



Performance Management Support

Literacy Link South Central is committed to providing performance management assistance to LBS service providers. Through this newsletter, LLSC will share tools and resources gathered from our partners around the province 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

Technology in the Adult Literacy Classroom

AlphaPlus explores how literacy programs in Southwest Ontario use digital technology

In the autumn of 2012, Literacy Link South Central invited AlphaPlus to visit 3 LBS programs in Southwestern Ontario to gather information about their current use of technology. Following their visits, AlphaPlus provided several recommendations on additional technology that could be used to support Literacy and Basic Skills programs.

Three organizations, one central goal

While the many Literacy and Basic Skill organizations in our region may operate differently, they focus on the same goal: helping learners continue on their goal paths. The three LBS service providers AlphaPlus visited during their visit were:

Literacy London	Gateway to Learning (TVDSB)	Tillsonburg & District Multi-Service Centre
www.literacylondon.ca	www.tvdsb.ca	www.multiservicecentre.com
The program: Offers part-time skills upgrading with flexible day and evening, one-to-one and small group sessions.	The program: Provides upgrading classes to adults who may have been out of school for a number of years and are unsure of their skill levels.	The program: Provides one-to-one tutor/student matches, small group sessions, and on-line learning.

Current Technology Practices

While there are differences in how LBS providers support students, the use of technology is common throughout. AlphaPlus asked each of the three organizations they visited what sort of technology their **students** currently utilize, and some of their answers included:

Student Technology	How it's used
In-class laptops	Laptops are stored in cupboards and free for students to borrow during class. In addition to being able to use the laptop, students gain experience with basic assembly.
Class websites	Communicating information about upcoming lessons, class assignments, etc.
Web browsers	To find information online via search engines - training includes how to perform effective searches
Email	Set-up and use of online email such as Gmail for communication and job search purposes
Online job search	Searching for jobs to match student skills, submitting resumes
typingweb.com	Free online typing tutor & keyboarding tutorial for typists of all skill levels.
GCFLearnFree.org	Free interactive online classes in reading, math, and computer skills, including Microsoft Office
thinkingblocks.com	Visual and colourful online math exercises for students
rbeaudoin333.homestead.com	Practice activities in phonics, word structure, and vocabulary
Mathtv.com	An assortment of videos showing how to solve math problems from the simple to the complex
The Khan Academy website	An online resource library of over 3,900 videos, hundreds of interactive challenges, and assessments skills to practice
Maths-games.org	Free online math games for learners of all ages
Teachingtime.co.uk and classroom.jc-schools.net /basic/math-time.html	Interactive websites with games and printable exercise sheets to support learning how to tell time on an analogue clock
Moodle Courses	A user-friendly e-learning platform for learners that includes online tools, including discussion areas, and collaborative work sites
Word, Excel and PowerPoint software	Microsoft Office programs are used to teach skills in creating and editing documents, spreadsheets and presentations
Ultra Key 4 software	A typing program for users of all skill levels
Spelling Fusion software	A program that teaches and tests a wide range of language and literacy skills at four language levels
Plato software	Integrated data, assessment, reporting, curriculum, and course management features. Offers courses in mathematics, science, social studies and English / language arts
Clarity's Active Reading software	Integrates reading with other skills, offering six levels from Elementary to Advanced, with ten units in each level

Current Technology Practices Continued

LBS staff uses an assortment of technology tools and resources to help them support learners. Here are some of the most commonly mentioned technology used by **staff** in the classroom:

Staff Technology	How it's used
FirstClass	A communications system used by employees of the Thames Valley District School Board that allows staff to access resources and message one another
School World	A resource that allows educators to create and manage their own website
Aloscotland.com	An online bank of Scottish-based learning and teaching resources, training materials, research and reports
Twitter	Used to follow groups and organizations that send short (140 character) educational-based messages, ex: twitter.com/eyeoneducation
Pinterest	A content-sharing service that allows members to "pin" images, videos and other objects to their pinboard. Used to gather materials to support classroom learning, ex: pinterest.com/search/boards/?q=numeracy
TenMarks.com	A web-based learning environment that offers adaptive math curriculum that's interactive and utilizes new technologies
EQAO	The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) site offers both the results of Standardized testing in Ontario, and sample tests for each grade and subject that is tested
SmartBoards	An interactive whiteboard partnered with a computer and projector that allows the user to project computer images, use SmartBoard-friendly interactive programs and write notes in digital ink
Online math resource sites such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • themathworksheetsite.com • math-drills.com • algebrahelp.com 	Offering quick-to-produce printable worksheets for simple and more complex math (from addition and subtraction, to measurements and graphing)
MarkBook	Class Management Software that can be used to prepare class rosters, record/analyze attendance and achievement, plan lessons, units and courses and more

The Future of Technology in the Classroom

Where do we go from here?

Bearing in mind the variety of technology used by learners and teachers in LBS classrooms today, there are many new and exciting ways to introduce technology to the classroom. AlphaPlus offers the following suggestions for **free** tools that LBS organizations can explore.

Facebook

What is it? A social networking site that can be used to build an online community and connect to / communicate with other Facebook users.

How it could benefit an LBS organization: Can be used to promote services, showcase clients, and advertise special events. Information posted on the Facebook page is automatically shared with people who follow (or “like”) the page.

How it could benefit LBS students: Setting up a Facebook page for the class will allow students to build a stronger community, connect to each other and get updates. Events, class assignments, homework, interesting links, pictures and videos can be shared on the page.

Support resources and documentation:

Interested in using Facebook in a classroom? This article provides an interesting perspective:

- <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/3559>



There are several LBS organization pages on Facebook:

- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tillsonburg-Multi-Service-Centre/109475662455610?v=wall>
- <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectREADLitNetwork?v=wall&ref=sgm>

And you can visit this example of a page built specifically for an LBS class:

- <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Labour-Education-Centres-LBS-Class/307213145961521?ref=hl>

Twitter



What is it? An online site where users can post brief (140 character) messages called “tweets.” Can also be used to share links to relevant articles or websites, and send messages to other Twitter users.

How it could benefit an LBS organization: Twitter can be used to promote programs, share information, and keep your followers “in the loop” on trending topics that impact your organization. Following other LBS and educational “tweets” can help you gather information on what’s happening at other organizations.

How it could benefit LBS students: Students can use Twitter to learn new technical skills, connect to others and understand how social media works. Once connected, they can receive updates and information from sources that interest them.

Support resources and documentation:

Examples of LBS organization Twitter feeds:

- https://twitter.com/Life_Literacy
- <https://twitter.com/ProjectREADWW>
- <https://twitter.com/multisercen>

An overview of how businesses can use Twitter:

- business.twitter.com



Wikis

What is it? A website developed collaboratively by a community of users, allowing any user to add and edit content.

How it could benefit an LBS organization: Wikis can be used as a project management tool, where organizations post meeting times and resources for a group, and where individuals can post what they're working on. Sharing documents that can be edited collaboratively is one of the key selling points of an organizational wiki.



How it could benefit LBS students: Wikis can be set up as online spaces for a class of students, housing links, class assignments, pictures, etc. Since it is online, students can access it in the class or from home/library.

Support resources and documentation:

Examples of education-based Wikis include QUIL Learning Network's Wiki focused on Task-based activities for LBS, and the "Tech Tuesday" Wiki hosted by AlphaPlus.

- taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.pbworks.com
- alphaplustechtuesdays.pbworks.com/w/page/37597292/AlphaPlus-Tech-Tuesdays

Get started building your own Wiki using either of the following services:

- pbworks.com
- wikispaces.com

Blogs

What is it? Short for the term “web log,” a blog is a journal-style web page typically displayed in reverse chronological order, so the most recent post appears first.

How it could benefit an LBS organization: Fairly easy to set up and manage, blogs are a great way to establish an online presence without the user needing a technical background. Organizations can post updates, information, opinions and links, allowing the blogs’ readers to comment on their posts. Some blog-building tools allow users to create a “static page” that can be used as the company’s website.

How it could benefit LBS students: Blogging can provide an opportunity for students to read and learn more about your organization, the classes you offer, or a research topic. They can also be run by the students themselves, encouraging them to develop their writing skills and ability to communicate, while gaining some basic technical knowledge

Support resources and documentation:

The Sioux Hudson Literacy Council and the John Howard Society of Durham Region both use blogs to provide an outlet for their students to share their experiences and feelings in writing:

- ourlearners.wordpress.com
- jhsreflections.wordpress.com

Learn more and start your own blog with the help of an online blogging service such as these:

- www.blogger.com/tour_start.g
- <http://en.wordpress.com/features/>



Google Apps

What is it? A suite of Google tools that can be customized to reflect your needs. Housed online rather than as downloadable software, it mirrors many office suites and includes calendar, email, word processing and presentation interfaces.

How it could benefit an LBS organization: As your material is stored online rather than in a computer hard drive, any of the following features (which are just a sampling of what's offered by Google) can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection, creating a "portable office."



- **Gmail** – the free online email program, with contact and task lists
- **Google Drive** – used to post, share and collaborate on spreadsheets, presentations, forms and documents
- **Google Calendar** – Where multiple users can share and view important dates, appointments and events
- **Google Sites** – can be used to build simple web pages and Wikis for programs or classes
- **Google Talk** – allows users to video call or chat online, creating virtual meetings

How it could benefit LBS students: The Google suite of tools can be used by students to create and collaborate on documents with classmates, instructors or volunteers. They can use it to enhance their technical and organizational skills through managing calendars or developing simple webpages. Having a Gmail account makes it easier for students to contact possible employers and apply for jobs online. Using any of the Google suite of tools will increase students' use of, and comfort with, online tools.

Support resources and documentation:

To see the result when AlphaPlus used Google Forms to register instructors for Moodle courses, view the below form:

- <https://docs.google.com/a/marcin.ca/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGZGTl9EQUF0VjU1NHB3aDEyNno4emc6MQ#gid=0>

Get started with Google Apps using their simple interface, which explains each feature individually:

- <http://docs.google.com/>

Prezi

What is it? An alternative to Power Point, Prezi is a web-based presentation and storytelling tool that uses a zooming canvas instead of traditional slides.



How it could benefit an LBS organization: Instructors can use Prezi to create visually interesting presentations for learners, or for use at meetings. As Prezi includes online storage space, completed presentations can be accessed from any location with internet access. There are three levels of Prezi access, two of which have a fee – please note that all content created in the free version of Prezi becomes available publicly.

How it could benefit LBS students: Prezi can also be used to build digital resumes, design portfolios, work on assignments, and more. Students often appreciate the program's design and develop tech skills when creating presentations.

Support resources and documentation:

To view an assortment of Prezis that focus on educational topics:

- prezi.com/explore/education/

Ready to make your own?

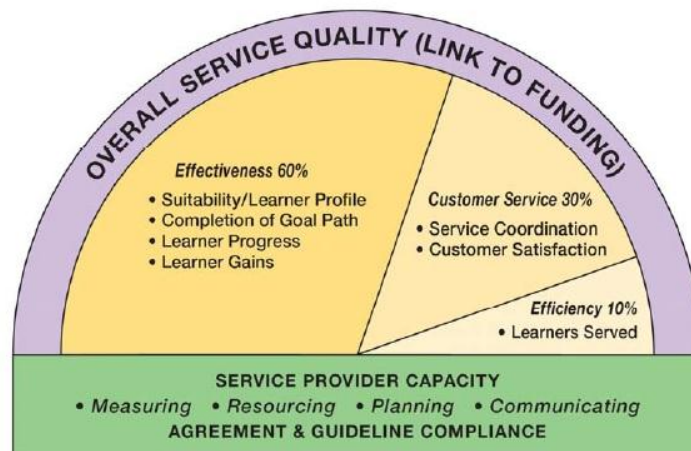
- prezi.com



Conclusion

We have enjoyed bringing you this month's Performance Management newsletter, and encourage you to begin exploring new ways that you can introduce technology into your learning environments. The online tools and programs we've discussed here are just the beginning! How could you use iPads in the classroom to support student learning? Have you been in a classroom that uses i>clicker remotes so students can vote or choose answers to your questions from their seats? Technology is changing quickly, and LBS has much to gain by changing with it.

Please visit the AlphaPlus website at www.alphaplus.ca for more information on using digital technology in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs.



Questions about this newsletter?

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