ministry database (IMS). This procedure means that follow-ups are done regularly every month throughout the year. It is, therefore, a case where an employee is regularly available to perform administrative duties.

    Instead of a binder, Excel spreadsheets could very well be used. The entry of follow-up dates could be automated (using an Excel formula). The file created in this way could also contain the contact information of both the learner and his or her contact persons.

  o Another example of a procedure already discussed is one where follow-ups are done every three months starting in September. Follow-ups would, therefore, be done in September, December, March and June. In practice, this would mean that follow-ups after an April departure would occur in September (three-month follow-up) and in the month of December (six-month follow-up). This procedure would suit an establishment lacking the time and human resources to do more frequent follow-ups.

    As in the case of the preceding example, Excel spreadsheets could be used to flag follow-ups to be done.

- It is also suggested that the Ministry database (IMS) be used to generate lists of learners having left the LBS program. Decisions can be made as to who to contact based on the information in these lists.

- Perseverance is required when a learner has not been reached after one or two tries. As mentioned earlier in the present report, different means of communication need to be used and learners difficult to reach ought to be called at different times.

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