It's NOT About Body Snatching

Shared Students: Creating a Win/Win

An Online Community of Practice Webinar
October 26, 2017

e-Channel   EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Sarah Stocker from Contact North welcomes all participants.

Andrea Dickinson, Executive Director of the Tri-County Literacy Network, introduces Arlene Cronin:

Welcome everyone to the webinar today. It's good to see that we have a good response again. As some background, we have been providing the Online Community of Practice series for the last three years. It's basically at-your-desk training/learning. We have been very fortunate to have the collaboration of Contact North and of the Learning Networks of Ontario for the past couple of years, and this year we have added Community Literacy of Ontario and ACE Distance Delivery. It's a great opportunity for us to work together to help the LBS field.

This year, we have five webinars in the series. E-Channel providers are involved in giving the first four webinars, and the last one will see some practitioners involved. The focus for the series is on blended learning.

Now it's my pleasure to introduce our presenter for today, Arlene Cronin. Arlene has worked in education throughout her career, first as a reading and English teacher in public schools, and later as an English professor and administrator at St. Lawrence College where she held a number of management positions including Dean of Academic Policy and Development. Arlene has a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Arts Degree from the State University of New York at Plattsburg and has extensive experience in curriculum. Arlene now works as an Educational Consultant for the College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading as the Project Lead for ACE Distance Delivery which provides academic upgrading courses online. Arlene has had a long-term commitment to adult education and literacy. She has served on boards at both the community and provincial levels, and is currently a member of the Board of Directors of Kingston Literacy. Arlene is also an active member on the online Community of Practice Committee, and we appreciate all of her involvement on that.

Arlene Cronin

I'm really happy to be here with you today to talk about what the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development calls blended learning, but we call shared learning. This is about creating win/win/wins, for students, for you, and for partner agencies. If you have been around for a while, you'll remember back at the start of CAMS, that there wasn't sharing of learners. There was a lot of fear in the community of practice that if we were going to share students, it would be about sending them to that big black hole in the sky – it would be about body snatching. So the whole point about this presentation today is to help you have a much better understanding of just exactly how we can all succeed by sharing students and how the students can benefit most of all from this process.

Blended Learning? Hybrid Learning? Shared Learners? A Rose By Any Other name……

- There is No single, reliable definition of blended learning.
- Generally applied to using both online and in person learning experiences when teaching students.
- MAESD context : Learners who access both in-person and online learning are known as blended learners.
- Using the term shared learners avoids confusion

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First of all, I should tell you that there is no single, reliable definition of the term blended learning. If you want to amuse yourself, just google it some afternoon and take a look at the first half dozen entries that come up. There seem to be some pretty broad definitions that come up.

Pedagogically, amongst those in academic circles -- those who belong to school board and those who work in colleges, and those in academic departments in universities – there is an understanding that blended learning combines a few consistent elements, regardless of how they are applied. That combines online digital media along with traditional classroom-based methods, and blended learning requires the presence of both a teacher and a student, and the student has to have some control over the time, the place, the goal path or the pace of the learning. Other than that, there's nothing else that hangs together in terms of what blended learning means. In fact, in the Cathexis report, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development has defined blended learning as learners who access both in-person and online learning. That's the term that they use, but for the purposes of day, I'm going to use the term "shared learning" because I think it avoids confusion. In fact, many people who use the more traditional blended learning approach do it within one organization. This shared learning term tells us that this will be between two agencies.

What's In This For You (and your students)?

- Richer experience for the learner
- Access to new/additional curriculum, technology, delivery formats
- Language of choice: English/French/ASL
- Reach rural & remote learners
- Connect with shift workers & seasonally or casually employed when they can't participate in class
- Access to remedial or refresher materials
- Enrichment activities available
- Access to culturally appropriate programming

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Now, all that's nice, but quite frankly, as a service provider the big question is always "what's in this for me" or "what's in this for my learners"? So that's going to be the over-arching framework of this presentation. It's interesting that when I started listing the benefits, they are almost equally divided. In fact, shared learning can provide a richer learning experience for your student. It will give you access to new or additional curriculum, to new or additional technology, or to new or different delivery formats that your learner may not have had an opportunity to experience before. All of that makes for a much richer learning environment.

It also gives a language of choice to your student. Normally, we're talking about English and French, but we are also able to provide programming in ASL for deaf learners, which is a whole other layer of complexity. For you, this is an opportunity to reach out and connect with some of your rural and remote learners. As many of you know, the cost of trying to provide delivery in small locations where you may not have an actual physical presence, or where you don't have much equipment, or where you may have only one or two learners, makes that almost a self-defeating experience. However, with shared learners, if you use the resources of several locations, it does allow you to reach out and connect with remote learners. We have seen that a lot in the e-Channel programs in terms of where our learners come from. We're reaching out into very remote communities where we are giving access to students who normally wouldn't be able to connect with literacy programming.
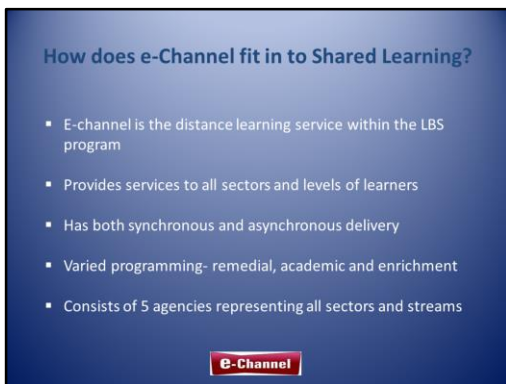
We are also able to connect you with shift workers or seasonal workers or those who are casually employed who just can't always connect to a classroom-based program. There are many workers now, particularly in today's economy, where many people are contract workers or they are working casual hours. So if WalMart needs them in the morning today but in the afternoon or evening two days from now, they can't commit to being in a classroom-based program between 9 and 12 or 9 and 3. So, shared learning may help them maintain their learning when they're working or when they can't be in a full-time program.

It also gives you and the student access to remedial or refresher materials. That's a big expense saving, because every time you have to invest in more development of curriculum materials, that's a fair investment of resources. To have some of the best thinking from a lot of different places is a wonderful benefit to you and to your learners.

The other thing is that students can have access to enrichment activities.

Lastly, it also gives access to culturally appropriate programming.

These are all sort of nebulous, and that's fine, because I'm trying to give you the overall scan. We're going to talk about what all of this means in more depth.

How does e-Channel fit in to Shared Learning?

- E-channel is the distance learning service within the LBS program
- Provides services to all sectors and levels of learners
- Has both synchronous and asynchronous delivery
- Varied programming- remedial, academic and enrichment
- Consists of 5 agencies representing all sectors and streams

e-Channel

So, I'm from e-Channel. How does e-Channel fit into shared learning? You can do shared learning between two bricks and mortar programs, although that's not often the way it works, however, because of the way the LSPs and the Ministry has encouraged people to identify areas of expertise and levels of service. They are trying to avoid duplication, so e-Channel tends to be a resource that gives you access to all of those tools without having to eat someone else's lunch in your own community and making enemies instead of friends.

e-Channel is the distance learning service within the LBS program. The five e-Channel providers provide services to all sectors and all levels of learners. So between one of the five of us you can go everywhere from the lowest level learners right up to students who are applying for college and apprenticeship programming.

E-Channel is also able to provide you with both synchronous and asynchronous delivery of programming. Synchronous means that the courses take place at a set time and at a set location. There are courses, for example, that are offered Tuesday and Thursday at 10 am on Saba: that's an example of a synchronous program. Then there's asynchronous delivery which is anytime, anywhere. My program, for example, doesn't do any synchronous delivery, it's totally asynchronous. All of our programming is up on line, and students can access their courses whenever they want: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We've been in business for 10 years, and in those years we have seen, through our tracking analytics, when students log on. We know that the busiest time for adult learners is between 9 pm and 1 am. We have also seen the demographics show that 75% of our learners are female, so we recognize that these are women are working, who often have kids, so they are taking care of their kids – making sure they have clean clothes and something to eat – and once the kids are in bed, it's their time to focus on themselves. This has been consistent year in and year out. At 9 pm, they're logging on to work on their chemistry course or their physics course. It's a format that works very well for those high level learners. It probably wouldn't work very well for the lowest levels, but for our learners it does.

We are also able with e-Channel to offer a full range of programming. We can offer remedial, so if you have students who come to you but who aren't appropriate for the level of learning that you deliver, you can refer them to another program for remediation. Or, if you have learners who need credentialing, you can do that as well. There is also an enrichment program, because people are interested and want to learn things.

The five agencies represent all of the sectors and all of the streams. We cover the waterfront!

I will give you an example of the remedial: because all of ACE Distance coursework is at the Grade 11 and 12 level, we often have students come to us who want to take physics, but when we do an assessment, we find

that they aren't functioning anywhere near the level required to take that course. So, we're able to refer them as a shared learner because they may test appropriately at communications in other areas, but they need remediation in math. So what we often do is partner with The Learning Hub as the other Anglophone program where they do the remedial work with them and then they are sent back. We have found that works very nicely. No one worries about if they are going to take our student because we're both going to win from this process.

Who IS e-Channel?

Stream	Program	Agency
Anglophone	The Learning Hub	Centres for Employment & Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board
Anglophone	ACE Distance Delivery	College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading
Francophone	Formation a Distance (F@D)	COFA
Francophone	Accès carrières études	College Sector for Adult Upgrading/College Boreal
Aboriginal	Good Learning Anywhere	Sioux Hudson Literacy Council
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Deaf Learn Now	George Brown College

So who is e-Channel? You can see that there are six groups on the slide, but in fact there are five deliverers.

For the Anglophone stream, the Learning Hub is the lead.

I thought I would put this chart up because you often hear about e-Channel by the name of the program, but sometimes you hear the name of the agency who is responsible for delivery.

The Centres for Employment and Learning of the Avon Maitland District School Board is in fact the agency that delivers programming through the Learning Hub.

ACE Distance: College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading.

Accès carrières études is also offered through the College Sector for Adult Upgrading. Because there are two French language colleges in the system, we do both English and French programming for ACE Distance because our learners are preparing to go into either post-secondary or apprenticeship programming. The Francophone lead is COFA through Formation à Distance, and they are undergoing some change right now. When we talk about contacts, you'll be wanting to pay attention as there will be a new Executive Director. Philippe Landry is moving on very shortly.

Good Learning Anywhere is the Aboriginal group through the Sioux Hudson Literacy Council.

Deaf Learn Now is the deaf program operated through George Brown College. George Brown has both a classroom based deaf program as well as a deaf/blind program, and Deaf Learn Now online.

Using e-Channel to serve shared learners

- To reach rural & remote learners   All
- Students whose skills are rusty
-      Numeracy Support   ACE Distance
- Students who need help with
       Reading/Writing/Numeracy   The Learning Hub,
                                          Good Learning Anywhere

- To gain prerequisites for college   ACE Distance
- For Deaf Learners   Deaf Learn Now
- For Francophones
       Below ACE   F@D
       ACE Level   Accès carrières études
- For cultural enrichment
       Sharing Circles   Good Learning Anywhere

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Let's talk about using e-Channel to serve shared learners.

To reach rural and remote learners: all five of the e-Channel providers do that. They either use a program like Saba to provide synchronous classes, or they use a computer-based program such as Moodle, or they use programs like Plato to teach specific skills. All of those can be used to reach rural and remote learners. If that is the group you are trying to connect to literacy learning, any of those agencies should be able to help you.

Students whose skills are rusty: I use rusty deliberately, because when we started ACE Distance we discovered that when students did the Essential Skills for Education and Employment Assessment, which we use to determine eligibility for our program, we had some who were testing out slightly below the cut off. It turned out that these students had done math before but hadn't done it in a long time. It's probably like some of us, right? I think that's true of many math users: if you don't use it, you lose it. We developed a numeracy support class for learners who test out between 225 and 249 on the Essential Skills numeracy component, we enroll them in that. That's a 40-hour course, and we know from our tracking that when a student completes that course, on average they gain about 55 points on their Essential Skills math component. They just needed someone to bang the rust off their math skills. It's not a course that's intended to teach people math but to refresh it.

The other thing we did with this course, after finding that many students didn't have a methodology for problem solving so when it came to word problems they were totally lost because they had no idea how to tease information out from a word problem. So we made the first module a three step critical thinking and problem solving methodology that students are asked to use throughout the course.

For assessment, we use ESEE: Essential Skills for Education and Employment. When a student signs up with it, that's one of the first things we do. Many other agencies have been using it throughout the province over the past few years, because we have made it available at no cost.

We have done the analytical studies from our program. After we had 2000 students do the ESEE, we did the correlation studies to determine if you scored x on ESEE on math, what was your likelihood of passing core math, business math, technology math? We were able to set entry standards for each of our courses based upon the actual performance of learners based on a couple of years of data. That has made a huge difference because now we're setting students up for success instead of failure. If someone tests below the cut off, it's much kinder to connect them with a partner agency for some remediation before they start with us. We don't kick them to the curb, instead we ask them to do some extra work to get the foundations in place.

For students who need help with reading, writing, and numeracy, the Learning Hub and Good Learning Anywhere are available. The Learning Hub the full range of math programming and most of communications. Good Learning Anywhere has a fair bit of writing programming. You may be interested in partnering with them to work with your learners.

If a student needs to gain some prerequisites for college – as you know, some courses require certain prerequisites. ACE Distance offers those prerequisites. If a student needs an equivalent for Grade 11 C Level math, for example, they can do that through ACE Distance, and that's recognized for apprenticeship and post-secondary learning.

Deaf Learn Now has programming for deaf learners. I'm going to give you some links further on, but if you have never been to Deaf Learn Now's website, I'd highly suggest you take a look. We have all been to meetings where we work with the interpreters, but it's interesting to see how that works in an online environment. They have some examples and samples of the work they do online, so you can see what that involves and if it may be beneficial for some of your learners.

For Francophones below ACE level, Formation à Distance is the contact. For the ACE level, it's Collège Boréal's Accès carrières études.

A good example of cultural enrichment is through Good Learning Anywhere. They have a program called Sharing Circles where they bring in high profile Aboriginal speakers to talk about the work they do, the experiences they have had and the things they have done. If you're talking about giving Aboriginal learners a connection to positive role models, some of the folks that have been on the Sharing Circle are wonderful examples. So even if you have Aboriginal learners who are happy with your program, this may be a way to give them a slightly richer learning environment.

A participant asks if there is financial support for internet similar to the training support we provide at a bricks and mortar centre? Answer: No there isn't, unfortunately. Basically, there have been no support for learners for child care or travel or other supports. We have talked about that, particularly the mental health pieces where there has been discussion about the need for supports and what that could look like. I think that will be an increasingly important conversation. I think all programs have support needs to help learners overcome the barriers they have. I have always wondered why there isn't money to buy extra laptops or computers or tablets that you could lend out to learners who aren't able to afford their own computers.

Now I'm going to connect the dots. I've talked about the big overarching, I've talked in specifics about language of choice, rural and remote learners, and enrichment programs.

But in fact, if you want to go up close and personal, here are some specific examples of how this all works.

So if you want ASL, you can go to Deaf Learn Now's Better Emails Part 1 and Part 2. I would encourage you to take a look at that.

Collège Boréal offers the full range of ACE programming in French. When we developed the English courses, we gave all of the materials to the Francophone stream, but they still had to find French online resources to support the work they are doing so there was a fair bit of development and research for their curriculum.

When you're looking to provide service to remote and rural learners, all of the ACE courses are available including biology, math and chemistry, which are our biggest uptake programs. There is huge interest in health and life science programming. I think every young man in the province wants to be a paramedic until he discovers that he has to work shifts and weekends and there is blood involved. It's a hugely popular topic. Similarly, five or six years ago everyone wanted to be a police officer.

The Learning Hub offers an asynchronous program on telling your story. It's interesting, even folks who do not have sophisticated levels of literacy are very interested in writing and expressing themselves. That's a real driving force among many literacy learners. Whether it's writing poetry, writing a memoir or just expressing themselves, it's very empowering. The Learning Hub's "Creative Writing: Telling Your Story" may be of interest to your learners.

In a synchronous format, which means there is a teacher, a specific format, there is "How To Write a Cover Letter". You may have learners who want to connect with employment. You may have seasonal or casual workers who may not have formed an attachment to the labour force. A synchronous course like "How To Write a Cover Letter" may serve a really good purpose in terms of helping them get a bit closer to being connected to the labour force.

Good Learning Anywhere has a course on money management including the fundamentals of budgeting. That's a skill that becomes more important if you don't have much money than if you have lots! Having worked in the college system, I can tell you it's amazing how many students drop out because they don't have money management skills. They get their OSAP and think they're rich, but they haven't learned how to parse it out throughout the academic year.

If you want to look at shift workers and the seasonal and casually employed, "Computer Fundamentals" is a course that we try and encourage learners to take because it's amazing the number of learners who say they know how to work a computer, but really all they know is how to surf the web, but they don't know about file management, saving files, organization, naming files so that they can retrieve them later, etc. So that's a course that provides some of those basic skills.
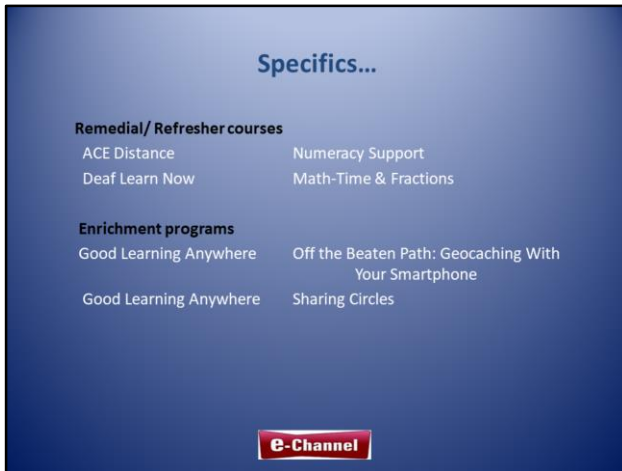
Good Learning Anywhere has a ready for work program that helps people get ready to be successful in the labour market.

There is always a demand for GED prep, and The Learning Hub offers the full range of GED prep. If a student needs, they can take just the one or two they are missing, but sometimes there are bundles of GED prep courses that may be of value to their learners.

I'm very impressed by the "M'Nendamowin (A Good Way of Thinking): Introduction to Mental Health" . We know that mental health is increasingly becoming an issue for some of our learners, so anything we can do to help people become more familiar with their own mental health needs and how they can help themselves, is a good thing. This is a brand new course that Good Learning Anywhere is going to be starting shortly.

The Learning Hub offers "Preparing for a Job Interview". Those who are shift workers or are casually employed can again benefit from this course to help them make that attachment to the labour force.

Deaf Learn Now offers the very practical course to help deaf persons get their driver's license. If you're ever going to become employable, for many people having a driver's license is a basic requirement.

Specifics...

Remedial/ Refresher courses

ACE Distance Numeracy Support

Deaf Learn Now Math-Time & Fractions

Enrichment programs

Good Learning Anywhere Off the Beaten Path: Geocaching With Your Smartphone

Good Learning Anywhere Sharing Circles

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I have already talked about some of these remedial refresher courses.

Deaf Learn Now does a course on time and fractions. Those of us who are a little older who learned to tell time before digital watches learned to tell time a different way. There's a need for this as some people can't tell time without a digital device. There is also a need for fractions learning.

For the enrichment programs, we talked about the Sharing Circles, but there are other things that people are interested in. For example, Good Learning Anywhere does a course called "Off the Beaten Path: Geocaching With Your Smartphone". I thought this was interesting for a couple of reasons. Geocaching is an increasingly popular sport with young people, and the fact is that they do it with their smart phone. So it's a nice way to get people connected and interested.

An audience member asks if a hearing person can take a Deaf Learn Now course: I am not sure but it's worth asking. I think that if the hearing person understands sign language, they probably could. Many of the Deaf Learn Now courses also have a voice-over track for those who are hard of hearing rather than actually deaf.

Another audience member asks how you make the introduction to mental health and G1 courses fit into the OALCF: I am not sure how they have done that, because it isn't my program. I know that all of our courses have been done, but I am sure that Good Learning Anywhere would be happy to tell you how they fit in.

Rachel Anne from the Centre d'éducation à Distance, a French e-Channel provider: We have 25 Francophone centres in Ontario that we work closely with. We also have some learners that come from outside of our centres. We provide many different courses.

Sarah adds a text comment: Deaf Learn Now requires its registrants to be able to study and communicate in ASL, so if you can do ASL you can sign up.

Another audience member asks if you share the ESEE results correlation with the College Sector Committee and all of the college providers? Yes, we do. We have a chart that we distribute widely. So, if you want to take core Math for example, you have to have a score of 250. The same is true for Communications. If you want to take physics, however, you have to have a reading score of 275 and a math score of 325 because we found that if they're below that, they struggle. They can't do the math to succeed. We do share information – not by specific learner, but by what is required to succeed.

How Does the Shared Learner Process Work?

- Student enrolls with a service provider that sets up service profile, conducts the assessment, and creates a service plan in CaMS
- Student receives services from enrolling agency but is also referred to another LBS agency for additional services
- Referring agency sends assessment info and learner plan with receiving agency
- Receiving agency creates another service plan in CaMS
- Learner receives service from both agencies
- When learner finishes with receiving agency notification of completion , grades, and milestones completed is sent to enrolling agency
- Both agencies receive credit for registering the learner
- Both agencies receive credit for milestones attained

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So the question is, how does the shared learner process work? This is basically a global question. First of all, a student enrolls with the initial service provider. That organization sets up the service profile, they conduct the assessment, they create a service plan in CaMS for that learner, so they become "their" learner. Then they also begin to start receiving services from the enrolling agency.

At the same time, either then or a little later in their progress, they are also referred to another LBS agency for additional services. For example, if you have an Aboriginal learner and you think they would like to take one or two courses through Good Learning Anywhere, you can do that. You would send their assessment info and learner plan to the receiving agency. The receiving agency creates another service plan in CaMs because a student can have more than one service plan, and they receive services from both agencies. When the learner is finished with the receiving agency, that agency sends a notification of any grades or milestones that were completed, to the enrolling agency who can then put that into their file and any credit that they get is also in their CaMS file. Both agencies receive credit for registering the learner. If the second agency is no longer providing services, they close their service plan, but then the student continues on with the first agency until it's time for them to move on.

That sounds quite complicated, but it's actually not once you have done it.

You'll see that four of the five agencies have an online referral form on their websites. Here are the links for The Learning Hub, Deaf Learn Now, Good Learning Anywhere and F@D. ACE Distance has not yet put the referral form on to our website, however we do have a refillable form which you will receive as part of your package. It's also available for download.

We did ours as a fillable form. It's just a Word document, but you just have to download the file and click to enter the information. We chose this format because most agencies want a copy for their files. So you can complete the form, save it, send it to me and also print a copy for your file. You can tell us exactly what they want, for example, to be enrolled in communications support. It makes it nice and smooth for switching between one agency and another.

Humber College has a number of students they have been sending to us because they are testing out below where they need to be. We are able to provide them with numeracy support, but if they are below our cut off, we can refer them on.

If you want to know more about e-Channel, I would encourage you to listen to us! Last year, we created a series of short podcast soundbites about our agencies. You can find those on Sound Cloud and on the Contact North website. All of the links are on the slide. You don't have to listen to them all at once, you can listen to just one of them and learn how an agency can help you.

The e-Channel introduction is Sarah talking about e-Channel overall.

What is nice about this series of podcasts, is that you can download them and listen to them at any time. It's a good way to learn about e-Channel.

Contact information: here's how you get hold of us. We all have website, and you're more than welcome to contact us if you think you have clients that we could work with together, or if you have suggestions for programming. We're always looking for good ideas. If you have an unmet need for some of your learners, I'm sure that any and all of the e-Channel providers would be happy to hear from you.

I'm open to answer questions and to listen to what you have to say. Thank you for attending today! I hope you'll come back for Webinar #3 with Courtney Brown from The Learning Hub on November 30.

Questions from the audience:

Agencies have some concerns about shared milestones and potential duplication.

A participant asks about having an actual piece of paper in the files during an audit. There's no reason that can't happen. Every milestone that a student in ACE Distance does comes into my inbox and gets put into a folder. So my faculty have a hard copy which I ask them to keep. We can also take the milestone that was submitted, and I can send it to you so that you have a copy in your files. For example, Milestone 14 is used by several agencies. We use it for chemistry, and I know that Good Learning Anywhere has a Level 1 milestone for Milestone 14.

Sarah Stocker: E-Channel providers are online and monitoring questions and will provide additional information. This isn't the end! We're just getting into the subject.

Arlene: Sarah's right. We're just at the beginning of the journey! One of the realities is that we all have increased targets, and this is an opportunity to help you make sure you're hitting your targets and providing the best service to your learners by making sure that we're sharing them around. It's a win for everybody.

The winter offerings catalogue is coming out through Contact North, so please check our websites to see what is being offered this winter that may be of interest and value to your learners.