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## Literacy Networks

### What does a Literacy Network do?

The main role of Literacy Networks is to facilitate the Literacy Community Planning Process ([LCP](#)). They function as a liaison between Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU) and local literacy providers as a group. Literacy Networks also function to build partnerships and collaboration in the community between literacy providers and other community stakeholders. Literacy Networks may also undertake a variety of other activities related to literacy, such as research, training or assessment services.

**What does LCP mean?**

LCP stands for Literacy Community Planning. This is a process by which all of the literacy service providers in a region co-ordinate and plan services. This co-ordination culminates in an annual Literacy Service Plan (LSP).

**Do Literacy Networks have classes?**

No. However, every literacy network has information about, and can provide referrals to, any of the LBS programs in its region.

**Who funds Literacy Networks?**

Literacy Networks are part of Employment Ontario umbrella of services, funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU).

**Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)**

**What is Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)?**

LBS has 4 streams: Anglophone, Francophone, Native and Deaf. LBS provides basic education for adults in 6 competencies

- find and use information (e.g., read continuous text)
- communicate ideas and information (e.g., complete and create documents)
- understand and use numbers (e.g., manage money)
- use digital technology
- manage learning
- engage with others

LBS programs use the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). The OALCF provides a consistent delivery model while still allowing for individualized programming. There are 3 OALCF levels. Learners complete

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milestones as they progress through their learning plans and when ready to move to another level, complete a culminating task.

### **How long does it take to complete a Literacy and Basic Skills program?**

The length of time a learner is in the program depends on their pace of learning, the level they are starting at and their goal.

### **Who can attend Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classes?**

Anyone over the age of 19 can attend an LBS program. Some programs may allow students over the age of 16 to attend on an exception-only basis. You should have some identification to prove your residency status in Ontario.

### **How do I know if Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs are right for me?**

LBS programs are right for anyone who needs to improve their reading, writing or math skills. Even if you finished Grade 12 but you feel that you need to upgrade your skills you can still participate in LBS classes. Those who speak English as a Second Language must have a current Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 6 or higher in listening and speaking to participate in LBS.

### **Where can I find Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classes?**

LBS classes are available in every region of Ontario. Within each region there are often multiple providers. Contact your local literacy network through [www.learningnetworks.ca](http://www.learningnetworks.ca), go to the [www.essentialskillsontario.ca/program-map](http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/program-map) site for a complete list, or look under Learn in the Yellow Pages.

**Who offers Literacy and Basic Skill programs?**

There are many different providers for LBS. In your area LBS may be provided by a school board, community college or community based program such as a literacy council or pre-employment program.

**Who funds Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)?**

LBS programs are part of Employment Ontario umbrella of services, funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities (MTCU)

**How much does it cost to be a learner in an Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program?**

Most LBS program are free. Some programs may charge a small fee to register (less than \$25).

**How many students are in a Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) class?**

Class sizes vary (2 to 20+); some programs provide tutors who work 1 to 1 with learners.

**When can I take Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classes?**

Most LBS classes are continuous intake – you can start anytime. Note that some programs may close during the summer. Most LBS classes are offered during the day, but many locations also offer evening classes.

**Are Literacy and Basic Skills programs full-time or part-time? Can I study at home?**

Most LBS programs are offered on a full-time basis; some are offered on a part-time basis. Programs with tutors may be flexible in terms of when and where they can meet with learners. If you want to study at home visit E-Channel at [www.e-channel.ca/en/students](http://www.e-channel.ca/en/students)

**What is the difference between LBS and adult high school credit programs?**

There are 2 major differences

1. LBS programs help you achieve specific goals and acquire specific educational skills, whether related to employment, training or independence; high school credit programs are curriculum-directed (everybody studies the same thing).
2. LBS program studies go up to Grade 9-10 level equivalency - you do not complete LBS with a Grade 12 equivalent diploma; high school credit programs work towards achieving a Grade 12 diploma or providing pre-requisite credits for college or university studies.

**Can I take Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classes to a Grade 12 level?**

Community colleges in Ontario that offer LBS classes also have programs that bridge learners to the colleges' grade 12 equivalency program called Academic and Career Entrance (ACE).

**What is the difference between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and English as a Second Language(ESL)?**

LBS is for learners who speak English as a first language. If English is not your first language but you have a current Canadian Benchmark Level of 6 or higher in listening and speaking, you may be eligible to attend LBS classes.

**Can I take Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) in French?**

Yes, most regions in Ontario have LBS classes available in French for people whose first language is French.

**Can LBS help me with learning disabilities?**

Most LBS programs do not have specific classes for students with diagnosed with [learning disabilities](#). However, many instructors can help you increase your functional skills in reading, writing, or numeracy and help you with strategies and accommodations to help you cope with learning disabilities.

**What is a Learning Disability?**

An official definition of Learning Disabilities can be found at [Learning Disability Association of Ontario](#).

**Can I study Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) on the Internet?**

Yes, you can by connecting to any of these online programs.

The current e-Channel network consists of the following delivery organizations

[The Learning Hub](#) for English speaking students

[Good Learning Anywhere](#) for Aboriginal students

[Coalition Ontarienne de Formation des Adultes \(COFA\)](#) for French students

[Deaf Learn Now](#) for Deaf students

[Academic & Career Entrance Program / ACE Distance](#) for students preparing to enter college

**If I am on Ontario Works can I attend a Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program?**

Yes, and in most cases attending LBS classes can help you meet your participation agreement requirements.

**If I am on EI (Employment Insurance), can I attend a Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program?**

Yes, but check to see how many hours you are approved by EI to attend. Some EI offices will only approve upgrading for less than 10 hours per week. Other offices will approve more hours per week.

**What commitment do I have to make when I attend an Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)class?**

Whether you attend on a part-time or full-time basis, instructors are looking for you to make and commit to a schedule and specific goals.

**What can I do after Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)?**

Once you complete LBS you will be ready for employment, training or higher level education opportunities.

**What is Employment Ontario?**

[Employment Ontario](#) is a network for all of the employment, training and education services offered or funded through MTCU. This includes LBS programs.



## **Literacy and Essential Skills**

### **What is literacy?**

An international definition of literacy was established from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS-1994) study: “Literacy is the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential.”

### **Is literacy an issue?**

Both the IALS (1994) and the follow-up Adult Learning & Lifeskills Survey (ALLS-2003), found that 42% of all Canadians have difficulty with everyday literacy tasks. The 2013 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) Results supported the evidence that literacy remains an issue in Canada. PIACC also indicated that those leaving the workforce have a higher skill set than those entering the workforce, resulting in a skills gap.

### **What are Essential Skills?**

The term Essential Skills, in Canada, is generally used to refer to the system developed by Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) as a comprehensive description of the range of skills which are “essential” for work, learning and life. This includes Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Continuous Learning, Thinking Skills, and Computer Use. Go to the [Essentials Skills homepage](#) for further information.