Best Practices for Makin' It All Work!

Blended Learning Part 3 Online Community of Practice Webinar Series



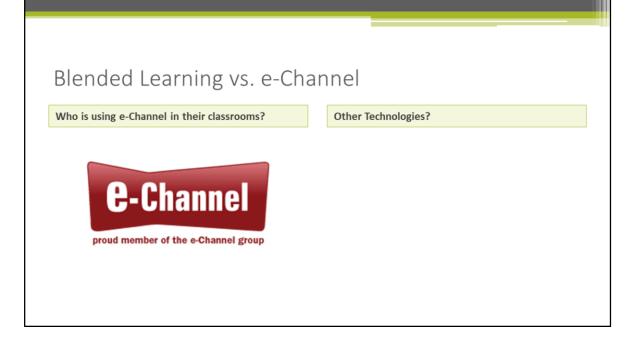
Presented by: Courtney Brown, AMDSB November 30, 2017

Welcome everyone. I chose to introduce Courtney, because she sits as a Board member for the QUILL Learning Network, and it's always wonderful to work so closely with our Board members.

Courtney is the Literacy Program Advisor for the Centres of Employment and Learning for Avon Maitland District School Board. She works out of the Wingham office, which isn't too far from Lake Huron so we're tucked into the Southwestern area of Ontario. Courtney has worked there for the last 10 years managing Avon Maitland's in-person Literacy and Basic Skills programming and also the Anglophone stream of e-Channel, commonly known as The LearningHub.

In her bio, Courtney writes that she has been there since 2007 when The LearningHUB had 90 learners, and now they have served more than 20,000 people. That's amazing to know that so many people have been served by this wonderful platform. We're really looking forward to hearing about the best practices that Courtney will share with us today. Welcome, Courtney. We're looking forward to this wonderful webinar. Courtney begins:

It's a pleasure to be here, and I hope that each of you are able to take a little piece home with you to put in practice in your programs. If you have questions during the webinar, please don't hesitate to ask.



I'm going to start the webinar by talking a bit about what blended learning means. We do know that blended learning incorporates the e-Channel programs which are the online service delivery of LBS programming across the province of Ontario through five delivery streams. We also know that blended learning can incorporate digital learning or other technologies in the classroom. I want to take a moment to poll the audience to see what technologies you are using or if anyone in the audience is using e-Channel and how familiar you are with it.

I do see that there are a few fellow LearningHUB staff on the webinar today – thank you for your support! Obviously they are quite familiar with the tools and resources we use within our Anglophone delivery of the e-Channel program. For any of the classroom programs, are there any other technologies that you lean towards in your classroom that you are incorporating for blended learning?

A couple are saying that they are using The LearningHUB, and some say they use other sites for math and computer use, and some say that they are looking forward to incorporating e-Channel into the classroom.

As programs grow and expand, they do bring in new staff and instructors, and we look

forward to building relationships with those people. Don't hesitate to contact us – everyone is very approachable if you have questions. Sarah is also a wonderful resource if you are looking to incorporate e-Channel delivery into your programs.

There are a couple of participants who are using f@d with the Francophone stream. YouTube is mentioned as is GCF LearnFree. We do use those technologies within e-Channel, and it's great to see that some of the other programs have that comfort level. It really helps as you bring you students into that environment if you can be alongside of them and help them gain confidence.

Thanks for your participation. It's nice to see what comfort levels are out there.

Shared Learners – What we know...

In the event more than one service provider is providing training to a learner that prepares them to complete a specific Milestone assessment, it is acceptable for both service providers to report on the same Milestone.

- MAESD (MTCU), 2014

Going back a couple of years now, when we talk about blended and shared learning just what do we know? Where did this adventure of blended learning really start? What we do know is when more than one service provider is providing training to a learner that prepares them to complete a specific Milestone assessment, it is acceptable for both service providers to report on the same Milestone.

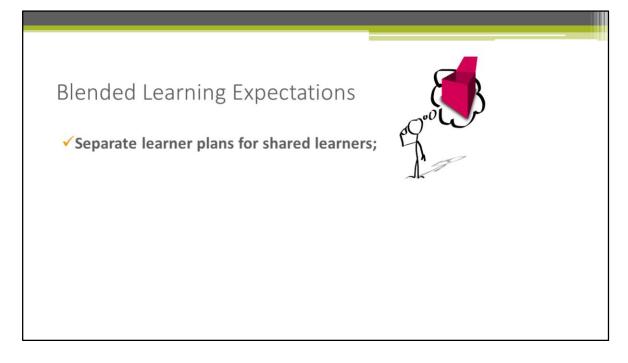
Back in 2014, around the time that the e-Channel projects became programs, the Ministry provided a memorandum to explain what blended learning is and how it can be used. Since that point, there hasn't been a whole lot of formal communication around how to adopt blended learning or how to incorporate it. But what we do know, is that we have the blessing to share our learner plans and share our learner achievements across programs when that blended learning does occur.

So as I mentioned, in 2014, the Ministry circulated a memo indicating that Milestone and Culminating Task Assessments for learners accessing multiple LBS sites could be shared when more than one service delivery site – that could be a classroom program and an online program -- contributes to a learner's success. This memo clarified that it is acceptable for one service provider to conduct an assessment with a learner and that both service delivery sites could document the achievement in their reporting to the Ministry in CaMS.

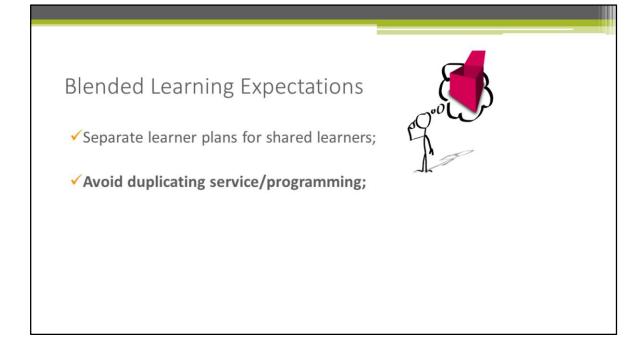
That's the premise that we are building our blended learning on, and what we do know is that the contributions of both the classroom programs on the ground and the e-Channel programs are really helping strengthen learning across the province.

This news was well received for blended learning, however, it raised some questions about what type of documentation was needed and what qualified as both programs contributing to "success".

When blended learning occurs, LBS service delivery sites need to demonstrate that the training they provided contributed to the successful achievement of the Milestone or Culminating Task that is being shared through documentation of learning activities in the learner's file. In e-Channel, for example, we document that shared learning experience through learning activities and through the Milestone achievements, so the Milestones and the learning activities are shared between the programs. We do ensure that we clarify who administered the Milestone assessment just so that it's clear.



As far as expectations around blended learning, what's really required? We're supposed to have individual learner plans for each learner in our program, so classroom and e-Channel programs each need to maintain separate but complementary learning plans for those learners. That means there is collaboration between the two programs, and the learner is aware that they are contributing to two learning plans.

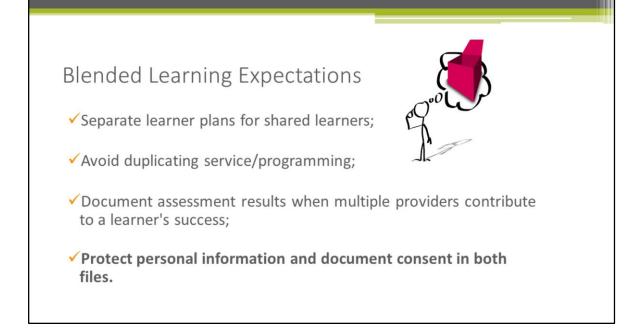


We want to avoid any duplication of service. We want to complement each other, not compete with each other. We want to support the work that's happening in each of the classrooms, depending on what's being utilized in the classroom and what's being completed in the online program. We don't want to operate in isolation of each other because we want to be sure that we're complementing the service plans and that the learning is shared. We want to make sure that when those shared competencies are being reported on, that the documentation is in place to support that.

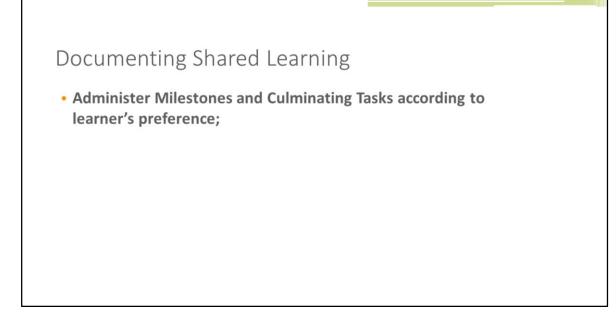
Of course, we want to avoid assigning a Milestone more than once. The communication between the programs and with the learner definitely helps get those ideas clear and up front so we know exactly who is targeting what and how things are going to roll out.

Blended Learning Expectations	P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P P
 Avoid duplicating service/programming; 	
 Document assessment results when multip contribute to a learner's success; 	le providers

We document our results when multiple service providers are contributing to that success. Both service providers need to document the Milestones and Culminating Tasks (if that's the case) regardless of who administered the assessments when both providers contribute to a learner's success. If a classroom program is going towards one Milestone, and an e-Channel program is going towards another Milestone, that's separate from that shared learning. We'll review that a bit more in the slides ahead.



Finally, we want to ensure that we are protecting the personal information of learners. We need to ensure that there is consent for sharing information in both files. This consent is required to be on file by both agencies to support blended learning and communication about learners across programs. When one program is communicating with another program and including the learner in that correspondence, we just need to ensure that consent is on file giving us the permission to consult on that learner when blended learning is happening.

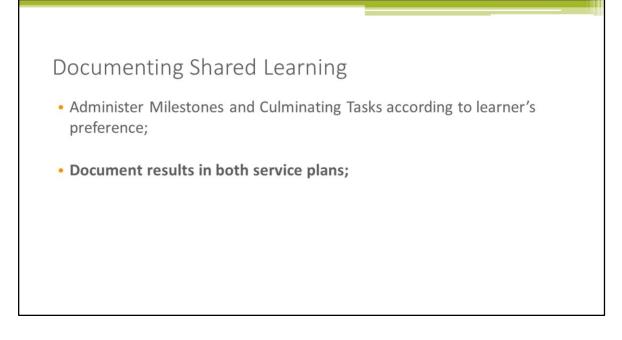


When we talk about documenting shared learning, we know that either program can administer Milestones or Culminating Tasks depending on learner's preference, schedule or learning style. If a learner is more comfortable doing something, perhaps with paper and pencil, then the e-Channel provider can work with the classroom program to ensure that the learner's needs are being met.

But regardless of who administers the assessments, it should be clear to both programs as well as the learner how assessments will be handled. This avoids confusion between service providers and of course the learner. For example, if an online practitioner administers a Milestone for a blended learner, they might find out down the road that the classroom practitioner may feel that the learner needs more learning reinforcement before they go ahead and attempt that Milestone. Or perhaps they have already done it, and the information just isn't documented in CaMS just yet. That's why communication between both programs is KEY to support e-Channel in the classroom and why there is a relationship between the classroom and the online instructor.

We don't want to confuse learners by administering a Milestone that perhaps they have already attained or didn't attain and may not be ready to reattempt it yet. So

that communication is really key.

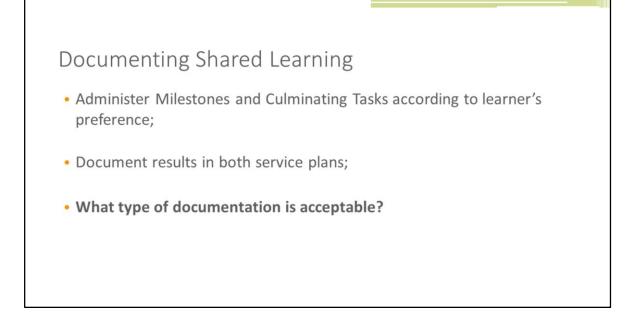


We can share the documentation within CaMS reporting as long as the supporting documentation is present, ensuring that the story makes sense, that learning activities are clearly articulated and that the relationship is clear and that there is documentation in the notes regarding what the learning is doing and how it's contributing to that learning. This includes checking off the "Blended Learning" option in CaMS if a service provider is crediting blended learning in a learner's file.

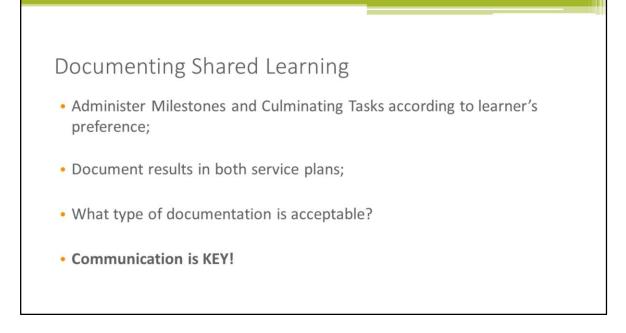
ame o	f Sub-Goal		Start Date	End Date	Status	Outcome	
e Digit	al Technology		13/09/2017	03/10/2017	Completed	Attained	
tails me pe n Iten	75	Use Digital Te Competencies	chnology		lutcome wner	Attained	
		Name	MileStone #	Start Date	End Date	Status	Outcom
-	!	Use Digital Technology	54	13/09/2017	18/09/2017	Completed	Attained
P E E E E F	ame rimary Client spected Start Date ctual Start Date ductore od Cause stimated Cost lan Item Owner	1	ise Digital Technology 3/09/2017 3/09/2017 evel 1	E A O S A	ub-Goal Appected End Date Cual End Date Utcome Eatus ctual Cost esponsibility	Use Digital Techni 15/09/2017 18/09/2017 Attained Completed	logy
S M M	dditional Information ervice Delivery Site lilestone lilestone Description omments	54 54-D1 - Log into	a user account on a computer.		elivery Nethod Jended Learning	Classroom Yes	

I'm bringing up an example in this slide. What we do know is that if a classroom program is crediting some online learning or perhaps a Milestone that an online program has administered, they should be be indicating that it is related to blended learning. That is found at the "plan item" level. You can see that in this case, it's referring to Milestone 54 and that it was attained.

You can see at the bottom of the image that there is a comments section, and that's where those notes can be made regarding who administered the Milestone. If it was a blended learning Milestone, perhaps the service provider who is putting it in the learning plan wasn't the one who administered it. That's the section that is really important. I'm not sure that everyone realizes that section is in CaMS or they may be unsure of when to use it. Some classroom programs we see are using it and some aren't. As e-Channel service providers, we would indicate if it was blended learning as well.



What type of documentation is acceptable if, for example, a classroom program is noting blended learning that an online program administered? Email communication between programs can be included in our files as documentation. I know that within the LearningHUB, if we administer a Milestone assessment with a blended learner, that success is communicated back to the learner through an email, and the classroom practitioner is included in that. That type of documentation is what can be printed off and noted in the file. We want to be sure that those Milestone and Culminating Tasks remain secure and that they are filed away and aren't being shuffled around through the internet. That communication does go back and forth between the online instructors and of course the learners to indicate the outcome of their assessment. As I noted in the previous slide, the comments can be noted in the Plan item in CaMS to indicate that blended learning occurred, and the communication is clear as to who administered that Milestone.



Communication is really important. e-Channel programs may use different Ministry approved tools to administer Milestone and Culminating Tasks digitally. When Milestones were introduced, they were available to the classroom programs right away using paper and pencil delivery, and they we stepped back and said, "how is e-Channel going to administer this", and how will this work in the online world? We went through a process where the delivery of online Milestones was approved and vetted through the Ministry.

I know that The LearningHUB primarily uses Moodle, and GLA may use Saba for some or other online tools. Be aware that the different programs may administer them slightly differently. If you have a learner in your classroom, and you really feel that the best place for that Milestone to occur is in that classroom, remember that communication is so important around that.

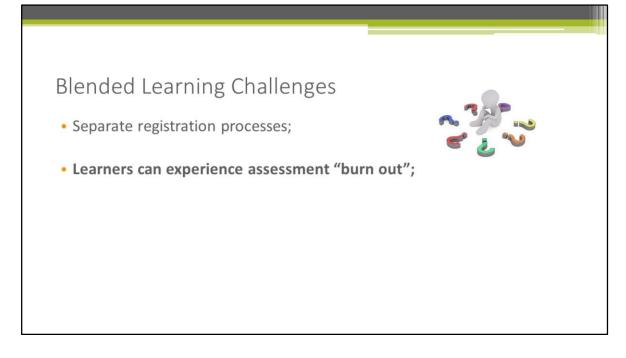
We also recognize that completing tasks online can add an additional layer of complexity for the learner so ensuring the right approach is taken for each learner is important. The last thing we want is for someone to have anxiety around the technology when they are in an assessment situation.



Now some challenges.

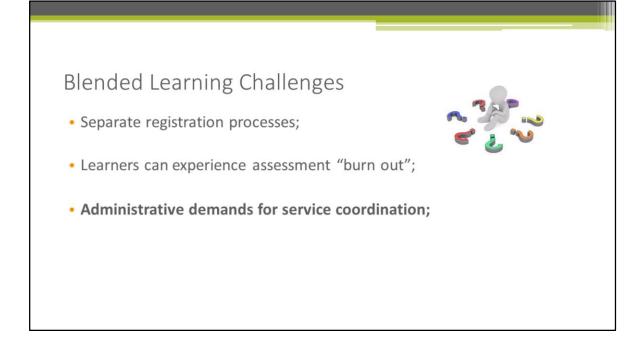
New ways of doing things don't come without some challenges along the way. We do recognize that the programs each have separate registration processes and that it is required for a learner to register with multiple programs if they want to participate in classroom and e-Channel learning. This process starts at program intake and runs straight through the exit and follow up process. We know that learners get frustrated with duplication of paperwork and assessments, but both programs are required to document the same information.

We need clear communication with the learner around what is required to participate in more than one program so they don't say, "I already did that and now I'm being asked to do it again". Unfortunately, that is the framework we are working in right now.

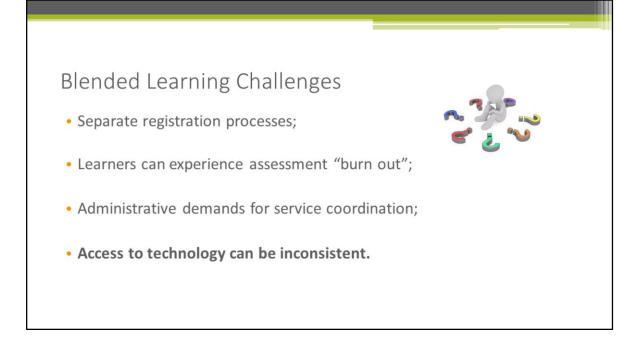


We also know that learners can experience some assessment burnout. The intake assessment processes could be streamlined. If you had something that you did in the classroom that you feel would be beneficial for the e-Channel providers to be aware of, especially when we're talking about common assessments, or if you have already assessed your learner before referring them to e-Channel, sharing those assessments is absolutely welcome.

There may be some assessment required by the e-Channel provider, because each program does operate individually, but certainly if there is information that the online provider can capitalize on in the beginning, that is a great way to establish that relationship upfront.



We also recognize that administrative demands for service co-ordination are challenging for classroom service providers. Supporting blended learning really does take time. We know that the administrative resources to communicate with multiple service providers for learners accessing e-Channel can be limited, but it is so essential for the learner's success. We recognize that with five e-Channel service providers, sometimes you might contact one and then think you have the wrong program, but we're pretty good about redirecting. Sarah is also a good resource if you're looking for contact information for a particular program.



We also know that access to technology can be inconsistent, and there is some work happening right now regarding the technology refresh on a provincial scope, so that's promising. We do know that regular access to technology including a reliable internet connection is inconsistent across the province. That's not just the northern regions! Even here in Huron County we have pockets that don't have reliable access to internet.

If a learner doesn't have access or it isn't available, we recognize that blended learning just isn't the right fit right now until the technology can be established or there are other supports in place. We definitely want learners to have positive online learning experiences. If things don't go well, we want to be clear why if they return so perhaps it will be better the second time around, and we can perhaps remove some of those barriers. We don't want learners to get frustrated with technology resulting in a negative online experience. We want to make sure that they have a positive experience right from the beginning.

Are there any other challenges you have faced in your classroom programs around blended learning?

E-Channel providers are always open to improving our processes and the way that we work with classroom programs. We tend to find new challenges all the time! If something is going on, we do appreciate you reaching out and letting us know.

Makin' it work - What do learners need?

- ✓ Personal email address
- Basic email and the Internet use skills
- ✓ Regular access to a computer and the Internet
- ✓ Access to software for specialized courses (if applicable)
- ✓A headset with speakers/microphone for synchronous courses
- Time management skills to balance two programs
- Clear goals and timeframe to reach them

To make it all work, what do learners really need?

I'm going to speak on behalf of all of the e-Channel programs when I say that our primary communication tool is typically email, so they should have a personal email address that works. I know that some programs specify that they want a "professional" type of email address, but sometimes just knowing that a learner has one is a step in the right direction. Make sure that they have that set up ahead of time, that they have the support they need to communicate with their online instructor, and that they know that will be an expectation.

Basic email and internet use skills are important, particularly if learners are going to be participating in their upgrading independently, i.e., outside of class time. We do have technical support at the program level, and Contact North does provide technical support for some of the learning platforms as well. However, if a learner has never used a website before, it's challenging to expect that they will thrive in an online learning environment.

I've already mentioned access to a computer and the internet. If they don't have that access at home, it could be in a classroom program or the local library, a Contact

North access centre – there are various places around the province that can support access to the internet.

A question from the text chat: "Has anyone asked their ETC if training supports can be used to subsidize the cost of internet access?" For e-Channel specifically, we don't have training supports. Speaking personally from my relationships with classroom programs, it hasn't come up for me. I know that it has been discussed before. Not all learners have the ability to go to another location, and there may be barriers to doing so. If they aren't comfortable doing that, if they can't access income support or it can't be provided through other resources, it does pose a challenge. I would be interested in hearing more about that!

Sarah Stocker: Training supports for digital users is definitely a topic of conversation that came up amongst e-Channel providers recently. Given that we're going into a phase of work groups and reference groups to expand and improve LBS, I am sure this will be brought forward, and we hope that there will be a response. It's certainly recognized as an issue amongst e-Channel providers.

Courtney: Access to software for specialized courses, if applicable. For example, if a learner wants to participate in a word processing course or an Excel course, make sure that they have access to that technology or software. We do, from time to time, see registrations come through saying that a learner wants to do Microsoft Word, but they don't have access to the software. E-Channel service providers do provide curriculum around free products, like Google products, but if learners are looking for something that requires a specialized software, ensure that they have access before they are referred or sign up for a course.

A headset with speakers and microphone for synchronous courses. That is an important one. If they are taking live classes on the Saba classroom, if there isn't a headset available, be sure that there is a speaker and microphone built into the computer. If they're doing that class from a classroom or a computer lab, ensure that they have the appropriate environment to participate actively in that course. Text chat is useful, but sometimes audio provides a level of clarity.

Time management skills to balance two programs. This one's really important. E-Channel does have various requirements around participation or timelines of course delivery, but ensuring that learners know that they are going to be part of two programs and that there are expectations with both programs is very important. Sometimes learners are very excited, and they start with an e-Channel program, but it turns out that they don't have the time to dedicate to both programs. We do require learners to be actively participating in their courses, and some of the ACE courses are time sensitive, so learners must be sure that they have the time to participate in both

programs.

Clear goals and a timeframe to reach them. For example, don't refer a GED learner whose test is booked for next week! That's probably not the right approach, because we wouldn't have enough time to work with them and provide the appropriate work and time needed. Sometimes it takes a couple of weeks to get going and to get the assessment piece done and get them started. Just make sure that they know how long they want to be part of the program and that it aligns with their goals.

The LearningHUB does have a readiness checklist. If you're interested in seeing that, it's on our website, learninghub.ca, under the practitioners tab, and it's called "Readiness Checklist." It also has an award format available to print out. You can sit down with the learner and go through the checklist: if there are more "nos" than "yeses", you can come up with a plan in the classroom to get them where they need to be to have that technology in place, or to have the time management in place before pursuing blended learning. A collaborate approach is good to have in place when you are working with classroom learners and recommending e-Channel programs.

Makin' it work - Tips for supporting learners

- ✓ Provide on the ground support whenever possible;
- ✓ Set clear expectations for assessments with e-Channel programs;
- Limit the number of subjects / competencies learners are working on;
- Document formal referrals for service coordination;
- Encourage learners to communicate regularly;
- Keep in touch with e-Channel providers;
- Ensure learners have the time and technology to fully participate in e-Channel programming.

Tips for supporting learners in the classroom. These questions come up often. For example, what do I need to know as a classroom instructor? What type of technology do I need in the classroom to support learners in e-Channel?

That on the ground support is great. As I mentioned, e-Channel programs do have technical support capacity. We have a variety of tools that we use to reach out. Sometimes we do encounter firewalls or other things with certain programs. We do have some tools to support the learner, but having that physical body there to help guide them, even just in the beginning, is really important. It can help alleviate the anxiety around doing something new and reassuring the learner that someone is there to help answer questions.

Set clear expectations for assessments with e-Channel programs. If there are assessments that you have done that you want to consider, that is really important. We don't want to see the learner do the same type of assessment in both programs, but we do need to understand that both programs need to have those assessment records on file.

Limiting the number of subjects or competencies the learner is working on. This one

can go both ways. It totally depends on the learner. If you're working with a lower level learner who needs to focus on one area, and the two programs can collaborate and support each other towards a common Milestone or goal, then that's great. If the learner is going to be working at home independently or you feel that they are able to manage more than one course or competency, then that's different. You need to know what the learner is capable of and the areas they need to focus on. It's completely individual to each learner.

We do find it's best to align our subjects to maximize our outcomes with e-Channel, and targeting different content areas does work, but definitely depends upon the learner's level and their dedication. Of course, we're all working towards the same progress measures, helping each other out and maximizing the potential for success on all levels.

Documenting referrals is really important for service coordination. I'm going to bring up the information regarding referrals with e-Channel on the next slide, but that is important. If you are referring a learner to an online program, ensure that is captured at registration so the e-Channel provider knows what the referral in was, and viceversa when we're making referrals out to your programs. The communication must be clear so that it can be documented.

Encouraging learners to communicate regularly. That one is big. Knowing that they are receiving our messages and that they are responding to us is really important. Some practitioners say that the communication is directed to the learner and that they might not have seen it in their inbox, and we do welcome that feedback from the classroom practitioners when we are communicating with learners. If there is something going, or if the learner isn't responding, we do want to hear from the program. Perhaps the learner has been ill or busy. It's also important to give the learner the responsibility to keep the pace with their online instructor. If they aren't able to be online, let us know. If they are finding the work is too hard, let us know. E-Channel programs do need to know that the practitioner is involved, so if you have a question or a learner has a question, do pick up the phone – we are there on the other end.

That goes in line with keeping in touch with the e-Channel providers and communicating regularly. Sometimes learners struggle to articulate exactly what they need, so helping to organize the learner plan and coming up with clarity between the classroom and online programs is really important.

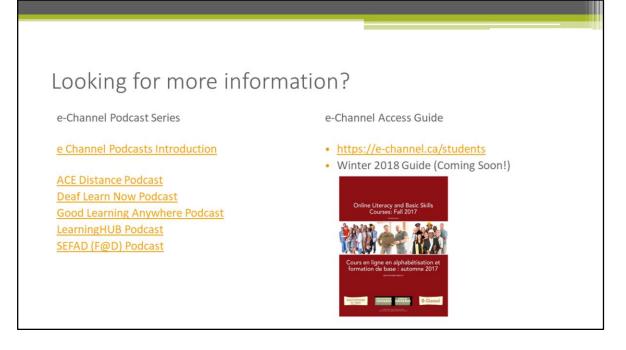
And finally, as I mentioned earlier, ensure that they have the time and technology to participate fully in e-Channel programming.

Referring to e-Channel	
Online Referral Form: • The LearningHUB: <u>https://ca.surveygizmo.com/s3/50000525/Referral</u> *Referral form identifies who should follow up to complete registration	
 Refer via Registration: Deaf Learn Now: <u>https://deaflearnnowcc.desire2learn.com/register</u> Good Learning Anywhere: <u>https://goodlearninganywhere.com/register</u> F@D: <u>http://www.sefad.ca/</u> 	<u>(</u>
Fillable Referral Form:ACE Distance	

Referral forms! They are listed here for the different streams. The LearningHUB has an online referral form. We did add in a layer of confirmation recently where when you make a referral in, you do receive a confirmation back so you have something to print off and document in your files. That's just an added layer of communication, so you know the registration isn't lost in cyberspace and you're not waiting to hear back from us. You receive immediate confirmation so you know it went through. That referral form does identify who should follow up, so whether the service provider is going to follow up with the registration or if the service provider expects The LearningHUB to forward instructions to the student directly.

Deaf Learn Now, Good Learning Anywhere, and the F@D program have their referral communications right on the registrations forms. ACE Distance has a fillable form which Sarah has distributed and has available to share with you.

We welcome your referrals, we welcome your calls and questions.



If you're looking for any more information, feel free to check us out. We have the Access Guide that gets published three times a year on the e-channel.ca website. The Fall one was there when I was preparing the slides, but the Winter one was posted in early December. It does provide a snapshot of what all five e-Channel providers are offering with the specific schedules where they apply.

We also have a podcast series which was created earlier this year which is a really nice introduction. It's great for programs, instructors and students. There is a five part series. If you are interested in all of the programs, you can take some time and go through them. There is an introductory podcast that talks a bit about what e-Channel is and then an interview with each of the service providers asking some important questions that programs and learners would benefit from. The podcasts were a lot of fun to put together, and they're a different way to learn about the programs and the various courses that are offered.

One other piece that we have been piloting. We are looking to strengthen the blended learning relationship, so the LearningHUB has started piloting a blended learner profile with a couple of programs. It's similar to the referral form, and we might be looking at expanding it with a couple of other programs. It's kind of unique,

because it allows us to capture a bit more information about the learner that might not come through on the registration form. It includes the goal path, the intake level, learning style, frequency of access to online work (i.e., where they will be doing their learning and how often they will be online), background of Milestones that have been completed or are being targeted, and preference of Milestone delivery. We're trying it out. It's a new approach that we're using to try to alleviate the questions that come through around establishing a learning plan or establishing a blended learning relationship. That's something that you might see a bit more of in the coming months. We have found that it lets the classroom practitioner share some important information such as a learning disability or anxiety around working with, for example, a male instructor. It's nice to have all of that information. We can of course still collect that type of information over email or through the contact page on our website. It's called a Blended Learning Profile, it's kind of an offshoot of our referral form. The referral form allows you to upload your assessment or your learner plan information if you're referring a learner to The LearningHUB, but this one asks for more specific information to support that time when the learner comes into the program.

https://e-channel.ca/ http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca/ http://www.deaflearnnow.ca/index.html http://www.sefad.ca/ https://goodlearninganywhere.com/

We look forward to hearing from you!



The five e-Channel delivery streams are listed on the slide: ACE (the College Sector), The LearningHUB (the Anglophone stream), the F@D (the Francophone stream), Good Learning Anywhere or GLA (the Indigenous stream), and Deaf Learn Now which is facilitated through George Brown College.

Debera Flynn thanks Courtney for her presentation and for talking about best practices by both classroom and online programs to assist learners.

Debera also reminds listeners that the next webinar takes place in January and focuses on how to make a win/win situation so that learners will want to get involved. The last webinar will be in February, and it will be a practitioner talking about other online items that we can use for blended learning such as YouTube, GCFLearn Free and so on.

Debera also thanks Sarah Stocker for her patience and support with these webinars for both presenters and participants.

Sarah also thanks Courtney for her presentation and for addressing the concerns that e-Channel providers hear from classroom practitioners.

Thank You!

Blended Learning Part 4 How to make it a WIN January 25, 2018 2:30 - 3:30 pm EST