**Host:** Gay Douglas

**Panelists:** Jennine Agnew-Kata, Doug Noyes and Tamara Kaattari

**Partners** in developing this session (and the others in the series) were:

* Coalation Ontarienne De Formation Des Adults
* Contact North
* Literacy Network of Durham Region
* Literacy Northwest
* Literacy Link Niagara
* Literacy Link South Central
* Rideau Ottawa Valley Learning Network

**Audience:** The session was developed with the needs of Workforce Planning and Delivery Boards and Regional Literacy Networks in mind.

**Session overview:**

The session began by defining what Labour Market Information (LMI) is. Because LMI is used in Literacy Service Planning, a definition of what the Literacy Service Planning (LSP) process involves and is intended to achieve was shared next.

A brief history of the Literacy Service Planning process was shared. As much has changed over the 30 years in Ontario, both its original format and how it has changed over the years were discussed. The impact of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) on Literacy Service Planning was also shared.

Key point: LMI + LSP = effective workplace and workforce regional planning

**Integrating LMI into the LSP**

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill Development (MLTSD) is increasingly talking about integrating LMI into the LSP process, so each panelist shared their thoughts on how LMI is integrated into service planning, including:

* That it’s a process that happens across the entire Employment Ontario system
* There is a sometimes-unwritten expectation that literacy networks integrate LMI into the process of planning, using demographic information in a skillful way to plan services
* All panelists agreed that the need to use LMI is indicated in Literacy Service Planning, but not always clearly outlined
* Funding platforms like SkillsAdvance Ontario (SAO) and Skills Development Fund (SDF) certainly favour proposals that use LMI as part of their applications
* There is much to be gained by partnering with LMI experts

**Client and workforce trend data**

There are many layers to integrating LMI to be reviewed. Participants were asked whether they think they are currently integrating LMI effectively in LSP/Business Planning. The general responses were mixed, and many consider it a “work in progress.”

Participants were then asked what kind of data they are using and where it’s coming from. While participants responded, panelists shared what sort of data they use in planning, including:

* Workforce planning board sources like data pulled from their job search sites, their analysis of stats Canada tables and census data, and results of Employer surveys.
* CMSM data
* Quarterly statistical reports about LBS programs
* Population demographics
* Settlement statistics
* Ontario Works (OW) caseload data and client information (like education level and length of time on the caseload)
* Information shared by LBS program staff at Literacy Service Planning tables
* The new “LMI helpdesk” in Peterborough
* The Future Skill Centre
* Chambers of Commerce
* Economic development organizations
* With the increases focus on workplace literacy, info from employment services partners and directly from employers has been useful

It was mentioned that with limited resources, making data-based decisions at the program level is critical. Access to LMI isn’t always the same as being able to interpret it… and understand how it impacts your community and the programs you serve. For example, there is much to be learned through comparison tracking (how one region is different than another and why).

In the chat, participants suggested they find their LMI from:

* The media
* Statistics Canada
* Workforce Planning Boards
* Employment Services partners
* Through conversations with people who share what they’ve heard at other meetings
* Through community consultations such as strategic planning sessions with other community-based organizations
* At local events such as announcement of a new business
* From the Labour Market Information Council (LMIC)

Looking at this list spurred some conversation around careful consideration of the validity of data sources, and the need to analyze their relevance. Comments were made around the fact that not everyone has the same access to data, or the same relationships with their local Planning Boards to be able to get information. In each community, the strength of the system may be different.

**The LBS/Planning Board Connection**

Many Literacy Networks do have very strong relationships with their Workforce Planning Boards, and work together to get the best possible picture of what’s happening in their local communities. Panelists shared ways that their networks have connected with Planning Boards, including:

* Hosting joint initiatives like conferences
* Applying for projects as partners
* Deciding together on a particular focus so both can tackle it from their own perspectives, then sharing the information they’ve gleaned with each other
* Working together on workplace literacy projects
* Jointly promoting apprenticeship initiatives
* Gathering data that proves a need in your community (not just anecdotal)
* Learning the employer point of view, which can be beneficial to pass on to LBS programs supporting leaners on the Employment Goal Path
* Getting a well-rounded picture of our local community by looking at issues through lenses other than LBS
* Learning the language that employers speak, which is different than the language we use in LBS does
* The Workforce Planning Board has been helpful in networks getting a deeper understanding of the realities of employers
* They are great partners to help connect LBS to organizations and planning tables around which LBS may not automatically be invited. They can advocate for us.

Participants were asked to think about their “wish list”? What do you think you’re missing in terms of LMI? This information is helpful for Workforce Planning Boards working to identify what data to gather and share.

**Integrating LMI into LSP**

When asked how the information gathered about the local labour market is integrated into the LSP process, panelists shared:

* Literacy Service Planning includes ministry-created templates and program charts - LMI is integrated into both, but LSP is much broader than that. Many networks actually produce larger LSP reports beyond Ministry requirements which can include a broad outline of local trends, observations of what’s happening at the community level, commentary on key local industries and future opportunities for LBS learners, and forecasting changes to come. LMI is used across all of that supplemental information.
* LMI can impact learners regardless of goal path – when they are setting goals, for example. Sharing information about service availability is part of LMI too. For example, keeping on top of changing transportation options (like new bus routes from companies like riverroute.ca) can open up new job options for learners on the employment goal path.
* Consider what a new Executive Director at a literacy network would need to know about integrating LMI into an LSP. Things like what factors are impacting the local workforce, and the systems or government programs that are introduced as a result of those factors. Different government initiatives that may duplicate services in LBS are an indicator that we all need to use strong LMI to know what’s going on in a system level. LMI is about more than just what jobs are in demand – and it’s important to share that up to the ministry too.

**The role of LBS**

The role of LBS in LMI can vary from area to area – in how they use it and how they impact it too. Panelists share that:

* LBS is both the recipient of, and source of, information
* LBS can play an active role in responding to LMI, including creating LBS curriculum for occupations in high demand in the region. The same can be done for sectors deeply impacted by COVID-19, like hospitality and tourism
* LBS can also respond to the timelines of seasonal labour – can plan for the cycle of work and backtrack to offer short-term targeted programming that aligns with the needs of the labour market
* These types of projects are a great opportunity to respond to local needs and develop a stronger relationship with employers
* LBS programs can adjust their direction to better reflect the local community and trends. LMI provides a level of responsiveness and also helps justify program direction and decisions.
* Having LBS programs share their experiences with the Workforce Planning Board helps fill in the gaps. For example, if they cannot respond to certain realities in the community, they can explain why – provide context. For example, a program may not be able to develop programs to support this particular future career because they deal largely with Level 1 learners, and have experience that those learners won’t commit to a job goal that requires post-secondary education
* LBS representatives can (and do) sit on a lot of committees that allow them to form links with potential partners who focus on labour market issues. For Example, LiUNA Local 1059 partnered with their local network to provide assessments, confirmed that many of them needed math upgrading, then worked with local LBS agencies to develop a program that would meet those needs. It’s a great way to demonstrate the value literacy can bring. And given the network’s view of what programs may be struggling to meet their targets and how the partnerships we develop can help them increase the number of people they serve while meeting emerging needs in the local community

**Wrap up**

Other webinars in this series were reviewed. The next (and last) webinar in the series is called “Workforce Planning Boards and Regional Literacy Networks” and is coming up on February 17th, 2022 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm. Register here: <https://echannel-contactnorth.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mAdhnEbiRYWAmXHdEMcCdg>

Resources from these sessions are available online at: <https://e-channel.ca/practitioners/lbs-workforce-workplace-resources>

Please evaluate today’s session: <https://tinyurl.com/2nmdny46>