



Performance Management Support

Literacy Link South Central continues to be committed to providing performance management assistance to LBS service providers. Through this newsletter, LLSC shares tools, resources and information that can be used to impact your organization's performance management. If there are specific topics you would like to see in upcoming issues, please contact Literacy Link South Central at literacylink@gmail.com

Targeted Short-Term Programs

You may know them better as “boutique programs,” but now we are supposed to refer to them (I think) as Targeted Short-Term Programs. Whatever we call them, they are a relatively new way for adult literacy providers to meet the needs of clients, stakeholders and contractual agreements. While many adult literacy programs may have a history of providing Targeted Short-Term computer programming, there has been a significant increase in the number of short-term programs being provided by Literacy and Basic Skills Programs. You can find the most recent [listing](#) of such programming on the Learning Networks of Ontario website.

It's a Trend...But is it an effective trend?

Here's some food for thought. If you offer Targeted Short-Term Programming, how do you know it's effective? What proof could you offer that the provision of this type of programming is beneficial for learners, and not just a way of gaining more learners for your next QSAR? This question came up at a recent Literacy Service Planning (LSP) meeting – well, not the part about the QSAR – but the query about how we know that this type of programming is effective. If you don't currently offer Targeted Short-Term Programming, but are considering it, now might be the time to think about adding in some evaluation. If you ARE offering Targeted Short-Term Programming, give some thought to how you're demonstrating its value.

What's our theory of change?

A theory of change is basically a laying out of assumptions that are behind the delivery of Targeted Short-Term Programs. You may have different assumptions that you will want to test during evaluation, but it seems that many Targeted Programs are designed and delivered to:

- Increase clients' overall employability
- Attract clients who might, under regular circumstances, be reluctant to participate in an adult literacy program. Once they attend programming and have some positive associations with learning, their stay with an adult literacy program may be extended
- Satisfy the needs of some of our primary referral partners, such as Employment Services and Ontario Works.

If we could prove each of these assumptions through evaluation, we would be much better equipped to explain why we offer this type of programming and to justify the amount of resources we may allocate to it.

How to move ahead with evaluating Targeted Short-Term Programming

You may decide that now is not the right time for you to evaluate any or all of the Targeted Short-Term Programming you offer. Or you may decide that you only want to evaluate one aspect of the programming. The choice is up to you. You may already evaluate such programming when you offer it, so you may only need to add another question or three to the evaluation. If you don't currently evaluate these programs, put together three or four questions and start evaluating! And don't forget to check in with your community partners and stakeholders to see to what extent the programming you're offering is meeting their needs.

If you'd like to move in this direction, but you're not sure how, email us here at Literacy Link South Central or give us a call: literacylink@bellnet.ca or 519.681.7307. The more we know about what works and why, the better off we'll be!

What about Short-Term Programming in other jurisdictions?

Are you curious about how other countries or jurisdictions address or manage literacy programming? For a general overview, Australia's [Literacy for Life Foundation](#) News page is a great place to start. Australia is currently looking at a Cuban model of literacy programming called Yes I Can to raise the literacy levels of Indigenous persons. For more information, check out Adult Learning Australia's [website](#).

You may also be interested in reviewing New Zealand's Literacy and Numeracy Implementation Strategy (2015-2019), released in October 2015. This 18-page document is worth a read. You will see a lot of similarities between what's happening in New Zealand and what's happening in Ontario.

Their plan has three Workstreams:

Workstream 1: We will reach more people to help them succeed by:

- Increasing our focus on the workplace
- Collaborating with other agencies

Workstream 2: We will better target support to individual learners to help improve their outcomes by:

- Supporting more Maori learners to succeed
- Supporting more Pasifika learners to succeed
- Supporting younger learners to succeed
- Supporting adults who are new to New Zealand to succeed
- Supporting adults with learning difficulties to succeed

Workstream 3: We will ensure that tutors and trainers are well equipped to help their learners succeed by:

- Maintaining and promoting our educational resources
- Ensuring an appropriately qualified workforce

Workstream 4: We will support and influence other agencies' work by:

- Sharing our knowledge and resources with the Ministry of Education



targeted literacy
program in New Zealand

Questions or comments?

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, please email us at literacylink@bellnet.ca or call us at 519.681.7307.

If you have any suggestions for future content that you'd like to see, we'd love to hear from you as well.