



The “A” Word:

Building a Strong Apprenticeship Pathway

Hello everyone, and welcome. My name is Summer Burton, and I’m here on behalf of Literacy Link South Central. Today we’re going to be talking about Apprenticeship. Specifically, the pathways into, and through, what can seem to be a complex system – and how understanding each of our roles in that system can create a solid foundation for apprentices working their way throughout it.

If you work in employment services, adult literacy, continuing education, or social services, we think you will find this presentation particularly useful. It will not only provide a clearer picture of how we can attract and support apprentices to complete their training journey, but what an important role we can play as a community of service providers in that goal.

The Impact of Apprenticeship in Literacy

1. Many literacy learners want to apprentice in the skilled trades
2. Clients often work with multiple agencies at the same time, including Literacy and Employment Services
3. LLSC shares information about the apprenticeship system to help services work together to support clients effectively

Literacy Link South Central is the regional support network for adult literacy programs throughout a six county area in southern Ontario, including Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk, Oxford, Elgin, and Middlesex. In our role as a support network we do a lot of work with local programs, identifying needs, developing training aids and professional development material, doing presentations and spreading awareness around the important role literacy plays in people's success.

So why are we specifically talking about apprenticeship?

First, because the adult literacy programs we support work with people that have (or could have) apprenticeship as a goal. In fact, it's one of the 5 recognized goal paths in the Literacy and Basic Skills (or "LBS") program, and adult literacy programs offer specific activities and lessons based on real-life apprenticeship tasks as a result.

Because adult literacy programs can (and do) share clients with employment agencies, many clients who are working with employment counsellors to develop the skills they need for employment, are also working on developing their essential math, reading, writing, interpersonal and digital skills with LBS. This offers an excellent opportunity for coordinated support that moves clients even more quickly toward their goals.

Finally, Literacy Link South Central has a history of conducting activity in the area of apprenticeship – doing projects, developing resources, and hosting community conversations. This is a continuation of that important work – work that's becoming more

and more critical as we face an impending shortage of skilled tradespeople across Ontario.

Our Apprenticeship Trilogy

Part 1 of a 3-part series available at www.llsc.on.ca, where you can find:

1. Recordings
2. Slides
3. Transcripts

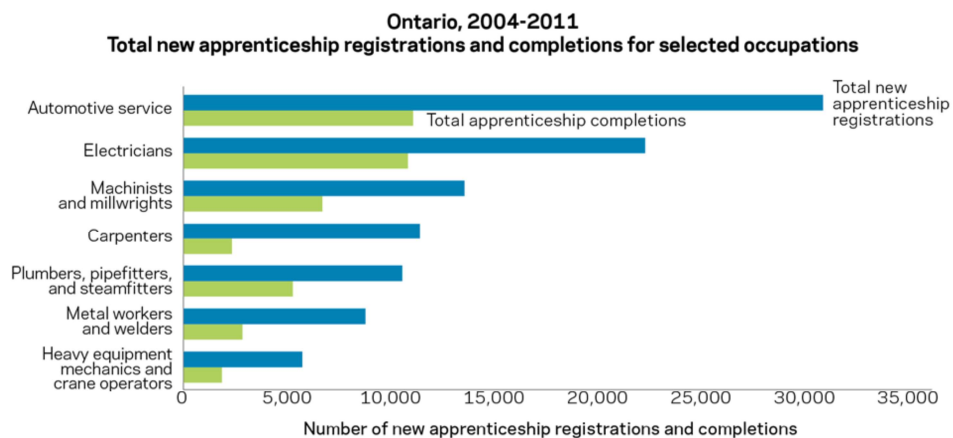


Today's presentation is actually the third in a 3-part series about Apprenticeship, and throughout the series, we've referred to things that are "as easy as 1-2-3." Along those lines, if you visit our website at www.llsc.on.ca, you'll find 3 helpful resources:

- First, links to this and the other two presentations in the series
- You'll also find PDF copies of the slides, and finally,
- a transcript of each presentation.

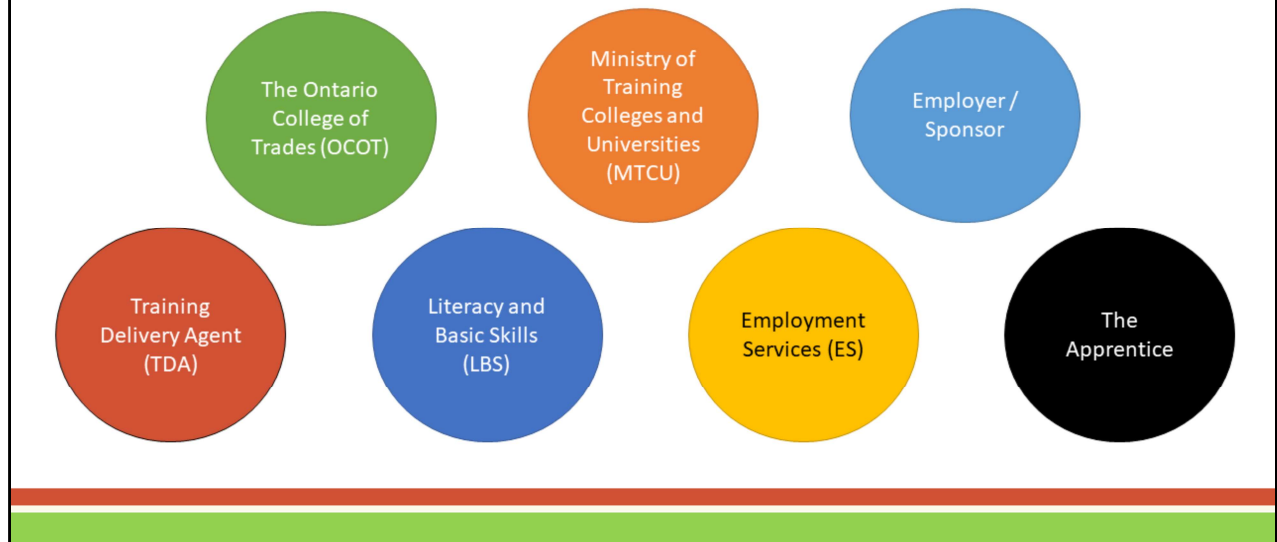
Before we move on to the main focus of our time together, we'd like to thank the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (or MTCU) for providing the funding for this series of presentations.

What Inspired Today's Presentation?



One of the reasons we're facing that skilled shortage is that fewer people are pursuing the skilled trades today than in the past. But more concerning than that is the issue of people who do choose to pursue a career in the skilled trades, but don't continue it. Several studies show that Ontario (and other areas in Canada) have what's referred to as a "low completion rate", which means that people who register as apprentices don't actually complete their training. The graph shown on your screen, which was produced by the Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity and is based on data from Statistics Canada, shows that the number of apprenticeship certificates issued between 2004 and 2011 was less than half the number of new apprenticeship registrations for most trades.

Who is Involved on the Apprenticeship Path?



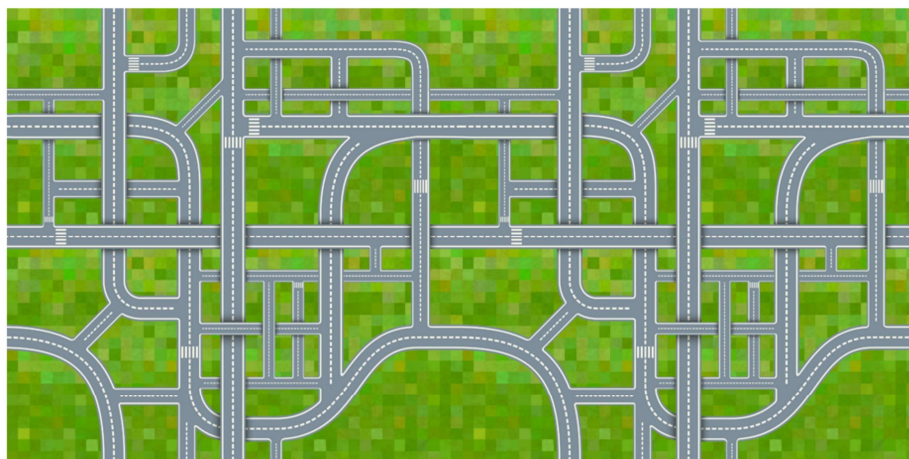
There are many people and organizations that play an essential part in the apprenticeship process, including

- The Ontario College of Trades, which is currently the regulatory body for the skilled trades in Ontario
- The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, which is responsible for assessing eligibility, laying out the requirements and commitments for apprentices and employers, and monitoring progress
- The Sponsor (who may be an individual, employer, or third-party sponsor group like a union), who is responsible for providing the “on-the-the-job” training outlined in Ministry-approved Training Standards
- Training Delivery Agents, which are MTCU-approved training sites where apprentices will generally spend 10% to 15% of their training learning the “in-class” theory portion of their trade
- Literacy and Basic Skills agencies, which are free, provincially funded programs that provide training in Essential Skills, offer upgrading opportunities and provide ongoing learning support
- And Employment Services - free provincially funded programs that help with career identification, employment preparation and connections to job opportunities

So as you can see, there are **a lot** of people involved in the apprenticeship pathway:

employers or sponsors, government staff (including policy makers), training delivery site instructors, regulatory bodies, service providers from a variety of organizations and of course the apprentice themselves. Often, as service providers, we might feel like much of what happens in the apprenticeship system is deemed outside of our control - as if our role is small and there's not much we can do to help people move towards an apprenticeship-related career. And yet, you will see that there is much that remains within our control. There are many things we can, and should, do to create a healthy apprenticeship system that attracts people to apprenticeship and supports successful completions.

Apprenticeship is NOT a Linear Path



Often, when service providers speak about the path to a successful apprenticeship, it's described as a simple and linear process. For example, "First, you find an employer. Then you sign a contract with the Ministry. Then you have your on-the-job and in-school training and then, if applicable, you write the C of Q exam."

During a recent apprenticeship project we found that the path is anything but linear. At project intake, participants were often at various points along that perceived linear path. Some had an employer but lacked the skills needed to succeed during the in-school portion of their apprenticeship training. Some had a high school diploma but lacked the skills and habits that are required by an employer. Some didn't have a high school diploma but had strong literacy skills and work ethic. Participants in the project moved in and out of services, piecing together the necessary components to build their foundation for a successful apprenticeship.

Literacy upgrading, employment readiness programs, and continual assessments played a key role in building this foundation. Once participants acknowledged that the path to apprenticeship included several side roads that could include revisiting certain points or services, they were more receptive to addressing their needs to build a strong foundation that would carry them through their chosen apprenticeship.

Our goal during today's webinar is to take a look at what role we play in helping people navigate this apprenticeship pathway. There is a role for us in what we see as three key areas: attracting new apprentices, supporting them to successfully complete their apprenticeship training, and community collaboration. Whether you work in employment services, LBS, adult education or other community agencies, let's ask ourselves, "Who is responsible for success of our client when they pursue an apprenticeship?" (The answer, of course, is all of us.)

Step 1: Attracting New Apprentices

The problem: Not enough people are pursuing a career in the skilled trades through Ontario's apprenticeship system

Our vision for the future:

- Apprenticeship is esteemed
- People understand it's a valuable option
- Information about apprenticeship is easily available from multiple sources
- Job postings demonstrate the need for apprentices



The first stage of a successful apprenticeship is, of course, knowing about the opportunity in the first place. Attracting people to the skilled trades is critical, and it's a big concern. We know that fewer people are entering into the skilled trades than necessary to meet labour market needs. There are misconceptions about who is a good fit for an apprenticeship, and people don't know what supports are available if they do become one. While the skilled trades are highly viable career choices, they remain undervalued, and even employers may not understand how an apprenticeship could benefit their business. The Ontario government released a statement saying that by 2021, one in 5 new jobs are expected to be in the skilled trades (that's less than two years away!) But what we **aren't** seeing is one in 5 people we work with pursuing a career in the trades. So how can we attract more people – to open up the idea of apprenticing in the skilled trades?

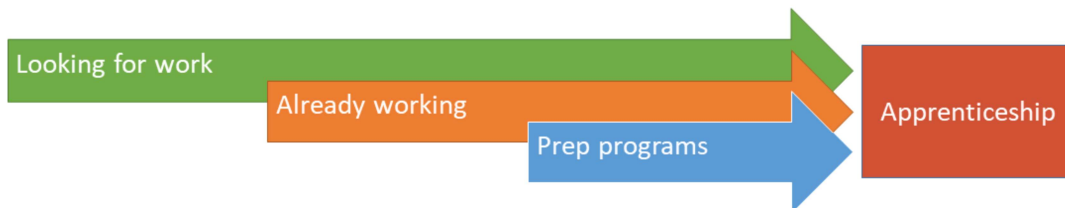
In our vision for the future...

- Students, parents and guidance counsellors would automatically consider an apprenticeship among the many post-secondary options available, because it would be held in the same esteem as a university or college level education
- People looking for work would know about the option of working as an apprentice.
- Anyone seeking support from an employment service would be introduced to the idea of apprenticing in the skilled trades They would receive comprehensive information, and make informed decisions about pursuing this goal.

- From a career planning perspective, anyone considering their future career would see the skilled trades as equally valuable to other job choices
- Awareness of apprenticeships would spread across the adult and continuing education field, so people upgrading their education receive the support they need to be successful in their apprenticeship journey, and
- More employers would create job postings to hire apprentices, showing evidence that this is a viable career option

How Can We Move Towards This Vision?

- Promote your organization's role in apprenticeship
- Host an information session
- Consider possible "on ramps" to apprenticeship



- <http://www.skillsontario.com/pathways-to-apprenticeship#direct>

So how do we move towards this vision of the future?

First, we promote apprenticeship within our organizations. One great way to share the message is to profile clients who have used your services as part of their journey through the apprenticeship process. You might post their stories on social media, or design posters for within your agency. Through this promotion your staff, clients and the public will see the connection between apprenticeship and your organization, and understand how they can have a positive impact.

Another great idea is to host (or better yet, co-host with another agency) an apprenticeship information session. Depending on what you hope to achieve, consider who might be the target for this session, and who the presenter could be. Will you be trying to build the knowledge of staff around what apprenticeship is and how the process works? Will you be encouraging clients to consider an apprenticeship in the skilled trades as viable career path? Will you be educating employers on how they could benefit from taking on apprentices and use your services for support?

We would also encourage you to watch for opportunities within various "on ramps" into apprenticeship. For example:

- When one of your clients says that they want to get a job, regardless of what service you provide, you've been offered a great opportunity to plant a seed about apprenticeship.

To attract more people into the skilled trades, let's not wait for someone to identify apprenticeship themselves, but instead proactively talk to clients about this career path. (And as a reminder: if you'd like some "easy as 1-2-3" tips on what to talk with those clients about, we hope you'll view the other two presentations in this series: what service providers need to know, and what clients need to know.)

- Someone already working may have the opportunity to become an apprentice in their chosen career, gaining widely-recognized certification. Does their employer know they can access support through the apprenticeship system to help train and certify one of their employees? Do they know about any grants available to support them? This is an excellent opportunity to support people who are already working and their employers, letting them know the benefits of changing an employer-employee relationship... to a mentor-apprentice relationship.
- Some apprenticeship-related programs are meant to be an on-ramp to a formal apprenticeship. These programs are designed to engage people in trades-related careers, teach them some of the basics, and give them a head start. It should be noted that these programs are not a *prerequisite* to becoming an apprentice. For instance, a formal pre-apprenticeship program is a short-term program where clients can start down the apprenticeship pathway by learning some theory and gaining some hands-on experience. A pre-apprenticeship program is a great stepping stone for some apprenticeships but you don't HAVE to be involved in pre-apprenticeship to become an apprentice. *Pre-apprenticeship* is not a *pre* requisite. There are many other programs, like the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (often referred to as OYAP), dual credit, and Specialist High Skills Major (or SHSM) that lead to apprenticeships, and if you'd like more information about them we encourage you to visit the Skills Ontario website using the link you see on your screen.

Any of these "on ramps" to apprenticeship could act as an "on ramp" to accessing the programs and services you offer as well. For example, students who participate in the OYAP program in high school often leave their work placement behind when they graduate. They may need help to find work, make sure they have the skills they need to succeed and ensure they have any ongoing supports and accommodations in place. So here's an interesting idea: instead of waiting for them to eventually find our programs and services (hopefully before they get frustrated and give up on the idea of pursuing their apprenticeship), is there a way for us to connect with them at this transition point, and let them know about our services?

Step 2: Supporting Successful Completion

The problem: Many people who begin an apprenticeship in the skilled trades do not complete it.



Our vision for the future:

- Apprentices clearly understand their training path and what's expected of them
- Apprentices know their skills and challenges, and have the support they need to be successful
- Apprenticeship completion is high!

As we saw in an earlier slide, just because people register as apprentices doesn't mean that they successfully work their way through the system, complete their apprenticeship, and become certified journey people. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, in some trades less than 40% of those who begin the apprenticeship process actually complete it. There are many reasons apprentices leave the system, including that they lack the support they need to navigate the system of rules and services connected to apprenticeship, that they don't have the skills they need (like math used in their on-the-job training, or studying and testing during their in-school training), and that they don't know their next steps or who to ask for help.

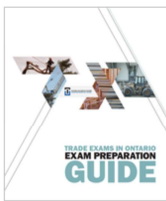
In our vision for the future...

- Apprentices would start their journey with a clear understanding of what's involved in their training (including timelines, roles and responsibilities, and expectations)
- The apprentice would understand their skills and strengths, along with barriers and areas for improvement, and know exactly how to access the support they need to be successful
- Apprentices would know who to go to when they need information or help
- Most registered apprentices would complete their on-the-job training, pass their in-class testing, and successfully complete their Certificate of Qualification exam (if required in their trade)

- Both employers and apprentices would encourage others to be involved in the apprenticeship system by sharing their positive experiences

How Can We Move Towards That Vision?

- Increase service provider knowledge
- Share resources with potential apprentices
- Get support from Employment Services
- Get support from Literacy programs
- Prepare for tests and exams



https://www.collegeoftrades.ca/wp-content/uploads/Exam_Prep_Guide_FINAL.pdf



<https://www.collegeoftrades.ca/training-standards>

So how do we move towards that vision for the future?

If we all take a role in learning what we can about the apprenticeship system, we can better help our clients understand the expectations before they even begin. And this presentation is a great way to get started! As we mentioned at the start of today's presentation, if you haven't done so already, we encourage you to review the first presentation in this series called "What Service Providers Need To Know" to continue growing your knowledge. And don't stop there! Seek out opportunities to speak with people who support apprentices in your community – training delivery agencies, networking groups, and trade unions have a wealth of information they can share.

To ensure that potential apprentices understand the journey they are embarking on, we hope you'll share the resources we outlined in the second presentation in this series called "What Clients Need To Know." There are great resources to help clients fully understand what's expected of them in their chosen trade, including information sheets from the Ontario College of Trades that outline the responsibilities for each trade and the number of hours an apprentice will spend in both on-the-job and in-class training. We also recommend that anyone considering a career in the skilled trades review a copy of the Training Standards for their chosen trade. There's no better way to understand what will be expected of you than reading the actual guidebook that you and your employer will use

throughout your on-the-job training. And it's not just the training standards that are available – the curriculum standards (which outline what will be taught and tested during the in-class portion of apprenticeship training) are available for review as well.

Employment Services have tools at their disposal to help clients consider their interests and skills, and what sort of jobs they are well-suited for. Programs (like Career Cruising and others) can help potential apprentices discover their strengths and how they align with labour market needs, so connecting with an Employment Counsellor is an excellent step towards apprenticeship success. Beyond the self-reflection necessary to be truly prepared for an apprenticeship journey, Employment Services can also provide a gateway to identifying potential sponsors, arranging work placement opportunities, and more.

One of the possible hurdles apprentices have to overcome is the in-class portion of their training. Many people are attracted to the skilled trades because they are good with their hands – something that doesn't always go hand-in-hand with being a strong “book learner” or test-taker. The curriculum covered during the in-class portion of the training can be tricky, especially for those who haven't been involved in school-based learning for quite some time. And testing – done both during each in-class training block and when writing a Certificate of Qualification or Red Seal exam – may be a barrier to completion. Ontario's adult literacy programs have curriculum specifically created to help apprentices develop the literacy, numeracy, and test-taking skills required to rise to this challenge. In some areas, there are also exam preparation courses available, and we encourage you to contact your local Employment Ontario apprenticeship office to ask how your client could register for one. We also recommend this resource, which can provide tips and guidance around writing trades exams in Ontario.

Step 3: Community Collaboration

The problem: becoming an apprentice means working with lots of agencies, systems, programs, schools, employers. It's a lot to navigate!

Our vision for the future:

- Everyone involved in apprenticeship sees the “big picture”
- We know about and value the support apprentices can receive through other community agencies
- Apprentices needs are met



There are a **lot** of people involved in the journey from considering a job in the skilled trades, to successfully completing an apprenticeship and becoming a certified journeyperson – possibly to begin taking on apprentices of your own! While every apprentices path will differ, many apprentices will access or encounter:

- different types of education including literacy, pre-apprenticeship, and post-secondary
- different branches of the government including the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Labour
- different agencies, like employment services
- different pots of funding for grants, loans, and other financial support
- different governing bodies like the Ontario College of Trades and trade unions
- and different employers throughout their training.

As we say here... there are a lot of elements to navigate – and it becomes more difficult to do if each of these people or organizations don't fully understand what the others do, or could do, to support an apprentice's journey.

In our vision for the future...

- No one would work in a silo, and anyone in a position to support apprentices would have a good understanding of what that journey looks like or could involve.
- The “players in the game” would be well known – and we're all players, really. Each organization, school, agency or program that could support apprentices would be known

to the others, and referred to regularly

- Which means ultimately, a community of support would be in place to meet not only an apprentice's employment requirements, but their educational development, financial needs, health and well-being.
- As we know, the government has indicated their intent to modernize the apprenticeship program, and we're hopeful for a future system that meets everyone's needs in exactly these ways.

How Can We Move Towards That Vision?

- Think beyond what your program offers
- Consider what could impact client success after they leave your program
- Ask questions & identify opportunities the client may not have considered
- Picture the long-view of the client's path

So how do we move towards that vision for the future?

Upon reflection, we may find that the current model of service delivery contributes to some of the confusion. Often, our focus is on how to help our clients with their immediate needs – and specifically the ones that match the services we offer. However, focusing only on the “now” could result in clients leaving our service not fully prepared for their next step – even when it appears to be a successful step. Success for the client means they are prepared with skills, knowledge and support they need to succeed at every point on their journey. To best support our clients, as service providers we must be aware of supports and programs that will help guide apprentices throughout the whole process – even when they're not with us any more.

If an employment counselor helps their client find an opportunity to apprentice under a skilled tradesperson (exiting to employment), does that mean they've done their job? What if that same client loses their job because they are unable to complete mathematical equations, or fill out forms the job required? Would it be fair to say the employment counsellor still did their best job – even if statistically the client **was** successfully served? Our vision includes Employment counsellors who have a long view, not only providing for the immediate needs of the client, but having a process in place to identify the skills required for the workplace, so that future challenges can be identified before they become barriers. And they would act on that knowledge, by connecting their client with the

supports they need to be successful in all elements of their apprenticeship journey.

If staff at a Training Delivery Agency teaching the in-class portion of apprenticeship training recognize a student is struggling, and that student is unable to pass their classes, even though the trainer had done their best to help them prepare in class, have they fully done their job? Some apprentices return to the same level of in-class training, or to attempt to write their C of Q multiple times without success – and for many, that can be a barrier to completing their apprenticeship. Our vision includes Training Delivery Agents who connect struggling students with a local literacy program for support with studying, test-taking, and many of the foundational math and writing skills that the student requires to be successful in class.

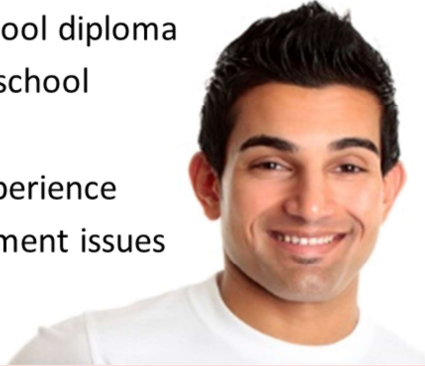
Let's consider staff at a literacy program helping someone whose goal is to upgrade their reading and writing skills. That client then leaves the program and starts working as a labourer in a trades-related field, hoping to demonstrate his work ethic and be taken on an apprentice. If that long-term goal, and the associated skills it requires, were never discussed, has the literacy program done its best job for that client? Our vision includes forward thinking programs that plan for the whole pathway, seek out opportunities beyond those the learner identifies, and know when to offer more – both of their own services again in the future if needed, and the services of their community partners who can help the client along the way.

Ultimately, a solid plan for apprenticeship success needs to take into consideration the *total* path to completion.

Meet Ryan

Our Client:

- Youth
- Has a high school diploma
- Not strong in school
- Math issues
- Little work experience
- Time management issues



What they may need:

- Skills assessment
 - Upgrading
- Learning disabilities assessment
- Information about the realities of the profession
 - Work placement / experience

As any of us know, people often come to us with complex stories and diverse needs. Let's look at an example. Your client, Ryan, is a 23-year old male that wants to be a chef. He says that didn't do well in school and had trouble concentrating, but he did graduate, and got his high school diploma. Ryan shared that he's not very good at math, but isn't too concerned because he won't really need it as a chef. He is excited about becoming an apprentice, but has very little work experience and seems to have a time management problem - he's usually late for your meetings, but at least he shows up!

Let's recap some key points, and questions that we should ask ourselves:

- Ryan under age 30, so are there youth-specific supports available to him?
- He has a high school diploma, but does that piece of paper actually reflect his skills?
- He didn't do well in school - was there a learning challenge that could also be barrier going forward? And if so, can accommodations put in place to support him?
- Ryan doesn't like math and says he's not good at it – and he doesn't think he'll need it for his career anyway. Unfortunately that last part's not true – math is used in every trade, including those related to food preparation... measuring, weighing, and dividing ingredients are just a few of the things that come to mind. So where can he go to “sharpen” his math skills?
- Ryan doesn't have much previous work experience to draw on. Does he know what will be expected of him in a work environment, including soft skills like “work ethic”? Does

he actually understand what working in a commercial kitchen would be like? Who would be willing to hire him with no work experience?

- And finally, Ryan doesn't show up on time, and while at least he shows up, employers won't tolerate him being late - and could his poor math skills be playing a role in his lack of time management? Or is there something else going on?

We can see where Ryan might face some barriers on his apprenticeship journey if we only address some of his needs, and not all of them. Working with Ryan, you can identify that he might need:

- A skills assessment, to check his math and other essential skills and see where he may need to improve. From there Ryan would likely benefit from skills upgrading based on that assessment.
- A learning disability assessment, and accommodations and supports if a learning disability is identified.
- A reality check – specifically a review of what's involved in his chosen career as a chef, what activities he'll be doing and what skills and knowledge he'll need to succeed both on-the-job training and in-class.
- And finally, some work experience, or participation in a program that offers placements so Ryan can get some real-world experience

Many of these services can be accessed at the same time – much like the apprenticeship pathway isn't always linear, access to services doesn't have to be done in a linear fashion either. Client can ease in and out of services, and can often access more than one at a time. Knowing this, how can you coordinate a plan for Ryan to help increase his chances becoming a certified chef? Do you know what resources, services and supports exist in your area that could help? Ryan's story, by the way, is quite typical. To help apprentices succeed we need to be aware of the local supports about also how our services integrate with other programs to provide necessary services. And, instead of giving the client all the information on various services and hoping they use that information to plan for their future, let's help our clients to lay out a concrete plan for moving forward – and we can't do that successfully in a silo.

We're Better... Stronger... Together



On the apprenticeship pathway, there are several opportunities for us to work closer together to support apprentices to successful completion. We don't have to look far to see where our services meet – and there are plenty of programs who are already striving toward this vision of the future we've been talking about. If you're one of them – thank you! And we'll follow up that "thanks" with an ask... please, share your success stories with others. The more stories we can profile that demonstrate not only the winding path that a journey to apprenticeship can take, but also the many, many supports that have been successfully coordinated and accessed along the way, the easier it will be for everyone to see how we can work together to support apprentices in reaching their goals. And demonstrating that system of support acts as an element of attraction as well – showing those considering a career in the skilled trades that they won't be in it alone, but with a community of support helping them along the way.

So let's share success stories to attract people towards a career in an apprenticeship. Let's be proactive and think about the supports our clients might need in the next stage of their journey – or the one after that, instead of just what they need today. Let's break out of our programs and connect with others in the apprenticeship community. Plan visits and presentations to share what other agencies have to offer, and consider co-delivering programs with these new peers, instead of having clients move between locations.

We need people to go into the trades now, more than ever. The skilled trades shortage isn't something that will happen in the future - it's already here. And, as we said earlier, the Ontario government's prediction is that a vast amount of new trades-related positions will soon become available. Let's be proactive and prepare for this trend now.

Thank you!

Other presentations in this series in the Resources section of our website, available at www.llsc.on.ca



Contact us at 519-681-7307 or literacylink@llsc.on.ca

Thank you for joining us today. We hope this presentation has given you some new ideas on how to attract people to the skilled trades, and how to work with others on the apprenticeship pathway to help guide and support apprentices towards successful completion of their goals.

As a reminder, this presentation was the third in a series of presentations we've called the "A" Word. We hope you found them helpful, and remind you that the entire series is available, along with other helpful documents, in the Resources section of our website www.llsc.on.ca.

Thank you for joining us today. If you have any questions about this presentation, or any of our other work, please don't hesitate to contact us using the information on your screen.