Interim Report 2:

ESPORT Project Evaluation

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February 27, 2006
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Executive summary

This Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) project commenced in late 2004, and was to conclude, after an extension, in August 2006. The purpose of the project was to provide training and counseling to entry-level employment low-literate adults, in regions of Canada experiencing chronic unemployment, through enhancement of clients’ essential skills. The original partners were the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council Of Canada (AHRDCC), the Cape Breton Education Consortium, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labor (NLFL). An amendment to the project expanded access to the John Howard Society (Ottawa), Aboriginal Futures Career and Training Centre (Calgary), and Metis Employment Services, Region 3 (Calgary). As well, data and experience from the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prince Albert, was incorporated, although this site was not a formal part of the project, and was not a participant in the evaluation.

An advisory group (AG) of representatives of the funding and participating agencies and stakeholder groups was established. At this writing, the AG had met twice in Ottawa to review project plans and outcomes.

The evaluation was conducted using principles of participatory action research (PAR), incorporating on-site and online interviews and observations, surveys of various kinds (via telephone and e-mail), direct observations (on the part of the evaluators, the project manager, trainers, and participants), and records and reports generated by the ESPORT system.

Tentative findings of the project to date include the following:

- Usage of the system, though initially disappointing, rose steadily during the report period: at this time, a total of 12 sites in four provinces, 103 clients, and 51 facilitators have been involved in the project. ESPORT usage increased over 100% in the final quarter of 2005.

- Careers investigated by clients varied; the five most commonly appearing employment areas in the clients’ portfolios were: business, construction, clerk
(various), heritage and environmental, and nursery and greenhouse. Also included were health aide and health services, and retail.

- Facilitators reported that problems arose for many users over the time required (14 to 16 hours) to complete the ESPORT program. Suggestions for addressing this problem were offered, and are under investigation in the remainder of the project.

- Changes were made to the training process to make the training more effective in preparing facilitators to implement ESPORT with clients in their home programs. Training outcomes and experiences were evaluated regularly, and evolved continually as the project proceeded.

- Additional initiatives of opportunity were added to the project, as amendments were approved.

- Other modifications enhancing the project and addressing needs or opportunities included: a virtual community of practice, to link users and exploit their growing experience with ESPORT; revisions and enhancements to materials and contents of ESPORT as suggested by users, including addition of a spell-checker to the system; provision of a searchable EARAT database; development of a utility to permit downloading and transfer of client ESPORT records (providing ready mobility for users); refinements to the standalone version (for the Prince Albert Penitentiary); provision of a Helpdesk for users during business hours; and planning for a French version of the system.

- Questions about the future availability of PLATO, the computer-assisted learning program, were raised, and are subject to ongoing assessment.

This is the second interim report of the project; the final report will be available in fall 2006.
Project background and overview

Reporting history

This is the second interim report of the ESPORT project; the First Interim Report was produced in July 2005 (Fahy, 2005). A full description of the project’s origins and rationale, including an explanation for the evaluation methodology, is contained in the first report (available from the project manager). The following is a brief summary of pertinent background information from that report.

The ESPORT (Essential Skills Portfolio; initially, ESCORT) project formally commenced on October 17, 2004. The purpose of the project was described as follows:

The ESPORT Demonstration Project will evaluate, enhance, and promote an Internet-delivered, computer-mediated process designed to assist low-literate adults in choosing, qualifying for, and obtaining entry-level employment consistent with their interests and abilities. The project targets two of the groups identified in Knowledge Matters as sources of workers for the knowledge economy: youth and Aboriginal people, and a third group – displaced workers. ("Report to Advisors," November 7, 2004).
The project was to be conducted in four phases over the period October 2004 to May 2006. Participating programs, through funding provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), and the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada (AHRDCC), were to be located in Cape Breton, Newfoundland, and in selected aboriginal communities in the West (Calgary, Vancouver). (As described later in this report, other sites commenced use of ESPORT during this period. Though these sites were in some cases not formally part of the project, they provided additional evaluation opportunities and experiences. Where these non-project sites are referenced, they are identified, and a brief program description is provided.)

The project was originally to consist of four phases:

1. Phase 1 (October 2004 to March 2005): Concept refinement and project development
2. Phase 2 (October 2004 to April 2005): Preparation for implementation
4. Phase 4 (June 2005 to May 2006): Reporting and dissemination of results

An extension of the project was authorized in late 2005, allowing sites that had only lately commenced operations to be included in the evaluation, and extending the completion to summer 2006.

**Partners**

*Planning, funding partners.* The parties collaborating in the project consisted of the planning and funding partners, and the employment-related programs that provided facilitators (tutors, advisors) and clients (“Report to Advisors,” 2004). The collaborating parties comprised:

- Cummins EP Consulting, Inc. (CEP), Patrick Cummins, president.
- PLATO Learning (Canada), Inc., Grant Bishop, general manager.
- TVLT New Media Language, Inc., Rob McBride, president.
P. Fahy Consulting (PFC), Patrick J. Fahy, PhD, president and project lead evaluator.


Activoweb, Peter Merritt, principal consultant.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (HRSDC provided staff to oversee the project, and to the agency on the Advisory Committee.)

**Programming partners.** The partnering programs in which ESPORT was to be implemented and evaluated were chosen for their ability to provide an environment consistent with ESPORT’s objectives, staffed by skilled and experienced facilitators, and serving clients with needs and goals that might benefit from ESPORT’s presence.

ESPORT was intended to provide the following enhancements to the clients’ experiences:

- Evaluation, enhancement, and promotion of Internet-delivered, computer-mediated process that assists low-literate adults to qualify for and obtain entry-level employment consistent with their individual interests and abilities. (*Logical Framework Analysis*)

Each programming partner provided training opportunities for their facilitators, who then provided clients with guided access to ESPORT and to evaluation processes.

The participating programs were in centres where occupational guidance or training were regularly delivered to clients (these were called *local delivery agencies* [LDAs], in project planning documents). The original project identified three programming partners (from the *Proposal Template for Proponents [HRP 1.1.1]*):

1. **The Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council Of Canada (AHRDCC).** Working through strategic public and private sector partnerships, AHRDCC develops innovative employment solutions for Aboriginal people, with a mission to promote full participation of Aboriginal people in Canadian labour markets. Through partnerships with corporate,
educational, government, and aboriginal leaders, the Council pioneers ways to increase skills and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in Canada.

2. **The Cape Breton Education Consortium.** This is an umbrella group that represents employment service providers in the former industrial Cape Breton region. It is composed of the North Side Economic Development Assistance Corporation, the Glace Bay and Sidney YMCA, and the Horizon Achievement Centre. These organizations are funded through joint contracts with HRDC and the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services to provide employment counseling services and/or employment readiness services to individuals facing multiple barriers to employment.

3. **The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labor (NLFL).** This is the main umbrella organization for the labor movement in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a mandate to promote the interests of its affiliates, to generally advance the economic and social welfare of both unionized and non-unionized workers, and to advocate on behalf of workers and the general public areas such as economic development, social programs, equality, and human rights. The NLFL represents approximately 50,000 workers in 25 affiliated unions across the province, in both the public and private sectors.

An amendment to the project, with costs jointly shared by CEP Consulting and the funding agency, was approved in late 2005, allowing recruitment of a coordinator for distance delivery in Newfoundland and Labrador. Implementation in these sites was to commence early in 2006, extending for six months (unless extended).

4. **ACCESS group, Surrey, BC.** Consists of facilitators and staff from the Aboriginal Connections to Employment (ACE); the ACCESS Centre; Kla-how-eya Employment Services (KES); and the Native Education Centre (NEC). Programming commenced in the ACCESS group when training was conducted, July 26 – 28, 2005, at the Kla-how-eya Centre, as described below.
All sites were re-trained onsite December 2, 5, and 6, 2005, due to turnover among staff.

5. **Ottawa John Howard Society.** This site commenced with training on November 9, 2005. Initial training was on ESPORT only. Another innovation in the training was to have students accompany facilitators, so that the training could be specific to the needs and preferences of individuals, and to assure that at least one student was active in the program when the facilitator returned to his or her home program.

6. **Aboriginal Futures Career and Training Centre, Calgary.** Training was conducted afternoons during the period January 16 and 17, 2006, for four staff facilitators. Trainee facilitators were invited to include clients in the training, but declined for various reasons (see below).

7. **Metis Employment Services, Region 3, Calgary.** This site was trained mornings during January 16 and 17, 2006. Like Aboriginal Futures, above, these facilitators, though offered the opportunity, declined to include their clients in the training process.

*The Advisory Group.* The ESPORT Advisory Group (AG) comprised representatives of the programming, planning, and funding agencies, sufficiently knowledgeable about and interested in the project to provide review of and guidance on project decisions and outcomes. These individuals advised and supported ESPORT during its development, and received the reports and briefings for reflection and comment. The core members of this group were (“Report to Advisors,” 2004):

2. Bonnie Kennedy – Executive Director, Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment, Ottawa.

Other advisors who served on the Advisory Group included:

5. Patrick Cummins, project manager.

6. Trina Maher, Manager, Aboriginal Skills and Learning, AHRDCC, Ottawa representing Craig Hall.

7. Colleen Meloche, HRSDC, Ottawa.


9. Patrick J. Fahy, lead evaluator, and author of this report.

Originally, four meetings of the Advisory Group were planned: the first, in Ottawa, November 9, 2004, was held prior to project implementation, and looked particularly at the evaluation and communication plans. The second, during implementation, considered emerging formative recommendations of the evaluation (this meeting occurred December 12, 2005, in Ottawa). Others meetings were to be held as required in relation to significant findings, emerging questions or opportunities, or at the request of the Advisory Group itself.

The role of the Advisory Group was described as follows in the project’s Evaluation Plan:

The AG will be the initial source of guidance on the evaluation plan for this project. As part of the face-to-face meeting with the Advisory Group, work will begin on core elements of the Evaluation Framework, including development or review of such evaluation components as the following:

1. Persons to be involved.

2. Schedule of key events.

3. Philosophy guiding the project and the evaluation (proposed is PAR).

4. Specific objectives of the project and the evaluation.

5. Observation and data-gathering processes, and data to be gathered.
6. Communication plan, methods, and schedule.
7. Reflection and (re)planning processes.
8. Reports to be produced; vetting and dissemination process.

At the meeting of the Advisory Group in November 2004, the above was endorsed by the AG.

Evaluation process

Background to the model – participatory action research (PAR)

The evaluation of the project was based upon principles of participatory action research (PAR), described as follows (“Evaluation proposal: ESPORT Demonstration Project, Draft 5,” 2004):

PAR is a method of research where creating a positive social change is the predominant driving force. PAR grew out of social and educational research and exists today as one of the few research methods which embraces principles of participation and reflection, and empowerment and emancipation of groups seeking to improve their social situation (Seymour-Rolls & Hughes, 1998).

In PAR evaluations, the focus is on production of results useful to the participants in making better decisions about possible action. Meaningfulness and usefulness are the crucial criteria for judging PAR results; participants must be able to understand and use evaluation findings. Through reflection and dialogue – the opportunity to think and talk about the results – everyone concerned should have the opportunity to understand what is being discovered, and to express their views about its implications. The purpose of the evaluation was to assure that the project’s lessons were understood in a collaborative fashion, and that the project benefited from its discoveries.

An iterative process of observation, reflection, planning, and action was used to give all participants input into project development and implementation.

Data collection – principles and strategies. Various methods of collecting evaluation data were employed in the project, based on core PAR principles:
1. Anyone asked to participate in any evaluation activity could decline to participate, or could withdraw from any activity, at any time, without explanation, and without prejudice to their ongoing involvement.

2. Those wishing to remove themselves and/or their input from the study could do so at any time.

3. Any information collected during the evaluation process was kept completely confidential and secure at all times. No one who participated in the project was identified in any report or publication, unless they expressly agree or requested to be identified. Written permission was obtained from anyone for use of information which might identify them.

4. All information generated or data used during the evaluation was to be kept secure during the project, and destroyed at an agreed upon date after project end.

The principal data-gathering methods and strategies used in the evaluation included:

- **On-site or online interviews.** When feasible, the evaluators visited sites personally, to observe training events and to meet with and interview directly as many participants as possible. The evaluators also conducted interviews using various technologies (telephone, computer conferencing), or posted messages, surveys, or questions to participants electronically. The evaluators explained their intentions regarding any information generated by any of these methods.

- **Questionnaires, opinionnaires.** These surveys were administered in various forms, including face-to-face, oral or written, or electronic. Participants were asked to express their opinions, or describe their views or experiences, on these. Surveys were completed by an interviewer taking down the subject’s comments, or by the subject directly. At least one open-ended question permitted respondents to comment on any aspect of the project.
- **Direct observations.** Anyone involved in the project used visits as opportunities to observe activities at learning centres. Observations of interest were forwarded to the evaluators.

- **Records (system-generated and paper-based).** Program records of client activity, and personal, work-related, and academic histories, were accessed as available. Confidentiality was maintained in any such secondary use of these data (Medical Research Council of Canada, 2003). Any reports that resulted preserved the confidentiality of participants; no one other than the evaluators saw information containing personal information.

- **Document analysis.** The evaluators used reports and other documents that added useful information to the evaluation. Before any documents were used, names and other identifying information were removed, and any identifying information retained in the reports was kept strictly confidential.

**Role of the evaluation consultants**

The evaluation consultants were involved in various of tasks during the project, including:

1. Helping to identify and contact those who should be included in the evaluation.
2. Explaining the evaluation to those involved or interested in the project.
3. Assisting participants to express their views and articulate their suggestions about various questions the project was attempting to address.
4. Helping participants to communicate with each other, and monitoring the overall interaction process.
5. Summarizing the results of discussions for participants, and asking them to clarify or comment on any questions arising from the ongoing discussions and planning.
6. Monitoring progress toward answering important project questions; writing reports to summarize results regarding the project’s important questions.
7. Reporting the findings and conclusions reached by the project, and helping to make various identified stakeholders aware of the project’s results.

8. Consulting with project administrators regarding evaluation results and their implications for project planning and direction.

The overall goal of the evaluation was to help the participants to achieve their various goals for the project. The PAR model regards all participants as “researchers,” each playing a key role in the evaluation process, “including, but not limited to, [producing] information relevant to making decisions, judgments, comparisons, or goal attainment assessments” (Patton, 1975). All participants were asked to help make the evaluation successful (Masters, 1995). The evaluation consultants’ role was described as supporting the participants, especially in communications, data gathering and analysis, recordkeeping and monitoring, and reporting (including dissemination of results).

**Scope of the evaluation**

The questions initially identified for the evaluation appear in the *First Interim Report* (pp. 15 – 17). These questions defined the scope of the evaluation, as follows:

1. Participants: backgrounds, characteristics, histories, goals and objectives, barriers, views of the program.
2. Programs: enrolment, programming, counseling, and employment histories; relation of history to the ESPORT project.
3. Technology: used, success/adaptations, impact on the program.
4. Outcomes: sustainability, adaptation to ESPORT, community and learning impacts.

**Occasional Reports**

In order to help the project management monitor adoption and progress of the project, occasional reports were provided from time to time based on emerging data or conditions observed as part of the evaluation process. As noted in the *First Interim Report*, six Occasional Reports were produced from February to June 2005. In the period
July 1, 2005, to November 1, 2005, five more Occasional Reports were provided to the project management. Occasional reports were to brief project managers on situations or events considered significant for planning or the evaluation, clearly requiring intervention or attention, or meriting further exploration. The reports were quasi-confidential documents, intended for the use of management, rather than as project evaluation reports per se. Some of the observations or findings that were the subject of these reports might later have been included in other evaluation documents; if so, confidentiality was maintained regarding sources of the information reported.

**Overall chronology of the project**

Table 1 shows the major events of the evaluation process, during the period covered in this report (July 2005 – January 2006), in chronological order.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date, location</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 5, 2005</td>
<td>First ESPORT newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 7</td>
<td>Dates for ACCESS training set (July 27 – 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>Occasional Report #7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 27 – 29</td>
<td>Training, ACCESS program, Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 12</td>
<td>Occasional Report #8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 31</td>
<td>Occasional Report #9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Occasional Report #10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Occasional Report #11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Amendment to demonstration project agreement signed by Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Occasional Report #12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Spell-checker added to portfolio builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 26</td>
<td>Note from PC to Clahane, Bishop, re problems in Sydney accessing PLATO materials; request for meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Planning for John Howard Society, Ottawa, training and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 9</td>
<td>Training, John Howard Society, Hire Power group, Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Question from Cape Breton (C. MacLellan) re suspension of Canadian PLATO operations; referred to P. Cummins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
<td><em>Readiness questionnaire</em> sent to Hire Power group, John Howard Society, Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>Training, John Howard Society, literacy group, Ottawa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>ESPORT announces (Newsletter) that PLATO (Canada) has closed its offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 22</td>
<td><em>Readiness questionnaire</em> sent to literacy group, John Howard Society, Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>Occasional Report #13; <em>Facilitator and Client Surveys</em> sent by e-mail (Attachments 5 – 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>TEC authorized to upgrade RAM at CEP expense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2, 5, 6</td>
<td>Retraining of ACCESS facilitators, Vancouver, due to staff turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>Meeting, London, WIL program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>Cut-off for <em>Facilitator and Client Surveys</em> Meeting, Vancouver, with SUCCESS programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>Advisory committee meeting, Ottawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 16-17, 2006</td>
<td>Training, evaluator site visit, Calgary: Metis Employment Services, Region 3, and Aboriginal Futures Career and Training Centre sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 18 – 27</td>
<td>Survey, student completion problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Occasional Report #14 – follow-up on new Calgary sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>Draft Interim Report #2 submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>Interim Report #2 released</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project evolution

Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prince Albert

This initiative, which was not part of the core project, commenced in early 2005. The major findings of the implementation were reported by the project coordinator and on-site instructor-facilitator. Salient findings from this implementation are presented below.

John Howard Society, Ottawa

In summer 2005, the opportunity to offer ESPORT to clients of this agency arose. Two programs, one for literacy clients and another career preparation (“Hire Power”) were involved. As with the Saskatchewan Penitentiary site, these clients and programs were deemed comparable to those in the project, so relevant findings will be included here and in future reports.

Virtual community initiative

After the April 27, 2005, meeting, in Ottawa, at which the virtual community (VC) initiative commenced, Mark Wallace continued to coordinate the program. Five objectives were set for participants who join the VC:

1. Greater understanding of the whole project, not just one’s own role.
2. Less need to use [the project manager] as chief conduit for information, when it may be more efficient to communicate directly with team members.
3. More opportunities for synergy through increased project awareness and increased interpersonal contact.
4. Chance to work towards the development of a corporate identity/vision.
5. By encouraging the options and feedback of all ESPORT members, a greater sense of ownership and pride in the project and its products.
As noted, the *First Interim Report* contains information about results of the project to June 30, 2005. The following describes outcomes in the period July 2005 to January 2006.

**Client commencements and activity**

Client commencement in the ESPORT program, and completion of ESPORT elements, grew steadily as the project matured. Figure 1 shows the growth in the number of clients participating the demonstration project who commenced ESPORT from February 2005 to January 2006:

![ESPORT registrations graph](image)

Figure 1: Growth in “total learners” (clients) over twelve months (February 2005 to January 2006).

Table 2 shows the geographic distribution of demonstration project clients across Canada, as of January 20, 2006.
Table 2: Total clients by province, to January 20, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of demonstration project sites, by province, is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Total project sites, by province (January 20, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall growth was accompanied by activity in all elements of the ESPORT program. Table 4 shows changes in the ESPORT activities in which clients were engaged, over the twelve-month period from project commencement (February 2005) to January 20, 2006.

Table 4: Client completion of ESPORT elements, February 28, 2005, to January 20, 2006

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InterOptions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Plan(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total learners</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facilitators were trained (and re-trained) regularly as part of the demonstration project. Table 5 shows the number of trained ESPORT facilitators in place in participating provinces as of January 20, 2006.
Table 5: Total project facilitators trained, by geographic location, to January 20, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, Table 6 shows ESPORT activity levels for all sites and all presently trained facilitators, as of January 27, 2006. (Note that all facilitators are not presently active; the re-training reflected in the totals shown in Table 5 was often required by facilitator turn-over at these sites.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site / Facilitator</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Self-Assessment</th>
<th>Learning plan</th>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brandon</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Candy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cori</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Donna</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fred</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jackie</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jolene</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Loma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shannon McC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shannon McM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tonya</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape – TEC</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Charlie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gina</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Derek</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jenny</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marie</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Michelle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape – GB-YMCA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape – Hire Power</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHS – Hire Power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Deborah</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Abdul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jamie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Justin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ken</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lydia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Melanie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Neally</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rhea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metis Employment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tessie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Caroline</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Futures</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jami</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jack</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project totals</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of ESPORT elements: Indicators of career interests

As clients worked with ESPORT, their portfolios, and the investigations they undertook in producing the portfolios, showed the careers of most interest to them. Table 7 shows the titles of the careers which were most often accessed by clients. (Note that these data reflect all users of ESPORT during this time period, not only those in the demonstration project.)

Table 7: Frequency of careers included in all clients’ portfolios (as of January 20, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Owner-Operators</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Clerks</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Interpreters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Operators</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Protective Service Occupations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Related Clerks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparel Production Supervisors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Operators</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By-law Enforcement and Other Regulatory Officers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Clerks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Equipment Operators (Except Crane)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image, Social and Other Personal Consultants</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil and Gas Well Drilling Workers and Services Operators</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Control Technicians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale Trade (Non-Technical)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Pre-production Technicians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events Co-ordinators and Special Events Managers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another measure of career interest was the learning plans produced by clients. Table 8 shows the careers most often found in clients’ the learning plans.
Table 8: Careers most often included in clients' *learning plans* (as of January 20, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Clerks</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Owner-Operators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery and Greenhouse Workers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events Co-ordinators and Special Events Managers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By-law Enforcement and Other Regulatory Officers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Operators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judging the basis for (and thus the potential soundness or plausibility of) clients’ career interests and choices requires information on the processes involved in making these choices, especially how often clients examined the career information available in ESPORT. In Table 8, above, the column marked “views” indicates the number of page views of specific careers examined by clients, since these data began being tracked (December 2005).

Interpreting the above data is easier with the following, showing those careers in ESPORT that, overall, were viewed most often over this same period. The total number of views in the period of interest here (December 27, 2005, to January 20, 2006) was 1968. The two careers from Table 8 that were among the most commonly accessed overall are shown in bold in Table 9.

Table 9: Most commonly viewed careers (as of January 20, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting and Related Clerks</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Interpreters</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources Managers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Aides, Orderlies, and Patient Service Associates</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Counselors</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Business Owner-Operators</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.8%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Educator Assistants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the terms used by clients in their free searches of the career database also provide insight into the employment areas attractive to clients. Table 10 shows the terms most often typed into the search utility by clients to find career information, during the period December 27, 2005, to January 20, 2006.

Table 10: Most commonly used client-generated search terms, December 2005 to January 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client-generated career search term</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Health service</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data suggests some observations about how clients used ESPORT to generated information about possible careers, and the careers they were interested in pursuing:

- ESPORT activity levels increased steadily over the 12-month term observed, especially since November 2005. In the period September 2005 to January 2006, activity levels increased 224% (Figure 1; Tables 4 and 6).
- Clients in the demonstration project were generally evenly distributed geographically (Table 2).
- Over fifty facilitators were trained during this period (Table 5). While not all of them continue to be active in the project (indeed, part of the reason for re-training, and for this high number of trainees, was turn-over among facilitators), nevertheless, this number suggests that the objective of cultivating a community of practice is realistic.
Clients showed interest in a wide range of careers (Tables 7 to 10). The viability and feasibility of these, in terms of their personal qualifications and actual employment opportunities, remain to be investigated.

Careers that showed special appeal for ESPORT clients overall included construction, retail, health, fishing, and food services.

**Client and Facilitator surveys**

In order to assess attitudes toward ESPORT, and experiences of clients and facilitators, a survey was sent out by e-mail on November 27, 2005 (Attachment 5). The surveys were intended to answer the following questions:

**Client survey:**
1. What is the client’s overall impression of ESPORT?
2. Specifically, what ESPORT elements are viewed as helpful?
3. What are the clients’ goals related to ESPORT and other services and resources?
4. Other comments.

**Facilitator survey:**
1. What problems or successes have emerged with ESPORT for clients, from view of facilitators?
2. What requests do facilitators have for further information, assistance, or resources for themselves?

The surveys were sent with a cover letter that asked for assistance from the local facilitator in completing the survey, and asking clients to complete theirs. A total of 13 surveys were returned from the three sites, as shown in Table 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Clients</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS – Vancouver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JHS – Ottawa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Breton</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of the survey were as follows (see Attachments 8 and 9, and bear in mind the small number of participants overall, especially the clients):

- Both clients and facilitators rated their experiences positively (the mean rating for clients was 3.32, for facilitators 3.12, where 4 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).
- The two groups generally agreed with each other in their ratings: the Spearman \( \rho \) correlation was .35, an indication of a “moderate” level of correlation.
- On five items, clients and facilitators differed by 5 rankings or more (see Attachment 8), even though both groups were positive (i.e., mean values greater than 2.5, indicating results skewed to the agree-strongly agree end of the Likert scale). Though both were positive, facilitators were more likely than clients to believe that:
  - Clients would use their ESPORT portfolio when looking for a job (item 15).
  - Clients knew their potential occupational skills better after using ESPORT (item 14).
  - Clients found the portfolio builder useful.
- Clients were more likely than facilitators to believe that:
  - They would like to use ESPORT more (item 5).
  - They found the self-assessment tool useful (item 9).

While there was a difference in ranking, it is important to emphasize that both groups were positive about the above elements, as shown in Attachment 9: clients agreed that the self-assessment tool was useful (Likert value = 3.0, where 3 meant agree); facilitators rated this item (item 9) 3.14. The ratings for more use of ESPORT (item 5) were 3.0 and 3.3, respectively, for clients and facilitators.
The overall conclusion from this brief survey was that both clients and facilitators saw the value in ESPORT in relation to their career development, and tended to see most aspects of ESPORT use in the same light.

Though not a formal part of the project, the Sask Pen experience illustrates results achievable when facilitators are committed and clients spend the time required to complete the program. According to a letter received from the Sask Pen facilitator, of 42 referrals received since September 2005, 26 had been processed, 4 had been unable or unwilling to participate, six had completed, and six more were still working on the program. The facilitator reported that she had provided information sessions to the inmate, and that self-referrals had resulted (Attachment 3).

**ESPORT completion rates**

Early in the project, it was apparent that many clients were commencing but not completing ESPORT. The reasons for this became a focus of this phase of the evaluation, and investigations of this phenomenon will continue in the final phase of the project.

To examine the phenomenon of non-completion, a question was put to local coordinators in the sites with sufficient ESPORT history to have an opinion (Attachment 4). The question that was put to each participant was:

*We’re seeing, at pretty well all of our sites, that a certain number of clients are getting started - creating an account and getting through the early stages like the interest inventory - but they aren’t “finishing” the process and walking out with a training plan. So what I’d like to hear from you is why you think this might be happening….*

Two individuals with positions of authority and perspective in multi-site programs responded. The reasons given by them for non-completion included:

- Program is still attempting to identify appropriate clients for ESPORT.
- Present clients, of various ages and backgrounds, find ESPORT interesting, but are not motivated to address skills deficits systematically with a Learning Plan.
Many of current users are not at entry levels; therefore, do not see ESPORT as offering relevant employment assistance.

Technical problems in some sites have discouraged use.

Turn-over has required re-training of facilitators; re-training was also useful to address “rusty” ESPORT skills among previously trained facilitators.

Re-training that was completed [in fall 2005] was helpful, and resulted in more use of ESPORT.

When they become busy, facilitators tend to resort to traditional methods of handling clients (use of ESPORT declines).

Attempts to use PLATO with ESPORT have regularly encountered technical problems that constituted “a nuisance.”

A facilitator, experienced with ESPORT but without administrative responsibilities added the following comments:

Facilitators need to learn enough about ESPORT to be able to describe its components and its potential usefulness accurately to clients. Immediately after initial training, facilitators may not have a good enough grasp of ESPORT to do this well. Follow-up training, and the use of the virtual community, could provide information and additional confidence to facilitators for this task.

Clients who are involved in extended upgrading or skill-training programs might find it easier to access ESPORT in stages. Some ESPORT activities are useful early in a counseling and upgrading program, while others are more relevant after some other experiences have been successfully completed. At all stages, concrete results of activities (printed copies, an evolving file of findings or discoveries) should be compiled and made freely available to the client.

While the decision about what to present, and when, should be made on the basis of individual client needs, characteristics, and preferences, but facilitators should entertain the possibility of pacing clients through ESPORT
along with, and in relation to, any other activities in which they might be engaged.

Evidence from Sask Pen indicated that average time for completion of the ESPORT among the inmates involved was 3 to 4.5 hours, and that the record time for completion was 1.5 hours. Another observation of interest from this site was that preparation and previous education was a factor; the facilitator wrote, “I have found that the more computer literate and high functioning the offender is, the shorter the time it takes to complete ESPORT.”

While completion rates will be a priority of the evaluation during the rest of the project, and completion levels will be monitored and updated in the final report, it should be recognized that non-completion may be viewed as complex, representing various realities, and not simply a sign of a failure of the program. It is well known that most adult learners, even if low-functioning, prefer learning situations that allow them to exercise some choice and self-direction, and are motivated by their (real-world) priorities and goals (Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1978, 1981), and tend to look for immediate applications of new learning. It may be that some non-completers have gained enough from the program without finishing it, that other priorities have emerged or become pressing, or that new opportunities have presented themselves. (Non-completion is not de facto evidence of failure of either the program or the client.)

The experiences of clients, completers and, as possible, non-completers, will be examined to attempt to address this question.

**Status – project and non-project elements**

_Cape Breton status report_

Since the initial training workshop (January 18 – 21, 2005), activity in Cape Breton has been low, except for the Entrepreneurial Centre (TEC; see Table 6). Several Occasional Reports have chronicled activity levels, but it was report #12 (October 20, 2005) that resulted in the identification of several factors that have suppressed usage of
ESPORT in these sites. Specifically, the following were cited as problems in the Cape Breton:

- The interface between ESPORT and PLATO was deemed not friendly enough, especially for facilitators who had not used the system immediately after training. (Some of the reported “technical problems” were, it was suspected, actually instances of staff being unable to remember how to use the system, due to a lack of practice after training.)

- CHOICES, a career counseling tool familiar to facilitators in these sites, was deemed more attractive by some, because it was seen as simpler, was already in place, and was familiar to facilitators and administrators.

- ESPORT and PLATO use were initially tied to one another; use of one entailed use of the other, with ESPORT preceding PLATO. (PLATO was used in the training plan phase of the portfolio development process, to address academic skills deficiencies detected in the self-assessment.) The Cape Breton informant (from TEC; i.e., the largest ESPORT user site in the Cape) suggested that clients be permitted to use PLATO first, if they or their counselor chose, in order to gain trust and understanding of and enthusiasm for the system. At that point, ESPORT could be introduced.

- A time-lag between enrolment and appearance of accessible lessons was reported. This lag prevented clients from entering and using the ESPORT system immediately after registration. Facilitators were not advised of the reason for the lag, and were not able to advise clients of how long they would have to wait before accessing the system, with consequent negative impact on motivation.

- Some technical issues continue to exist for some sites in this region. While many of the issues have been addressed, some facilitators have formed a negative impression of ESPORT from earlier experiences, which the regional spokesman believes are hampering further use. Project management is
aware of this, and is considering whether the situation is remediable in the
time remaining for the project.

- Immediately after training, HRSDC in the Cape notified programs under its
jurisdiction that they were not authorized to be involved in the project. This
instance of poor articulation between the local and national offices had
profound implications for the initial implementation of ESPORT in this area.

Despite these difficulties, one Cape Breton site (TEC) continued to make regular
use of the system, both ESPORT and PLATO, and continued to supply feedback and
suggestions for improvement to procedures and technologies. This site was also
creative in applying the system to other client groups (such as students of the local high
school, enrolled in the Physical Active Living (PAL) program).

ACCESS sites, Vancouver

Three sites were trained July 27 – 29, 2005, as part of the ACCESS initiative. The
three sites were Aboriginal Connections to Employment (ACE); Kla-how-eya
Employment Services (KES); and the Native Education Centre (NEC). A total of eleven
facilitators and administrators were eligible for training; six actually took the full three
days of training, and all participated in the follow-up readiness survey.

The readiness survey was conducted within a week of completion of the training
(Occasional Report #9; see Table 13, Attachment 5). In their remarks, three of the six
facilitators who responded mentioned that time pressure had reduced their immediate
use of ESPORT. Two other respondents made recommendations about the system: one
mentioned that the language/reading levels of some parts of the program could prove
challenging to some clients; another suggested that program administrators should
“provide a push so that we can get started soon after training, so we don’t lose our
knowledge’; and the third wondered whether clients would be able to separate specific
occupations used as examples in ESPORT, from their own actual career interests and
expectations. (This last point refers to the fact that ESPORT uses examples, such as
babysitting, which many clients have experience with, to illustrate potential job skills
arising from previous work experience. ESPORT explains that “A babysitter interacts
with several people at once and takes into account their individual needs...,” to cue the
client to the skill contained in this experience. One facilitator voiced her concern: “In
their mind, they may think, ‘I don’t want to be a babysitter.’ Although it may sound
silly, this is really how some of our clients may take it.”

As of this report, usage of ESPORT at these sites is as shown in Table 6.

**Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prince Albert**

The Saskatchewan Penitentiary (Sask Pen) was not an official part of the ESPORT
demonstration project, but was undertaken when interest was shown by Corrections
Canada, and qualified clients and facilitators were identified at the penitentiary site.

Costs of this implementation are shared between Corrections Canada and CEP
Consulting, Inc. (Sask Pen uses only ESPORT, not PLATO, due to the priority of making
the implementation easier to establish and support, and in the interest of simplifying
training.)

Initially, this implementation experienced several problems:

- None of those initially training ultimately took part in the implementation.
- Technical problems arose in the initial local area network (LAN)
  implementation.
- Hardware problems required the building and installation of a second server.
- Regional Corrections Canada technical staff had to be oriented to support
  requirements of ESPORT.
- There was some initial adjustments to ESPORT, as an innovation, on the part
  of facilitators and Sask Pen senior officials.

Once problems were resolved, the experience at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary
became very positive, and the site continues to provide useful feedback on ESPORT as a
tool for helping clients reflect on and understand the character of their work
experiences. Attachments 1 and 3 contain descriptions from earlier in the
The implementation of client outcomes using ESPORT. The major points reported by users in the corrections setting include:

- Clients require guidance, some throughout the process, with ESPORT.
- Clients frequently discount or fail to appreciate the occupational significance of their previous employment and life experiences.
- The counselor working with a client using ESPORT requires patience; a non-threatening environment of trust enhances ESPORT’s positive effects.
- The ESPORT resume is quite acceptable to industry; however, a client lacking expected credentials, especially a high school diploma, would be less likely to get an interview, even with a positive resume.
- Client experience and familiarity with the computer is important.
- Information generated by ESPORT aids the counseling process. The resume is very helpful in clarifying assumptions and detailing the client’s employment and skill-training history.
- With ESPORT, goal setting is more realistic, and skills (and skills deficits) are clearer and better linked related to occupational goals.

In early 2006, a updated report of usage at Sask Pen was received from the on-site facilitator. According to this report, 42 referrals had been received for ESPORT since September 2005, of which 30 had been processed. Results were noted in the “Project Outcomes” section, above. Overall, Sask Pen rates their experience with ESPORT as “very positive.” ESPORT continues to be tested at Sask Pen, and as results are pertinent to this evaluation, they will continue to be reported.

John Howard Society, Ottawa

This site, like the Saskatchewan Penitentiary, Prince Albert, is not an official part of the ESPORT demonstration project. (Costs, which have been minimal, are borne by CEP Consulting.) The project commenced with two training groups, the employment-focused group (Hire Power; trained November 9) and the literacy group (training November 16). The Hire Power group consisted of nine persons, including 2 clients, and
a student intern; the literacy group also consisted of nine, including 4 facilitators and 5 clients.

As noted earlier, an innovation in training for this group was the presence of clients (students) in the training sessions, accompanying their facilitators (instructors). The clients and facilitators proceed through the training together, and problem solve as necessary together as part of the process. PLATO was not introduced with ESPORT at this site, to permit greater focus in the training; PLATO will be introduced later, if appropriate and feasible.

As part of the training, this group was asked to describe their goals for the training session, and for ESPORT. Responses included the following:

Facilitator: I would like to become more familiar with the program itself and the administration of it so I can use the results to help my clients progress to meet both short-term and long-term goals.

Administrator: to familiarize myself with ESPORT and how best to administer and facilitate the program.

Facilitator/site administrator: gain more knowledge about ESPORT. Be familiar enough with the program to answer clients’ questions and provide guidance and support on ESPORT.

Facilitator: to learn about a new assessment tool for clients that provides easy to understand, useful information to help clients to make education/training/career decisions.

Facilitator, administrator: 1) like to see how this tool can be used in group settings; 2) is it workshop friendly?; 3) how can we expand its use -- can we use it for computer training, self-esteem building?

Client: I hope to learn today about new job-search strategies and possible career change advice.

Facilitator: As a social service worker … I wanted to gain as much knowledge as possible on this field placement. I think attending this program will allow me to be as updated as possible as I enter into the work world in this career.
Client: I would like to find out what different skills I actually have and different job search engines.

This question had not been asked of previous trainees, so comparisons are not possible, but the tenor of the comments indicated a positive view of ESPORT, and a clear conception of its purposes.

Other comments of this group included the following (received at various points in the training, in response to invitations to comment on the training, or to make suggestions about ESPORT):

Facilitator: I had already bought in because I had worked with it before today. Now I want to get one or two counselors on board (at another John Howard Society). They will like the Authentic Materials. People have their favourites, but one-stop shopping means this is the best. Other systems are all based on interest. This has everything in place. You don’t have to go to other sites. Great time saver. Information is at your fingertips.

Site administrator: Getting people started is challenging. Introducing people to the first steps. Doing the training in a group is distracting.

Client: Great. One-stop shopping. Gender friendly, age friendly. Gives great suggestions that you wouldn’t think of. Resume gives ideas.

Facilitator: Liked the way everything was connected. Break into occupation, then showed tasks. Didn’t have to go to NOC. You have a “cheat sheet” for when you go to the interview. Liked the way each job gets its own portfolio.

Facilitator, program manager: Love the learning – adult learning. Learning by doing. Fun to see others see the possibilities. Young people will come.

Facilitator: [Client’s] reaction was positive. Interest Inventory made sense. The innovative part is like… gave examples, make connections.

Client: A lot easier for me to compare life experience. It’s right there in front of me. A lot easier because of this.
The literacy group, as would be expected, had specific comments about the reading and literacy demands of the system. The goals and objectives included the following (the comment indicated was from a client):

- To learn how to use ESPORT in order to help clients achieve the best benefits for finding a job, etc.
- To understand how ESPORT will enhance the organizational and work-related skills of clients. How can clients use ESPORT to their advantage?
  - Client: To learn how the program will teach me how to work the skills to find a job.
- To see how ESPORT works and how it is better than other ways of finding a career.
- To learn how to use ESPORT will be able to benefit clients and aid them in searching for a career with the skills they may already have or be currently learning.

Their comments, taken after their training, included the following suggestions about the training and about ESPORT.

**Suggestions for improvement of ESPORT:**

- Too wordy – watch level of comprehension.
- Bullet points. Fewer words.
- Need a file for everybody.
- Make the button for Print Format more obvious.
- Too much reading.
- Tasks (in assessment) are okay, but they should be mixed up as to difficulty.
- Reading about tasks – How can I know if I can do that job if I’ve never tried to do it? (Need to interpret the skills for the job. Generalize.)
- I tried to project myself into that job.
- Break in the middle.
- Maybe a two-hour initial training session is too long for some clients.
• Make sure clients each has an email address before the session.
• The information needs to be condensed. You must say the most with the fewest number of words, or else the clients will not bother to complete the questionnaires.

**Comments on logistics of training:**

• How to deal with two people sitting around one computer.
• Make sure printer is connected and running.
• Want paper copies. (Clients can highlight useful things.)
• Don’t want this to be lost.

**General Comments:**

• More jobs that I didn’t know I was interested in, that I am interested in now.
• Choose opportunities. Hopefully, I will look more.
• First part gives us a direction to work on.
• [Client] Takes too long.

The trainer noted that the Literacy Coordinator made up files of each client’s work, which could be useful in other parts of their programs (i.e., for portfolio assessment by counselors). Also, by the end of the training consensus developed that three 1.5 hour sessions may be better than two 2-hour sessions, as clients began to get restless towards the end. Finally, it was concluded that having clients attend the training with their counselor/facilitators was a help to both, and made the training more effective.

Within a week of completion of the training, a readiness survey was conducted with the John Howard participants. The results are shown in Table 11, Attachment 5. The table and the attachment show that the Ottawa John Howard trainees differed from the other two previous training sites in various ways.

The Ottawa John Howard trainees were more confident about:

• Explaining ESPORT to clients (1).
• Showing ESPORT to clients (2).
The Ottawa John Howard trainees were less confident about:

1. Recognizing outcomes or findings important to the evaluation (8).
2. Contacting the project’s evaluators (11).

The Cape Breton trainees were more confident about:

1. Explaining the evaluation model (PAR) to clients (5).

The ACCESS (Vancouver) trainees were more confident about:

1. Contacting the project administrator when necessary (9).

Some of the above results were unsurprising: the Cape Breton group had an extensive (too extensive, it was later concluded; this aspect of the orientation was dramatically shortened in subsequent training) orientation to the purpose and processes of the evaluation); JHS trainees had only a minimal introduction to the evaluation, and had not met the evaluators in person, at the time of the survey. The finding that JHS trainees also felt more confident explaining and showing ESPORT to clients was gratifying, as this was exactly the purpose in removing some other content from the initial training, as described above. These results suggest that the objective of refining the focus of the initial orientation was achieved in the Ottawa training.

Aboriginal Futures and Metis Employment Societies, Alberta

In January 2006, these two Calgary-based organizations were trained and commenced ESPORT operations, Aboriginal Futures Career and Training Centre, and Metis Employment Services. As of this writing, the programs have only begun use of ESPORT. Information about their results will be provided in the final report.

The following points, raised with the evaluator and the project manager (who were present) immediately after training had been completed, were recorded:

**Cautions and questioning comments**

1. The time commitment appears significant.
2. Some materials would be more useful if they could be printed out; some of these, it was noted, can be printed, and further instruction was promised to train users how to do this.
3. The training had presented a large amount of information, which would need to be absorbed and digested by staff before they would feel truly comfortable with the ESPORT system.

4. Clients would need quiet and privacy to work through all the elements of the program conscientiously; this might be challenging, especially at busy times of the day.

5. There were some typos in the materials.

6. The ESPORT print diagram in the training materials no longer matches the diagram of activity on the ESPORT screen.

7. Clients will still need the assistance of the facilitator to polish their resumes, prepare for interviews.

8. Lack of suitable hardware may limit use; hardware has been ordered but has not yet arrived; existing hardware is heavily used, and is not available for the sole use of clients in this project.

9. Facilitators must help clients when none of the jobs generated by ESPORT match clients’ expectations or interests.

Positive comments

1. The format of the resumes made them stand out well, would probably positively distinguish ESPORT users from other applicants.

2. Experience of completing the self-assessment demonstrates to clients that they have skills and relevant experience for future employment; often, this is a surprise to them, and is encouraging.

3. The process is a systematic career planning tool, with good potential to help clients identify their skills, and to help facilitators provide effective advice.

5. Process seems positive: clients do not need another negative experience, or more proof of their deficiencies; ESPORT appears to emphasize and demonstrate the positive.

6. While other tools and packages exist that do many of the things that ESPORT does, ESPORT is a package, is accessible over the Web, and is integrated, to help clients work on their own, and over time, when facilitators are not present.

7. Working with ESPORT output, facilitators can help clients see the application of their previous work histories to their future possibilities; should also make counseling further education or training easier.

8. ESPORT appears more friendly and useful for low-level clients than CHOICES, or some of the other materials currently in use. (ESPORT should allow counselors to advise clients they formerly referred elsewhere, due to lack of suitable materials.)

9. As familiarity increases, potential usefulness also increases; further experience with ESPORT will be needed to truly test it.

The progress of these two sites will be reported in the final report. They will be asked to complete the Readiness Survey, as the other sites have done.

Project initiatives

Virtual community

Background. In April 2005, WERC (Mark Wallace) conducted preliminary research on Communities of Practice. Mark organized a meeting of ESPORT team members in Ottawa, some of whom had been working together for years, but had never met in person.

The primary initial objective of the meeting was to develop a Community of Practice for ESPORT team members, to improve communication about the project, and to bypass the need for using Patrick Cummins as the conduit of all work-related communication. With the lessons learned from the ESPORT team, it was planned that a
Community of Practice would be introduced to the facilitators, and eventually to the learners as well.

A community system was implemented, using the Yahoo Groups website. This allowed the entire ESPORT team to be contacted via one e-mail, and provided an accessible archive of all messages. The project manager began using the Yahoo function to send out weekly digests about the ESPORT project, which greatly aided the sense of community.

There were several successes with using the Yahoo Groups, and also some less successful areas. The successes included an increase in information about the ESPORT project being circulated to all team members. When working from virtual offices as part of a large project, it can be difficult to get an overall picture of the work, as one tends to get focused on one’s own contributions and little else. With greater awareness of issues facing the project, and of individuals’ roles within the project, team members began to offer assistance to other members where possible.

Other strengths of the Yahoo group are the aforementioned Update Digests, sent out by the project manager. The use of one email to reach everyone has also been used when urgent questions needed to be answered. Mark Wallace works to follow up on any such questions that come in, ensuring that appropriate team members are providing answers.

One of the initial difficulties with the Yahoo group was that there was minimal buy-in to signing up and using the system by some ESPORT team members. The core members were all on-board, but there was a slow or non-existent response from some of the PLATO members. This was likely due to their need to respond to the demands of their full-time work with PLATO, but despite repeated attempts to establish these members as part of the community, success was limited.

As of February 2006, PLATO’s employees are no longer part of the ESPORT group; however, their Canadian representatives are part of the community. Given ESPORT’s new “arms-length” relationship with PLATO, there is greater autonomy, enabling the Yahoo Group to work with greater involvement than it ever has. Team
communication is at an all-time-high. The ESPORT team now works together freely
without the need to use the project manager constantly as the chief conduit. With
Patrick’s continued Update Digests, the team is kept informed of big-picture issues
regarding the ongoing developments of ESPORT.

The decision was made fairly early in the process not to attempt to implement
the Community of Practice with facilitators until later. Their requirements to use and
understand ESPORT, and then to understand PLATO, were considered priorities,
without burdening them with another website to visit and use. One key discovery
through the project member’s Community of Practice is that there needs to be enough
people using the site regularly in order for the community to develop. At the same time,
there needs to be a compelling reason to use the site regularly. These findings will be
invaluable when we proceed with designing and introducing a Community of Practice
for facilitators.

Helpdesk. WERC receives any queries that are made by facilitators or interested
visitors, and either responds to them or forwards them to the appropriate party who can
answer the question. This process has been ongoing since April 2005, and has resulted
in development and refining of a standard downloadable Help document that is now
published on the ESPORT site.

Updating the database. The original ESPORT database only contained the
Essential Skills that were measured by a specific complexity level. As ESPORT has
expanded, the decision was made to update the database to include all possible Essential
Skills, so that clients have an accurate picture of the requirements of their chosen
occupation. The following Skills were added: Working With Others, Significant Use of
Memory, Additional Information, Continuous Learning.

In the process of conducting this update, it was discovered that many of the
HRSD Profiles had changed since the ESPORT database was first built. Some Profiles
were no longer listed, and many had been renamed. WERC proceeded to make changes
to the database and corresponding materials to reflect the changes on the HRSD website.
In addition, 26 new Profiles were added to the ESPORT databases, and several of the older Profiles were updated to reflect the way they have been aligned with PLATO courseware. An additional 20 Profiles are forthcoming from HRSD. The first 26 have been prepared and coded for alignment into PLATO. Upon receiving finalized versions of the new Profiles, they will be added into ESPORT as well.

All new and revised Profiles have been matched with InterOptions occupations, and the new Essential Skill of Critical Thinking has also been added to the new Profiles on the database. Critical Thinking has been aligned with PLATO courseware, wherever such articulation is possible. The result of this work is that ESPORT’s databases are accurately reflecting the detail of the HRSD Profiles.

Learning materials

The following is a summary of activities related to the ESPORT system itself, including software changes and linkages to other resources.

HRSDC Authentic Materials. The learning materials comprising the HRSDC Authentic Materials have been recreated on the host server allowing the content to be made available from ESPORT. This removes the risk of “file not found” errors that tend to occur when relying on content that is managed by an external site. There have been instances where the external site has undergone revisions that impacted the file directory structure causing the database pointers to become outdated and that content data to be suddenly unavailable. The information is now stored entirely on the ESPORT site.

Example:


Clients are also able to search for Authentic Materials by skill type category, and may also use an optional complexity level filter to narrow the results even further. This enables a user to access materials that focus on a particular skill type and skill level, regardless of a restriction of trade.
Job Futures. Job Futures is a career tool to help clients plan for their future. It provides the following useful information about the various occupational groups.

- AT WORK (General Information)
  - What They Do
  - Where They Find Work — Top Occupational Areas
  - Some Related Occupation(s)

- EDUCATION, TRAINING, & EXPERIENCE
  - What You Need
  - Required/Related - Educational Programs*

- WORK PROSPECTS
  - Current Conditions (example Poor-Very good, etc.)

- IMPORTANT FACTS
  - Wages
  - Part-Time/Full-Time (employment percentages)
  - Demographic Statistical Information (men/women)

The information within the Job Futures module has also been recreated on the host server, allowing the content to be made available directly from ESPORT. This again eliminates the errors due to missing files that tend to occur when simply using links to an external website. Clients have access to print versions for an easy-to-print information sheet. A quick link to the skill requirements is also available on each display of Job Futures for a trade.

Choose occupation (additional profiles). ESPORT has included an additional 70 occupation titles with descriptions and skill requirements for each. Skill and job task requirements for a small set of occupations remain missing, and will be included when the information becomes available.

The inclusion of the trade profiles has enabled ESPORT to broaden the data available in the set of occupation titles that exists within the Interest Inventory section. There are over 800 trade titles in the Interest inventory section compared to 237 that exist in the Choose Occupation section. This has been a challenge to integrate, as the trades in
the Interest Inventory are very specific in nature, whereas the trade titles in Choose
Occupation tend to represent a general grouping. Please see the following example for
an illustration:

Table: Choose Occupation

| Plastic Products Assemblers, Finishers and Inspectors |

Table: Interest inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern of interest code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Products Assembler or Finisher (Moi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plastic Products Inspector (OMi)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trades within the Interest Inventory are assigned to the closest match to the
entry in the Choose Occupation set. In the above example you will notice that the more
specific trades differ in pattern of interest code.

Many trades in the Interest Inventory have no matches. This is mostly due to a
much higher skill level existing beyond the scope of ESPORT. This unfortunately results
in the occasional instance where a client completing the Interest Inventory questionnaire
achieves a pattern of interest code that contains very few matches of trades according to
the individual’s interests. If all occupations are included, it causes a type of disconnect
between the details available for a user in terms of skills and interests. The following
information would not be available: Skill requirements, job task requirements, Job
Futures, etc.

There has been a tuning of the content display to ensure information for a
particular trade is accessible with ease. The following links to supplemental information
are available on each occupation detail page:

- JOB FUTURES
- PRINT VERSION
- AUTHENTIC MATERIALS
- SKILLS SUMMARY ANALYSIS
- EARAT

The screenshot below (Figure 2) illustrates a typical Skills Summary Analysis.

This allows a client to quickly identify the skills that they need to improve to reach the
level that is deemed to be required for the occupation. (If lacking in a certain skill, the client is advised to use the learning materials and also to create a learning plan)

Figure 2: Skills summary analysis - example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The following is a Summary Analysis of how well you measure up to the skill requirements of Assemblers and Inspectors, Electrical Appliance, Apparatus and Equipment Manufacturing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• You meet or exceed the &quot;maximum&quot; requirements of this occupation for the following skills:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Reading Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Document Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Job Task Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Finding Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Computer Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• You exceed the &quot;minimum&quot; requirements for this occupation for the following skills. However, since your skill level does not yet meet the &quot;maximum&quot; requirements it is recommended that you update these skills if you are interested in this occupation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Oral Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Decision Making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These results are based upon your scores from the Self Assessment as compared to the skill requirements of the occupation*
Spell check. A spell check feature has been implemented in various areas of the ESPORT website that allows clients to verify the spelling of the information that they provide in the development of their portfolio resumes. The areas where this feature has been implemented include the following:

1. Education & Certificates
2. Job History
3. Life & Work Experiences
4. Learning Plan (available for each skill category)
5. Sending Resumes

EARAT Skill Sheets (searchable). EARAT (Evaluation for Academic Readiness for Apprenticeship Training) provides academic skill sheets in reading, writing, and math. The client prints up these skill sheets, then works on their assignments with the help of a tutor. EARAT skill sheets are appropriate for people who are preparing to take college courses as part of trade preparation. The section pertaining to the EARAT Skill Sheets has been improved through the inclusion of a search interface allowing a client to search for skill sheets for a particular skill for a particular trade without going through the choose occupation route.

French versioning preparation. There has been an extensive re-design of the database to allow ESPORT to display content in both English and French. All columns have been added to store the corresponding data in French. The original database was developed with separate tables for English and French content that had become inefficient in terms of restricting rapid development and made management of the database more difficult. Segmentation of the site has been accomplished to manage the display and query contents, and to improve the ease of integration with a multilingual format.

XML (generation of profile data into format for LAN – WEB integration). This is a feature enabling a facilitator to press a button to launch a file-save mechanism to conveniently store a client’s portfolio and personal information. This file stores the data in XML format which will in the near future allow a user using a LAN based system to
save their data on a disk and use a file upload mechanism on the web-based system to automatically create their account and seed their profile with the existing information. This will allow a client to continue working with ESPORT on the web without any interruption and without any loss of their information and assessment scores, etc.

**Database migration scripts.** Within a LAN based system that has a tight security restriction to the viewing of client supplied data, a system was needed to enable the remote updating of the database when changes were completed on the web system. A comprehensive script has been developed that will enable an administrator at a remote institution to run a set of procedures to perform a migration of client data into a revised database.

**Statistics and reports.** Evaluators and ESPORT administrators can go onto the ESPORT website to view current, dynamically created statistics in a variety of formats, and can also download reports as .csv files viewable or analyzable using MS-Excel or SPSS. The reports contain information on users, skill assessments scores, trades included in portfolios (by NOC codes), trades browsed or searched (again using NOC codes), and search terms used by clients in their career explorations.

Database changes allow an enhanced query enabling the ESPORT system to highlight the most important essential skills for each of the trades. This informs users of the skills most critical for a particular trade, and shows them how well they measure up (assuming they have completed the self-assessment section). The resulting comparison is used to recommend the key elements of a learning plan for skill development and improvement.

**Monitoring requests for information on ESPORT from the public.** For monitoring and promotion of the pilot project, and of users given temporary trial ESPORT accounts, information is now routinely gathered on Request For Information contacts. This utility enables reviewing the details in any message requesting information, including “Site,” “Facilitator,” “Organization,” “Account Creation Date,” and “Status.” The information can be browsed from all manager and facilitator accounts within ESPORT, with a filter available for such criteria as “Site” and “Role.” The
module contains an e-mail-friendly text feature, allowing high level administrators to copy email addresses to send a reply quickly and efficiently.

Newsletter. An ESPORT newsletter has been developed and published from time to time to provide information to users, and to publish results of the demonstration project. The second issue, which appeared in fall 2005, is available at [http://www.esportfolio.com/Project_Site/index.cfm?display=newsletter&Edition=edition2](http://www.esportfolio.com/Project_Site/index.cfm?display=newsletter&Edition=edition2).

Server changes

Since the stand-alone server was deployed to Prince Albert (PA), Chris Rogers worked on testing the installation, and on upgrading the server for PA and for future deployments. These changes will facilitate a more streamlined approach to stand-alone servers, making them less likely to become infected with a virus or other potentially destructive spyware or trojan, however small the risk.

The first thing implemented was a backup scheme for the learner database, to a USB memory stick. This provided a tertiary method of backing up learner data on the stand-alone server, in the event of a complete server failure. Additionally, this method of backing up, deployed in January 2006, will assist in rolling out updates to all standalone servers in future.

Secondly, and most importantly, was the setup of the Windows Server Update Services (WSUS). This service allows deployment of updates from Microsoft Windows to the standalone servers in the field, and other machines running Microsoft Windows operating systems. The WSUS was sent out in January and installed on the PA server in February. Future server deployments will already have the WSUS installed and updates can be sent to the institutions on a quarterly basis. Another ESPORT consultant is currently working on a method of installing the WSUS updates to the stand alone servers that will be easier than the current method of restoring from multiple DVD’s using two software packages. Ideally a single script should be able to do most of the update with minimal interaction from institution staff.
Another web server was setup in mid-February 2006 for ESPORT technical personnel to use as a standalone test web server, completely isolated from the internet. This will aid in testing of the ESPORT website for standalone servers.

Other

Based on experiences, observations, and evaluation findings to date, the following are activities, issues, and opportunities to be explored, as the project continues.

1. General
   a. Occasional reports will continue to be provided, to assure that significant developments are noted and monitored in a timely way.
   b. Training approaches and contents will continue to be assessed in relation to trainee feedback and subsequent facilitator behaviour. Changes to make the training more efficient will be implemented and assessed as required.

2. Cape Breton
   a. This has been a disappointing adoption, due to low usage levels, delayed adoption at some sites, and technical issues.
   b. Usage levels will continue to be monitored; where usage is low, attempts will be made to determine whether specific issues exist that might be addressed. Centres where usage is higher, and where client recruitment is creative (e.g., TEC), will continue to be the priority for evaluation.
   c. Technical issues, such as the newly encountered “enrolment lag” problem, will be addressed.
   d. The complementarity or compatibility of ESPORT with other tools (such as CHOICES) will be explicitly demonstrated, where appropriate based on client needs.
   e. Usage and usefulness of PLATO will be assessed.
3. ACCESS, Vancouver
   a. The potential problem of facilitators perceiving a lack of time for ESPORT, which appeared in the readiness assessment, will be monitored, as will client usage.
   b. The need for further training, as was supplied in Cape Breton, will be monitored.

4. John Howard Society, Ottawa
   a. The impact of the training differences that were implemented in these centres will be monitored.
   b. The suggestions and questions generated by the facilitators at the end of their training session will be analyzed and addressed.
   c. These trainees had considerably less exposure to PLATO, and to the processes and purposes of the project’s evaluation. Their needs for more information in these areas will be monitored, and response made as appropriate.

5. Saskatchewan Penitentiary
   a. The experience and feedback from this site has been positive, detailed, and useful to the project. Sask Pen will continue to receive attention as part of the evaluation, as the results continue to appear applicable.
   b. Making ESPORT available in the LAN version has made the system more robust and positively redundant.

6. SUCCESS, ISS, and MOSAIC
   a. Negotiations involve the three implementing agencies, and Service Canada (EBSM), national HRSDC, and HRSDC’s regional Human Rights Program (HRP). The target for implementation is February 2006, pending agreements with the funding agencies. Facilitator training will take place separately at each of the three sites.

7. Metis Employment Services, Aboriginal Futures
a. These sites commenced ESPORT demonstration project operations in January 2006.

8. The virtual community initiative

a. This concept is still evolving and changing as the project also evolves.

b. The intention to create and sustain a virtual community of practice, using technologies and based on experience with ESPORT, appears to be increasingly valid, as the number of project participants increases, and more is learned about what constitutes good practice with ESPORT.

c. Users constitute a potentially large and useful source of evaluation feedback for the project, especially as more conclusions are reached based on direct experience. The VC will be consulted, as appropriate, to vet evaluation findings and conclusions.

9. Evolution of training

a. Training has undergone radical evolution. As the project commenced, training had been mainly PLATO’s responsibility. Beginning with the John Howard implementation, in mid-2005, training was taken over by CEP.

b. The word “training” is less accurate, as the sessions are more on the model of “facilitated learning.” Facilitators and learners often attend the same sessions (if the trainee-facilitators agree). They go through the normal process with a support person in the background, and a Facilitator’s Guide for reference.

c. With experience, a shift in emphasis in the implementation also occurred. Facilitators were encouraged to view the Portfolio Builder section as the foundation; Interest Inventory, Self-Assessment, and Learning Materials were seen as supports.
The issue of student completion of essential aspects of ESPORT was identified in late 2005. A report on this issue will be included in the final report.

PLATO training will take place once facilitators are comfortable with ESPORT. This should address the problem of loss of learning through overload.

10. Future of PLATO

a. In November 2005, PLATO learning Inc. closed its Canadian division. This looked ominous at first, but PLATO’s president has now assured CEP that “we fully intend to honor our commitments and to expand our relationships in Canada in a responsible and organized way.”

b. The closure is disappointing for PLATO’s Canadian representatives, who have invested considerable faith and personal effort in helping ESPORT grow its wings.

c. The closure has also put CEP in the interesting position of having to answer queries about marketing, schedule and provide training, and provide technical support (at least temporarily) for the PLATO system.

d. Although there are legally binding agreements with PLATO, these developments may provide an opportunity to review the relative value of PLATO in the overall picture and the way it is offered within the package, to structure a more independent marketing strategy, and build a Canadian training team.

11. Completion

a. The finding that clients often do not complete all of ESPORT has been noted at all sites. The meaning of this phenomenon remains to be analyzed, and will continue to be investigated. It is a matter of concern that clients do not complete the Portfolio, as this is the part of ESPORT that uniquely involves clients in assessment of their own
skills and interests. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that
at least some users terminate ESPORT after having achieved
something useful; their non-completion may be seen as a sign of
accomplishment of their immediate objectives.

b. The notion that clients working in cohorts may accomplish more than
those working in one-to-one relationships with facilitators or
counselors has been made (Saltiel and Russo, 2001). This concept will
be explored further in the final phase of the project.

Emerging project findings (tentative)

While the project continues, and the original plans and intentions are still in
place, some tentative findings are already being identified. In some cases, these findings
are of sufficient significance, and are sufficiently well supported by the evidence, that
they have already been acted upon. All are tentative, and may be further impacted by
events still transpiring in the project. They are offered here as preliminary findings, and
as indications of possible eventual outcomes of the project.

Training

Experience with the process of training new facilitators has led to several
tentative conclusions. First, it was clear that facilitators required different amounts of
ESPORT training, and different types of training experiences, based upon their previous
experience with computers, online training systems, computer-assisted learning, adult
education, and use of online counseling tools. Early in the project it was decided that
the standard training approach would be modified as needed: where the outcomes of
training required it, retraining or additional training has been offered.

It was also clear early in program that facilitator turnover at the sites would
necessitate regular – even frequent – retraining. Throughout the project, maintaining the
presence of adequately training facilitators at each site has been a challenge. There is, of
course, nothing that can be done about the fact that trained people leave their jobs, but it was somewhat surprising how often facilitators moved out of positions, changed employers, or, for various reasons, stopped dealing directly with clients who were ESPORT candidates. In the mature adaptation of ESPORT, on-site expertise could be used to assure the training of newcomers, but in the project this solution could not be counted upon.

Over time, it was decided that including clients in the training experience could have benefits for all parties. The option of including clients was offered to trainees after the Cape Breton training; facilitators were urged to bring a client of their choice with them to the training, after explaining that the client would be a co-trainee of this experience. The offer was not a requirement, however, and some programs have chosen not to do so, for various reasons (often related to the level of confidence or experience of the facilitators, or the related desire not to appear unprepared to their clients). Where clients have attended, trainers believe that the results are better: facilitators are more focused on the training content, collaboration between the facilitator and the client offers genuine training benefits, and continued use of ESPORT in the program after training is more common.

Facilitators often observed that their understanding of ESPORT increased with use, and the more immediately they used ESPORT after the training the more competent and confident they felt with the system. Additional training could also add to understanding and expertise with ESPORT, but the most important factor in facilitator understanding and effective use of ESPORT appears to be direct experience with real clients back in the home program. This reinforces the importance of early use and application of new ESPORT skills immediately after training.

**Time commitment**

Where programs did not make significant use of ESPORT after training, the most common explanation was the amount of time that the program required, on the part of the facilitator with the client, and on the part of clients with the system. It appears that
programs are often not accustomed to spending extended time with individual clients, as ESPORT demands. (The developers recommend that 14 to 16 hours be allocated to initial ESPORT activities, dependent upon client readiness and needs; see Attachment 10.) Programs, it appears, usually spend considerably shorter amounts of time with clients, and do not develop counseling plans systematically for most cases. Clients become used to “dropping in” to the training agency, but not necessarily to planning to attend regularly for the time required, over multiple days/appointments, to complete the full process. This became clear early in the project, and was a topic during training, in order to attempt to prepare facilitators; however, the issue remained a limitation and a factor.

One of the implications of the discovery of the problem of convincing facilitators and clients to devote time to the ESPORT process was to consider how the total time required could be divided into smaller units. A suggestion that emerged after considerable experience was that blocks of time, or steps, might be offered to clients for completing the ESPORT process. Clients would be advised of the time needed to complete a step of the program, but would not commit to the next step until the first was successfully finished. Steps could correspond to clusters of the units suggested in Attachment 10:

Step 1 (preparation)
- Preparing and engaging client – (1 hr)
- Registration and Introduction of the program – (1 hr)
- Interest Inventory – (1 hr)

Step 2 (self-assessment)
- Walking client through the essential skills / areas of self-assessment – (2 hrs)
- Guiding client through choosing an occupation and using resources – (2 – 3 hrs)

Step 3 (portfolio)
- Portfolio building – Clients spent a lot of time in building the portfolio. They had difficulty in putting ideas into words. Much more input from the counselor is required. I have come to realize that I did not spend enough time with my clients when they were building their portfolio in terms of guidance
and assistance. – (3 – 4 hr) More time will be required if the client wants to build more than one portfolio.

Step 4 (learning plan)
- **Learning Plan** – (2 hrs)
- **Review/interpret Portfolio** and follow-up plan – (2 hrs)

Step 5 (conclusion, job search)

The initial block of time would be for the preparatory stages, after which would follow a block of time for self-assessment and career exploration. A final stage might be actual career choice and preparation of the portfolio and résumé related to career choices. This approach divides the amount of time required into smaller units, and permits the student to complete part of the whole process before committing to the next part. This approach was viewed as having merit, and was proposed for assessment in the final stages of the project. (*Occasional Report #17* was produced to describe this idea more fully.)

**Client outcomes**

Data were collected in various forms throughout the project on clients’ adaptation to ESPORT, especially through the comments of facilitators working directly with clients. These reports provided information about client adaptation and any problems or issues with use of the ESPORT system. Findings of the surveys are reported elsewhere (see Attachments 8 and 9 for general results, and Attachments 1 and 3 for results from the Saskatchewan Penitentiary; Tables 1, 4, and 6, indirectly describe, through usage patterns, client adaptation).

In relation to career thinking, Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 contain information about the careers that clients considered in the process of working through the ESPORT process. In summary, it appears that clients’ interests clustered in the following areas (taken from the contents of their portfolios and learning plans, and from their browsing within various career information databases):
- small-business (ownership and counseling)
construction trades (helpers and laborers)
clerks (administrative, library, and accounting)
heritage and environmental
nursery and greenhouse
special events planning and management
human resources
nursing (aides, orderlies, and patient services)
teaching assistant (elementary, early childhood, and secondary school)
retail
fishing and food services

In terms of attitudes, from survey results was clear that both clients and facilitators viewed ESPORT highly positively; all results were skewed to the positive end of the Likert scales used (Attachments 6, 8, and 9). There were some minor differences in emphasis: facilitators tended to feel more strongly than clients that ESPORT portfolios would be useful for job-search, while clients would prefer to use ESPORT more. The printed products of the ESPORT process, including résumés and printouts of career searches and self-assessments, and the ability to transfer ESPORT profiles and records to other ESPORT systems if the client moved, were cited as useful.
REFERENCES


ATTACHMENT 1

August 29, 2005, notes from Saskatchewan Penitentiary

Regarding experiences with a client, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. (Composed by an on-site facilitator):

In the process of working with a young man a few weeks ago, I asked if he would be willing to work with me on the resume portion of ESPORT. He agreed and we went through to it. He had decided with the help of the facilitator operating the pilot project in the classroom, to apply for a job as AUTOMOTIVE ASSEMBLY CHECKER AND TESTER through the InterOptions portion of the program.

We went through the academic section and he had a full Grade 11 and was 19 years old. I asked him what jobs he had had. He replied that the only real "job" had been as Cook in a Pizza shop. I said that was fine and asked what he had had to do in that job.

He looked at me as if I were dumb and also a bit sheepishly, said, "I cooked pizzas. I told you - I was a cook there." I replied very quietly and gently that "I can't quite agree with that. I have stood and waited while my pizza was being prepared and I know it isn't only cooking."

So:

Q. Did you ever have to answer the phone?
A Yes

Q What kind of information did you have to get?
A Lots - their name, address, phone, what they wanted on the pizza, size etc.

Q Did it have to be accurate
A Of course.

Q OK, so you already know then that you did more than cook. Now let's look at what this program wants from you.
Of course, the program starts with the 10 Essential Skills and in a dialogue box, describes what the auto assembler etc. would have to do in the situation exacting the skill. The one I remember best was something like this:

“Interpersonal Interactions. At the beginning of a new shift the auto assembler (etc.) would have to advise the newly arriving staff of incidents on the previous shift and of any changes policy or procedures that had come up on the last shift.”

Q Did you ever have to do that?
A No.

Q Well, let's see - what time did the shift change at your shop?
A 2pm.

Q Did you ever have to tell them that you were running out of sauce?
A No.

Q Did you ever have to tell them that at sometime, let's say 4:30, someone is coming to pick up 30 pizzas for a party or something like that?
A Well – yes, I did sometimes, but not all the time.

Q. Would you like to put something like that in the box (where he would write his experience)?
A. OK.

All the time we worked together- about an hour and a half - he answered the questions and chose what he would write down. Several times he added information.

Once the Essential Skill area had been completed, he asked the program to show him the whole resume. Once he read it he turned to me and with wide eyes said, "Oh, I guess I really DID do a lot of things in that job!"

To test out the resume, I asked his permission to use it but to take out his name, address, etc., all except the academic and age, and the experience portions. I then phoned [a local international company] here. Over lunch a few days later their Director of Human Resources read over the resume and said, "This is exactly the kind of information I need. It has the skills listed on the left and I don't have to go looking for them. The proof is listed on the right in his description of his job experience. Usually I
have to read resumes and then phone to ask a lot of questions to get the proof information. For example, everybody writes ‘trustworthy’ on their application, but who is going to say he is NOT trustworthy, so it sometimes takes me over an hour to get the information out of him that proves he has that quality. In this format it is all right there”.

The only thing she found missing is the proof of Ability to Learn - she advised that she could see this from Certificates earned, i.e., WHMIS, etc., and Volunteer Experiences.

I then phoned an international automobile manufacturer in Ontario and asked the same questions. Her immediate reaction was to say he would be screened out because of lack of Grade 12. I asked her to put that aside - assume he HAS Grade 12 - now what? She advised that they have their own application form with the info THEY want on. When she gave this one a bit more thought, she said it would get him a phone call (if he had Gr. 12), that would put him into the first round of a multi-level screening process their company goes through.

In both interviews the interviewee had more than 15 years of human resources experience.

I left this exercise thinking these things:

1. I am convinced that this format of resume would put a person into a screening process if nothing else. Two major industrial employers are enough to satisfy me on that score.

2. It is unrealistic, given my experience with the student, to think that we will ever be able to put someone with little to no work experience in front of this program and leave him/her on their own to follow it all through effectively.

3. Mediating the experience is extremely important- asking open-ended questions in an unthreatening way and waiting till he sorts it out and says it out. This puts an onus on the training to be very applications oriented.
4. The trainer (or one of them) will have to be able to create an atmosphere of trust in which the facilitators will be willing to exercise their imaginations and practice almost counseling-type techniques to draw the information from the clients. They will need to be able to empower the client to articulate that experience to the computer program.

5. In discussions with a teacher of Learning Disabled students, we talked about those clients who may be able to articulate but have little to no computer experience. This led us to the possibility of using Dragon Naturally Speaking- an inexpensive program that allows the client to speak and it writes the data onto the screen for him/her. This would free up time that is currently used in the client coming to terms with the keyboard.
**ATTACHMENT 2**

*Table 12: Results of Readiness Questionnaire, Ottawa John Howard Society*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Contact the project administrator (Patrick) when necessary.</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Know where to go for assistance if needed.</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contact the project evaluators when necessary.</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Have the right technology for the project.</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recognize outcomes or findings important to the evaluation.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Be able to use the project’s technologies.</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explain the evaluation model (PAR) to clients.</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Participate in the evaluation process.</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Communicate using various technologies.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show clients how to get started with ESPORT.</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain ESPORT to clients.</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Make time for everything the project requires me to do.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Scale: 0 = I am not at all ready; I am very uncomfortable with this  
10 = I am completely ready; I am perfectly comfortable with this
ATTACHMENT 3

November 8, 2005 – Letter from Saskatchewan Penitentiary facilitator:

The longer I work with ESPORT, the more impressed I am with it! Between the interview and ESPORT, I am able to derive enough information to write a report for the employment part of the correction plan and a more thorough in-depth report. In general, other than the resume, most offenders are able to complete the interview and ESPORT within 1.5 - 2.0 hours. The resume adds another 1 -2 hours to the process depending on the person doing it.

Initially, I was uncertain about the benefit of doing a resume in the intake process. However, I now see it as a valuable tool. It is amazing how many assumptions are dispelled because of it! The resume gives me a very clear picture of the employment history, as material is automatically arranged chronologically. As the resume asks for a job title and a job description, further valuable information is gleaned from this.

I also see the resume as a useful method of goal setting or dreaming. It allows the offender to see where they are now and gives them a sense of what they need to do to achieve their goal/dream.

Whether an offender chooses to actually use the ESPORT resume or not, he now has in his possession the information he needs to write one. He has done the thinking about his employment history, education history, and related certificates. I have been putting the resume on a disk and giving it to the offender, informing him that the resume can be updated before they leave the institution.

I do like the "In-depth Report" that is generated from the Interest Inventory. I would love to see the detailed report expanded to include the results of the 10 Essential Skills, thus putting everything into one report. I realize that the results of the 10 Essential Skills are available through the occupation choice to demonstrate how the offender stacks up against the Essential Skills requirements for that occupation. I really like the fact that ESPORT does that, but I would still like to see it appear in the detailed report.

The server is up and running and so far, I have had no difficulties with it. From my perspective, things are going well!

With warmest regards,

[Name]
Sask Pen, PA
February 3, 2006 - Letter from Saskatchewan Penitentiary facilitator:

Since I took over the ESPORT program in September 2005, I have had 42 referrals for it. Of this 42, 30 files have been completed. Of the 30 files, for security reasons, 3 were not permitted to come to the school to do ESPORT and 1 refused to do it because he did not want to disclose "personal information" by answering the questions in ESPORT and doing the resume. Of the remaining 12 (of the 42), 6 are part way through it and 6 are waiting to do it.

The response to ESPORT by the offenders has been very positive (other than the one that refused to even look at it). [The coordinator] has devised an evaluation form for the guys to fill out upon completion of ESPORT. So far, there have been no complaints. Upon completion of ESPORT, I give the offender a hard copy of everything he has done and their results along with a computer disk which contains the same information....

I have found that the more computer literate and high functioning the offender is, the shorter the time it takes to complete ESPORT. The record time to date is 1.5 hours. Of course, the reverse is also true, the less computer literate and lower functioning they are, the longer it takes - an average of 3 to 4.5 hours....

With the principal's encouragement and permission, I have been doing "information sessions" in some of the classrooms. Most of my "self-referrals" have come from this....

As I have the time, and I have not been in touch with you lately, I felt it was time to touch base.

I am very pleased with the way the server is running, and I have not run into any major glitches that hinder its use.

With warmest regards,

[name]
Sask Pen, PA
**ATTACHMENT 4**

**Client completion of ESPORT activities:**

**Question:**
We're seeing, at pretty well all of our sites, that a certain number of clients are getting started - creating an account and getting through the early stages like the interest inventory - but they aren’t “finishing” the process and walking out with a training plan. So what I’d like to hear from you is why you think this might be happening; are they getting frustrated somewhere, or are counselors maybe using just selected portions of the ESPORT system and not worrying about doing the whole thing, or...?

**Response #1:**
I have mentioned before that the program is seeking an audience. Most people that started the program haven't gone on because they haven't found any real value in it. We have had a mix of youth, and older people use ESPORT, and although they found it interesting, there was no desire to do a learning plan to bring up their essential skills. One reason is that many met the highest number (5) for many of the occupations offered. Also we use the CHOICES software in our Centre and clients find it much more interesting and informative to use than ESPORT.

We have tried to utilize the PLATO software to assist people preparing to write GED, but the technical difficulties associated with that have made it frustrating to use. We have worked through all the technical problems here at the Centre, but many clients are not prepared to stick with it. Besides, we have PLATO stand alone software that is easy to use.

Other groups in our consortium have pretty well ceased trying to use ESPORT because the technical difficulties were too much to deal with and they just said the heck with it. Everyone is busy with their duties, and the time is just not there to experiment with this program. That being said, we are still trying to find clients we can run through the program and I am hoping to get some high school students interested.

**Response #2:**
[Summary of a telephone interview]: The training we received was during the summer; we’ve had some busy time when we weren’t able to get into ESPORT as well as some staff turnover. So the fact that our skills are rusty has been a deterrent. Patrick came out and did some refresher training on the ESPORT side; that was helpful and we’ve been using it more since that time...there hasn’t been any retraining on the PLATO side, though. If we could get brushed up again on that component of the program our usage there might pick up too.
When we tried to get students from the ESPORT side to the PLATO side, we discovered that their accounts didn't carry over - it was necessary to create them new usernames and passwords before they could get going in PLATO. That was a nuisance.
### ATTACHMENT 5

**Table 13: Results of Readiness Questionnaire, all ESPORT sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item¹</th>
<th>Cape Breton</th>
<th>ACCESS – Vancouver</th>
<th>JHS – Ottawa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain ESPORT to clients.</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show clients how to get started with ESPORT.</td>
<td>6.3*</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explain PLATO to clients.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Show clients how to get started with PLATO.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explain the evaluation model (PAR) to clients.</td>
<td>6.8**</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Participate in the evaluation process.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Communicate using various technologies.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Recognize outcomes or findings important to the evaluation.</td>
<td>8.3**</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contact the project administrator when necessary.</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contact the PLATO trainer when necessary.</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contact the project evaluators</td>
<td>9.3*</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when necessary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Make time for everything the project requires me to do.</td>
<td>6.0*</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Know where to go for assistance if needed.</td>
<td>9.5*</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Have the right technology for the project.</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Be able to use the project’s technologies.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Scale: 0 = I am not at all ready; I am very uncomfortable with this
       10 = I am completely ready; I am perfectly comfortable with this

²Item not included in Ottawa survey as PLATO was not included in John Howard Society training.

*Significant beyond the .10 level of confidence (t-test).
**Significant beyond the .05 level of confidence (t-test).
Client Survey

November 2005

Please respond, by mail, e-mail, or fax (see below) to these statements using the following ratings:

SA - Strongly agree
A - Agree
NS - Not sure, no opinion
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

Site (check one):
_____ Cape Breton
_____ ACCESS (BC)
_____ JHS (Ottawa)

1. ESPORT has been helpful to me.      SD  D  NS  A  SA
2. I would rather use ESPORT than other career exploration tools. SD  D  NS  A  SA
3. I understand what ESPORT is intended do for me. SD  D  NS  A  SA
4. Whenever I had any questions about ESPORT, they were answered. SD  D  NS  A  SA
5. I would like to use ESPORT more. SD  D  NS  A  SA
6. I am comfortable using computers. SD  D  NS  A  SA
7. I found the ESPORT interest inventory useful. SD  D  NS  A  SA
8. ESPORT is easy to use. SD  D  NS  A  SA
9. I found the ESPORT self-assessment useful. SD  D  NS  A  SA
10. I found the ESPORT portfolio builder useful. SD  D  NS  A  SA
11. I found PLATO useful. SD  D  NS  A  SA
12. I found some occupations I am interested in using ESPORT. SD  D  NS  A  SA
13. I am working on my ESPORT learning plan. SD  D  NS  A  SA
14. I know my potential occupational skills better after using ESPORT. SD  D  NS  A  SA
15. I intend to use my ESPORT portfolio when I look for a job. SD  D  NS  A  SA

Comments:

PS: We would like to talk to some survey respondents briefly by telephone. If you are willing to take part in a 5 – 10 minute phone interview about ESPORT, please give your phone number, and time when we can reach you, here:
Facilitator Survey

November 2005

Please respond to the following statements using the following ratings:

SA - Strongly agree
A - Agree
NS - Not sure, no opinion
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

(Circle one):

1. ESPORT has been helpful to me. SD D NS A SA
2. I would rather use ESPORT than other career exploration tools. SD D NS A SA
3. I understand what ESPORT is intended to do for me. SD D NS A SA
4. Whenever I had any questions about ESPORT, they were answered. SD D NS A SA
5. I would like to use ESPORT more with my clients. SD D NS A SA
6. I am comfortable using computers. SD D NS A SA
7. My clients find the ESPORT interest inventory useful. SD D NS A SA
8. ESPORT is easy to use. SD D NS A SA
9. My clients find the ESPORT self-assessment useful. SD D NS A SA
10. My clients find the ESPORT portfolio builder useful. SD D NS A SA
11. My clients find PLATO useful. SD D NS A SA
12. My clients find some occupations they are interested in using ESPORT. SD D NS A SA
13. ESPORT. SD D NS A SA
14. My clients are working on their ESPORT learning plans. SD D NS A SA
15. My clients know their potential occupational skills better after using ESPORT. SD D NS A SA
16. My clients intend to use the ESPORT portfolio when they look for a job. SD D NS A SA

Comments (please add anything you wish below):
ATTACHMENT 7

Cover-letter to facilitators regarding survey

Dear [Facilitator]:

As part of the evaluation of ESPORT, an interim report is being prepared. The report will describe how ESPORT is being used, and hopefully will point out areas where changes are needed (as well as documenting what is working well).

As preparation for the interim report, I would like to ask two things of you:

1. To complete and return to me the attached “Facilitator Survey,” giving your own views.
2. To ask any clients who are able to complete the “Client Survey.”

The surveys can be mailed back to me, or, better, can be e-mailed to patf@athabascau.ca, or faxed (toll-free) to 866-514-6234. I would appreciate receiving these by Monday, December 5, if at all possible.

All replies are strictly confidential. The forms are marked to show they are from the Cape, but no other identification is required, and participants will not be identified in any way in the interim report that will include this information.

If you or your clients have any questions, please e-mail or phone me at the toll-free number above.

Thank you, as ever, for your ongoing help with this evaluation.

Sincerely,

Pat Fahy
ESPORT Project Evaluator

PS: Please complete the survey for yourself, even if you don’t have clients who can participate. Thanks!
ATTACHMENT 8

Response to Facilitator Survey: Comments

1. Sorry, only one client has used it and they were getting rather irritated at the length of time it was taking to do all the different areas. I believe I will do just bits of the options with clients, then give them their passwords so that they can move through it at their own speed, and then get their own results. I have not answered the survey as I have only one client who was willing to do this. Others who are coming in have definite plans, registered for school, etc., so for some it is useful. I wonder if this program isn’t more suited to high school evaluations from what we used to be called guidance counselors. And speaking of counselors, you don’t have those listed in your area of careers.

2. My experience has been limited thus far. It is hard to get clients to stick with it.

3. working with clients who are lacking in a considerable amount of skills, I find ESPORT a very useful tool. They seem to be a few problems that still need attention.

4. The clients I enrolled in ESPORT had very little difficulty with the actual program; however, did express that it wasn’t as user-friendly as it could be. Most clients agreed that they would not feel comfortable sending a resume that was created in ESPORT to an employer. Clients were concerned the resume would be too long and in an unacceptable format. We also experienced, from time to time, technical difficulties while waiting for account activations for new users. Otherwise, ESPORT is a useful tool for determining what areas of the essential skills need additional work. Clients were receptive of the program, however many did not follow through due to time constraints.

5. Technical issues have been a problem. Nothing that couldn’t be worked out, but it took time and persistence, something that led to the discontinuation of the program by some facilitators. Again, we searched for clients that this program is right for.

6. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control, the clients here at the [name] center were not given the opportunity to participate in the project. Therefore, no information that might have been useful for this project was obtained from this initial test site.

   I do wish to apologize for not being able to participate in the project. I was looking forward to this new experience, as I have an academic background in survey research and would have appreciated this new learning opportunity. However, due to circumstances beyond my control, was not given permission by the management here at my center to participate in the project. I do hope that you have been able to collect enough information from the other test sites in the region to be able to come toward some substantive conclusions as to the usefulness of ESPORT in academic and employment support service fields.
7. I have gotten my clients to do this [survey] but have not asked for feedback from them [about whether they have actually completed the form].

8. After working with the program I can say that I find it very useful tool. Unfortunately, I clients didn't have the level of commitment needed when approaching a program such as ESPORT. Without that, the program cannot be used as fully as it could be. I think the concept is a great idea and I really like the program. In career exploration we tend to use the CHOICES program but the ESPORT program is useful and it could play a big part in career development. Perhaps more marketing and endorsement through Service Canada would make the program more successful.

9. Sorry I'm not able to offer much of my thoughts or opinions about ESPORT because we have not been using it as part of our client assessment tools. I took the initial training that was offered but have not had the opportunity to actually use it. I guess it is up to our employer of their going to use ESPORT as an assessment tool.

Clients

1. I really like working with ESPORT and think that everyone would benefit from it.
### Response to Facilitator Survey: Frequencies

Table 14: Responses to the Facilitator Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Mean-total</th>
<th>Rank-total</th>
<th>Mean-clients</th>
<th>Rank-client</th>
<th>Mean-facilitators</th>
<th>Rank-facilitators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am comfortable using computers.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I found PLATO useful. Whenever I had any questions about ESPORT, they were answered.</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I know my potential occupational skills better after using ESPORT.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>ESPORT</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I understand what ESPORT is intended do for me.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would like to use ESPORT more.</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I found the ESPORT interest inventory useful.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I intend to use my ESPORT portfolio when I look for a job.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I found the ESPORT self-assessment useful</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I found some occupations I am interested in using ESPORT.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ESPORT has been helpful to me</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I found the ESPORT portfolio builder useful.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am working on my ESPORT learning plan.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ESPORT is easy to use.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I would rather use ESPORT than other career exploration tools.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 show levels of activity as of November 25, 2005, for Cape Breton, Vancouver (ACCESS), and Ottawa (John Howard Society). (Note that Saskatchewan Penitentiary, a non-project site, is not included in these figures.)

Table 15: Client activity levels, by site (November 25, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>Cape Breton</th>
<th>Ottawa</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>BEO</td>
<td>NWEO</td>
<td>TEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Learning Plan(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Complete InterOptions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Registered PLATO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has Completed Self-Assessment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total learners</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTACHMENT 10

*Estimated time commitments*

[The following estimates were developed by an ESPORT user during the project. While not empirically tested, the project manager believes the totals and the rationale for the time spent are sound.]

I would definitely like to spend more time in each stage of the preparation and feedback if more time were available. Preferably, I would like to allocate for each client:

- Preparing and engaging client – (1 hr)
- Registration and Introduction of the program – (1 hr)
- Interest Inventory – (1 hr)
- Walking client through the essential skills / areas of self-assessment – (2 hrs)
- Guiding client through choosing an occupation and using resources – (2 – 3 hrs)
- Portfolio building – Clients spent a lot of time in building the portfolio. They had difficulty in putting ideas into words. Much more input from the counselor is required. I have come to realize that I did not spend enough time with my clients when they were building their portfolio in terms of guidance and assistance. – (3 – 4 hr) More time will be required if the client wants to build more than one portfolio.
- Learning Plan – (2 hrs)
- Review /interpret Portfolio and follow-up plan – (2 hrs)

Total: 14 – 16 hours (This does not include time spent on guidance throughout the implementation of the Learning Plan.)