CONNECT
Strategic Alliances

The SCALES Project

Phase One: Research Results

June 2011

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- The Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training
- British Columbia Career Development Association
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- Coalition for Persons with Disabilities
- Coalition ontarienne de fôrmation des adultes (COFA)
- College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading
- College Sector Employment Services (CSES)
- Community Futures Development Corporations in Ontario (CFDC)
- Employment Services, Canadian Hearing Society
- Féderation canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français
- Learning and Workforce Services, NSCC
- Literacy BC
- Nova Scotia Career Development Association;
- Nova Scotia Literacy Network
- Ontario Alliance of Career Development Practitioners (OACDP)
- Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA)
- Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres (OAYEC)
- Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
- Ontario Literacy Network
- Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP)
- People and Planning, NSCC
- Sioux Lookout Aboriginal Area Management Board (SLAAMB)

SCALES would also like to thank our Partner Agencies for participating in the Organizational Needs Analysis interviews:

- Antigonish Career Resource Centre
- Career Development Association
- Conestoga College
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- Durham College
- Fleming College
- FutureWorx Job Search Centre
- Greater Trail Community Skills Centre
- Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia
- John Howard Society of Durham Region
- La Cité collégiale

- Lakehead Employment Services
- Le Centre de services a l'emploi de Prescott Russell Inc.
- Métis Nation of British Columbia
- Northern College
- Northern Lights Canada
- Opportunity Place Career Resource Centre
- PeopleWorx
- Phoenix Youth Programs
- Regional Municipality of Waterloo
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- Seneca College
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- Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board
- Unamaki
- YWCA Career Zone
- YWCA One Stop Career Shop

Lastly, a special thank you to Karen Myers and Natalie Conte of the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation for their expertise and guidance during the research phase.

2.   Introduction: Background and Methodology

CONNECT Strategic Alliances, representing Ontario's 24 publicly funded colleges, has been funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada-Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (HRSDC-OLES) for a three-year initiative seeking to improve employability by providing tools to identify the Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) of un- or underemployed Canadians, in an effort to obtain employment or to increase their prospects.

The CONNECT *Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills* (SCALES) project, in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Douglas College, will develop a series of tools/best practices intended to:

- Integrate a LES approach (a method that considers both the Literacy and Essential Skill levels of their clients when assisting them in making life/work decisions) into existing active employment measures, retraining options or active job searches

- Increase the capacity of service providers and employment counsellors to provide assessment and referral services

- Build the confidence of adults in transition in relation to LES in order to assess their skill levels to develop action plans for re-entry into the workforce or re-training options

When the project began in March 2010, the project team, working closely with the Advisory Committee members, researched tools both developed and in development, and what service providers and employment counsellors needed to successfully embed LES into their work with clients.

The research phase began by working with representatives from the Nova Scotia, British Columbia, and Ontario governments to understand what LES projects they were funding in their respective provinces, interviewing LES experts and various organizations, and reviewing recent reports released from stakeholders. The project team also conducted an Environmental Scan using online surveys and telephone and in-person interviews.

The Environmental Scan, conducted between June and September 2010, asked the following questions, as they pertain to the provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia:

1. What LES tools and models are currently being used by career practitioners or other professionals who assist unemployed and low-skilled workers in achieving their career goals?

2. What LES tools, resources and models are needed and desired in order to assist practitioners to incorporate a LES approach into their work?

An overview of the Environmental Scan will be presented in Part Three of this report and will include the research methodology, an analysis of the surveys, and key findings.

A significant lesson learned from the Environmental Scan was that trying to reach large numbers of practitioners at once was far too challenging, and the wide range of needs of adults in transition and the diversity of practices within and across the provinces being studied made it difficult to interpret the results of the Environmental Scan and to determine the appropriate tools to develop.

In February 2011, Karen Myers and Natalie Conte, from the Social Demonstration and Research Corporation (SRDC) assisted the project team in creating a more focussed and strategic approach for data collection for the purpose of developing appropriate tools. The proposed research strategy built on the data collected in the Environmental Scan and provided a detailed analysis of current practices and identified gaps and opportunities.

This research addressed three key questions:

1. **What do we know and not know about current approaches to LES in the context of active employment service provision?** What are the key features, components and processes associated with each of these models? What do practitioners identify as the key gaps or shortcomings of these models? Finally, what do we still need to know in order to develop tools that will better integrate LES in employment services?

2. **What are the needs and gaps of career development practitioners?** What are the needs of practitioners with respect to helping their clients build awareness of their strengths and skills profiles and use this information to improve employment prospects?

3. **What are the opportunities?** According to practitioners and other experts, what types of tools can address these needs? What is the feasibility of pilot testing these tools as part of the SCALES project?

Part Four of this report will outline the research methodology used and the data collected to answer the above questions. Part Five will list the tools identified by the SCALES project team as those desired by career practitioners to achieve the objectives of the project. The final section of this report, Part Six, will present next steps.

3.   The Environmental Scan

3.1   Overview of Approach and Methodology

Both the online and telephone surveys were developed by Douglas College and were used by all project partners to examine the demographics of the project audience as well as their knowledge, training and ideas relating to the nine Essential Skills. For the survey questions, see Appendix A.

3.1.1   British Columbia

Three surveys were conducted in British Columbia. The first two were online, and the third was a telephone survey conducted to gather more detailed information with those respondents who volunteered their contact information.

The first online survey (Survey A) was distributed via email to approximately 500 individuals who had previously participated in one or more of Douglas College's Essential Skills workshops offered since 2005. The BC project team members received 98 responses, providing a response rate of approximately 25%.

The second online survey (Survey B) was designed to reach a sample of those individuals working with un- and underemployed adults. This sample group primarily consisted of career practitioners. For the purpose of this document, "career practitioner" is defined as employment counsellors, workplace trainers, career counsellors, educators, and Human Resource Professionals. A total of approximately 850 individuals/organizations received this survey, and 234 responses were returned, for a response rate of 28%. However, it must be noted that actual distribution numbers and response rates may vary greatly, as there may be duplication between individuals who have taken Douglas College Essential Skills workshops and/or are members in more than one of the distributing organizations. Additionally, organizations receiving the online survey may have forwarded the link to others, internally or externally to their organization. In total, 1,350 individuals/organizations received the first two surveys.

Respondents to Surveys A and B who included their contact information were called to gather more specific information around the needs and desires of practitioners with respect to embedding LES into their work with clients. A total of 101 online respondents (32 from Survey A and 74 from Survey B, of which 5 respondents volunteered in both surveys) were contacted to perform a telephone survey. However, telephone surveys proved to be a challenge in all three provinces. Multiple attempts were made to contact those who volunteered; however due to various circumstances, including incorrect contact information, lack of response, or unavailability, not all respondents could be reached. A total of 42 telephone surveys were completed in British Columbia.

Appendix B shows the distribution of responses from career practitioners across British Columbia, providing representation throughout the province similar to population proportions.

3.1.2 Nova Scotia

The second survey used in British Columbia (Survey B) was distributed in Nova Scotia. The survey was circulated between July and September 2010 to approximately 500 career practitioners across the province. NSCC received 94 responses, producing a response rate of approximately 19%.

Follow-up telephone or in-person interviews were performed in September 2010 with those respondents who volunteered their contact information. Of the 19% who answered the online survey, 33% participated in a telephone or in-person interview.

Appendix B shows the distribution of responses from Nova Scotia career practitioners. Though the majority were from Halifax, the map illustrates that the NSCC project team was able to receive feedback from all parts of the province.

3.1.3 Ontario

As in Nova Scotia, Survey B was used in Ontario during September 2010. Approximately 1,749 online surveys were distributed across Ontario. There were 250 responses from the Anglophone community and 5 responses from the Francophone community.

The accuracy of the response rate is unreliable as evidence cannot be provided to support how widely the surveys were distributed or how many respondents actually received them. It can be safely assumed that some individuals received duplicate requests to complete the survey, particularly if they are members of multiple umbrella organizations. However, we can estimate a response of at least 8%. While the rate of response was considerably lower in Ontario, the following must be considered as mitigating factors.

1. Due to prescribed project timelines, the survey was distributed in September, a peak period for those employed in the educational field;
2. Ontario's provincially-funded employment programs underwent a transformation effective August 1, 2010. Career practitioners consistently spoke about the stress, time-constraints and learning curve associated with the change in their programs;
3. Many respondents declined our invitation to interview, as they lack sufficient knowledge of Essential Skills.

In-person and telephone interviews were conducted between September and early October 2010. Of the estimated 8% who answered the online survey, 46% (42 out of 92) were contacted to participate in the in-person or telephone discussions.

Respondents to Survey B in Ontario reside in 80 communities across the province. Of those who answered the survey, 26 live in Toronto, 20 live in London, 10 from Kitchener, and 10

from Waterloo. Participants also answered from Blind River, Iroquois Falls, Sioux Lookout, Timmins, and Windsor. Appendix B lists the locations from which five or more responses were received, with the balance of the participants represented under 'other'.

3.2   Analysis of Online and Telephone Surveys

Through the analysis of the online and telephone surveys, the following could be ascertained.

- Demographics of respondents;
- Knowledge of respondents with regards to HRSDC`s concept of Essential Skills;
- Use of the Essential Skills and the tools already developed; and
- Interest in participating in the piloting of the tools developed by the SCALES project team

Note statistical rigor has not been applied to these surveys as the purpose of the Environmental Scan was to exam what tools and models are currently being used, and what are the desired supports.

3.2.1 Demographics

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the surveys were career practitioners, the project's primary audience. The table below illustrates the distribution of respondents from all three provinces according to employment status.
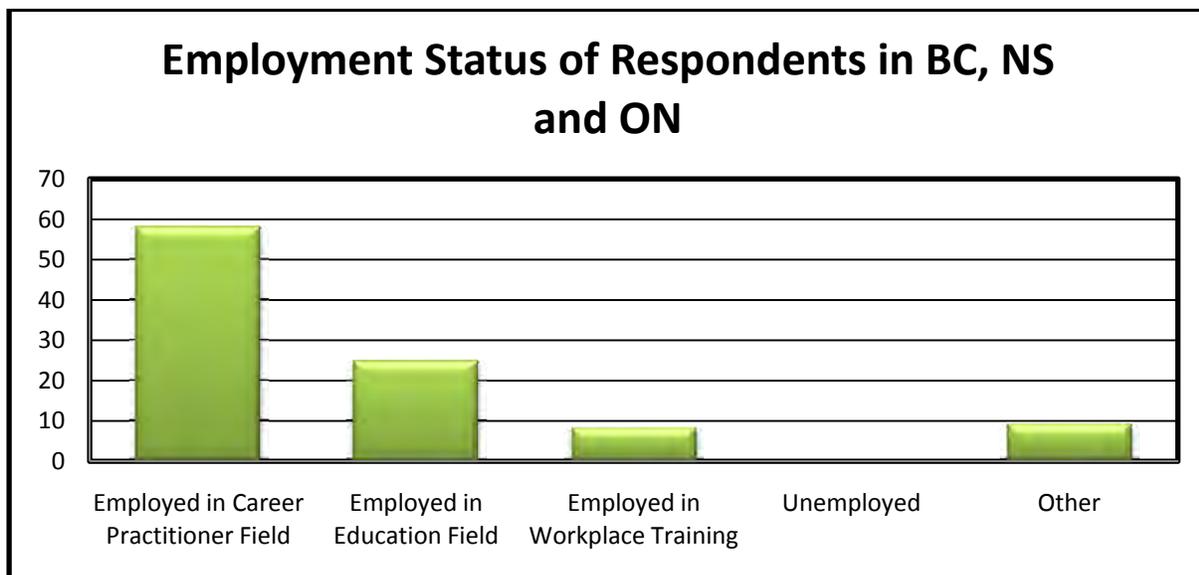

Figure 3.2.1-1

In Nova Scotia, 69% chose the Career Practitioner field when asked their current employment status. In British Columbia, approximately 55% of Survey A and 73% of Survey B respondents were career practitioners, as is illustrated in Appendix C: Employment Status of Respondents by Province. In Ontario, though career practitioners only comprised 35% of

the respondents' occupational focus, Survey B allowed for multiple answers. As a result, 29 additional responses were submitted and 14 career practitioners also indicated they work in the education sector, with many stating they work for educational organizations.

Those who answered Survey B in English were only able to submit one response to the question "What is your client/target group?" By far the greatest majority of those polled in each of the three provinces indicated that they work with adults in transition (19-65 years old). In British Columbia, 22% of respondents stated they work with this target group, in Nova Scotia 72%, and in Ontario, 74.2%. The respondents in the provinces who did not select this group indicated they work with the following target groups, as illustrated below in Figure 3.2.1-2.
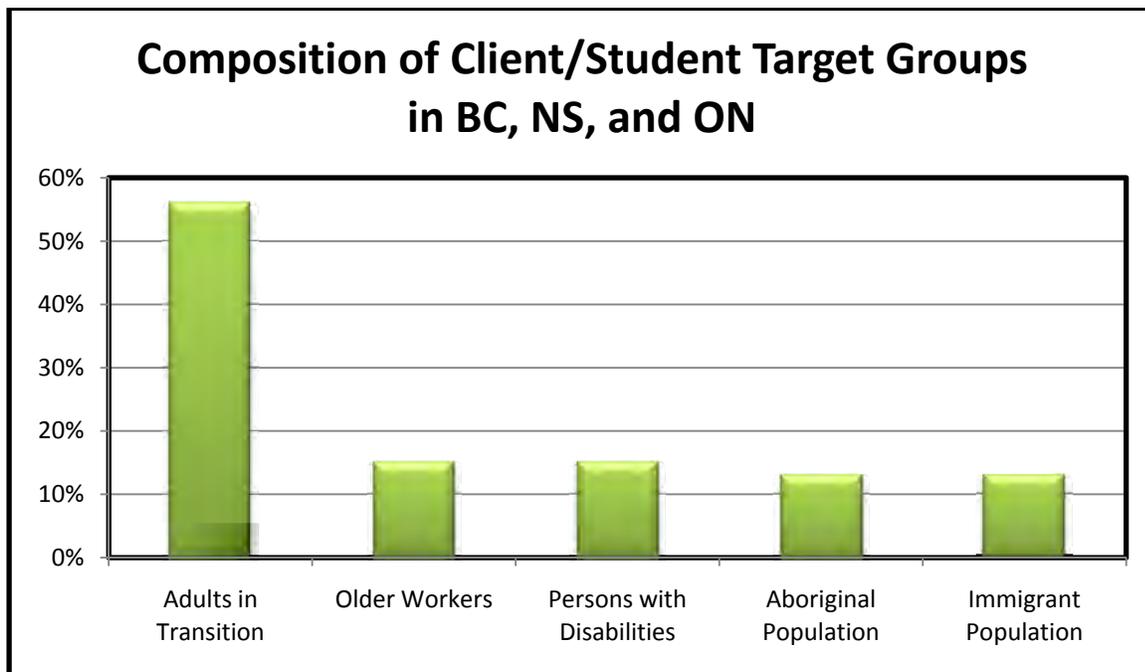

Figure 3.2.1-2

All five respondents to the French Survey B indicated they work with Francophone adults in transition, as well as the other client groups noted above.

See Appendix C for the breakdown of target groups by province.

3.2.2 Knowledge of HRSDC`s Concept of Essential Skills

As expected, those who participated in Survey A in British Columbia and who had registered in one or more workshops on Essential Skills at Douglas College rated themselves as having a high familiarity with Essential Skills. A total of 49.5% of those polled in Survey A indicated that they have a considerable level of knowledge of Essential Skills. Furthermore, 49% indicated that they definitely understand the benefits of integrating Essential Skills into their work with clients. Of those respondents who have enrolled in one workshop at Douglas College, 21.1% are currently using LES in their work; 69% of those who have taken

two workshops are currently using a LES approach; and 74.4% of those who have taken three workshops have embedded LES into their work with clients. This information would indicate that with more knowledge, the likelihood that respondents will apply a LES approach to their work increases.

Survey A: Correlation Between Knowledge of HRSDC's Concept of Essential Skills and Integrating a LES Approach Into Work with Clients
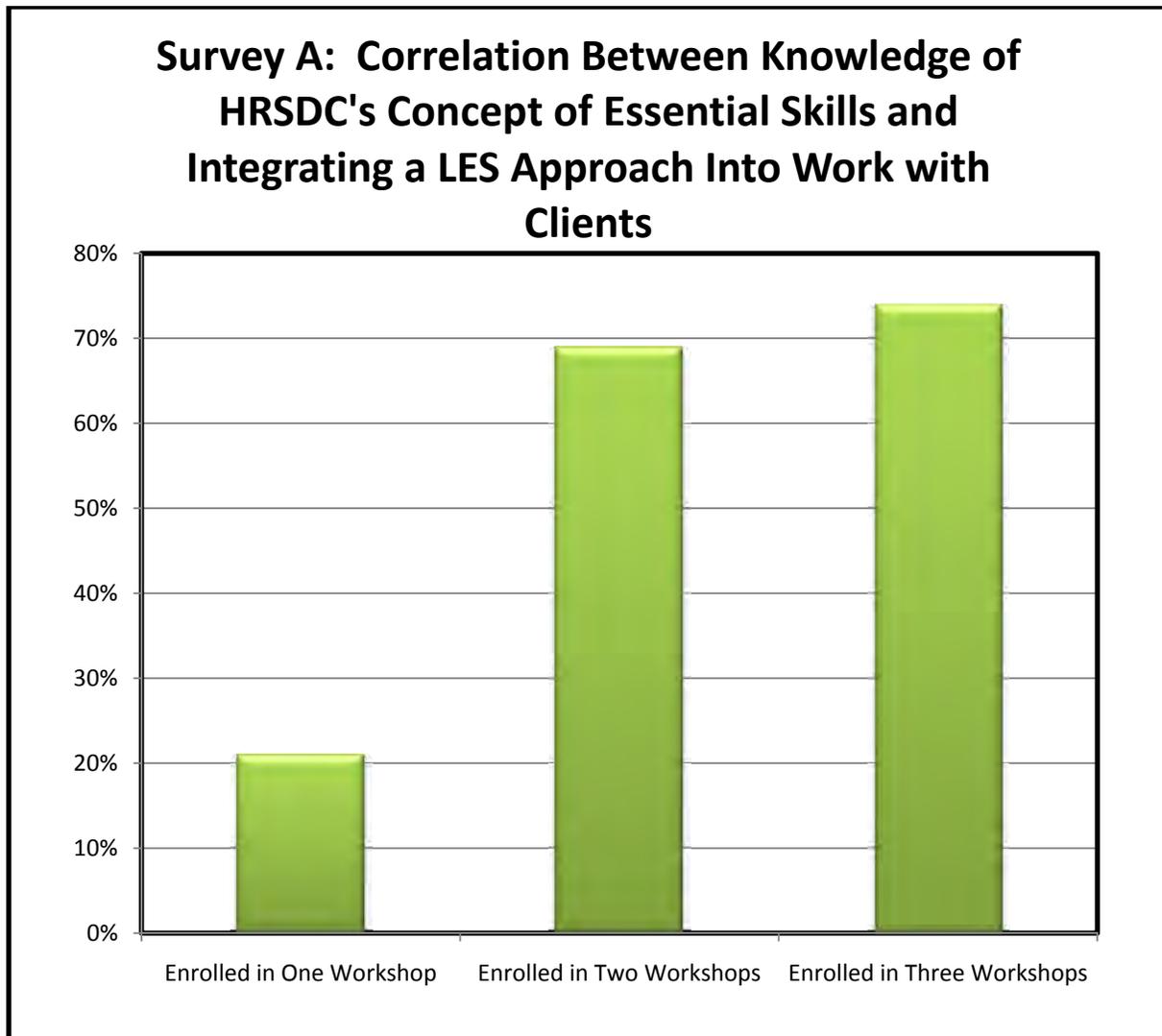
Figure 3.2.2-1

In comparison, 21% of those who participated in Survey B in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario, noted they have very little or no knowledge of HRSDC`s Essential Skills, yet an overwhelming percentage (72.9%) stated they were to some extent aware of the benefits of Essential Skills. When asked if they use Essential Skills in their work, only 37% indicated that they currently do. When comparing this data with that noted above from Survey A, it is fair to conclude that with increased education and training about Essential Skills, respondents would be more likely to use Essential Skills in their daily work.

This conclusion is further supported by the results of the telephone and in-person interviews. These in-depth discussions with survey participants indicated that though the majority were able to speak of Essential Skills and describe to some degree how they may

be used with their clients, most did not demonstrate the depth of understanding needed to apply this knowledge effectively. This may be in large part due to the fact that the majority had not received training in LES. For example, in Nova Scotia, while 58% of interviewees claimed to have a good understanding of HRSDC's Essential Skills, 61% of those interviewed said they have not participated in any training. Of those who had, most had participated in either a workshop or presentation. In British Columbia, there were several practitioners who identified themselves as "self taught"; upon further discussion, one was led to question whether they were fully able to grasp HRSDC's Essential Skills methodology. The respondent stated that they are fully aware of Essential Skills, but could not see the benefits for immigrants who are mostly literate. This misunderstanding of the usefulness of Essential Skills was voiced in the Ontario telephone surveys as well. One practitioner noted,

> Essential Skills is highly useful for professional positions. Essential Skills are not needed for people in part-time/manual labour, casual positions. Not for physical labour but for processing. Essential Skills doesn't cover essential duties such as sales associate, dishwasher, cleaner. This may become more relevant as they move on to higher positions within the organization.

In conclusion, the results of the telephone interviews in all three provinces revealed that while respondents had some knowledge of Essential Skills, most did not demonstrate the depth of understanding required to apply the knowledge effectively when working with their clients.

It is clear from the statistics and comments found in the online and telephone surveys that there is a significant relationship between training and awareness with increased training resulting in increased understanding of the benefits and usefulness of the nine Essential Skills, and also in the likelihood of using Essential Skills methodology with their clients.

3.2.3 Usage of Essential Skills

Participants in all three provinces were asked "If you are aware of Essential Skills and do not use them in your work, please indicate the reason". In Nova Scotia, 46% stated the reason was because they did not have enough knowledge of the subject; with 43% in British Columbia and 48% in Ontario giving the same reason making this the most common response. Comments made by respondents through the telephone and in-person interviews made it evident that the main barrier to practitioners using Essential Skills was a lack of knowledge, and inability to adapt them to suit their clients` needs. One interviewee in British Columbia said,

> I am aware of some of the benefits, but I would love to have more information about ways to incorporate it into my work.

Another stated,

> I am aware of the benefits, but given that new ``essential skill`` movement, it would be beneficial to get more training on administering these assessments. Although they are fairly basic, it is helpful to see what we can do with the results and to create some sort of referral system within the agency on supporting them to acquire/advance their skills.

This sentiment was reiterated during the interviews conducted in Nova Scotia and Ontario as well. In Nova Scotia, one practitioner stated, "I would like the opportunity to learn how to effectively analyse a case study based on an Essential Skills framework". While in Ontario, one respondent noted, "Practical examples of how it`s been done successfully in other organizations would be valuable".

The second most common reason for not using a LES approach was due to funding and time constraints, with 20% in Nova Scotia selecting this answer, in British Columbia, 47%, and in Ontario, 49%. Other reasons included a lack of access to tools or resources; clients who lack an understanding of LES; clients who are not ready for work or education; respondents felt it was not their job; and those who were not convinced of the benefits of Essential Skills.

During the interviews in all three provinces, practitioners were asked how they are using Essential Skills, what areas they are addressing, what tools they use, and if they had developed any tools. The responses ranged from using hard-copy materials, documents and/or tangible tools; conducting academic and social assessments; job searches and job maintenance; and using role playing/performing real-life situations in order to teach Essential Skills (Skill Enhancement). A career practitioner in Nova Scotia shared her technique.

> We use real-life problems to teach Essential Skills. For example, we`ll introduce a problem, like we need to replace all the light bulbs in the building. So they have to do a work order, go online and get a cost estimate, schedule the time..., as if it were a real workplace task. And for that, we`ve identified the Essential Skills needed to do it...we complete order forms. So we`re not doing it as stand-alone chunks. We`re trying as much as possible to use Essential Skills in an integrated way as if they were on the job.

Another practitioner in Ontario commented,

> We have set up a program based on ES profiles, use TOWES or other assessments to discuss and determine skill gaps. The clients look at several profiles based on NOC codes to figure out common skills for the occupations. Using ES and the variety of NOC codes allows flexibility in the event that the client/student changes their career goal. Also, this model includes the use of authentic workplace materials which helps the client/student prepare for the workplace.

In British Columbia, survey respondents noted they are integrating Essential Skills into their work by using them to define occupational requirements, assisting clients in identifying and developing the skills they will need to maintain employment, and helping clients to identify what jobs would suit their skill levels. However, the most common way practitioners are using Essential Skills is to increase their clients' self-confidence. One example of this comes from an individual in Nova Scotia, who said,

Last year, the students wrote a book and had it translated into Mi'kmaq. These are people who are essentially at Level 2 or 3 combined, and some considered themselves barely literate, but they produced essays, illustrations, wrote poems, did all the writing, and had community members support us.

3.2.4 Desired Supports

Over the course of the research phase, it became apparent what form the LES tools, resources and models, which are needed and desired, should take in order to assist practitioners.

When asked what kind of supports they would need in order to integrate LES into their daily work, there were two prominent responses; Education/Workshops and Tools.

Examples of "Education/Workshops" requests from respondents included:

- Training on how to use current tools, such as those developed by HRSDC, Skill Plan, and NOC Profiles
- Training on how to explain what Essential Skills are and their benefits
- An Essential Skills conference
- Training on practical uses of Essential Skills/Success Stories
- Awareness-raising sessions
- Webinars
- Train-the-Trainer Workshops/Conferences
- An on-going email list with updates on new Essential Skills materials

One comment made by a counsellor notes,

> There is a lack of time and funding and this needs to be considered in the training that is provided through the SCALES project. Different client populations need to be considered. Practitioners need to see the applicability to their client group. There is a need [for] Essential Skills materials in layman's terms so that clients understand the relevance.

Examples of the types of "Tools" respondents suggested included:

- A guidebook or resource card listing the various tools
- A user friendly framework to explain Essential Skills
- Material to explain the link between Essential Skills and Literacy and Basic Skills
- A one-stop shop for on-line Essential Skills resources
- A ready-made Essential Skills workshop for clients
- Tools to address the following Essential Skills: Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Oral Communication, Thinking/Coping Skills
- Assessment tools that lead to a learning plan

Other comments around what kind of assistance would be required to meet the objectives of the SCALES project included:

- Networking events
- Assistance with the actual integration of tools
- Accessibility for persons with disabilities in relation to Essentials Skills/NOC websites and tools
- Clear and measurable objectives and criteria for use of resources, and
- Assessments and tools for new immigrants whose first language is not English or French

Another option discussed was mentorships and coaching opportunities. However, Survey A respondents were more likely to request this versus those who completed Survey B; 63% compared to 46% in Survey B. One can draw the conclusion that those respondents in Survey A, who have taken more Essential Skills training and, therefore, know what the Essentials Skills are and their benefits than those who answered Survey B, are better equipped to investigate how one can embed a LES approach when working with their clients.

Appendix D illustrates, by province, what practitioners feel is needed to allow them to integrate Essential Skills when assisting their clients.

3.2.5 Interest in Pilot Projects

When asked if respondents would be interested in piloting new Essential Skills tools relevant to their work, the majority answered favourably, as shown in Figure 4.2.1.
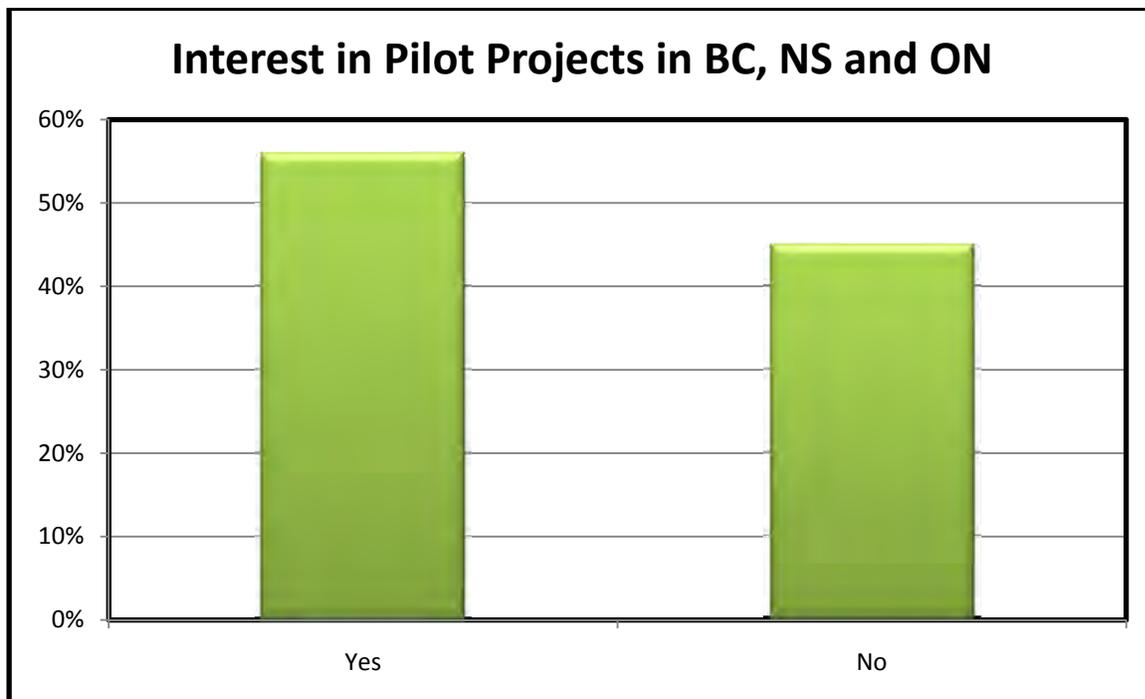

Figure 4.2.1

Appendix F charts, by province, the percentage of those respondents who answered positively to participating in a Pilot Project.

3.3   Key Findings

The Environmental Scan performed in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Ontario revealed a number of key findings:

- Response rates in British Columbia (25%) and Nova Scotia (19%) were favourable, while in Ontario the response rate was approximately 8%. This may indicate there is a strong interest in understanding and using Essential Skills in the work that career practitioners undertake. While the rate of response was considerably lower in Ontario (8%), the following must be considered as mitigating factors. The survey was distributed in September while Ontario's provincially-funded employment programs were undergoing a transformation, and many respondents declined our invitation to participate in the survey as they lack sufficient knowledge of Essential Skills. This indicates a need for continued research in Ontario.

- Data gathered from Survey A distributed by Douglas College illustrates a strong correlation between more education/training opportunities and the potential for integrating a LES approach into existing employment counselling measures.

- Practitioners who use Essential Skills in their work with clients see the benefits; everything from building self-esteem to using the occupational profiles in the job search was noted. However, more practical knowledge and awareness around the Essential Skills is needed. Practical Train-the-Trainer conferences, assessments, tools, coaching and mentoring opportunities, and peer networking were key recommendations.

- In the online surveys distributed in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Ontario, an average of 56% expressed interest in participating in Pilot Projects for Essential Skills. This is a very positive indicator that practitioners are seeking more information around Essential Skills and that they see the relevance of integrating LES into their work with clients.

4.   Organizational Needs Assessment

4.1   Overview of Approach and Methodology

In early February 2011, Karen Myers and Natalie Conte, from SRDC joined the project team in Toronto. During this meeting, they proposed a pilot testing strategy with seven phases.

1. Identify 15-20 service delivery agencies willing to participate as partners

2. Conduct detailed Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs) with these agencies to further identify gaps and needs

3. Analyse ONA results, identify options and develop tools

4. Design an evaluation strategy for pilots

5. Pilot tools with the same service delivery agents

6. Conduct evaluation, analyze findings and revise tools based on findings

7. Use a variety of strategies to disseminate research and pilot findings and encourage tool uptake through such methods as regional workshops where partner agencies share their experiences and act as ambassadors for the CONNECT SCALES project tools.

To best determine what the needs of career practitioners are, SRDC proposed the SCALES project partner with strategically selected career development agencies in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Ontario.

Potential partner agencies were sent a formal invitation that explained the project and highlighted the benefits of participation. Agencies that expressed interest in participating were asked to submit an application. The invitation and application form were circulated in mid February 2011 through such organizations as the Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP), the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), and the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC). The deadline to submit an application was March 4, 2011 and teams in each province made selections based on the criteria developed by the project office.

Selection criteria were guided by feasibility, credibility, and diversity issues. Feasibility issues relate to the ability of the agency to meet project requirements, such as sharing of information during the Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs), the availability of staff to attend the pilot of awareness-raising sessions, and participation in pilot projects. In regards to credibility, the selected association had to be perceived as trustworthy with peer organizations and willing to act as ambassadors by attending various conferences to promote the use of the tools developed by the SCALES project team. Furthermore, in order

to ensure relevance of tools to a wide audience, the project team selected agencies that cover the full career planning cycle and serve Francophone people, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, Anglophone people, and rural and urban communities.

A total of 27 organizations were selected; 6 from British Columbia, 13 from Ontario, and 8 from Nova Scotia. Appendix F lists the Partner Agencies by geographical location.

The Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs) were conducted by the project team and involved direct observation and in-depth interviews to determine what the agencies are currently doing, what their challenges are in relation to clients' skills, and what they see as possible solutions for integrating an LES approach into their work.

When selecting individuals for the ONAs, team members made every effort to obtain a variety of perspectives by interviewing both new and long-term employees, and managers and frontline staff. In British Columbia, 22 practitioners were interviewed; interviewees included employment counsellors, case managers, training instructors, employment and workplace consultants, and facilitators, as well as a director and one project manager. Experience in these roles ranged from nine months to 20 years. In Ontario, 59 individuals participated in the ONAs; representing a variety of roles including case managers, program managers and supervisors, operations and training coordinators, project officers, employment specialists and counsellors, career coaches, vocational/educational specialists and counsellors, facilitators, employer liaisons, placement agents, and job developers. Experience in these roles ranged from one to 30 years.   In Nova Scotia, a total of 35 practitioners, holding such job titles as program coordinators, case managers, employment counsellors, job developers, program managers, employment officers, and facilitators were interviewed. The interviewees had experience in these roles ranging from six months to 28 years.

The interviews primarily used open-ended questions so as to invite complex responses. Practitioners were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on five existing tools which were chosen by the project team, the purpose of which was to gain some insight on what types of tools, design features and delivery modes are perceived as useful to their work and why. The five tools selected were

1. Assessment for Document Use
2. Self-Assessment for Working With Others
3. Practice, Learning Exercises and Tip Sheet for Computer Use
4. Career Development Tool
5. Occupational-Specific Essential Skills Tool

To review the ONA Interview Protocol, please see Appendix H.

4.2   Analyzing the Organizational Needs Assessments Results and Findings

The project team completed the ONAs by mid-April 2011 and the data was then organized by province and by theme, and analyzed for similarities and differences across the provinces. Follow-up interviews were also conducted between SRDC and project team members to obtain further details on their observations through the ONA process and their perceptions of the findings.

The findings of the ONAs are organized into four parts. In Part A, the current labour market and client context is presented; Part B demonstrates the current practices and tools; Part C describes the key gaps in service delivery from the standpoint of an LES approach; and Part D discusses the opportunities for new tools.

4.2.1   Part A: Current Labour Market and Client Context (Appendix J)

The most commonly reported key industry in local labour markets across all three provinces was retail (78%). The other most identified key industries in British Columbia were educational services (64%), accommodation and food services (64%), and health and social assistance (55%). In Ontario, other key industries most commonly identified were educational services (59%), and health and social assistance (53%). Respondents in Nova Scotia most often reported the key industries other than retail were construction (83%), and accommodation and food services (63%). The graph below illustrates the distribution of key industries as report by practitioners. To review key industries as reported by province, please see Appendix I.

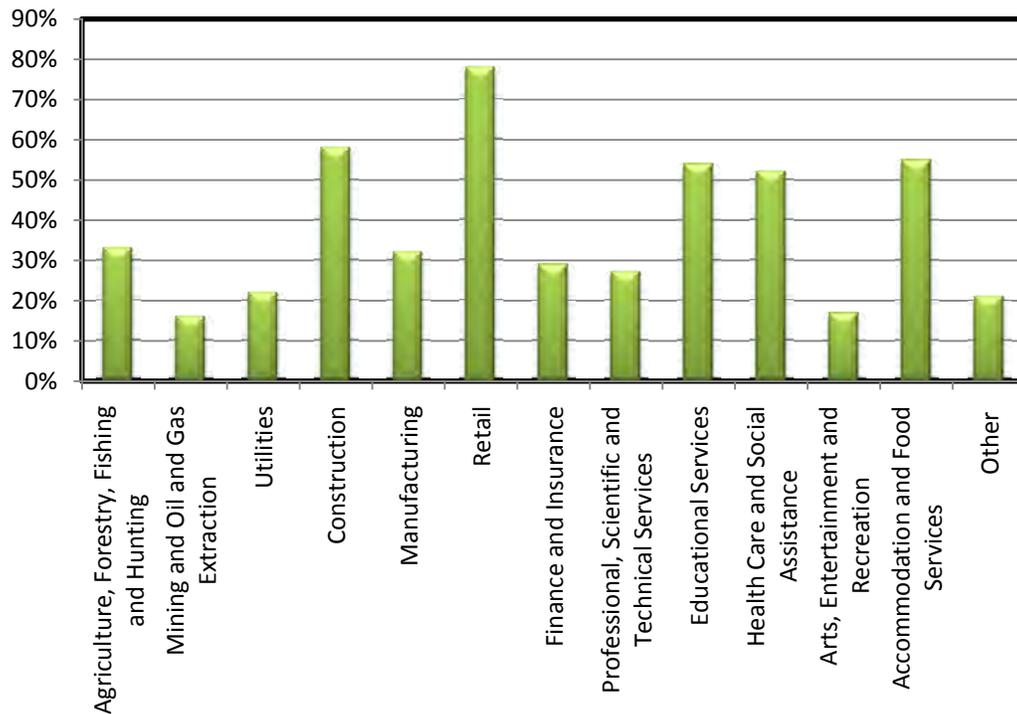**Key Industries As Report by Respondents in All Three Provinces**

Figure 4.2.1-1

ONA participants were asked to categorize their client base into the following groups:

- Social assistance recipients
- Immigrants
- Persons with disabilities
- Older Workers
- Youth
- Aboriginal peoples
- New entrants and re-entrants to the labour market
- Unemployed individuals previously self-employed
- Employed individuals who are low skilled (e.g. do not have a high school diploma or a recognized certification or who have low levels of Literacy and Essential Skills)
- Other

Across the three provinces, the majority of respondents reported serving most of the listed client types. A notable finding was that youth were the one group most commonly reported as being served in all three provinces. In British Columbia and Nova Scotia, social assistance recipients were the second most commonly identified client group served, while in Ontario the second most commonly chosen client group served was between older

workers and persons with disabilities. The chart below provides details regarding the other client groups served in all three provinces.
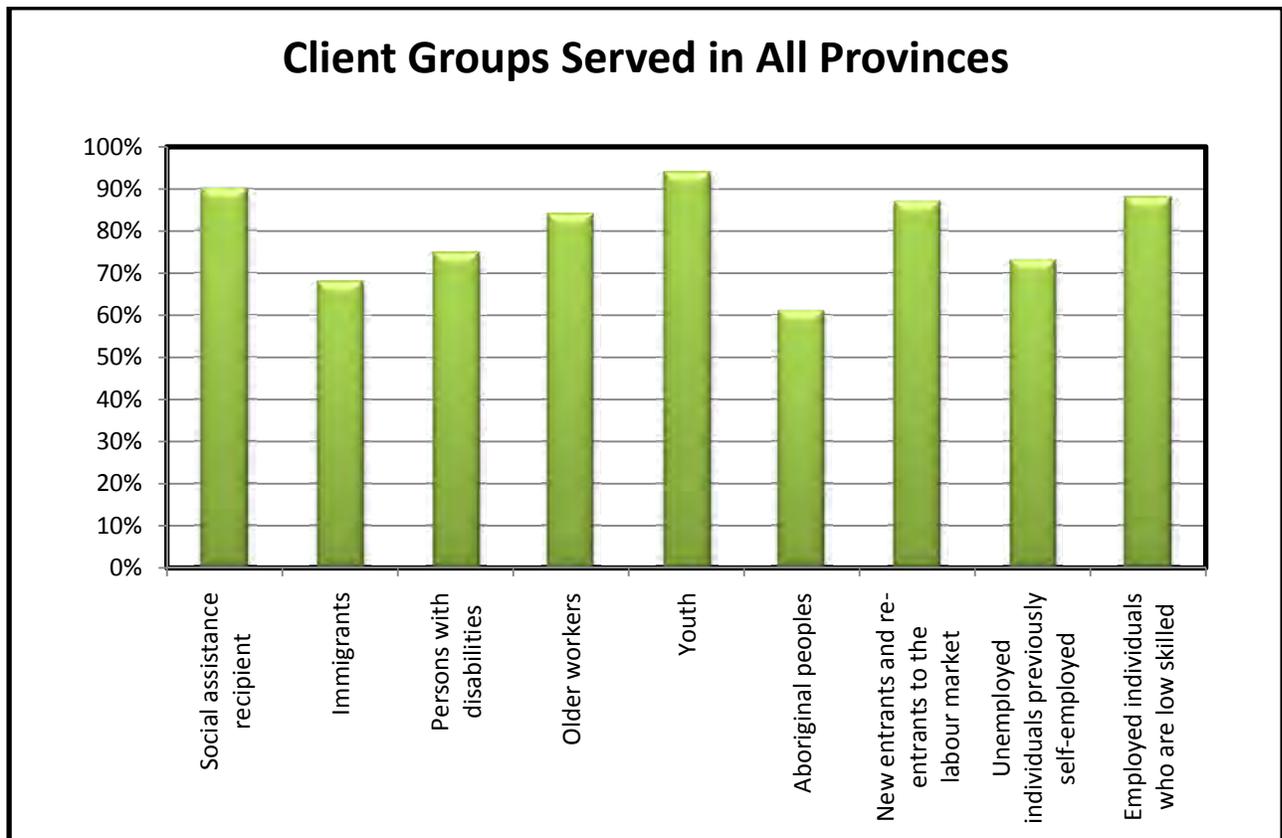
Client Groups Served in All Provinces

Figure 4.2.1-2

4.2.2 Part B: Career Development Services – Current Practices and Tools

This section describes current practices and tools used by respondents. The findings are organized according to five functions: identifying client strengths, interests, goals and values; exploring career options; identifying need for skills upgrading; identifying readiness for post-secondary education and training; and identifying readiness for employment.

4.2.2.1 Identifying Client Strengths, Interests, Goals and Values (Appendix K)

The most common approach identified by practitioners during the ONAs was to use an intake form and to conduct conversational interviews. This approach was consistent across British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Ontario. In terms of tools, practitioners reported using a wide range of instruments. *Career Cruising*, an online career guidance and planning system, available at http://www.careercruising.com, was by far the most popular tool used, particularly in Nova Scotia. It is particularly notable that in British Columbia and Ontario a significant number of respondents did not report using any tools at this stage of the career development process.

4.2.2.2 Exploring Career Options (Appendix L)

In all three provinces, ONA participants also reported using an informal approach in exploring clients' career options, including goal setting, one-on-one conversations, and workshops. When tools were used, labour market information and *Career Cruising* were commonly reported. In Ontario in particular, practitioners who use tools tend to use online resources and specifically identified HRSDC's *Job Bank* as well as the *Ontario Skills Passport*. However, it is important to note that a significant number of participants, again particularly those in British Columbia and Ontario, reported they do not use any tools for exploring career options.

4.2.2.3 Identifying the Need for Skills Upgrading (Appendix M)

Observation of clients' ability to complete intake forms, complete job search tasks, and tasks in job placements were the most common approach reported for identifying an individual's need for skills upgrading. In all three provinces, a substantial number of respondents reported they do not use any tools to identify a client's need for skills upgrading. This stage in the career development process appears to be mainly informal and relies on the practitioner's judgment.

4.2.2.4 Identifying Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and Training (Appendix N)

Generally speaking, practitioners reported they employ an informal approach to identify whether a client is ready for post-secondary education and training. One-on-one conversation aimed to determine whether a client possesses the prerequisites for post-secondary education and training and whether they have sufficient supports in place is the most common method identified by respondents. Through these conversations, as well as through observation, practitioners determine if the client has the sufficient level of commitment and motivation to pursue post-secondary education and training.

Practitioners who reported using tools commonly reported relying on labour market information, *Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks* (CCLB) testing, *Test of Workplace Essential Skills* (TOWES), academic upgrading assessments, and *Prior Learning Assessments Recognition* (PLAR).

4.2.2.5 Identifying Readiness for Employment (Appendix O)

As was the case in identifying readiness for post-secondary education and training, practitioners in all three provinces commonly reported engaging in one-on-one conversations with clients and observing whether a client demonstrates motivation, commitment, and confidence, and whether they have any barriers to employment, such as skill deficiencies, financial limitations, and mental health issues. While Appendix O addresses the current practices and tools used by practitioners in each province to identify readiness for employment, it is important to draw attention to the fact that respondents in all three provinces do not typically use tools.

It is apparent, based on the data collected during the ONAs, that practitioners in all three provinces generally use an informal approach when working with clients through the career development process.

4.2.3 Part C: Key Gaps

This section addresses key gaps in the career development process from the perspective of an LES approach, and will be addressed based on six key themes identified through the analysis of the ONA data and follow up interviews with the SCALES project team members who conducted the interviews. The six key themes are:

- Link between Essential Skills and improved employment outcomes
- Tools that provide user-friendly information about specific occupations
- Tools for transitioning clients into the labour market
- Tools for various client needs
- Tools that are non-threatening, engaging and tools that generate quick results

4.2.3.1 Link between Literacy and Essential Skills and Improved Employment Outcomes

A key finding from the ONAs was that a significant proportion of respondents did not see how using LES tools with clients could improve client outcomes. Furthermore, practitioners did not see how a lack of Literacy and Essential Skills may be a contributing factor in a client's inability to obtain and/or retain employment, or how using LES tools to identify a client's LES levels could improve their chances of obtaining and retaining a job. Therefore, if current LES tools do not make these connections explicit, which the SCALES Project Office has noted is not common, both practitioners and clients will not see the benefit of using them in the career development process.

It is clear there is a real need for tools that can help both clients and practitioners understand the value of identifying and enhancing LES levels of clients in order to improve their ability to obtain and retain employment. If the tools developed by the SCALES Project Office do not make this link explicit, tool uptake will be severely compromised.

Another constraint commonly identified by respondents was limited client contact time. In addition, practitioners also identified time constraints as a barrier to learning about and administering new tools; and from a client perspective, time is also an issue as many typically want to obtain employment as soon as possible. Time constraints, therefore, will be in the forefront of team members' minds when developing tools to ensure uptake by practitioners and clients.

4.2.3.2 Tools That Provide User-Friendly Information about Specific Occupations

An important gap identified by respondents was the need for tools that are occupation-specific. Practitioners said they would like to have more tools that provide information on the Essential Skills required for various occupations that are in demand as stated in labour

market information (LMI). This was clearly reflected in the positive feedback obtained from practitioners when shown the occupational-specific Essential Skills tool. This tool organized tasks by skill area, making a clear connection between the tasks, Essential Skills, and skill levels required to successfully perform in this position.

4.2.3.3 Tools for Transitioning Clients into the Labour Market

A major concern of practitioners is when clients "recycle back" into the system, and being unable to identify the reasons for this. In Ontario in particular, practitioners commonly voiced frustration with the quality of feedback they receive from employers who may not understand or be able to clearly and concisely explain the reasons why the client was unable to successfully perform on the job. This in turn hinders practitioners' ability to address the root issue. Therefore, many practitioners identified a gap in the availability of tools to assist them in not only transitioning clients into employment and promoting job retention, but also facilitating the use of a common language among practitioners, clients, and employers. Such tools would address existing communication challenges in determining what employers are looking for and how clients are performing.

4.2.3.4 Tools for Various Client Needs

Another key gap identified by practitioners was a need for a range of tools that can be customized for clients with different skill levels, clients of specific cultures, and for clients of different ages. Many practitioners, particularly those in Nova Scotia, voiced a need for tools appropriate for clients with very low skills. Respondents working with such clients suggested current tools exceed their clients' skill levels.

Practitioners in all three provinces working with Aboriginal clients stated current tools appear to be government documents, and instead should use plain language and more graphics. They argue a need for tools that approach the career development process through an Aboriginal lens; and practitioners working with immigrant groups suggested a need for tools that do not include West-centric language.

Lastly, respondents who work closely with the Francophone community reported a need for tools that have not only been translated from English to French, but have been adapted for Francophone clients. Some Francophone practitioners reported that current tools originally developed in English and then translated into French may not be at the same level of complexity as the English version. Therefore, the tools developed by the SCALES project team will be adapted and translated into French to ensure usefulness to Francophone communities.

Furthermore, practitioners noted a gap in tools appropriate for different age groups. For example, those working with youth stated a need for tools that utilized technology such as computers, and that were visually appealing. In addition, those respondents working with older workers reported a need for tools that help this client group understand their transferrable skills. It was reported by career practitioners working with this client group that it is challenging for many older workers who have been working in the same

occupation for most of their working life to be able to identify and acknowledge skills that can be applied to other employment prospects.

4.2.3.5 Tools That Are Non-Threatening and Engaging

Another common gap voiced by respondents in all three provinces was a need for tools that are non-threatening and engaging. Practitioners stated that tools, skills assessments and/or skill indicators in particular, should not make clients feel as though they are writing an exam.

4.2.3.6 Tools That Generate Quick Results

Reiterating time constraints, many practitioners expressed a real need for more tools that rapidly generate information and career advice for their clients. For example, *Career Cruising* is one such tool and, as noted earlier, a common tool used by practitioners in all three provinces.

4.2.4   Opportunities for Tools

4.2.4.1 Reaction to Tools

During the ONAs, practitioners were given the opportunity to provide feedback on five existing tools. While some were already aware of these tools, many were seeing them for the first time. This data alone provides some valuable insight into why practitioners are not using the tools. They either do not know about them or do not know how to access them. The SCALES project team, as will be presented in Part 5, took this into consideration when selecting tools to develop.

Practitioners' feedback on the assessment for Document Use suggested that it could be potentially useful, but is in need of adaptation to make it more appealing and appropriate to a diversity of clients. Practitioners in British Columbia believe it needs to be repackaged so that it does not appear to be a skills test, which is especially important for Aboriginal clients and clients with lower skills. In Nova Scotia, practitioners stated that the tool requires higher skills than those possessed by their clients; and in Ontario, feedback was mixed. Many stated it could be useful as a tool for workshops or for employers to screen potential hires, while many others said it was intimidating, confusing, long, and text heavy. To view a detailed summary of practitioners' feedback in each province on the assessment for Document Use, please see Appendix P Table 1.

When shown the self-assessment for Working with Others, practitioners in all three provinces reported they thought this tool was useful in theory in terms of identifying "soft skills". However, many also said that this tool is not practical as it requires a degree of self-awareness and honesty that practitioners feel is lacking with many clients. Again the concern about tools requiring a higher level of skills than clients possessed was voiced by respondents in Ontario and Nova Scotia; and practitioners working with Francophone clients said the French version was more complex than the English version. Appendix P

Table 2 provides a summary of the feedback by province on the self-assessment for Working with Others.

In British Columbia and Ontario, feedback on the practice, learning exercises, and tip sheet for Computer Use was very mixed. Some practitioners in BC said it was obsolete and irrelevant for clients who require further instructions on how to use it; others found it very useful. In Ontario, some practitioners found it to be too advanced and would be intimidating for their clients. Others said it was very useful for a variety of situations and purposes, as well as being fast and easy. While in Nova Scotia, practitioners saw the value of it but said it needed to be more engaging and more appropriate for those who have no or very little knowledge of computers. Appendix P Table 3 gives a breakdown of practitioners' comments in each province on this particular tool.

In regards to the career development tool, practitioners reported they did not find it particularly useful. While participants in British Columbia and Nova Scotia could see the potential value, they had a variety of concerns with its format; namely, they questioned its appropriateness for youth who increasingly use online tools, and found it to be too long, too detailed and, therefore, daunting for clients. In Ontario, feedback was varied. Some saw it as being useful for workshops and job placements, while others said it was too time consuming, required a high level of skill, and its purpose was unclear. For a summary of the feedback from each province, see Appendix P Table 4.

The fifth tool shown to practitioners was an occupational-specific Essentials Skills tool. Feedback on this tool was very positive across British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia. In British Columbia, it was reported that the tool was very useful, but practitioners had suggestions for improvement. First, it was suggested that it needed to include additional details such as levels of training required to perform the job tasks and how to assess the client's ability to perform these tasks. Second, respondents said this type of tool needs to be available for many more occupations; and third, it needs to be adaptable for Aboriginals and immigrants. In Ontario and Nova Scotia, practitioners were very receptive to this tool and considered it to be very informative, namely because it demonstrated a clear link between Essential Skills and job tasks, and it was very user-friendly. A detailed summary of the feedback given on this tool in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia can be found in Appendix P Table 5.

4.2.5 Practitioners' "Wish List" for Improving the Career Development Process

The last set of ONA questions provided practitioners an opportunity to share their ideas for improving the integration of LES into the career development process. The purpose of this was to shed light on what the SCALES project team should keep in mind when deciding what tools to develop that will embed an LES approach into the career development process. Responses to this line of questioning were varied. While some were not specifically related to LES, perhaps because there is a need to increase practitioners' awareness of Essential Skills, many were related to the design, function, and content of potential tools. Appendix Q provides a summary "wish list" practitioners suggested would improve the career development process.

In summary, ONA participants reported a desire for more accurate yet non-threatening assessment tools. Again they voiced a desire for assessments and skill indicators that are occupation specific or at least relate to the workplace more generally.   Tools to assess soft skills, such as Working with Others, were also commonly requested, as was one to identify Computer Use skills. Lastly, as has already been mentioned, practitioners expressed a need for more tools that make an explicit link between Essential Skills and workplace expectations, and tools that could improve the quality of communication between practitioners and employers.

In addition to suggesting specific tool functions and content, practitioners also expressed a need for tools that are quick and easy to learn and administer to clients, tools that can be easily integrated into their current processes, and tools that vary in terms of their design and delivery so that practitioners can match tools with client needs, whether that be skills, age, culture, or language.

5.   Tool Selection and Development

The SCALES project team met with SRDC April 25-26, 2011 to discuss the preliminary results of the ONAs and to brainstorm a list of tools to develop. The team devised a long list of potential tools, and then created a short list by applying the following criteria.

Meeting Practitioners' Needs	Impact	Content and Design
• Tools that address an identified gap in the career development process	• Tools that are core to the career development process • Tools with multiple applications that could be used at different stages in the career development process	• Tools that show a clear connection to employment outcomes/returns • Tools that can be adapted to different client groups

Based on these criteria, the project team devised the following list of tools to develop.

1. Guidebook – This tool will provide an overview of current Literacy and Essential Skills tools that may be used in various steps in the career development process
2. Workshops – A series of three awareness-raising sessions that will provide the basics of Literacy and Essential Skills, the variety of uses of LES in the career development process, an opportunity for practitioners to explore the career development process and become familiar with the Guidebook, and an orientation to the CONNECT SCALES project tools
3. Checklist of Skills – This checklist will allow clients to complete a self assessment that covers all of the 9 Essential Skills
4. Job Posting Tool – This tool will enable practitioners to ask the right questions of employers to create a job posting that is written in the format of LES
5. Roadmap – The purpose of the roadmap is to provide a graphic chart that will allow clients to map out and summarize their interests, skills, values, research, work preferences, goals and action plan in an LES framework
6. Card Sorts – An exercise allowing clients to identify current Essential Skills and areas of growth, to assist them in becoming more self aware as they build resumes, cover letters and prepare for interviews
7. Resume Statement Tool – This tool will provide both practitioners and clients with Essential Skills language to assist in writing relevant resumes and cover letters for the job search process

8. Computer Use Tool – This tool will provide a "how-to" for clients to assist them in using and increasing their computer skills through applying their skills in the job search process

9. Adaptation Tool – This tool will provide guidance for career practitioners to assist them in adapting the SCALES project tools to suit the needs of their clients and other ways in which the tools can be creatively used.

Please note that while the project team had originally included Mini Profiles in the list of tools, discussions with HRSDC-OLES have made it clear that they will be developing mini profiles and we do not wish to duplicate their efforts. Therefore, Mini Profiles have been eliminated from the tools the SCALES project team is developing.

Once the tools were selected, the team categorized them according to the general phases in the career development process as shown below. The purpose of doing so was to ensure the selected tools would address every phase of the career development process, and, thereby, provide practitioners with a more formal approach when working with their clients.
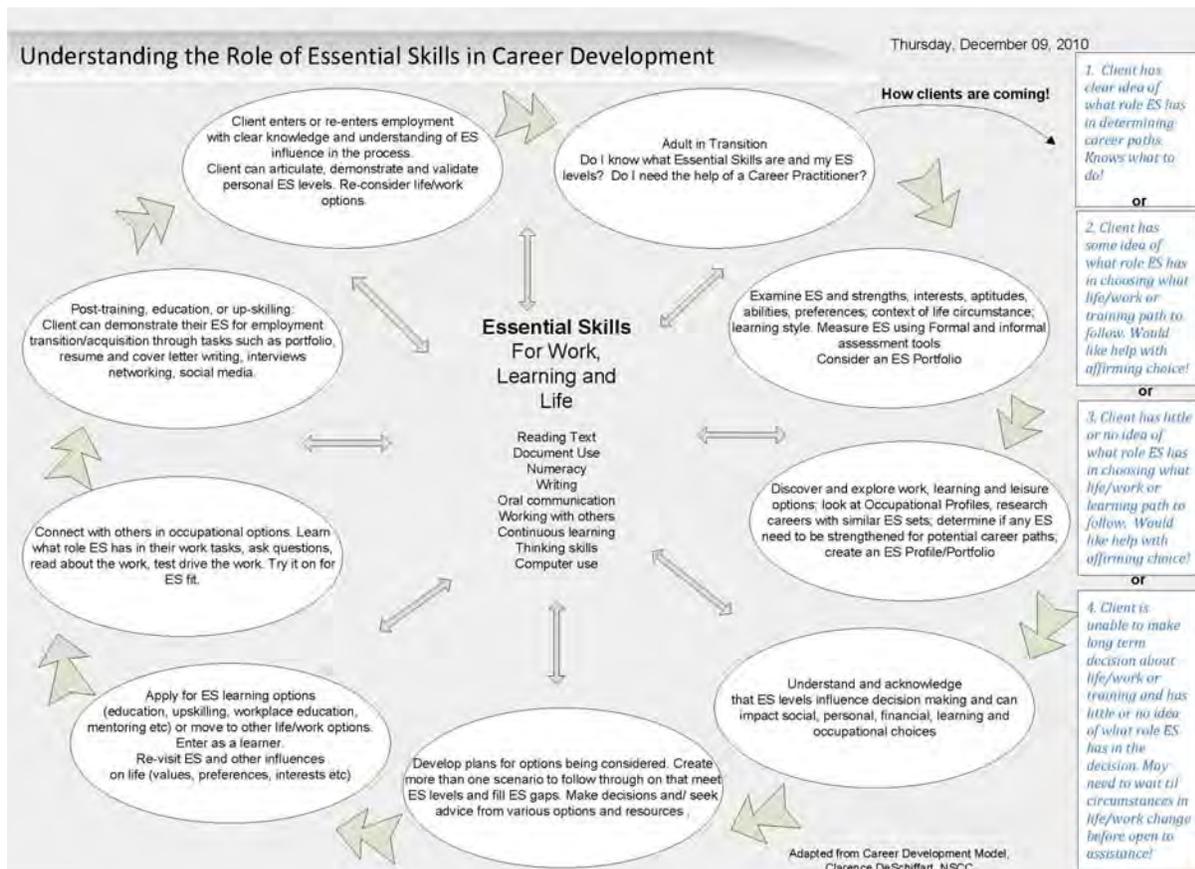
Tools Selected for Development
Who Am I? and What Do I Want To Do/Be?
Card Sort
Checklist of Skills
How Do I Reach My Goals?
Workshops
Job Posting Tool
Computer Use Tool
Getting Started: Action Planning
Resume Statement Tool
Computer Use Tool (Job Search Context)
Tools Applicable to Every Phase of the Career Development Process
Guidebook
Roadmap
Adaptation Tool

6.   Next Steps

The SCALES project team will develop the tools in English which will then be adapted and translated into French. The tools will also be adapted for persons with disabilities at the same time as they are adapted for the Francophone community.

Once the tools have been developed, it is important for the credibility of the pilots that an evaluation strategy be devised in advance of implementation. This will take place in August 2011 and will allow the team to determine what revisions need to be made with the tools, and how the implementation of the tools improves client outcomes and the implementation of an LES approach into current practices.

From late September to early November 2011, the SCALES project team will pilot the workshops with the partner agencies, raising their awareness of and the benefits of LES, but also instructing practitioners on how to use the developed tools. Upon completion of the workshops, the tools will be distributed to the agencies to apply to their practice according to a set of guidelines developed by the project team.

The pilots will run from November 2011 to May 2012 at which time an evaluation will be conducted. A report will be released shortly after the completion and analyses of the evaluations outlining the success of the pilots and comparing the changes reported by the partner agencies at the beginning of the pilot versus the end. The SCALES project team will then revise and finalize the tools according to the pilot evaluations.

In the final phase of the project, the SCALES project team will disseminate the findings of our research and the pilots, as well as the tools. The strategy for doing so will be to facilitate workshops at both regional and national conferences where partner agencies will share their experiences and act as ambassadors for the tools, thereby encouraging tool uptake.

Appendix A

Online Survey A

Q1   What workshops have you attended? Please indicate all the workshops you have completed:

- ❐   Intro to Essential Skills
- ❐   Essential Skills Assessments
- ❐   Essential Skills Portfolios
- ❐   Bridging the Gap
- ❐   Profile Analyst Training
- ❐   Authentic Workplace Materials Developer
- ❐   None of the Above

Q2   What is your current employment status?

- ❐   Employed in field of Career Practitioner
- ❐   Employed in education field
- ❐   Employed in workplace training
- ❐   Other employment
- ❐   Unemployed or not seeking employment

Q3   If you had "other" employment, please describe it

Q4   What is your knowledge of Essential Skills?
- ❐   None
- ❐   Very Little
- ❐   Have taken some training
- ❐   Currently us Essential Skills in my work (please describe)

Q5   How aware are you of the benefits of integrating Essential Skills into your work?
- ❐   Very unaware
- ❐   Somewhat unaware
- ❐   Somewhat aware
- ❐   Very aware

Q6   Please comment about your awareness of the benefits of integrating
       Essential Skills into your work.

Q7   What kind of assistance would help you to integrate Essential Skills into your
       work?
       ❒   More education/workshops
       ❒   Coaching/mentoring
       ❒   Tools
       ❒   Other
       Please describe tools or other help you would appreciate receiving.

Q8   Are you interested in piloting new Essential Skills tools that are relevant to
       your work?
       ❒   Definitely
       ❒   Probably
       ❒   Probably not
       ❒   Definitely not

Q9   Other comments, if any, as to how Douglas College might help you with
       Essential Skills

Q10   If you are willing to participate in a brief telephone interview to further
       discuss your perspectives on integrating Essential Skills into your work,
       please provide your contact information

Online Survey B

Q1   Please rate your knowledge of HRSDC's concept of Essential Skills.

- ❒   None
- ❒   Very Little
- ❒   Have taken some training
- ❒   Currently use essential skills in my work with clients

Q2   What is your current employment status?

- ❒   Employed in field of Career Practitioner
- ❒   Employed in Education field
- ❒   Self-Employed
- ❒   Unemployed or not seeking work

Q3   What is your client/student target group?

- ❒   School age children (K-12)
- ❒   Youth 19-25 years
- ❒   Youth at Risk (19-35)
- ❒   Older workers (45+)
- ❒   Adults 19-65 years
- ❒   Immigrants (new Canadians)
- ❒   Aboriginal population
- ❒   Persons with Disabilities
- ❒   All of the above

Q4   Are you aware of the benefits of integrating HRSDC's Essential Skills into your work?

Q5   If you are aware of Essential Skills and do not use them in your work, please indicate the reason.

- ❒   Not enough knowledge of the subject
- ❒   Funding and time constraints
- ❒   No access to tools or resources
- ❒   Other

Q6   What kind of assistance would help you to integrate HRSDC's Essential Skills into your work?

☐   Education/Workshops
☐   Coaching/Mentoring
☐   Tools: please describe if possible

Q7   Are you interested in piloting new Essential Skills tools that are relevant to your work?

☐   Yes
☐   No

Q8   Would you be willing to participate in a brief telephone interview to further discuss your perspectives on integrating Essential Skills into your work.

☐   Yes
☐   No
Contact information

Q9   Please provide us with the city/town/community in which you live.

Telephone/In-Person Interview Guide

CONNECT Strategic Alliances
Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills Project
(The SCALES Project)

Interviewee:	
Organization:	
Tel Number:	
Date Interviewed:	
Interviewer:	

Introduction:

Thank you for completing our Survey Monkey survey on Essential Skills and agreeing to participate in a brief telephone survey. As noted in the survey, NSCC is currently involved in the CONNECT project "Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills". This national project is funded by HRSDC's Office of Literacy and Essential Skills and has been designed to assist career practitioners in integrating Essential Skills into their work to benefit their clients in reaching their career goals. The initial phase of the project includes an environmental scan to explore current Essential Skills practices and identify desired tools and resources. We appreciate and value your time in assisting us with this aspect of the project. This telephone survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes.

1. What is your current position?

2. What type of organization do you work for?

3. Who are your clients?

4a. What is your knowledge of HRSDC's Essential skills?

4b. Have you participated in any training? If yes, what?

5. What is your perception regarding the utility of Essential Skills?
    (If negative, use prompts to identify root of perception)

6. When you hear about this initiative to integrate Essential Skills into the work of career practitioners, do you have any thoughts on how this could be integrated in a pan-Canadian approach? Should it roll out? May respond yes or not, need prompts here to further engage conversation.

7. Are you currently using Essential Skills in your work?
- ☐ Yes **IF YES, go to 7a, 7b, 7c**
- ☐ No **IF NO, go to 7d, 7e**

IF YES, answer 7a, 7b, 7c

7a. How?
Tell me what does that mean?
What does that look like?
What area are you addressing? (i.e. assessment)
Do you use tools? What types of tools?
Have you developed tools?

7b. What has worked and what hasn't worked? Please explain (success stories / ah-   ha moments…)

7c. If you were to integrate Essential Skills further into your work, what support would you like to have (i.e. workshops, coaching, tools, resources, etc.)

IF NO, answer 7d, 7e

7d. Can you elaborate on the reason for not integrating Essential Skills, for example lack of knowledge (may be constraints re process or policy, monetary or time, etc.)

7e. What kind of support would you need in order to start integrating Essential Skills into your work? (for example, knowledge, time, understanding the benefits, etc.)
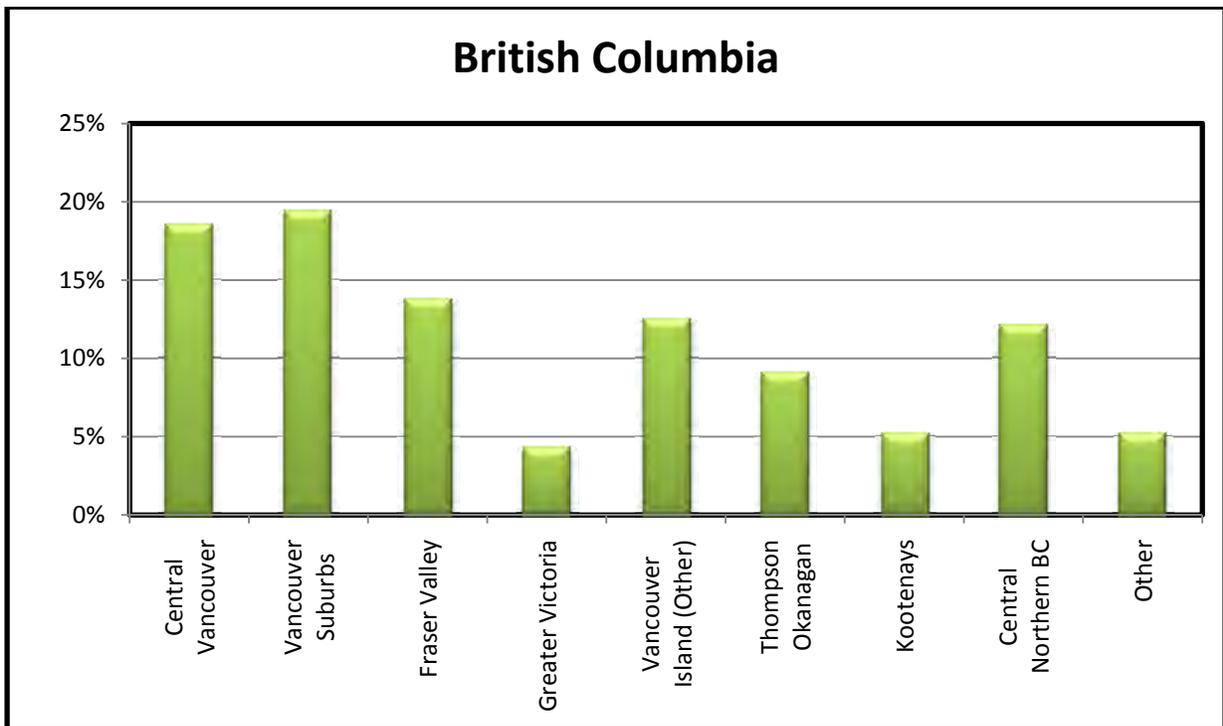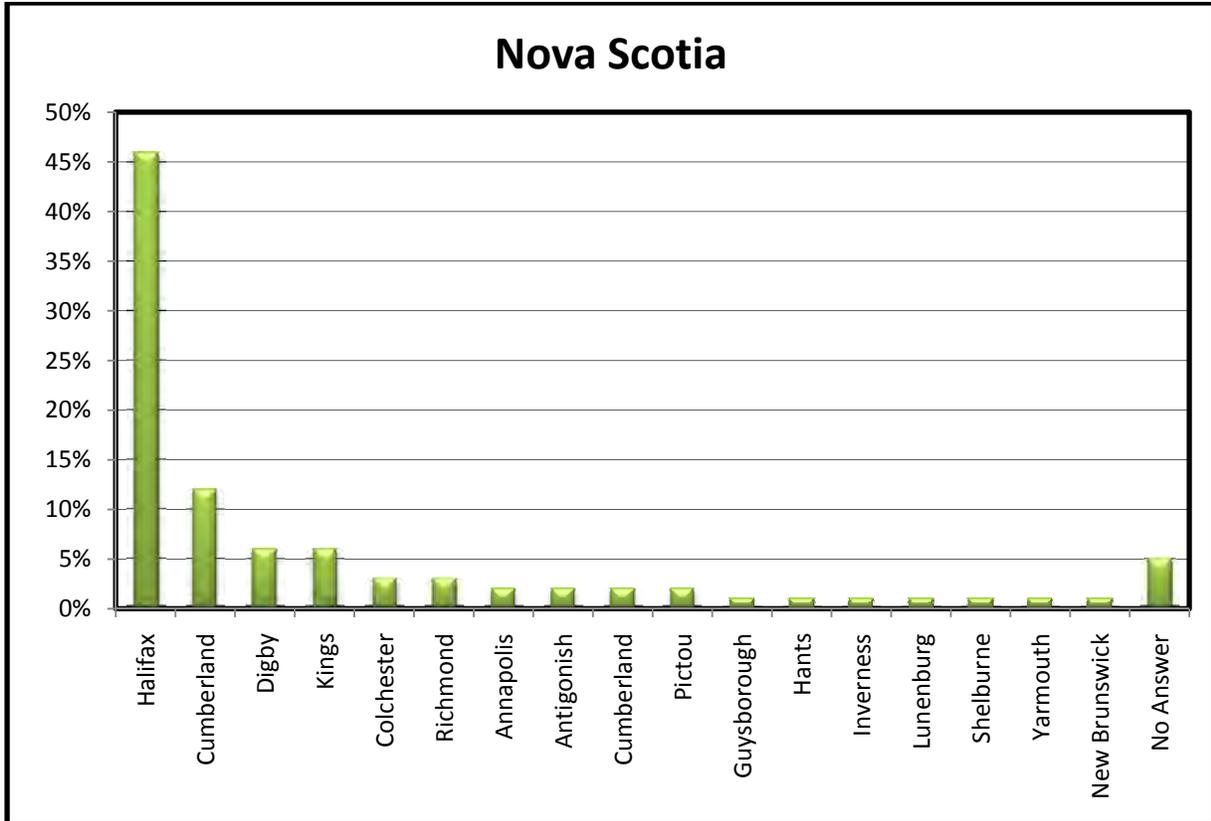
Final Comments
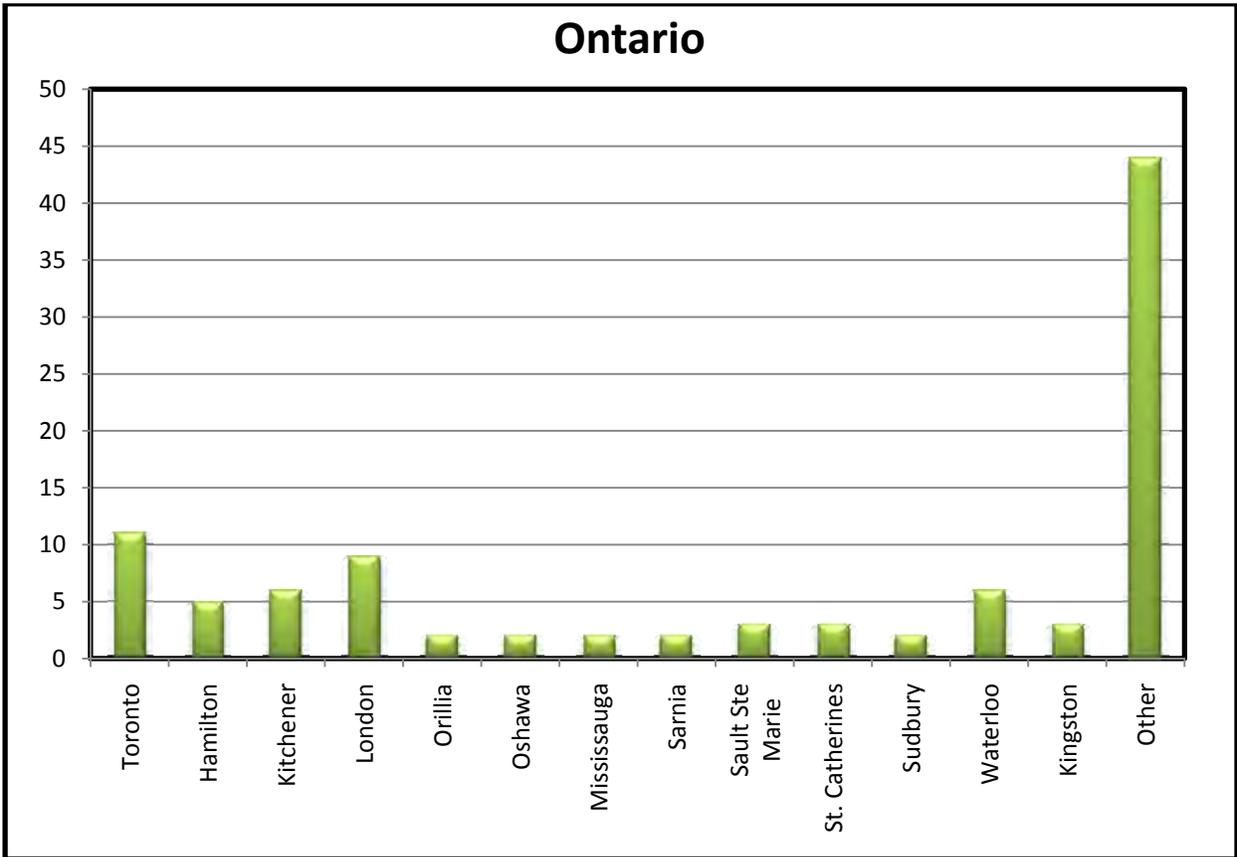Do you have any final comments you'd like to add?

We appreciate your cooperation today. Thank you for your assistance.

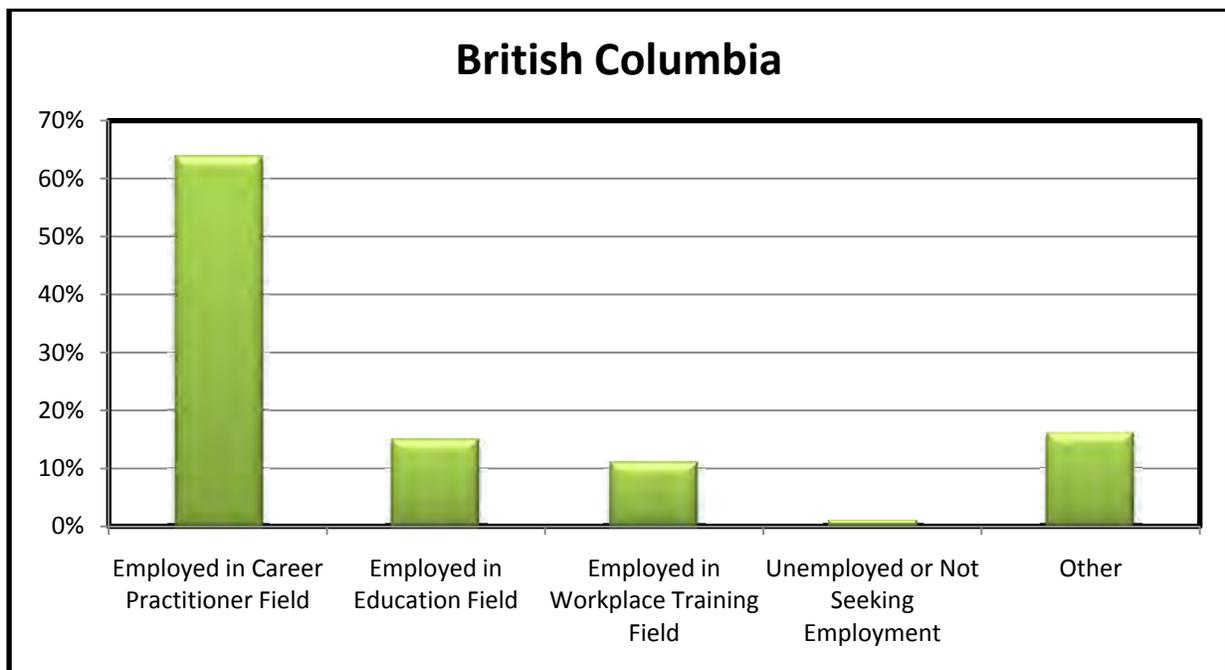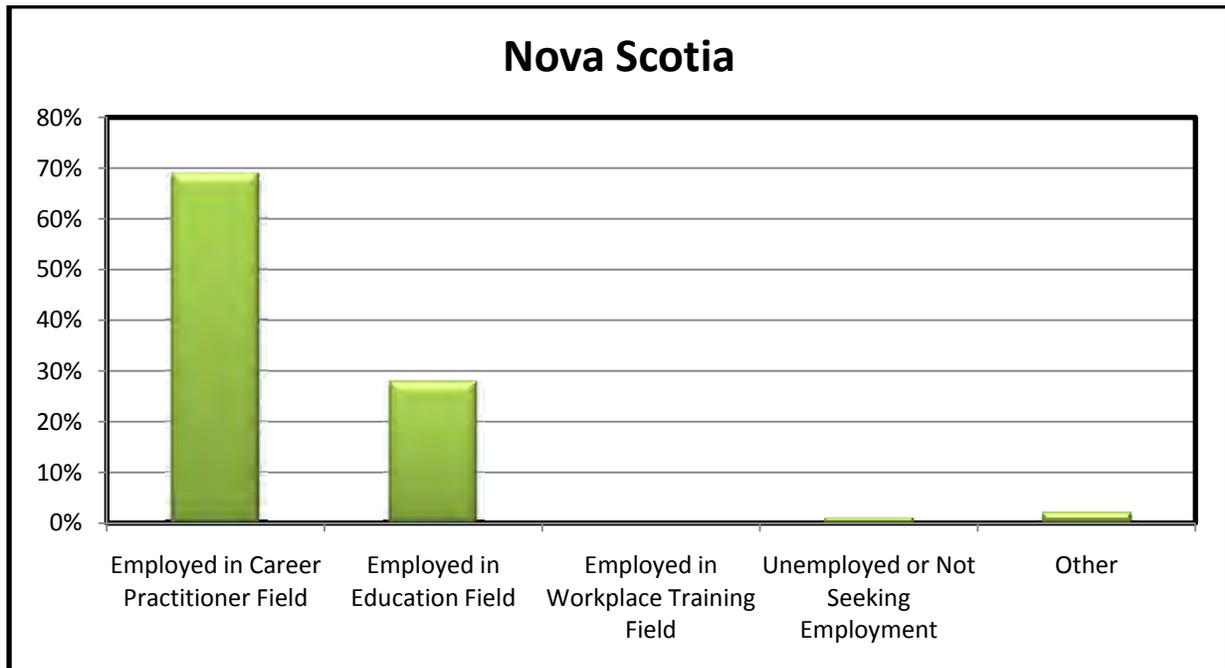# Appendix B: Location of Participants by Province
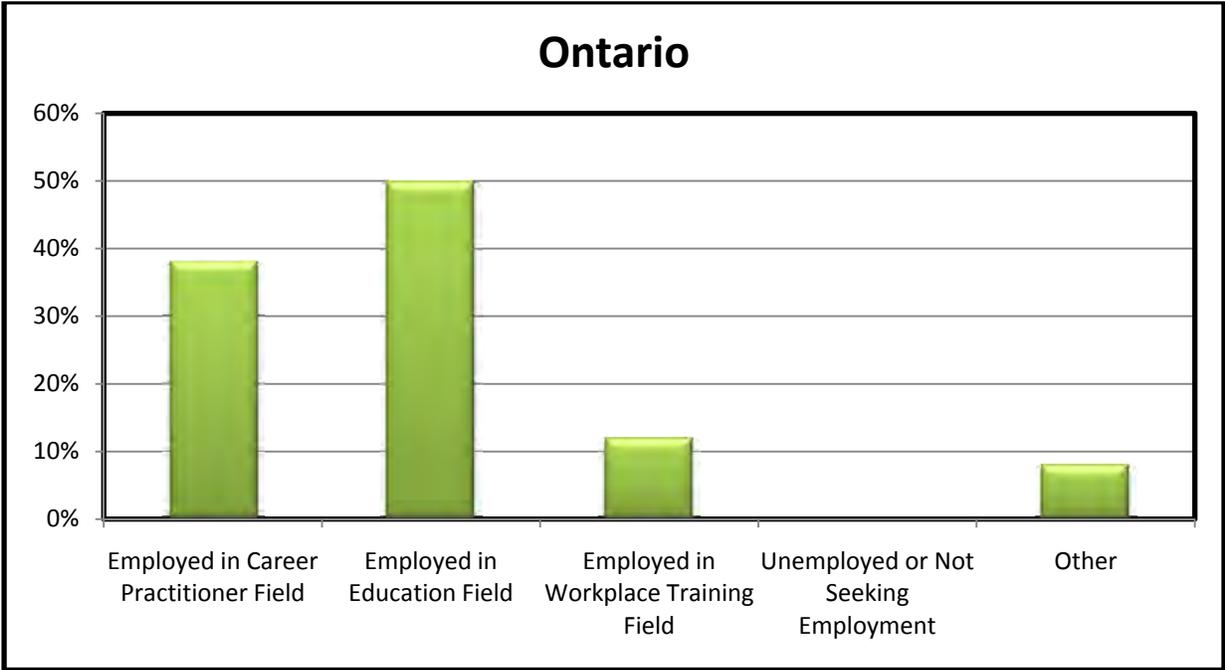
Nova Scotia

British Columbia

Ontario

Appendix C: Employment Status of Respondents by Province

Nova Scotia

A bar chart titled "Nova Scotia" showing employment status percentages:
- Employed in Career Practitioner Field: ~69%
- Employed in Education Field: ~28%
- Employed in Workplace Training Field: ~0%
- Unemployed or Not Seeking Employment: ~1%
- Other: ~2%

British Columbia

A bar chart titled "British Columbia" showing employment status percentages:
- Employed in Career Practitioner Field: ~64%
- Employed in Education Field: ~15%
- Employed in Workplace Training Field: ~11%
- Unemployed or Not Seeking Employment: ~1%
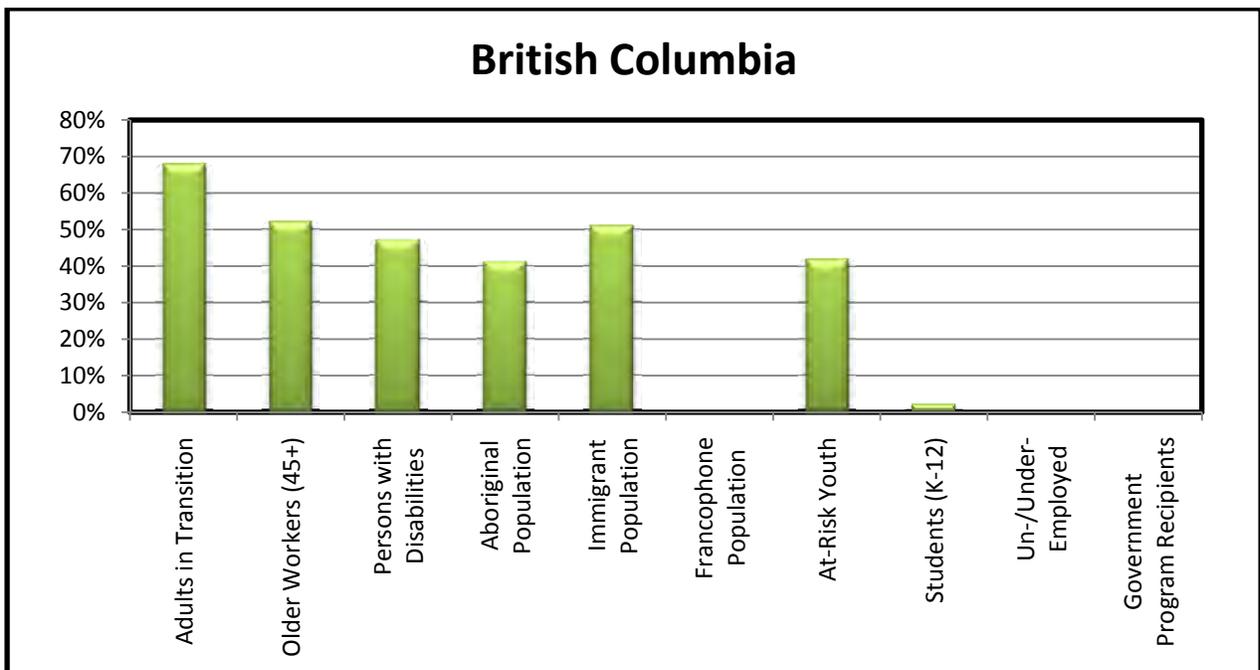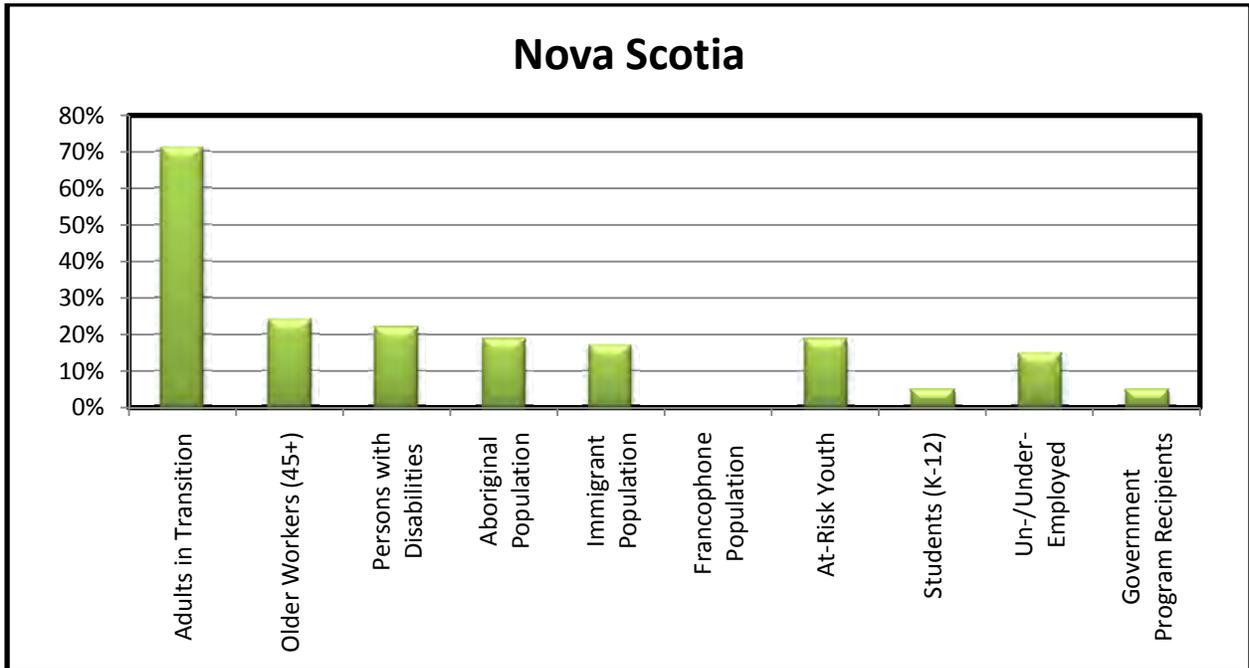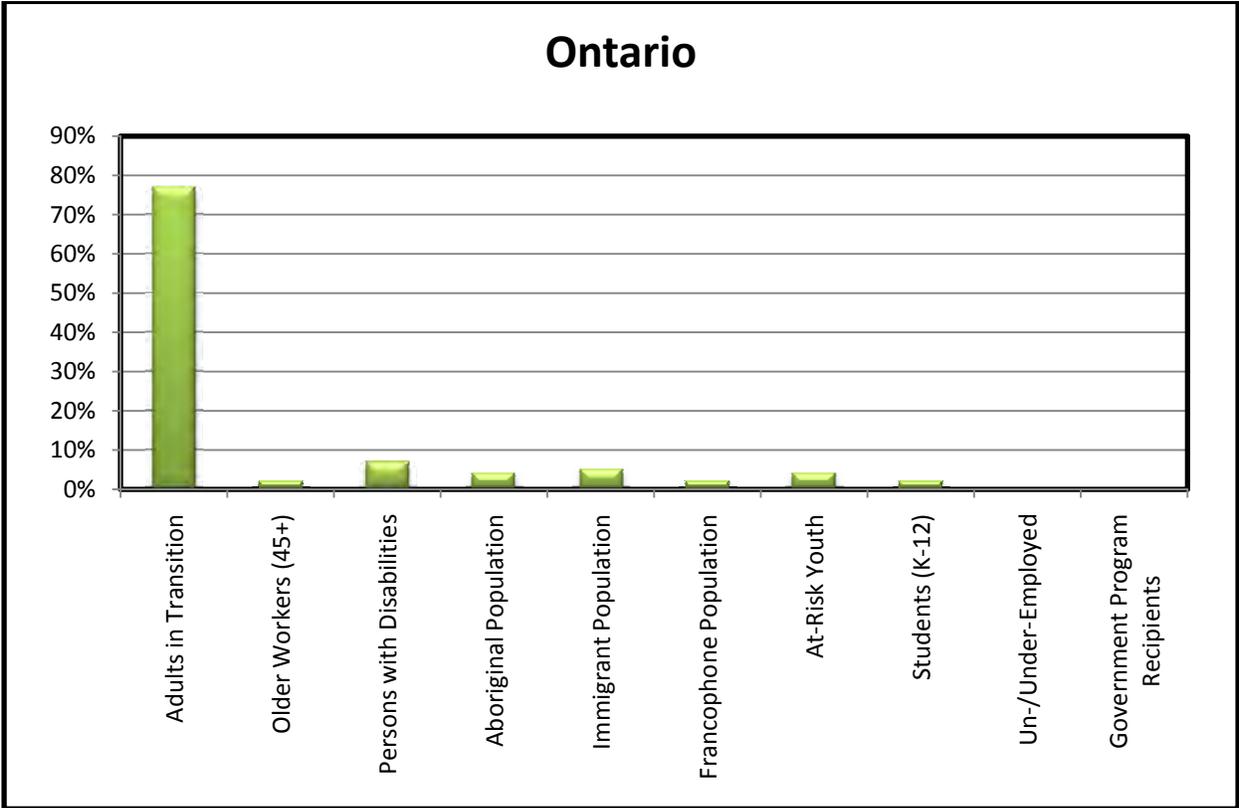- Other: ~16%

Ontario

**Please note: Respondents were able to choose more than one category

Appendix D: Composition of Client/Student Target Groups by Province

Nova Scotia

Bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 80% and categories:
- Adults in Transition: ~71%
- Older Workers (45+): ~24%
- Persons with Disabilities: ~22%
- Aboriginal Population: ~19%
- Immigrant Population: ~17%
- Francophone Population: 0%
- At-Risk Youth: ~19%
- Students (K-12): ~5%
- Un-/Under-Employed: ~15%
- Government Program Recipients: ~5%

British Columbia

Bar chart with y-axis from 0% to 80% and categories:
- Adults in Transition: ~68%
- Older Workers (45+): ~52%
- Persons with Disabilities: ~47%
- Aboriginal Population: ~41%
- Immigrant Population: ~51%
- Francophone Population: 0%
- At-Risk Youth: ~42%
- Students (K-12): ~2%
- Un-/Under-Employed: 0%
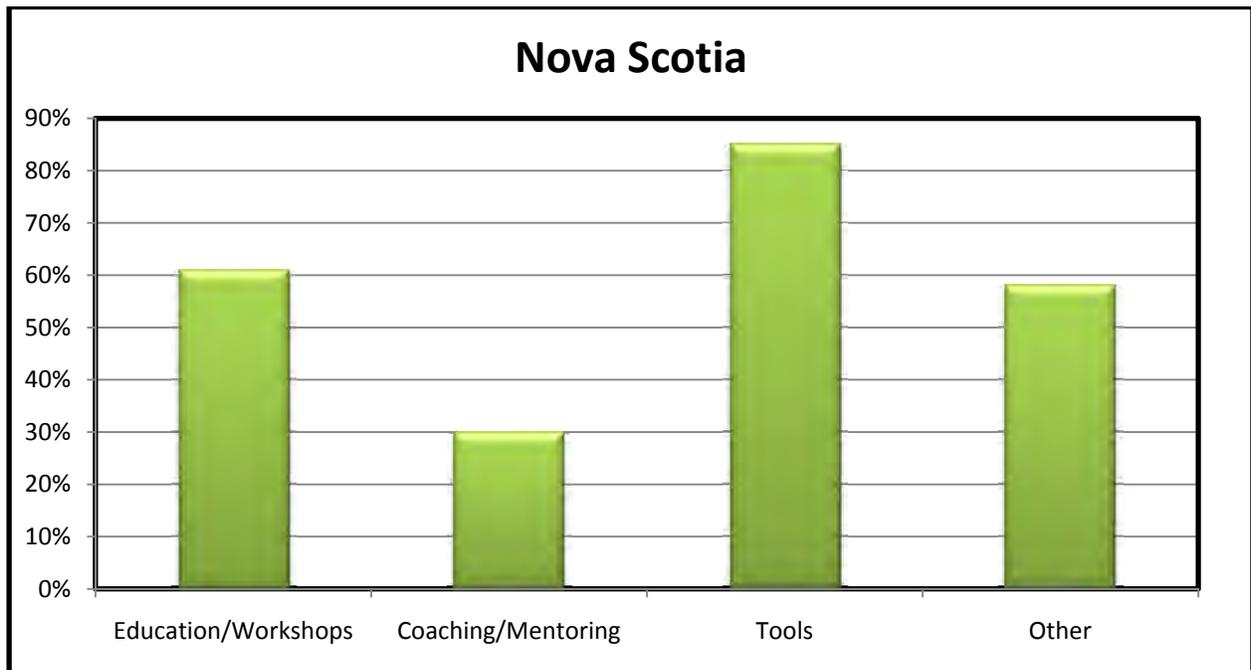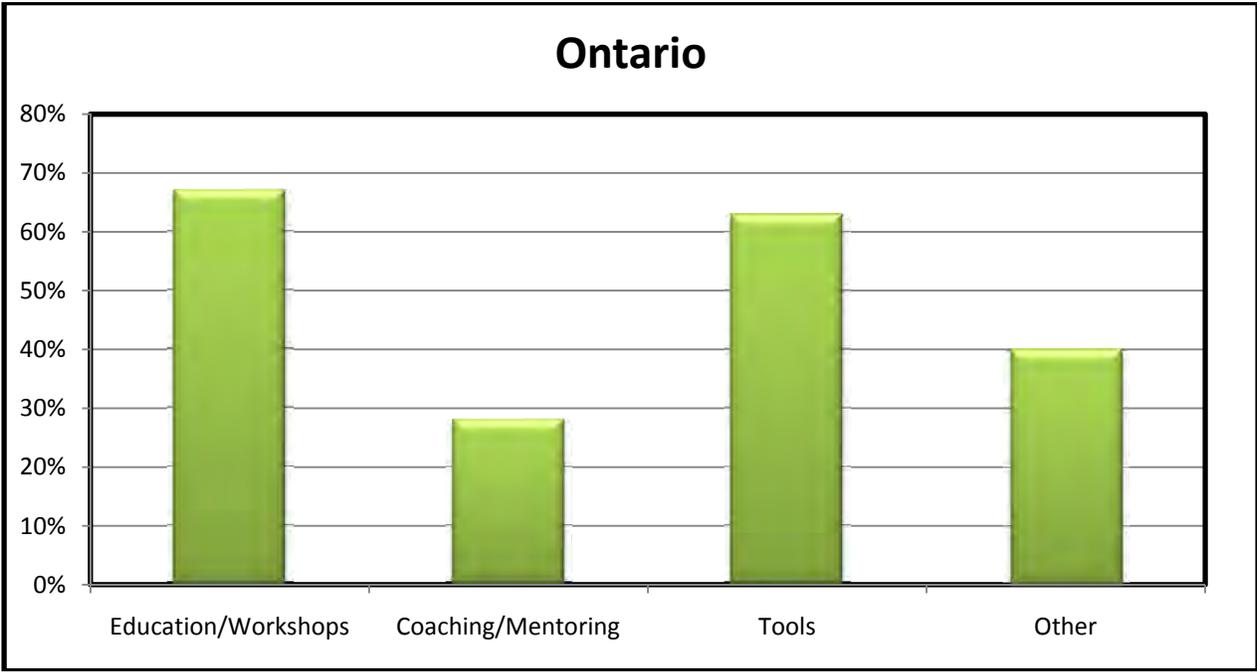- Government Program Recipients: 0%

Ontario

**Please note: Respondents were able to choose more than one category

Appendix E: Desired Supports

Nova Scotia

British Columbia

Ontario

Please note: Respondents were able to choose more than one category

Nova Scotia

British Columbia
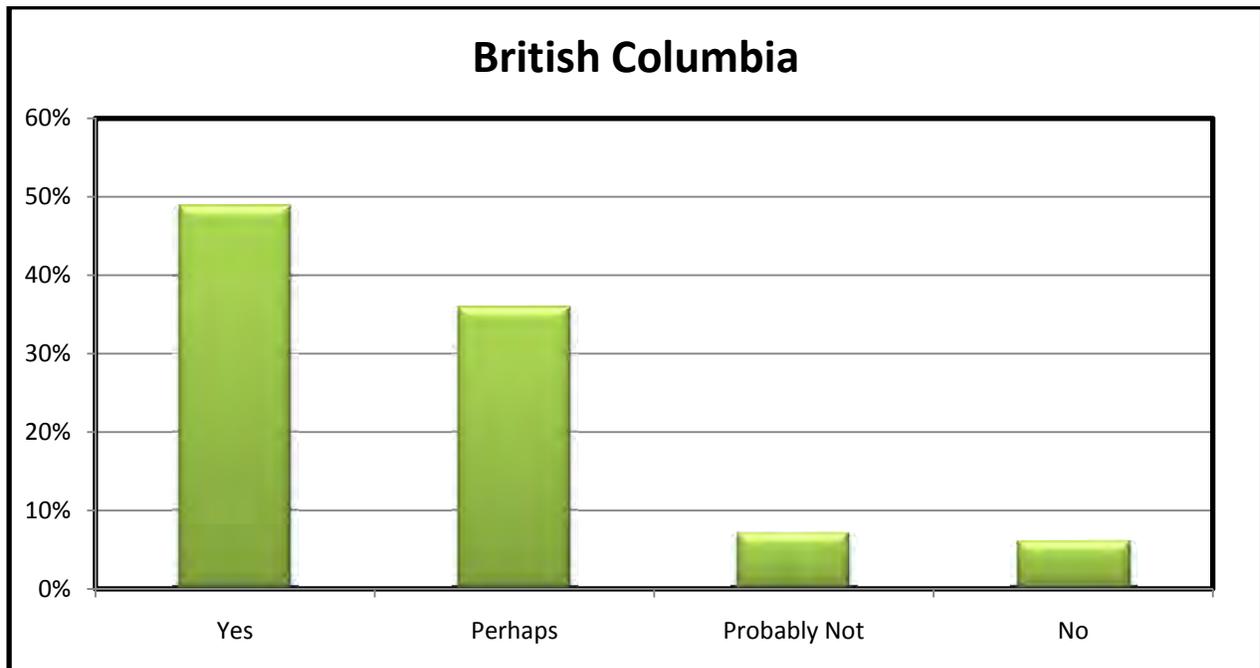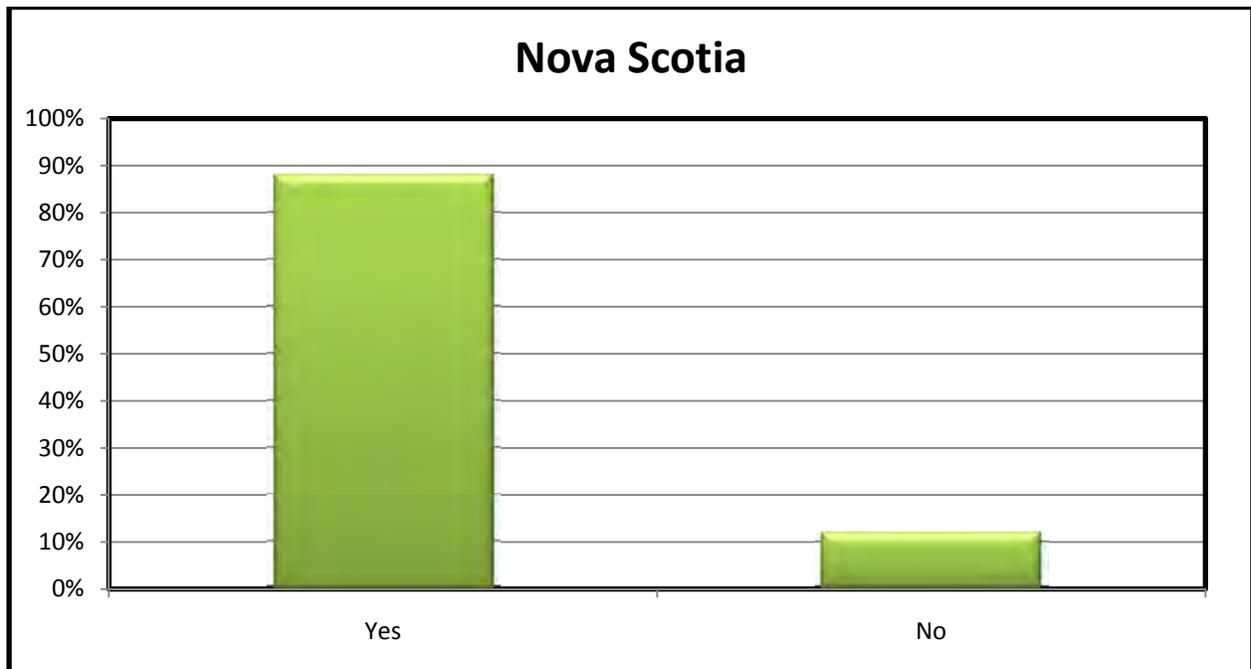
Ontario
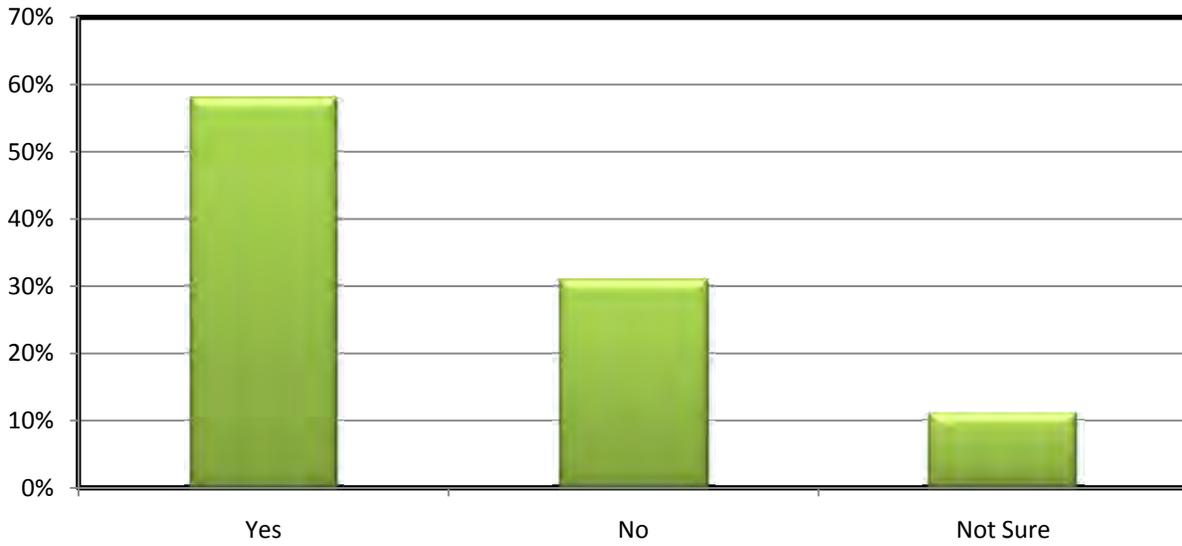
Appendix G: List of Partner Agencies by Province

Organization	City/Town	Geographic/Demographic Characteristics
Nova Scotia		
Phoenix Youth Programs	Halifax	Urban and Rural
Opportunity Place Career Resource Centre	Lower Sackville	Rural
FutureWorx Job Search Centre	Elmsdale	Rural
Career Development Association	Port Hawkesbury	Urban
Antigonish Career Resource Centre	Antigonish	Aboriginal
Direction employ	Dartmouth	Francophone and Urban
Aboriginal Employment Officers	Sydney	Aboriginal
PeopleWorx	Kentville	Urban
Ontario		
Le Centre de services à l'emploi de Prescott Russell Inc.	Hawkesbury/Rockport	Francophone
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	Waterloo	Urban
John Howard Society of Durham Region	Oshawa/Whitby	Urban
Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board	Sioux Lookout	Aboriginal
Northern Lights Canada	Ajax/Barrie/Bracebridge/Burk's Falls/Courtice/Innisfil/Fergus/Mt. Forest/Kitchener/Orillia/Ottawa/Peterborough/Lakefield/ Belleville/Picton/Napanee	Rural and Urban
Lakehead Employment Services	Thunder Bay	North
La Cité collégiale	Ottawa	Francophone and Urban
Conestoga College	Kitchener/Waterloo/Guelph/ Stratford/Cambridge	Urban
Sheridan College	Brampton/Oakville	Immigrant Population and Urban
Seneca College	Scarborough/Vaughan/ Newmarket	Immigrant Population and Urban
Northern College	Timmins	Rural and North
Fleming College	Peterborough/Haliburton	Rural and Urban
Durham College	Oshawa/Port Hope	Rural and Urban
British Columbia		
Greater Trail Community Skills Centre	Trail	Rural
Métis Nation of British Columbia	Abbotsford	Aboriginal
S.U.C.C.E.S.S	New Westminster	Youth
YWCA Career Zone	Vancouver	Urban
Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia	Surrey	Immigrant Population and Urban
YWCA One Stop Career Shop	North Vancouver	Urban

Appendix H: Organizational Needs Assessment Interview Protocol

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2" align="center">Section A: Information About the Organization</th></tr>
</table>

1. Please start off by telling me a bit about yourself in terms of your experience in delivering career development services. How long have you held your current job title? How long have you been working in this field?

The next set of questions is about your organization and the context in which it is operating.

Question	Response
2. Briefly, how would you describe the local labour market?	

a) What are the key industries?	Circle all that apply:
	
	a) Industries:
	
	    1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
	    2. Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction
	    3. Utilities
	    4. Construction
	    5. Manufacturing
	    6. Retail
	    7. Finance and Insurance
	    8. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
	    9. Educational Services
	    10. Health Care and Social Assistance
	    11. Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
	    12. Accommodation and Food Services
	    13. Other – Specify: _____

b) Has there been any major expansion or downsizing that has impacted local employment rates?	b) Expansion/Downsizing:
	
	    1. Major expansion
	    2. Major downsizing
	    3. Neither major expansion nor major downsizing

c) What else is important about the local labour market?	c) Other important information:

3. Does your organization have multiple locations? Where?	Circle the response: 1. No (skip to question 5) 2. Yes – List other locations:
4. Are these sites located in urban or rural areas, or both?	Circle the response: 1. Urban 2. Rural 3. Has both urban and rural locations
5. Does your organization perform case management?	Circle the response: 1. Yes 2. No
6. What is the range of services your organization provides?	
7. What types of clients does your organization serve?	Circle all that apply: 1. Social assistance recipients 2. Immigrants 3. Persons with disabilities 4. Older workers 5. Youth 6. Aboriginal peoples 7. New entrants and re-entrants to the labour market 8. Unemployed individuals previously self-employed 9. Employed individuals who are low skilled (e.g. do not have a high school diploma or a recognized certification or a recognized certification or who have low levels of LES) 10. Other: _____
8. Roughly what proportion of clients does not have a post-secondary credential?	_____%
9. What are the typical barriers your clients face?	
10. Are there any interesting or unique features about your organization that we have not touched on so far? Please explain.	

11. Is your work guided by a specific career development model? Please briefly describe this model. What are the key components?

    NOTE: You may wish to use a generic model and ask respondents to describe how their model is similar or different.

    _____

12. Let's go through the career development process.

Questions	Current Practice	Challenges	Current Tools
a) How do you work with clients to identify their strengths, interests, and aptitudes?			
b) How do you help clients explore their career options or learning options?			
c) How do you know when a client needs skills upgrading?			
d) How do you know when a client is ready for post-secondary education?			
e) How do you know when a client is ready for employment?			

NOTE: Only ask Question 13 if respondents say they use tools. Repeat this question for each tool used.

13. You said that you use [tool name] with clients.

    a) How does this tool work?

    b) Do you like this tool? Why?

    c) How do clients react to this tool?

14. HRSDC has defined Essential Skills as the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change. The Government of Canada and other national and international agencies have identified and validated nine Essential Skills. These skills are used in nearly every occupation and throughout daily life in different way and at different levels of complexity.

    a) Are you aware of what the nine Essential Skills are?

    b) Have you used the Essential Skills in some way when working with a client? How often? Can you give me an example of how you've used them?

Note to the SCALES project team: Question 15 is proposed in response to the discussion during the SCALES project team meeting on February 3, 2011. It was suggested that the project team could select a number of tools to present to practitioners as examples of tools that could assist practitioners in integrating an LES approach. One idea was to select a set of tools that the team considered to be promising and that cover various stages of the career development process. Whether to do this is a decision for the project team to make.

**The SCALES project team did decide to select a set of tools to present to practitioners during the ONAs. The tools selected were:

    1. **Assessment for Document Use**
    2. **Self-Assessment for Working With Others**
    3. **Practice, Learning Exercises and Tip Sheet for Computer Use**
    4. **Career Development Tool**
    5. **Occupational-Specific Essential Skills Tool**

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15. I am going to describe some examples of tools that some practitioners have found useful. Please tell me whether or not you think this tool would be useful for you and why.

NOTE: The interviewer should show the respondent the draft guidebook of tools, allowing them a few minutes to look it over.

16. Here is a draft guidebook of Essential Skills tools that we created for career practitioners. It is intended to make career practitioners aware of the tools available, and to facilitate the selection of appropriate tools for clients.

a) Do you think this guidebook would be helpful for you when deciding what tools to use? Do you find it easy to understand? Why or why not?

b) What changes, if any, do you suggest to make this resource more useful?

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17. If you had the right tools, resources and amount of time, what would you like to do, either on your own or with clients that would improve the career development process?
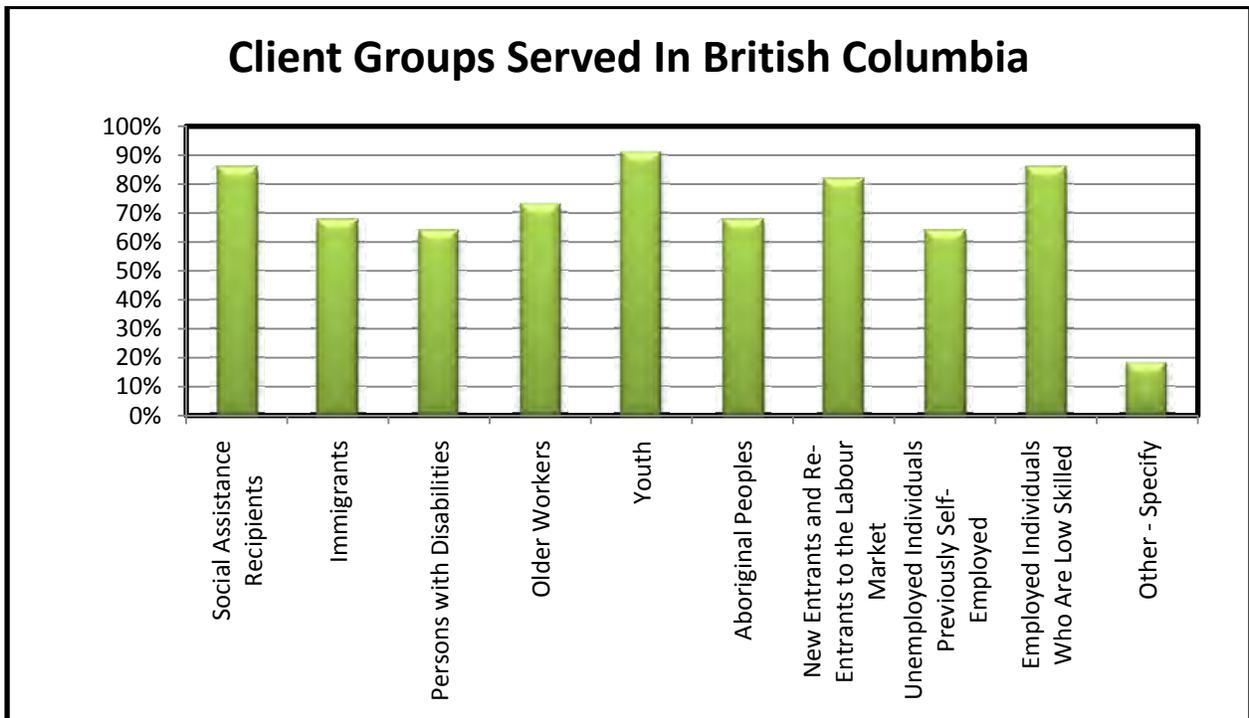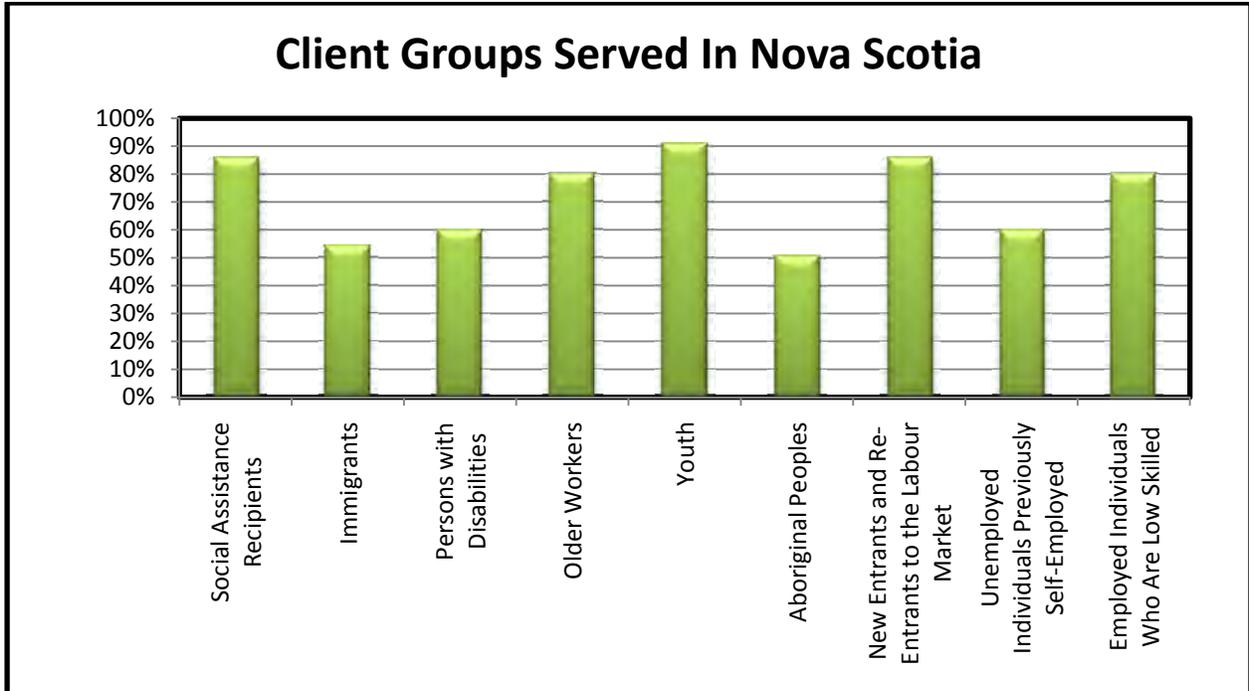
Key Industries As Reported by Career Practitioners in Nova Scotia

Key Industries As Reported by Career Practitioners in British Columbia
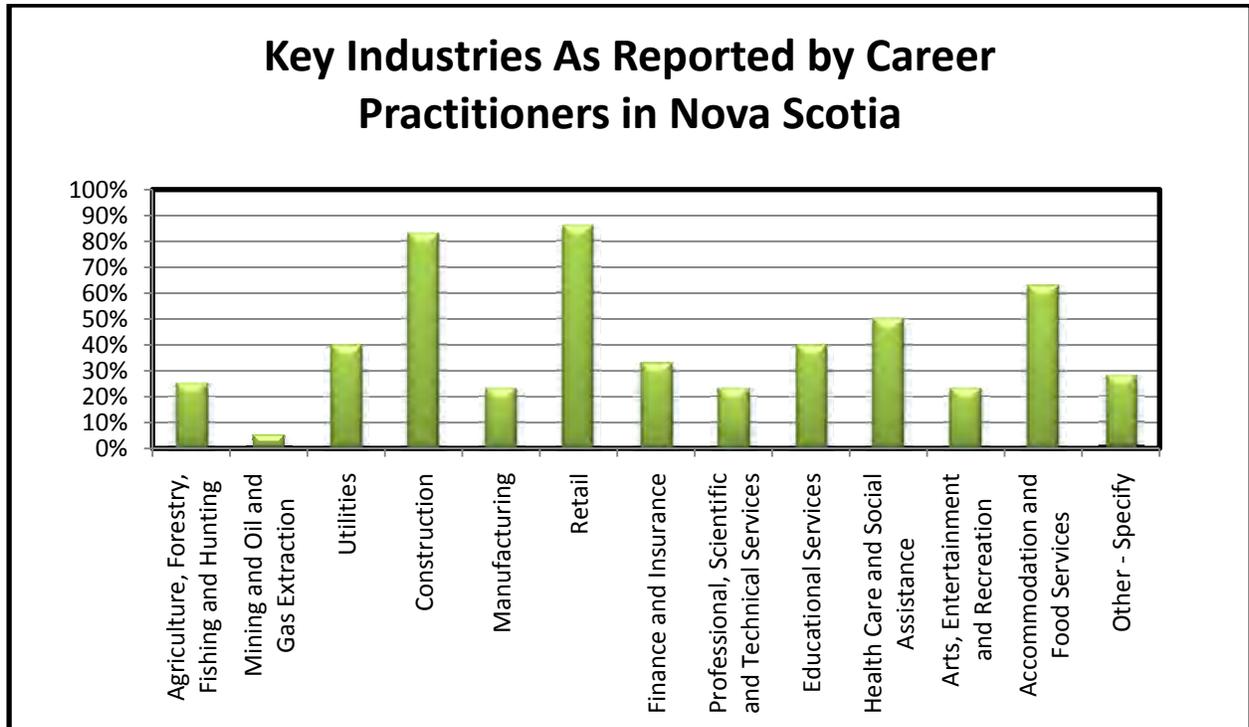
Key Industries As Reported by Career Practitioners in Ontario

Client Groups Served In Nova Scotia
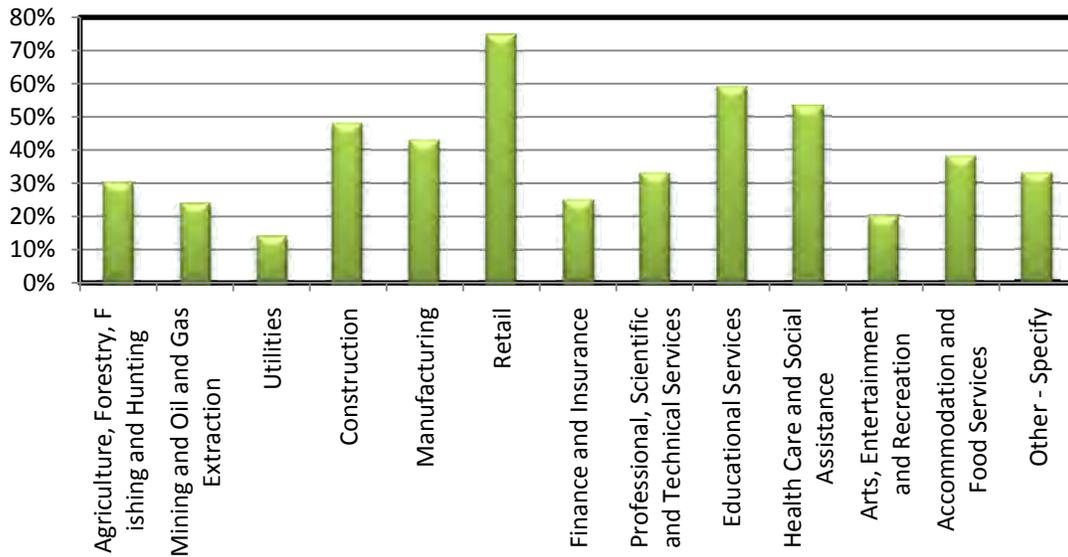
Client Groups Served In British Columbia

Client Groups Served In Ontario
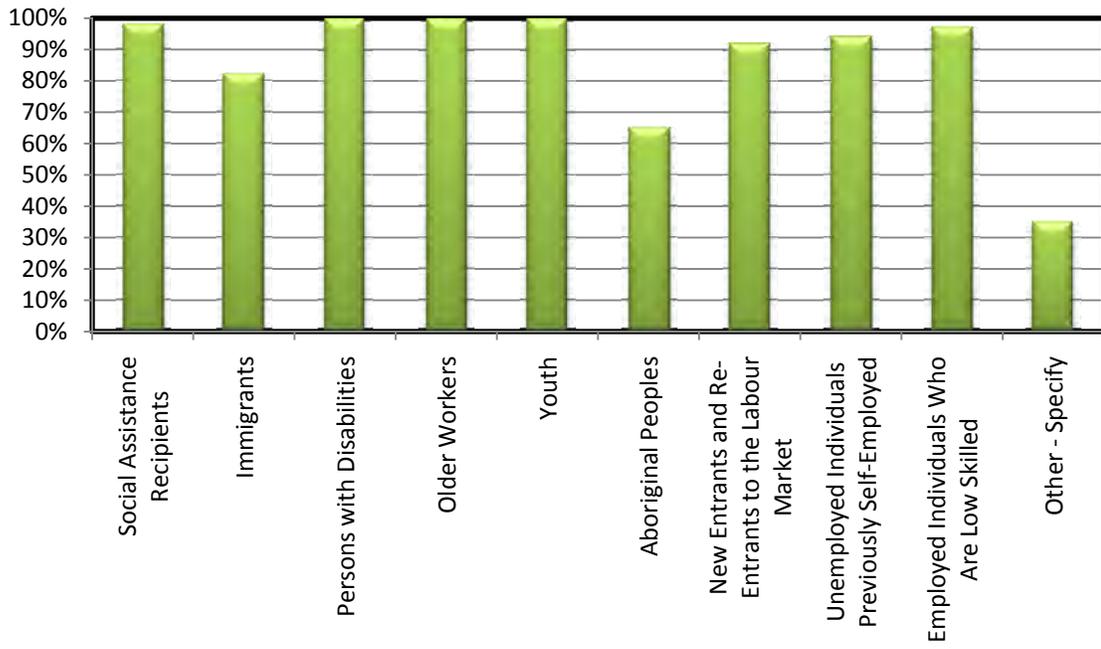
Appendix K: Current Practices and Tools Used In Each Province to Identify Client Strengths, Interests, Goals and Values

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
Current Practices		
• **Conversation/Interview** • Look at intake forms • Client self-identifies • Career planning • Intake/needs assessment	• **Conversation/Interview** • Intake assessment • Resume Review • Workshops • Counselling • Referral out for aptitudes • Cognitive approach	• **Conversation/Interview** • Intake form • Counselling
Tools Used		
• **Nothing** • **Conversation/interview** • *Career Cruising* • *Skill Scan* • *TOWES* • *Personality Dimensions* • *MBTI* • Essential Skills • *Measure Up* • *Snap the Question* • *PLATO* • Motivational card score • *WorkFocus*	• **Agency questionnaire** • *Career Cruising* • **Nothing – no time** • Self-directed • Self-directed/*Holland Code* • Government of Canada *Job Bank* website • *MBTI, SDS, CARISM* • Checklist – barriers • *Jackson vocational* • *EO* driven forms • Workshop • Exploring employable self • *Delta Screener* • Card Sorts • Career Life planning • *Ontario Skills Passport* • Academic Assessment • Personality Dimensions • *Working in Canada* website • *Measure Up, Essential Skills* • Strong Interest Inventory • *COPS, COPES* • Employability Skills	• **Career Cruising** • *Passport to Employment* • *Holland Codes* • Personality dimensions • Motivational assessments • Life situations • *Working in Canada* • Intake forms • *CPI* • *NOC* • *CDI* • Checklists • Value cards

Appendix L: Current Practices and Tools Used In Each Province for Exploring Career Options

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
Current Practices		
Career Planning **Goal setting** - LMI - One-on-One interviews - Internet search	**One-on-One discussion/dialogue/ conversation with client** **Workshops** **Information interviews** - Case managing - Reviewing LMI - Online job sites/tools - Explore educational institution websites - Research - Intake package - Cold call practice - Offer job trials - Employability assessment	**LMI, career exploration, career decision making workshops** - Identify local labour market need - Mock interview
Tools Used		
Nothing ***Career Cruising*** **Personality dimensions** *NOC* - Work futures - Career values - Starting points - Education planner - Type focus - Job mentoring - Workshops	**Nothing, n/a** **LMI** **Online job sites** - Government of Canada *Job Bank* website - Government websites *Ontario Skills Passport* *Ontario College Application Service* 2D/3D exploration (Labour market) - Workshops - Intro ES tool - Intake package - Use career development process with assessment phase - Choices *Career Cruising*	*Career Cruising* **LMI** - Transitions program - Test drive - Options *CARS* - Informational Interviews *CDI* - LMI *Working in Canada* - Sector Councils *BESI* - NSCC website - Personality dimensions

Appendix M: Current Practices and Tools Used In Each Province to Identify the Need for Skills Upgrading

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
Current Practices		
• **Nothing, n/a** • **Compare clients skills with labour market needs** • Needs assessment • Client self-identifies • One-on-One support • Refer client to programs (e.g. older worker and youth programs)	• **One-on-One discussion/dialogue/ conversation with client** • **Observation of progress/struggles in job search and at work** • **Various forms of skills assessment (college, self-assessment etc.)** • Case managing • Intake package • Educational history • Employer reports/evaluations • Indicators, like lack of grade 12 credential • Skills/job availability mismatching • Consider life situation • Job trial • Life skills work • Trial and error	• **Observe form completion and various tasks** • Clients identify need • Gaps in work history • Monitor participants while in work • Check if have grade 12
Tools Used		
• **Nothing** • *TOWES*	• Nothing, n/a • Reports/resumes • YMCA learning material, using that to reinforce base skill development • *MBTI* and Personality Dimensions • *OSP*/discussion • *Learn2Learn* tutorial referral • *ACE* basic computer literacy • Intake assessment • Support from literacy group; in-house assessments; ES profiles from HRSDC • *TOWES*, but rarely • Personal knowledge, websites (*NOC*), assess background informally • *SDMI* system, online case notes and assessment • AU assessment can be offered • Nothing formal – referrals are based on years of experience in the field	• **Nothing** • **Forms and observation** • Self-disclosure • Referrals • Ask questions • Ask around • Computer detects this • Resume is revealing • Check with instructors • Even with grade 12 might have a learning disability

Appendix N: Current Practices and Tools Used In Each Province to Identify Readiness for Post-Secondary Education and Training (PSE)

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
Current Practices		
• **Nothing, n/a** • **Conversation/interviews** • **If client has prerequisites** • If financial and other supports in place • Skills testing • Client demonstrates motivation and has clear goal	• **Conversation/interview** • **Commitment and motivation for pursuing PSE** • **Necessary credentials** • Research on program of choice, testing whether they can meet deadlines etc. • Application (completion, research, eligibility and suitability) • *OLST* program • Feedback based on assessment and evaluation • Refer to the assessment/evaluator	• **Career goals, attitude, logistics worked out** • When they say they are ready • Realistic plan with logistics in place • Adult learning program • Research on options • We make a plan
Tools Used		
• **Nothing** • LMI • *CLB Test* • *TOWES* • *Grassroots Press curriculum* • *PLATO*	• **Nothing, n/a** • Checklist • AU Referral Assessment • Academic Upgrading assessment, *PLAR* • *Learn2Learn* – part of *ACE* online delivery (Academic Upgrading online) – the pre-course before client takes on *ACE* online course • Workshops, in-house literacy program • *NOC* and ES profiles	• **Nothing** • LMI • Test drive • Customized training programs

Appendix O: Current Practices and Tools Used In Each Province to Identify Readiness for Employment

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
Current Practices		
• **Conversation/interviews** • **Client demonstrates motivation, commitment, confidence** • Barriers have been addressed and logistics in place • Client has the experience and credentials that employers want	• **Conversation/interview** • **Observation of attitude, confidence, motivation and preparation** • **Workshops** • Discussion with placement employers • Settled in permanent residence • Sufficient skill set • Have clients go on informational interviews with employers • Occupational research explored/job search tools used • Resume ready • Self direction • Action plan checklist	• **Conversation/interview** • **Commitment, confidence, realistic** • Look at job history • Able to use job search strategies • Mental health and other issues addressed
Tools Used		
• **Nothing**	• **Nothing, n/a** • *TOWES* could be used in a variety of settings • *BESI* • *Working in Canada* • Workshops • Agency needs Assessment. Clients are then referred to the appropriate employment workshops based on their answers. • Checklist sheet that the client can use to self-assess their readiness	• **Nothing** • Employment readiness assessment • Transition program • Use ES tools

Appendix P: Career Practitioners' Feedback to HRSDC Tools

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
• **Useful but needs adaptation (e.g. for Aboriginals, and different skills levels)** • Needs to be packaged better (i.e. not like a skills test) • Could be useful in a workshop • Could be useful to prepare clients for employer testing • No time for this	• **Useful as an aptitude test or as a measure of ability** • **Helpful in the job development and HR hiring process** • **Good tool for explaining ES** • **Possibly test heavy** • **Not clear how to use it** • **Symbols may be confusing** • **Would be more useful if question were sector-specific** • Could be used for workshops • Can help to explain ES to employers • Workable • Good for ESL/FSL clients • Might not be useful for someone interested in an office position • Intimidating • Directions and steps are clear • Too long • Needs to include level 3 questions	• **Could be useful but needs adaptation** • Too high level for clients • Not sure how to frame it with clients • Excellent tool • Too much at the front end

Table 1 – Assessment for Document Use Feedback

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
• **Useful for resume writing and interview vocabulary but as an assessment, it relies too much on clients' self-awareness and honesty** • Useful. Need more tools on working with others • Brings awareness • Don't need assessment	• **Disagreement about whether it is user friendly** • **Lacks clarity; the language is too complex, presumes sound English skills** • **Too subjective. People may not be honest when filling out the form, and would only work if people are genuinely self-aware** • French version is much more complex (not comparable with English version as a result) • Counsellors aren't equipped to interpret results – online tool could instantly provide results • Purpose unclear • Helpful for someone working on a resume • Could use on intake • Useful for self awareness and discussion • Work well with resume development • Especially good for older workers – how it is introduced will affect if it is accepted • Great tip sheet • Good for big team as a basis for asking client more detailed questions • Good length • Needs a guide for counsellors • Good for someone with self-esteem issues • Good for determining self-awareness of client • Good for showing employer soft skills and areas needing improvement • Reasonable length • Too many instructions • Good if enough time	• **Clients need this but too subjective** • Need to use plain language • Need to use a scale • Useful but needs adaptation • Could be used in a workshop • But once identified what is next for clients?

Table 2 - Self-Assessment For Working With Others Feedback

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
• **Antiquated – needs to be modernized and made more relevant** • **Need to have a computer use activity or class component to practice application to make this useful** • **Useful but format needs work** • **Step-by-step examples needed** • **Could be useful** • **Definitely useful**	• **Very useful, helpful for a variety of purposes** • **Would be more useful if it focused on more work related tips (e.g. formatting documents, setting up/using email accounts etc.)** • **Needs to be more basic – not clear if it can be used unassisted** • **Front page is too intimidating, especially for new users** • **Purpose unclear** • Good tool for workshops and staff training • Good for a variety of situations and purposes • Very motivated clients might use it to practice their skills • Very important for the counsellor to explain the purpose of the tool – clients need to know how it will help them • Too advanced for new immigrants, not clear • Practical and helpful for people at different levels • Good to test aptitude • Could be useful, depending on who is using it • Obvious/clear, and outcomes based which is good • Good for range of areas • Handy – everyone could use it, broad use • Formatting tips would be more useful than keyboard tips	• **Yes but needs to be more engaging** • Need a beginner piece to go with it

Table 3 – Practice, Learning Exercises, and Tip Sheet for Computer Use Feedback

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
• **Not particularly useful** • Useful on a personal level • Useful for entry level positions and if coupled with ES training in workplace that includes goals related to passport • For youth, needs to be computer-based • Difficult to clearly determine function and use • Could be used in career exploration	• **Could be confusing, presumes high literacy skills (not good for low literacy)** • **Too long and time consuming** • **Purpose unclear** • **Useful in a workshop scenario** • **Useful in job placement scenarios** • Useful for evaluation in job placement scenario • Needs to be able to be used independently • Useful for a workshop • Good tool for employment counsellors • Only useable if clients and employer sit down and discuss disconnect between responses • Needs to be presented well so as not to appear threatening • Employers don't have time or resources to invest in this	• **Useful but way too much** • Well laid out • Good to have the whole process • Too long • Too wordy • Too detailed • Could use in workshop • Process is good but too much information

Table 4 – Career Development Tool Feedback

British Columbia	Ontario	Nova Scotia
• **Very useful, but needs more detail (e.g. levels of training required)** • Very useful, need this for other occupations • Useful but needs adaptation for Aboriginals and immigrants • Would be more useful in an online format • Needs to include information for practitioners on how to assess where clients are at	• **Easy to understand and clearly written, icons help with clarity** • **Would be great if it could target more (or every) occupation** • **Good for explaining ES** • **Especially helpful if client has a specific goal toward which they are working** • **Generally very well received** • **Purpose unclear** • Very useful • Missing complexity • Not helpful if employers are not aware of ES • Requires employer awareness of ES • Good tools for employment counsellors and job developers • Information available elsewhere • Would be interesting to create this tool for each post-secondary program • Icons helped with clarity • Good for reality checking to understand occupational requirements • Most appropriate for prep for job development • Tip sheet is good – liked learning exercises • Good for translating ES into tasks • Not enough time to use with clients • Useful for resume building purposes	• **Excellent!** • Very useful • Well-designed • Plain language • User-friendly • Great for exploring and identifying gaps • Concrete demonstration of areas for learning • Non-threatening because no levels • Much better than occupational profiles

Table 5 – Occupational-Specific Essential Skills Tool Feedback

Appendix Q: Summary of Career Practitioners' "Wish List" for Improving the Career Development Process

Nova Scotia

- Employer engagement and education process
- Dynamic approaches for youth
- Tools that are tactile, quick, non-threatening and user-friendly
- Mentoring program
- Engagement plan and assessment processes to help youth understand gaps in their skills for work
- Take away for the client to remind them of key learnings
- Professional development to help me better assess clients (limited number of agency staff have this training)
- Embed ES into every workshop. Make connection to job search, LMI, resumes, career exploration
- Process that is meaningful to client and includes skill building for labour market
- Need to address gaps for referrals and integrate into service delivery
- 20-30 minute assessment tool that covers all ES, a check list so to speak, needs tools that educate employers so they can be consistent and to highlight best practices and share language
- Currently use an excellent 12 week program with OHS, career exploration, computer use, ES job readiness and life skills. Need more computer skills training. We need a developed program for this. Need a bridge program to PSE.
- Checklist, bus and computer for clients to work on
- Needs resources tailored for our area. All tools are so generic, they have to be tailored for specific clients.
- Courses should be offered for practitioners and tailored to the region
- Love to see a workshop on ES, what they are, complexity levels, how to use them, why that are valuable to client services, and how we can help our clients understand
- Need training – tools not enough

British Columbia

- Wider range of assessment tools
- Professional development for staff; more opportunities for training and specific workshops around Essential Skills
- Tools for measuring soft skills, such as working with others
- Tools for computer use skills
- Essential Skills tools that focus on specific occupations
- More accurate assessment tools, but need to be quick and easy to administer (TOWES is too long and intimidating)
- Tools/processes around employer expectations
- Email updates about new tools and processes, ideas (similar to Career Cruising), and best practices information from other organizations
- Single access point for all ES tools and information for practitioners (e.g. website)

- Tools that can be easily taught and understood by practitioners and clients and easily integrated into practitioners' work
- Portfolio development workshops
- Tools that are appropriate for Canadian Aboriginal clients (e.g. less "government-like" language and more graphics) and new immigrants
- A Smartphone application for youth clients

Ontario
- Consistent reporting from employers
- Tools for effective hiring practices
- Need to educate employers about ES
- Ensure relevance for a particular job of any given tool
- Ideally tools could be used quickly and independently to help clients learn about themselves
- Develop more tools (like the auto service tech piece) that makes a link between skills and workplace expectations
- Use clearer language in tools
- Develop tools that can be offered on a one to one basis, and a workshop setting
- ES need to better address bilingualism
- Develop tools for career exploration and orientation
- More mini profiles
- Counsellors need more time with clients to get to the hearts of issues
- A checklist of ES tasks that can be used when creating a resume
- Tools need to have more pictures and be less text driven
- Develop ES workshops
- Train band economic development officers on how to get clients to apply ES in the workplace
- Develop tangible assessments for skills levels
- Career assessment tool
- Resume writing tool
- Tool for assessing literacy level
- Would like to incorporate ES tools into intake package
- Find way to put tools online so they can be accessed from home
- Develop ES tools for a wide range of post-secondary programs
- Tools need to be 'timeless', such that they are as relevant two years from now as they are currently
- Change perception about ES; people need to understand how important they are
- More emphasis on grade 12 math and English in high school