

Supporting Practice Engagement

Promising Practices for Literacy and Essential Skills Programs and Services in Alberta

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Part One: Introduction

In 2009 the Government of Alberta committed to “coordinate and collaborate with ... partners to improve the literacy skills of Albertans.”ⁱ This Promising Practicesⁱⁱ Framework is for partners and potential partners who offer or support programs and services for adult literacy and essential skills (LES) development.

The Framework focuses on practices that support adults to *persist* in learning in order to *expand* literacy and essential skills to meet their goals. It is intended to be general enough to include a range of delivery agencies and organizations, programs and services, and learner audiences in Alberta. We anticipate that you will continue to refer to other frameworks and guides for particular delivery agencies and learner audiences (see Appendix 1), and that guides for particular audiences in Alberta may be developed.

You likely will be familiar with many of the practices named in this Framework. Some may be in place in your agency or organization, or they may offer suggestions for future work. We hope that the Framework will affirm much current work, foster discussion and reflection and offer possibilities to expand the horizons of literacy and essential skills delivery and learning in Alberta.

You might use the Framework to:

- Promote consensus about effective ways to support literacy and essential skills development.
- Inspire reflection and dialogue about LES delivery among facilitators, staff and volunteers, instructors, learners, and others
- Inspire discussion and networking about LES delivery among agencies, organizations and groups.
- Support agencies and programs to:
 - Affirm practices that are in place.
 - Identify practices that might be changed.
 - Discern what is needed to change practices, and determine how this can be done.
- Foster renewal and growth in programs and services.
- Serve as a resource to advocate for support for LES programs and services.

Government and other funders may find the Framework useful for program design, policy development and planning purposes.

The Framework is not intended as a “how to” guide. It does list some resources (Appendix 1) that you might use to apply or extend the promising practices in your work, along with “snapshots” of what some programs are doing to apply the practices. It may also offer starting points to plan professional development. The Framework is intended to be a living

A **promising practice** is an activity, strategy, or process that has been shown, through practice and/or research, to lead to desired results.

A **framework** is a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality.

LES programs and services include a wide range of activities that support adults to engage in literacy and essential skills learning. They include organized classes, one-to-one tutoring, peer learning, independent learning, mentoring, family literacy activities, integrated learning, and other approaches.

Delivery agencies include community literacy programs, post-secondary institutions, workplaces, libraries, and a range of other community-serving agencies that offer LES programs and services.

document, to be revised and further developed as it is used; your feedback and suggestions are welcome.

Background

In 2012, the Alberta Ministries of Human Services and of Innovation and Advanced Education initiated a project to develop a literacy and essential skills (LES) effective practices guide for Alberta. Literacy Alberta was contracted to manage the project and NorQuest College was subcontracted to coordinate development of a guide. The Ministries appointed a Coordinating Advisory Committee to provide leadership and direction for the project.

NorQuest College contracted Lori Smits, Barbara Penner (until April 30, 2013), and Mary Norton to form a Development Team. We, the Development Team, worked in consultation with an advisory Task Force Team appointed by Literacy Alberta. The Task Force Team included individuals from organizations that, together, serve a range of agencies and learner audiences. Dr. Stephen Rederⁱⁱⁱ served as an advisor for the project.

Development processes

We believe it is important for a guide / framework to include “practical and reflective knowledge”^{iv} from the field as well as research-based knowledge about literacy and essential skills development. With this in mind, we reviewed and drew from publications about best and effective practices^v for adult literacy and essential skills delivery. These provided the base for a literature review^{vi}, which in turn provided a foundation to develop a promising practices framework. The literature review included the following:

- Canadian provincial and territorial best practice guides that were developed in consultation with literacy practitioners
- Research summaries and related literature about best or effective practices in literacy and essential skills

Our work on the Framework was also informed by these sources:

- The Government of Alberta Request for Proposals for the project
- Recent Government of Alberta documents that present vision, values, and goals for adult literacy and lifelong learning in Alberta (see text box)
- Our own knowledge and experiences in the adult literacy field, including our perspectives
- Feedback and suggestions from the Task Force Team
- Discussion with the project advisor
- Feedback and suggestions from practitioners and others in the LES fields who participated in consultations
- Feedback from the Coordinating Advisory Committee

Living Literacy. A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009)

Building Vibrant Learning Communities. Framework and Actions to Strengthen Community Adult Learning Councils and Community Literacy Programs (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2007)

Social Policy Framework. (Government of Alberta, 2013).

We also reviewed Alberta's Social Policy Framework (2013) and found that there is consistency between the goals and principles of that framework and this Promising Practice Framework. The Social Policy Framework provides further context and perspectives for the

delivery of adult literacy and essential skills. A key outcome is that Albertans are lifelong learners with the knowledge, skills and commitment to learning needed to participate in society to reach their full potential..

To include both the practical and research-based knowledge reflected in the framework, we adapted the term “promising practices.” The term also recognizes that delivery agencies might adopt or adapt promising practices, depending on their context and resources. We used the term framework to suggest that this Framework offers a structure and support for LES delivery.

As we considered the literature and other sources, we identified two concepts that apply across learning and delivery contexts, namely *practice engagement theory* and *persistence*. These concepts provided a foundation for the Framework, along with perspectives about literacy, essential skills, and learners. Values presented in Government of Alberta publications are also reflected in the framework.

Practice Engagement Theory

In practice engagement theory, literacy is understood as a socio-cultural or social practice.^{vii} Social practice perspectives consider how people use written language in their everyday lives.

Literacy as a social practice, and literacy skills

Literacy skills are the cognitive skills people use to read and write, such as figuring out or spelling words, finding main ideas, and organizing ideas in writing. These skills are one of the resources people use to engage in literacy practices.

Literacy skills are often taught and learned in the context of meaningful, authentic texts such as a story, poem, form, or letter. In a social practice perspective, the context is broader. It includes these elements:

- The people involved in using a text (e.g., a parent and child, employees at a staff meeting)
- What people do with the text (e.g., read, post, forward to others)
- Where people use the text (e.g., living room, grocery store, classroom, garage)
- How the text relates to their lives (e.g., family, community, work and related purposes)
- Resources (e.g., cognitive skills and background knowledge, as well as books, paper, pens, computers, spray paint, and other resources)^{viii}

Social practice perspectives also consider the broader social, cultural and historical contexts that shape how people use literacy. Social practice theories also recognize the relative power of various literacy practices and how these practices can be used to control or to empower people of diverse cultures and identities.^{ix}

The relevance of practice engagement theory is highlighted in a *Longitudinal study of adult learning*.^x In this study, Reder found no short-term relationship between participation in adult basic skills programs and changes in proficiency (skill level). However, the study did find a short-term relationship between participation in programs and changes in literacy practices. For example, a learner might not show an increase in proficiency level as measured by a standardized test, but may be more able and confident to use literacy in

In **practice engagement theory**, literacy is understood as a socio-cultural or social practice.

A **social practice** perspective focuses on how people use written language in their everyday lives.

day-to-day situations. Further, Reder’s study found that engaging in literacy practices in and out of basic skills programs *does* lead to long-term increases in proficiency. For example, adults’ reading skills might increase as they engage in the practices of reading to their children or using written instructions at work.

Reder^{xi} emphasizes that the study findings *do not* suggest that literacy programs are ineffective. Instead, he advocates that assessing short-term changes in proficiency may not be an appropriate way to measure program impact; assessing changes in *literacy practices* may be more appropriate.

Persistence Theories

Persistence can be defined as “a continuous learning process that lasts until an adult student [learner] meets his or her educational goals.”^{xii} In the longitudinal study of adult learning, Reder found that a significant fraction of adults may “stop out” of programs and re-enrol, either in the same program or another one. In another study about persistence, Comings noted that intermittent attendance may be the only option for many adult learners. Both researchers noted that adults engage in self-study, either instead of attending programs, before attending programs, or between attending programs. Comings suggests that the concept of persistence be broadened to acknowledge that learning also takes place outside organized programs. In this Framework, we suggest that persistence includes self-study, practice, informal learning, and other ways to expand literacy practices, as well as attending organized programs (see text box on p. 1). We also recognize the important role that organized programs play in LES delivery; many of the promising practices reflect research and experience about supporting persistence in programs.

Supporting Practice Engagement

Combining theory and research about *practice engagement* and *persistence* points to wider possibilities for adults to expand literacy and essential skills practices. On the one hand, the research affirms the importance of using authentic, relevant texts and activities in literacy and essential skills instruction and practice in various contexts. On the other, it points to expanding the notion of “program” to include a wide range of contexts—including a range of people, activities and places—to support adults to develop literacy and essential skills.

Further, Practice Engagement Theory, as a socio-cultural perspective, offers possibilities to support literacy and essential skills development across cultures, languages, and social identities. As noted, social practice theories also recognize the relative power of various literacy practices and how these practices can be and have been used to control or to empower people.

Literacy

While drawing on Practice Engagement Theory, this Framework builds on the following perspective on literacy:

Literacy is not just about reading and writing. While reading and writing provide the necessary foundation for learning, literacy is fundamentally about an individual’s capacity to put his/her skills to work in shaping the course of his or her own life. Literacy involves “reading the word and the world^{xiii} in a variety of contexts. Individuals need literacy skills to obtain and use information effectively, to act as informed players and to

manage interactions in a variety of contexts (eg. making decisions about health care, parenting, managing household finances, engaging in the political process or working). (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009, p. 2).

The framework also recognizes that there are broader perspectives of literacy and learning. The following examples were drawn from literature and/or contributed through feedback.

Literacy from an Indigenous people's perspective is seen as integrated and embedded in the knowledge and language of the people (holistic) and inextricably linked to both individual and collective identity (Balenoff et. al, 2006). Literacy from an Indigenous people's perspective goes far beyond print-based literacy or the cognitive skills of reading, writing or numeracy needed to access the labour market. Rather it is a way of life based on a wholistic worldview. (Klinga, S., 2012, p. 11)

Our teachings and learnings, come from within ourselves, from others in our communities including Elders, from Mother Earth, from all there is. This process is our way of life and is embedded in all we are as seen through our ceremonies and culture. (Pam Swimmer, Literacy Alberta)

The FNIM person learns from and through the natural world, language, traditions and ceremonies, and the world of people (self, family, ancestors, clan, community, nation and other nations). (First Nations Holistic Learning Model, 2007) ^{xiv}

Essential Skills

This Framework adopts Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) description of Essential Skills. Essential Skills are the skills (or practices) people use to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks. Essential Skills are not the technical skills required by particular occupations, but rather the skills applied in all occupations. Essential Skills enable people to do their work. They are enabling skills that do the following:

- Help people perform the tasks required by their occupation and other activities of daily life
- Provide people with a foundation to learn other skills
- Enhance people's ability to adapt to change

Essential Skills include reading, writing, numeracy, document use, oral communications, thinking skills, working with others, computer use and continuous learning.^{xv}

We found relatively few documents about best practices in Essential Skills delivery. However, practice engagement theory suggests that Essential Skills can also be understood as social practices that are developed in various social and cultural contexts and situations, and with various people. We anticipate that promising practices from the literacy field will also support Essential Skills development.

Learners

We use the term *learners* to include adults who self-identify as learners. These include adults who join an organized literacy or essential skills program as well as adults who decide to engage in informal learning on their own, with support and/or with others. Adult learners are individuals and have a range of identities, experiences, existing literacy practices, learning strategies and interests. They bring physical, emotional, spiritual, social and

aesthetic, as well as cognitive experiences and social practices to their learning.^{xvi} All of these attributes shape and provide contexts to learning.

Values

This Framework also reflects the following values from *Living Literacy* (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009).

Literacy policies, programs and services:

- are learner-centered and responsive to the strengths, abilities and needs of individuals
- acknowledge and value the language, culture, spirituality and traditions of learners, families and communities
- are delivered through collaborative partnerships
- support innovation and excellence in teaching and learning
- are based on shared responsibility and accountability
- are developed and implemented through open, honest, consistent and transparent processes

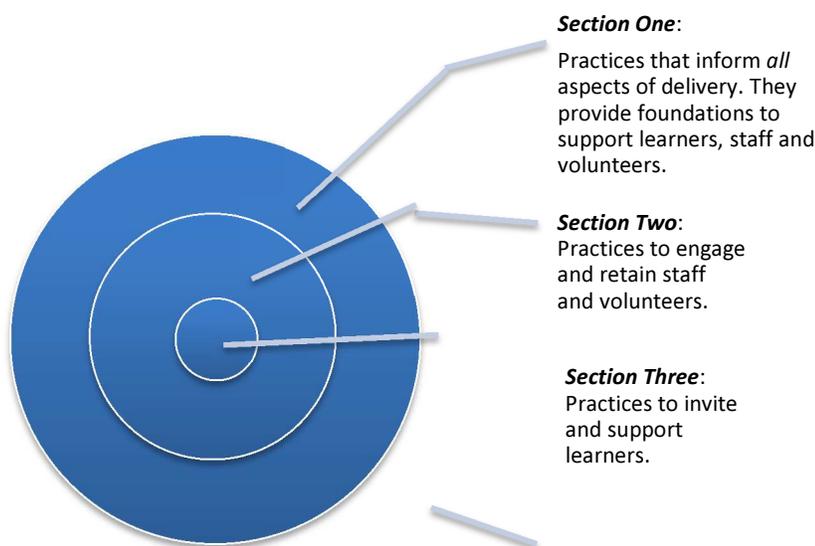
A Living Document

As noted, this Framework was developed with input and response from a number of sources, including guides, reports, and people working in the LES fields. We hope that the Framework will continue to evolve as it is used.

Part Two: Promising Practices

A *promising practice* is an activity, strategy, or process that has been shown, through practice and/or research, to lead to desired results. This Framework presents promising practices to support learners to develop literacy and essential skills practices in a range of contexts related to their lives and learning goals.

The Framework includes three sections of promising practices.



Each section includes the following:

Statements. These include a main statement and may include some related sub-statements. The statements identify “what” the delivery agency does. In some cases the statements identify “why”; in other cases, the why is implied.

Activities. These are examples of activities that demonstrate “how” agencies might implement the practices. Not all activities will apply for your agency, and you will likely have other examples. You can also find more examples in best practice guides (see Appendix 1).

Snapshots. These include examples of how delivery agencies across Alberta are applying the practices. A number of snapshots are from a summary of Foundational Learning Fund (FLFP) Projects completed by community-based learning programs in Alberta.^{xvii} Other snapshots were provided during the consultations about the framework. We hope that more snapshots will be contributed as you and others use the guide.

We anticipate that agencies and practitioners will continue to use available best practice guides related to specific learner groups and programs (e.g., volunteer tutor, workplace programs, Aboriginal literacy programs, family literacy programs). A number of these guides are included in Appendix 1, along with other suggested resources. We hope that resources will be added by you and others using the framework.

Using the framework to reflect and evaluate

Following, is a template you could use to reflect about whether and how well your agency is implementing promising practices.

Step One: Identify a practice statement or statements you wish to focus on.

For each of the practice statements you have identified, indicate a rating:

1. This is a top priority to address.
2. We need to work on this at some point to address it.
3. We are working on this and could do better.
4. We do this adequately.
5. We do this well.

Step Two: For each statement, describe activities to support your rating. Include comments and questions for further reflection and action. For example:

Practice (What and Why)	Activities (How)	Rating:
1. Delivery agencies and partners work together... to facilitate transfer of learners among LES programs and services.	We reviewed learners' goals and developed a list of other programs learners are preparing to apply for. Our next step is to identify requirements to enrol in those programs— from online catalogues and/or conversations with program registrars.	3
5.1 Delivery agencies develop, maintain and implement policies and procedures to foster respect and inclusion.	Our board developed a policy with input from staff, learners and volunteers, and with the assistance of a consultant. The policy is posted in the agency and is reviewed during orientation for new staff, learners, and volunteers. We provide time in staff, volunteer, and learner meetings to review how we are all applying the policy.	4-5
16. Delivery agencies provide instructional activities and learning resources that...Provide a variety of authentic, relevant ... resources related to learners' interests and goals	Our resource collection includes materials that are out of date (content and instructional approaches). We need to develop guidelines for the collection. We will use the guidelines to review and remove materials. We have applied for a grant to purchase new resources and will use the guidelines to select them. Learners and volunteers will help with selecting resources.	1

Adapted from *Learner persistence program self-assessment by driver of persistence*. (2009). Learner Persistence Project. Boston, MA: New England Literacy Resource Centre. Retrieved from <http://www.neirc.org/persist/pdfs/Self-assessment%20by%20driver.pdf>

Section One: Practices that inform all aspects of delivery

1. Delivery agencies and partners work together to do the following:

- Coordinate LES programs and service delivery in their communities.
- Increase contexts and opportunities for adults to engage in LES practices and development.
- Access resources for LES delivery (space, staff, funds).
- Share instructional resources and professional expertise.
- Facilitate referral and self-referral of learners to LES programs and services.
- Reduce barriers and expand access to supports for adults to engage in LES development.
- Facilitate transfer of learners among LES programs and services.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Become familiar with community, online, and other resources that can support learners.
- Develop and maintain relationships with agencies that serve potential learners.
- Identify requirements for learners to transfer to other learning programs.
- Participate in an interagency network.
- Partner with other agencies to offer LES programs in various locations.
- Promote and practice use of clear language.

2. Delivery agencies respond to the LES practice needs and goals of learners, and to the needs and resources of communities the agencies serve.

- 2.1 Delivery agencies have clearly written mission statements, goals, and plans that guide all aspects of LES program and service development and delivery.
- 2.2 As applicable, delivery agencies have boards or advisory groups that are responsible for setting or advising about directions that respond to learner and community needs.
- 2.3 Delivery agencies regularly evaluate how well programs and services reflect their mission and are meeting goals.
- 2.4 Delivery agencies review and update mission statements, goals, plans, and programs and services to account for evaluation outcomes, emerging learner and community needs, promising practices, and available agency and community resources.
- 2.5 Delivery agencies are accountable to learners, staff, volunteers, community partners, and funders.

Activities. As examples, how do/might your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Develop and review/update the agency mission statement
- Survey stakeholders, including community agencies, employers, staff, volunteers, and learners about learner needs and about community needs and resources.
- Involve learners, staff, volunteers, and community partners in evaluation processes.
- Invite suggestions from stakeholders about learner and community needs and resources.
- Invite community representation on the board or advisory group.
- Make evaluation results available to learners, staff, volunteers, community partners, and others with an interest in the agency.
- Encourage and support learners, staff and volunteers to critically reflect about program and service practices as part of ongoing evaluation.

Snapshots

We partnered with industry to obtain information about skill development needs, such as writing trades exams and supervisory skills. (Participant in consultation)

Alberta Works staff and employment agencies refer learners; we tailor services to meet learners' needs. (Participant in consultation)

The Foundational Learning Fund project expanded access to literacy programming in Northeast Edmonton. Additionally, the project aimed to encourage other support agencies to integrate literacy development into programs and services. (The Learning Centre Literacy Association. FLFP)

The "Horizon Community Learning Centre" project focused on communities with strong literacy and language learning needs including Aboriginal communities, Low German Mennonite communities, and the growing newcomer community. One-stop shopping for access to adult learning (direct programming and referrals to other core learner services) is an effective tool that was used. (Peace River Community Adult Learning. FLFP)

3. Delivery agencies develop and maintain respectful and trustworthy relationships to support learning, cooperation, and collaboration in these ways:

- Among staff, volunteers, learners, and others involved in their programs and services.
- With other agencies, organizations, employers, and other people in their communities that share an interest in LES delivery.
- With regional networks and staff in other networks.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Facilitate time and activities for staff, volunteers, and learners to meet and build relationships with each other.
- Provide orientation and training for staff, volunteers, and learners about building respectful relationships and boundaries.
- Allocate paid time for staff to meet with staff in other agencies.
- Support staff to continue with the agency so they can build and maintain relationships.

Good personal relationships are important for learning. This includes recognizing learners as “whole people” with lives outside the classrooms ...¹

...relationships are the foundation of better communication with program staff, greater peer support in and out of class, and more willingness to participate by asking questions and expressing needs²

¹Appleby, Y. (2010). Who are the learners. pp. 2-47. In N. Hughes and I. Schwab (Eds). *Teaching adult literacy. Principles and practice*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

² Nash, A., & Kallenbach, S. (2009). *Making it worth the stay: Findings from the New England Persistence Project*. Boston: New England Literacy Resource Centre at World Education. p. 33. Retrieved from: <http://www.nelrc.org/persist/report09.pdf>

4. Delivery agencies encourage and support learners, staff, volunteers, and partners to participate in development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Involve staff, volunteers, learners, and community partners in planning, promoting, and evaluating programs and services.
- Invite staff, volunteer, and learner suggestions and implement them as possible.
- Integrate literacy and LES development into development and evaluation activities.

Snapshots

We find opportunities and events to invite participation, such as at trade fairs, registration events, and volunteer appreciation events. (Participant in consultation)

We hold a learners' club where we meet monthly to discuss relevant topics like municipal government, doctors' visits, money matters, and travel. It is a great connection tool. (Participant in consultation)

We have two socials per year. It is an international potluck where tutors, learners, board members, and all their families each introduce food, ingredients, and a history of the food prepared. It is a comfortable environment to practise learning. (Participant in consultation)

5. Delivery agencies promote and practise respect for and inclusion of diverse cultures and social identities.

- 5.1 Delivery agencies develop, maintain and implement policies and procedures to foster respect and inclusion.
- 5.2 Delivery agencies develop, maintain and implement policies and procedures to ensure ethical and equitable treatment of all staff, volunteers, and learners.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Invite and involve representatives from agencies that serve diverse cultures to participate on the agency board or advisory group.
- Consult with representatives from agencies that serve diverse cultures.
- Create inviting environments for people of all cultures and identities.
- Provide training and support for staff, volunteers, and learners about inclusion, non-discrimination, anti-racism and related topics.
- Provide training in cross-cultural communication.
- Address and work to resolve incidences of discrimination and/or conflict

Social identities include race, culture, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, abilities, education, and other identities.

Culture refers to the beliefs and customs that are shared by a particular group. Although *culture* is often used in reference to ethnicity, it is also used in reference to other identities (e.g., *youth culture*).

Inclusion promotes the full participation of individuals in society, regardless of their traits, identities or circumstances. ¹

Snapshots

We organize social events to promote respect and inclusion in the agency and community. (Participant in consultation)

¹ Alberta's Social Policy Framework. Government of Alberta. February, 2013.

We offered cultural awareness training for learners in the workforce. (Participant in consultation)

The "Plug Into Learning" program made strong efforts to reach underrepresented learners by establishing excellent partnerships with the Aboriginal communities around them. This was established and maintained through a satellite campus at the Rocky Native Friendship Centre. (Rocky Community Learning Council. FLFP)

6. Delivery agencies raise awareness and promote programs and services to invite learners, staff and volunteers from diverse cultures and identities.

Delivery agencies use promotional resources and activities that have the following attributes:

- Are varied to address diverse experiences and interests.
- Are presented in clear language.
- Provide sufficient information about programs, services, and expectations so that prospective learners and volunteers can make informed choices about enrolling and participating.
- Provide information and referral to other programs and services as appropriate
- Involve current learners and volunteers as possible in promotion and recruitment
- Use diverse media that account for various experiences with technology.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Attend and present at interagency meetings and/or Chamber of Commerce meetings.
- Host community events to promote programs and services.
- Visit other agencies to share information about the LES programs and services.
- Use clear language on websites and social media.

Snapshots

Learners and volunteers serve as ambassadors to invite learners and volunteers from their communities. (Participant in consultation)

We make presentations to community partners, schools, libraries, and community centres, and at interagency meetings. (Participant in consultation)

Promotion is pounding the pavement and making personal contact. (Participant in consultation)

We've gone door-to-door to let people know about our programs and services. (Participant in consultation)

We provide personal, regular contact with current learners and those on our wait lists. (Participant in consultation)

The "Financial Literacy program" partnered with the Edmonton Financial Literacy Society to offer courses, and partnered with NorQuest College and literacy providers in Edmonton to publicize courses, recruit participants, and accept referrals. (Centre for Family Literacy. FLFP)

The "Community Adult Literacy Learning project" delivered relevant workshops and information sessions that motivated and addressed lower-skilled learners. (Rocky View Schools Community Learning. FLFP)

7. Delivery agencies address impacts of violence on learning to support all learners, staff, and volunteers in all aspects of programs and services.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Acknowledge and raise awareness about the prevalence of experiences of violence and their impact on learning.
- Create environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and as safe as possible for all learners, staff, and volunteers
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Provide orientation for staff, volunteers, and learners about the scope of violence and its impacts.
- Provide training for staff, volunteers, and learners about addressing the impacts of violence on learning.
- Develop and maintain relationships with agencies that help people to address experiences and impacts of violence.
- Provide training and orientation for staff, volunteers, and learners about appropriate boundaries, supports, and referral processes.
- Involve learners, staff, and volunteers in creating emotional safety.

Violence is any pattern of behaviour that individuals or groups use to gain and maintain control over other individuals or groups. Violence includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, cultural, verbal and financial abuse. Racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, poverty and other oppressions are also violent. ¹

Question from the consultations. *Why is addressing impacts of violence included as a distinct statement rather than as part of addressing barriers and challenges to learning, including poverty or homelessness? Violence is multidimensional (see text box) and occurs across social and economic classes. Adult learners may be living with the impacts of violence experienced in childhood or youth, as well as with current experiences. Approaches to address impacts of violence can also help to address emotional, spiritual and social impacts of poverty and homelessness.*

Snapshot

Women who had experienced violence created a Readers' Theatre script, based on their experiences. They practiced literacy skills as they wrote and read their script. They developed confidence as they presented their script to other learners and community workers. They wanted to let other women know that they were not alone, and that help was available. (Development Team member

¹ Violence. Retrieved from <http://learningandviolence.net/violence.htm>

Section Two: Practices to engage and retain suitable staff and volunteers

8. Delivery agencies engage staff and volunteers with appropriate training and/or experience, cultural and diversity awareness, and abilities.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Clarify criteria for hiring / engaging staff and volunteers.
- Prepare and update job descriptions for staff and volunteers.
- Interview and select staff and volunteers.

9. Delivery agencies provide orientation to help staff and volunteers understand the program and their roles, clarify their responsibilities, and identify support and resources they may need.

Delivery agencies provide orientation activities that help staff and volunteers to:

- Feel welcome and build community.
- Understand the program and services.
- Set realistic expectations for their participation.
- Identify training and support needs and resources.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Welcome staff and volunteers into programs.
- Help staff / volunteers clarify goals and expectations.
- Involve current staff, learners and volunteers in orientation activities as possible.

10. Delivery agencies provide or refer to ongoing training and professional development that is appropriate to staff and volunteers' current experiences in their roles.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Provide regular opportunities for staff and volunteers to evaluate their job/role performance.
- Assess needs for training and professional development.
- Access and allocate funds for training and professional development.
- Provide training and professional development.
- Evaluate whether training and professional development are addressing needs.

Snapshot

The "Shared Training" program provided unique professional development and resource sharing opportunities to Calgary-based non-profit organizations that provide foundational learning. This included sharing new delivery models and promising practices specific to working with low literate learners. (Calgary Learns. FLFP)

11. Delivery agencies provide appropriate remuneration for staff, including pay for planning/preparation time, staff meetings, and professional development.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Maintain and update a pay scale.
- Access and allocate funds to pay staff.

12. Delivery agencies recognize volunteers' contributions.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Organize recognition events.
- Recognize an individual's contributions or special talents.

Snapshots

We recruit volunteers from among our learners and recruit staff from among our volunteers. For example, a woman who attended a family literacy program volunteered to organize supplies. (Participant in consultation)

We provide ongoing support to keep volunteers inspired and engaged; we recognize they have a large role in keeping our learners engaged. (Participant in consultation)

The "A Gift to our Community – Learning Without Borders" program provided professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers across the Council which is comprised of more than 16 agencies, organizations and individuals. The purpose was to enhance program delivery and build capacity within the Council. (Lloydminster Learning Council Association. FLFP)

Section Three: Practices to invite and support learners

13. Delivery agencies work with partners to reduce barriers and increase supports for learners to persist in learning.

13.1 Delivery agencies and partners acknowledge that cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, and social needs and challenges have impacts on persistence and learning. Agencies and partners help learners to address these needs and challenges by providing or referring to the following:

- Program sites that are accessible, safe and conducive to learning.
- Free or reduced tuition and/or grants.
- Supports and resources (counselling, income support, food security, housing).
- Child-care services.

13.2 Delivery agencies provide policies, training, and time for staff to help learners to access, and learn how to access supports and resources.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Train staff to support and refer learners.
- Maintain a list of community resources.
- Allocate time for staff to help learners access resources.
- Ensure that sites are welcoming.
- Ensure that sites are accessible for people of diverse physical abilities and transportation resources.
- Promote emotional, physical, and spiritual safety for learners from diverse cultures and learning experiences.
- Offer flexible schedules to accommodate learners' commitments to family, work, and other responsibilities.
- In group settings, manage continuous enrolment to contribute to emotional safety and stability.
- Invite learners, staff, and volunteers to identify what they need in order to increase their safety in the program.

Snapshots

The Learning Connections program utilized a variety of delivery models (class/tutoring) at flexible times with appropriate supports to reduce barriers (such as transportation and child care) to help better serve their learners needs. (Taber and District Community Adult Learning Association. FLFP)

The Math to Success program found their success at attracting younger, harder-to-reach learners was higher once they offered child care. (Lamont County Community Adult Learning Council. FLFP)

Westlock and District Skills for Success program focused on building technology/computer skills and literacy skills to support learners to transition to further learning. They additionally tried to support learners who were not able to access learning activities or were not experiencing success in learning. (Westlock and District Adult Learning Centre Society. FLFP)

14. Delivery agencies orient learners to programs and services.

Delivery agencies provide orientation activities that help learners in the following ways:

- Feel welcome and build community.
- Understand the program and services.
- Set realistic expectations for participation.
- Clarify learning goals.
- Identify support needs and resources.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Welcome learners into programs.
- Help learners clarify goals and expectations.
- Involve current learners and volunteers in orientation activities.

Snapshots

We recruit and train learner mentors to support new learners. (Participant in consultation)

We provide learner orientation to explain any changes at the Centre, expectations of the learner, and supports available. Learners are provided a checklist to identify a skill they would like to learn. (Participant in consultation)

15. Delivery agencies provide initial and ongoing assessment of literacy and essential skills practices that are relevant to learners' goals.

Delivery agencies use assessment processes that include the following attributes:

- Encourage learner self-assessment, reflection, and self-direction.
- Are appropriate to learners' cultures, identities, and skill levels.
- Provide a common language for staff, tutors, and learners to talk about assessment, skills, and practices.
- Identify learners' strengths and learning needs.
- Identify learners' literacy skills and literacy practices.
- Identify attainable short- and long-term goals.
- Are used to plan learning activities.
- Account for changes in learners' everyday literacy and essential skills practices.
- Support learner transition to other learning opportunities and activities.
- Recognize social, emotional, and other areas of growth.
- Assessment results are shared with relevant staff and tutors, with learners' permission. As needed, results are documented to facilitate transition to other programs, employment, or other opportunities.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff and/or others achieve the following?

- Select assessment resources and processes used in your agency.
- Train staff and volunteers in assessment approaches.
- Share assessment information.
- Involve learners in assessment processes.
- Adapt assessment processes to the delivery context.

Snapshots

The Horizon Community Learning Centre project provided individualized learning plans prepared from cutting-edge literacy and foundational learning assessments. (Peace River Community Adult Learning Council. FLFP)

The Edson Learning Centre provided a detailed learning assessment and learning plan as part of their core service. (Edson and District Community Learning Society. FLFP)

16. Delivery agencies provide learning activities and resources that invite learners to engage actively in learning.

Delivery agencies provide learning activities and resources that include the following attributes:

- Are diverse, authentic, relevant and related to learners' interests and goals.
- Reflect learners' cultures and identities.
- Balance direct instruction in skills and strategies with opportunities to apply skills to practices in various, wider contexts.
- Introduce holistic approaches to engage and support cognitive, emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and aesthetic aspects of self in learning.
- Balance individual and group learning (in group settings).
- Promote self-efficacy.
- Encourage and guide towards self-directed learning.
- Encourage and support peer learning opportunities.
- Use learning resources that respectfully and accurately represent diverse cultures and identities.

Learning activities includes activities to support adult learning such as teaching, facilitating, tutoring, mentoring, computer-mediated learning, with groups and/or individuals.

Self-efficacy refers to people's beliefs in their capabilities to learn or perform specific tasks at designated levels, and to meet specific goals.¹

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- Develop and use policy and procedures to select learning resources.
- Recruit, train, and support peer tutors.
- Introduce and integrate holistic approaches in instruction.
- Encourage and support learners to set short-term goals, plan how to work towards them, and evaluate their progress/success.
- Focus instruction and assessment on learners' progress to meet their own goals, rather than on comparison with other learners.
- Provide opportunities for learners to share their goals, plans, and accomplishments with each other.

Snapshots

The Essential Literacy Skills project taught literacy in a holistic, comprehensive sense to empower learners, such as using writing to address significant community issues such as homelessness and discrimination. They tried to use literacy to help learners advocate for themselves and find other practical applications of literacy and learning. (Slave Lake Adult Education Committee. FLFP)

¹ Nash, A., & Kallenbach, S. (2009). *Making it worth the stay: Findings from the New England persistence project*. Boston: New England Literacy Resource Centre at World Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.nelrc.org/persist/report09.pdf>

17. Delivery agencies acknowledge that learners step out of programs and services they enrolled in before reaching their goals.

Activities. As examples, how do your agency, staff, and/or others achieve the following?

- During orientation, acknowledge the possibilities of and support for stepping out.
- Help learners to access instructional resources when they step out.
- Help learners to plan for self-study and other learning opportunities.
- Follow-up with learners who step out.
- Invite and welcome learners to return to programs when they are able to.

Appendix 1: Resources

This Appendix includes best practice guides and a selection of resources related to implementing the promising practice statements. With a few exceptions, the resources are available in electronic formats.

Aboriginal literacy

An Aboriginal essential skills workshop. Planting the seeds for growth. Participant workbook. Victoria, BC: Douglas College, Retrieved from:

http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/aboriginal_journey/workbook/workbook.pdf

First Nations holistic lifelong learning model. Canadian Council on Learning. Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. Retrieved from: http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/CCL_Learning_Model_FN.pdf

Gravelin, F.J. (2012). *Circleworks. Transforming Aboriginal literacy.* Can be purchased from: Ningwakwe Learning Press. [<http://nlpress.cp100.net/ecom/shopexd.asp?id=86>]

Klinga, S. (2012). *Literature review: State of practice: Essential skills applications with First Nations, Inuit and Metis in Canada.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Career Development Foundation. Retrieved from:

http://www.nald.ca/library/research/literature_review/literature_review.pdf

Ningwakwe (Priscilla George) (2010). *A new vision guiding aboriginal literacy.* Can be purchased from: Ningwakwe Learning Press.

<http://www.ningwakwe.on.ca/webstore.html>

The Aboriginal literacy and essential skills pilot project. (2013). Victoria, BC: Literacy Victoria. Retrieved from: <http://www.literacyvictoria.ca/sites/default/files/resources/aboriginalliteracyandessentialskillspilotprojecteverversionfinal.pdf>

Addressing impacts of violence on learning

Learning and violence website. <http://www.learningandviolence.net/>

Morrish, E., Horsman, J. and Hofer, J. (2002). *Take on the challenge.* Boston, MA: World Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.worlded.org/docs/TakeOnTheChallenge.pdf>

Quartar, G., Horsman, J., Bajwa, J. K., Willat, A, Bonistee, M (2009). *Marginalized women and apprenticeship training: Investigating a high-support model.* Toronto, ON: George Brown College and Spiral Community Resource Group. Retrieved from:

http://www.learningandviolence.net/lrnteach/marg_women_apprenticeship.pdf

Violence and learning. *Taking action.* (2004). Calgary, AB: Literacy Alberta. Retrieved from: <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/valta/valta.pdf>

Assessment

Read forward. Retrieved from:

<http://blogs.bowvalleycollegeweb.com/adultreadingassessment/>

Record of achievement manual. Certificate in literacy and learning. Stage 1. (2009). Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, Adult Learning and Literacy. Retrieved from: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/stages/pdf/stage1_0809.pdf

Record of achievement manual. Certificate in literacy and learning. Stage 2. (2009). Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, Adult Learning and Literacy. Retrieved from: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/stages/pdf/stage2_0809.pdf

Sauve, L. (2012). *Collective list of assessment tools*. Retrieved from: <http://www.literacy.ca/content/uploads/2012/06/Assessment-Matrix-all-tools-individuallyJune2012.pdf>

Community-based

[Bow Valley College \(2012\) *Community Learning Needs Assessment: Toolkit*. Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College: Retrieved from: \[www.norquest.ca/NorquestCollege/media/pdf/.../CALNA-Final-2011.pdf\]\(http://www.norquest.ca/NorquestCollege/media/pdf/.../CALNA-Final-2011.pdf\)](#)

Campbell, J. (1999). *Enhancing program quality: Standards for community-based adult literacy programs*. Halifax, NS: Quality Standards Committee. Retrieved from: <http://www.gonssal.ca/General-Public/Documents-Resources/documents/Enhancingprogramquality--standardsforcommunity-basedadulthoodliteracyprograms.pdf>

NWT Literacy Council, Aurora College, Department of Education, Culture and Employment (2004). *Best practices in action. Tools for Community-Based Adult Literacy and Basic Education Programs*. Retrieved from <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/adultlit/bpractic/bpractic.pdf>

Saskatchewan Literacy Network (2001), *Best program practices*. (2001). Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Retrieved from: http://www.sk.literacy.ca/pdf_links/bestProgramPractices.PDF

Skage, S. & Schaetti, M. (1999). *Setting the compass. A program development and evaluation tool for volunteer literacy programs in Alberta. The Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. Retrieved from: <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/compass/compass.pdf> Deaf and hard of hearing learners*

Bow Valley College (2009) *Effective teaching techniques and tools for deaf and hard of hearing adult immigrants in ASL and English bilingual and bicultural college programs*. Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College: Retrieved from: <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/bowvalley/deaf/deaf.pdf>

Developmental differences

Best practices in literacy for adults with developmental disabilities. (1988). Toronto: Literacy and Basic Skills Section. Workplace Preparation Branch, Ministry of Education and Training. Retrieved from: <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/training/literacy/practice/practice.pdf>

English as an additional language

Gnida S. (2009). *Best practices for adult ESL and LINC programming in Alberta*. Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language. Retrieved from: <http://www.atesldocuments.com/bp/>

Family literacy

Centre for Family Literacy. Statements of good practice. Retrieved from:
<http://famlit.ca/resources/goodpractice.shtml>

Colchester-East Hants Regional Library (2003) Family literacy best practices guide for programs in Nova Scotia. Retrieved from:
<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/best/best.pdf>

Sutherland, Kimberly (2005) *Family literacy in Ontario: A guide to best practices*. Toronto: Ontario Literacy Coalition. Retrieved from:
<http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/bstprcgd/bstprcgd.pdf>

Perry, J. & Brown, C. (2006), Live, horse, 'til the grass grows. A study of family literacy in New Brunswick. Work, outcomes and best practices. Report of the Family Literacy Field Coordination and Research Project. Fredericton, NB: Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick Ltd. Retrieved from: <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/live/livehors-web.pdf>

General

Government of New Brunswick, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. (2011). *Quality Framework for Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Service Delivery in New Brunswick*. Retrieved from:
http://www.nald.ca/library/research/govnb/quality_framework/quality_framework.pdf

Instruction

Jacobson, E., Degner, S., & Purcell-Gates, V. (2003). *Creating authentic materials and activities for the adult literacy classroom*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/jacobson.pdf>

The adult literacy and numeracy curriculum framework for Scotland and the curriculum wheel. Website. <http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/39.html>

The circle of learning. Benchmarks levels 1 and 2. (2006). Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Retrieved from: http://www.sk.literacy.ca/pdf_links/benchCircle.pdf

Learning disabilities

Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (2007). *Adult literacy and learning disabilities: Best practices for success. A resource manual for practitioners*. Fredericton NB. Retrieved from: <http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/alld/alld.pdf>

Outreach / Widening access

Alderson, L., and Twiss, D. (2003). *Literacy for women on the streets*. Vancouver, BC: Capilano College. Retrieved from: <http://wish-vancouver.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/litforwm.pdf>

- Barton, D., Appleby, Y., Hodge, R., Tusting, K., & Ivanic, R. (2006). Relating adults' lives and learning: participation and engagement in different settings. London: NRDC. Retrieved from: http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=48
- Gardner, A. (2003). *Building community capacity: Focus on adult literacy*. (Connecting Literacy to Community). Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College. Retrieved from <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/connect/focus/focus.pdf>
- Reisenberger, A., Barton, D., Satchwell, C., Wilson, A., Law, C., & Weaver, S. (2010). *Engaging homeless people, Black and minority ethnic and other priority groups in Skills for Life*. Research Report. (2010). London, England: National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Retrieved from: http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.asp?ID=182
- Revelstoke Adult Literacy Outreach Project, (2008). A look at best practices for conducting outreach for literacy programs. Revelstoke, BC: Okanagan College. Retrieved from: <http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Assets/Regions/Shuswap+Revelstoke+Region/Images/Best+Practices+Inventory.pdf>
- Trumpener, B. (1997). *Gimme shelter. A resource for literacy and homelessness work*. Toronto, ON: St. Christopher House. Retrieved from: <http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/homeless/homeless.pdf>
- Widening Access for Adult Literacies. Website. <http://www.wideningaccessforliteracies.ca/>

Participatory approaches

- Burkhart, K. (2009). Exploring participatory approaches within community-based adult literacy programs in Canada. Integrated Studies Project. Athabasca, AB: Athabasca University. Retrieved from <http://dtp.lib.athabascau.ca/action/download.php?filename=mais/KathleenBurkartProject.pdf>
- Learning about participatory approaches in adult literacy education. Six research in practice studies*. (2000). Edmonton, AB: The Learning Centre Literacy Association. Retrieved from <http://library.copian.ca/item/726>

Persistence

- Comings, J., Parella, A., & Soricone, L. (1999). Persistence among adult basic education students in pre-GED classes. Cambridge, MA: The National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report12.pdf>
- Nash, A., & Kallenbach, S. (2009). *Making it worth the stay: Findings from the New England persistence project*. Boston: New England Literacy Resource Centre at World Education. Retrieved from: <http://www.nelrc.org/persist/report09.pdf>

Postsecondary

- College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading. (2003) *Best practices in managing the classroom to improve student commitment*. Retrieved from: <http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca/projrprt/RthruR/bestprac/cover.htm>
- Eaton, S. E. (2008). *Best practices for late entry learners into college academic upgrading programs*. Annotated bibliography Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College. Retrieved from: <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/bowvalley/annobiblio/annobiblio.pdf>

Practice engagement / literacy as a social practice

Reder, S. (1994) Practice engagement theory: A socio-cultural approach to literacy across languages and cultures. In B.M. Ferdman, R. Weber, & A.G. Ramirez (Eds.), *Literacy across languages and cultures* (pp. 33-74). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Reder, S. (2009). Scaling up and moving in: Connecting social practices views to policies and programs in adult education. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*. 17(1), 35-50.

Reder, S. (2012) The Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning: Challenging Assumptions. Montreal, QC: The Centre for Literacy. (Research Brief). 1-6. Retrieved from: http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/CFLRsrbchBrief_Chllngng_Assmptns.pdf

Program promotion

Effective marketing and communications for Community Adult Learning Councils and Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs. (2007). Community Learning Network and Literacy Alberta. Retrieved from: http://en.copian.ca/library/learning/cln/effective_market/effective_market.pdf

Self-efficacy

Adult learner persistence. Competence. New England Literacy Resource Centre. Retrieved from: http://www.nelrc.org/persist/drivers_competence.html

Self-efficacy. Helping students believe in themselves. On the cutting edge, Professional development for Geoscience Faculty. Retrieved from: <http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/efficacy.html>

Tutor training and support

Creating learning partners. A facilitators guide for training effective adult literacy tutors. (2007). Calgary, AB: Literacy Alberta. Retrieved from: <http://literacyalberta.ca/sites/default/files/Creating%20Learning%20Partners%202011.pdf>

Promoting Best Practices in Volunteer Management. (1996). Community Literacy of Ontario: Barrie. Retrieved from: http://www.communityliteracyofontario.ca/resource/pdfs/volun_quality_stand.pdf

Workplace literacy

Belfiore, M. E. (2002). *Good practice in use: Guidelines for good practice in workplace education.* Toronto, ON: Ontario Literacy Coalition. Retrieved from: <http://en.copian.ca/library/research/olc/goodprac/goodprac.pdf>

Defoe, T. & Twiss, D. (2012). *Embedding literacy and essential skills. Lessons from our research.* Vancouver, BC: Decoda Literacy Solutions. Retrieved from: http://decoda.ca/wp-content/files_flutter/1372191306EmbeddingLESResearchReport.pdf

MacLeod, C (1995) Principles of good practice in workplace/workforce education. Toronto, ON: ABC Canada. Retrieved from:
<http://en.copian.ca/library/research/abc/prigoo/english/prigooen.pdf>

Nunavut Literacy Council. (2004). *Literacy programs that work. Sharing knowledge and experience*. Retrieved from:
http://www.ilitagsiniq.ca/sites/default/files/files/literacy_programs_that_work_en.pdf

The Conference Board of Canada. (2009). prepared for The Canadian Council on Learning Workplace learning in small and medium-sized enterprises: Effective practices for improving productivity and competitiveness. Retrieved from: <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/pdfs/OtherReports/CBofC-WorkplaceLearning-SME-OverviewReport.pdf>

Union-led, work-related learning. Profiles of effective practice. (2011). Centre for Workplace Skills. Retrieved from:
http://www.nald.ca/library/research/cws/profiles_effective_practices/profiles_effective_practices.pdf

Wholistic learning

Managing stress to improve learning (2008), (Website)/
<http://www.nelrc.org/managingstress/>

Appendix 2: Definitions

The following definitions were adopted in consultation with the Task Force Team. The first two are commonly used in Alberta, including by the Government of Alberta. The remaining definitions were identified through the literature review or through an online search and review of definitions.

Literacy is not just about reading and writing. While reading and writing provide the necessary foundation for learning, literacy is fundamentally about an individual's capacity to put his/her skills to work in shaping the course of his or her own life. Literacy involves "reading the word and the world in a variety of contexts. Individuals need literacy skills to obtain and use information effectively, to act as informed players and to manage interactions in a variety of contexts (e.g., making decisions about health care, parenting, managing household finances, engaging in the political process or working)." (Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, 2009, p. 2)

Literacy from an Indigenous people's perspective is seen as integrated and embedded in the knowledge and language of the people (holistic) and inextricably linked to both individual and collective identity (Balenoff et. al, 2006). Literacy from an Indigenous people's perspective goes far beyond print-based literacy or the cognitive skills of reading, writing or numeracy needed to access the labour market. Rather it is a way of life based on a wholistic worldview. (Klinga, S. 2012, p. 11)

Our teachings and learnings, come from within ourselves, from others in our communities including Elders, from Mother Earth, from all there is. This process is our way of life and is embedded in all we are as seen through our ceremonies and culture. (Pam Swimmer, Literacy Alberta)

The FNIM person learns from and through the natural world, language, traditions and ceremonies, and the world of people (self, family, ancestors, clan, community, nation and other nations). (First Nations Holistic Learning Model, 2007) ^{xviii}

Essential Skills are the skills people use to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks. Essential Skills are not the technical skills required by particular occupations but rather the skills applied in all occupations. Essential Skills enable people to do their work. They are enabling skills that:

- Help people perform the tasks required by their occupation and other activities of daily life
- Provide people with a foundation to learn other skills
- Enhance people's ability to adapt to change.

Essential Skills include reading, writing, numeracy, document use, oral communications, thinking skills, working with others, computer use and continuous learning.

Promising practices include activities that, through experience or research, have shown to lead to a desired result. In this framework, the term is used to include good practices, best practices, quality standards, standards, and similar terms used in the literature.

Framework is a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality.^{xix} The Development Team suggests the use of the term "framework" rather than "guide," as framework suggests a wider scope.

Delivery agency is an organization or business that provides literacy and essential skills programs and services.

Program includes activities that involve and support adult learners to expand literacy and essential skills practices.

Practice-Engagement Theory is a socio-cultural theory of literacy: people develop literacy as they engage in literacy practices within cultural and social situations (Reder, 1994).

Persistence is “a continuous learning process that lasts until an adult student meets his or her ... goals” (Comings, Parella and Soricone, 1999). In the context of this framework, persistence includes participation in learning opportunities and engagement in literacy and essential skills practices and learning.

Endnotes

ⁱ Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). *Living Literacy. A Literacy Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy*.

ⁱⁱ Adapted from Criteria for choosing promising practices and community interventions. Community Tool Box. Retrieved from <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/choose-and-adapt-community-interventions/criteria-for-selectinng/main>

ⁱⁱⁱ Dr. Reder is a professor of Applied Linguistics at Portland State University. His research interests include adult literacy and language development, and longitudinal studies of literacy and language development.

^{iv} Darville, R. (2003). Practical knowledge and research knowledge of the adult literacy process. Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Online Proceedings 2003. Retrieved from: http://www.casae-aceea.ca/sites/casae/archives/cnf2003/2003_papers/richarddarville-rvscAS03.pdf

^v Various terms are used in the literature, including best practices, good practices, and quality standards.

^{vi} Literature review: Effective practices in literacy and essential skills. Unpublished. (Literacy Alberta and NorQuest College, July, 2013)

^{vii} Reder, S. (1994). Practice engagement theory: A socio-cultural approach to literacy across languages and cultures. In B.M. Ferdman, R. Weber, & A.G. Ramirez (Eds.), *Literacy across languages and cultures* (pp. 33-74). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

^{viii} Hamilton, M. (2010). The social context of literacy. pp. 7-27. In Hughes, N., & Schwab, N. *Teaching adult literacy. Principles and practices*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

^{ix} Barton, D. & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local Literacies*. London: Routledge.

^x Reder, S. (2009). Scaling up and moving in: Connecting social practices views to policies and programs in adult education. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*. 17(1), 35-50

^{xi} Reder, S. (2012). The longitudinal study of adult learning: Challenging assumptions. Montreal, QC: The Centre for Literacy. (Research Brief). 1-6. Retrieved from http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/CFLRsrchBrief_Chllngng_Assmptns.pdf

^{xii} Comings, J., Parella, A., & Soricone, L. (1999). Persistence among adult basic education students in pre-GED classes. Cambridge, MA: The National Centre for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/research/report12.pdf>

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