

LBS Digital Capacity Building Project

Designing a Roadmap to Build Ontario's Capacity for Digital Learning

Consultation with e-Channel providers and LBS support organizations

December 8, 2021, 2pm ET

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

With:



Contact North | Contact Nord



AlphaPlus

About

About the project

- In recent years, digital learning and technology have undergone rapid transformation and growth.
- The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) asked Contact North and AlphaPlus to consult stakeholders in Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) system.
- The purpose of these consultations is to develop a roadmap for enhancing Ontario’s LBS system capacity to **deliver more services remotely** and **expand blended learning opportunities** to serve more learners.

Meeting purpose

- A meeting was held December 8, 2021 with representatives from e-Channel providers and LBS Support Organizations.
- This meeting was the first step in engaging LBS system stakeholders to develop a shared vision and co-design a ‘roadmap’ of how digital and blended learning can be expanded and better delivered in Ontario. (See Appendix for digital and blended learning options.)
- The meeting was facilitated by [redacted]. It was attended by 17 participants from 13 organizations. (See next page for participating organizations.)

About this report

- This report provides a summary of the **key themes** and **what we heard** from the discussions.
- We’ve left room in this report to make note of **questions and curiosities** that these findings bring to mind.
- We’ll use these themes, questions, and curiosities to inform the **broader consultations** that we’ll undertake with LBS system stakeholders in 2022.

Meeting agenda

2:00 – 2:15

Introduction

Welcome
Overview of project

2:20 – 3:20

Discussion

What do **learners** need to make the most of digital/blended learning?

What do **educators** and **programs** need to make digital/blended learning work for learners?

3:20 – 3:30

Closing

Reflections
Next steps

Meeting participants

E-channel & LBS Support Organizations

A total of 17 participants across 13 organizations:

1. ACE Distance/Online, College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC)
2. AlphaPlus
3. Centre franco Ontarien de ressources en alphabétisation (Centre FORA)
4. Coalition ontarienne de formation des adultes (COFA)
5. Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO)
6. Contact North | Contact Nord (Contact North)
7. Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA)
8. Deaf Learn Now
9. Deaf Literacy Initiative (DLI)
10. Good Learning Anywhere (GLA)
11. Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO)
12. Le Programme de formation à distance (F@D)
13. The LearningHUB

Other

- 2 project staff
- 4 meeting facilitation staff

Absent

Ontario Native Literacy Coalition (ONLC)

Summary

Participants contemplated three questions:

- What do **learners** need to make the most of digital/blended learning?
- What do **educators** need to make digital/blended learning work for learners?
- What do **programs** need to make digital/blended learning work for learners?

Their responses to these questions provide a starting point for a vision for expanding digital learning in Ontario's LBS system.

Participants emphasized that there are significant differences between digital program delivery and program delivery that is largely face-to-face (F2F). Expanding digital learning opportunities is not merely a matter of putting resources online. To provide meaningful and quality programming that supports the needs and goals of learners, significant investment in infrastructure, resources, and capacity is needed.



Learners need:

- Supports to make meaningful digital learning happen, including technical support and well-trained educators.
- Curriculum and content that is learner-centred, culturally relevant and tailored to meet their individual needs and lived experience.
- Tools and technology that are reliable, accessible and affordable.
- Processes that are seamless and information that is accessible throughout the learner journey.



Educators need:

- Resources to deliver quality online learning which is not less expensive than face-to-face delivery.
- Time and supports for capacity building and professional development and training on best practices in high-quality online learning.
- Enhancements to the system to develop streamlined administrative processes that provide more time for teaching than reporting.



Programs need:

- Resources to develop long term planning and investments in program infrastructure to deliver quality programming sustainably.
- Partnerships and stronger connections between e-Channel and in person providers and educators.
- Leadership and autonomy to plan for the future.
- Enhancements to the system to develop a proper integrated training delivery system.

What do learners need to make the most of digital/blended learning?



Theme	What we heard	Questions & curiosities
Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-prepared educators, staff, and volunteers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make the program welcoming/inclusive for new learners ○ Guide and coach learners seamlessly through the program ○ Design meaningful digital learning that reflects the learners lived experience ▪ Technical support ▪ Wraparound supports (academic, personal) to position learner for success 	
Curriculum and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course designed from learner perspective – learner-centred design ▪ Culturally relevant curriculum ▪ Flexible curriculum that can be tailored to meet their needs, lives, goals ▪ Netiquette skills/awareness, reading, writing, self-direction, understanding of their own goals ▪ Ability to understand and measure their progress 	
Tools and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reliable devices with audio/video capability (not just Smartphones) ▪ Reliable and affordable internet ▪ Intentional selection of tools aligned with learning goals ▪ Access to the right tools, both at home and at the program 	
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to information about available programs ▪ Seamless registration process (i.e., not having to fill out duplicate forms for online and in-person) ▪ Access to information and supports while enrolled (clear communications about how to access) 	

What do educators need to make digital/blended learning work for learners?



Theme	What we heard	Questions & curiosities
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-house expertise in online/blended delivery ▪ Adequate funding to deliver quality services that reflects the real cost of delivery (online is not less expensive than face to face) ▪ Materials and supports to teach from decolonized and culturally appropriate perspectives (for Indigenous, Francophone, and Deaf learners) ▪ High-quality curriculum and assessments that people feel good using – supports quality control yet is flexible to tailor to learners’ needs 	
Capacity building / professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time for PD ▪ Service quality standards that require programs to provide practitioners with training that continually improves their capacity to delivery digital/blended learning ▪ Celebration and sharing of best practices ▪ Capacity building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to use the technology ○ Instructional design ○ Online course design principles, how to design meaningful blended learning experience ○ Delivery methods ○ Assessment methods 	
System enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LBS program’s organizational vision and strategy for online/blended delivery ▪ Quality standards for online content development and delivery ▪ Streamlined registration/tracking processes for shared learners (those registered in both e-Channel and face to face concurrently) ▪ Streamlined administrative and reporting processes (allowing more time for teaching) 	

What do programs need to make digital/blended learning work for learners?



Theme	What we heard	Questions & curiosities
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having the resources to do long-term planning and forecasting (for tools/equipment, capacity building) ▪ Infrastructure (especially technology) to be able to offer more and meet demand in a sustainable way 	
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong connection between e-Channel and in-person providers ▪ Buy-in from faculty (champions for blended learning) 	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Autonomy to lead ▪ Leaders able to assess programs' capacity to deliver in the present and to meet anticipated needs in future ▪ Long-range planning for purchasing, accessing, maintaining, updating, and supporting various technologies for online design, development, and delivery ▪ Investment in sector leaders 	
System enhancements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment in an appropriate integrated training delivery system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Easier and clearer processes to share learners ○ Consult programs in the redesign of the evaluation framework or learning framework ○ Milestones compatible with online learning environment ○ Performance measures (including Learners Served) that are appropriate for online/blended delivery ▪ Promotion of LBS programs – targeted to reach diverse clientele ▪ Streamlined reporting back to government, e.g. college and school board sectors usually have to report to 2 other funding ministries: MCU for colleges and EDU for school boards as well as MLTSD 	

Appendix

Digital and blended learning options

Digital & blended learning

