



Our Voice

One-to-One and Small Group Programming

March 2005

**Community Literacy
of Ontario**

**80 Bradford Street
Suite 508**

**Barrie, Ontario
L4N 6S7**

**Tel: 705-733-2312
Fax: 705-733-6197**

**www.nald.ca/
clo.htm**

clo@bellnet.ca



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The results are in! Thanks to the **72** (yes, count them, 72!) community literacy agencies who responded to CLO's survey conducted in February 2005, we now have an up-to-the minute picture of the state of programming in our sector. And what a sector we are! Yes, change has occurred, and a dramatic shift towards incorporating small group programming has happened. However, have we abandoned our traditional 1-1 programming? The answer is a resounding "NO". Instead, in 2005, Ontario's community literacy agencies are delivering a very healthy mix of 1-1 and small group programming based on the needs of the learners and the needs of their communities. Read on for more details:

- ⇒ Overall, 92% of Ontario's community literacy agencies offer BOTH small group and 1-1 programming.
- ⇒ Adult learners are exactly divided between participating in 1-1 and small groups. In the average year, in Ontario's community literacy agencies 50% of learners participate in 1-1 programming and 50% participate in small group programming.

And do agencies like this combined method of program delivery? YES! When asked "Does your program model of 1-1 and small group delivery meet the needs of learners in your program?" here is how 72 agencies responded:

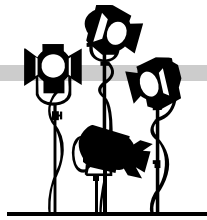
- ⇒ 55% of agencies said "Yes"
- ⇒ 42% of agencies said "Mostly"
- ⇒ 3% of agencies said "No"

Of the 3% (2 agencies) who responded "No" to the above question, both indicated that they were not unhappy with the delivery method, they merely wanted to increase BOTH 1-1 and small group programming!

1-1 programming is delivered as follows:

- ⇒ 33% of agencies deliver 1-1 programming by matching a tutor with a specific student
- ⇒ 6% of agencies have tutors provide 1-1 support within a small group
- ⇒ 61% of agencies use both of the above methods

CLO also asked agencies to share the benefits and challenges of both types of programming. Please see [page 4](#) for details.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Presenting, Listening, Interacting... Literacy Through Communications

By Caroline Outten, East End Literacy

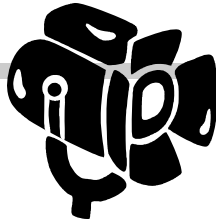
First piloted at East End Literacy in 2000, The Communication Management and Techniques Course is the only program of its kind offered by a community-based adult literacy organization in Ontario. The program was developed and taught by East End Literacy Instructor, Caroline Outten who had the unique opportunity to integrate her communications and arts background to mold, shape and experiment with the creation of the course.

The course was created to validate the life experiences of East End Literacy learners, many of whom already use oral communication and self-management skills and strategies in their everyday lives. Constructed around this validation was the need for students to apply and expand the skills and strategies of presenting, interacting, listening, concentrating, goal setting, personal advocacy, problem solving, self-reflection, self-esteem building, thinking, time management, organization skills and group dynamics through formal situations explored in the areas of life skills, job readiness and technology.

The course environment is orally charged and involves skill building workshops, group projects, guest speakers, video screenings, field trips, the use of technology, creative writing and cultural art therapy.

The course runs once a week for four hours over the three sessions of the school year. The participants include LBS level 3 and 4 students and participants in East End Literacy's Immigrant Women Integration Project (I.W.I.P.). In Session One participants work through various themes in life skill building such as, active listening, conflict resolution, giving and receiving feedback and interpersonal skills. In Session Two participants explore cycles of socialization, self-awareness, self-talk, identity and workability. In Session Three participants concentrate on career goals and goal planning strategies along with other job readiness skills. The use of technology is integrated throughout each session.

At the end of each session students participate in demonstrations linked to the level descriptor performance indicators in the areas of speaking and listening, self-management and self-direction and computers.



Instructors, tutors and trainers notice that students who participate in this training feel more at ease when having to speak in front of groups of people or read out loud. These students also demonstrate strong organizational skills when it comes to completing assignments in a timely manner. They are able to communicate their thoughts and ideas more clearly and competently in the areas of reading, writing and numeracy. These students are also able to create and share knowledge through a variety of media arts tools, including presentation and design software, audio software and interactive online communications.

It's clear that the staff and volunteers at East End Literacy support the course and have seen the ways in which it has benefited participants, but what about the learners themselves? What do they have to say?

"I feel the detailed information that we receive in the area of life skills will really help me when I enter the field of community development. Being able to listen to others is very important. I also feel I am gaining valuable Canadian experience and this is building my confidence and my independence. I've also learned about many rights that I wasn't aware of that workers have in the workplace. I've been able to apply my new found time management skills to my home life. If I am organized then the family is organized." (*Lejia, I.W.I.P. Trainee*)

"I am naturally a quiet person. This class helps me to communicate more assertively. I have also been able to learn from the experiences of others through group activities we do in class. I like the fact that I am able to say what I think in this class. I feel this class will help me a lot in the future when I begin working as a Personal Support Worker. Right now I am using some of the life skill lessons to help me find balance in my decision-making process. This is still a challenge for me, but the class has helped me to get started." (*Zehanesh, LBS Level 3*)

Some past program highlights include:

- ⇒ Student Book Talk Recordings presented at the 2002 Word On the Street Festival
- ⇒ Student presenters attended the 2003 Community Writing Workshop in Montreal
- ⇒ Student conducts phone interview with renowned historian and writer Dr. Henry Bishop, founder of the Black Cultural Centre in Nova Scotia regarding a research project about Josiah Henson

For more information about the Communication Management and Techniques Course, please contact Course Director, Caroline Outten at caroline@eastendliteracy.on.ca.



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OUR CORE FUNDER

CLO gratefully acknowledges its funder: the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

OURVOICE NEWSLETTER

OURVOICE is published three times per year by Community Literacy of Ontario. Research and writing by Jette Cosburn and Joanne Kaattari. Editing and desktop publishing by Joanne Kaattari.

Benefits and Challenges

CLO's survey also asked community literacy agencies to identify the benefits and challenges of 1-1 and small group programming.

The most commonly identified benefits of 1-1 programming:

- ⇒ Has the ability to meet individual learner needs
- ⇒ Provides a highly supportive, safe, private, non-threatening environment for students
- ⇒ Convenient for learners (flexible times and locations)
- ⇒ Provides effective support to lower level students
- ⇒ Offers individualised attention and support
- ⇒ Allows students to move at their own pace
- ⇒ Builds self-esteem and confidence
- ⇒ Is highly learner-centred

The most commonly identified challenges of 1-1 programming:

- ⇒ Volunteer recruitment
- ⇒ Limited hours of instruction
- ⇒ Volunteer coordination
- ⇒ Volunteer retention
- ⇒ Provides less contact hours
- ⇒ Time needed for follow-up and monitoring
- ⇒ Tutor training
- ⇒ Funding

The most commonly identified benefits of small group programming:

- ⇒ Group support, encouragement and assistance
- ⇒ Peer group interaction increases a wide variety of skills
- ⇒ Peer learning and exposure to varied ideas and opinions
- ⇒ Can serve more learners
- ⇒ Helpful for transitioning students to future goals
- ⇒ Provides more contact hours
- ⇒ Group dynamics give energy, confidence and motivation
- ⇒ Students can attend for more hours
- ⇒ Can develop programming targeted to group needs
- ⇒ Provides networking opportunities for students

The most commonly identified challenges of small group programming:

- ⇒ Meeting multi-level needs and goals
- ⇒ Time needed for preparation and follow-up
- ⇒ Paid instructors are usually required
- ⇒ Lack of space
- ⇒ Group dynamics (personality conflicts, disruptive students)
- ⇒ Some students cannot keep up or work in group setting
- ⇒ Less individualised support
- ⇒ Funding