

# BUILDING CAPACITY

## Occupation-specific Language Training at Ontario Colleges (2008 – 2011)

FINAL REPORT

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## Acknowledgements

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### *Participating Colleges*

**Algonquin**

**Boréal**

**Centennial**

**Conestoga**

**Confederation**

**Fanshawe**

**George Brown**

**Georgian**

**Humber**

**La Cité**

**Mohawk**

**Niagara**

**Seneca**

**Sheridan**

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## A. Executive Summary

In 2007, Colleges Ontario prepared a report for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) that examined existing occupation-specific language training in Ontario colleges.<sup>1</sup> The findings from that report formed the basis of the Occupation-specific Language Training (OSLT) initiative. CIC funded Colleges Ontario, in partnership with Ontario colleges and CONNECT Strategic Alliances, to undertake the OSLT initiative to develop curriculum and work with Ontario colleges to conduct pilot deliveries of language training for newcomers. This report summarizes the activities conducted from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2011.

Ontario's colleges are highly experienced in meeting the language needs of immigrants and have a strong track record in designing and delivering occupation-specific language training. For the OSLT initiative, the target participants were defined as newcomers who were permanent residents or protected persons with Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 6 to 8 (or Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 5/6 to 8). These newcomers were working in or wanted to re-enter an occupation related to their training and experience, or they wanted to take a related program of study to bridge to employment.

### Developing the OSLT Curriculum

Curriculum development concentrated on five priority sectors – business, health sciences, human services, technology and skilled trades – and encompassed 27 high-demand occupations. The curriculum focused on workplace-related language, socio-cultural communication skills training and an orientation to the labour market for the occupations in these sectors.

To facilitate the development and production of the curricula, Colleges Ontario and participating colleges

- established a team of curriculum development experts.
- established a consistent format and features for all OSLT Curriculum.
- developed language curriculum for priority sectors and occupation areas.
- adapted selected curriculum and resources for delivery in French.
- created assessment methods, activities and tools to link participant learning to authentic workplace-based, occupation-centred tasks.
- solicited feedback from employers and experts in occupational fields.
- developed 52 online dialogues.

The final 12 curricula included electronic PDF files and over 4,800 pages of printed material. The curricula were posted on the OSLT Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN)<sup>2</sup> to facilitate access and sharing of ideas about delivery among instructors and colleges. As a result, Ontario now has accessible and high quality occupation-specific language training curricula in both official languages that are purpose-built according to the language needs of newcomers who want to work in the field for which they are trained or have experience.

<sup>1</sup> *Language Skills for the Workplace: Developing a Framework for College Delivery of Occupation-specific Language Training in Ontario*, Colleges Ontario, 2007. The report is available on the Colleges Ontario website at: [www.co-oslt.org/downloads/CO\\_WorkplaceLanguageSkillsReportNovember2007.pdf](http://www.co-oslt.org/downloads/CO_WorkplaceLanguageSkillsReportNovember2007.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> KEN is a web-based network established by Colleges Ontario to encourage sharing of best practices and inter-regional communication for colleges involved in delivering OSLT courses.

## Piloting Delivery of the OSLT Curriculum

In piloting the delivery of the OSLT Curriculum, Ontario colleges

- hired, trained and provided ongoing support to instructors.
- developed local-level relationships and referral processes with CIC-funded Assessment Centres.
- conducted marketing, in-reach and outreach.
- piloted assessment tools.
- piloted the use of online dialogues.
- explored ways to involve employers in pilot deliveries.
- issued college-based documentation to participants who completed OSLT courses.
- conducted a review of the courses delivered.

Over the three-year duration of the pilot initiative, 14 Ontario colleges successfully delivered 121 OSLT courses attended by 1,257<sup>3</sup> CIC-eligible participants in central, south-western and eastern regions of Ontario:

- From September 2008 to April 2009, seven Ontario colleges, including one francophone college, delivered 16 classes of occupation-related language curriculum that existed prior to the launch of the OSLT initiative. These classes provided timely feedback that informed the development of the new curriculum.
- From September 2009 to March 2011, 14 Ontario colleges, including two francophone colleges, delivered a combination of 105 previously developed and newly developed OSLT curricula at 19 different sites.
- Of these 121 OSLT courses, 12 were offered in French, five were delivered in conjunction with employers and eight were offered in English to the francophone immigrant community with supports and services being offered in French.

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<sup>3</sup>While 1,377 participants initially enrolled in OSLT courses, a total of 1,257 participants remained enrolled in the courses after one month.

**Table 1: Summary of OSLT Courses and Enrolment**

Fiscal Year	Colleges	Number of Courses Delivered	Enrolment
2008-2009	7	16	97
2009-2010	13	45	426
2010-2011	14	60	734
<b>Total</b>		<b>121</b>	<b>1,257</b>

The number of OSLT courses offered, overall enrolment and average class size increased year by year.

Evaluation of pilot results and feedback from OSLT participants indicate that during the 2010 to 2011 delivery period

- over 70 percent of participants who remained enrolled in an OSLT course after one month went on to complete the course.
- a high percentage (90 percent) of participants reported overall satisfaction with OSLT courses and 99 percent would recommend the course to others.

The pilot deliveries provided colleges with opportunities to learn from each other's experiences and expertise in delivering the OSLT courses. By collaborating and building on pilot deliveries across the college sector, colleges were able to capitalize on individual strengths while effectively transferring knowledge, building expertise and improving immigrant access to workplace-oriented language training.

### Supporting OSLT Curriculum Development and Delivery

As a result of the OSLT initiative, the Ontario college sector now has the infrastructure and processes in place to

- **develop and adapt curriculum and learning resources for college-delivered occupation-specific language training.** A team of language and occupational content experts is in place to develop new curriculum, add new material to existing curriculum and make adaptations as needed in English and French.
- **provide orientation and support to OSLT language instructors.** Forty-two qualified college language instructors, including two francophone instructors, are now trained and have received orientation to deliver OSLT courses.
- **coordinate regional and provincial outreach.** An infrastructure is in place to support coordinated marketing and outreach activities.

- **facilitate a wide range of partnerships to support OSLT course delivery.** Partnerships with community agencies, employment services, industry associations, regulatory bodies and related initiatives (LINC/CLIC <sup>4</sup>, CIIP,<sup>5</sup> CIITE,<sup>6</sup> etc.) are in place.
- **coordinate regional and provincial delivery.** A tested, collaborative process is in place to identify where OSLT courses are needed, avoid duplication and confirm an appropriate delivery format.
- **deliver high quality occupation-specific language training.** Fourteen colleges across Ontario now have the expertise and capacity to deliver the OSLT Curriculum.
- **conduct a comprehensive evaluation of delivery.** An established evaluation framework includes a course review process and a process for collecting data for ongoing performance measurement of the OSLT initiative.
- **ensure efficient monitoring of all deliverables.** Tested processes and infrastructure are in place to oversee college delivery of OSLT courses.

## Insights

The activities and outcomes from the OSLT initiative between 2008 and 2011 led to important insights about the development and delivery of occupation-specific language training for newcomers to Ontario:

- Embed authentic occupational context into the language training.
- Address the socio-cultural aspects of communication.
- Commit sufficient resources to develop curriculum.
- Build enrolment through internal champions and external relationships.
- Set course offerings according to local market need.
- Anticipate factors that will affect retention.
- Engage qualified language instructors and adequately support them.
- Provide participants with as much connection to the workplace as possible.
- Create a balance between face-to-face and self-paced online learning opportunities.
- Establish coordinated and consistent processes.
- Create opportunities to promote best practices.

These insights will continue to inform OSLT course delivery in Ontario and can guide other organizations considering the development and implementation of occupation-specific language training in other regions.

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<sup>4</sup>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) or Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs.

<sup>5</sup>Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP).

<sup>6</sup>Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE).

## Moving Forward

In 2011, CIC approved continued funding<sup>7</sup> for Colleges Ontario to continue the OSLT initiative to April 2013 on behalf of 16 Ontario colleges. As it moves forward, the OSLT initiative will reach more newcomers across Ontario and will continue to focus on maintaining quality, relevancy and consistency.

Ontario colleges will continue to implement and refine strategies to develop and deliver OSLT courses across Ontario to

- expand participant connections to the workplace.
- use technology to enhance delivery.
- adapt or develop curriculum to meet identified needs.
- strengthen connections with community-based organizations.
- increase linkages to related departments at the college level.
- promote recognition of OSLT courses within the continuum of language training.
- implement the OSLT assessment scheme to measure participant success.
- work toward issuing a college credential for OSLT courses.
- maintain capacity to deliver OSLT courses.
- put into practice a plan for continuous improvement.

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<sup>7</sup> CIC funding was approved under the 2010 Modernized Approach Call for Proposals.



## B. Addressing Language Training Gaps for Immigrants

### B.1 Identified the gaps

Newcomers to Canada often encounter barriers to employment. These barriers are well documented and include lack of Canadian work experience, language barriers, differences in workplace culture, difficulties in obtaining recognition for foreign qualifications and international experience, discrimination, and lack of workplace integration and diversity programs.<sup>8</sup>

#### Colleges Ontario's 2007 Report on Language Skills for the Workplace

- Identified gaps and opportunities for occupation-specific language training.
- Determined that there was an unmet demand for occupation-specific language training for newcomers in Ontario.
- Demonstrated the need for college-delivered occupation-specific language training.
- Provided input on guidelines for moving toward a province-wide framework for college delivery of occupation-specific language training.
- Suggested strategies for moving forward.

In 2007, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) asked Colleges Ontario to examine barriers related to language proficiency for newcomers seeking employment. Colleges Ontario examined existing occupation-specific language training in Ontario's 24 publicly funded colleges to identify gaps and opportunities in the training, and to provide input on guidelines for moving forward to address those gaps. Based on its analysis, Colleges Ontario prepared a report entitled *Language Skills for the Workplace: Developing a Framework for College Delivery of Occupation-specific Language Training in Ontario* (2007).

The report summarized Colleges Ontario's consultations with individual colleges, CONNECT Strategic Alliances and the Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) project. It also provided a synthesis of the information Colleges Ontario collected about occupation-specific language training at Canadian and international colleges and universities.

Colleges Ontario identified an unmet demand for occupation-specific language training for newcomers to Ontario and, at the same time, identified significant training gaps in several industry sectors:

- lack of occupation-specific language curriculum and no framework for consistent delivery.
- lack of alternate delivery formats
- little employer engagement in the province-wide delivery of language training
- scarcity of French-language resources to serve newcomers with French as their first or other language
- lack of infrastructure to develop curriculum and provide coordinated delivery.

<sup>8</sup> Vadim Kukushkin and Douglas Watt, *Immigrant-Friendly Business: Effective Practices for Attracting, Integrating, and Retaining Immigrants in Canadian Workplaces*, The Conference Board of Canada, 2009, p. 7.

Five priority sectors with training gaps were identified: business, health sciences, human services, technology and skilled trades. These sectors were considered priorities based on evidence of local skills shortages, the number of immigrants with occupational backgrounds in the sector and the existing shortage of curriculum at the appropriate language benchmark levels. Within these sectors, colleges identified occupational priority areas where no college-developed occupation-specific language curriculum existed.

Colleges Ontario and CIC recognized that addressing the identified gaps in these priority sectors and occupations would effectively contribute to newcomers' ability to find and maintain employment in Ontario commensurate with their training and experience. In the longer term, it would help newcomers become full participants in the growth and expansion of the Canadian economy.

## **B.2 Determined the objectives**

In 2008, CIC funded the Ontario-wide Occupation-specific Language Training (OSLT) initiative. The focus of this initiative was to develop and implement a framework for curriculum development and college-based delivery of occupation-specific language training for newcomers to Ontario. This training would directly relate to career-focused programs at Ontario colleges.

The OSLT initiative was administered and coordinated by Colleges Ontario on behalf of the participating colleges to

- develop language curriculum for CIC-eligible newcomers within both official language communities that addresses workplace language and socio-cultural communication skills and provides an orientation to the labour market in Ontario.
- develop new approaches to college-based delivery of language training.
- maximize cost efficiencies at the community, regional and provincial levels through a coordinated approach to processes and activities.

## **B.3 Focused on the target audience**

The college-delivered OSLT courses developed as part of the OSLT initiative were designed for newcomers to Ontario who need to improve their workplace communication skills and learn more about socio-cultural communication in their occupation in Ontario. The courses target permanent residents or protected persons with Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 6 to 8 (or Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 5/6 to 8) in at least one language skill area.

Pilot deliveries were tailored for participants who were

- at the higher levels of Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) or Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (CLIC) programs, were ready to focus on specific occupation areas and needed to acquire occupation-specific language skills and knowledge.
- candidates for Enhanced Language Training (ELT) and bridging programs who were not functioning at the CLB level required for these programs.
- employed or unemployed and needed to focus on occupation-specific language training to obtain or maintain employment.
- pursuing career or vocational training through college programs.

## B.4 Established project partners

The three partners in the OSLT initiative were Colleges Ontario, the participating Ontario colleges and CONNECT Strategic Alliances. Table 2 outlines the activities undertaken by each partner.

Partners	Activities
<p><b>Colleges Ontario</b></p> <p>Colleges Ontario provides strategic counsel and services to Ontario's colleges. It advocates for policy improvements and measures that help produce the skilled workforce needed to strengthen Ontario's economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provided strategic direction, leadership and oversight.</li> <li>▪ Coordinated activities on behalf of colleges related to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing, adapting and updating high-quality curriculum materials and resources.</li> <li>• delivery schedules and plans.</li> <li>• piloting alternate delivery methods.</li> <li>• provincial marketing and outreach.</li> <li>• communication.</li> <li>• instructor, coordinator and budget staff orientation.</li> <li>• sharing of best practices.</li> <li>• implementing an evaluation process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Participating Colleges</b></p> <p>Algonquin, Boréal, Centennial, Conestoga, Confederation, Fanshawe, George Brown, Georgian, Humber, La Cité, Mohawk, Niagara, Seneca and Sheridan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supported curriculum development by providing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• input and feedback on the curriculum framework.</li> <li>• occupational content experts.</li> <li>• input on assessment tools.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Hired qualified instructors.</li> <li>▪ Conducted marketing and outreach in local communities.</li> <li>▪ Determined fit and enrolled participants.</li> <li>▪ Delivered OSLT courses.</li> <li>▪ Assessed participant progress and results.</li> <li>▪ Issued college documentation to participants on completion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONNECT Strategic Alliances</b></p> <p>CONNECT Strategic Alliances is a partnership of Ontario's 24 publicly funded colleges. It connects industry, business, communities and government to the education and training resources of the Ontario college sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helped Colleges Ontario prepare monthly progress reports.</li> <li>▪ Liaised with individual colleges on planning, delivery, data collection and course reviews.</li> <li>▪ Monitored the funds distributed to colleges.</li> </ul>

## C. Responding to the Need

### C.1 Built on college expertise in meeting immigrant needs

Ontario's college sector comprises 24 independent, publicly funded colleges, including two francophone colleges. Colleges actively collaborate in a wide range of educational initiatives. Each college brings its unique perspective to the delivery of education and training and addresses the specific needs of the communities it serves.

Ontario colleges are a visible first point of entry for newcomers seeking

- information on pathways to employment.
- credential and skills assessment.
- language training in English and French.
- upgrades to their skills and knowledge.
- bridge-to-work programs.

Ontario's colleges are highly experienced in meeting the language needs of immigrants and have a strong track record in designing and delivering occupation-specific language training. For more than 25 years, colleges have provided occupation-specific training and skill development that complement international credentials. Delivery models have included

- part- or full-time courses that integrated training into post-secondary programs.
- continuing education courses.
- provincially funded bridging programs.
- workplace-based training programs.

#### Past and Current College-delivered Language Programs in Ontario

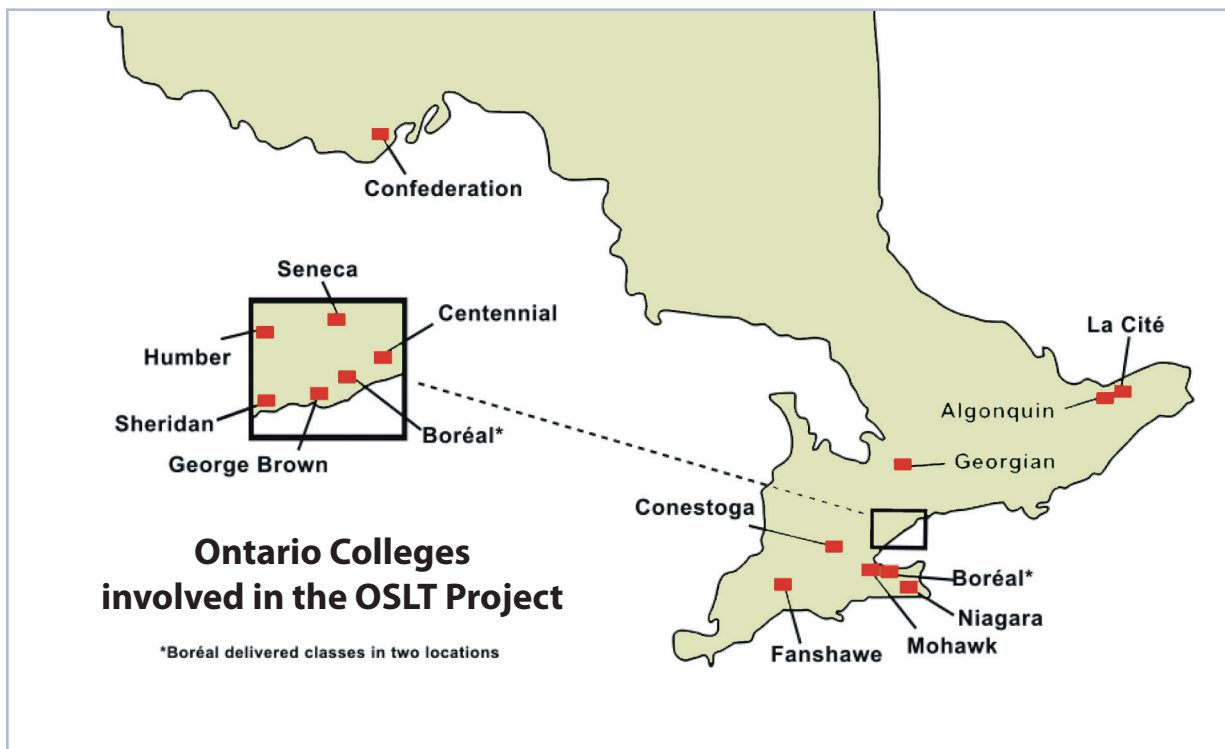
- **College credit courses/programs, such as**
  - English for Academic Purposes.
  - Language courses required by post-secondary programs of study.
  - Off-shore language training.
- **College non-credit ESL/FSL courses, such as**
  - Language foundation and pre-bridging courses.
  - Non-credit ESL/FSL courses offered through continuing education.
  - Non-credit ESL/FSL courses offered through tuition-short programs.<sup>9</sup>
- **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (federally funded).**
- **Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada (federally funded).**
- **Enhanced Language Training (federally funded).**
- **Occupation-specific Language Training (federally funded).**
- **Language component of the Bridge to Work programs (provincially funded).**
- **Workplace-based language training and contract training tailored to employers' needs.**

<sup>9</sup>Tuition-short programs are generally less than 52 weeks in duration. They are designed to prepare students for employment or career advancement, or to provide vocational updating or academic upgrading.

## C.2 Mobilized Ontario's college sector

Fourteen colleges, serving communities across Ontario, contributed to the OSLT initiative through

- expertise in delivering a range of career-focused programs.
- extensive track records in language training and immigrant initiatives.
- established campuses serving communities and regions across Ontario.
- experience and infrastructure to provide language training in English and French to the immigrant community.



### C.3 Coordinated a province-wide initiative

The coordinated approach undertaken by Colleges Ontario, the 14 participating Ontario colleges and CONNECT Strategic Alliances was applied to addressing the barriers Colleges Ontario had identified in its 2007 report. These barriers related to the lack of infrastructure to develop and deliver college-based occupation-specific language training across the province.

CIC demonstrated strong support of the initial development needed to design an effective framework for developing and delivering college-based occupation-specific language training in Ontario. This foundational work was instrumental in paving the way for the high level of provincial and regional coordination and collaboration required to achieve the objectives of the OSLT initiative.

Colleges recognized the value in collaborating and building on pilot deliveries across the college sector to improve immigrant access to occupation-specific language training. They welcomed the opportunity to capitalize on individual college strengths, experience and expertise while effectively sharing knowledge among colleges.

The collaboration and the partnership between Colleges Ontario, the 14 participating Ontario colleges and CONNECT Strategic Alliances provided opportunities to realize efficiencies across the province-wide OSLT initiative by providing access to central resources and carrying out some activities centrally, including

- developing the OSLT Curriculum, informed by college input.
- dedicating resources to instructor orientation, training and ongoing support.
- coordinating provincial promotional material and website content.
- creating a central outreach database and common templates that colleges could access for local marketing and outreach.
- bringing together evaluation expertise to develop the evaluation framework and carry out evaluation activities.
- managing the communication to and consultations with stakeholders and employers across Ontario.
- streamlining reporting and administration with Colleges Ontario serving as the single point of contact for CIC.

## C.4 Established an evaluation framework

An important feature of the OSLT initiative was the development of an overall framework for evaluating the many components of the planned development and delivery of college-based occupation-specific language training.

Colleges Ontario identified evaluation consultants with the necessary expertise and convened an evaluation support team with competence in both official languages and with expertise in second-language curriculum development, program delivery within the post-secondary sector, the design and administration of data-gathering tools, and analysis of results.

The evaluation support team worked with the colleges and Colleges Ontario to design an evaluation framework to

- provide formative feedback<sup>10</sup> on project activities that informed curriculum and assessment scheme development and the pilot deliveries.
- assess the effectiveness of major project activity areas, including curriculum development, marketing and outreach, college capacity to deliver OSLT courses and the use of HARTS.<sup>11</sup>
- evaluate the outcomes of the pilot deliveries as required by CIC.
- inform the development and implementation of a long-term strategy for sustainable, high-quality delivery and continuous improvement of OSLT courses.

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<sup>10</sup> Formative feedback entails providing information that can be used to make changes during the project, rather than evaluating results only at the end of a project.

<sup>11</sup> The History of Assessments, Referrals and Training System (HARTS) is a comprehensive information, enrolment and course-management system for CIC-funded language programs. HARTS houses information on enrolment, withdrawals (including course completion) as well as participant demographic data (such as gender, age, time in Canada, previous/current occupation and level of education).

## D. Developing the OSLT Curriculum

### D.1 Determined objectives for curriculum development

The objectives for the OSLT Curriculum development activities were to

- develop clearly articulated learning outcomes for each OSLT course that were relevant to participants, achievable within the proposed course duration and measurable.
- examine the feasibility of combining a sector-wide core curriculum with additional occupational content presented in the accompanying “occupation tool kits.”
- consider ways to meet the range of participant needs through different delivery models, including online delivery.
- ensure that the linguistic, occupational and socio-cultural aspects of occupation-specific communication skills are addressed in an integrated fashion and reflect the current realities within both of the official language communities.
- determine the effectiveness of models of cross-college collaboration in the development and sharing of the OSLT Curriculum.

### D.2 Created the OSLT Curriculum

Colleges Ontario and the participating colleges undertook to meet these curriculum development objectives by bringing resources together centrally to realize efficiencies and by creating a common approach to curriculum development across the five priority sectors and 27 occupational areas. They undertook a broad range of activities, leveraging central expertise with input from the colleges:

1. Brought together a team of experts.
2. Established a curriculum development framework.
3. Solicited input from employers and occupational experts.
4. Developed language curriculum for priority sectors and occupation areas.
5. Ensured each curriculum uses consistent format and features.
6. Developed assessment activities to determine participant progress.
7. Adapted and translated curriculum for delivery in French.
8. Gathered and analyzed feedback.
9. Developed online dialogues to accompany the OSLT Curriculum.
10. Produced and distributed final versions of the OSLT Curriculum.

#### 1. Brought together a team of experts

A curriculum development team was formed to review existing curriculum and develop curriculum in each of the priority sectors. The team, comprised of language curriculum writers, occupational content experts and language training delivery experts, conducted a needs analysis of workplace language requirements in each of the five priority sectors.

Colleges Ontario contracted with occupational content experts from Ontario colleges and from occupational fields who helped the curriculum development team embed sector and occupational background information, workplace applications and industry cultural expectations in Ontario into



the curriculum. Where appropriate, curriculum writers visited workplaces to identify on-the-job communication requirements.

Experts in areas such as English language instruction, language assessment, evaluation, human rights, and diversity and equity were also consulted to ensure that the curriculum addressed issues facing newcomers in the workplace. French-language curriculum writers and editors were brought on board to develop curriculum and assessment tasks in French for the health sciences and human services sectors.

## **2. Established a curriculum development framework**

A framework was created by the curriculum development team, in consultation with the evaluation support team, as a conceptual template to guide the work of curriculum development.

This framework incorporated key elements considered essential for addressing the occupation-specific language needs of newcomers to Ontario:

- Focus on language.
- Build cultural awareness to support communication.
- Focus on the workplace context in Ontario.
- Adjust for French or English contexts.
- Ground language expertise in workplace communication needs.
- Connect learning objectives, outcomes, activities and assessment.
- Base assessment on workplace-based communication tasks.
- Draw on the knowledge and experience of immigrants.
- Meet the needs of adult learners.
- Allow for flexible delivery models.
- Accommodate mixed occupational backgrounds.

The framework was the basis for the evaluation team to provide feedback on the draft versions of the curriculum across all sectors. It also helped the curriculum development team identify gaps and potential problems in the early stages so that modifications could be made before the curriculum was piloted.

## **3. Solicited input from employers and occupational experts**

From January to March 2009, Colleges Ontario and 12 colleges consulted with a total of 218 stakeholders including employers, ethno-cultural organizations, associations and unions<sup>12</sup>. These consultations included a cross-section of large, medium and small enterprises in the five industry sectors, as well as francophone employers. Roundtable discussions, one-on-one dialogues and online questionnaires were used to elicit industry information and employer input.

In addition, the curriculum development team consulted with selected employers and sector associations about occupational, workplace and socio-cultural content and adapted the curriculum accordingly.

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<sup>12</sup> *Enhancing the Role of Colleges in Immigrant Integration to Employment*, Colleges Ontario, 2009. The report is available on the Colleges Ontario website at: <http://www.collegesontario.org/policy-positions/positionpapers/Employer+Consultations.pdf>.

#### 4. Developed language curriculum for priority sectors and occupation areas

The OSLT Curriculum was developed for five sectors – business, health sciences, human services, technology and skilled trades – and 27 occupation areas. It was designed to be delivered by colleges and to accommodate instructional groups of newcomers from multiple occupations within a sector. The OSLT Health Sciences Curriculum and OSLT Human Services Curriculum were adapted for delivery in French.

The curriculum development team anchored each curriculum in one of the five sectors, and developed specialized curriculum to address specific occupations.

- Table 3 shows how the OSLT Curriculum has been structured to address the occupations in each priority sector.
- Table 4 shows how the OSLT Curriculum achieves the objectives set out in the curriculum development framework.

**Table 3: OSLT Curriculum by Sector**

Sector	OSLT Curriculum and Occupations
<b>Business</b>	Occupation-specific Language Training for Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accounting Personnel</li> <li>▪ Finance Personnel</li> </ul>
	Occupation-specific Language Training for Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Entrepreneur</li> <li>▪ Sales and Marketing Personnel</li> </ul>
	Occupation-specific Language Training for Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hospitality Personnel</li> </ul>
	Occupation-specific Language Training for Business <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project Manager</li> </ul>
<b>Health Sciences</b>	Occupation-specific Language Training for Health Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dental Hygienist</li> <li>▪ Medical Radiation Technologist</li> <li>▪ Nurse</li> <li>▪ Personal Support Worker</li> <li>▪ Sleep Technologist</li> </ul>
	Formation linguistique axée sur les professions Programme – Sciences de la santé <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hygiéniste dentaire</li> <li>▪ Soins infirmiers</li> <li>▪ Préposé(e) aux services de soutien personnel</li> </ul>

Sector	OSLT Curriculum and Occupations
Human Services	<p><b>Occupation-specific Language Training for Human Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child and Youth Worker</li> <li>▪ Early Childhood Educator</li> </ul> <p><b>Formation linguistique axée sur les professions Programme – Services aux personnes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Édicateur/trice de la petite enfance</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Occupation-specific Language Training for Human Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policing Personnel</li> <li>▪ Security Personnel</li> </ul>
Technology	<p><b>Occupation-specific Language Training for Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Architectural Technologist</li> <li>▪ Engineering Technologist</li> <li>▪ Environmental Technologist</li> <li>▪ IT Personnel</li> </ul>
Skilled Trades	<p><b>Occupation-specific Language Training for Construction Trades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Civil Trades – Carpenter and Bricklayer</li> <li>▪ Electrical Trades – Construction and Maintenance Electrician</li> <li>▪ Mechanical Trades – Plumber and Steamfitter</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Occupation-specific Language Training for Motive Power Trades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Automotive Service Technician</li> <li>▪ Heavy Duty Equipment Technician</li> <li>▪ Truck and Coach Technician</li> </ul>

**Table 4: Curriculum Development Framework and the OSLT Curriculum**

Elements of the Curriculum Development Framework	How this is Achieved in the OSLT Curriculum
<b>Focus on language.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Authentic, relevant learning activities are included to develop language skills to support the communication demands of the workplace.</li> <li>▪ Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) are used to help determine the language addressed in the curriculum and are referenced where appropriate in the curriculum.</li> </ul>
<b>Build cultural awareness to support communication.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instruction notes and activities make explicit connections between socio-cultural context and communication skills to support language learning.</li> <li>▪ Cultural aspects of communication are integrated into the language teaching through activities and learning materials associated with workplace-based situations specific to the sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Focus on the workplace context in Ontario.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each curriculum includes an orientation to the sector in Ontario, and reflects Canadian laws and regulations pertaining to human rights in the workplace.</li> </ul>
<b>Ground language expertise in workplace communication needs.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum developers consulted with college experts in occupational content and people working in the field to develop authentic, workplace-based language activities and materials. OSLT Curriculum also reflected curriculum developers' observations of language usage in the workplace.</li> </ul>
<b>Connect learning objectives, outcomes, activities and assessment.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each unit of the OSLT Curriculum sets out the instructional focus and learning outcomes, with activities explicitly linked to these dimensions.</li> <li>▪ Assessment activities are directly connected to the learning outcomes and reflect the practice activities in each unit.</li> </ul>
<b>Base assessment on workplace-based communication tasks.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessments of participant progress and level of skill are based on language and communication skills specific to the sector as demonstrated through the communication tasks for each unit.</li> </ul>
<b>Draw on the knowledge and experience of immigrants.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructors are encouraged to draw on participants' knowledge and experience to enhance the occupational context for language and communication activities.</li> <li>▪ Instructors receive guidance on how to establish a collaborative environment where participants can share their knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Meet the needs of adult learners.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The OSLT Curriculum incorporates key adult learning principles.</li> </ul>
<b>Allow for flexible delivery models.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The OSLT Curriculum can be delivered in a full-time or part-time classroom-based format on a college campus or in a workplace setting, as best meets local needs.</li> <li>▪ It is designed to incorporate online supports and contains elements that can be adapted for online delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodate mixed occupational backgrounds.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each OSLT Curriculum contains a core curriculum that can be delivered to classes with participants from mixed occupational backgrounds in the sector.</li> <li>▪ Some curricula include occupation tool kits that contain material focused on the language and communication needs of specific occupations within the sector.</li> </ul>

## 5. Ensured each curriculum uses consistent format and features

The curriculum for each priority sector has been designed for newcomers with Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 6 to 8 (or Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 5/6 to 8) in at least one language skill area. Each curriculum includes

- information on the sector and occupational areas covered.
- introductory activities with a needs analysis form.
- five core units of language curriculum.
- accompanying assessment activities for each unit.

The introduction, five core units of language curriculum and assessment activities have been designed to be delivered in consecutive order over approximately 180 hours.

Each core unit contains a specific instructional focus (see Table 5) along with

- workplace-based communication learning outcomes.
- a syllabus that links communication tasks with related language and socio-cultural topics.
- suggested activities with accompanying instruction notes and learning resources.
- an assessment activity tied to the unit learning outcomes.

**Table 5: Focus of the Core Units in the OSLT Curriculum**

Core Unit	Description
<b>1. Working in the Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides an introduction and orientation to the sector and occupations, and offers practice in introducing oneself in professional and workplace contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Gathering and Sharing Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Addresses occupation or sector-specific communication tasks that involve collecting and sharing information.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Communicating Using Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offers practice in technology-mediated communication tasks performed in the occupations within the sector (e.g., using the telephone, emailing).</li> </ul>
<b>4. Managing Interactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examines interactions with colleagues, clients and supervisors (e.g., assertion, handling difficult situations).</li> </ul>
<b>5. Moving Forward in the Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Looks at the communication tasks required for taking the next steps toward employment in the sector (e.g., communication for job interviews).</li> </ul>

Socio-cultural elements of occupation-specific communication integrated into the OSLT Curriculum included

- using the vernacular.
- engaging in small talk.
- interpreting and using body language in the workplace context in Canada.
- knowing how to handle potentially sensitive communication situations, such as
  - talking to clients and supervisors.
  - expressing opinions.
  - providing feedback.
  - disagreeing politely.
- knowing when to use formal and informal language.

The evaluation support team consulted with curriculum developers and with the colleges throughout the development of the OSLT Curriculum, reviewing and providing feedback on successive drafts before the curriculum was readied for pilot delivery.

Each curriculum was produced in PDF electronic file format and paper-based binder format. The binder format accommodated the instructors' need for flexibility and adaptability by making it easy to include supplementary material or additional resources.

## **6. Developed assessment activities to determine participant progress**

Target performance descriptors that reflected communication competencies within the range of CLB 6 to 8 (Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens 5/6 to 8) were developed using rating criteria in

- effectiveness.
- speaking accuracy and fluency.
- pronunciation.
- writing accuracy and fluency.
- listening and reading comprehension.
- socio-cultural appropriateness.

The OSLT Curriculum has been designed with clearly articulated learning outcomes that are relevant to participants and their future employers, achievable within the proposed course duration and measurable.

These clearly articulated learning outcomes formed the basis of the assessment activities developed for the end of each unit and for the final course assessment. Assessment activities are grounded in workplace communication tasks and directly connect to unit and course outcomes.

The curriculum development team developed an OSLT Assessment Manual, provided in binder, PDF and CD format, that includes

- a description of the assessment process.
- target performance descriptors and a rating scale.
- assessment activities for each curriculum.
- exemplars from actual tasks performed by participants during the pilot deliveries.
- an outline of the process for providing individual feedback on participant progress.
- participant feedback forms.

All instructors received training on using the OSLT Assessment Manual to assess participant progress. This training improved consistency in measuring participant performance.

### **7. Adapted and translated curriculum for delivery in French**

The curriculum development team adapted and translated into French two of the OSLT Curriculum:

- the OSLT Health Sciences Curriculum and three occupation tool kits (Dental Hygienist, Nurse and Personal Support Worker)
- the OSLT Human Services Curriculum and the Early Childhood Educator tool kit.

French linguistic and socio-cultural norms for the targeted occupations were researched and reflected in the adapted curriculum since a straight translation of the English curriculum would not capture the nuances of everyday French language used in the workplace. Appropriate assessment activities were translated or adapted as required.

The Course Review Guide and associated evaluation tools such as the needs analysis form and final participant surveys were translated and adapted into French as necessary.

### **8. Gathered and analyzed feedback**

Interviews, surveys and focus groups were used to gather feedback on the OSLT Curriculum from participants, instructors, college coordinators,<sup>13</sup> employers, and industry and professional associations. This feedback was analyzed by the evaluation team and informed modifications to pilot deliveries and was reflected in subsequent versions of OSLT Curriculum.

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<sup>13</sup> Each college had an OSLT coordinator responsible for OSLT pilot deliveries. The OSLT coordinator provided overall direction and operational coordination to the college's OSLT courses in terms of marketing and outreach, participant related issues, administration, course management and financial accountability. They also were the point of contact for Colleges Ontario.

## **9. Developed online dialogues to accompany the OSLT Curriculum**

In 2009 to 2010, authentic occupation-specific dialogues spread across occupational areas from each curriculum were professionally audio-taped using experienced actors to ensure that the recordings included a variety of accents. The dialogues were housed on an online course-management system so that participants could access them at any time using the Internet, and download them onto their computer or hand-held device. These 52 dialogues vary in length from 30 seconds to 2 minutes, and can be used for listening and interactive pronunciation practice as well as role-play activities.

## **10. Produced and distributed final versions of the OSLT Curriculum**

A production team of editors, designers, proofreaders and a printer was assembled to create the final version of the OSLT Curriculum. Electronic PDF files and over 4,800 printed pages were produced and delivered to colleges across Ontario.

At the same time, the OSLT Assessment Manual was produced as an accompanying resource for instructors. It contains assessment-related content, including assessment criteria, final assessment activities, forms and exemplars of specific tasks rated according to the assessment criteria.

In addition to distribution in printed format, each curriculum has been posted on the OSLT Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN)<sup>14</sup> to facilitate access and sharing of ideas for instructors and among colleges.

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<sup>14</sup> KEN is a web-based knowledge exchange network and resource repository established by Colleges Ontario that can be accessed by OSLT college coordinators and instructors.



## **E. Piloting Delivery of the OSLT Curriculum**

### **E.1 Determined objectives for the OSLT pilot deliveries**

The objectives for the pilot deliveries conducted from 2008 to 2011 were to

- launch immediate delivery of existing workplace-related language curriculum in 2008.
- pilot the newly-developed OSLT Curriculum, and use feedback on these deliveries to enhance and revise the OSLT Curriculum as needed.

### **E.2 Examined a range of delivery models**

Variables that affected the pilot deliveries included the size of the region being served, the number of potential participants and the range of occupational areas covered by each curriculum, as well as different session lengths, instructors, geographical regions, scheduled times and delivery sites. The pilot deliveries provided enough variety to help

- determine the lead time needed to market an OSLT course and recruit qualified participants.
- identify delivery structures that considered participants' locations, work schedules and family responsibilities.
- test models of employer involvement, including workplace-based training.

### **E.3 Delivered OSLT Curriculum at 14 Ontario colleges**

From 2008 to 2011, fourteen Ontario colleges delivered existing language curriculum and the newly developed OSLT Curriculum. With support from Colleges Ontario, these colleges successfully undertook the wide range of activities required to provide high-quality, workplace-based language training to eligible newcomers:

1. Hired and provided support to instructors.
2. Developed local-level relationships and referral mechanisms with CIC-funded Assessment Centres.
3. Conducted marketing, in-reach and outreach.
4. Launched immediate delivery of pre-existing curriculum.
5. Piloted the new OSLT Curriculum.
6. Piloted assessment tools.
7. Piloted online components.
8. Explored ways to involve employers in pilot deliveries.
9. Issued documentation to participants who completed OSLT courses.

## **1. Hired and provided support to instructors**

Colleges hired qualified language instructors to deliver the OSLT Curriculum; several instructors taught more than one course or courses in different sectors. A cadre of 42 experienced OSLT instructors, including two francophone instructors, has now taught the OSLT Curriculum and is familiar with the workplace language requirements of a range of occupations.

To support the colleges and their instructors, Colleges Ontario organized and delivered instructor orientation, training and wrap-up sessions that brought instructors together, and established the OSLT Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) to facilitate ongoing sharing of best practices and inter-regional communication among instructors.

## **2. Developed local-level relationships and referral mechanisms with CIC-funded Assessment Centres**

Each college offering OSLT courses screened applicants to ensure that they had training or experience in either the sector or one of occupations covered by the course. Those who met this criteria were referred to a CIC-funded Assessment Centre that

- established the applicant's eligibility for CIC-funded programs.
- selected the most appropriate CLB-based test to assess each applicant.<sup>15</sup>
- administered the CLB-based language test using a qualified CLB assessor.
- determined whether the applicant's language level was appropriate for the OSLT course.

Colleges actively developed relationships with their local Assessment Centre(s) so that initial assessments could be completed in a timely manner. The colleges and Assessment Centres worked together whenever possible to provide applicants with consistent information about the application processes for OSLT courses.

Initial problems obtaining assessments in French, including the limited availability of assessors to do assessments in French and no test above Niveaux de compétence linguistique canadiens level 5, were gradually resolved, and the availability of assessment in French improved over the three years of the OSLT initiative.

Although Assessment Centres became more familiar with OSLT courses over the three years of pilot deliveries, in practice most participants were referred from colleges to the Assessment Centres, rather than the Assessment Centres referring candidates to colleges offering OSLT courses.

## **3. Conducted marketing, in-reach and outreach**

Colleges worked closely with each other and with Colleges Ontario to establish clear roles and responsibilities in attracting potential participants to OSLT courses. (See Table 6.)

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<sup>15</sup> If the applicant had been enrolled in a CIC-sponsored language course within the last six months, the CLB level assigned to the participant at the end of that course was used.

**Table 6: OSLT Marketing and Outreach Activities**

Activity	Role of Colleges Ontario	Role of Colleges
<p><b>Created marketing materials and outreach kit.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developed background material on the OSLT initiative.</li> <li>▪ Established OSLT identity and logo.</li> <li>▪ Created design templates for print materials.</li> <li>▪ Developed an outreach checklist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Customized flyers and ads for local markets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Placed advertising in appropriate channels.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developed articles for provincial publications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distributed flyers/ads to libraries, community centres and settlement agencies.</li> <li>▪ Developed articles for local newspapers.</li> <li>▪ Conducted email and word-of-mouth campaigns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Established a digital presence.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developed and maintained the OSLT website.</li> <li>▪ Maintained OSLT information on broad-reaching websites, including the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration website, Settlement.org and others.</li> <li>▪ Created online advertising campaigns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Posted and maintained OSLT-related content on college website.</li> <li>▪ Developed online newsletters for distribution to local communities.</li> <li>▪ Developed online videos to promote OSLT courses on college websites.</li> <li>▪ Used social media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Coordinated marketing initiatives.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinated province-wide marketing activities and helped coordinate college marketing activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developed a local marketing plan.</li> <li>▪ Provided dedicated resources to coordinate marketing activities with other college-specific programs and initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Built referral network.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Created and maintained a database of 375 community agencies serving immigrants.</li> <li>▪ Conducted outreach with provincial business organizations and regulatory bodies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coordinated local level               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information sessions.</li> <li>• job fair booths.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Established relationships with local               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Centres.</li> <li>• Job Search Workshops (JSW).</li> <li>• TESL deliverers.</li> <li>• professional associations.</li> <li>• school boards.</li> <li>• local hospitals (for Health Sciences pilot deliveries).</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Conducted in-reach to internal college departments and services.</li> </ul>

### **(a) Undertook college in-reach**

Colleges leveraged their position as visible, local sources of education- and employment-related information for newcomers by cultivating in-reach opportunities to departments and academic programs related to OSLT courses, including

- academic divisions offering occupation-related courses of study or bridging programs.
- student recruitment, student admissions and continuing education point-of-contact areas used by newcomers seeking information about college offerings.
- advising services for immigrants provided through the Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) project.
- student employment and career centres.
- employment-related supports offered by college-operated Employment Ontario services.

### **(b) Conducted targeted outreach**

Colleges Ontario created a database of over 375 organizations serving immigrants that included information on provincial, regional and local associations and agencies serving immigrants. This supported college marketing and outreach efforts early in the OSLT initiative when colleges did not have ready access to this information.

To build awareness of the OSLT courses, colleges built solid relationships wherever possible with local agencies, language-training and immigrant-related service providers, and Assessment Centres. Additional outreach activities were directed at Employment Ontario programs, Job Search Workshops, local professional trade associations, employers and unions, as appropriate for the local market.

Over the three-year OSLT initiative, colleges tested and refined approaches to outreach and marketing. They used a broad range of communication channels and nurtured relationships with graduates so that participants would be more inclined to refer friends and family to an OSLT course.

In their feedback, participants reported that they learned about OSLT courses primarily through word of mouth from family or friends, but other sources of information cited by participants included flyers, college staff, college websites, advertisements in local papers, Assessment Centres and employment centres.

### **(c) Facilitated regional collaboration**

Six colleges<sup>16</sup> in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) worked as a consortium, holding monthly meetings and pooling resources to cooperate in their local marketing and recruitment efforts. The expertise they developed was shared with other colleges through meetings and teleconferences with all colleges.

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<sup>16</sup> Boréal, Centennial, George Brown, Humber, Seneca and Sheridan.

#### 4. Launched immediate delivery of pre-existing curriculum

In 2008, Colleges Ontario was asked by CIC to coordinate the delivery of a limited number of workplace-related language courses at the same time as the new OSLT Curriculum was being developed. This allowed colleges to provide immediate delivery of occupation-related language curriculum to recently-arrived immigrants who had experience or training in selected priority occupation areas.

From September 2008 to April 2009, seven Ontario colleges delivered 16 courses of occupation-related language curriculum that had been created prior to the launch of the OSLT initiative in business (accounting personnel and project manager), health sciences (nurse and medical laboratory technologist) and skilled trades (construction trades). (See Table 7.)

**Table 7: Course Deliveries 2008 to 2009**

Priority Sector	2008-2009	
	Number of Classes	Number of Classes
Business	4	2
Health Sciences	9	5
Skilled Trades	3*	1
<b>Total Courses</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7**</b>

Enrolment in this first year of deliveries was affected by the limited time available for marketing and outreach activities. In total, 97 participants met the CIC registration requirements as to their status in Canada, language proficiency and occupational fit, and enrolled in these initial courses. The class size averaged six CIC-eligible participants.<sup>17</sup> Sixty-four of the 97 participants (66 percent) completed these courses.

These courses were evaluated by the OSLT evaluation team and informed the development of the new curriculum. These deliveries also helped identify gaps where instructors needed to supplement materials to meet specific learning needs, such as

- pronunciation and grammar.
- on-the-job role-plays and scenarios.
- interactive activities related to networking skills.

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 \* These classes were delivered in French.

\*\*Colleges: Algonquin, Centennial, Fanshawe, George Brown, La Cité, Mohawk, Niagara.

<sup>17</sup>After consultation with CIC, an additional 44 participants, most of whom had recently become Canadian citizens but who otherwise met the requirements, were enrolled in classes where there was space. As such, the average class size was six students if Canadian citizens are not included and nine if citizens are included.

Findings from these initial pilot deliveries also provided valuable information during the development of processes related to

- marketing, outreach and recruitment.
- instructor selection.
- delivery.
- administrative support.
- working with CIC-funded Assessment Centres.
- gathering data.
- reporting.
- evaluation of course quality.

### 5. Piloted the new OSLT Curriculum

Between May 2009 and March 2011, 14 Ontario colleges delivered a combination of 91 courses of the newly developed OSLT curriculum, and 14 courses of the previously developed curriculum, at 19 different sites. (See Table 8.)

**Table 8: Participating Colleges 2009 to 2011**

Colleges Participating in OSLT Delivery 2009 to 2011 <sup>18</sup>					
Business	Health Sciences	Human Services	Technology	Skilled Trades	
Algonquin	Algonquin	Conestoga	Fanshawe	<b>Motive Power</b>	<b>Construction</b>
Boréal*	Boréal*	La Cité**	Humber		
Centennial	Centennial	Mohawk	Niagara	Centennial	George Brown
Conestoga	Conestoga	Seneca	Seneca		La Cité**
Fanshawe	Confederation	Sheridan	Sheridan		
George Brown	Fanshawe				
Georgian	George Brown				
Humber	Georgian				
Niagara	Mohawk				
Seneca	Niagara				
Sheridan	Seneca				

<sup>18</sup> The OSLT initiative used the CIC fiscal year for reporting, which starts April 1. Unless otherwise stated, the year starts April 1 and ends March 31.

\* Boréal delivered courses in English to the francophone immigrant community.

\*\*La Cité delivered courses in French.

## Deliveries 2009 to 2011

By September 2009, newly developed OSLT Curriculum in all five priority sectors was available for pilot delivery. Six additional colleges joined the OSLT initiative, bringing the total to 13 participating colleges. During this period, 45 OSLT courses were delivered; 38 using the newly developed OSLT Curriculum and seven using the previously developed curriculum. (See Table 9.) The health sciences and business courses accounted for approximately 70 percent of the courses delivered in 2009 to 2011.

In 2010, the addition of Confederation College brought the number of colleges delivering the OSLT Curriculum to 14. Sixty OSLT courses were delivered, of which 53 used the newly developed OSLT Curriculum and seven used the previously developed curriculum. (See Table 9.) While the health sciences and business sectors continued to represent the largest number of OSLT course offerings, the number of technology courses more than doubled over the previous year.

**Table 9: Course Deliveries 2009 to 2011**

Priority Sector	2009-2010		2010-2011	
	Number of Classes	Number of Colleges	Number of Classes	Number of Colleges
Business	12	6	18	9
Health Sciences	19	12	20	12
Human Services	3	2	5	5
Technology	6	4	13	5
Skilled Trades	5	3	4	3
<b>Total Courses</b>	<b>45*</b>	<b>13**</b>	<b>60°</b>	<b>14°°</b>

It is important to note that in 2010 to 2011, the central coordination of the OSLT initiative resulted in more courses being delivered in total (60 instead of 54) for the original amount of funding:

- When a college did not have sufficient enrolment to run a scheduled course, the funds for that course were reallocated to another course with a waiting list at that college or at a different college.
- When a college experienced lower-than-expected expenses, the remaining funding was reallocated to support an additional course offering at that college or at a different college.

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\*Of these courses, four were delivered in French, and four in English to the francophone immigrant community.

\*\*Colleges: Algonquin, Boréal, Centennial, Conestoga, Fanshawe, George Brown, Georgian, Humber, La Cité, Mohawk, Niagara, Seneca, Sheridan.

°Of these classes, five were delivered in French, and four were delivered in English to the francophone immigrant community.

°°Colleges: Algonquin, Boréal, Centennial, Conestoga, Confederation, Fanshawe, George Brown, Georgian, Humber, La Cité, Mohawk, Niagara, Seneca, Sheridan.

## Enrolment 2009 to 2011

Monthly reports from the colleges revealed a considerable number of withdrawals during the first month of each OSLT course, mostly because individuals decided they were in the wrong course or could not juggle their other responsibilities to allow regular attendance.

In 2008 to 2009 and 2009 to 2010, the HARTS data on enrolment did not identify these withdrawals because enrolment information tended to be entered closer to the end of the first month rather than at the start of the course. Recognizing this, two enrolment numbers were captured for each OSLT course in 2010 to 2011:

- *Peak enrolment* was defined as the largest number of participants enrolled.
- *Stable enrolment* was defined as the number of participants who were still enrolled in the course at the end of the first month.

In 2010 to 2011, numbers for stable enrolment were used to calculate completion rates and class size so that course effectiveness could be evaluated. These figures are comparable to the data available for 2008 to 2009 and 2009 to 2010.

Total enrolment in 2009 to 2010 was 426 participants, with an average class size of 9.5 CIC-eligible participants.<sup>19</sup> (See Table 10.)

The total stable enrolment in 2010 to 2011 was 734 participants, with an average class size of 12 CIC-eligible participants.<sup>20</sup> (See Table 10.)

**Table 10: Enrolment and Average Class Size 2009 to 2011**

Priority Sector	2009-2010	2010-2011
	Enrolment	Stable Enrolment
Business	143	242
Health Sciences	158	228
Human Services	16	59
Technology	74	172
Skilled Trades	35	33
<b>Total Courses</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>734</b>
<b>Total Colleges</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>

<sup>19</sup>After consultation with CIC, an additional 89 participants, most of whom had recently become Canadian citizens but who otherwise met the eligibility requirements, were enrolled in OSLT courses where there was space. The average class size was 9.5 participants if Canadian citizens are not included, and 11 if citizens are included.

<sup>20</sup>After consultation with CIC, 148 additional participants, most of whom had recently become Canadian citizens but who otherwise met the requirements, were enrolled in classes where there was space. The average class size was 12 if Canadian citizens are not included and 15 if citizens are included.



## 6. Piloted assessment tools

Instructors used the results of final assessment activities to determine whether participants, on completion of an OSLT course, were able to demonstrate the communication skills required to perform key workplace-based communication activities for one of the occupations included in the course. Because participants were unlikely to progress an entire CLB level across all skill areas during a 180-hour OSLT course, CLB exit testing was not conducted after participants completed the course.<sup>21</sup>

In the last two years of the OSLT initiative, colleges piloted assessment activities at the end of each unit. Colleges Ontario collected samples of the assessment activities completed by participants, which were calibrated by a team of OSLT instructors using the target descriptors. These samples were included as exemplars in the OSLT Assessment Manual.

## 7. Piloted online components

The audio dialogues developed in 2009 to 2010 were piloted online in 2010 to 2011. All OSLT participants were given password access to the dialogues that were housed on a Moodle site.<sup>22</sup>

- Participants listened to the dialogues online, or downloaded them to a computer or hand-held device (for example, phone) and listened to them as podcasts.
- A participant practised pronunciation by recording his or her voice over the voice of the person in the dialogue who was playing the occupational role, thereby inserting himself or herself into an authentic, workplace-based dialogue. The participant then listened to himself or herself taking part in the dialogue. Participants could repeat this process as many times as they wanted and could send samples to their instructors for additional feedback.

Participants were also provided with access to licensed pronunciation software, which allowed them to practise pronunciation skills and work on specific challenges on their own time at home or at the college. One of the francophone colleges also provided access to this software for the English component of its courses, a module they had included to reflect the bilingual workplaces in the region.

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<sup>21</sup>In addition, neither CLB assessment tasks nor TOWES adequately matches the specific content of OSLT courses, and at this time CLB benchmarking data is not available for all occupations covered by OSLT courses.

<sup>22</sup>Moodle is a content management system for producing Internet-based courses and websites. It allows for content creation and delivery, communication, collaboration and assessment.

## 8. Explored ways to involve employers in pilot deliveries

Other colleges engaged in a variety of activities to involve employers and industry representatives in OSLT pilot deliveries:

- Industry and employer representatives were invited to OSLT classes as guest speakers on topics that included sector updates, pathways to employment and employability skills.
- Job-shadowing or job-observation opportunities were provided for participants in some OSLT courses at, for example, child-care facilities for participants in an OSLT Human Services course, and at municipal fleet services for participants in an OSLT Motive Power course.
- Employer networking opportunities were arranged where participants practised their presentation and self-marketing skills in a live roundtable “meet-and-greet” setting with employers.
- Focus groups were held with sector employers, such as regional health care providers.
- Participants were invited on field trips to worksites, such as construction sites, hospitals, car dealerships and to question-and-answer sessions with employers.

Two colleges delivered the OSLT Health Sciences Curriculum and the OSLT Technology Curriculum in conjunction with employers in 2009 to 2010 and 2010 to 2011.

## 9. Issued documentation to participants who completed OSLT courses

All participants who completed an OSLT course received college documentation that specified the OSLT course taken, participant name, number of hours of instruction, date of completion and college name.

### E.4 Reviewed the impact of pilot deliveries

The delivery of OSLT courses was monitored and evaluated throughout the three-year OSLT initiative, including gathering and analyzing data on

1. Demographic profile of participants.
2. Participant satisfaction.
3. Completion rate of OSLT courses.

#### 1. Demographic profile of participants

Participants across all three years of pilot deliveries showed similar demographic characteristics. (See Table 14.)<sup>23</sup>

- The majority of participants (82 percent) were over 30 years of age, with most participants in the 30- to 40-year-old age range.
- More females than males (a ratio of approximately 3:2) participated, although some classes were comprised of either all female or male participants.
- Most participants had been in Canada for less than three years.
- Most participants were well-educated and held post-secondary qualifications.

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<sup>23</sup>Only participants who met the CIC-eligibility criteria are included in the demographic information provided in this report.

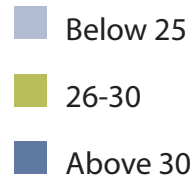
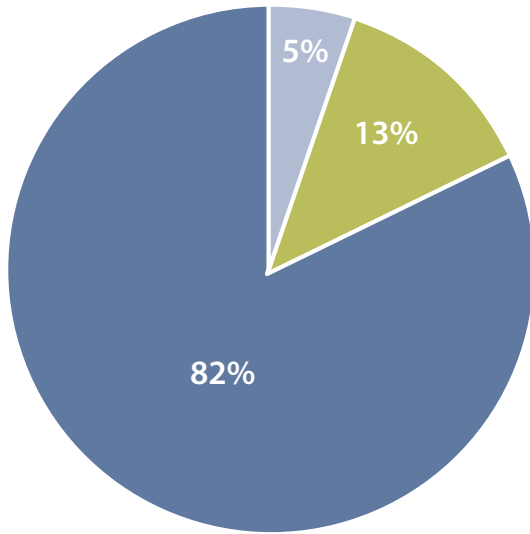
- Participants represented 66 language backgrounds, with the most frequently reported first languages being Mandarin and Spanish.

Table 11 provides detailed information on the demographic profile of participants enrolled in 2010 to 2011 courses. While verified data at this level of detail is available only for the final year, instructors report that the figures are broadly representative of the profile of participants in the previous two years.

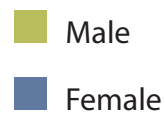
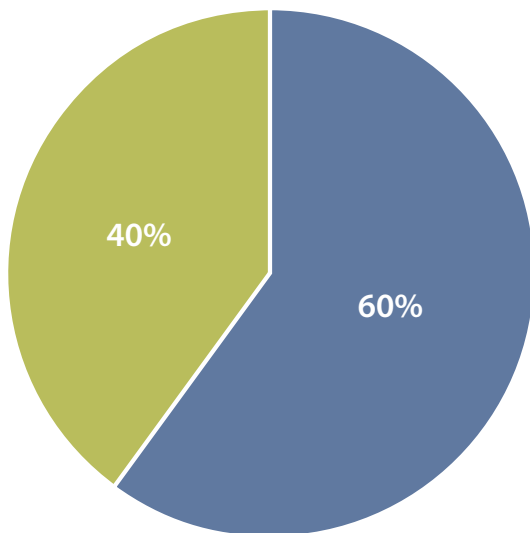
**Table 11: Demographic Profile of Participants**

Demographic Profile of Participants (2010-2011)	Percent
<b>Participant Age</b>	
Below 25	5%
26-30	13%
Above 30	82%
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	60%
Male	40%
<b>Years in Canada</b>	
Less than 1 year	32%
1-3 years	36%
3-5 years	20%
More than 5 years	12%
<b>Educational Background</b>	
Elementary/Secondary	5%
Post-secondary (undergraduate)	54%
Post-secondary (graduate)	28%
Trade or non-university certificate	13%
<b>Language Background</b>	
Mandarin	18%
Spanish	18%
Arabic	8%
Persian/Farsi	7%
Remaining 62 languages	49%

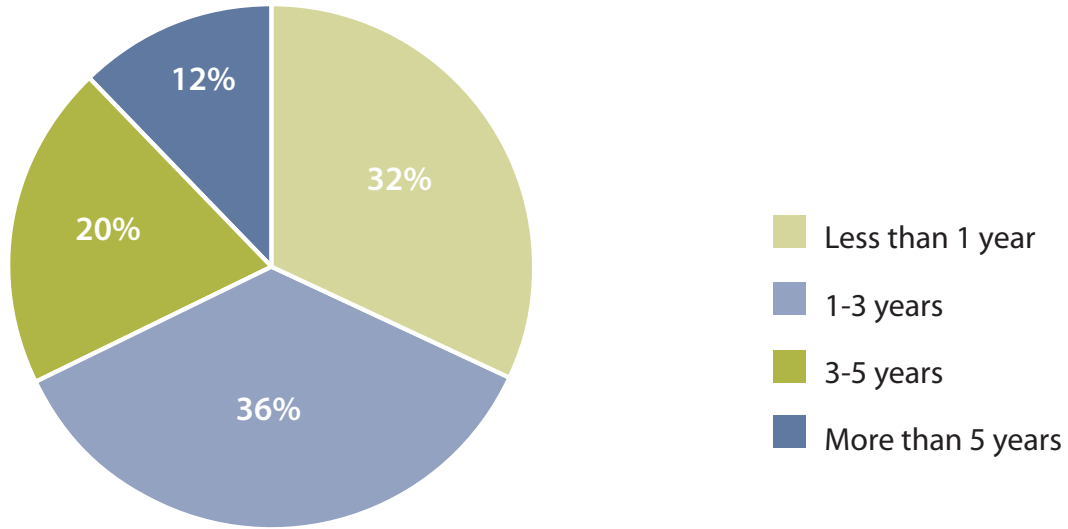
### Participant Age



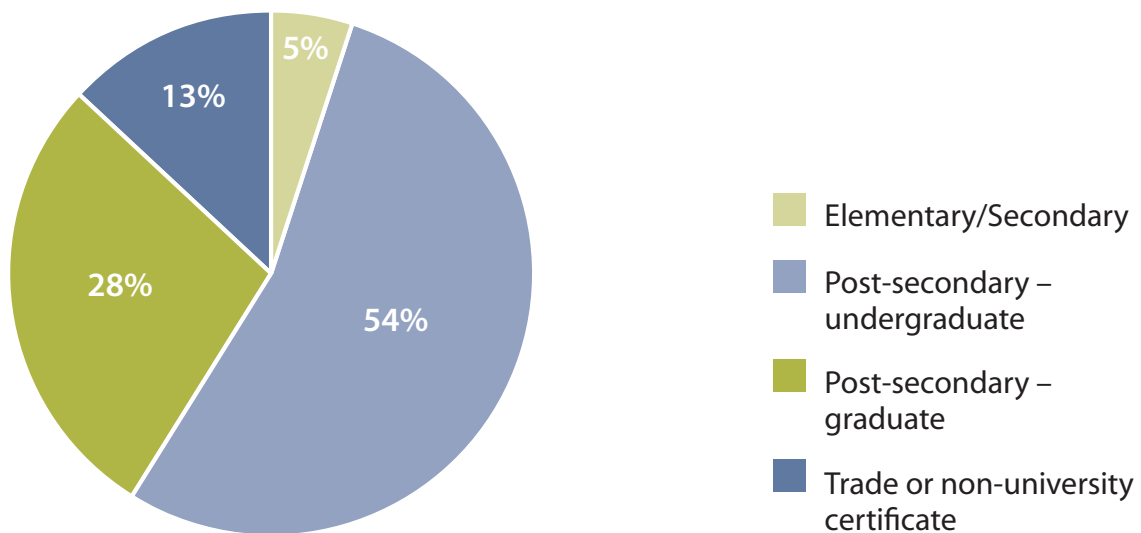
### Gender



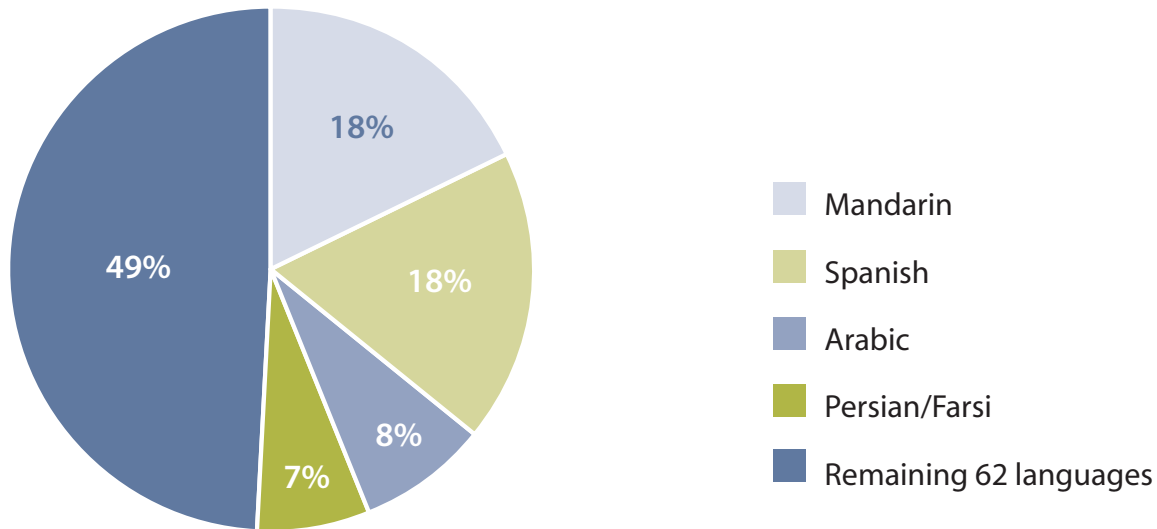
### Years in Canada



### Educational Background



## Language Background



## 2. Participant satisfaction

### (a) Participant survey

Every year participants were asked to complete a survey at the end of each OSLT course that asked them to indicate

- the extent to which the course helped them improve their language skills.
- the helpfulness of feedback provided throughout the course.
- the extent to which their confidence in their communication skills had increased their overall satisfaction with the course.
- what they liked best about the course and any suggestions they had for improvements.
- whether they would recommend the course to a friend or colleague.

Participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the OSLT courses delivered during 2009 to 2011. (See Tables 12 to 15.) Detailed data from 2010 to 2011 reveals that for each question, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction “to a great extent” on all dimensions.

**Table 12: Participant Satisfaction 2009 to 2011**

The Extent to which the Courses Helped Participants	Percent of Participants who Expressed Satisfaction	
	2009-2010	2010-2011
Improve accuracy in speaking	97%	97%
Improve their fluency when speaking	96%	97%
Improve their listening comprehension	97%	97%
Make their pronunciation easier for others to understand	94%	97%
Increase their vocabulary specific to their occupation	88%	95%
Improve their telephone communication skills	99%	97%
Improve their reading comprehension of information related to the occupation	99%	94%
Improve their writing skills in ways related to the occupation	97%	96%
Increase their awareness of workplace cultural practices within the occupation in Canada	98%	98%
Improve their job interviewing skills	98%	95%

**Table 13: Helpfulness of Feedback**

The Helpfulness of Feedback Provided to Participants throughout the Course	2009-2010	2010-2011	Helpful	Very Helpful
Percent of participants responding	98%	99%	22%	77%

**Table 14: Extent to which Participants' Confidence Increased**

The Extent to which Participants' Confidence in their Communication Skills had Increased	2009-2010	2010-2011	To Some Extent	To a Great Extent
Percent of participants responding	98%	99%	36%	62%

**Table 15: Participants who would Recommend the Course**

Participants who would Recommend the Course to a Friend or Colleague	2009-2010	2010-2011
Yes	99%	99%

**(b) Participant focus groups**

In addition to the survey, participant focus group sessions were held in the first two years to gauge participant reaction to the OSLT courses. The feedback received at these sessions indicated that

- with very few exceptions, participants expressed overall satisfaction with the OSLT course and a willingness to recommend it to others.
- the majority of participants reported<sup>24</sup> that their confidence in their communication skills had increased to a great extent, while over nine out of ten reported at least some increase in their confidence in their communication skills.
- participants reported that they appreciated the flexibility and effectiveness of instructors, and the quality of the feedback instructors provided on their language progress.
- participants welcomed the opportunity to interact with and learn from classmates with whom they shared a professional interest, even if they did not share the same cultural background.
- participants praised the OSLT course for the opportunities it afforded them to
  - learn about cultural expectations within their sectors.
  - practise role-plays and informal conversation.
  - learn to handle situations requiring sensitive communication.
  - work in groups.
  - make presentations.

.....  
<sup>24</sup> Participants reported this through the survey.



### 3. Completion rate of OSLT courses

Completion rates for OSLT courses increased each year, from 66 percent in the first year to 72 percent in the third year. (See Table 16.)

**Table 16: Number of Participants who Completed the Course**

Year	Number of Participants who Completed the Course	Percent of Completion Rate*
2008-2009	64	66%
2009-2010	300	70%
2010-2011	526	72%

Over the three years, a consistent pattern emerged about reasons for withdrawing before the end of the OSLT course. Over 50 percent of participants who withdrew each year stated one of three reasons: that they had obtained work, there were personal reasons involved or that they were taking other training. (See Table 17.)

**Table 17: Top Reasons Cited for Withdrawal**

Top Reasons Cited for Withdrawal (2010-2011)	Percent of Participants
Obtained work	35%
Personal reasons	20%
Stopped attending/unable to contact	9%
Taking other training	8%
Poor attendance	7%
Other	21%

.....  
\* Completion rate is calculated using stable enrolment at the end of the first month.

## F. Supporting OSLT Curriculum Development and Delivery

### F.1 Identified the supports needed

With the input of colleges, Colleges Ontario identified important areas of support for OSLT Curriculum development and delivery, including

- establishing an infrastructure to develop curriculum and support colleges in conducting the pilot deliveries.
- coordinating and structuring processes and activities to maximize consistency in delivery.
- planning and coordinating evaluation activities to ensure high-quality delivery and continuous improvement.
- building the capacity of the Ontario colleges to sustain OSLT delivery.

### F.2 Established an OSLT infrastructure

Colleges Ontario, in collaboration with CONNECT Strategic Alliances, facilitated a consistent approach to OSLT delivery across Ontario.

1. Provided leadership to the OSLT initiative.
2. Coordinated college participation.
3. Facilitated curriculum development.
4. Coordinated the development of marketing and outreach plans.
5. Facilitated pilot delivery of the OSLT Curriculum.
6. Established an evaluation process to support quality and consistency of outcomes.
7. Evaluated the initial and pilot deliveries.

#### 1. Provided leadership to the OSLT initiative

Colleges Ontario provided strategic direction, leadership and administrative oversight to the OSLT initiative. In conjunction with colleges, Colleges Ontario consulted with the following key stakeholders on language issues in the workplace:

- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Ontario Region LINC Advisory Committee
- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Job Search Workshops
- regulatory bodies and professional associations
- over 200 employers, professional associations and unions
- umbrella organizations serving employment agencies.

To ensure that colleges had opportunities to provide strategic advice and input, and to share information and best practices, Colleges Ontario established the OSLT Working Group and the OSLT Participating Colleges Group with responsibilities as outlined in Table 18.

**Table 18: Role of College Groups**

College Group	Role
<p align="center"><b>OSLT Working Group</b></p>	<p>Met four to five times annually to provide strategic advice relating to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gaps in existing language training.</li> <li>▪ the priority occupation(s) to be covered.</li> <li>▪ the design, delivery and evaluation of pilot deliveries.</li> <li>▪ the process and criteria for college participation.</li> <li>▪ partnerships with other immigrant-related initiatives, employers, and government and community organizations.</li> <li>▪ the long-term feasibility and sustainability of language training programs for newcomers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OSLT Participating Colleges Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Representatives from 14 colleges</li> </ul>	<p>Met two to three times annually to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ provide input and strategic feedback on the OSLT Curriculum.</li> <li>▪ share progress on pilot deliveries.</li> <li>▪ advise Colleges Ontario on issues affecting the pilot deliveries.</li> <li>▪ provide feedback on long-term employer engagement strategies.</li> <li>▪ participate in the evaluation of curriculum and pilot deliveries.</li> <li>▪ advise on the long-term sustainability of OSLT courses at the college.</li> </ul>

Colleges Ontario flowed funds to and supported colleges in meeting their obligations under the contribution agreement with CIC, including

- coordinating activities related to curriculum development.
- testing processes and establishing an infrastructure to facilitate pilot delivery of the OSLT Curriculum and monitor project deliverables.
- coordinating marketing and outreach, communications, instructor orientation, and associated evaluation and performance measurement activities.
- supporting the francophone colleges delivering OSLT courses.
- providing instructors with direct access to one-to-one support contacts.
- piloting alternate delivery methods.
- gathering information on college processes related to issuing documentation to newcomers who successfully completed an OSLT course and making recommendations for increased consistency of documentation processes.

- employing appropriate controls for monitoring OSLT activities at the college level.
- managing the overall budget and reporting to CIC.
- acting as a single point of contact for CIC.

Throughout the OSLT initiative, strong emphasis was placed on achieving cost efficiencies through streamlining activities and processes.

## **2. Coordinated college participation**

Colleges Ontario developed criteria for college participation and invited colleges to participate through a formal Request for Information that asked colleges to outline local demand, outline their capacity to respond to that demand and provide a draft budget and plan for pilot delivery.

Participating colleges were selected using agreed-upon criteria that included delivery capacity, local demand, budget and staffing models. Once funding was approved by CIC, Colleges Ontario worked with these colleges to prepare participation agreements that mirrored the contribution agreement between Colleges Ontario and CIC, and outlined commitments, deliverables and responsibilities.

## **3. Facilitated curriculum development**

Colleges Ontario brought resources together to create a curriculum development team that included a coordinator, writers, editors, content experts, reviewers, designers and proofreaders, and coordinated activities to develop the online dialogues.

To develop the OSLT Assessment Manual, Colleges Ontario contracted with language assessment experts and instructors, and collected exemplars of written files, audio files and calibrated assessments.

## **4. Coordinated the development of marketing and outreach plans**

Colleges Ontario implemented a coordinated marketing and outreach plan to build awareness of the OSLT initiative, which entailed

- working with provincial associations and agencies on behalf of colleges.
- liaising with government ministries and immigrant-related initiatives.
- creating and maintaining the OSLT website (in English and French) that provided information on the OSLT courses offered at colleges.
- developing templates for marketing materials.
- working with individual colleges to develop plans that were responsive to local markets.
- coordinating CIC approval of college marketing materials.

## **5. Facilitated pilot delivery of the OSLT Curriculum**

Colleges Ontario coordinated the delivery schedule of pilots across Ontario to meet the regional training needs of newcomers and employers by

- identifying a process to expand delivery of courses to other colleges.
- shifting delivery from colleges that had insufficient enrolment to others colleges that had waitlists or could run a new class.
- redirecting funds from courses with insufficient enrolment to courses with higher demand to maximize delivery opportunities across Ontario.
- coordinating the use of the Assessment Registration System (ARS), and later HARTS, to standardize data collection and analysis.
- providing ten orientation and training sessions to 42 OSLT instructors.
- establishing the web-based Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) to facilitate networking and sharing of promising practices among participating colleges and instructors.

## **6. Established an evaluation process to support quality and consistency of outcomes**

The evaluation support team developed an evaluation and data collection process for gathering and verifying data on enrolment and completion, and a process for colleges to use in reviewing OSLT courses, that lays the foundation for ongoing performance measurement.

In addition to developing the evaluation framework for the OSLT initiative, the evaluation support team

- created evaluation tools and processes for curriculum development and course delivery, including a Course Review Guide to help colleges conduct a review of OSLT courses.
- reviewed curriculum as it was developed and provided feedback to the curriculum development team.
- worked with individual colleges during OSLT delivery to check progress, consider any problems encountered and help identify solutions.
- summarized and evaluated the data from the initial and pilot deliveries.
- documented findings in a consistent way across multiple courses, sectors, colleges and time frames.
- reported key findings to Colleges Ontario and the colleges.

## 7. Evaluated the initial and pilot deliveries

The evaluation framework and tools were used to gather and analyze information on

- marketing and recruitment.
- enrolment, demographics and completion.
- participant perceptions.
- instructor perceptions.
- course assessments to capture whether the participants met the learning outcomes.
- course management issues, such as scheduling, facilities and college capacity.
- suggestions for improvements by colleges' OSLT coordinators based on the feedback received from instructors and participants.

By March 2011, all courses had undergone one of two evaluation processes:

1. **Evaluation by the evaluation support team:** Between 2008 and 2010, 45 classes were evaluated by the evaluation support team. This included data collection and analysis relating to enrolment, completion, demographic profiles and participant satisfaction. In most cases, an evaluation support team member visited the college and a participant focus group meeting was held. Face-to-face interviews with college OSLT coordinators and instructors were also conducted. For ten of these 45 classes, instead of a college visit, telephone interviews were conducted with coordinators and instructors.
2. **Review by the college:** In 2009 to 2010, colleges conducted 16 college-led reviews using the Course Review Guide; in 2010 to 2011, all 60 course reviews were college-led. Colleges gathered and submitted results to the evaluation support team, including information on marketing and recruitment, participant perceptions, instructor perceptions and coordinator suggestions for improvements. In addition, colleges confirmed the accuracy of the HARTS data on enrolment, withdrawals and completion.

## G. Insights

The development and pilot delivery of the OSLT Curriculum from 2008 to 2011 led to important insights about how language training for newcomers to Ontario can successfully be linked to the workplace communication requirements for selected occupational fields and how colleges can work together to provide high-quality language training. These key insights will continue to inform planning for the ongoing college delivery of the OSLT Curriculum in Ontario, and may guide other organizations considering the development and implementation of occupation-specific language training in their regions.

1. Embed authentic occupational context into the language training.
2. Address the socio-cultural aspects of communication.
3. Commit sufficient resources to develop curriculum.
4. Build enrolment through internal champions and external relationships.
5. Set course offerings according to local market needs.
6. Anticipate factors that will affect retention.
7. Engage qualified language instructors and adequately support them.
8. Provide participants with as much connection to the workplace as possible.
9. Create a balance between face-to-face and self-paced online learning opportunities.
10. Establish coordinated and consistent processes.
11. Create opportunities to promote best practices.

### **1. Embed authentic occupational context into the language training**

Participants were highly engaged with and valued the course content that was directly tied to their occupational field. Some of the features of OSLT courses that participants reported they liked best were

- the language skills they were developing were rooted in familiar occupational content.
- they were learning the Canadian context for their occupational field.
- their peers in the classroom also possessed experience or educational background in their occupational field.

Embedding occupational context into the OSLT Curriculum was achieved by including content experts at every stage of the curriculum development process, and by having curriculum writers visit worksites. These factors helped create authentic, occupation-related language activities for the OSLT Curriculum.

Instructors helped provide participants with exposure to occupational content during the delivery of the OSLT courses by connecting with other college programs that offered occupational training related to the sector. OSLT courses also built on the college's existing relationships with industries and employers to bring in speakers and offer field trips to worksites or other occupation-related events.

## **2. Address the socio-cultural aspects of communication**

Consultations with employers and professional associations highlighted the need for workplace communication training that facilitated the development of socio-cultural skills in the Canadian context. Their feedback indicated that including socio-cultural elements of communication training was essential to help newcomers integrate successfully into the local labour market.

Participants indicated that they benefited from learning more about workplace culture in the Canadian context, especially cultural expectations within their sector, and appreciated the opportunities the OSLT courses provided for developing soft skills.<sup>25</sup>

## **3. Commit sufficient resources to develop curriculum**

OSLT instructors and coordinators provided positive feedback about the quality and comprehensiveness of the OSLT Curriculum,<sup>26</sup> and participants highly praised the curriculum.

Creating a conceptual framework in the early stages of curriculum development greatly enhanced the quality of the OSLT Curriculum by providing a consistent approach across sectors and occupational areas. Feedback from the pilot deliveries also helped inform the curriculum development team on how best to implement modifications to the curriculum and materials.

A wide range of skills was required for the complex process of developing the OSLT Curriculum. Colleges Ontario assembled a curriculum development team that consulted with experts to help ensure that curriculum reflected authentic occupational content, as well as the cultural and human-rights context of the occupation and workplaces in Ontario. This reflected the view that a well-designed, relevant and comprehensive curriculum would be a key factor in ensuring participant satisfaction with OSLT courses.

## **4. Build enrolment through internal champions and external relationships**

Colleges found creative ways to conduct the marketing and outreach needed to reach enrolment targets.

Internal champions in the colleges helped leverage the processes and programs that were already in place to serve immigrants. By linking with these established, internal networks of support, colleges were able to integrate the OSLT courses they offered with their other immigrant- and occupation-related services.

Colleges realized the importance of sustaining and expanding local marketing efforts to build enrolment for subsequent OSLT course offerings. Colleges built on strategies used in previous deliveries to enhance subsequent marketing and recruitment efforts. They continued to develop solid relationships with their local CIC-funded Assessment Centre(s) and with other local agencies and community partners wherever possible.

To broaden collaboration opportunities, colleges also developed relationships with external organizations such as school boards, professional associations, regulatory bodies and Job Search Workshops.

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<sup>25</sup>Surveys results from 2010 to 2011 indicated that 96 percent of OSLT participants reported that the course helped increase their awareness of Canadian workplace cultural practices.

<sup>26</sup>Several instructors said that OSLT Curriculum was one of the best and most comprehensive set of materials with which they had worked.



## 5. Set course offerings according to local market needs

The deliveries from 2008 to 2011 showed that participant demand and class composition could vary significantly from region to region, from sector to sector, and from occupation to occupation.

In order to set realistic enrolment targets, colleges needed to clearly understand their local immigrant population and anticipate factors that could affect enrolment.

- **Regional differences in immigrant settlement:** There are major differences in immigrant settlement patterns across Ontario and the availability of services for newcomers. Recruitment strategies that were effective in urban areas with high immigrant settlement rates were different from those in communities with lower rates of immigrant settlement.
- **Number of immigrants eligible for CIC-funded programs:** Although demand for an OSLT course might have been strong in a specific location, applicants who could benefit might not have met the eligibility criteria if they had been in Canada for more than three years and had already obtained Canadian citizenship.
- **Competition in the local market:** Colleges need to be aware that the type, frequency and timing of other programs and levels of language training offered by school boards, settlement agencies and even within the college could affect enrolment.
- **Availability, location and coordination of CIC-funded Assessment Centres:** CIC-funded Assessment Centres were key contributors to the OSLT initiative by conducting initial language assessments and providing referrals. Colleges need to keep the Assessment Centres informed about upcoming OSLT courses.
- **Range of occupations covered by curriculum:** Colleges found it was easier to fill a class with a range of occupations within a sector than limit enrolment to a specific occupation because a range of occupations expanded the pool of potential participants.
- **State of the local labour market:** While enrolment targets need to be linked to regional circumstances and local market demand, demand for a specific course can fluctuate when the factors affecting the local labour market change.
- **Whether the course was an initial or subsequent offering:** It was easier to fill an OSLT course if it had been offered before. Once funding was confirmed, colleges were able to generate waiting lists for future offerings.
- **Scheduling:** In some regions, attendance was problematic for OSLT courses offered in the winter months because frequent snow storms made travel difficult. However certain occupations with seasonal sector employment, such as the construction trades, resulted in participants being more available to attend courses offered during the winter months. Colleges reported that the time of day when the course was held sometimes presented problems for participants who were employed or had child-care responsibilities.

## 6. Anticipate factors that will affect retention

Colleges were creative, flexible and adaptable when scheduling classes to maximize retention. The OSLT pilot deliveries revealed several factors that affected attendance and retention.

- **Obtaining employment:** The most pressing issue for most recently arrived immigrants is finding employment; their success in doing so directly affects retention. The most common reason participants gave for withdrawing early from an OSLT course was that they had obtained work. Participants often expressed regret about leaving before completing the OSLT course; however, securing a job meant securing income, entering the labour market and gaining valued Canadian experience.
- **Transportation issues:** The cost of transportation and the time required to travel to the OSLT course affected attendance, especially when the course location was far from participants' homes or workplaces. The limitations on the CIC transportation allowance caused some colleges not to apply for the transit subsidy since it would have been difficult to disburse fairly and would not have fully covered the participants' costs of transportation to the college.
- **Scheduling conflicts:** No single schedule of classes suited all participants, so colleges tried a variety of schedules. Participants' work or child-care responsibilities sometimes made it difficult for them to attend all classes on time. Evening classes that extended past three hours were sometimes judged to be too long, and Saturday classes, where attendance was often sporadic, were cited by some as difficult.
- **Appropriate mix of participants:** Selecting an appropriate mix of participants increased the quality of the learning experience for all. This mix considered occupation, background, education and CLB levels. In classes with the right mix, participants were able to fully engage in activities and group discussions. When participants represented a large range of language levels, were at language levels at the lower end for certain occupations or were from occupations not well matched with the curriculum, they were less likely to remain enrolled in the course and instructors encountered difficulties in meeting course outcomes. From an enrolment perspective, colleges had to screen a large pool of applicants to ensure a sustainable class size and appropriate mix of participants.
- **Heavy course load:** In some cases, participants who were enrolled in other educational courses found it hard to regularly attend the OSLT course and complete the work required in addition to the requirements of their other courses.
- **Lack of child-minding services that fit participants' needs:** Participants with preschool and school-aged children often cited lack of child care as a barrier to attending courses on a regular basis. CIC-funded child-minding was rarely available at college campuses because colleges encountered logistical challenges in offering child-minding services: often the number of participants requiring these services was low, and sometimes only full-time child-minding was available and the course was not offered full time so the participant was not eligible for the CIC-funded service.
- **External factors:** Unanticipated events such as a transit strike and the 2009 H1N1 outbreak affected attendance for certain OSLT courses.

## 7. Engage qualified language instructors and adequately support them

Because the OSLT Curriculum focuses on building language skills, the instructors hired to teach OSLT courses were language experts and not occupational-content experts. These qualified language instructors, experienced in delivering this type of language training, significantly enhanced the quality of learning experience for participants. Due to the relatively small pool of ESL-trained instructors with experience teaching this type of program, colleges had to build a cadre of language instructors qualified to teach the OSLT Curriculum.

Providing ongoing support to instructors led to greater consistency in delivery across sites by emphasizing a common perspective and understanding of OSLT Curriculum objectives. The frequent training opportunities and availability of support also helped mitigate the effect of turnover of instructors over the three-year project. From 2008 to 2011, ongoing support was provided for instructors through

- **instructor orientation sessions and regular professional development opportunities.** Instructors liked and found the orientation and professional development sessions useful. They indicated that bringing instructors together for face-to-face discussions contributed to common understanding and collaboration, and they wanted additional opportunities to work together and address issues relating to assessment and the use of technology in course delivery.
- **the Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN).** Because information was posted online and instructors could communicate with each other through KEN, OSLT instructors from across the province found it easy to communicate and connect with each other and with the OSLT curriculum development team.
- **background information about the occupations covered in each OSLT Curriculum.** Each OSLT Curriculum provided instructors with sector and occupation information. In addition, instructors were encouraged to invite participants to share their occupational knowledge and experience.
- **clear guidance around assessment activities.** Instructors received training on using the standardized assessment forms, rubrics and descriptors provided to assess participant performance against the course outcomes. This improved the consistency and quality of performance assessments across all of the OSLT courses province-wide.

## **8. Provide participants with as much connection to the workplace as possible**

Participants indicated that they strongly valued and wanted more connections with the workplace. Participants most frequently requested additional workplace connections, such as

- classroom visits from sector representatives.
- field trips to actual worksites.
- job shadowing opportunities.
- job placements.
- opportunities to attend industry conferences.

Colleges implemented a variety of strategies to help participants connect with people and worksites in their intended occupational field, including

- arranging for people working in the field, or college faculty with industry expertise, to be guest speakers.
- inviting college faculty with industry experience to team-teach selected portions of the curriculum.
- bringing in graduates of OSLT courses who had obtained work in their fields.
- providing field trips to worksites.
- job-shadowing or job-observation opportunities.
- arranging employer networking opportunities.

Although participants expressed a desire for job-placement opportunities, the scope of the OSLT initiative did not include integrating job placements into the language training, and participants were aware of that when they enrolled in the course.

One college delivered the OSLT Health Sciences Curriculum at an employer worksite. Although it is difficult to generalize from one offering, this pilot identified issues to be considered for future worksite-based courses:

- Additional administrative resources were needed to set up and deliver the course at a non-campus location.
- Enrolment of CIC-eligible participants was not strong since the course attracted Canadian citizens already employed in the field.
- The worksite location received mixed feedback.
  - Some participants reported that they liked the convenience of attending an OSLT course scheduled just before or after a shift at their workplace.
  - Other participants preferred attending courses in the classroom or computer lab learning environment on a college campus, without the perceived stigma that co-workers might attach to taking a language course.

## **9. Create a balance between face-to-face and self-paced online learning opportunities**

The pilot deliveries reinforced the importance of the classroom experience in OSLT courses. Participants and instructors reported that classroom-based learning provided valuable face-to-face opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. Classroom-based delivery helped build a community of learners and provided motivation and feedback to participants.

Participants also wanted access to complementary opportunities to study at their own pace and practise their skills outside of the classroom to reinforce their learning. One college implemented online learning in an initial delivery in 2008, and it was generally viewed as successful. However, neither participants nor instructors wanted to give up the beneficial face-to-face component. Colleges introduced audio-recorded dialogues in 2010 to 2011 as integrated, self-paced, online opportunities for participants to practise listening and pronunciation skills at their own speed and as often as they needed.

## **10. Establish coordinated and consistent processes**

Colleges acknowledged the importance of a coordinated and consistent approach to language training and the value of collaboration in improving newcomer access to occupation-specific language training in Ontario. To achieve this, colleges worked together with Colleges Ontario serving as the umbrella organization that could represent the 14 participating colleges, and act as the single point of contact with CIC. This approach created opportunities for colleges to leverage economies of scale, create consistent processes and realize cost efficiencies across regions wherever possible.

Colleges also benefited from a coordinated approach to regional delivery. As an example, when a college could not enroll enough participants to offer a course, the delivery funds were transferred to another college needing extra funds to accommodate a waitlist.

## **11. Create opportunities to promote best practices**

To promote the ongoing communication and collaboration between colleges, instructors and college coordinators, Colleges Ontario provided opportunities to exchange ideas and share best practices through

- formal and informal meetings of instructors.
- teleconferences.
- the Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN).
- sharing success stories.
- regular meetings of college coordinators.

This focus on communication created a community of practice, supported the OSLT initiative's coordinated approach and maximized opportunities to connect. At the same time, using a variety of communication methods maximized opportunities to share information within a limited budget.

Feedback from instructors and college coordinators indicated that regular team communication helped promote best practices and provided greater consistency in OSLT course delivery across Ontario.

## H. Moving Forward

The preceding sections of this report summarize the activities undertaken and successful outcomes achieved by the OSLT initiative from 2008 to 2011. This section outlines the direction that the OSLT initiative will take over the next two years to help shape delivery of the OSLT Curriculum beyond that time frame.

The commitment from CIC to continue funding the OSLT initiative from April 2011 to March 2013 provides Colleges Ontario and Ontario colleges with the opportunity to continue to deliver the OSLT Curriculum to newcomers in Ontario and expand on the results achieved to date.

Moving forward, the OSLT initiative will continue to focus on quality, relevancy and consistency. This focus guided the development and delivery of the OSLT Curriculum during the pilot phase, and it informs the path to be taken in the future to maintain and expand effective delivery of the OSLT Curriculum to newcomers across Ontario.

- Focusing on the **quality** of OSLT outcomes for participants means
  - establishing high standards for the development and delivery of the OSLT Curriculum.
  - maintaining a resource base of qualified instructors.
  - providing instructor orientation to the OSLT Curriculum.
  - applying established criteria to select participants.
  - using the piloted evaluation framework, tools and feedback mechanisms.
  - following tested processes for coordinating and administering the OSLT courses at the local level.
- Focusing on the **relevancy** of OSLT courses means
  - consulting with employers and with language and occupation content experts at colleges.
  - providing participants with authentic, up-to-date, workplace-based activities and materials.
  - basing assessment tasks on workplace-based activities.
- Focusing on the **consistency** of OSLT outcomes across different regions and courses means
  - establishing common standards for curriculum development and delivery.
  - being guided by clearly defined curriculum outcomes.
  - using a standardized pre-course language assessment test to select participants.
  - supporting instructors by providing orientation, training and ongoing communication.
  - applying consistent measurements of “successful completion” at colleges province-wide.
  - providing college documentation of course completion.
  - engaging all colleges in the course review process.

From April 2011 to March 2013, the OSLT initiative will undertake the following activities to support the continued development and delivery of the OSLT Curriculum to newcomers across Ontario:

1. **Expand participant connections to the workplace.**
2. **Use technology to enhance delivery.**
3. **Adapt or develop curriculum to meet identified needs.**
4. **Strengthen connections with community-based organizations.**
5. **Increase linkages to related departments at the college level.**
6. **Promote recognition of OSLT courses within the continuum of language training.**
7. **Implement the OSLT assessment scheme to measure participant success.**
8. **Work toward issuing a college credential for OSLT courses.**
9. **Maintain capacity to deliver OSLT courses.**
10. **Put into practice a plan for continuous improvement.**

### **1. Expand participant connections to the workplace**

Past participants strongly valued and wanted more connections with the workplace. Colleges will build on the variety of strategies and relationships already in place to help participants connect with people and worksites in their intended occupational field. This includes continuing to

- explore opportunities with employers and industry to expand and deepen connections to create increased linkages to the workplace.
- seek opportunities to enhance participants' orientation to the labour market, industry and occupational worksites.
- provide information about the range of language and employment and job search supports available.

### **2. Use technology to enhance delivery**

While the classroom-based portion of OSLT courses will continue to provide participants with valued opportunities to network with peers in the same occupational field, and ensure a high degree of feedback on language performance from classroom instructors, expanding the use of technology offers significant benefits for participants.

Colleges Ontario will work with colleges to pilot delivery modes that use technology to

- enhance blended delivery options that provide participants with opportunities to learn independently and practise their skills outside of the classroom.
- reduce reliance on classroom-based training to allow participants more flexibility in meeting family and work commitments that consume their time and affect their ability to attend class.
- pilot distance delivery in under-serviced communities in northern, south-eastern and south-western Ontario to extend the reach of OSLT courses across the province.



### **3. Adapt or develop curriculum to meet identified needs**

Colleges Ontario will work with colleges to adapt existing OSLT Curriculum and develop new curriculum to meet needs identified during the pilot phase by

- creating blended versions of the OSLT Business Curriculum that will combine classroom delivery and online delivery.
- adapting the OSLT Hospitality Curriculum for delivery in French.
- tailoring the OSLT Technology Curriculum for synchronous and asynchronous distance delivery.
- developing a new inter-professional curriculum for the health and social services sectors to address the language and communication skills needs of occupations that straddle both sectors.

### **4. Strengthen connections with community-based organizations**

OSLT courses are now part of a continuum of programs and services in Ontario that support newcomers in making the transition to the workforce. Colleges will continue to develop and expand partnerships within local communities to identify how best to position OSLT courses within the broader range of immigrant support services designed to facilitate entry into the labour force.

Colleges will continue to strengthen partnerships relationships with local CIC-funded Assessment Centres, Job Search Workshops and other immigrant-related services to increase local community knowledge about OSLT courses and make information easily accessible for newcomers.

### **5. Increase linkages to related departments at the college level**

Colleges will strengthen internal department linkages so that more newcomers can be made aware of OSLT courses when considering college training. Even though a newcomer may not require a college certificate, diploma or degree credential before they work in their field in Canada, they may benefit from an OSLT course or other college training that includes exposure to job search skills, networking skills and opportunities, practice for Board licensing examinations or technology upgrading.

Strengthening OSLT course linkages with existing college programs and services will help newcomers customize their pathways to employment based on specific skill and knowledge needs.

### **6. Promote recognition of OSLT courses within the continuum of language training**

OSLT courses are relatively new to Ontario. Focused marketing and outreach activities are needed to build awareness of how OSLT courses fit into the continuum of language training and labour market access options in the province.

Colleges will work together and with Colleges Ontario to implement a coordinated marketing and outreach plan that targets newcomers, employers and organizations serving immigrants. These activities will

- help develop an identity for the OSLT initiative so that it becomes better known.
- increase opportunities for referrals to OSLT courses from employers and organizations serving immigrants.



- help CIC provide information to the Assessment Centres and CIC-funded service providers that is aligned with the OSLT marketing and outreach plan.
- enable CIC to reinforce the importance of the OSLT initiative in discussions on coordinated services for immigrants in the province.

## **7. Implement the OSLT assessment scheme to measure participant success**

During the pilot phase from 2009 to 2011, an assessment scheme was developed to measure participant achievement of learning outcomes tied to key workplace-based communication tasks. The results from the pilot deliveries indicated that this assessment scheme can now be applied to determine whether a participant has successfully completed an OSLT course. To ensure that participant outcomes are measured consistently across the colleges, a process is needed to check that the same results are given for the same level of performance within and across colleges and sectors.

## **8. Work toward issuing a college credential for OSLT courses**

Employers and participants recognize the value of a college credential: it demonstrates an individual's preparedness to work in an occupation, and provides evidence that the individual successfully studied at a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution. Colleges and Colleges Ontario will collaborate on

- creating a locally determined college credential that aligns with each college's application of the Ontario Credential Framework and can be issued to participants who successfully achieve the learning outcomes of an OSLT course.
- monitoring the processes related to issuing these locally determined credentials to participants who successfully complete an OSLT course and working to ensure their consistent application.

## **9. Maintain capacity to deliver OSLT courses**

Since the 2008 launch of the OSLT initiative, colleges have built the capacity to develop and deliver quality OSLT courses to newcomers. Knowledgeable resources are now in place across Ontario to provide consistency and continuity in key roles: well-trained language instructors who specialize in this kind of language teaching, and college coordinators who have experience in the administrative supports required to deliver OSLT courses that meet the expected standards of course implementation and participant achievement.

To maintain this capacity, colleges and Colleges Ontario will conduct ongoing training as required to provide orientation to new OSLT instructors, administrators and budget staff.

Colleges will have an opportunity to network and share best practices at regularly scheduled meetings of the OSLT Participating Colleges Advisory Group and at training sessions for OSLT instructors. The online Knowledge Exchange Network (KEN) developed by Colleges Ontario will continue to serve as a forum to encourage the exchange of ideas among OSLT instructors, project coordinators and Colleges Ontario.

## **10. Put into practice a plan for continuous improvement**

Moving forward, the OSLT initiative will build on the evaluation activities implemented during the pilot phase to refine quality assurance and continuous improvement processes. These activities will help ensure that colleges have the tools and processes in place to review and reflect on their delivery of OSLT courses, and implement any necessary changes.

Colleges Ontario and participating colleges will develop and implement a continuous improvement plan that will at the same time provide the data required by CIC for accountability purposes. Elements of this plan will include

- continuing to collect course-based information, review outcome data and make recommendations for improvement at the college level.
- establishing OSLT service standards related to participant retention, completion and satisfaction levels.
- facilitating self-monitoring by colleges based on the agreed-upon service standards and performance indicators.
- reviewing college results against the service standards.

Continuity and building on insights gained through program delivery will be achieved by colleges sharing their results and seeking opportunities for improvement. Colleges Ontario will help colleges review and analyze their results against the service standards. This will include identifying and addressing issues related to gaps in service and issues that may affect efficient and effective delivery of OSLT courses.