

## Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Project

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The OALC Project is comprised of three parts: the OALC Framework Components; OALC Framework Supports; and ongoing OALC Framework Quality Assurance. There are nine project teams working very closely together that include the LBS streams, sectors and technology support organizations. The first part, the OALC Framework Component, includes the development of the Curriculum, Assessment and Materials content and guidelines. The first version of the OALC Framework (Curriculum Component) is scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 2010. Overview training of the OALC Project with specific focus on the Curriculum Component will take place through October to December of 2010.

The following OALC Project teams are also working throughout the fall with the following objectives:

#### Assessment – Learner Gains

- To situate learner gains assessment within the context of the OALC Framework. The Learner gains assessment will measure gains in adult education programming for province-wide reporting.

#### Assessment – Goal Completion

- To develop a more comprehensive description of a learner's goal completion in relation to contextual task development and the five goal pathways.
- To explore learning plans in relation to assessment and task-based program planning primarily from the perspective of learners and practitioners as well as other stakeholders, such as other Employment Ontario service providers.

#### Learning Materials Framework

- To develop guidelines that will assist practitioners in determining how their existing learning materials support a task-based (competency-based) program approach.
- To identify materials which practitioners can use to support a task-based (competency-based) program approach.

#### LBS Agency Support

- To determine what policies, processes and reports will change for agencies during the transition to the OALC Framework.
- To determine how agencies will be supported during the transition.
- To determine the related supports learners need to achieve success, with a particular focus on cultural and linguistic considerations and service coordination.

Other teams are also working on information management, including the feasibility of a dedicated website, training, communication and sustainability. More information concerning the work of those teams will be provided in the future.

The following questions have been raised at a variety of provincial meetings:

**1. Is there going to be a standardized assessment? If so, what assessments are being considered?**

The current assessment strategy has two components with the following goals:

- assess individual client progress toward **goal completion** in a manner that is appropriate and related to the different requirements of the five goal pathways.
- assess a sample of learners using a tool to measure individual skills on the IALS 500 point-scale. The **learner gains** project team will eventually be reviewing a tool, Read to Succeed, which is currently being developed by Bow Valley College with an anticipated completion date of 2012.

**2. Is there going to be centralized assessment? Who would handle the assessment in the field?**

This decision is currently in process. Two project teams, the Assessment team (learner gains and goal completion) and the LBS Agency Support team, are working on these questions. We expect recommendations for the Ministry in 2011.

**3. How are IALS/ES Levels used in the OALC Framework?**

The OALC Framework is competency based and identifies tasks that learners will be able to do as a result of their programming. The tasks are described at 3 levels of complexity which correspond to Essential Skills levels 1-3. The Curriculum development team also consider other factors in the development and levelling of tasks but the Essential Skills are a key part of the methodology. The Assessment Team is tasked with researching and making recommendations to the Ministry on aspects of the Assessment Framework such as, how to use tasks to describe learner progress.

**4. How will progress be indicated to the learners?**

The goal completion project workers are currently researching how learner progress can most meaningfully be conveyed to learners and also be reported on for accountability purposes. Until a formal decision is made, agencies can expect to maintain the status quo.

**5. How will results be communicated to MTCU?**

While the OALC Framework Assessment Team and the Agency Support Team will be making recommendations to the Ministry on how assessment results might best be reported, the Ministry will

determine how agencies will report learner progress on the Employment Ontario Information System (EOIS). When implemented, LBS service providers will be trained on the new data management system by MTCU, including what data will need to be collected and how the data will be reported to the Ministry.

## **6. How many levels are there in the OALC? What happens to the LBS levels?**

The Assessment Team (learner gain and goal completion) is currently researching what assessment methods are most appropriate for what purposes. The Curriculum Development Team is currently identifying sample tasks that help practitioners and learners to understand how competencies are used in practical ways. The tasks are described at 3 levels of complexity which correspond to Essential Skills levels 1-3 .

LBS Levels 1 – 5 describe skill levels, which are a different focus from the OALC Framework’s task-based approach. Practitioners may find LBS levels to be appropriate and useful when working on skills building with a learner to identify which skills can support the learner in successfully completing a task.

The goal completion project workers are considering how goal completion is connected to skills that need to be developed, tasks that need to be demonstrated, the context and purpose of literacy learning as well as the changes a learner may need to make or may make as a result of literacy programming. Literacy acquisition is a complex combination of skills, tasks, practices and change and the Assessment Team will provide well researched recommendations on how best to assess and report on learner gains and learner goal completion.

## **7. What will happen in January 2011? What do we need to implement right away and what is to be implemented later?**

The OALC Framework is a task-based framework which points practitioners to the importance of LBS programming (both content and approach) enabling learners to transfer their newly acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes to the authentic situations they will face as parents, citizens, workers, apprentices, credit or postsecondary students. Some programs already use this approach while some programs may find the concepts new. What will be implemented in January 2011 may be different for different programs as it will depend on each agency’s starting point. The OALC Project Overview Training with particular emphasis on the Curriculum Component includes Competencies, Task Groups and Curriculum Guidelines and is to be held in the fall of 2010. The training will provide agencies with a clear process for determining their current capacity to implement the OALC Framework and to identify what work the agency will need to do to build sufficient capacity to put the OALC Framework in place.

**8. What are the key dates for all implementation? Is there a specific date for which implementation is to be completed?**

Although agencies will have many of the tools needed to begin implementation in January 2011, each agency will need to assess its own needs and develop an implementation plan which will take place throughout 2011. Throughout the year, the sector and stream organizations as well as regional networks will assist those agencies who need to build the capacity required to fully implement the OALC Framework.

**9. When is OALC Framework practitioner training occurring? Who is doing the training?**

Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) has been funded to prepare the common training and deliver the train the trainer sessions to the trainers in each sector and stream in fall of 2010. Each sector and stream will provide the overview training to their stakeholders.

An underlying principle of training suggests that training should be provided as close to the time it will be needed as possible. With that principle in mind, specific implementation training will be scheduled in early 2011. Implementation training is currently being developed by CLO and will be delivered by trainers from each sector and stream.

**10. Upon which learning principles has the OALC Framework been built?**

The final OALC Framework report will fully describe the learning principles that influenced the development of the Framework. The OALC Project work continues to build on the theoretical underpinnings of the LBS reform in 1998: LBS continues to be a learner-centred, goal-directed, and outcome-based program. The OALC Framework will further this well-established approach by making more explicit how literacy learning is affected by context, social practice, cultural and linguistic considerations, purpose and next step or transition requirements. This will make practitioners' work easier and will ensure consistent quality practice across the province.

**11. Will there be any funding to support programs' transitions into using the OALC Framework? How will this funding be allocated?**

The MTCU funds Support and Service Organizations (stream, sector and regional networks) to assist agencies in meeting the requirements of the LBS program and will continue to do so. Core funding for the organizations and annual Research and Development funds will continue to support agencies in delivering quality programming. Agencies will be required to transition to a competency or task-based approach according to a proposed timeline, based on the agency's capacity. Each agency's timeline for

OALC Framework implementation will be subject to approval by their Ministry Employment and Training Consultant (ETC).

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this communiqué, or wish to provide feedback, we welcome your comments. Project contacts are as follows:

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