

The LVQ Pilot Project 2010-2011 – A Summary

The project began in June 2010, with meetings to review the existing literature on measuring non-academic outcomes and to focus on finding and researching existing tools developed for this purpose, in order to understand the context and scope of their use. This led to a process of sifting through the tools so that we could make an appropriate selection to present to organizations that would participate in the pilot phase of the project. We were six pilot sites, all LVQ member organizations.

In September 2010 we had two meetings to launch the project. The first was a chance to give an overview of the relevant research to the participating pilot sites, define terms and clarify objectives, and to discuss the outcomes we would be most interested in assessing. We looked at eight existing tools to see what non-academic outcomes they were designed to measure. The second meeting two weeks later, was a full day meeting, giving a chance to hear from the experts and developers of the **3 tools** that we had chosen based on our first meeting.

Each Pilot site was free then to adapt, modify, cut and copy from these tools to come up with something that would suit the needs of their students and tutors. They could decide collectively within their respective organizations what to use, and how to apply the tools. The only stipulations were that they work with a minimum of 3 tutor-student pairs, and that they begin the first “assessments” before December. During this period from October – December, the project coordinator kept in touch with the participating pilot sites. All pilot site reps communicated by conference call in December, and were asked to respond with a report.

In January a draft report was compiled from feedback from the pilot sites in December after they had a chance to modify and use the tools for the first time. This draft report was refined as changes were noted in the adaptations and uses by the pilot sites, and an edited version was distributed so that we could share experiences and decide together on the next steps. The adapted versions of the MNAO tools were circulated amongst the pilot sites as well. The first rounds of student assessments were collected from those pilot sites who were willing and able to share their students’ participation (some for reasons of strict confidentiality did not submit the answers written by the students, but re-wrote and summarized the results of their assessments instead).

We planned a face-to-face meeting in February to assess our progress, and plan for the spring meeting with all LVQ members. This meeting allowed us to interpret our feedback from very different settings, where each situation is unique – sometimes even within the same pilot site there were sub-groups using the tools differently from each other or using different tools. We discussed how best to integrate this feedback in a consistent way. The next task was the planning together for the general meeting in the spring. Towards this end we discussed extending the project: How long would realistically be needed to “track” these kinds of non-academic changes? We agreed that it would be feasible within two years, and we shared ideas for presenting the tools and experiences in May to the LVQ members

The idea was to bring together a composite of our different adaptations and uses of the tools, so that we would be better able to bring recommendations and suggestions for their use, explain what challenges and difficulties we each encountered, and look forward to the next steps with the LVQ membership. The general members training meeting was held in May 2011. All six pilot sites participated, and 5 other LVQ member organizations engaged in the training.

The outcomes of this final meeting can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Integration of all participants around the aims and purpose of the MNAO project by introducing them to the results of the literature review and the accepted definitions of non-academic outcomes, indicators, etc. as understood in the pilot phase.
- 2) Presentation of the 3 tools selected to track the outcomes by the pilot sites
 - i) Catching Confidence (CC) materials (NIACE/Jan Eldred)
 - ii) Self Management, Self Direction (SMSD) tools (Quinte School/ Marsha Roadhouse)
 - iii) Bridging the Gap (QELA/Vicki Huegli) assessment package
- 3) The Pilot Sites presented adapted versions of the tools, experiences in the field, recommendations and ideas for the next steps, challenges and difficulties encountered, etc.
- 4) We conducted an exercise in using the tools – including the adapted versions, so that the pilot sites could coach the LVQ members from their own experience. There was much discussion, questions, sharing, and interaction towards this purpose of training the LVQ members who had not been part of the pilot phase, so that they can go on to use and adapt the tools for themselves.
- 5) We held an open final discussion outlining possible next steps, giving thanks and acknowledgements and sharing ideas – see conclusions and recommendations.

This Chart summarizes which Tools were selected and adapted at each Pilot Site, and below the number of students/tutors involved in the assessments.

Pilot Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Site 6
<p>SMSD</p> <p>4 sections Time Management, Organizations and Goal Setting and Self-management, Self-direction section 11</p>	<p>CC BTG SMSD</p> <p>BTG sections on Lifelong Learning and Communications, SMSD sections 11-13 from the blue binder, CC adapted grid</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>A fully adapted version of the CC including preparatory and explanatory guide and worksheets</p>	<p>CC BTG</p> <p>Adapted tools from BTG section on goal-setting and the CC grid.</p>	<p>CC SMSD</p> <p>Adapted version of CC with a tutor guide giving examples, adapted students' grid</p>	<p>CC SMSD</p> <p>2 parts: Explanation and section on Goal-setting from the SMSD and the CC grid</p>
<p>8 students, 3 tutors All did all, everyone filled in the same SMSD assessment sheets in 1-1 student-tutor pairs</p>	<p>Different settings- The BTG and SMSD used in the prison with 6 tutor-student pairs, CC with small group of 4 students (SMSD with 1 student tutor pair)</p>	<p>5 students, 3 tutors All did the same thing in 1-1 tutor student pairs</p>	<p>9 students, 9 tutors All did all, the all filled in the same assessment sheets with the assistance of the pilot coordinator</p>	<p>Different settings- 15 literacy students in class settings (Small groups, Sec I-III classes), 2 Student – tutor pairs</p>	<p>7 students, 7 tutors 3 student-tutor pairs used the Goal-setting SMSD tool, 3 pairs used CC grid, 2 filled in both tools</p>

SMSD = Self Management/Self Direction tools

CC = Catching confidence, adapted tool

BTG= Bridging the Gap – Competency-based Assessment Charts

Conclusions and recommendations

The reports back from the pilot sites indicate that it would have been good to have more time between having received the tools and having to use them with students. The tools all needed to be adapted, and as this was often done in collaboration with the tutors who would use them, it took considerable time. The feeling was that if there had been more time, then the adapted tools could have been shared and improved before they were used. The results of these first assessments were available to us in January, and the second set of assessments had to be done too soon afterwards, because of the constraints of time for meeting and reporting. Perhaps a next phase of this project could be undertaken to collect and properly analyze the results of the assessments over a two year period. However the primary goal of this first pilot phase was to identify and adapt suitable tools for our membership, and we are confident that much important progress has been made over the course of this pilot project.

All participating pilot sites felt that the experience had been positive, and had been an enriching exercise for both tutors and students. They are motivated to continue, to look for new tools or to improve upon the tools and their use for a next phase of this project. The original tools will be shared on the LVQ website, and we hope that more of our member organization can successfully adapt and use these assessment tools. Other tools have come to our attention since that time, and these could also be made available on the LVQ website as they are tested and used by member organizations. Hopefully these, or other tools in some form, can become part of our tutor training so that they can help track the progress of all literacy learners.

From this first pilot project, we are better prepared at this stage to measure non-academic outcomes with tools that suit the needs of our organizations.

Appendix 3

Relevant Vocabulary

Competency	A competency is the capacity to act effectively in contexts of varying degrees of complexity through the identification, coordination, mobilization, and use of internal and external resources appropriate for a specific situation. ¹
Competency-based initiative	Purposeful actions undertaken by educational institutions directed at defining, teaching, and assessing competencies across their system.
Competency-based assessment	Assessment that seeks to determine what a learner knows and can do in specific contexts. Results should be compared to criteria within a matrix.
Non-formal education:	Education provided by councils or community-based groups which do not offer accreditation.
Formal education:	Education provided by school boards or education that provides official accreditation. This includes high school completion, vocational school, continuing education, distance education, cégep, technical schools, etc.

¹ MELS Adult Education Conference, May 12th & 13th, 2005, “Context for Curriculum Reform”.

3 Tools - Accompanying Websites:

- Catching Confidence: <http://shop.niace.org.uk/catching-confidence.html>
- Measuring SMSD Skills in Literacy Learners: http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/acctblty/QuniteRprt_Dec09.pdf
- Bridging the Gap: <http://qela.qc.ca/literacies/community-literacy/resources/bridging-the-gap/>

Other tools and sites of interest:

BC Community Literacy Benchmarks:

<http://decoda.ca/resources/rsc-community/rsc-community-litnow/rsc-community-litnow-assessment/community-literacy-benchmarks/>

Naming the Magic - BC 2001- <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/magic/magic.pdf>

I've opened up - Parkdale Project Read - Toronto 2006 -

<http://www.nald.ca/library/research/openup/openup.pdf>

From the Ground Up - Adult Goal Progress Monitoring Tool - BC 2009 -

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/groundup/mtagpc/progress.pdf>

OLES - Essential Skills Indicators:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/tools_resources/tools.shtml

CAMERA assessment information: [http://www.ptp.ca/wp-](http://www.ptp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/camera-e-booklet.pdf)

[content/uploads/2009/01/camera-e-booklet.pdf](http://www.ptp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/camera-e-booklet.pdf)