

# Learner Gains Research Project

## Questions and Answers

### 1. What is Learner Gains?

Learner gains assessment provides one indicator that the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program supports the progress of learners. Learner gains measures the percentage of learners who show improvement from entrance to exit from the LBS program using a MAESD approved standardized test. Learner gains scores answer the question, “Do learners in Ontario increase their skills as measured by a national standard, as a result of participating in the LBS program?”

### 2. Why did the ministry undertake the Learner Gains Research Project?

The Learner Gains Research Project (LGRP) was undertaken to test the Essential Skills for Employment and Education (ESEE) tool for use in the LBS program. The project goals were to:

- gather client level data on learner profiles
- obtain information on learner types and learner progress
- link service type and program effectiveness
- support the review of the LBS Performance Management Framework (PMF).

### 3. How did the evaluation of the Learner Gains Research Project differ from the LBS Evaluation report?

The LBS Evaluation report covered a broad range of issues and timelines. It included a comprehensive assessment of Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) implementation, as well as program outcomes for learners and service providers, efficiency of the LBS performance management framework, and outcomes of distance learning initiatives. The LBS Evaluation covered the period from April 2012 (OALCF implementation launch) to April 2014 to examine long-term outcomes for learners.

In contrast, the Learner Gains Research Project collected data on learner progress between January and November 2016. Both evaluations provide the ministry with valuable considerations as we work with the network to improve the LBS program.

**4. Who conducted the evaluation of the Learner Gains Research Project?**

The evaluation was conducted by the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading (CSC), who also administered the project and prepared the final report. In addition, CSC retained an independent evaluator (Marti Jurmain Consulting) to administer a ministry-developed survey to service providers participating in the LGRP. The evaluator summarized and analyzed the survey findings.

**5. What will the ministry do with the findings in the project reports?**

Based on the LGRP report findings, the ministry will not further implement the ESEE tool for measuring learner gains at this time. As part of the ministry's process to seek input and feedback from the LBS network throughout 2018-2019 to inform program improvements and expansion, the findings from the project will be included for consideration in the work of the LBS Improvement and Expansion Working Tables and Reference Groups.

**6. Will the results of the project delay implementation of the LBS Performance Management Framework Phase II-B?**

At this time, there will be no further changes to the Performance Management Framework. The LBS program Improvement and Expansion process, including the work of Reference Group 2: Funding and Performance Management, will inform any future changes to the framework.

**7. Will the ministry continue to research methods for measuring the progress of LBS learners?**

Yes. The ministry values the importance of assessing incremental progress for the broad spectrum of learners who participate in LBS, and has been exploring options for suitable learner gains measurement. The ministry will continue to investigate tools and best practices for assessing learner gains as part of its work to improve the LBS program and expand the reach of literacy and essential skills training in Ontario.