



# **EXPLORING LEARNER PATHWAYS**

Meeting at the LBS / ESL Intersections

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**



**Academic and Career Entrance (ACE):** Adult upgrading certificate delivered by community colleges in Ontario and partnerships between colleges and community literacy organizations. ACE is recognized as a Grade 12 equivalency by colleges and apprenticeship offices in Ontario and by a growing number of employers. ACE is available at all 24 community colleges and online.

**Academic Upgrading (AU):** Prepares learners for college postsecondary programs and technical training. AU typically serves learners who may not have a high school diploma but whose skills are above a Grade 9, or learners who have a high school diploma but lack specific prerequisites for postsecondary training.

**Adult Education:** All sustained, systematic, and structured educational activities, at any level beyond initial education, whether offered formally or non-formally, which are undertaken by all of those defined as adults in their society for the purposes of personal, social, or workplace knowledge, skills, attitude and values acquisition. Adult education learning experiences can be categorized into three types: certified, not certified and experiential (categories consistent with formal, non-formal and informal learning).<sup>1</sup>

**Andragogy:** An approach of learning strategies focused on adults where learners are engaged in a learning process which involves self-direction and autonomy.

**Articulation:** Systematic coordination of course and/or program content within and between educational institutions to facilitate the continuous and efficient progress of students from grade to grade, school to school, and from school to the working world.

**Assessment:** Any process or procedure that gathers information to decide about a learner's knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Service providers conduct three kinds of assessments – intake assessment, ongoing assessment and exit assessment.

**Basic Skills:** The additional skills a learner needs to use their literacy skills, such as, digital technology, interpersonal skills, problem solving and critical thinking.<sup>2</sup>

**BICS and CALP:** Basic interpersonal communication skills (i.e. conversational fluency in a language) and cognitive academic language proficiency (i.e. students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school).<sup>3</sup> The distinction between BICS and CALP [introduced by Jim Cummins in the early 80s] was made in order to draw attention to the timelines and challenges that second language learners encounter as they attempt to catch up to their peers within an academic context.

**CLARS:** Acronym for the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System – a common third-party assessment approach through which an adult immigrant learner's readiness and proficiency level is assessed in a CLARS centre/site in order to place the learner in an appropriate language training class, whether in a federally funded CIC program (such as LINC/CLIC) or a provincially funded MCI program (such as ESL/FSL). Full implementation expected in Ontario by the end of 2012/start of 2013.

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1 Council of Ministers, Canada (CMEC), *Developing an Adult Education Policy Framework: Terminology, Typology and Best Practices* (2005), p. 7.

2 LBS Support Organization Guidelines, December 2011.

3 Jim Cummins, "BICS and CALP: Empirical and Theoretical Status of the Distinction," eds. B. Street and N. H. Hornberger, in *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Springer Science + Business Media LLC, 2008), p. 71.

**Canada Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA):** The five-year agreement signed in 2005 by federal and provincial ministers responsible for immigration (CIC and MCI) that was extended to March 2011. This agreement sets the framework for enabling and enhancing the coordination of federal and provincial settlement policies and programs, defining common standards and harmonizing approaches as both ministries address gaps in services to immigrants. The CLARS initiative sprang from COIA.

**Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT):** An assessment tool that measures an adult's current functional level in math, reading and language as they correspond to school grade levels.

**Canadian Adult Reading Assessment (CARA):** An assessment tool that is comprised of reading passages with a readability range that covers Grades 1-12 followed by a set of comprehension questions.

**Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB):** A set of language performance standards with levels literacy to 4 (basic/elementary), 5 to 8 (intermediate), and 9 to 12 (advanced).

**Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB):** A not-for-profit, national standard-setting body for the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

**Common Assessment [in the LBS Program context]:** The approach to assessment used by LBS service providers, whereby agencies use comparable assessment tools and approaches, based upon the common language of learning outcomes, in order to enable learners to move among these agencies without being unnecessarily reassessed. Common assessment also facilitates communication about the achievements of learners with other stakeholders of the LBS Program, such as training programs and employers.<sup>4</sup>

**Common Assessment of Basic Skills (CABS):** CABS is assessment tool used to support initial assessment using the LBS Levels. The tasks in CABS focus on the development of print and meaning component skills, such as decoding and vocabulary development, the writing process, or numerical operations and calculations. A CABS online tool also is available. LBS Levels are articulated to Essential Skills levels 1-3 in the domains of Reading Text, Document Use and Numeracy.

**Competencies:** Broad, generic categories of learners abilities that capture and organize the learning in a program<sup>5</sup>; Statements of intended outcomes of learning applicable to a variety of specific contexts; observable, measurable behaviours, usually evaluated against specifically stated objectives, conditions or standards of performance.<sup>6</sup> The six **OALCF competencies** are: Find and Use Information; Communicate Ideas and Information; Understand and Use Numbers; Use Digital Technology; Manage Learning; and Engage with Others.

**Competency-based approach:** An approach encompassing the interaction of skills, knowledge and behaviours that contributes to learners being able to perform authentic and purposeful tasks.

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<sup>4</sup> Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. *Common Assessment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program*, (August 2000), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, (2011). *Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework: Glossary*. Employment Ontario.

<sup>6</sup> Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Glossary of Terms website page. [http://www.language.ca/display\\_page.asp?page\\_id=999](http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=999).

**Communicative competence:** A speaker's fluency and accuracy in a given language that demonstrates communicating in socially appropriate ways within a particular speech community. It involves knowing both the language code and what to say to whom, and how to say it in a particular cultural context. Communicative competence involves knowing how to:

- Use language for a range of different purposes and functions
- Vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g., knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)
- Produce and understand different types of texts (e.g., narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)
- Maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g., through using different kinds of communication strategies)<sup>7</sup>

**Communicative language teaching (CLT):** An approach to second language instruction that emphasizes interaction through role-plays, games, pair work and other kinds of partner/group activities.

**Curriculum:** The planned content and experiences to which learners should be exposed to in order to achieve learning goals.

**EAL:** Acronym for English as an Additional Language

**EFL:** Acronym for English as a Foreign Language

**EOIS-CaMS:** Acronym for the Employment Ontario Information System - Case Management System – a web-based, real-time software solution that supports the administration and management of clients participating in EO programs and services.

**ESL:** Acronym for English as a Second Language

**ESL credit:** An English as a Second Language credit course offered in 5 levels (ESL A-E) – intended for secondary school student or mature students with age-appropriate literacy and educational backgrounds in their first language but whose second/additional language (English) is significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools

**ESL non-credit:** English as a Second Language classes offered through the local school boards – funded by the provincial Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI).

**ESL Literacy:** A program for individuals for who are learning English as a Second Language and who are not functionally literate in their own language.<sup>8</sup>; Also, a growing field in Canada and throughout the English-speaking world.

**Employment Ontario (EO):** Ontario's integrated employment and training network in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that oversees programs, such as Apprenticeship, Literacy and Basic Skills, Second Career, and more.

<sup>7</sup> Richards, J.C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp.2-3

<sup>8</sup> Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: *ESL for Literacy Learners* (2000), p. ii, [http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.language.ca/pdfs/esl_literacy.pdf)

**English Literacy Development (ELD) programs:** Programs that are a part of the Ontario Grade 9-12 curriculum intended for students whose first language is a language other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools and who have significant gaps in their education. Students in these programs are most often from countries in which their access to education has been limited, so that they have had limited opportunities to develop language and literacy skills in any language.<sup>9</sup> There are five ELD course levels (ELD A-E) and a student is placed depending on the amount of prior schooling, literacy development and knowledge of English. Note: Adults may work on an ELD credit during a quadmester in an adult learning centre setting.

**English Language Learner (ELL):** English language learner – this term is primarily used by teachers in the Ontario schools for students K-12 and in the ED-funded adult credit courses.

**Enhanced Language Training (ELT):** Federally funded language training programs with a work-language component for high English proficiency level adults (workplace experience must be included in this program).

**Essential Skills:** The nine skills needed for work, learning and life, as researched and defined by Human Resources and Development Canada – i.e. reading; writing; document use; numeracy; computer use; thinking; oral communication; working with others; and continuous learning. These skills are considered the foundation for learning and all other skills.

**Fossilized English:** English that contains long-established habitual errors that are difficult to correct.

**Fossilization:** A habitual language error that does not interfere with communication. The error usually develops and becomes permanent due to years of use and lack of correction.<sup>10</sup> In attempting to explicitly correct and address this type of error, ESL instructors often are frustrated that the habit is so ingrained in the individual that the error persists despite targeted correction efforts.

**General Educational Development (GED):** An international testing program for adults who have been unable to complete high school. Adults write a set of five tests in core high school curriculum areas. The tests measure the knowledge and skills usually acquired during a regular high school program of study. If the writer obtains a standard score of at least 450 on each of the five GED tests, s/he will receive an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate that is recognized by colleges, employers, and apprenticeship offices as equivalent to an OSSD/ Grade 12.

**Generation 1.5 students:** Students who arrived in Canada as children or adolescents and attended school in Canada. These students share characteristics of both first- and second-generation Canadians.

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education, *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12 (Revised) - English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development* (2007), p. 6, accessed November 6, 2011, <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/esl912curr.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Xuemei Li, Johanne Myles, and Pamela Robinson, *Teaching ESL in Canada* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 273.

**Grey Area Client:** A client whose needs/wants, eligibility criteria, and language and literacy levels make it difficult for service providers to immediately determine which agency offers training or services that would be the best fit for this individual.

**HARTs:** Acronym for the History of Assessments, Referrals and Training system – a web-based database where each language training client (whether a LINC or an ESL non-credit adult learner) will be assigned a unique identifier. Attendance and CLB proficiency levels (beginning competency; developing competency; and completing competency) will all be entered into the common database.

**Income Support:** Government payments to a learner that are administered via Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), or Employment Insurance (EI).

**L1:** First language/mother tongue.

**L2:** The second language that an individual is learning/acquiring (i.e. target language of second language instruction).

**LBS Levels:** Up until the introduction of the OALCF, the LBS Program described literacy skills in terms of domains, skill sets and success markers over a series of five levels - LBS Levels 1-5). *The Level Descriptors Manual* (<http://www.nald.ca/library/research/levels/levels.pdf>) published by the Ontario Literacy Coalition details the levels and their descriptors as well as performance indicators for the domains of self-direction and self-management. Programs often placed students in classes according to these levels, but with the advent of the OALCF, instruction and progress will revolve around the Complexity Levels 1-3 [which correspond with HRSDC's Essential Skills Levels 1-3] within the of the new curriculum framework's context of goal-oriented tasks. As the transition to OALCF takes place, LBS agencies and programs may still find themselves referring LBS Levels when it comes to their learners.

**Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC):** Federally funded English as a Second Language program for newcomers.

**Language Skills:** A learner's communicative proficiency in a language is described in relation to four language skills: speaking; listening; reading and writing.

**Learner Plan:** Describes the learning or program elements that prepare learners for their next steps beyond the LBS Program. It includes the learner's goals, background information, assessment results, milestone tasks to indicate goal completion, indicators of progress, program duration, additional learner supports required, service coordination, and referral results.

**Learner Supports:** Five (5) categories of supports that may be included in the learner plan in order to help the learner succeed and meet his/her goal in a broader sense. Through service coordination the LBS agencies coordinate with other organizations to provide any of the following supports if required for learner success: financial/material supports; academic supports; employment supports; social service supports; life/social skills supports; and health supports. [Learner supports are also known as 'wrap-around services'].

**Learning Path:** The training/education path a learner may choose as s/he works towards a goal

**LINC Literacy:** The ESL Literacy component within the federally-funded LINC Program.

**Literacy / Basic Skills:** [as defined in the 2011 LBS Service Provider Guidelines] Literacy is the ability to read, write, calculate, speak and understand, as well as sign (for the Deaf) and communicate in other forms of language according to need. Literacy is a continuum of these skills necessary for everyday life in the home, at work, in education and in the community. Basic skills are the additional skills a learner needs to use their literacy skills, such as, digital technology, interpersonal skills, problem solving and critical thinking.

**Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program:** An Employment Ontario program funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that provides adults with literacy, numeracy, and essential skills training to help them achieve their goals of employment, apprenticeship, secondary school credit, and postsecondary education, or to enjoy increased independence.

**Literacy Learner:** An individual enrolled in an LBS program.

**Mature Student:** [As identified by the Ministry of Education] A student who is at least 18 years old on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> of the school year; is enrolled in a secondary school credit program for the purpose of obtaining an OSSD; and has been out of school for a period of at least one year before returning as an adult.

**Metalinguistic Awareness:** Conscious reflection on different aspects of language, apart from the unconscious processes of understanding and production of language. This awareness covers a number of linguistic areas (e.g. phonological awareness; lexical/semantic awareness; syntactic awareness; syllogisms).<sup>11</sup>

**Newcomer:** An individual who was born in another country and settled in Canada 5 years ago or less.

**Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF):** The OALCF has been developed to include all the features of competency-based programming (i.e. competencies; assessment; learner transitions to work, further education or independence; and learning materials). The OALCF is comprised of six competencies that organize learning content and describe learner proficiency, using three levels of performance [these three levels coincide with the HRSDC's first three Essential Skills levels]. The OALCF's primary purpose is to make visible the skills, knowledge, and behaviours that adult learners need to fulfill their responsibilities at work, in the community.<sup>12</sup>

**OSSD (Ontario Secondary School Diploma):** Adults can obtain their OSSD by enrolling in an adult credit program delivered by school boards or the Independent Learning Centre. This credential is recognized by all employers, apprenticeship programs and educational institutions, including colleges and universities.

**Outcomes-based education:** A learner-centred approach to education that focuses on the intended learning outcomes resulting from instruction. Three components comprise an outcome-based approach to learning: i) an explicit statement of learning intent (outcome); ii) the process/strategy that enables intended learning to be achieved and demonstrated (curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and support and guidance methods); and iii) criteria for assessing learning which are aligned with intended outcomes.

11 Jeanne Kurvers, Ton Vallen, and Roeland Van Hout, *Low-Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition: Proceedings of the Inaugural Symposium*, Netherlands, Utrecht, p. 70, <http://lotos.library.uu.nl/publish/articles/000172/bookpart.pdf>

12 Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. *OALCF Curriculum Framework*. October 2011, p. 1. [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF\\_Curriculum\\_Framework\\_Oct\\_11.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Curriculum_Framework_Oct_11.pdf)



**PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition):** The formal evaluation and credit-granting process through which mature students may obtain high school credits for prior learning – the knowledge and skills that adults have acquired in both formal and informal ways. A Grade 9 and 10 individual assessment/equivalency process exists that grants up to 16 credits; and a Grade 11 and 12 equivalency process involves an evaluation in which students may gain no more than 10 credits. (Note: A maximum of 26 credits can be ‘PLARed’; however, the mature student must complete four credit courses to obtain an OSSD [it is recommended that principals of adult learning centres delay granting the Grade 11/12 equivalent credits until the four courses that complete the 30-credit OSSD requirements are completed].

**PLAR challenge process:** An assessment process in which a mature student who successfully challenges a credit may receive a percentage grade that is recorded on his/her transcript.

**Pedagogy:** Strategies of classroom instruction and methods of teaching.

**Prose literacy:** The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals.

**Quadmester:** The academic year in adult learning centres is divided into 4 quadmesters. A quadmester (often called ‘quad’) runs approximately 9 weeks. Students can take up to 3 credits per quad, meaning that a total of 12 credits can be acquired per year.

**Reading components in literacy development instruction:** Four crucial aspects of reading – alphabets [phonemic awareness and word analysis]; fluency; vocabulary; and comprehension.<sup>13</sup>

**Referral:** The act of recommending a client to a different agency or program that is better able to meet the client’s needs.

**Referral Protocols:** Systems and processes that ensure appropriate referrals and support effectiveness and efficiency.

**Second-language Acquisition (SLA):** The process of learning or acquiring a second language. Second-language Acquisition also refers to the field of study devoted to studying that process.

**Service coordination:** LBS service providers coordinate their literacy services with other service providers in a community, such as income support or health services, to meet the range of non-LBS Program-related needs and challenges brought to the LBS program by a learner.

**Situated learning:** Learning by doing in an authentic environment (e.g. on the job). Situated learning theory posits that learning is embedded within activity, context and culture. It is also usually unintentional rather than deliberate. Lave and Wenger (1991) call this a process of “legitimate peripheral participation”.<sup>14</sup>

**Specialized Language Training (SLT):** Provincially funded language training [MCI funded] with a workplace focus around a specific occupation (e.g. language training for healthcare; hospitality) – offered as either Language Training in the Workplace (LTIW) or Language Training for the Workplace (LTFW).

13 John R. Kruidenier, Charles A. MacArthur, and Heide S. Wrigley, *Adult Education Literacy Instruction: A Review of the Research* (National Institute for Literacy, USA, 2010), p. 8.

14 Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge [England: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

**TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language):** A high-stakes English proficiency test for non-native speakers of English who wish to enter a university program.

**Task:** [OALCF context] A purposeful activity that bundles skills, knowledge, and behaviours in unique and authentic ways. Tasks require learners to perform an action or activity, resulting in something concrete or tangible (e.g. a completed form, a to-do list, etc).

**Tasks:** [CLB context] Practical applications and demonstrations of language abilities; practical activities or actions that result from using language<sup>15</sup>.

**Task-based learning/Task-based approach:** An instructional approach that helps adults draw connections between what they learn in an educational setting and how they can apply their skills and knowledge in everyday activities.

**Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES):** Measures three Essential Skills needed for employment – Reading Text, Document Use, and Numeracy. It uses the 500-point IALS scale.

**Third-Party Assessment:** [in the CLARS context] Assessment that takes place at a site independent of ESL or LINC program service providers.

**Transition-oriented programming:** A term that brings together three key program elements: goal-directed learning, contextualized learning, and coordinated learner supports and services. These three elements maximize a learner's successful transition to the next step along their goal paths.

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<sup>15</sup> Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Glossary of Terms website page. [http://www.language.ca/display\\_page.asp?page\\_id=999](http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=999)