

# **What's Possible: Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Occupation-specific Language Training and Helping Clients Transition to Work**

## **Service Delivery Improvement Project Summary Report**

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## A. Context for the OSLT/FLAP SDI Project

This report summarizes the IRCC-funded Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) project on leveraging emerging technologies and helping clients transition to work through Occupation-specific Language Training (OSLT) and Formation linguistique axée sur les professions (FLAP). The report includes details about the activities undertaken by Colleges Ontario and the 12 participating colleges as well as what was learned and how it could be applied to ongoing OSLT/FLAP delivery. It also includes information about the guiding design principles developed during this SDI project – ideas that curriculum developers could consider when developing and planning the delivery of online language courses.

Section A includes a brief introduction to OSLT/FLAP as well as an overview of the SDI project for OSLT/FLAP. Section B summarizes the project activities and observations. Section C offers eleven key insights gained during the project, and Section D provides suggestions on how to apply project learning and move forward with OSLT/FLAP. The appendices provide an overview of OSLT/FLAP courses, details about the OSLT online guiding design principles and a reading list for Francophone language learning.

### About OSLT/FLAP

OSLT/FLAP is workplace-based language and socio-cultural communication skills training for newcomers covering 35 priority occupations in 5 high-demand industry sectors. Funded by IRCC since 2008, OSLT/FLAP curriculum has been designed by language experts in collaboration with occupation-content experts. Qualified language faculty at 12 participating Ontario colleges deliver outcomes-based courses across Ontario in a variety of three delivery formats: classroom-based with web-enhanced elements, blended using a mix of classroom-based and online delivery, and exclusively online. Courses are delivered in English and, where demand exists, in French, and newcomers receive an OSLT/FLAP credential from the college. OSLT/FLAP is coordinated by Colleges Ontario, the umbrella organization of Ontario colleges. Ontario colleges are a visible first point of entry for newcomers looking for information on pathways to employment, credentials and skills assessment, language training, upgrading of skills and post-secondary education.

OSLT/FLAP curriculum builds a practical understanding of workplace culture, typical communication requirements and socio-cultural dimensions within a sector and occupation in Ontario. Newcomers learn to interact effectively and communicate clearly with clients/customers, colleagues and supervisors in day-to-day, workplace-based contexts. The curriculum is designed to better position newcomers to quickly integrate into the workplace and apply their training, expertise and experience on the job, or to pursue additional education in their fields. It is also intended to meet employers' needs for skilled, job-ready employees.

OSLT/FLAP courses are designed for IRCC-eligible learners who have training or experience in the sector or occupations targeted by the curriculum, and whose language levels are intermediate, typically within a CLB 6 to 8 range, depending on the course.

At the time of writing this report, OSLT/FLAP has enrolled about 13,000 newcomers in OSLT courses, and colleges have delivered over 750 classroom-based and blended OSLT courses as well as over 150 online courses or modules. All newcomers who enrolled in OSLT/FLAP were internationally trained or had experience in their occupations. About eighty percent of OSLT/FLAP graduates reported that they were working, completing licensure or other professional credentials, or attending bridging programs or further training within four months of course completion. Over 95% of OSLT/FLAP learners have reported extremely high rates of satisfaction with OSLT/FLAP and have stated that it improved their language skills and gave them confidence to communicate in the workplace.

For information about OSLT/FLAP courses by sector/occupation and delivery formats, see **Appendix 1: Overview of OSLT/FLAP Courses**.

## About the IRCC-funded OSLT/FLAP SDI Project

Since the inception of OSLT/FLAP in 2008, newcomers looking for work or already working in their target sector and occupation have expressed the need for expanded access to language training, flexible course options, targeted skills training, expanded practice opportunities, improved digital competencies, and more employment and entrepreneurship supports integrated into the courses.

Employers have expressed the need for workplace-based language and socio-cultural skills training that targets language and communication gaps in the workplace to enable newcomers who are working to advance in their fields.

From 2018 to 2021, Colleges Ontario, together with Ontario colleges, undertook the SDI project entitled *Building Knowledge/Capacity for Online Language Learning for the Workplace and Helping Clients Transition to Work*.

The overall objectives of this SDI project were to

- deepen the understanding of the effectiveness of online learning formats in meeting the occupation-specific language-learning and socio-cultural workplace communication needs of newcomers looking for work and those already employed in their sectors and occupations. Specifically, the project would examine whether
  - an online, faculty-led, OSLT delivery format using 40-hour modules could meet the needs of newcomers looking for work and could achieve the same learning outcomes as established classroom-based and blended OSLT courses.
  - an online, faculty-led OSLT delivery format using 21-hour modules designed to improve workplace communication skills would better fit the circumstances of newcomers already employed in their sectors/occupations and help advance their careers.
- explore how emerging technologies could optimize learning for newcomers and target skills gaps by developing self-directed learning materials, tools and apps in English and French.
- develop and test additional supports embedded in regular OSLT/FLAP courses for transitioning to employment/entrepreneurship.
- investigate the gaps to online and blended language learning for Francophone newcomers and develop tools to address them.
- meet newcomer and employer needs as well as the project objectives that Colleges Ontario, working together with colleges, proposed by undertaking the following activities:
  - Integrate the curriculum, delivery format and evaluation processes for faculty-led, exclusively online delivery into the established OSLT framework.
  - Build on selected, existing, OSLT classroom-based and blended courses in developing online modular delivery.
  - Test the online modular approach to curriculum and faculty-led online delivery, the new modules and the new tools.
  - Use emerging technology to develop self-directed tools and apps to enhance learning in English and French.
  - Test expanded employment/entrepreneurship supports by integrating them into existing OSLT delivery formats.
  - Review research and literature on barriers to online language learning for Francophone newcomers and develop online language tools to enhance learning.
  - Evaluate the success of project elements and identify learnings to inform and improve future delivery of OSLT/FLAP in Ontario.

## B. Project Activities and Observations

SDI project activities began in April 2018 and continued to September 2021. Colleges Ontario coordinated the project by providing strategic leadership, research, curriculum development and evaluation support. It also provided pilot delivery coordination and administration of the SDI Contribution Agreement with IRCC on behalf of the 12 participating colleges. The following colleges participated in SDI pilots: Algonquin, Boréal, Centennial, Conestoga, Fanshawe, George Brown, Georgian, Humber, La Cité, Mohawk, Niagara and Seneca.

This section includes a summary of the project activities followed by an in-depth description of each activity (what we did) and observations (what we found).

### Summary of Project Activities

1. Created an OSLT Online Design Framework
2. Piloted OSLT Online Curriculum
3. Developed and Piloted OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Curriculum
4. Designed and Piloted Self-directed Online Activities and Apps
5. Analyzed Barriers to Online Learning for Francophone Newcomers
6. Developed and Piloted OSLT/FLAP Online Faculty Training
7. Piloted Employment and Entrepreneurship Supports for OSLT/FLAP
8. Evaluated the Effectiveness of OSLT/FLAP SDI Project Deliverables

## 1. Created an OSLT Online Design Framework

### What We Did

Colleges Ontario created and implemented a design-based research methodology that allowed language and online-learning experts to provide input on design features at the outset and during pilot delivery.

- Worked with online-learning and online-language-learning experts to formalize a design framework to guide the development of OSLT online curriculum.
  - The design framework was grounded in the established OSLT/FLAP curriculum framework and learning outcomes developed for classroom-based and blended delivery.
- Formalized ten guiding design principles for successful online curricula, integrating the learnings from previously developed OSLT 40-hour online modular courses.
- Applied the principles consistently in developing and modifying new OSLT online modular curriculum and in testing during the pilot deliveries.
- Gathered and analyzed input from learners, faculty, employers and program administrators throughout the curriculum development process and pilot deliveries.
- Modified the framework, online curriculum and course materials to reflect feedback and input from online learning and language learning experts, learners, faculty, employers and program administrators participating in the online pilots.
- Formalized the guiding design principles (see below) and online design features so they could be shared with organizations that are considering development of online language courses.

#### Ten Guiding Design Principles for OSLT Online

1. Ground content in real-world, workplace-based activities.
2. Choose technology tools that serve a clear pedagogical purpose and/or learners are likely to use in the workplace.
3. Scaffold the introduction and integration of technology tools.
4. Promote activities to build the digital skills required to help learners succeed in online learning.
5. Facilitate community-building through learner-to-learner and faculty-to-learner interactions.
6. Present materials in a variety of ways to create and maintain engagement and to ensure practice in all skill areas.
7. Use a combination of self-directed, interactive and facilitated learning to build communication skills.
8. Provide opportunities to practise accuracy and fluency in reading, writing, listening and speaking.
9. Ensure learner evaluation reflects the content and goals of the course.
10. Recognize the key role faculty play in ensuring that learners succeed in achieving course outcomes.

For information about how each design principle was incorporated and points to consider during implementation, see **Appendix 2: OSLT Online Guiding Design Principles**.

## What We Found

- The guiding design principles were instrumental in consistently establishing, testing, applying and modifying the OSLT online curriculum.
- Input from online-learning and curriculum experts on the online curriculum and learning materials provided valuable perspectives on applying the guiding design principles.
- The established OSLT/FLAP curriculum framework and performance-based outcomes kept the online curriculum development process focused.
- Input from end-users provided valuable practical insights into how the guiding design principles were implemented in the courses.
- Feedback from the pilot deliveries helped inform the curriculum development team on how to modify the online curriculum and self-directed learning activities.

## 2. Piloted OSLT Online Curriculum

### What We Did

#### Pilots

Between April 2018 and March 2021, Colleges Ontario and the participating colleges piloted faculty-led OSLT online modular curriculum for newcomers looking for work in their target sectors or occupations.

Pilot Data for the OSLT Online Curriculum			
Sectors	No. of Pilots	Enrollments	No. of Colleges
Business	19	219	5
Health Care	16	186	3
Technology	10	88	3
Writing Professionally in Health Care (for graduates of an OSLT Health Care course) <sup>1</sup>	4	43	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>5</b>

For more about these courses, see the textbox **About the OSLT Online Curriculum**.

<sup>1</sup> Between 2019-2021, the newly developed *OSLT Writing Professionally in Health Care* curriculum was piloted for OSLT graduates of the 140-hour Interprofessional Health Care Teams course and for the 180-hour Health Care course as well as for clients who had successfully completed the recently piloted suite of online 40-hour Health Care modules. Note that *OSLT Writing Professionally in Health Care* is modelled after the existing *OSLT Writing Professionally* course designed for graduates of OSLT Business and Technology courses.

## What We Did (continued)

### Pilots (continued)

#### About the OSLT Online Curriculum

- Each 120-hour online course, designed for newcomers at an intermediate level of English, comprises three 40-hour modules to improve language and workplace communication skills for the sectors of Business, Technology and Health Care:
  - Accessing the [sector] Job Market in Ontario
  - Communicating in the [sector] in Ontario
  - Managing [sector] Interactions in Ontario
- The modules were built on the existing OSLT/FLAP curriculum framework, learning outcomes, and the content and learning materials delivered in a classroom-based or blended format.
- The modules integrated activities that learners needed to help them succeed in online learning.
- The modules use the same performance evaluation process as the OSLT/FLAP classroom-based and blended courses.
- The three modules in each sector provide learners with the linguistic and socio-cultural communication skills needed to apply for work, and opportunities to
  - explore labour market trends and opportunities.
  - learn and practise communication skills needed to succeed in their target occupations.
  - develop a plan for moving forward and finding work in their fields.
  - explore networking opportunities.
- Faculty-led delivery was exclusively online, with mandatory synchronous class-time through 1- to 1.5-hour video conferences with the entire class at the end of each week, where possible.
- Online weekly learning activities included synchronous pair and group-work activities through Zoom (along with asynchronous self-directed activities) to develop accuracy and fluency in speaking and listening.
- After successfully completing the three modules, learners could take a 40-hour online module on Writing Professionally for their sector. Writing Professionally in the Health Care Sector was piloted between April 2018 and March 2021.
- An OSLT credential, issued by the college after each 40-hour module, provided proof of successful completion based on learners' having met the learning outcomes.

## What We Did (continued)

The administration of the OSLT online pilot required Colleges Ontario and the participating colleges to adapt the administration of OSLT/FLAP classroom-based and blended delivery to accommodate online delivery and recruitment.

### Marketing and Recruitment

- To market OSLT online courses, colleges diversified their OSLT/FLAP advertising to amplify and include the following:
  - digital campaigns.
  - ads in digital newcomer magazines.
  - e-flyers to partner agencies.
  - increased social media.
  - enhanced OSLT presence on college websites.
  - virtual information sessions.
- Colleges promoted OSLT online courses outside their typical catchment areas by
  - connecting with and sending marketing materials to a variety of assessment centres in Ontario.
  - enlisting the aid of other colleges to help promote their courses to current clients and alumni.
  - using a variety of social media platforms.

### Administration

- Because the catchment for OSLT online was province-wide, participating colleges asked Colleges Ontario to help coordinate the scheduling of OSLT online course pilots.
- Colleges piloted different approaches to scheduling the faculty-led synchronous sessions, offering them on different days of the week and varying the length from 1 to 1.5 hours.
- Colleges were able to implement online applications to help screen potential clients as a more efficient way to determine potential eligibility.
- An OSLT credential provided learners with proof of successful completion of each online module.

### Pre-enrollment Digital Literacy Assessment

- Whenever possible, colleges screened applicants for basic digital literacy prior to course start and redirected those who did not possess the skills necessary to succeed. Some colleges were able to offer digital literacy training through other funding sources to benefit potential OSLT clients.

### Enrollment Process

- At the start of the course, faculty re-articulated the requirements for succeeding in online language learning:
  - the technology requirements for the online course.
  - the criteria for being a successful online learner, including organization and time-management.

## What We Found

### Pilots

#### Demographic Data

- Below is a summary of demographic data about the 536 learners enrolled in the OSLT online pilots:

<b>Gender</b>	72% female
	28% male
<b>Age</b>	82% between 30 and 49 years old
	35% between 30 and 35 years old
<b>Education Level</b>	92% completed higher education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3% College diploma</li> <li>44% Bachelor's degree</li> <li>30% Masters</li> <li>8% Doctorate</li> <li>6% Some post-graduate</li> </ul>
<b>Length of Time in Canada</b>	78% have been in Canada under five years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33% of these learners were very recent arrivals (between 6 and 23 months)</li> </ul>
<b>Immigration Status</b>	Where status was known, the two largest single groups were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25% Skilled Workers and Professionals</li> <li>24% Family Class</li> </ul>
<b>Original Languages of Learners (Top Five)</b>	16% Arabic
	16% Spanish
	10% Persian/Farsi
	6% Tagalog
	5% French

#### Accessibility and Flexibility

- The 40-hour modular approach made learning more accessible and flexible for newcomers who were already working or had constraints preventing access to 180- or 140-hour classroom-based or blended courses.
  - Newcomers who were working, had child-care responsibilities, and/or lived in underserved areas were able to access online language and socio-cultural communication skills training for their occupations.
  - Some learners looking for work did not need to take all three 40-hour modules in their online course. They could target their areas of need by taking only selected modules.
  - Learners who found employment and had to withdraw part-way through an OSLT 180-hour or 140-hour courses were able to complete their course using online modules.

## What We Found (continued)

### Pilots (continued)

#### *Role of Faculty*

- OSLT performance-based learning outcomes are achievable in a faculty-led, online learning environment.
- Faculty contributed resources and materials that enriched the online experience for the learners by targeting the specific needs of a particular group of learners.
  - Learner feedback pointed consistently to the role played by faculty in facilitating a positive learning environment, providing timely and constructive feedback, promoting discussion, and supporting and motivating learners.
  - Learners appreciated the language teaching background that faculty brought to the modules.

#### *Synchronous Elements*

- Meeting and interacting with other learners and the faculty in the mandatory synchronous class sessions provided regular opportunities for learners to engage with one another and with course materials.
  - Learners built relationships with the entire class through the mandatory synchronous sessions.
  - Learners reported that they highly valued the whole-class synchronous elements of their online OSLT courses (for example, Zoom sessions, use of break-out rooms).
  - Scheduling the weekly synchronous class session at the end of the week allowed the faculty to address any questions that came up during the week and allowed learners to seek clarification on areas of confusion.

#### *Retention and Successful Completion Rates*

- During the time period examined, 40-hour OSLT online modular courses achieved higher retention rates (clients remained in the module until the end) and comparable successful completion rates (clients met the learning outcomes as demonstrated through a final assessment protocol) compared to the 140/180-hour classroom-based and blended courses. As for the successful completion rates, newcomers were able to achieve the same learning outcomes as established classroom-based and blended OSLT courses.
- During 2020-2021, all 140/180-hour courses were adapted to a virtual delivery because of the pandemic. Retention data for this cohort point to comparable but slightly lower retention rates for the online modules but higher than for their classroom-based/blended counterparts. These courses offered virtually also showed a higher successful completion rate than both the 140/180-hour courses that were classroom-based and blended and the 40-hour online modules. This preliminary observation could be examined more closely if colleges opt to continue to offer 140/180-hour courses in a virtual format post-pandemic.

## What We Found (continued)

### Pilots (continued)

#### Retention and Successful Completion Rates (continued)

Retention and Successful Completion Rates	Delivery Methods and Sectors							
	Classroom-based and Blended (140/180-hour courses)				Online (40-hour modules)			
	Business	Health Care	Technology	Total	Business	Health Care	Technology	Total
<b>Retention Rates</b>	68%	71%	67%	<b>68%</b>	69%	82%	78%	<b>76%</b>
<b>Successful Completion Rates</b>	66%	69%	66%	<b>67%</b>	62%	73%	65%	<b>67%</b>

#### Learner Satisfaction

- The majority of learners in the 40-hour online modular courses reported that the modules helped them meet the OSLT performance-based learning outcomes related to gaining the language skills, sector/occupation orientation, socio-cultural workplace communication skills and job-search skills. They also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the online courses, stating that
  - the modules provided flexibility, allowing them to balance their learning with their work and personal responsibilities.
  - the online courses were practical, productive, useful and relevant.
  - the variety of technology tools helped to build competence and confidence in the use of technology and its applicability outside the course.
  - they had improved communication skills and increased confidence levels in communication and technology skills.
  - they gained useful tips, tools and strategies in a short amount of time.
  - they valued the opportunity to build community with newcomers who also shared similar occupational backgrounds, interests and settlement journeys and discovered that this was still possible to achieve in an online setting.

Learner Satisfaction with OSLT Online	
<b>Learners Who Found the Modules Helped them Meet the Learning Outcomes</b>	94%
<b>Learners Who Expressed High Satisfaction with OSLT Online</b>	91%
<b>Learners Who Expressed Improved Confidence in Their Communication Skills</b>	93%
<b>Learners Who Would Recommend the Online Modules to Others</b>	97%

## What We Found (continued)

### Marketing and Recruitment

- Adding online modular courses to the OSLT delivery formats increased access to occupation-specific language learning for newcomers across Ontario.
  - 25% of clients who were enrolled in the piloted OSLT online courses were from outside of a 50-km range of the colleges they attended virtually.
- Many newcomers used social media, especially Facebook, to find out about online language courses.

### Administration

- Compared to one intake session for a classroom-based or blended course, college administrators had to manage recruitment for multiple intake sessions for the online modules in each course.
- Learners did not always enroll in sequential or subsequent modules.
- Class sizes needed to be managed to align enrollment numbers with expectations around faculty interaction with learners and opportunities for learner-to-learner interaction.
- Colleges needed to adapt their administrative processes to provide similar experiences for learners in online courses as compared to a classroom-based or blended courses (for example, graduation ceremonies were offered virtually and credentials were made available digitally).
- Colleges needed to examine how they could best offer labour market supports in an online modular environment.
- Faculty-led OSLT online courses cost about the same to deliver as classroom-based and blended formats.

### Pre-enrollment Language and Digital Literacy Assessment

- Colleges had to consider how to screen and service potential clients remotely to determine fit for both OSLT and for online learning.
- Because eligible clients could reside anywhere in Ontario, colleges had to learn how to connect with assessment centres other than their local ones. IRCC policy changes (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) increased the validity period of language assessments, which minimized delays in enrolling eligible newcomers in online courses.
- The remote language assessment tools that were implemented system-wide during the first year of COVID were an important complement to online delivery of language training.

### Enrollment Process and Considerations

- Learners found it helpful when colleges clarified the expected time commitment before course registration and provided examples of the topics covered.
- Learners with language levels at the higher end of the CLB 6 to 8 range, particularly in reading and writing, were able to meet course outcomes more easily and with less time commitment than those at the lower end of the range.
- Learners with lower levels of digital competency had ongoing difficulties logging in, keeping track of passwords and fully participating in the course.
- Awareness of learners' levels of digital competency meant faculty could help them become familiar with the technology, identify technological concerns and clarify expectations early in the course.
- Reliable access to appropriate equipment and technology is essential.

### 3. Developed and Piloted OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Curriculum

#### What We Did

##### Course Development and Pilots

Colleges Ontario and the participating colleges developed and piloted six faculty-led OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses for newcomers already working in their target sectors or occupations.

- Developed five courses that each includes eight 21-hour modules and one course that includes five 21-hour modules.
- OSLT-in-the-workplace online course modules target work-related topics geared to newcomers already working in their fields (for example, intercultural communications, participating in meetings, making presentations, and managing interactions with clients, colleagues and/or customers).
- Modules were designed so learners could take all modules within one sector or select individual modules within a sector according to their needs.
- Between April 2018 and September 2021, Colleges Ontario and three participating colleges conducted six pilots of four of the newly developed OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses. Health Care and Personal Support Work were not piloted due to demands on health care practitioners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pilot Data for the OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Curriculum			
Courses	No. of Pilots	Enrollments	No. of Colleges
Accounting and Finance	1	90	1
Entrepreneurship	2	176	1
Management	2	180	2
Technology	1	81	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>3</b>

For more about these courses, see the textbox **About OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Curriculum**.

##### Administration

See the **What We Did** section under **Activity 2: Piloted OSLT Online Curriculum** for more information about the administration of online courses.

## What We Did (continued)

### Course Development and Pilots (continued)

#### About OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Curriculum

- These courses consist of eight 21-hour modules intended for newcomers already working in the fields of Accounting and Finance, Entrepreneurship, Health Care, Management, Personal Support Work<sup>2</sup> and Technology.
  - Modules provide learners with the opportunity to strengthen their language and socio-cultural skills for the workplace and for career advancement.
- The eight modules for each sector were built on the OSLT online design framework and existing OSLT curriculum:
  - Exploring intercultural communication.
  - Gathering and sharing information.
  - Using email and telephone effectively.
  - Participating in meetings.
  - Making presentations.
  - Managing interactions with clients and/or customers.
  - Managing interactions with colleagues or employees.
  - Managing challenging interactions.
- The modules integrated activities that learners needed to help them succeed in online learning.
- Faculty-led delivery was exclusively online, with mandatory synchronous class-time through 1- to 1.5-hour video conferences with the entire class at the end of each week.
- Online weekly learning activities included synchronous pair and group-work activities through Zoom (along with asynchronous self-directed activities) to develop accuracy and fluency in speaking and listening.
- An OSLT credential, issued by the college after each 21-hour module, provided proof of successful completion based on learners' having met the attendance requirements and completion of all required course work.

<sup>2</sup> Personal Support Worker was developed with five modules only.

## What We Found

### Pilots

#### Demographic Data

- Below is a summary of demographic data about the learners enrolled in the OSLT-in-the-workplace online pilots:

<b>Gender</b>	56% female
	44% male
<b>Age</b>	16% between 30 and 35 years old
	25% between 36 and 40 years old
	41% between 41 and 49
<b>Education Level</b>	92% completed higher education:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45% Bachelor's degree</li> <li>40% Masters</li> <li>3% Doctorate</li> <li>4% Some post-graduate</li> </ul>
<b>Length of Time in Canada</b>	67% have been in Canada under five years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23% of these learners were very recent arrivals (between 6 and 23 months)</li> </ul>
<b>Immigration Status</b>	Where status was known, the two largest single groups were:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28% Skilled Workers and Professionals</li> <li>11% Family Class</li> </ul>
<b>Original Languages of Learners (Top Five)</b>	18% Arabic
	18% Persian/Farsi
	18% Spanish
	16% Mandarin
	5% Russian

#### Language Skills and Expectations

- Newcomers who are already employed in their fields and who enroll in online courses usually function with language skills higher than CLB 6.
- Newcomers who are already employed expect online courses to offer learning activities specific to their occupations and experience levels in the workplace.

## What We Found (continued)

### Pilots (continued)

#### *Language Assessments*

- Applicants are less likely to need a formal language assessment to determine whether they will benefit from the course.
  - Some of the newcomers interested in OSLT-in-the-workplace modules were surprised that a pre-enrollment language assessment was required even when their level of language skills was high enough to have secured employment in their fields.
  - Some newcomers who required updated language assessments experienced delays in obtaining assessments in a timely manner, which sometimes precluded them from enrolling in modules.
- Delays in language assessments reduced newcomers' ability to enroll in scheduled 21-hour online modules, although as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, remote language assessment became more widely available for IRCC clients in Ontario.

#### *Accessibility and Flexibility*

- The 21-hour modular approach provided flexibility and customization for newcomers already working in their fields.
  - Newcomers already working in their fields can have time constraints in terms of taking courses of a longer duration. Learners stated the 21-hour length and three-week timespan of each module was a manageable commitment.
  - Learners were able to choose 21-hour modules in the online OSLT-in-the-workplace courses to address their specific gaps in language and socio-cultural communication skills. They appreciated the ability to take modules as they needed and when they could.
  - Learners liked that the 21-hour modules allowed them to take a short, targeted approach to a given topic and later determine if they needed more work in that area.
  - While some learners were willing at the outset to commit to taking all eight modules, others found it difficult to make this commitment.

#### *Synchronous Elements*

- Learners who work full time can find it difficult to participate in individual or small-group synchronous activities outside of the mandatory weekly full-class session.

#### *Retention and Successful Completion Rates*

- 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses achieved high retention rates (clients remained in the module until the end) and completion rates (clients completed all required course work and met attendance requirements):

Retention and Successful Completion Rates for OSLT-in-the-workplace Online	
Retention Rates	91%
Successful Completion Rates	82%

## What We Found (continued)

### Pilots (continued)

#### Learner Satisfaction

- The majority of learners in the 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses reported that the modules helped them meet the outcomes addressed in the curricula. They also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the online courses, stating that
  - the online modules helped them communicate more effectively in the workplace.
  - the online modules provided a range of relevant activities and useful tips, tools and strategies presented in a variety of ways.
  - the flow of the modules was logical.
  - the learning activities were practical, productive, useful and immediately applicable to their occupational experience.
  - they liked the short, targeted approach and the fast-paced aspect of a new topic being introduced every three weeks.
  - they liked knowing that they could drop out of a module if life and work circumstances intervened and then rejoin in a subsequent module without losing a whole course.
  - they appreciated being able to take this kind of program online for the convenience and flexibility.
  - they valued the OSLT credential at the end of each module that provided proof of successful completion.

Learner Satisfaction with OSLT-in-the-workplace Online	
Learners Who Found the Modules Helped them Meet the Learning Outcomes	96%
Learners Who Expressed Satisfaction with OSLT-in-the-workplace (Highly satisfied = 71%; Satisfied = 25%)	96%
Learners Who Expressed Improved Confidence in Their Communication Skills	96%
Learners Who Would Recommend the Online Modules to Others	99%

### Marketing and Recruitment

- 26% of clients who were enrolled in the piloted OSLT-in-the-workplace online courses were from outside of a 50-km range of the colleges they attended virtually.

## 4. Designed and Piloted Self-directed Online Activities and Apps

### What We Did

Colleges Ontario designed and piloted online, self-directed, language-learning activities in English and French, and online learning apps in English. These online learning activities and tools were built into the OSLT online courses to allow learners to practise their workplace-related communication skills at their own pace.

- Colleges Ontario developed optional, self-directed, online learning activities in English (30) and French (7) to help learners address self-identified gaps.
  - The online self-directed learning activities were designed to supplement the OSLT/FLAP curriculum and address gaps in language and communication skills in a workplace context.
  - They are focused on relevant workplace content – grammar, idioms, vocabulary and punctuation – within a workplace context and provide learners with immediate feedback.
  - They are housed on the existing OSLT/FLAP Moodle site utilize Moodle branching technology, H5P technology as well as videos and audio recordings.
  - Access to the self-directed activities was provided to all OSLT/FLAP courses.
- Colleges Ontario developed two Moodle-based plug-in apps in English to allow learners to practise job-interview and conversation skills.
  - The Business Job Interview app was integrated into all Business and Technology courses, and the Health Care Job Interview app was integrated into the Health Care courses.
  - The Dialogue practice app was integrated into Entrepreneurship, Sales and Marketing, and Accounting and Finance courses.
- Colleges Ontario piloted the self-directed, online learning activities and plug-in apps.
  - Three pilots ran in 2020, with 855 learners and 23 faculty having access to the self-directed space. 154 learners logged into at least one activity, and most learners completed at least 10 activities. The pilots had a total of 6782 views (engagements) by 170 users (learners and faculty).
  - In spring/summer 2021, two faculty piloted the self-directed space as an adjunct to two regular OSLT courses, with faculty able to monitor learners' work. All other OSLT/FLAP learners also had self-enrollment access to the space.

## What We Found

- The self-directed online activities and apps helped learners practise and enhance their language skills and digital competencies in English or French as well as develop effective skills for job interviews in English.
  - Learners practised language skills in their own time and at their own pace.
  - Learners appreciated the opportunity to review their work and practise new skills.
  - Many learners repeated activities multiple times to achieve a 100% score.
  - They reported the activities were useful in improving the accuracy of their workplace communication skills.
- Learners selected the topics that addressed their individual needs.
  - Examples of the most popular topics in English were: Completed Past Actions and Past Actions with Present or Future Implications, Time Expressions, Talking about Money, Prepositions, Articles with Count/Non-count Nouns and Business Phrasal Verbs.
  - Examples of the most popular topics in French were: Prepositions, Expressions de temps and Articles partitifs.
- FLAP learners requested more grammar, punctuation, Canadian expressions, reading comprehension and find-the-error exercises. They suggested designating the activities for beginners, intermediate and advanced.
- Faculty noted that learners at the higher end of the CLB 6 to 8 range tended to use the self-directed activities more than those at the lower end of the range.
- All faculty stated that, when offered concurrently, self-directed online activities were a great tool for providing extra practice in areas of need.

## 5. Analyzed Barriers to Online Learning for Francophone Newcomers

### What We Did

Colleges Ontario reviewed the research on, and analyzed the barriers to, successful blended and online learning for Francophone newcomers.

- Conducted a literature search to determine whether and what type of research had been carried out on blended and online learning for Francophone newcomers.
- Reviewed demographic data for Francophone newcomers outside Quebec (for example, technology use in source countries and access to computers and internet).
- Examined essential skills profiles for construction trades and early childhood education/educators since Ontario colleges offer FLAP courses for these occupations. Determined digital technology use as it applies to language instruction for Francophone newcomers in these sectors.
- Reviewed recent research on social integration of Francophone newcomers in minority communities.
- Consulted with learners, faculty and administrators at the two Ontario Francophone colleges that deliver FLAP programming for Francophone newcomers to identify barriers to successful online learning and possible resources to fill gaps.

For recent reports on demographics and major issues that are relevant to incorporating blended and online learning for Francophone newcomers to Ontario, see **Appendix 3: Reading List for Francophone Language Learning**.

### What We Found

- There is a lack of workplace-focused online language-training curriculum in French.
- Few resources, learning materials and supports exist for workplace-context French language and communication skills training for Francophone newcomers in Canada.
- There are no bilingual language-learning materials for Francophone newcomers working or looking for work in settings where they must navigate both French and English.
- Most of the references, studies and programs regarding digital literacy and newcomers are English-centric.
- During consultations with FLAP learners and faculty in 2019-2020, the following was reported:
  - Some FLAP learners indicated that they needed to become comfortable with more technology at work.
  - Faculty reported that many FLAP learners had ongoing problems using technology and that many lack the digital literacy to be comfortable with taking a blended or online course. This, however, could change from one cohort to the next.
  - Faculty have an important role to play in any online course to ensure Francophone learners are able to use the required technology.
- Because FLAP courses were offered virtually in 2020-21, Francophone clients had a unique opportunity to experience learning in a virtual setting. The impact this had on bridging gaps in their digital literacy skills or increasing their comfort in participating in online learning needs could be explored further.

## 6. Developed and Piloted Faculty Training for OSLT/FLAP Online

### What We Did

Colleges Ontario developed and piloted a 16-hour online faculty-training course for 22 faculty teaching the online modular courses to ensure consistent course delivery as well as consistent administration and calibration of course assessment tools for the pilots.

- Ensured the training included these topics:
  - Teaching and Learning Language in an Online Context.
  - Understanding and Using Online Resources.
  - Creating Engagement Online.
- Designed the course with integrated individual and interactive online activities, and synchronous, virtual class meetings, paralleling the structure of the OSLT online courses.
- Ensured faculty were trained in performance-based assessment and provided calibration-training sessions to ensure consistent evaluation.
- Ensured faculty teaching online courses were comfortable with technology.
- Provided faculty with instruction notes in the curriculum to support faculty in delivering online courses.
- Provided ongoing technical and pedagogical support to faculty teaching online modules.

Building on the 16-hour online faculty training course, Colleges Ontario developed a one-day workshop specifically for faculty teaching the 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modules. This training course addressed the unique requirements of teaching these 21-hour modules.

- Covered the challenges in creating meaningful engagement with learners who are working full-time and juggling multiple responsibilities.
- Focused on strategies for teaching targeted topics in a short period and effective means of providing formative and summative feedback.

### What We Found

- Faculty benefited from the online faculty training and supports that outlined strategies to promote learner engagement.
- It was helpful for faculty teaching FLAP courses to have access to training in French.
- Faculty found that the course instruction notes and online training helped them be successful in delivering the courses.

## 7. Piloted Employment and Entrepreneurship Supports for OSLT/FLAP

### What We Did

Colleges Ontario developed and piloted OSLT/FLAP employment and entrepreneurship support initiatives at seven colleges.

- Colleges Ontario researched and reviewed best practices in providing employment and entrepreneurial supports to newcomers seeking work or entrepreneurship opportunities.
  - Existing OSLT/FLAP courses already embed multiple concrete and valuable supports to help learners transition to employment or entrepreneurship (for example, labour market information, mock interviews, role-plays, preparing business plans and guest speakers).
- Colleges Ontario worked with seven colleges to pilot additional strategies for providing effective labour-market supports to learners enrolled in OSLT classroom-based and blended courses.
  - Colleges leveraged their connections and partnerships with entrepreneurship centres, local employers, and community and municipal organizations in creating pilot initiatives.
  - Colleges conducted outreach to employers, met with new college and community partners, confirmed guest speakers, facilitators and panelists, and organized workshops, entrepreneurial training and networking events.
- Colleges Ontario facilitated ten unique pilots customized to local needs. These included:
  - using an experiential learning platform (Riipen) to link an employer who presented a workplace issue for learners in OSLT Business and Technology classes.
  - facilitating meetups for learners, including opportunities to meet new people, network and engage in facilitated discussion on a career-related topic.
  - arranging workshops with industry guest speakers to build soft skills for learners, provide information and facilitate networking.
  - seeking industry/sector partnerships and input to identify opportunities for supporting learners transitioning to employment or entrepreneurship.
  - offering an opportunity for OSLT/FLAP clients to hone their networking skills and to provide access to networking opportunities through three pilots:
    - Face-to-face formalized networking sessions with local employers.
    - A virtual networking opportunity in French geared to clients in the FLAP Human Services – Youth and Children program.
    - A virtual networking educational seminar with a focus on how to network in a virtual environment.
  - partnering with college entrepreneurship hubs, community organizations and municipal centres to provide learners with information, tips, strategies and workshops on starting a business, as well as access to experts in the field (four pilots).

Pilot Data for the Employment and Entrepreneurship Supports for OSLT/FLAP							
Employment Supports				Entrepreneurship Supports			
No. of Pilots	Enrollments	No. of Partners	No. of Colleges	No. of Pilots	Enrollments	No. of Partners	No. of Colleges
6	406	172	5	4	122	27	3

## What We Found

- Dedicated funding allowed colleges to develop and offer additional and innovative supports, outside of job placements or internships, for bridging gaps and making the transition to employment or entrepreneurship.
- Scaffolding the activities and supports was important.
  - For example, interviewing and networking techniques were introduced and learners were coached in the classroom or as part of a workshop through practice dialogues, mock interviews and role-plays before learners attended planned events.
- These authentic, relevant and practical activities offered in a supportive environment helped learners reframe their experiences and boost their confidence levels to view themselves as bilingual/multilingual, skilled professionals with international experience.
- When planning events and developing programs or career-related opportunities, colleges needed to capitalize on momentum by integrating these offerings with course schedules.
- Colleges' outreach work helped employers appreciate the depth of experience newcomers bring to the workplace and reframed employers' perspectives on the contributions newcomers can make to their organizations.
- The recent pilots that were conducted during the pandemic provided a unique opportunity for colleges to adapt some of their earlier face-to-face initiatives to a virtual environment (i.e., networking sessions, career- or entrepreneurial-focused workshops). The online delivery allowed colleges to scale up by having a greater number of participants attend the sessions than would otherwise have been possible, while also providing OSLT clients attending other colleges the opportunity to be included. This resulted in a greater number of OSLT clients from a variety of geographic regions to benefit from the content of the sessions. As well, OSLT clients were able to expand their personal and business networks.
- Through formal surveys and feedback sessions conducted post-pilot, colleges determined that these interventions and supports were welcomed and well received by participating newcomers. In specific these supports
  - provided the opportunity to practise real-life scenarios in supportive settings.
  - increased the confidence levels of newcomers in their integration to employment or entrepreneurship.
  - enhanced knowledge of workplace cultural practices.
  - provided useful tips and strategies that would serve newcomers well in the job-search process or in building their own businesses.
  - reinforced the importance of networking as a key strategy toward employment or entrepreneurship.
  - provided useful connections and an opportunity to learn from industry professionals and from immigrants who had successfully navigated the transition to employment or entrepreneurship.
  - introduced clients to local resources.
  - explored how to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset.
  - motivated and encouraged newcomers.

## 8. Evaluated the Effectiveness of OSLT/FLAP SDI Project Deliverables

Colleges Ontario evaluated the effectiveness of OSLT online modular course delivery, self-directed learning activities and apps, and employment and entrepreneurship supports. This report summarizes the findings in terms of the effectiveness of these activities and insights gained. Below are the activities Colleges Ontario undertook to prepare this evaluation:

- Convened a team of in-house and external research/evaluation personnel with expertise in online learning, language learning and program design/delivery to evaluate the project.
- Developed a range of evaluation tools to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative evidence. Tools included weekly written reports from faculty, online evaluation surveys, interviews and focus groups.
- Used the HARTs database for the pilot online modules for information on enrollments, completions and demographic data.
- Built on existing baseline and comparison data by gathering quantitative and qualitative data from OSLT classroom-based and blended courses.
- Analyzed quantitative and qualitative evidence to examine:
  - course achievements and results.
  - learner satisfaction.
  - enrollment and completion rates.
  - demographic profile of learners.
  - learner, faculty and program-manager feedback.
  - employer feedback.
  - barriers, gaps and opportunities.
- Gathered formal and informal feedback on the delivery of online modules from faculty, program administrators, learners and employers to help determine
  - the effectiveness of the OSLT faculty-led online curriculum.
  - the feasibility and effectiveness of delivering the curriculum in an online format.
  - employer- and workplace-related factors that affect language learning in the workplace.
  - access, policy, logistical and service-delivery considerations.
- Evaluated evidence on project effectiveness, feasibility and service improvement.
- Prepared this report, a Project-Level Learning Report and a presentation to summarize findings for IRCC.

## Effects of COVID-19 on the OSLT/FLAP SDI Project

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 affected the third year of the SDI project delivery:

- In 2020, Colleges Ontario and colleges mobilized quickly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to transition from classroom-based or blended courses to virtual blended and online delivery. This was helped by the fact that OSLT already had infrastructure to support online learning as well as online courses that had been piloted through SDI.
- The online OSLT delivery model was integrated into the delivery of regular OSLT programming in the Business, Health Care and Technology sectors, with faculty-led online delivery replacing classroom-based or blended courses where appropriate.
- Additional data was captured for the substituted online courses and used for comparative analysis in the SDI project.
- The online OSLT-in-the-workplace courses developed under SDI for newcomers already working in Health Care and Personal Support Work could not be piloted due to the stresses on the health care system in Ontario.
- The entrepreneurship and employment pilots that were conducted during the pandemic provided a unique opportunity for colleges to adapt some of their earlier face-to-face initiatives to a virtual environment (i.e., networking sessions, career- or entrepreneurial-focused workshops). The online delivery allowed colleges to scale up by having a greater number of participants attend the sessions than would otherwise have been possible, while also providing OSLT clients attending other colleges the opportunity to be included. This resulted in a greater number of OSLT clients from a variety of geographic regions to benefit from the content of the sessions. As well, OSLT clients were able to expand their personal and business networks.

## C. Project Insights

Section C includes a summary of the eleven key insights gained during the OSLT/FLAP SDI project followed by an in-depth description of the learnings for each one.

### Summary of Project Insights

During the OSLT/FLAP SDI Project, Colleges Ontario developed insights about the following:

1. Faculty-led Online Delivery
2. Design-based Research Methodology
3. Synchronous Elements in Online Learning
4. Online Modular Approach to Curriculum Design
5. Curriculum Approach for Employed versus Job-seeking Newcomers
6. Self-directed Online Language Practice
7. Language Level and Learning Readiness for Online Courses
8. Faculty Preparedness for Online Instruction
9. Francophone Newcomers and Online Learning
10. Integrated Employment and Entrepreneurship Supports in OSLT/FLAP
11. Marketing, Recruitment and Administration Practices for Online Learning

## 1. Faculty-led Online Delivery

### What We Learned

Faculty-led, online delivery of modular OSLT courses for newcomers who are currently looking for employment in their fields works as well as classroom-based and blended delivery in helping learners meet OSLT performance-based learning outcomes.

- Faculty played a critical role in online courses by actively engaging with learners, helping to keep learners organized with assignment schedules, responding to learner questions in a timely manner, providing feedback, serving as a guiding hand and building community.
- Learner feedback pointed consistently to the role played by faculty in facilitating a positive learning environment, promoting discussion, and supporting and motivating learners.
- The faculty-led online courses worked as well as their classroom-based or blended counterparts in helping learners meet OSLT/FLAP learning outcomes.
- The evaluation process used in OSLT/FLAP classroom-based and blended courses also worked for faculty-led OSLT online courses.

## 2. Design-based Research Methodology

### What We Learned

Using a design-based research methodology to formalize guiding principles focused the online curriculum development process and ensured a consistent, high-quality final product.

- Creating guiding principles early in the curriculum development process facilitated a consistent approach across sectors and occupational areas. For a list of the design principles and points to consider during implementation, see **Appendix 2: OSLT Online Guiding Design Principles**.
- Building on the established OSLT/FLAP curriculum framework via the design principles streamlined the curriculum development process.
- Defining the target audience and articulating learning outcomes ensured activities and materials focused on the needs of target learners.
- Continual evaluation of the guiding principles and online design features by engaging language curriculum designers, online-learning experts and content experts and by building in feedback from end-users enhanced the quality of the online curriculum, learning activities and materials.

## 3. Synchronous Elements in Online Learning

### What We Learned

Synchronous elements are fundamental to learner engagement and a successful online learning experience.

- Using a variety of synchronous class activities on a weekly basis facilitated learner engagement, community building and relationship building with both faculty and learners.
- The in-person aspect of the synchronous sessions allowed the faculty to be responsive to learners' needs in an immediate way.
- Synchronous communication provided learners further opportunities to practise listening and speaking skills.

## 4. Online Modular Approach to Curriculum Design

### What We Learned

An online modular approach to curriculum design is effective in targeting learning gaps, allowing learners to customize their language learning and increasing access to courses.

- Learners valued the flexibility of the online modular approach since they could select modules to improve specific language and cultural workplace skills based on their individual needs.
- The online modular approach increased accessibility for learners who were already working or had personal constraints that prevented access to classroom-based or blended courses.
- The online modular approach increased geographic access to occupation-specific language learning for newcomers across Ontario.

## 5. Curriculum Approach for Employed versus Job-seeking Newcomers

### What We Learned

Designing and delivering online modules for newcomers already working in their fields is complex and requires a different approach than for online courses for newcomers looking for work.

- The language level of newcomers working in their fields is typically higher than CLB 6. It would be beneficial to look more closely at what type of language assessment is best suited for employed learners.
- The modules need to focus more heavily on workplace-based, socio-cultural communication skills rather than standard language training.
- The flexible 21-hour modules worked well for employed newcomers since they had time constraints in terms of taking courses of a longer duration.
- These short duration online modules affect the learning outcomes that are achievable in the time allotted and the types of learning outcomes that are practical and achievable.
- It also determines the types of learning activities and outcomes-targeting testing that can be used and affects the number and type of formative or summative evaluation tasks that can be assigned.
- In addition to workplace language training, the modules for employed learners also offer professional development.

## 6. Self-directed Online Language Practice

### What We Learned

Learners benefit from multiple sources of language practice that are either embedded into the courses or provided as adjunct activities.

- Self-directed online learning activities and apps are effective practice tools: they allow learners to select activities and customize practice to address specific learning needs.
- Learners willingly undertake targeted self-directed language practice to bridge gaps in their language skills for the workplace.

Self-directed, online activities and apps provide excellent value for colleges and funding organizations due to their low cost.

- Once developed, self-directed online tools require minimal resources and are easy to maintain.

## 7. Language Level and Learning Readiness for Online Courses

### What We Learned

Levels of language skill, digital competency and online learning readiness affect the ease with which learners can successfully complete online language courses.

- OSLT online courses require higher CLB-level entry requirements (CLB 6+) than for the same OSLT/FLAP course delivered in a classroom-based or blended format.
- An applicant-screening process that includes identifying an applicant's access to technology, digital-literacy level and attributes of success (organized, motivated and able to self-regulate) is important in helping learners succeed in online learning.
- As another IRCC-funded study has noted, screening for digital competency and managing applicant expectations are important for learner success.<sup>3</sup>

## 8. Faculty Preparedness for Online Instruction

### What We Learned

The role of faculty is as important in online delivery as it is in classroom-based or blended delivery and faculty need to be supported and prepared for this role.

- The OSLT online learning experience was greatly enhanced by faculty providing guidance, practical tips for improving communication skills and timely feedback, all of which motivated and engaged learners.
- Providing faculty with ongoing support as well as deliberate and targeted strategies for teaching in an online environment is critical for success.
- Faculty needed to be prepared for the time investments needed for synchronous and asynchronous activities, and for providing feedback on learners' emails, postings and assignments.

## 9. Francophone Newcomers and Online Learning

### What We Learned

Gaps for Francophone newcomers interested in FLAP courses include a lack of online workplace-focused language training curriculum in French and a lack of language training to prepare Francophone newcomers to work in a bilingual environment. There is a need to expand French-language digital tools for practising language and digital competency skills.

- There is a need to develop online workplace-focused language training curriculum for FLAP.
- Learners in FLAP courses may lack the digital literacy to be comfortable with and succeed in online learning and therefore need to be supported.
- There is a need to develop bilingual language-learning materials for Francophone newcomers working or looking for work in settings where they must navigate both French and English.
- Francophone learners in all FLAP courses would benefit from having access to more self-directed, workplace-based online language activities in French.

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<sup>3</sup> *From Silos to Solutions: Toward Sustainable and Equitable Hybrid Service Delivery in the Immigrant & Refugee-Serving Sector in Canada*. Liu, Jingzhou; Dedeoglu, Cansu E.; Campana, Marco. Coordinated by AMSSA. Funded by IRCC. April 2021.

## 10. Integrated Employment and Entrepreneurship Supports in OSLT/FLAP

### What We Learned

Newcomers value courses with integrated supports that help them make the transition to employment or entrepreneurship.

- Time and dedicated resources are needed to develop relationships with employers and community partners to support OSLT/FLAP learners in transitioning to employment or entrepreneurship.
- Colleges already offer a host of existing services, pathways and partnerships as well as employment supports that can be leveraged for newcomers and incorporated into or that extend beyond OSLT/FLAP courses.
- Faculty play a critical role in preparing learners for any extra-curricular employment or entrepreneurial supports offered during the courses.
- Inviting OSLT/FLAP alumni or other newcomers who have made successful transitions to employment or entrepreneurship as guest speakers to the classroom or as part of events can serve as inspirational role-modelling for other newcomers.
- Providing authentic and relevant practice opportunities and supports to newcomers transitioning to employment or entrepreneurship in a supportive and scaffolded environment is key to helping newcomers gain confidence in the job-search process and increase their knowledge of the workplace culture in their sector.
- Employment and entrepreneurial supports can be successfully and effectively integrated in a virtual setting while allowing a greater number of clients to be served from a greater number of geographic regions.

## 11. Marketing, Recruitment and Administration Practices for Online Learning

### What We Learned

Online delivery requires adapting how OSLT courses are marketed, recruited and administered.

- Geography and accessibility to campus were no longer determining factors in an eligible Ontario newcomer's ability to enroll in OSLT.
- Colleges need a solid OSLT presence on their websites to direct potential online learners, especially after launching digital campaigns or placing digital ads.
- Colleges need to adapt and tailor their marketing and recruitment strategies for online learning:
  - Less reliance on traditional face-to-face approaches, such as on-campus information sessions.
  - More emphasis on virtual and digital methods, social media and ensuring a solid web presence.
  - More province-wide college collaboration and coordination in routing newcomers to OSLT online courses based at other colleges.
- Coordination of online course schedules was essential for the smooth delivery of OSLT online courses. Colleges Ontario provided strategic direction and coordination to colleges delivering OSLT online courses.
- Labour market supports, such as guest speakers and special workshops, can happen online and inside or outside of the synchronous class sessions and be made available to learners across colleges.
- Key partners, such as assessment centres, need to be able to align their service-delivery models to accommodate classroom-based, blended and online delivery formats, regardless of the length of the course or the location of the service provider.
- Faculty training is fundamental to successfully teaching and delivering OSLT online courses because they
  - provide an opportunity for faculty to simulate the learners' online experience.
  - outline requirements and manage online classroom issues.
- Colleges' administrative processes and protocols must be adapted for OSLT online delivery.

## D. Moving Forward: Applying the Project Learning

SDI funding allowed Colleges Ontario and participating colleges to explore, develop and test OSLT online modular curriculum. It also provided an opportunity to develop and pilot OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular curriculum as well as employment and entrepreneurial supports for OSLT/FLAP clients.

With IRCC funding, Ontario colleges have the established capacity, infrastructure and ability to offer occupation-specific language training options for newcomers in a variety of formats for a range of high-demand sectors and occupations across Ontario. All courses, tools and supports are built on the OSLT/FLAP framework and infrastructure (established with IRCC funding in 2008), and there is now a continuum of occupation-specific language training services for newcomers.

This continuum of OSLT/FLAP courses and supports has the capacity to create accessible pathways and choices for newcomers who need language training for the workplace. Evaluation of the SDI initiatives confirms that the courses, tools and supports developed and piloted meet expected outcomes. Colleges Ontario and participating colleges are ready to integrate all courses and tools into regular OSLT/FLAP programming.

Section D discusses the main attributes of OSLT/FLAP services to provide a framework for how service delivery can be improved. For the **Attributes of OSLT/FLAP Services (Courses, Tools, Supports)**, see the textbox on the next page.

Section D then provides suggestions on how to apply project learning and move forward with OSLT/FLAP, including six recommendations for potential activities that will increase effectiveness and expand access.

<b>Attributes of OSLT/FLAP Services (Courses, Tools, Supports)</b>	
<b>Broad Range of Sectors and Occupations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language training in five high-demand industry sectors and 35 occupations for newcomers who have training and experience in their target occupations.</li> <li>• Language training in three high demand industry sectors and nine occupations for those who are already employed and who need to improve language skills to advance in the workplace.</li> </ul>
<b>Flexible Delivery Formats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of delivery formats offers newcomers access to the language training that best suits their needs and provides appropriate pathways for advancement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online delivery facilitates language learning that addresses the needs and diverse life/work circumstances of newcomers, especially those with geographic constraints and/or those who work and are unable to attend classroom training.</li> <li>○ Face-to-face interactions provided by classroom-based and blended training benefit newcomers who require more in-person engagement with faculty and other learners who have training and experience in their targeted occupations.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Modular Approach to Online Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The modular approach to online delivery provides flexible pathways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Newcomers can select modules that target their specific language-learning needs and can enter or exit a module pathway as their circumstances change or dictate.</li> <li>○ Newcomers taking 180-hour or 140-hour classroom-based or blended courses have the subsequent pathway of taking a 40-hour writing professionally module to complete their OSLT language training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• OSLT-in-the-workplace modules are designed specifically for newcomers working in their fields who want short, professional-development-style courses to improve their workplace communication skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-directed Online Learning Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 English and 7 French online activities are available to learners to address self-identified gaps in language and communication skills in a workplace context and to practise at their own pace.</li> <li>• These activities focus on relevant workplace content – grammar, idioms, vocabulary and punctuation – and they provide learners with immediate feedback.</li> <li>• Two Moodle-based plug-in apps in English allow learners to practise job-interview and conversation skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Business Job Interview app is integrated into Business and Technology courses, and the Health Care Job Interview app is integrated into the Health Care courses.</li> <li>○ The Dialogue practice app is integrated into Entrepreneurship, Sales and Marketing, and Accounting and Finance courses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Employment and Entrepreneurial Supports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges Ontario has piloted and can apply additional employment and entrepreneurial supports that are customized to local needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use an experiential learning platform (Riipen) to link an employer with learners to discuss and resolve a workplace issue.</li> <li>○ Facilitate meetups for learners, including opportunities to meet new people, network and engage in facilitated discussion on a career-related topic.</li> <li>○ Arrange workshops with industry guest speakers to build soft skills for learners, provide information on the evolving workplace, and facilitate networking.</li> <li>○ Seek industry/sector partnerships and input to identify opportunities for supporting learners transitioning to employment or entrepreneurship.</li> <li>○ Offer an opportunity for OSLT/FLAP clients to hone their networking skills and to provide access to networking opportunities through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ face-to-face formalized networking sessions with local employers.</li> <li>▪ a virtual networking opportunity.</li> <li>▪ a virtual educational seminar on how to network in a virtual environment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Partner with college entrepreneurship hubs, community organizations and municipal centres to provide learners with information, tips, strategies and workshops on starting a business, as well as access to field experts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The following six recommendations outline potential activities that will improve service delivery of OSLT:

### Summary of Recommendations

1. Scale Up Delivery of Faculty-led OSLT Online Courses
2. Offer the Self-directed Learning Space, Apps and Activities to All OSLT/FLAP Learners
3. Roll Out OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Courses to Newcomers Working in Their Fields
4. Address Gaps in the OSLT/FLAP Curriculum and Processes
5. Support IRCC to Build Client Digital Literacy
6. Integrate New Employment and Entrepreneurial Supports into OSLT/FLAP Delivery

## 1. Scale Up Delivery of Faculty-led OSLT Online Courses

<b>Potential Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver additional 40-hour OSLT online modules, and expand delivery of the 40-hour modules piloted during the SDI project.</li> <li>• Provide faculty training to new faculty teaching online OSLT courses.</li> <li>• Promote online OSLT modules in other marketing channels. Examples include IRCC communication channels and <a href="http://settlement.org">settlement.org</a>, the provincial website that promotes language learning for newcomers.</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SDI pilots confirmed that faculty-led, online delivery of modular OSLT courses work as well as classroom-based and blended delivery in helping learners meet OSLT performance-based learning outcomes. This makes faculty-led online courses an effective alternative to classroom-based or blended courses for newcomers unable to physically attend OSLT classes at Ontario colleges.</li> <li>• All Ontario colleges delivering the 40-hour OSLT online modules are ready to integrate this delivery format into available OSLT programming.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colleges have the infrastructure in place and the capacity to market and administer online OSLT courses.</li> <li>○ The faculty trained during this project are ready to teach the online course offerings.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Client Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access to workplace language and socio-cultural skills learning with flexibility to accommodate varying schedules and circumstances.</li> <li>• Clients able to achieve the same learning outcomes as classroom-based or blended OSLT courses.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The infrastructure is in place to efficiently integrate these courses into college delivery schedules. Many faculty members are already trained, and online training is in place if additional faculty need to be trained.</li> <li>• OSLT/FLAP will be more effective if provided in the delivery formats most needed in specific communities and sectors.</li> </ul>

## 2. Offer the Self-directed Learning Space, Apps and Activities to All OSLT/FLAP Learners

<b>Potential Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide OSLT/FLAP clients with access to self-directed, online learning activities in English and French and two Moodle plug-in apps in English to help them address self-identified gaps.</li> <li>• Coordinate the hosting, maintenance and routine updating of the OSLT/FLAP learning space and apps and provide/support learner access.</li> <li>• Provide information about the self-directed learning space and the process for referring learners to its apps and activities in OSLT/FLAP faculty orientation, training and preparation.</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SDI pilots confirmed that self-directed OSLT/FLAP online learning activities and apps helped learners practise and enhance their language skills and digital competencies in English or French as well as develop effective skills for job interviews in English.</li> <li>• OSLT/FLAP self-directed online learning activities and apps are effective practice tools that allow learners to select activities and customize practice to address specific learning needs.</li> <li>• Self-directed, online opportunities for learners to practise language skills within the course and outside of the course, where appropriate, provide excellent value for learners, colleges and funding organizations.</li> </ul>
<b>Client Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved fluency and accuracy in all language skill areas from easy-to-access, self-directed activities.</li> <li>• Increased opportunities to repeat practice, receive immediate feedback and show greater confidence in speaking and listening.</li> <li>• Greater likelihood of succeeding in courses and acquiring digital competencies for the workplace.</li> <li>• Enhanced success in interviews and finding work.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once developed, minimal resources are required to provide learners access to these self-directed online learning activities and apps.</li> <li>• Minimal resources are required to host, maintain, routinely update and possibly add more activities.</li> </ul>

### 3. Roll Out OSLT-in-the-workplace Online Courses to Newcomers Working in Their Fields

<p><b>Potential Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer the newly developed and piloted 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses in Accounting and Finance, Entrepreneurship, Management and Technology and integrate delivery into OSLT programming and the OSLT contribution agreement.</li> <li>• Deliver the newly developed 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular course in Health Care (unable to be piloted due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and revise the curriculum, if appropriate. Integrate delivery into OSLT programming.</li> <li>• Deliver the recently developed 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular course for Personal Support Work and revise the curriculum, if appropriate. Integrate delivery into OSLT programming.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomers working in their fields often indicate a need to improve their occupation-specific language and socio-cultural communication skills to succeed and advance at work.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurs/employers report gaps in language competency and lack of understanding of the socio-cultural context as major barriers to successful workplace integration.</li> <li>• Newcomers working full time or as entrepreneurs cannot easily access classroom-based or blended courses.</li> <li>• The SDI pilots showed that the 21-hour online modules worked well for newcomers who were already working in their fields and who had time constraints.</li> <li>• The design of the OSLT-in-the-workplace online courses meets the needs of newcomers in terms of accessibility, flexibility and training that targets specific workplace-communication and language skill gaps.</li> <li>• Preliminary feedback from employers points to the usefulness and relevance of this type of training to help bridge gaps and to build awareness and understanding.</li> <li>• There is demand in communities for these online modular courses.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Client Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomers already working in their fields benefit from             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ongoing language training with an emphasis on improving workplace language and socio-cultural communication skills.</li> <li>○ short faculty-led online courses with targeted outcomes and a focus on specific skills needed for successful integration in the workplace and career advancement.</li> <li>○ having the flexibility to take the modules as needed and when they are able.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Delivery Implications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The infrastructure is already in place to support 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modular courses.</li> <li>• Ontario colleges delivering online courses have the capacity to integrate the 21-hour online courses into OSLT programming.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colleges have existing connections with employers, professional associations and local immigrant employment councils to market these courses and recruit eligible newcomers.</li> <li>○ Colleges have the infrastructure and the capacity to administer OSLT online.</li> <li>○ Faculty trained during this project are ready to teach the online courses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 4. Address Gaps in the OSLT/FLAP Curriculum and Processes

<p><b>Potential Activities</b></p>	<p><b>OSLT/FLAP Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt and pilot the OSLT/FLAP Construction Trades and Early Childhood Education curricula for faculty-led online modular delivery in English and French.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each 120-hour course would include three 40-hour modules.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop more FLAP blended courses (50% classroom-based and 50% online activities) in French across all sectors as a gateway to online learning for Francophone newcomers who may need support in improving their digital competencies.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each blended course would be adapted from existing OSLT curriculum and include both face-to-face and online elements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Self-directed Online Learning Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create more self-directed, online language activities in English and French for the Health Care sector, and add more Health Care dialogues in the apps.</li> </ul> <p><b>Language Policies and Processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the policy implications of allowing colleges to determine the language preparedness of clients in the 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modules.</li> <li>• Examine policy implications of considering 21-hour OSLT-in-the-workplace online modules as not only language training support but also as professional development opportunities for employed newcomers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b></p>	<p><b>OSLT/FLAP Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OSLT online curriculum framework and guiding principles have proven effective, are immediately available for adapting existing OSLT/FLAP curriculum and could help other service providers wanting to develop similar online language curriculum.</li> <li>• Newcomers working in either English or French environments in the high-demand occupations of Construction Trades and Early Childhood Education face significant gaps in accessing online, on-the-job language training.</li> <li>• Few workplace-based language training resources exist for Francophone newcomers across all sectors and occupations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Language Policies and Processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomers already working in their fields are usually functioning at the higher CLB 6 to 8 range required for these modules.</li> <li>• Colleges have a variety of language assessment and screening tools to help them determine an appropriate fit for the modules.</li> <li>• Newcomers who are already working in their target occupations often see a language assessment as a barrier.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It is often difficult for working clients to find appropriate appointments with local assessment centres that suit their employment schedules.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There can be delays in scheduling appointments at local language assessment centres, which is a particular issue for short term modules. Newcomers who are already working in their fields experience course benefits in language training and in professional development for their careers and in their sectors. Current funding policy does not recognize the significant overlap in benefits that include language skills as well as professional development in the Canadian workplace.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Client Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding online language learning courses for more high-demand sectors that can be offered across Ontario will             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ prepare more newcomers for work in these high-demand sectors.</li> <li>○ serve more newcomers from diverse circumstances who cannot easily attend in-person classes.</li> <li>○ better meet more employers' needs for workplace-ready workers who have the language and communication skills to contribute to and succeed in the workplace.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increased availability of self-directed, workplace-based online language activities in French to support Francophone learners in all FLAP courses.</li> <li>• Recognition of client learning and commitment to language training, as well as professional development and building sector knowledge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service Delivery Implications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges Ontario already has capacity to develop curriculum and self-directed activities.</li> <li>• The OSLT/FLAP curriculum team has the framework in place to efficiently develop new curriculum.</li> <li>• Colleges conducting language screening activities for clients already employed will leverage existing strengths and infrastructure of the colleges.</li> <li>• Colleges Ontario would need funding for development of more self-directed online learning activities.</li> </ul>

## 5. Support IRCC to Build Client Digital Literacy

<b>Potential Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with IRCC where appropriate to address gaps in client digital competence.</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges Ontario and colleges support the following recommendations of the IRCC-funded report <i>From Silos to Solutions: Toward Sustainable and Equitable Hybrid Service Delivery in the Immigrant &amp; Refugee-Serving Sector in Canada</i> (April 2021).<sup>4</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is also a need for consistent and ongoing training for staff, not only focused on how best they can use technology, but also how to train clients to use it in a service context.</li> <li>○ The sector and IRCC should develop guidelines on how to develop and implement digital literacy tools to assess clients' digital skills. This guidance should include the provision of training materials, tools and recommendations for agencies to support clients' digital literacy skills.</li> <li>○ The sector and IRCC should develop a digital literacy competence framework conducive to the needs of the immigrant settlement sector.</li> <li>○ A Digital Literacy Benchmark (DLB) as a complement to Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) should allow for Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) to quickly and accurately assess the digital literacy levels of newcomers to guide and support them accordingly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Client Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and process changes will be informed by the experience and findings of OSLT/FLAP activities and frontline stakeholders (for example, client experience, faculty, app developers, employers, etc.).</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges Ontario and the colleges are prepared to advise and assist IRCC in developing policies to better build client digital literacy.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> *From Silos to Solutions: Toward Sustainable and Equitable Hybrid Service Delivery in the Immigrant & Refugee-Serving Sector in Canada*. Liu, Jingzhou; Dedeoglu, Cansu E.; Campana, Marco. Coordinated by AMSSA. Funded by IRCC. April 2021.

## 6. Integrate New Employment and Entrepreneurial Supports into OSLT/FLAP Delivery

<b>Potential Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct outreach to employers, meet with new college and community partners, confirm guest speakers, facilitators and panelists, and organize workshops, entrepreneurial training and networking events.</li> <li>• Integrate additional strategies for providing effective labour-market supports to learners enrolled in OSLT/FLAP classroom-based and blended courses.</li> <li>• Leverage college connections with entrepreneurship centres, local employers, and community and municipal organizations in creating pilot initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Rationale/ Relevant Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated funding allows colleges to develop and offer additional and innovative supports, outside of job placements or internships, for bridging gaps and making the transition to employment or entrepreneurship.</li> <li>• The success of the piloted employment and entrepreneurial supports highlights the value of offering more of these supports as extra-curricular activities in all OSLT/FLAP courses.</li> <li>• Time and dedicated resources are needed to develop relationships with employers and community partners to support OSLT/FLAP learners in transitioning to employment and entrepreneurship.</li> <li>• Colleges already offer a host of existing services and partnerships as well as employment supports that can be leveraged for newcomers and OSLT/FLAP courses.</li> </ul>
<b>Client Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These supports could provide learners with the same types of benefits as job placements or internships, sometimes offered as part of other programs.</li> <li>• Additional supports help learners reframe their experiences and boost their confidence levels to view themselves as bilingual/multilingual, skilled professionals with international experience.</li> <li>• These types of supports can help employers appreciate the depth of experience newcomers bring to the workplace and reframe employers' perspectives on the contributions newcomers can make to their organizations.</li> </ul>
<b>Service Delivery Implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated funding for these activities enables colleges to offer innovative supports for making the transition to employment and entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Overview of OSLT/FLAP Courses

### OSLT/FLAP Courses by Sector/Occupation and Delivery Format

OSLT/FLAP Courses and Modules by Sector	OSLT/FLAP Occupations	OSLT/FLAP Delivery Formats			OSLT-in-the-Workplace (Online) <sup>5</sup>
		Classroom-based	Blended <sup>6</sup>	Online <sup>7</sup>	
OSLT Business	Accounting and Finance Personnel	✓	✓		✓
	Entrepreneurs, Sales and Marketing Personnel	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Project Managers		✓		
	Managers in Business and Technology		✓		✓
	Hospitality Workers	✓			
FLAP Commerce/Affaires	Travailleurs/Travailleuses en hôtellerie	✓			
	Entrepreneurs et personnel en ventes et marketing	✓			
OSLT Health Sciences	Dental Hygienists Medical Laboratory Technologists Medical Radiation Technologists Nurses Personal Support Workers Sleep Technologists	✓	✓	✓	✓
OSLT Interprofessional Health Care	Dietitians Nurses Occupational Therapists Physiotherapists Social Workers		✓		
FLAP Sciences de la santé	Hygiénistes dentaires Infirmiers/infirmières Travailleurs/Travailleuses au soutien à la personne	✓			
OSLT Human Services	Child and Youth Care Practitioners Early Childhood Educators	✓	✓		
	Policing Occupations, Security Occupations	✓			
FLAP Services à la personne	Éducateur/Éducatrice de la petite enfance	✓			
OSLT Technology	Architectural Technologists and Technicians Engineering Technologists and Technicians IT Personnel	✓	✓	✓	✓
OSLT Skilled Trades	Construction Trades (Civil, Electrical and Mechanical)	✓			
	Motive Power Trades (Automotive Service Technicians, Heavy Duty Equipment Technicians, Truck and Coach Technicians)	✓			
FLAP Métiers de la construction	Briqueteurs/Briqueteuses, Menuisiers/Menuisières, Électriciens/Électriciennes, Monteurs/Monteuses d'appareils de chauffage, Plombiers/Plombières	✓			

<sup>5</sup> OSLT-in-the-workplace are online modules that were piloted through SDI.

<sup>6</sup> Blended courses are up to 50% online.

<sup>7</sup> Online modules were piloted through SDI.

## Post-OSLT 40-hour Modular Courses by Sector/Occupation and Delivery Format

Post-OSLT 40-hour Modules	Sectors/Occupations	Delivery Format	
		Blended	Online
Writing Professionally	Business/Technology		✓
Writing Professionally	Health Care		✓
Older Adult Care	Health Care (Dietitians, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Personal Support Workers, Physiotherapists, Social Workers)	✓	

## Appendix 2: OSLT Online Guiding Design Principles

This appendix contains the ten guiding design principles developed for OSLT online. For each design principle, it includes

- how it was incorporated (i.e., how it was applied to develop the OSLT online curriculum).
- points to consider (i.e., ideas for curriculum developers to consider when developing and planning the delivery of online language courses).

<b>OSLT Online Design Principle 1: Ground content in real-world, workplace-based activities.</b>	
<b>How the Design Principle Was Incorporated</b>	<b>Points to Consider</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured content of activities clearly related to workplace communication practices.</li> <li>• Modelled activities on workplace practices.</li> <li>• Used scenarios that occur in the workplace.</li> <li>• Provided examples of actual workplace-based communication using videos, audio dialogues, transcripts, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake upfront, detailed research about the workplace to ensure content is relevant.</li> <li>• Introduce and use technology tools that are commonly found in the workplace for delivering course content.</li> <li>• Conduct ongoing curriculum reviews to integrate evolving workplace practices.</li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 2:

**Choose technology tools that serve a clear pedagogical purpose and/or learners are likely to use in the workplace.**

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<p><b>Pedagogical-related Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used the teaching tool VoiceThread to develop listening, speaking and presentation skills.</li> <li>• Used the learning-management system Moodle to organize and manage the course content.</li> </ul> <p><b>Workplace-related Tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used common workplace technology tools to practise reading and writing skills (for example, Google Docs, email and Microsoft Word).</li> <li>• Used the Zoom meeting application for weekly synchronous sessions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect the technology tool with the skill being taught, for example,             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ VoiceThread for practising speaking situations such as introductions or presentations.</li> <li>○ Google Docs for writing and editing.</li> <li>○ Zoom for simulating workplace meetings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure learners can clearly see the link between each language task and the tool used.</li> </ul>

**OSLT Online Design Principle 3:  
Scaffold the introduction and integration of technology tools.**

<b>How the Design Principle Was Incorporated</b>	<b>Points to Consider</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced new tools one at a time.</li> <li>• Introduced simple tools before introducing more complicated tools.</li> <li>• Introduced new or high-stakes content separately from introducing new tools.</li> <li>• Ensured technology tools did not overwhelm the course activities and were not more complicated than the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaffold the introduction of technology tools to build learner confidence in using technology and to avoid overwhelming learners by requiring them to learn a new tool while interacting with new content.</li> <li>• Introduce a new tool using content learners already know (for example, “Introduce yourself to your classmates”).</li> <li>• Apply a new tool initially to a low-stakes task (i.e., one that is not evaluated).</li> <li>• Use an incremental approach when introducing a more complicated tool. For example, VoiceThread learning could start by             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ asking learners to comment on a VoiceThread recording.</li> <li>○ progressing to using VoiceThread to create a recording.</li> <li>○ culminating in using Voice Thread to record a presentation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider the length of the course or module.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Short-duration modules offer limited time for scaffolding, which limits the number and complexity of tools that can be introduced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 4:

### Promote activities to build the digital skills required to help learners succeed in online learning.

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screened learners for basic digital literacy prior to course start and redirected those who did not possess the skills necessary to succeed.</li> <li>• Articulated with learners the criteria for being a successful online learner, including organization and time management.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Created a questionnaire in the “Getting Started” materials that helped learners identify what is important for effective learning online.</li> <li>○ Discussed successful online learning during the first synchronous virtual meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encouraged faculty to assign due dates for individual activities throughout the week to help learners spread the work over several days.</li> <li>• Ensured faculty connected with learners one-on-one before the first synchronous meeting using the technology chosen for the virtual meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set higher CLB-level entry requirements (for example, CLB 6+) for online language training courses than for the same course delivered in a face-to-face format.</li> <li>• Establish an applicant-screening process and checklist that identifies an applicant’s digital literacy level, access to technology tools and attributes of success (being organized, motivated and able to self-regulate).</li> <li>• Communicate to learners before course registration that digital competency/literacy helps them to fully engage with the content and is essential for their success.</li> <li>• Ensure learners understand, before course registration, the time commitment expected.</li> <li>• Provide examples of what they will be introduced to in the course.</li> <li>• Schedule virtual sessions with faculty and learners, either one-on-one or with small groups, before the first synchronous meeting, if feasible. This will               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ help learners become acquainted with the faculty member and the technology.</li> <li>○ identify technological concerns.</li> <li>○ clarify expectations.</li> <li>○ allow the first synchronous session to focus on the course itself.</li> <li>○ help launch the process of building community and creating engagement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure learners have access to appropriate technology and equipment since reliable access to a computer is a key requirement.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build capacity and establish a process for lending equipment, if feasible.</li> <li>○ Advise learners on community-provided access to equipment and internet access.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage faculty to actively facilitate learner success. For example,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ to help learners organize their time.</li> <li>○ to remind learners about assignments and upcoming events.</li> <li>○ to provide regular feedback and guidance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**OSLT Online Design Principle 5:  
Facilitate community-building through learner-learner and faculty-to-learner interactions.**

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included a variety of synchronous and asynchronous interactions among learners and with faculty.</li> <li>• Held weekly, 1- to 1.5-hour, synchronous video conferences with the entire class.</li> <li>• Provided non-focused communication opportunities for learners to engage in conversations not directly related to the course learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Included activities using a range of social and collaborative interactions: pair work (messaging), small-group work (forums and VoiceThreads) and asynchronous, independent work (wikis and forums).</li> <li>• Included an “Open Forum” for learners and faculty to discuss topics of interest.</li> <li>• Organized opportunities for learners to work together in pairs or small groups in synchronous communication.</li> <li>• Emphasized in faculty instruction notes the importance of their ongoing presence, interaction and feedback.</li> <li>• Outlined potential ways faculty could interact with learners in addition to the weekly synchronous virtual meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep in mind that the duration and context of the course affects how much synchronous interaction is feasible. For example,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ shorter-duration courses might include fewer synchronous learner-to-learner activities than longer duration courses.</li> <li>○ learners who work full-time might find organizing synchronous activities difficult.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Conduct a weekly synchronous session with the whole class to provide opportunities for learners to build relationships with one another through whole-class activities and pair and small-group activities.</li> <li>• Provide multiple opportunities for learners to apply their extensive life experience, international experience and professional experience.</li> <li>• Remind faculty (through instruction notes or faculty training) about the learning-management system tools that facilitate interaction with learners.</li> <li>• Use the features of platforms and applications such as Zoom or Teams to simulate a classroom or meeting space, and use virtual break-out rooms to facilitate team-building, group interactions and pair work.</li> <li>• Train faculty and support them in being responsive to learners outside the synchronous video-conference sessions.</li> <li>• Establish course enrollment numbers that align with expectations for faculty interaction with and feedback to learners, and opportunities for learners to interact with one another.</li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 6:

**Present materials in a variety of ways to create and maintain engagement and to ensure practice in all skill areas.**

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced new material using a variety of formats such as video, audio recordings, PDFs and linked articles.</li> <li>• Included videos, audio recordings and PDFs developed specifically for the course as well as those sourced from elsewhere.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provided ways for learners to interact with the material and one another using questionnaires, quizzes, wikis, forums, VoiceThreads and synchronous video conferences.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a weekly synchronous session with the whole class to provide opportunities for learners to communicate with multiple people at the same time and to develop the ability to listen, synthesize and speak spontaneously.</li> <li>• Design weekly activities that include a variety of ways to access and work with the content, without requiring an overwhelming number of different technology tools.</li> <li>• Select a variety of technology tools that include ways to learn and practise all language-skill areas.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tools that help develop reading and writing skills include forums, wikis and PDFs.</li> <li>○ Tools that help develop listening and speaking skills include videos, audio, voicemail and VoiceThread.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognize that certain topics may dictate the technology tool that should be used, even if that means repeating the use of that tool.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, if a discussion is the best way to work with the content in two contiguous activities, then the same tool should be used for both, rather than introducing another tool for the sake of variety.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consider the course length when determining the variety and number of technology tools that can be introduced without overwhelming learners.</li> </ul>

**OSLT Online Design Principle 7:**

**Use a combination of self-directed, interactive and facilitated learning to build communication skills.**

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included required, weekly, individually completed activities (questionnaires and reading/listening quizzes), faculty-facilitated activities (forums, Google Docs, VoiceThreads and virtual conferences) and interactive activities with other learners (wikis, forums and VoiceThreads).</li> <li>• Included a weekly mandatory, 1- to 1.5-hour synchronous video conference with the whole class.</li> <li>• Provided learners with access to optional, self-directed-learning activities to supplement the curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure the course to maximize engagement and learning by allowing learners to move ahead on their own as well as providing faculty feedback where appropriate.</li> <li>• Design the course to include opportunities for learners to interact with one another both asynchronously and synchronously.</li> <li>• Include a mandatory synchronous virtual video conference for the whole class.</li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 8:

**Provide opportunities to practise accuracy and fluency in reading, writing, listening and speaking.**

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created fluency-targeted reading and writing opportunities using forums, wikis and questionnaires, where the focus was on communicating ideas rather than on the accuracy of the writing.</li> <li>• Used email, Google Docs, Microsoft Word and quizzes to provide opportunities to focus on the accuracy of writing and reading comprehension.</li> <li>• Used asynchronous activities (using VoiceThread, videos and audio recordings) and synchronous activities (through Zoom) to develop accuracy and fluency in speaking and listening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage faculty to clearly identify the focus of each activity or task as either accuracy or fluency.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fluency activities require faculty to consciously focus on assessing whether learners communicated their ideas, rather than whether they did so accurately (for example, grammatically), even if a written format is used.</li> <li>○ Explicitly address and reinforce this approach in an online-learning environment because much of the content is in written format. It is tempting for faculty to correct text and for learners to expect this correction, even when the activity is meant to mimic a free-flowing conversation to practise fluency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure the curriculum clearly outlines the focus of a task as targeting accuracy or fluency.</li> <li>• Coach learners so they understand the difference between feedback on accuracy and feedback on fluency. This will help them manage their expectations around faculty feedback.</li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 9:

Ensure learner evaluation reflects the content and goals of the course.

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geared course topics and practice activities directly toward achieving course outcomes.</li> <li>• Related course outcomes to workplace-based communication tasks.</li> <li>• Outlined outcomes to learners at the beginning of the course, and referred to them during the teaching and practice activities.</li> <li>• Used target descriptors with a four-point rating scale to determine achievement of course outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Learner Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluated task performance against a performance standard (target descriptors).</li> <li>• Trained faculty to apply each target descriptor’s rating scale and calibration.</li> <li>• Discussed target descriptors with learners at the beginning of the course.</li> <li>• Ensured performance-based evaluation tasks reflected the language skills taught.</li> <li>• Used formative and summative evaluation tasks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided formative and summative feedback using target descriptors.</li> <li>• Based the type and amount of formative feedback on the length of the course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure outcomes are achievable within the duration of the course.</li> <li>• Align the amount of testing with course duration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In short-duration online courses, it is inefficient to be continually testing learners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In courses of shorter duration without time for formal, interim tasks for learner evaluation, it is useful to find another way to provide outcomes-targeted formative feedback during practice activities.</li> <li>• If learner evaluation tasks are performance-based, faculty need calibration training sessions to ensure consistent evaluation across multiple deliveries.</li> </ul>

## OSLT Online Design Principle 10:

Recognize the key role faculty play in ensuring that learners succeed in achieving course outcomes.

How the Design Principle Was Incorporated	Points to Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Included instruction notes in the curriculum to explain key aspects of the curriculum and to guide, rather than direct, faculty.</li> <li>• Trained faculty on teaching online courses using the same online format as the course delivery, which provided opportunities to simulate the learners' experience and model effective approaches.</li> <li>• Equipped faculty with an Assessment Manual, setting out the principles and standards for OSLT evaluation along with target descriptors and rubrics for meeting outcomes.</li> <li>• Provided faculty with exemplars of successful achievement of outcomes.</li> <li>• Supported faculty by providing annual calibration sessions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize that faculty play an active role in learner engagement. For example,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ serving as a guiding hand.</li> <li>○ building community.</li> <li>○ providing feedback and timely responses.</li> <li>○ helping keep learners organized with assignment schedules.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Alert faculty to the time investments required for synchronous and asynchronous activities.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In addition to preparing and being part of synchronous activities, faculty need to set aside time to provide feedback to learners' emails, postings and assignments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Calculate ahead of time the resources needed for faculty training.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Training is fundamental to successful teaching and delivery of online courses and provides an opportunity for faculty to simulate the experience of the learners.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide faculty with opportunities to share best practices and build their networks outside of training and orientation sessions.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, set up an online faculty space in the learning-management system where faculty can ask questions and share ideas and resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Appendix 3: Reading List for Francophone Language Learning

The reading list below includes recent reports on demographics and major issues that are relevant to incorporating blended and online learning for Francophone newcomers to Ontario.

[“Digital Literacy.”](#) ABC Life Literacy Matters. 2021.

[Essential Skills Profile: Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers.](#) Employment and Social Development Canada. July 2021.

[Essential Skills Profile: Early Childhood Educators and Assistants.](#) Employment and Social Development Canada. July 2021.

[Francophone Immigration in Ontario: White Paper.](#) Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario. March 2017.

[From Silos to Solutions: Toward Sustainable and Equitable Hybrid Service Delivery in the Immigrant & Refugee-Serving Sector in Canada.](#) Liu, Jingzhou; Dedeoglu, Cansu E.; Campana, Marco. Coordinated by AMSSA. Funded by IRCC. April 2021.

[Group of Experts on Francophone Immigration 2015-2016.](#) Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. June 2017 (updated August 2021).

[“Infographic: The French Presence in Ontario.”](#) Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. September 2020.

[Meeting places: Social and cultural integration experiences for newly arrived French speakers in Francophone minority communities.](#) Veronis, Luisa (University of Ottawa); Huot, Suzanne (University of Western Ontario). Policy Research Division, IRCC. January 2017.

[“Migrants and Mobile Technology Use: Gaps in the Support Provided by Current Tools.”](#) Journal of Interactive Media in Education. Demmans Epp, Carrie. 2017.

[Skills for Success.](#) Employment and Social Development Canada. June 2021.