



*Celebrating Success*

# 45th Annual TESL Ontario Conference

A CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

**TWELFTH ANNUAL PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**Creating Opportunities for Success**  
November 3, 2017

# 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Panel Discussion: Creating Opportunities for Success

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Yves Saint-Germain, Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurement, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Ontario Region (IRCC)

Yvonne Ferrer, Manager, Program Design, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Pauline McNaughton, Manager of the Adult Education Policy Unit, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)

Monica Neitzert, Director, Lifelong Learning and Essential Skills, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)

## Overview

Through 2020, immigration levels in Canada are projected to continue to increase, from the 300,000 permanent residents welcomed in 2017 to an estimated 340,000 in 2020. Based on prior trends, Ontario expects to become home to approximately one-third of those immigrants.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) recognizes the importance of immigration to Canada's economic strength and diversity, and has put into place a plan that will welcome an increasing number of immigrants between 2018 and 2020. The department also supports a national focus on language training programs that will enable immigrants to join the workforce and become productive members of the community quickly.

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) is seeing the benefits of the ongoing redesign of Ontario's language training programs. To better support the influx of immigrants, the ministry is also increasing funding for targeted services to refugees and vulnerable newcomers and continuing to help transition highly skilled immigrants to the workforce.

Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu) has tasked its Adult Education and Policy Unit with better supporting adult learners in their efforts to finish high school and successfully transition to post-secondary education, training, or the workplace. The ministry is also challenging educators and administrators to help adult learners find the fastest and best pathway to their goals.

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) created the Lifelong Learning and Essential Skills branch in 2017, which is responsible for leading the development and implementation of a strategy to strengthen the adult education, lifelong learning, and essential skills training system in Ontario. As part of this focus on lifelong learning, MAESD is also reviewing the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program to understand how it can be improved and expanded to better service the community.

## Context

Panelists representing different government entities discussed how their programs are serving Canada's fast-growing immigrant population, as well as changes being made to enhance these services to better meet community needs.

## Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

Yves Saint-Germain spoke about the importance of language training for Canada's new permanent residents.

### Planned growth in immigration levels will continue to add to Canada's diversity.

Immigrants made up 22% of Canada's population, according to the 2016 census, and in 2017, the country welcomed a historic high of 300,000 permanent residents. That growth is expected to continue.

Year	IRCC's Immigration Plan (# of immigrants)
2018	310,000
2019	330,000
2020	340,000

The growth in immigration levels adds to Canada's growing diversity, supports economic growth, and spurs innovation. With this plan, the government can also continue to balance its commitment to reunite families more quickly and help refugees in need.

*"Immigration continues to play an important role in building a welcoming and strong country."*

*Yves Saint-Germain*

**The Pan-Canadian Language Strategy offers a national approach to language programs.**

As part of Canada’s immigration strategy, the IRCC continues to work with provinces and territories on the Pan-Canadian Language Strategy. This strategy provides a coordinated national approach to the delivery of settlement language programming for adult immigrants and refugees.

Over the next two years, the federal government will continue to work with provinces and territories, focusing on employment-related language training, English as a Second Language (ESL) and French as a Second Language (FSL) literacy, and improved access to e-learning.

Approximately 110,000 learners across Canada are using IRCC settlement language training services each year. IRCC minister Ahmed Hussen has challenged the department to improve settlement language offerings and availability so more newcomers can access the training and join the labor market faster, ultimately helping contribute to Canada’s prosperity.

**The focus on employment-related language training is growing.**

One path the IRCC is focusing on for faster labor market integration is integration of language training into the workplace. Strong practices are already emerging around workplace language training.

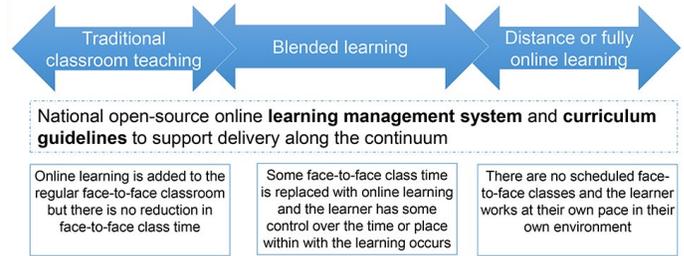


The IRCC is looking at how they can better engage employers to provide this language training approach, which needs to take into account language necessary for employment in a particular role or industry as well as language required for settlement needs beyond the workplace.

**A national e-learning platform is a top IRCC priority.**

In August 2017, the IRCC announced the creation of the Settlement and Integration Sector, which will be the single point of accountability for the strategic vision and oversight of the department’s policy programs and operations. One of the top priorities for this new sector is the continued development of a national e-learning platform.

As part of this project, the IRCC is focused on improving the suite of technology-enabled tools and the infrastructure supporting the offerings so that language learning can be better delivered online, in the classroom, or in a blended online/classroom model.

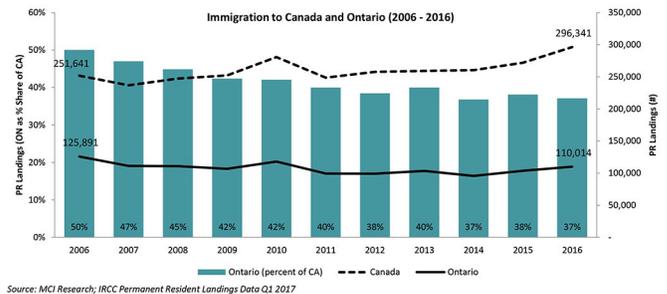


**Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)**

Yvonne Ferrer discussed the key achievements in the redesign of the adult language training program, and opportunities MCI sees for further success.

**MCI has seen a steady increase in language learners as more refugees arrive.**

A significant increase in Ontario immigrant landings – from an average of 102,400 during the preceding five years to 110,014 in 2016 – is a likely cause behind a larger-than-normal increase in MCI’s language training program service usage for the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 school years.



This upward trend in language learners is expected to continue as the IRCC’s plan increases the number of overall immigrants annually between 2018 and 2020. In 2018 alone, Ontario expects to become home to 120,312 of the predicted 310,000 Canadian newcomers.

Unique Learners	School Year
66,368	2013/14
66,450	2014/15
67,123	2015/16
68,134 (TBC)	2016/17

- Steady growth in unique learner count over the past several school years.
- Larger than normal increase between 2015/16 and 2016/17 likely related to increase in refugee claimants accessing the language training program.

As of 2014/15 school year:

Total Unique Learners by Immigration Status					
Permanent Resident	Convention Refugee	Refugee Claimant	Naturalized Canadian Citizen	Other	Total
39,454	1,595	6,332	17,623	700	65,704

### The adult language training program redesign already has key achievements.

In 2009, MCI began a redesign of the language training program, which was further impacted by the 2012 Ontario Immigration Strategy. The redesign has already made progress toward its five stated objectives:

1. Provide better **access** to language training
2. Introduce program accountability and **standards**
3. Offer **labor market** language training
4. **Coordinate** with the federal language training program to reduce duplication
5. Provide **funding** and program design flexibility

The program's key achievements to date include:

Objective	Program Redesign Achievements
<b>1. Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Developed online search tool</li> <li>✓ Expanded learner eligibility to increase access to FSL</li> </ul>
<b>2. Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduced Language Training Certificates</li> <li>✓ Adopted Canadian Language Benchmarks and National Language Placement and Progressions Guidelines as frameworks of reference for the program</li> </ul>
<b>3. Labour Market</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduced Specialized Language Training programming to better prepare learners for the labour market</li> </ul>
<b>4. Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduced Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral (CLARS)</li> <li>✓ Adopted/adapted the HARTs course and learner database</li> </ul>
<b>5. Funding Model</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Automated ADE calculation process to help school boards with reporting</li> <li>✓ Introduced new SLT funding model, based on smaller specialized classes with top up funding</li> </ul>

### Ontario programs give refugees the language training necessary for employment.

In 2016, Ontario welcomed a large number of refugees, many of whom were unable to access existing employment services because they did not meet language requirements. This experience identified a gap in training, leading the 2017 Ontario Budget to announce \$14 million in new funding for targeted services to meet the needs of refugees and vulnerable newcomers.

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*"We had a very large cohort of refugees with very specific and unique needs. We found . . . the traditional language training model was inadequate to meet the needs of this new cohort."*  
*Yvonne Ferrer*

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Included in the funding are pilot programs that combine employment and language training to support earlier labor market integration. Current calls for proposals also include a new integration funding stream that supports targeted language and employment skills training for newcomers with low levels of education and official language fluency.

Programming is expected to target a range of employment sectors, including agriculture, construction, early childhood education, and food preparation.

### The Bridge Training Program helps transition highly skilled immigrants to the workforce.

Ontario also offers a Bridge Training Program that helps highly skilled immigrants access specialized training for skills, supports necessary to pass licensure examples, and employment. This group of learners – who typically have a Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) 7 or higher proficiency level – focus on occupation-specific language, as well as culture and communication.

### MCI sees opportunities in improving program access, innovating, and tracking progress.

MCI continues to create new opportunities for success, and is currently focusing on three main areas for future program improvements: 1) improve program access; 2) promote innovation, responsiveness, and adaptability; and 3) focus on evidence and outcomes.

Opportunity	Proposed Projects
Improve program access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot e-learning and integrate it into the language training program</li> <li>• Implement waitlist guidelines for Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) services to minimize wait times</li> <li>• Implement remote assignments to facilitate access to language assessment and referral</li> <li>• Reach new/returning school boards who do not currently offer the program</li> </ul>
Promote innovation, responsiveness, and adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate specialized language training (SLT) into the core language training program; consider other specialized types of language training that could be supported using the SLT model</li> <li>• Support new projects to develop and pilot test language training for specialized learner populations</li> <li>• Support new and innovative approaches through a new project category in the recent CFP to meet unique needs, such as those of learners in rural/remote areas and vulnerable groups</li> </ul>
Focus on evidence and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Portfolio-Based Language Assessment (PBLA) across the program to measure learner progress accurately and consistently</li> <li>• Support the implementation of Ontario curriculum guidelines (OCG) for language training to ensure it is learner-centered and aligned with the PBLA</li> <li>• Work with MEdu and MAESD to improve program coordination and ensure learners have clear pathways from language training to other adult education programs</li> <li>• Make better use of data to support analysis of capacity and services to inform decision making</li> </ul>

## Adult Education and Policy Unit, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)

Pauline McNaughton provided an overview of the credit programs available through MEdu for adult learners, including those in the immigrant population.

### Adult credit programs are a focal point for the Adult Education and Policy Unit.

The Adult Education and Policy Unit of MEdu commits to ensuring the adult education system better supports adult learners in their efforts to finish high school and successfully transition to post-secondary education, training, or the workplace. MEdu's adult credit education strategy addresses this commitment by:

- Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of MEdu Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services that best meet adult learner needs.
- Coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referral, provided at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.
- Regionally available guidance, career counseling, and pathway planning for mature students.
- Improved and more consistent regional access at school boards to Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students seeking a high school diploma.

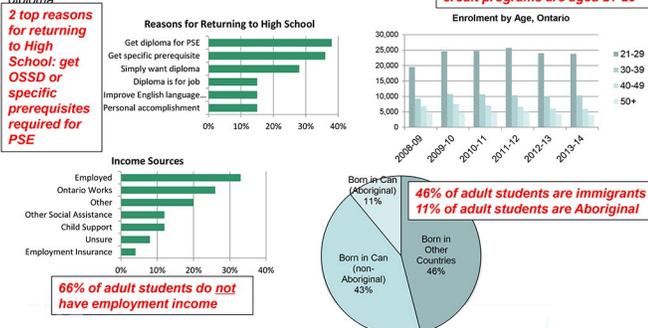
The provincial government annually invests more than \$200 million in adult education and training programs, supporting more than 200,000 adult learners across MEdu, MAESD, and MCI. To date, 31 Ontario school boards offer adult education and training programs funded by all three ministries.

### Immigrants make up 46% of all students in the adult credit program.

Nearly half (46%) of the adult credit program's 79,000 adult learners are immigrants. Many of these students are well-educated current or former ESL students who come to the program to overcome barriers to employment.

#### Increasing demand for more highly skilled individuals:

70% of all future jobs will require some form of PSE, yet.....  
 Almost 800,000 Ontarians aged 25-64 are without a high school diploma.



Some of these adult learners are returning to school to get their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), which will open up job opportunities for them. Others are interested in specific prerequisites for post-secondary education; retraining; or more intensive ESL courses.

### Adult learners can gain credit for prior experience and education.

Adult learners benefit from flexibility, including when and where courses are offered, as well as recognition and credit for prior experience and education. Ms. McNaughton encouraged educators and administrators to be aware of programs, like PLAR, that can provide adult learners a faster path to credits, certificates, diplomas, and testing, including the General Educational Development (GED) credential.

*"Why spend \$120 to write the GED and study and prepare for that when, basically, you have the right to a high school diploma because you've earned it?"*

Pauline McNaughton

Program	What it Provides
PLAR for Mature Students	Formal evaluation and credit-granting process allowing mature students to obtain credits towards the OSSD in recognition of prior learning acquired in both formal and informal ways outside of secondary school.  Continuing Education School Board Administration (CESBA) offers PLAR resources.
Dual Credit	School College Workforce Initiative (SCWI) offers dual credits to students through exposure to college courses and culture while supporting their successful transition to post-secondary education. Secondary students can also earn credits toward their OSSD and post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree, or apprenticeship certification.  MEdu is beginning a new dual credit pilot initiative in the 2017/2018 school year.
Adult Education Hybrid Project	Now in Phase 5 of its pilot, the hybrid project began in 2013 to better support adult learners with more access and flexibility. The courses offer a blended learning model – in class and online – that helps prepare students for post-secondary pathways.
TVO	Ontario's public education broadcaster has moved its Independent Learning Center and distance education online, giving more flexibility to independent adult learners.

## Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)

In 2017, MAESD created a new branch focusing on lifelong learning and essential skills.

In recognition of the importance of lifelong learning opportunities that allow Ontarians to fully participate in the highly skilled workforce and society, MAESD created a new branch in 2017 to focus on these skills. The Lifelong Learning and Essential Skills branch, which is part of the Workforce Policy Innovation Division, is responsible for leading the development and implementation of a strategy to strengthen the adult education, lifelong learning, and essential skills training system in Ontario.

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*"We think about getting our education when we're young, and that's it. We go on into work and we don't necessarily go back and upgrade."*

*Monica Neitzert*

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### MAESD, MEdu, and MCI are working together to strength the lifelong learning system.

To further lifelong learning, MAESD, MEdu, and MCI are all working together to strengthen the adult education system. Together, the three ministries are working to strengthen the system so that it is more seamless and learner-centered, and so that it enables more adults to achieve their educational, career, and personal goals.

The Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan is highlighted in Budget 2017 and includes three elements that focus on key areas of improvement:

- Strengthening the adult education and essentials skills system.
- Extending Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) support to mature students.
- Updating key Employment Ontario programs.

### The Literacy and Basic Skills program is a cornerstone of the adult education system.

A top priority for the government of Ontario is the LBS program. Viewed as a cornerstone of the adult education system, LBS helps adults develop and apply communication, numeracy, and digital skills to achieve further education, training, employment, employment advancement, and increased independence.

The program reaches an average of 40,000 adult learners today — approximately 43,000 participated in the 2016-2017 fiscal year — but this captures only an estimated one percent of potential learners. With the ongoing changes to technology and the economy, an estimated four million adults across the province could benefit from LBS to increase and update knowledge.

Recognizing the importance of reaching more adult learners, in June 2017, MAESD minister Deb Matthews announced a new investment of \$185 million over four years for the LBS program, so that by 2021, the program should be reaching double the number of students it reaches today.

### The LBS Symposium focused on key areas for improvement.

In April, MAESD released an evaluation report of the LBS program, and key areas for improvement were discussed with stakeholders across the network at October's LBS Symposium. The symposium focused on three key themes:

- **Community needs:** Ensuring the curriculum is sensitive to the diversity of learners' needs including deaf, deaf blind, Francophone, and Indigenous learners.
- **Leadership and vision:** Providing an inclusive and flexible program that serves the needs of all learners in the community.
- **Funding, sustainability, and efficiency:** Developing a clear, transparent, and equitable funding formula that recognizes the intensity of service, and includes consideration for professional development, technology, and curriculum development.

As the ministries work together to develop and enhance the program, they will be looking to engage partners across the adult education and essential skills space through a Fall 2017 discussion paper to talk about priorities and improvements.

## Biographies

### Yves Saint-Germain

Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurement, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Ontario Region (IRCC)

Yves Saint-Germain holds an M.A. (Political Science). Since 2007, Mr. Saint-Germain is Director, Language Policy, Francophone Communities and Performance Measurement, Integration Branch-FCRO, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. He is responsible for establishing directions for the settlement program including: language training program policy, leading the implementation of IRCC contribution to the Roadmap for Official Languages 2013-2018, and leading the work on funding issues such as annual settlement allocations and Performance Measurement reporting through Annual Project Performance Reports and iCARE data.

### Yvonne Ferrer

Manager, Program Design, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)

Throughout her professional career, Yvonne has held a number of managerial roles within the Ontario Government, the broader public sector and the philanthropic community. As manager of Program Design, Yvonne is responsible for establishing directions for the design, development and implementation of immigration and citizenship programs, including language training, bridge training and settlement programs. Yvonne also holds responsibility for the development and delivery of Refugee Resettlement and Integration Programs. Yvonne joined the Ontario Public Service in 2006 and has held managerial positions at Ministry of the Attorney General, in addition to MCI. Before joining the OPS, Yvonne worked at the municipal level leading planning and development work related to housing and spent ten years at the Ontario Trillium Foundation managing programs and initiatives that addressed priorities in the environmental, social and arts and culture sectors. Yvonne has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Toronto and a Master of Public Administration from Queen's University.

### Pauline McNaughton

Manager of the Adult Education Policy Unit, Ontario Ministry of Education (MEdu)

Pauline McNaughton has worked in the field of adult education for over 25 years in college, school board, government and not-for-profit sectors. Currently she is Manager of the Adult Education Policy Unit, with a dual report to both the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and works closely with the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Prior to this she was Executive Director at the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks and Field Team Manager with the AlphaPlus Centre. She taught adult literacy and adult ESL for many years with both Arctic College on Baffin Island and with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

### Monica Neitzert

Director, Lifelong Learning and Essential Skills, Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)

Monica is currently Director, Lifelong Learning and Essential Skills in the Highly Skilled Workforce Division of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD). She has responsibility for collaborating to build a more seamless and learner-centred adult education and essential skills system with more opportunities for Ontarians to upgrade their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Monica previously led policy teams at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Monica has policy analysis and research experience with the Ministries of the Status of Women, Economic Development and Growth, and Finance. She taught and researched in economics at Laurentian University in Sudbury, and also had the opportunity to teach techniques of social policy analysis at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. Monica's collaborative spirit has been sustained by her Northern Outward Bound Wilderness Experience Training on Lake Nipigon, which also led to a lifelong passion for canoeing, hiking and paddling. Monica has an MA and PhD in economics from the University of Toronto, and a BA in political science from York University.



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