



LinkedIn Learning

FIELD RESEARCH REPORT

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The views expressed are those of AlphaPlus and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.



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AlphaPlus LinkedIn Learning Report – Field Research

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Learning 1: Why project participants learn

- for inspiration
- to become competent
- to become conformant or compliant

For inspiration

- for the joy of learning
- to discover new things
- to innovate

To make myself a better person. And it helps me to use my own experience as a learner to support learners in the program and to let them know that they are not alone. And it gives me a little more confidence. ...Psychology courses help me understand myself and others. It makes it easier for me to communicate with more people.

I like to learn.

And I love to learn.

As a learner centre our mandate should be professional development – we should walk the talk – but it is mostly time and cost prohibitive.

PD is not just for keeping up and for compliance but also about your interests – not just to do things in your current job description but also things you want to do in the future or to enhance your resume.

We have PD and compensation – community-based programs cannot do as well in compensation as school boards and colleges – there is no promotion available but PD can help people grow and feel fulfilled at work.

Exciting ways to lead and support team – conflict management, handling stress, time management, work/life balance. People have different styles and need different approaches.

I take whatever is being offered. I try to support the organizations offering PD and if I can learn something new it is a good thing – it is worth it.

I think it is good to model lifelong learning and also to experience things that I can recommend.

To become competent

- To keep up to date
- To improve the work i do
- To solve a performance problem
- To acquire a new body of knowledge

If we do not include digital technology in our learning environments, we are not reflecting the real world. We used to be able to manage learning by being an avid reader but now we need to access the resources that are available online – if we don't, we will miss out on a lot.

I did not take an academic route to become an LBS instructor. My background is engineering. I did online training to get a TESL certificate. I have done [LBS training at CESBA](#) and I took the [Soft Skills Training](#). I also have done some of the [CLO modules](#) on making learner plans, portfolios and the [Digital Discoveries](#) resources developed in 2012. I don't always feel confident. I am new in the field and do not have as much experience as my colleagues. I want to learn to become a more effective teacher and to learn to better manage the administrative part of this job – as you know that has become a big part of being an LBS instructor.

My background is that I have a degree in art history and a minor in biology – I have no Masters degree. I need to learn about adult learning. I need access to the professional market.

To keep on top of things. To provide the best service I can (mostly around service coordination and what courses to offer). To understand what online learning tools are best. To see who is in the game as well especially in terms of curriculum.

I am new in this position and have had no training. As a co-ordinator I support learners and staff – people use me as a resource. I am learning more about outreach so that we can do referrals.

I apply what I learn to my work. I have been in field for 24 years. I am looking to change what I do. Our organization believes strongly in the value of PD.

I manage staff, volunteer and the Board – people turn to me for answers. I need to know policies of the organization, funders and government. I have a leadership role to keep the organization working and keep people working well together.

In our job descriptions – no one person can do it all when they come in but hopefully they know it all by the time they leave.

I would love for people to be cross trained in some of the Executive Director responsibilities. This would help in succession planning as well – for when I leave or even if I need to take time off.

There is not a lot for new teachers. When we are hiring, we often cannot find people with experience teaching adults and *there is not a clear learning pathway for people new to the field.*

I would try to find a good course that is relevant to what I am teaching. If I find it, I will make the time. I am worried that I am not giving the students the best experience. I am not confident that I know enough. At staff meetings the people I work with share ideas and this is very helpful.

I always want to be able to improve my ability to help students. I always feel there is more to know. And I love to learn.

I do this to keep skills current. I like micro-credentialling to keep my resume current. I recommend this to all the staff and the learners.

I have also done [AOAD training](#) [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act] and CPR and [Naloxone](#) training. This might not seem like LBS PD, but these are things that I need to know in my workplace and are transferable to other workplaces.

I do PD when I notice a gap in my knowledge.

I go online so I can train others.

To stay current – in all aspects. To stay aware of changes in digital technology - I am teaching digital technology and using it as a teacher and as a coordinator.

To become conformant or compliant

I like to get a certificate even if it is not of great value. I can put it in my personnel files. This also helps with reporting to the funder – MTCU asks programs how we know that staff is keeping up-to-date and certificates – even certificates of completion – help us show that.

The EO program has detailed guidelines and resources.

I want to make sure I am doing the right thing and things are constantly changing.

In the Executive Director position I have a multitude of responsibilities – I am like the CEO of the organization – it involves financial management, risk management, board governance.

PD at management level and for the Board – leadership, motivation, strategic planning, governance, funding in changing political climate and policy, legalities and things that have an impact on not-for-profits, changing operational needs in terms of politics and funding.

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Learning 2: How project participants learn

Learning Scenarios

- Intermittently – through training and other educational events
 - At work: classroom training, workshops
 - Outside the workplace: conferences, web courses, classroom training, workshops
 - Personal Learning Network or wider community of practice
- From time to time – as and when needed
 - At work: using workplace resources
 - Outside the workplace: using web resources
- Continuously – daily or very regularly
 - At work: doing the job, feedback and guidance from manager and colleagues
 - Outside the workplace: daily flow of new content, personal learning network
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - 1 high, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- yes/no

Scenarios 1 and 2: Just in time and refresh knowledge

- From time to time – as and when needed
 - Outside the workplace: using web resources

- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, 2 medium, **3 low**
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

- ⇒ Google it – and if a learner had a question like this, I would tell them to Google it 😊
- ⇒ Google.
- ⇒ Google.
- ⇒ Google it and find a video or something I can print out – I usually try to find something I can print out.
- ⇒ Google searches – look for How tos and YouTube videos (for just in time and for new concepts).
- ⇒ Google / YouTube.
- ⇒ Google search for things I need to know quickly.
- ⇒ I use help lines and Google.
- ⇒ Google.
- ⇒ Google it.
- ⇒ Look in Evernote to see if I have taught it before and then - **Google / YouTube.**
- ⇒ Sometimes what I find is too long and it is frustrating – I think that somewhere there must be a document with all this information but I cannot find it.

- From time to time – as and when needed
 - Outside the workplace: using web resources

- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

- ⇒ Searched online for Excel tutorials – found some at Microsoft and YouTube - I read the reviews and looked for the ones with pre-set markers so I could take things apart and play around with them.
- ⇒ YouTube video where I can fast forward to what I need.
- ⇒ Look it up online and in books we have at work or ask a co-worker.
- ⇒ I also like [GCFLearnfree](#) because I can narrow it down.
- ⇒ I sometimes use the [CLO discussion forum](#) – but there is not much happening there yet.
- ⇒ I use the [Quill portal](#) for learning activities.
- ⇒ [GCFLearnfree](#)
- ⇒ I went to do a series of workshops offsite – I was told that the computers were all Windows 8 but when I got there, I discovered that they were all Windows 7 which is quite different. I winged it for the first workshop but then went and checked out GCFL before the next one.

- From time to time – as and when needed
 - At work: using workplace resources
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

- ⇒ Look it up online **and in books we have at work** or ask a co-worker.
- ⇒ Look in Evernote to see if I have taught it before and then - Google / YouTube.

- Continuously – daily or very regularly
 - At work: doing the job, feedback and guidance from manager and colleagues
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

- ⇒ I contact _____ from the ministry – she is very helpful.
- ⇒ The former coordinator – she still works at the centre.
- ⇒ If I have a technical question, I ask my manager.
- ⇒ Other people – practitioner sharing, cross training, networking

- ⇒ We used to have a staff member who did our IT support but now we have outsourced that
 - the staff member is still here but I do not like to ask him for IT support because he is no longer getting paid to do that. It was great to have this support on site.
- ⇒ Look it up online and in books we have at work **or ask a co-worker.**
- ⇒ I had to clean out my predecessor's desk and found a set of handwritten notes. It was just by luck. I have worked through some of them and they have been very helpful.

Scenario 3: Concepts

- Intermittently – through training and other educational events
 - Outside the workplace: conferences, web courses, classroom training, workshops
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- yes/**no**

Responses:

- ⇒ Webinars – [AlphaPlus](#), [LNO Communities of Practice](#)
- ⇒ I would try to find a good course that is relevant to what I am teaching. If I find it, I will make the time. I am worried that I am not giving the students the best experience. I am not confident that I know enough.
- ⇒ Courses online – I take a course every semester (Laurentian, Loyalist or Niagara).
- ⇒ take courses as they pop up
- ⇒ for longer projects or in the case of shifting job descriptions – I look at colleges but then I have to look at the investment of time and money to determine if it is worth it. Sometimes this route takes too long – I need an outcome within 3 weeks.
- ⇒ I take online courses – recently I took Mental health for Refugees because we are working with Syrian refugees. It was convenient and I could watch the recorded lectures on my own time.
- ⇒ I did some live training about intercultural communication – I really like the live training because of the networking and collaboration.

- ⇒ I take [Gale](#) courses through the library. I have taken financial management, accounting and photography. I have also used [Udemy](#) – I took an IWD course to help us with our Empowering Women project.
- ⇒ Conferences
- ⇒ Workshops when we have time and money
- ⇒ [Charity Village](#) - I take the free training there. I don't use the paid training and resources because I don't know what I am paying for.
- ⇒ I am willing to copy what others are doing – I can change what does not work for us.

- Intermittently – through training and other educational events
 - At work: classroom training, workshops
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- yes/**no**

Responses:

⇒ United Way – we have access to learning – the United Way has list of people willing to do training in the region – some is free and some you have to pay for – we got help with strategic planning.

- From time to time – as and when needed
 - Outside the workplace: using web resources
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes**/no

Responses:

⇒ Google and read articles online.

⇒ Google searches – look for How tos and YouTube videos (for just in time and for new concepts)

⇒ Research on the internet for articles

⇒ CLO online

⇒ Strategic planning scenario – CLO has developed resources on topics such as strategic planning.

⇒ otherwise I try and find a site – I go to LNO and CLO

- Continuously – daily or very regularly
 - At work: doing the job, feedback and guidance from manager and colleagues
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low
- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

⇒ At staff meetings the people I work with share ideas and this is very helpful.

⇒ I ask the people I work with to learn from their experience.

⇒ Other people – practitioner sharing, cross training, networking

⇒ Hands on

- From time to time – as and when needed
 - At work: using workplace resources
 - Outside the workplace: using web resources
- Provide a personal experience
 - Level of personalization possible - 1 high, **2 medium**, 3 low
- Are self-organised and self-managed
 - Level of self-determination/self-evaluation - **1 high**, 2 medium, 3 low

- Are an integral part of the daily work -- **yes/no**

Responses:

⇒ I have a library at work from my background in business – I look at the books to focus my mind but there has been an evolution in information so then I go to Google for updated information or a new look at an old theory.

Scenario 4: Reflective practice

⇒ We pilot documents and processes with staff – sometimes students and tutors are involved.

⇒ I have worked as an outside evaluator.

⇒ My partner is a retired business person with a lot of wisdom. He is a mentor and I go to him with a problem – often to do with human behaviour – then I read and then I try something.

⇒ I take new ideas to our staff meetings to get input and feedback. Then we map out the idea in a visual way – we map out the flow of work, who is responsible for what, the limits and timelines.

⇒ Nothing radical or innovative

- we try it and ask how it went

- we usually know pretty quickly if something is working and can make tweaks in the moment
- when someone is trying something new – I make a note to check in to see how it is working
- we have sessions where we ask volunteers to share ideas and we experiment with some of those suggestions and evaluate their effectiveness
- one of the advantages community-based programs have is that we can switch on a dime – we do not have a chain of authority we have to go through such as the ones in colleges and school boards
- we allow people to try new things unless it contravenes a policy
- usually our process of pilot-reflect-evaluate is informal but we had a formal reflective practice process to develop the strategic plan

⇒ We were finding that some people were not attending very regularly so we implemented a reward for attendance. It seems to help. We keep readjusting – this is what we do at the Friday meeting. We are getting to know the learners and how different things work with different people.

⇒ We did the [Trails to Literacy](#) project about participatory learning. (NLS – 2002) Recently we have been looking at ways of getting digital technology to the community – especially in rural areas where there is no high-speed internet. We did research on the importance of

digital tech in the 21st century and what is happening in other jurisdictions in order to apply for funding.

⇒ All my teaching is one-on-one - if it doesn't work, I stop and try something else.

⇒ This is ad hoc and not systematic. For example – I looked at howtosopell.uk I kept it in mind and waited for a student who needed this resource. One student loved it, but another did not find it effective. The student who loved it had more experience using digital technology but the determining factor seemed to be the fact that this learner had a greater capacity for independent and self-directed learning – using this resource made this student feel empowered. The other student is developing those capacities and tried a course on the Learning Hub which worked much better – it was the level of self-directed learning expected that was a barrier rather than the use of digital technology.

⇒ We used to longer projects but that work no longer happens here. Trillium grants have become harder to access. It has been 5 years since we have had a big project. We have done some mini-projects – targeted training, evaluation re OALCF – but these are more qualitative than quantitative in terms of outcome.

⇒ Computer training – the technology is constantly changing and we are constantly revising the manual – it is a continuous process.

⇒ plus * above - When we work with Monika (AlphaPlus coach), she follows up. We do not want to be embarrassed so we try the new things, evaluate how it is going and then revise what we are doing.

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Learning 3: Criteria for good learning

Purpose

- ⇒ I want to learn to become a more effective teacher and to learn to better manage the administrative part of this job – as you know that has become a big part of being an LBS instructor.
- ⇒ If we do not include digital technology in our learning environments, we are not reflecting the real world. We used to be able to manage learning by being an avid reader but now we need to access the resources that are available online – if we don't, we will miss out on a lot.
- ⇒ It is good for me to get experience with online learning so that I can give learners tips. Some work well in chaos and do well in the classroom but others prefer quiet and we can accommodate them.

Pace and place

- ⇒ I want learning that fits into my workday – that I can do at my desk in between working with learners or before or after they come in.
- ⇒ I like to learn online because I can work at my own pace and be self-directed.

- ⇒ When you are working on a computer you can dip out of the course and do research as you go – when you have a question or want to look into something more deeply – instead of having to wait and do that later. I like that.
- ⇒ I like to work independently. I can focus when I work by myself. I like it very quiet and I usually study at home. My boss is okay with me working on courses at work and that works well to fit it into my schedule.
- ⇒ I think that face2face learning has value especially because of the sharing component but it is expensive and the time spent on travel is a waste. Online learning has huge value. I can do it for a few minutes at a time and fit it into my schedule without missing anything. Webinars are at a fixed time and sometimes I cannot attend at that time. I can listen to the recording but it is not the same I feel as though I am missing something – especially the opportunity to ask questions. I like learning that is time based – that I can do in a self-paced way but that has deadlines. Deadlines are important otherwise I do not do the work
- ⇒ Something that is online because I live in a rural area and it makes it quicker and easier if I can do it online.
- ⇒ Travel takes time and money – it is a waste.
- ⇒ There should be a good flow of information.
- ⇒ The pace should not be too fast – often videos are too fast.

⇒ Easy stop and start and manageable pieces.

Facilitator and Content

⇒ The person facilitating the workshop should have expertise.

⇒ It cannot be so easy that I feel it is a waste of time.

⇒ There should be a synopsis so that I can assess whether it is useful.

⇒ Delivery – the facilitators know their stuff and are more than ¼ step ahead of me

⇒ Professionalism (gave example of online facilitator who lost connection for 10 minutes because kids came home and started playing games)

⇒ Balance of activities to solid content – keeping it engaging and accessible to people who have a lot going on.

⇒ I would like to know more about

- program delivery
- managing people and leadership especially in terms of my relationship with the instructors
- what other people are doing
- what successes other programs are achieving – what is working in other programs

Taxonomy

- ⇒ There should be a variety of print, video and discussion – there should always be an opportunity for discussion.
- ⇒ There should be an activity – an opportunity to try and do the new things we are learning about – to put it into practice.
- ⇒ I like to be able to do something or create something – it makes me think about it for myself.
- ⇒ Multiple learning styles are sated – not just listening and reading but also doing.
- ⇒ Moves beyond concepts to steps and protocols. Something concrete. Walk me through the process so that I can walk others through it. Some visuals.
- ⇒ Do you know the Khan Academy? Or Lynda.com? I like that – to watch a video and then read – I need a hardcopy or to make notes – I need written content as well. I need to test my knowledge and ask questions and get immediate feedback.
- ⇒ I am a visual learner and I like visual stuff. I also want to be able to think about how I can practically apply it. I want a take away – something I can print off and reference.

Feedback and Follow Up

- ⇒ There should be marked assignments – marked either by the instructor or by peers – I want to know if I am doing it right.
- ⇒ I need feedback.
- ⇒ Not just self-assessment – I can do this on free platforms.
- ⇒ A contact for questions and feedback.
- ⇒ I need to test my knowledge and ask question and get immediate feedback.
- ⇒ And I would like some kind of follow up to make sure I am using it and how I am using it – it happens with the coaching and it is very effective.
- ⇒ I would like people to collaborate with and a system of resource sharing.
- ⇒ I want there to be some accountability so that I use the things that I learn [follow-up and feedback]
- ⇒ I want to be able to ask questions.

Certification

- ⇒ Something where I get certification and further my own experience.
- ⇒ Something that enhances my own employment opportunities.

⇒ A measure of assessment and certification that is recognized and, if not, a verifiable description of the course with a certificate of completion – something I can show professionally and personally.

⇒ I like to get a certificate even if it is not of great value. I can put it in my personnel files. This also helps with reporting to the funder – MTCU asks programs how we know that staff is keeping up-to-date and certificates – even certificates of completion – help us show that.

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Learning 4: Where program participants learn

Instruction and LBS

AlphaPlus (coaching and webinars) –

<https://alphaplus.ca/>

Communications And Math Employment Readiness Assessment (CAMERA) –

<http://ptpcompass.ca/the-camera-system/>

CESBA LBS Practitioner Training –

<http://lbs.cesba.com/>

Community Literacy Ontario (CLO) Literacy Basics –

<http://literacybasics.ca/>

CLO Digital Discoveries –

http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/digital_discoveries.pdf

CLO –

<http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/>

Coursera –

<https://www.coursera.org/>

Ditch That Textbook –

<http://ditchthattextbook.com/>

Gale –

<https://www.gale.com/>

GCFLearnfree – for digital technology questions

<https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/>

Laubach Literacy Ontario (LLO) Conference –

<http://www.laubach-on.ca/conference/>

Learning Challenges Assessment Tool (LCAT) –

<http://www.literacylinkniagara.ca/services/assessments/>

Literacy Networks of Ontario (LNO) Clear Writing –

<https://learningnetworks.ca/clear-writing/clear-writing-online-course/>

Literacy Resources and Discussion Forum –

<https://lbsresourcesandforum.contactnorth.ca/>

Quill Portal – Task-based Activities for LBS

<http://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/>

Simcoe Muskoka Literacy Network (SMLN) –

<http://literacynetwork.ca/>

Teacher of Adults Literacy Educator –

<https://studyonline.ca/program/teacher-adults-literacy-educator>

Udemy –

<https://www.udemy.com/>

Employment Qualifications

Smart Serve Ontario –

<https://www.smartserve.ca/>

Soft Skills Solutions –

<https://www.smwdb.com/soft-skills-solutions>

Accessibility, Health and Safety

Accessibility Ontario – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

<https://accessontario.com/services/aoda-training/>

CPR –

<http://www.firstaid4u.ca/>

Naloxone –

<https://ohpe.ca/node/14023>

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

<https://worksitesafety.ca/training/online/whmis-online-training/>

Leadership, Strategic Planning, Governance...

Charity Village –

Active Learning: <https://charityvillage.com/cms/active-learning>

Knowledge Centre: <https://charityvillage.com/cms/knowledge-centre>

United Way –

<http://www.unitedway.ca/>

Projects

Trails to Literacy Around the Province –

<http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/trailsto/cover.htm>

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Learning 5: The professional development (PD) wish list

⇒ As a manager, there are things for me, but I am also looking for things for staff and tutors.

- some way of making sure that they have consistent access to the best tools with annotation about how they work for different cohorts
- resource training
- assessment – right now we are relying on the expertise of assessors who are using tools that are heavy handed

⇒ I want to see learning that can be talked about and recognized in the community. The Ontario government has credentials such as [SmartServe](#) that is recognized because of marketing and standards. How do we get credentials recognized in literacy? I think we need a professional association – not regulatory but with credentials – not necessarily academic - that you need to be a member.

⇒ Things are changing. Students have demands re digital technology and some staff do not have the skills to teach this way. We have staff that cannot use calendars and shared drives in their own work. They need training on platforms.

⇒ Ministry-funded conference and workshops - when we get together there is a whole bunch of learning that happens in ad hoc conversations and networking as well as what happens in workshops.

- ⇒ It is important to get away from the office and the distractions of the workplace.
- ⇒ Online is okay if I am by myself but trying it with groups is frustrating as people try to get the technology to work – audio and video.
- ⇒ I would like to take more psychology – more training in deferent personalities and engaging with them. everyone is on a different journey. I want to create environments that are more comfortable for more people.
- ⇒ I feel that there are a lot of opportunities for PD.
- ⇒ PD has to happen.
- ⇒ We believe that employers should pay for PD – this should happen in the not-for-profit sector as well.
- ⇒ There are teachers-of-adults at the college and we pay it plus 50% work time. Our staff can do Coursera courses on worktime or 50% worktime. Some people have been learning about Google Classroom. We send at least one person to webinars and conferences when we can afford it and when we can afford the release time. We can go to the LLO conference about once every 5 years.
- ⇒ Certain topics are not covered. For example, learner assessment. When the OALCF first came out, there was lots but since then there has been a turnover in staff and there are different practices happening in different programs.

- ⇒ Digital technology integration varies from program-to-program and this is not fair because learners will get a different experience depending upon what their local program is doing.
- ⇒ PD should not get too far ahead of those who are behind.
- ⇒ There is not a lot for new teachers. When we are hiring, we often cannot find people with experience teaching adults and *there is not a clear learning pathway for people new to the field*. [I added this – I was missing this from the notes.]
- ⇒ There are gaps for someone new to the field.
- ⇒ HR: people managing community-based programs usually have no HR background and this is challenging.
- ⇒ Dealing with compassion fatigue: we are working with people with mental health issues
- ⇒ Self-care.
- ⇒ Accountability – evaluation of projects using the logic model lens used by the United Way.
- ⇒ More practical, hands on and applied stuff – here are the steps, here is what we did that worked.

Learning 6: For people less interested in professional development

You are a person who has identified PD and continuous learning as an important priority. Can you see LinkedIn Learning working for practitioners who may place continuous learning a little lower on the list?

I think it would work. I am more enthusiastic about PD than most of the people I meet in LBS but I think that it would work well for a wide range of practitioners. I showed it to my colleagues – they both took a one-hour session and they were ecstatic. It is another tool that they can use.

This would depend a lot on how it is framed by an organization. If someone is entrenched in not being a lifelong learner, there is not much you can do. But it is easily accessible and the learning is chunked into small, manageable pieces. You could ask staff to review something prior to a staff meeting – not mandatory but encouraged.

Budget constraints are the main barrier to PD – not practitioner motivation. It is not just the cost of attending PD opportunities, it is also the cost of replacing people at work and/or paying people for the time they spend on PD. LinkedIn can be done on work time.

I think so. Courses have a minimal length and are of varied length – when I was searching a 2-minute thing popped up. You can stop and start or just view a video from a course without doing the full course. I am not sure about the content – it is not geared specifically in that direction – not like the literacy educator certificate. There are courses about teaching but they are

mostly about teaching in classrooms and working with school age students. It would be great if there were courses that included lesson prep for adult literacy, information about how to use the OALCF, how to create differentiated or individualized learning opportunities and how to work with people who are working at a grade 7, 8, 9, academic level but are adults. It is easy for someone with experience to adapt the ideas to the adult literacy context but this may be more difficult for someone new to the field, especially if they were coming from the K-12 system.

I think it would be good – the videos are short and there are brief clips you can watch. The only thing is the timeline issue – especially if you are not too focussed. The timelines of the project helped me keep focussed – sometimes deadlines help. It is a great platform – I enjoyed it. I was surprised that the activities took time on top of the 2 hours posted time. It would be good to give people a heads up on that the time is for viewing the videos but there is time on top of that to do the activities. Also – as I was watching I was taking notes (there were no handouts or informational sheets) so I would pause the video and that made it take longer than the 2 hours.

I do. It is easy to access. It gives you training and knowledge plus brownie points. From a career perspective, it is advantageous. CLO training is good but it does not have credibility outside the field the way LinkedIn Learning does. This gave me energy. It was so easy. It was nicely segmented – you can stop and go get a tea and then come back.

This is not something that I thought I'd like but it is kind of cool. I think that for students at higher levels it would be good. We are used to scrimping and saving in LBS – we are used to making do. This feels like it is part of something bigger and not the usual make-do opportunity.

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Learning 7: For people less experienced with self-directed learning

You are a person with experience learning online and self-directed learning. How do you think that LinkedIn Learning would work for LBS practitioners with less experience learning online and self-directed learning?

I think it would work well. It is not difficult to navigate. I think the recommendations are helpful. When we work with learners, they ask us what's my next step? We encourage them and support them in making their own decisions about what to learn next but it is difficult sometimes. The recommendations help people be more confident about choosing what to do next and, as they make choices based on the recommendations, they will become more confident in their ability to make decisions about what to learn next for themselves – it is built into the platform.

I think so. If you can shop at Amazon, you can do this. It works on a mobile device as well – there is an app. It is pretty easy and user friendly.

I think so. It took me a little time to find the pathways but I figured it out. There is a good LI primer on GCFlearnfree.

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Learning 8: Benefits for LBS practitioners

Can you name the pros/benefits for LBS practitioners?

I have nothing to add. *Is there enough content that is relevant to LBS practitioners?* There is enough that intertwines and it is also a great place to get ideas for curriculum – learners in our program do not want to learn everything alone, they like to have the classroom experience sometimes so we offer that and LinkedIn Learning will help us build curriculum for that.

I went to a strategic planning meeting. I felt more armed when I stepped into that meeting because I had some good, tangible pieces. The course had concrete strategies, take aways and downloadable resources. The quizzes kept me focussed. I am thinking about ways to integrate the learning into a bigger framework. You can learn alone or as a team. I am thinking about opportunities to put things I learn together to create curriculum and resources for learners and to share with other staff.

There is good stuff on employment that I can watch and share with students. *Do you think that LinkedIn Learning should be accessible to LBS learners?* This is simpler but we get credit for referring learners to the Hub and it is good for most learners.

You can access it anywhere. I did a lot at home because there are too many interruptions at work. There is really good administrative material. For instructors/educators there are ways to increase knowledge. I didn't look at the instructional stuff – I wanted to focus on the administrative role because I need this more. It was a little tricky to search stuff out at the beginning but I figured it out without too much trouble. I liked the material and how it was presented – I did not want to fall asleep or think, "When will this be over." It takes a lot to impress me. I often think, "I knew all of that." But not with LinkedIn Learning. The biggest thing I took away – "Do not use your brain as a gathering point for information."

It is easy to access – you can do it anywhere. You could use it as a group and watch videos as training. It is linked to a greater professional community and the quality is good.

Once I found the bookmark function, I went in and bookmarked about 50 courses. I have paid for a second month because I think I will get a lot of use out of it and it is worth the \$35.00.

Everything works so well! There is no waiting for videos to load and watching that little circle going around and around. All the handouts and downloads worked perfectly.

I think this is a useful group tool as well as a good resource for individuals. We can watch a video together at work and discuss the content.

I liked the transcripts. I copied parts and shared with other staff when we were preparing for a discussion at a staff meeting.

It is online so if you start a course and find it is not what you wanted, you can stop. When you go to a face-to-face workshop or presentation it is awkward to leave if it is not what you expected – plus you have travelled to the location.

I got a response from a colleague who saw I was taking a course through my LinkedIn profile. It gets people talking about what and how they are learning. I liked certifications – the LNO Clear Language Course Certificate for example – that can elevate my profile. It is easy to use and the content is solid. I like the mobile app.

The content is solid. I felt as though I was listening to an expert. I watch videos on YouTube when I want to learn something but the content there is not always a good standard. In the LinkedIn Learning course I really felt as though I was getting somewhere.

I liked that this was not specific to LBS. The ministry funds training that is specific to LBS and that is most of what I attend these days but I feel that I am missing the wider picture. I want to learn about more general topics that are related to my work and to have access to what people are doing in other jurisdictions. We no longer learn about what is happening in adult education internationally.

PD does not have to be so intrinsically linked to how-to-teach or the class we are teaching to be relevant – it keeps our brains open, develops breadth and is especially helpful for developing individualized curricula.

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Learning 9: Challenges for LBS practitioners

Can you name the cons/challenges for LBS practitioners?

I can't see any. I am just so enthusiastic about this ☺ If I think of anything, I'll be in touch.

You have to have a specific learning style – this is auditory learning. It can be hard to sequester yourself at work – even 15 minutes can be a challenge sometimes. We could do the courses during our lunch hour but we have to be careful about making sure we have a sustainable work/life balance.

It would be great if there were more up-to-date stuff and a not-for-profit pathway.

I lost interest as I went along. There was too much detail for me. Part 1 was modelling and parts 2 and 3 were activities. The recommendations are too narrow. I was disappointed that I could not find time at work – for others they would have to do this professional development on their own time. My staff would not be able to do this at their desks. Courses that are under 30 minutes might work. There is no LBS content. Need to develop content: how to navigate through the list of A+ apps, how to use LLO/CLO discussion board, how to read CAMs reports, a guide to being a

program coordinator. It would be great if there was labour market information and workforce development information in plain language. Tutor training – some of it is online but the tutors didn't like it because there was too much reading. We rely on YouTube for learner training but the links go missing.

I found the second course I took was tedious for the first 10 minutes – I was thinking that it should be removed – and then suddenly I got interested. The two-hour time posted is just for watching but it takes longer if you do the activities – I felt let down because it took so much longer. It is too intense to do it at work and we need a reflection piece. It is directed towards Executive Directors – people with this education and experience – and most in LBS don't have this.

Do you see any problem with the fact that most of the content is American? (I asked this in a couple of the interviews because somebody at LinkedIn Learning had heard this was a concern and I wanted to hear what the project participants thought about it.)

I noticed that all the statistics about not-for-profits were American. It would be great if there were Canadian stats as well. But for most things it is okay. There may be some cultural practices that may need to be addressed. We are used to using American resources – it is not startling.

In terms of employment, do you see any problem with the fact that most of the content is American?

No. For math and things like that we have charts to help them make conversions and they need to learn about doing that. For soft skills, time management, cover letters and resumes, and things like that it does not matter.

And I guess for employment standards and things like that you can find a Canadian source. Yes.

Learning 10: LinkedIn Learning for LBS learners

Some people have commented that they would like to be able to use LinkedIn Learning with LBS learners. What do you think of that idea? (I didn't ask everyone this.)

It is going to be so good for our learners. When they take courses in school, they are weeks long. LinkedIn Learning will give learners experience learning online in shorter courses. We can start them in one-hour courses and then move them to longer courses as they get experience. Plus, the courses prepare them for employment and daily life in terms of content. I saw many matches for learners in our program.

I didn't really think about it. I am not sure that it would work well for lower level learners. It might work well for the Academic Upgrading learners. Some of the content is very jargon and the language is at a high level. We do use TED Talks. It would have to be vetted and curated.

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Learning 11: The LinkedIn Learning algorithm

The recommendations

I like the recommendations because they go by the skills you have already chosen for yourself and then gives you options of courses you could take.

No, I wasn't excited about the recommendations / options. I picked one anyway to get going on this project. Probably could develop a relevant useful learning pathway from the recommendations, but I would find the path daunting in terms of the length of time it would take. I'd be concerned about giving up if I didn't like (or they weren't relevant to me) one or more sections/parts. I'd also be concerned that the learning path would go by the wayside with real life work tasks taking it place for weeks at a time.

I certainly see some courses from the recommendations that would be useful to me. Just by selecting one course it shows related courses.

I think the recommendations are fine and many could be useful. I am not sure that a pathway would be my description, more like a web, as each one taken would lead to more

suggestions. You would be better to go through, map out, and save your pathway at the beginning.

Some are –some not but then I have a very diverse education/PD plan for myself.

The recommendations were accurate and helpful. Yes, I really like the idea of building my own learning pathways.

I am finding it a bit challenging to navigate around LinkedIn Learning. I added filters, then found that the filters really limited what I could see. I removed the filters, and then found that the courses highlighted or most obvious seemed to be directly connected to my profile or past training history. It's tricky because my past includes film work, so at least half the stuff I saw was not relevant for the "me" of today. And when I put in the search field "motivational interviewing" I got all kinds of hits about just plain old interviewing (like for film, and further down, for jobs). What I was really interested in was motivational interviewing techniques for working with adult learners. Sigh. Never did find that. So instead I took Learning How to Increase Learner Engagement, then Core Strategies in Teaching in Higher Education.

[LBS Pathway](#)

For the learners, I feel like that would make it easier for them to navigate the site.

YES

I think having an LBS specific learning pathway would be helpful when one starts, since the courses I've seen aren't necessarily directly related to Literacy and Basic Skills. The courses presently offered have a lot of useful material, but their audience seems more geared to the school classroom teacher or a person working in business. It would be nice to have some courses directly dealing with LBS specific issues.

Or specific suggestions, maybe. I got suggestions specific to Executive Directors which were very useful to my position.

Absolutely. I can see having a pathway good for tutors and instructors, one for management and one for support staff.

It depends. LBS needs are not that unique unless we are looking at OALCF or EOIS CaMS or SP Connect. Having said that 'learning pathways that are LBS specific could be important if they address needs that are not archaic. LBS tends to stay focused on the old ways instead of leaping forward. It appears to be more about getting project funding versus outcomes. Where LBS will benefit from customization is taking classroom applications and customizing them to more one-on-one delivery. There are some excellent resources – however, the training or video content is geared to education (schools and classrooms and parents).

Yes I think so! I would it easy to follow along with a set of courses or videos.

I think it would be very helpful to have LBS specific learning pathways. It would filter out a lot of the tangential stuff. I like to think I'm pretty smart, but I felt like I was struggling a bit

to find the stuff I wanted. There were lots of pathways I thought could help me and my staff in specific areas of our fields, both as individual workers, but also with transferability to things we could use/share with our students.

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Learning 12: Recommendations for Linked in Learning

What recommendations do you have for LinkedIn regarding making learning relevant and engaging for LBS practitioners? learners?

- A section for LBS where we could go and find all the courses – for practitioners and for learners.
- A hub for uploading our own content.
- It would be great if they had a per course fee instead of the subscription – or a cheaper time-based option (a set number of hours).
- Certifications
- Content quizzes
- Focus on adult learning – perhaps use the teachers from the adult literacy certificate program to create courses. (It would be great if there were courses that included lesson prep for adult literacy, information about how to use the OALCF, how to create differentiated or individualized learning opportunities and how to work with people who are working at a grade 7, 8, 9, academic level but are adults. It is easy for someone with experience to adapt the ideas to the adult literacy context but this may be more difficult for someone new to the field, especially if they were coming from the K-12 system.)

- Be more up front about the time courses take,
- I think that courses on mental health and social worky stuff are relevant to LBS practitioners.
- A way of learning what the platform does – an introduction or a tour.
- More LBS specific content – one-to-one instruction, working with people with learning disabilities, soft skills and how to work with learners of all types.

Learning 13: Recommendations for the funder

- Make it accessible for practitioners AND learners in all LBS programs.
- Create professional development each year for practitioners – perhaps required – on policies and procedures (for example, confidentiality of learner records and privacy), directions and priorities so that we are all told the same things and we are all on the same page.
- It would be great for a support organization to take it up – to buy 300 licenses and people can sign up and use it for a month at a time.
- I think that this is a good platform to deliver training.
- In terms of using it with learners – Is this possible? Is this realistic? I don't think it should compete with the Hub and Good Learning Anywhere. I think that they are doing a good

job. I have referred people to GALE after the Hub – LinkedIn Learning might be a good next step after the LBS program.

- I am concerned that access might include tracking and that this could become more 'thou shalt' than 'you can'.
- It might be a good tool for new staff – to explain the OALCF – it is standardized and high quality. And for CAMS training that has been offline for 6 months now.
- A pathway – a set of foundational documents, the information that everyone should know, courses to onboard new staff and a place to learn about updates and changes.
- I am not sure how expensive it is and I am not sure if it is worth it.
- This should not be funded at the cost of operating funds – only as an add on. There might be something better and cheaper.
- Contract AlphaPlus to have a stream to learn basic managerial skills.
- If we ask the ministry to add LBS access to LinkedIn Learning across school board and community based programs as well as colleges, we should include the development of LBS content by Ontario experts.

Learning 14: Recommendations for AlphaPlus

- You are doing it!
- It would be great if AlphaPlus had a library and an online repository like NALD/Copian where the webinars and courses were searchable and annotated – not just Ontario content but global, credible content.
- Create an overview of LinkedIn Learning.
- Help us connect to people taking the same courses so we can talk about the resource more.
- Thank you for the opportunity. You are doing an awesome job. Keep doing the coaching – it is the best thing ever. The one-to-one approach is awesome.
- I think that it would be better coming through AlphaPlus - it would ensure a more 'you can' than a 'thou shalt' approach.
- Create content.

