



# Basic Education Redesign

## Phase 1: Planning and Foundations

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## Introduction

This update reflects the work that has been completed by the Basic Education Redesign Task Team during Phase 1 (planning and foundations) of the redesign process and contains recommendations for the next three phases (curriculum development, implementation, and sustainability).

Specifically, the update articulates the broad vision, scope and guiding principles for basic education and describes the framework and content for credit programs.

The philosophy for curriculum development is also articulated. It consists of five foundations: 1) moving towards transactional and transformative perspectives; 2) valuing biculturalism; 3) respecting all types of knowledge and learning; 4) putting adult education principles into practice; and 5) making a commitment to renewal.

A process for the development of curriculum for Level 3 in the Adult 10 program is outlined as well as the development of benchmarks for Levels 1 and 2 (literacy levels). A longer-term plan for implementation of the new curricula and benchmarks is proposed. Processes to sustain the quality of the curriculum and its delivery are also recommended.

Five appendices are included to provide further information with respect to basic education goals and objectives, learner profiles, curriculum philosophy, teaching strategies and adult learning practices.

This document is to be used to guide the design, development and delivery of basic education programs and services. All activities will be congruent with the philosophy and framework that have been articulated.

The Basic Education Redesign Task Team developed the content of this report through research activities and consultations with learners, practitioners, and stakeholders. In addition to consultations on specific items, Task Team members regularly provide updates to and request feedback from their organizations. This feedback guides the work of the Task Team and is reflected in the content of this report.

## **1.0 Basic Education Visioning Document**

### **1.1 Vision for Basic Education**

Basic education in Saskatchewan provides opportunities for adults to further develop academic, employability, and functional skills<sup>1</sup> that contribute to life-long learning. It helps learners to speak with their own voice and enhances individual and community well being.

Basic education is accessible, responsive and supportive of adult learners. Integrated approaches and partnerships are used to address learner needs. The diversity of learners from all cultures and with varying abilities is respected. Success in basic education is measured by learners setting and progressing towards goals.

Basic education incorporates adult learning principles and practices to ensure learner success. Curricula reflect a holistic approach to learning and are flexible in order to meet diverse regional needs. Basic education curricula are reviewed and updated regularly.

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<sup>1</sup> Functional skills defined on page 8.

## 1.2 Scope of Basic Education

Basic education is an umbrella term that refers to a wide range of services and credit and non-credit programs designed to help learners achieve their goals. These goals may include increasing education and/or certification levels; gaining prerequisites for further training or employment; enhancing life skills, independence and self-sufficiency; or learning skills in specific areas (such as technological literacy, communication skills, portfolio development).

Because basic education activities are based on the needs of the members of the community or region, programs and services will vary from region to region.

The following two lists provide examples of services and non-credit programs, but are not intended to be comprehensive in nature.

Services may include:

- intake and assessment;
- access to elders; personal, academic and career counselling; tutors and/or learning specialists;
- cultural programs and services
- inclusion and supports for people with disabilities; or
- access to distance education opportunities.

Non-credit programs may include:

- literacy, family literacy
- workplace literacy
- work placements
- employment readiness
- life skills
- career exploration and development
- preparation for post-secondary programs
- pre-apprenticeship training
- English as a second language/English as a second dialect

Credit programs include:

- Basic Education 10 (Levels 1, 2, 3)
- Adult 12
- GED

Note: Elements from some programs listed in the non-credit section are also included for credit within the Basic Education 10 program (e.g., literacy, work placements, employment readiness activities).
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### 1.3 Guiding Principles

The philosophy, approaches and practices in basic education are guided by the following principles:

**Holistic** - Basic education recognizes and respects the interrelationship of individuals, families, communities and cultures.

**Learner-centred** - The voice of the learner is heard and respected. Basic education responds to the diverse needs of individuals, valuing their experiences, knowledge, goals, skills and learning styles. It recognizes that learning new skills is a developmental process that may not be a continuous, linear process.

**Equitable** – Basic education is inclusive in nature and is respectful of cultural, economic, social, and educational diversity. All people are treated and viewed in an equitable manner.

**Affirming** - Basic education reflects the realities of the learners it serves in a manner that is meaningful and empowering. Learners encounter an inviting, respectful environment from initial contact to completion of goals.

**Respectful of Aboriginal<sup>2</sup> cultures** - The diverse experiences, knowledge and cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan is recognized, respected, and incorporated into basic education development, design, and delivery.

**Critically reflective and action-oriented** – Learners are encouraged to move beyond surface acceptance of ideas, information and knowledge. Existing assumptions and biases are examined and issues are viewed from a variety of perspectives. Problem solving and solutions for change are emphasized. Learners are empowered by their learning experiences.

**Accessible** - Basic education is responsive to learner access needs, which may include geographic location, scheduling, various abilities and financial considerations.

**Accountable** - Basic education develops and maintains standards of good practice and is accountable to the learner, the community and governments.

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<sup>2</sup> Definition provided on page 8.

## 1.4 Glossary of Terms

(Note: These terms may have different meanings in other contexts)

**Aboriginal** – In the Canadian Constitution, the term “Aboriginal” refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. In the context of this report, the term “Aboriginal” refers to First Nations and Métis peoples. This reflects Saskatchewan demographics<sup>3</sup> and traditional territorial areas.

**Community** – Community may refer to a group of people living in the same geographic area or a group whose members share a common culture, language or interest.

**Functional Skills** – Those skills that have a practical application in one’s daily life. This may include skills such as numeracy (e.g., budgeting, bank deposits, price comparisons, etc.), prose literacy (e.g., editorials, news stories), document literacy (e.g., job applications, maps, bus schedules, tables, charts, etc.), technological literacy, and employability skills.

**Holistic Education** – Holistic education focuses on relationships – “the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, between mind and body, between various domains of knowledge, between the individual and community, between self and Self. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these relationships so that he/she gains both an awareness of them and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where appropriate.”<sup>4</sup> Instructional content is related to the specific contexts of learners’ lives and is delivered through a thematic approach wherever possible.

**Thematic Approaches** – There are several variations on the thematic approach. Multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches are most common. In a multidisciplinary approach, themes are developed within a specific subject area with related content from other disciplines added. An interdisciplinary approach stresses commonalities amongst all subjects; for example, reading and writing across the curriculum. In a transdisciplinary approach themes or topics of interest are identified by the learners – getting a job, selecting a balanced diet, and so on. The instructor then develops the unit, identifies the academic competencies (from all subject areas) and generic skills relevant to the theme, and uses a variety of resources and real life experiences to explore the theme.

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<sup>3</sup> In 2001, almost 60% of learners in basic education programs were Aboriginal. Demographic trends in Saskatchewan indicate that the Aboriginal population will increase and the non-Aboriginal population will decrease. The Registered Indian population is forecasted to represent 16.2% of the total provincial population in 2013 and 20.2% by 2018. The Indian labour force in 1998 was estimated at 5% of the total provincial labour force. This proportion is projected to rise to 8% in 2008 and 14% in 2018. In 1996, 59% of Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan, 15 years and over, had less than Grade 12 compared to 42% for the non-Aboriginal population (Elliott, January 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Miller, John P. (1988). *The Holistic Curriculum*. Toronto: OISE Press. p.3

## **2.0 Framework for Credit Programs**

### **2.1 Framework**

The framework for credit programs addresses requests for recognition of learner progress and achievements; broadening of traditional views of academic programming; stronger connections to employment; and more inclusive content and instructional practices.

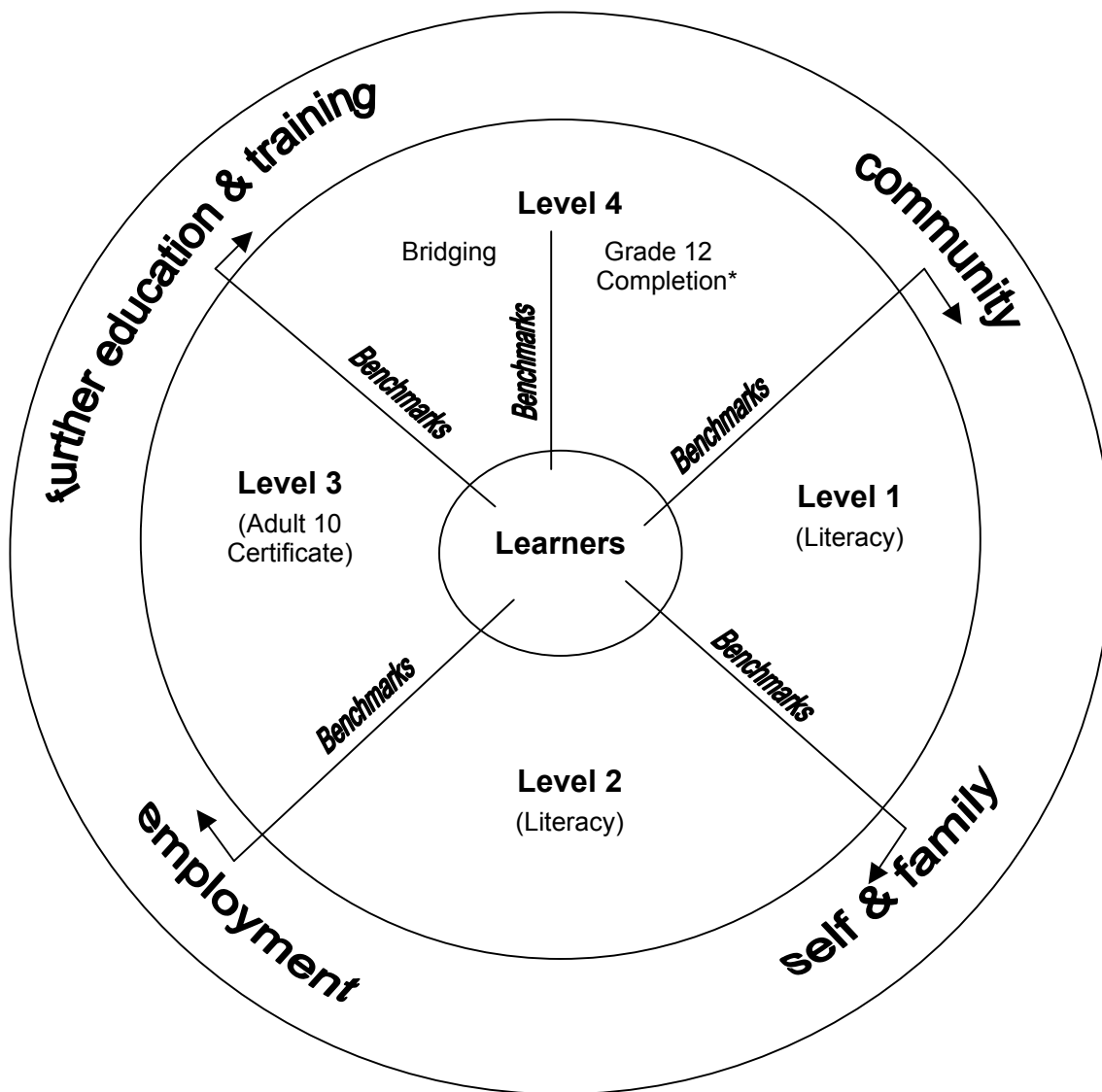
Curriculum development within the framework will address learner needs to obtain prerequisites for further education and training and to obtain the generic skills for transitions to employment.

The framework consists of four levels. The Adult 10 Certificate includes three levels, with the first two levels designated as literacy programming. The fourth level includes a bridging component and options for grade 12 completion.

The Task Team developed two diagrams to describe the framework for credit programs:

1. The first diagram provides an overview of the credit programs and the contexts skills are used in.
2. The second diagram describes the content of each level.  
(The content of Levels 1 and 2 will be further developed when writing the benchmarks and the content of Level 3 will be developed when writing curriculum.)

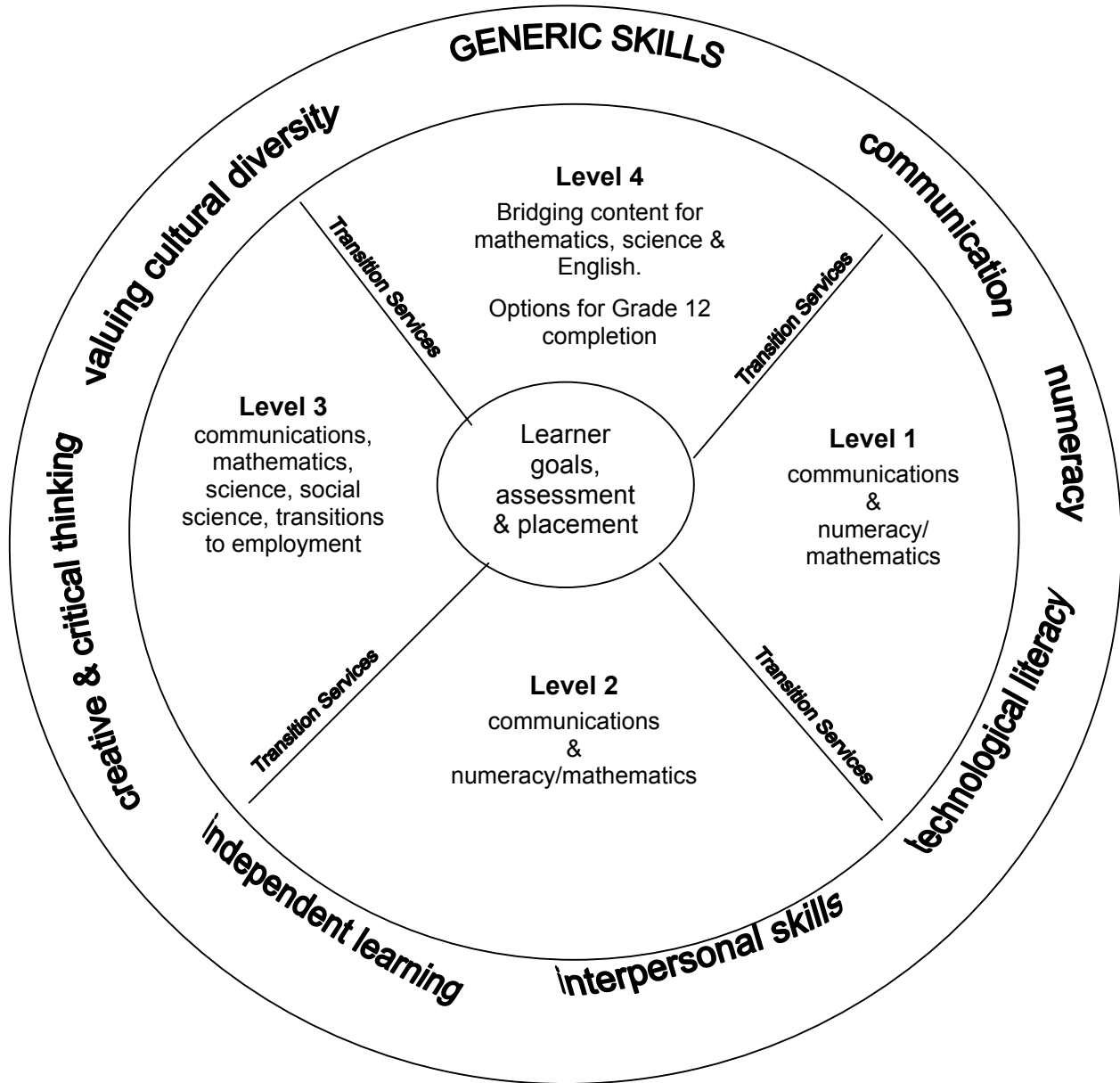
# Overview and context of Basic Education credit programs



Appropriate **assessment and placement** services are essential for learner success.

\* Options for grade 12 completion include G.E.D., G.E.D. with selected subjects, Adult 12 (seven 30 level courses), or completion of the 24 credits required by Saskatchewan Education.

# Content of Basic Education credit programs



**Transition services** help learners plan and prepare for their next steps.

Note: Further discussions with the literacy community are needed before making final recommendations with respect to the content of Levels 1 and 2.

## 2.1 Adult 10 Program

The Adult 10 program consists of three levels and includes the following:

- Aboriginal perspectives and content in all three levels.
- Development and demonstration of employability skills.
- Preparation for and transitions to employment, the community or further studies in all levels.
- Benchmarks (skill competencies) to determine entrance and exit requirements for each level.
- All curricula include objectives and activities that enhance development of Generic Skills. Generic skills include communication (speaking, reading, listening, and writing), numeracy, technological literacy, interpersonal skills, independent learning, creative and critical thinking, and valuing cultural diversity. These skills parallel the Common Essential Learnings contained in Saskatchewan Education curriculum guides and complement the employability skills identified by the Conference Board of Canada.
- To facilitate recognition of prior learning and portability for learners, portfolio development occurs in each level.
- Learners receive recognition for completion of a level.
- Bridging to Adult 12 (30 level courses) is available to the learner upon completion of Adult 10.

### Next Steps

Entrance/exit standards in Level 3 of the Adult 10 program will be identified and, then, curricula written to develop those skills. The curricula will include five content areas: transitions to employment, communications, social science, mathematics and science.

Benchmarks for Levels 1 and 2 will also be developed. They will be broad-based to reflect adult roles as family members, community members and workers. Functional skill areas related to these roles will be identified. The intent is to go beyond those standards developed solely for academic disciplines. Organizations will develop their programs based on their learners' needs and goals and will use contexts that have the most relevance to their learners<sup>5</sup>. The transferability of skills to different contexts will be encouraged.

Benchmarks for Levels 1 and 2 in the Adult 10 program will be developed in partnership with the literacy community. Initial discussions with the Provincial Literacy Steering Committee and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network have occurred. Options for developing the benchmarks will be further discussed and a plan presented.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Jane Meyer (1999) describes a learner who was not able to pass the essay portion of the GED test but demonstrated her writing skills by writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper, writing notes to her children's teacher and writing a monthly parenting column for her housing project's newsletter (p. 2). These activities had meaning for the learner as a parent and as a concerned community member.

## 2.2 Adult 12 Program

Further discussions and consultations will occur with respect to the Bridging and Adult 12 programs before any recommendations are made. However, a summary of the concerns raised to date is presented in this update.

Participants in the consultations stated concerns about the gap between the 10 and 12 programs. They suggested “bringing back” some Grade 11 subjects, adding an extra level to the Adult 10 program, or revising and giving credit for the existing Bridging courses. Changes have been made in some 30 level curriculum guides (e.g., English Language Arts) from Saskatchewan Education. Development work to keep pace with those changes has not occurred on a provincial basis with post-secondary’s Bridging documents. These documents were developed in 1995 and have not been reviewed or revised.

A second concern raised was that the requirements for an Adult 12 are more stringent than what is required for graduation from the K-12 system. For example, Saskatchewan Education graduates (in the 24-credit system) are not required to have a 30-level math course. Also, modified courses numbered 31 – 36 are not funded by Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. For some learners this creates an additional barrier to completion. It is felt that the existing program is more able to address the needs of learners who are going on to university or technical institutes. Additional options are needed for learners who choose to directly enter employment.

The third major comment stressed the essential role that intake or career counselling plays. Learners need to make informed decisions when choosing to take Adult 12 or GED and selected subjects. Most university or technical institute programs require specific subject prerequisites in addition to a Grade 12 standing. Some learners may need to take two mathematics or two science courses; other learners may need to improve their computer skills. Achieving a grade 12 credential does not necessarily mean you have the specific prerequisites for further training or employment.

### 3. Curriculum Philosophy

Five major concepts form the philosophical foundations for the redesign of basic education in Saskatchewan. These foundations have implications for curriculum design and content, for program design and delivery, for selection and development of resources, and for teaching strategies and approaches.

The philosophical foundations include moving towards transactional and transformative perspectives, putting adult education principles into practice, valuing biculturalism, respecting all types of knowledge and learning, and making a commitment to renewal. Although these foundations are discussed separately below, there are many common threads and interconnected elements.

#### 3.1 Moving towards transactional and transformative perspectives

To be congruent with the vision and guiding principles for basic education it is important to move away from the traditional transmission philosophy of learning – behaviouristic, individualistic, competency-based, linear - to more transactional and transformational philosophies. A brief description of these philosophies is found in Appendix C.

Trends in adult education reflect a more learner-centred and participatory nature (Imel, 1998, p. 9). There is more emphasis on “learning how to learn”, on integrating the affective and cognitive domains and on critical reflection.

The Task Team advocates incorporating elements from transformational learning theories into mainstream adult education programs. This has implications for *what* is taught as well as *how* it is taught.

#### 3.2 Valuing biculturalism

Darder (1991) defines biculturalism as “a process wherein individuals learn to function in two distinct sociocultural environments: their primary culture, and that of the dominant mainstream culture of the society in which they live” (p. 48).

Biculturalism implies a movement from regarding only one culture or perspective (Anglo-Western European) as having value to equally regarding the cultures of minority groups. It also implies helping learners to view themselves and their cultural group in a positive way. Guy (1999) states the following:

Learner self-image – seeing oneself in a positive light and being supported in that self-perception by other learners and educational officials (teachers, administrators, and so on) – is therefore a crucial aspect of culturally relevant adult education. (p. 94)

Given Saskatchewan demographics and enrolments in basic education programs, the foundation of ‘valuing biculturalism’ has special significance for Aboriginal learners. For example, educational organizations that discuss issues from several perspectives (e.g.,

discussions of history or science concepts reflective of Western and First Nations world views), that honour cultural activities, or that invite elders to provide counsel demonstrate “equal valuing” of Aboriginal cultures<sup>6</sup>. Validating multiple perspectives provides “a more complete account of the events and ideas that have shaped human growth and development” (Dei, 1994, p. 281).

When multiple perspectives are valued, learners are invited to examine how cultural assumptions, dynamics of power in society, frames of reference (based on race, class, gender, sexuality, age or ability), and biases influence one’s view of the world and what one believes to be true.

If learning is to be empowering, learners must feel that they can and are contributing to their community and to the larger society. Learners must also see themselves positively reflected in the educational environment.

### **3.3 Respecting all types of knowledge and learning**

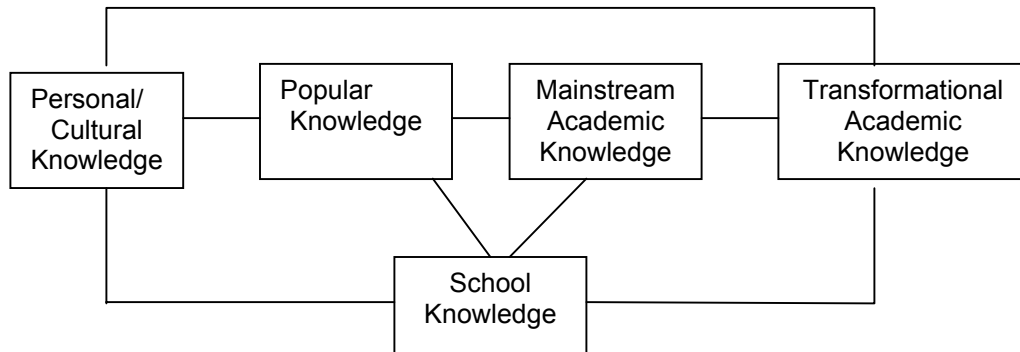
Decisions about what knowledge or content to include in the curriculum are influenced by the philosophies, values, cultural affiliations and worldviews of the decision-makers. These “deliberations about what and whose knowledge is of most worth” are essential to examine when developing curricula (Apple, 1990, p. xv).

The Task Team adopted Banks’ (1993, pp 4-14) typology of knowledge as the framework for incorporating all types of knowledge into Saskatchewan’s basic education curricula.

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for examples of inclusive teaching practices and for additional examples of ways to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives.

## Typology of Knowledge



*Personal/cultural knowledge* – concepts, explanations and interpretations that learners derive from personal experiences in their homes, families and community cultures.

*Popular knowledge* – facts, concepts, explanations, and interpretations that are institutionalized within television, movies, records and other forms of the mass media.

*Mainstream academic knowledge* – concepts, paradigms, theories, and explanations that constitute traditional and established Western-centric knowledge – a belief that there is a set of objective truths that can be verified through objective research procedures.

*Transformative academic knowledge* – concepts, paradigms, themes, and explanations that challenge mainstream academic knowledge. Knowledge is not believed to be neutral, but is influenced by human interests and reflects the power and social relationships within society.

*School knowledge* – facts, concepts and generalizations presented in textbooks, teachers' guides and other forms of media designed for school use. It also consists of the teacher's mediation and interpretation of that knowledge and is most influenced by mainstream academic and popular knowledge.

Aspects of personal/cultural and transformational academic knowledge need to be addressed as well as the three aspects of traditional knowledge if curricula are to be holistic and inclusive of all learners. This knowledge must have relevance to and connections with the learner's life.

### **3.4 Putting adult education principles into practice**

Basic education consists of programs and services for adults. Therefore, the Task Team agreed that it is critical that planning and delivery of those programs and services reflect good practice in adult education<sup>7</sup>. Imel (1998) identifies six adult education principles:

1. Involve learners in planning and implementing learning activities.
2. Draw upon learners' experiences as a resource.
3. Cultivate self-direction in learners.
4. Create a climate that encourages and supports learning.
5. Foster a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting.
6. Use small groups.

The challenge for adult educators and learning organizations is to reflect on their own practice, to articulate how these principles are reflected in their practice, and to identify principles that have yet to be implemented.

### **3.5 Making a commitment to renewal**

Development of curriculum is a necessary, but insufficient, factor in the redesign process. In order to affect meaningful change in the design and delivery of basic education programs, a consistent and long-term commitment is needed. To demonstrate accountability for continuous improvement of basic education programs and services (Goal 3 in Appendix A), a commitment is needed not only to the initial development of curriculum, but also to the supports related to the delivery and future renewal of that curriculum. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs and services will inform future renewal efforts.

In committing to renewal, we are also committing to reflect on areas such as curriculum philosophy; curriculum content; teaching strategies and approaches; assessment and intake practices; resource materials; retention strategies<sup>8</sup>; certification standards; and best practices.

The Task Team feels that by incorporating these five foundations, we will address concerns that have been raised about basic education's connection to employment; about inclusiveness in the design and delivery of programs; and about the success and retention rates of Aboriginal learners.

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix E for a detailed description of adult learning principles and practices.

<sup>8</sup> Recent research in retention of learners in basic education programs indicates that learners stay longer in programs with a highly supportive learning environment and more highly supportive teaching-learning strategies. Quigley and Uhland's (2000) research indicates that retention was improved when learners were involved in small teaching groups (60% higher retention rate after three months); when there was consistent, regular team support from the instructor and the counsellor (40% retention rate); and when a tutor was involved (20% retention rate) (p. 63).

Each of the foundations has specific implications for practice – present learning in context, provide opportunities for critical reflection, address a variety of learning styles, engage in professional development activities and so on. If we can be successful in implementing these foundations in the design and delivery of basic education programs, the learners will feel valued and respected from the initial assessment to exiting the program. If the learning is truly connected to learners' lives, success and retention will improve.

## 4.0 Recommendations for Phases Two, Three and Four

The Basic Education Redesign Task Team has proposed a plan for the subsequent phases of the curriculum development process. Further details and refinements will be developed through consultations with stakeholders.

A description of the major activities recommended for each of the phases follows.

### 4.1 Phase Two – Curriculum Development

<b>Actions</b>
1. Establish a sub-group with representation from the Basic Education Redesign Task Team, Provincial Literacy Steering Committee, and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network to write a proposal to develop Adult 10, Levels 1 and 2 benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• submit proposal to the National Literacy Secretariat for funding</li><li>• form an advisory group to inform the development process</li><li>• develop benchmarks, conduct consultations, field test, make revisions and conduct implementation workshops</li></ul>
2. Establish Adult 10, Level 3 curriculum advisory committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• advisory committees to consist of six members (one each from SIAST, DTI, SIIT, Northlands college, the southern colleges, and an elder)</li></ul>
3. Develop curriculum drafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• hire curriculum writer(s)</li><li>• begin with the Communications and Social Studies curriculum guides</li></ul>
4. Develop an annotated bibliography of resource materials
5. Publish/print draft copies for pilots
6. Conduct pilots <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• plan and deliver orientation workshop for pilot instructors</li><li>• conduct pilots (estimate 5 – 6 month pilots) and gather feedback</li><li>• revise draft curriculum</li></ul>
7. Publish/print final copies

## 4.2 Phase Three – Implementation

(Note: The new curricula will be implemented in stages. A timeframe and process for granting credit to learners during the transition period will be developed.)

<b>Actions</b>
1. Deliver provincial implementation workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in-service for instructors and administrators</li><li>• 5 regional in-service workshops (3 rural, 2 urban centres)</li></ul>
2. Identify, develop and/or deliver professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identification of needs</li><li>• course development or purchase</li><li>• identify delivery options (e.g., on-line, summer workshops)</li></ul>
3. Develop Best Practices document <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to include areas such as intake and assessment procedures, progress reports, support services for learners, retention strategies, transition services, follow-up procedures, program evaluation, professional development and so on.</li><li>• conduct consultations</li></ul>

## 4.3 Phase Four – Sustainability

(Note: Specific actions to be developed following consultations with stakeholders.)

<b>Actions</b>
1. What processes does the department need to have in place to make changes to curriculum on an ongoing basis? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How often does the curriculum need to be reviewed and revised?</li><li>• How could information on gaps, changes, and so on be collected? How frequently should this information be gathered?</li><li>• Who should have input regarding decisions on what revisions are made?</li></ul>
2. How can information on new learning resources, strategies, and Best Practices be gathered and shared throughout the system?
3. How can program innovations be encouraged?
4. How can the effectiveness of Basic Education programs and services be measured? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What factors could be considered when determining the effectiveness of Basic Education <b>programs</b>?</li><li>• What factors constitute effective <b>services</b>?</li><li>• Who needs to provide feedback on the effectiveness of programs and services?</li><li>• What types of evaluation are needed? For each type, how often should the evaluations occur?</li></ul>

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## 6.0 Appendices

Five appendices have been included to supplement information provided in this report. They are as follows:

**Appendix A** contains the goals, objectives and actions for basic education in Saskatchewan.

**Appendix B** provides a picture of who attends basic education classes, why they attend, and where they go when they are finished their programs.

**Appendix C** provides a brief overview of three curriculum philosophies.

**Appendix D** focuses on two teaching strategies: inclusive practices and incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives.

**Appendix E** describes adult learning principles and recommends ways to implement these principles in teaching practices.

**Appendix A: Basic Education Goals and Objectives**

<b>Goal 1: Basic education increases learners' success.</b>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p>Objective 1.1 To deliver programs that enhance learners' academic, employability and functional skills development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and promote cooperation amongst organizations to develop and deliver basic education programs and services.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver programs that reflect Saskatchewan's guiding principles for basic education.</li> </ul> <p>Programs may include topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning how to learn (e.g., learning style, study habits, time management, note taking, etc.);</li> <li>• research skills;</li> <li>• computer skills;</li> <li>• creative and critical thinking;</li> <li>• goal setting, problem-solving and decision-making;</li> <li>• team work and interpersonal communications;</li> <li>• self management (e.g., self-esteem, personal health, budgeting, etc.); and</li> <li>• valuing diversity (cultural, personal).</li> </ul>
<p>Objective 1.2 To develop and maintain basic education curricula that is relevant to adult learners and reflects the dynamic, changing nature of the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form curriculum advisory groups.</li> <li>• Through consultations with learners and community members develop curricula that 1) reflect the guiding principles for basic education; 2) meet standards required for entrance to further training, for gaining and maintaining employment or for coping with responsibilities of daily living; 3) examine concepts from a variety of perspectives; and 4) reflect strategies to increase student retention and timely completion.</li> <li>• Develop a process for curriculum review and revision.</li> <li>• Use culturally sensitive and appropriate learning environments and resources to support delivery of the curricula.</li> <li>• Use alternate format materials and adaptive equipment to meet needs of learners with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Objective 1.3 To provide professional development opportunities for basic education staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a training strategy with respect to the orientation and implementation of new curricula (Examples of potential training may be adult learning principles, experiential learning techniques, portfolio development, and cultural awareness.)</li> <li>• Develop a strategy for identifying and responding to additional training needs of staff.</li> </ul>

<p>Objective 1.4 To identify and promote the use of best practices in approaches to and delivery of basic education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop best practices in programs, services and delivery of basic education.</li> <li>• Develop strategies to enhance awareness of best practices, to provide training, and to encourage and promote the implementation of best practices.</li> </ul>
<p>Objective 1.5 To develop a certification process that is understood and valued by learners, employers and communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a provincial achievement/skills-based certification process.</li> <li>• Develop records of achievement/skills in order to enhance learner portability.</li> <li>• Promote the recognition of the revised certification with employers, training organizations and the community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 2: Basic education strengthens non- credit programs and support services.</b></p>	
<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p>
<p>Objective 2.1 To provide quality non-credit programs and support services to adult learners.</p>	<p>Programs and support services components may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assessment and intake services;</li> <li>• academic and personal counselling;</li> <li>• career counselling, planning and decision-making;</li> <li>• work experience;</li> <li>• cultural components;</li> <li>• personal skills development (e.g., life skills, family literacy, employment readiness, parenting, etc.);</li> <li>• portfolio development; or</li> <li>• prior learning assessment and recognition.</li> </ul>
<p>Objective 2.2 To develop strategies to provide transition and follow-up services to learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify critical transition points, the issues at each of these points, and the stakeholders who need to be involved in supporting learners at each transition.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate services and collaborate with stakeholders to respond to identified needs.</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 3: Basic Education is accountable for continuous improvement of its programs and services.</b>	
<p>Objective 3.1 To measure the effectiveness of Basic Education programs and services.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of programs and services to establish benchmarks and best practices and to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learner, employer, public satisfaction with Basic Education programs and services;</li><li>• improvement in academic, employability and functional skills of learners;</li><li>• placement in, increased retention in or completion of program/level;</li><li>• receipt of secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent;</li><li>• post-program activities of learners including pursuit of further post-secondary education/training or employment;</li><li>• curriculum revision and review process; and</li><li>• staff development activities.</li></ul>

## Appendix B: Learner Profiles and Demographics

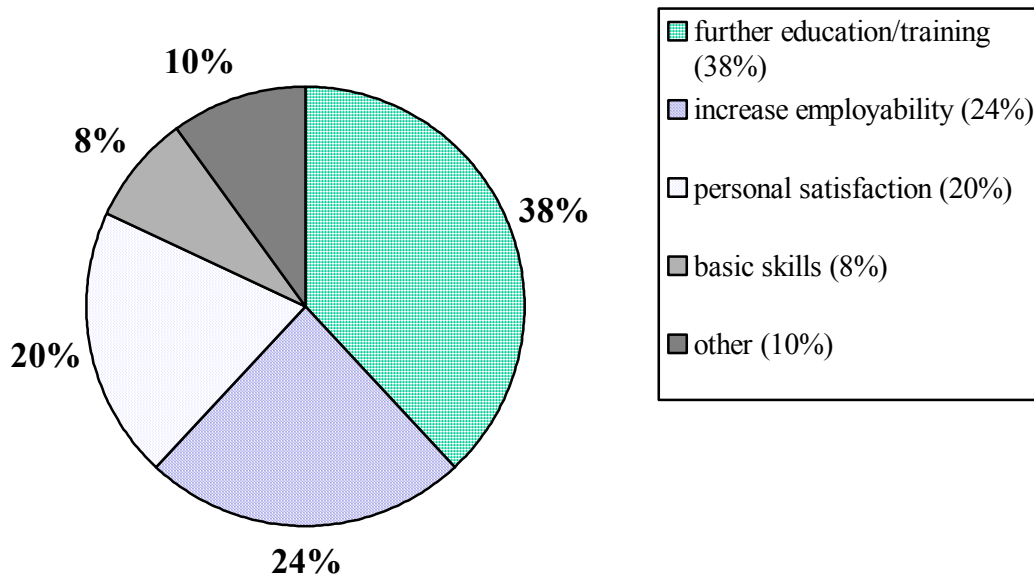
### 1. Basic Education Learners

(Source: Post-secondary Education and Skills Training Database, 1998-1999)

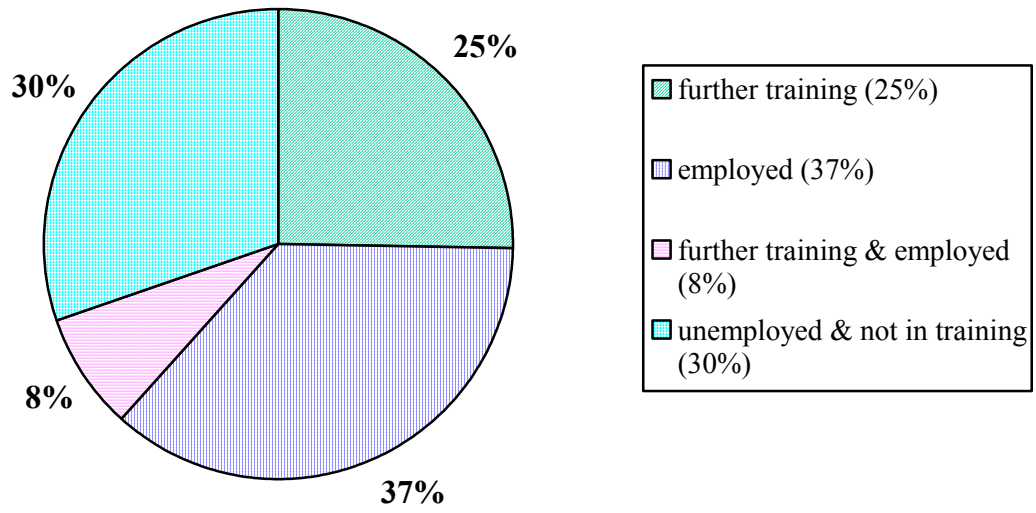
- 61% female, 39% male
- 52% Aboriginal (62% Treaty/Status; 31% Métis)
- 66% single, divorced or widowed; 34% married or common-law
- average age is 30.5 years (with a range of 15 to 73 years)
- 45% of learners have dependents with, on average, 2.36 children
- on average, the last grade completed was grade 9
- on average, 11 years since last attended school (with a range of 1 to 20 years)
- about 40% attend adult 12/GED and 60% attend Adult 10 and related programs.

### 2. Reasons for Attending Basic Education Programs

(Source: Basic Education Program Evaluation, 1999)



**3. Next Steps for Basic Education Completers**  
(Source: Basic Education Program Evaluation, 1999)



## Appendix C: Curriculum Philosophy

	<b>Transmission (Technical)</b>	<b>Transaction (Practical)</b>	<b>Transformation (Emancipatory)</b>
Goals and Objectives	Behavioral Content specific Mastery of basic skills	Complex intellectual skills (analysis, synthesis, problem-solving and decision making skills)	Objectives integrated (e.g., affective and cognitive) Personal integration
Criteria for Model	Contains clear, concise objectives Teacher is provided with specific direction Straightforward evaluation (usually testing) Content retention emphasized "Traditional" values reinforced	Allows students to examine own reasoning and problem-solving processes Should encourage inquiry and investigation Mutual inquiry between student and teacher Should encourage intellectual growth Checklists, observation and rating scales, questionnaires, and interviews as evaluation tools	Should involve students in social awareness and change Should encourage subject area integration Should focus on "whole" student Evaluation based on interviews, journal records, observation and rating scales, self and peer evaluations
Content	Knowledge viewed in parts as "objective" (one reality) Content should reinforce "traditional" beliefs and values	Knowledge related to mental processes and cognitive frameworks	Social content stresses identification and resolution of pressing social concerns
Teaching Strategies	Structured teaching approaches. Transmission of facts. Programmed learning	Focus on problem solving and analysis. Teaching strategies matched to students' intellectual developmental frameworks Independent learning, case study approaches	Divergent thinking encouraged. Focus on connecting students' inner and outer worlds Creative thinking strategies
Organization	Subject-centred and hierarchical	Problem-centred and developmental	Learner-centred and integrative

Adapted from Miller, J.P. & W. Seller (1985). *Curriculum Perspectives and Practice*. New York: Longman, p.203 and Miller, J.P., J.R. Bruce Cassie, & Susan M. Drake (1988). *Holistic Learning: A Teacher's Guide to Integrated Studies*. Toronto: OISE Press, p.103.

## **Appendix D: Teaching Strategies and Practices**

### **a) Inclusive Teaching Practices**

(Adapted from Amstutz, Donna D. (1999). Adult learning: Moving toward more inclusive theories and practices. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 82, pp 19-31.)

1. Ask learners to reflect on meaning from their own experiences.
2. Encourage holistic and integrative views that are nondichotomous ways of knowing (rather than either-or, all or nothing ways of being and knowing).
3. Seek, acknowledge, and foster alternative forms of knowledge – help learners view knowledge as something that they can produce.
4. Have the courage to teach – help students identify those societal structures that create and maintain inequality.
5. Use a variety of instructional techniques, such as cooperative learning and narratives, which address various learning styles.
6. Construct and maintain supportive learning environments.
7. Continually review educational goals.

**b) Incorporating Aboriginal Perspectives**

(Source: Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, Regina, October 2001)

✓	<b>Vary the way that you teach</b>
	Be aware of variety of learning styles – look at the whole, not discrete entities
	Use more interactive, experiential/discovery learning activities; use manipulatives
	Incorporate detailed observations and guided practice (observation, inquiry, reflection and experience – see the results and experience the consequences)
	Teach for transfer by presenting concepts in context – something relevant to learners’ circumstances, connected to a real event
	Build on and validate previous experiences of learners
	Include intuitive analyses
	Use cooperative learning groups, small groups, and circle strategies
	Focus on the continuum of the past to the present
	Model – you are the guide or mentor to the learning experience
	Teach with a narrative or story telling style
	Be respectful of a variety of perspectives – no “one way of doing things”
	Learn from the learners – everyone has knowledge to share
✓	<b>Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in the materials and examples you use</b>
	The curriculum states <b>what</b> students should know and be able to do – sets the content standards. <b>How</b> you get to those standards can vary greatly. Community and cultural contexts can guide the choice of materials and examples used to achieve the standards.
	Choose topics and examples related to the local community (e.g. in science explore local weather, land forms, and environmental issues).
	Start with the application of knowledge and then work to understand the “why and how”
	Build on the knowledge and skills of the local culture and acquire insights from other cultures without diminishing one’s own culture
	Incorporate traditional and contemporary issues and knowledge. Invite elders to speak on areas of expertise.
	Acknowledge diversity of Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan
	Seek out and document local knowledge as a basis for further investigations
✓	<b>Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in the way you integrate literature</b>

	Use oral narratives and writings by Aboriginal people in relation to all subjects (not just in the English class)
✓	<b>Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives by integrating subjects</b>
	Choose a project or topic; incorporate objectives and skills from all relevant subject areas
	Combine across curriculum skill sets, rather than by subject
✓	<b>Incorporate Aboriginal perspectives by including/honouring cultural practices</b>
	Create and maintain connections with the community – elders, feasts, and so on

**c) Examples of Incorporating Aboriginal Perspectives**

<b>English</b>	<b>Science</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate reading and writing in math, story telling, poetry, interviews, journals, learning logs</li> <li>• Discuss problem solving situations based on family and community experiences (e.g., choosing a theme or a setting within which to generate problems)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate Aboriginal world views</li> <li>• Cycle of life</li> <li>• Environmental issues – relationship to environment, balance in nature</li> <li>• Community wellness model, traditional food groups, safety and other community issues</li> </ul>
<b>Visual and Performing Arts/ Physical Education</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal artists, playwrights, authors, dancers</li> <li>• Traditional games, heroes, canoeing, lacrosse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families, heroes</li> <li>• Map skills, scale</li> <li>• Study of cultures, life styles, history</li> <li>• Self-government, education and employment</li> </ul>

<b>Mathematics</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include examples of numerical systems, calendar systems, seasons</li><li>• Applications of mathematical knowledge, historic and contemporary</li><li>• Language, pattern and order of Aboriginal language counting numbers</li><li>• Use of familiar materials as examples or manipulatives – designs in pottery, baskets, rugs, traditional clothing, quilting patterns, beading and quill work</li><li>• Knowledge, traditions, expertise (historic and contemporary)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Food preparation, measurement, menu planning</li><li>Geometric concepts – pattern, symbols, design, symmetry, shapes, quilts</li><li>Concepts of time, calendars, seasons</li></ul></li><li>• Measurement systems – currency, trade, distance</li></ul>

## Appendix E: Adult Learning Principles and Practices

The full text of Susan Imel's article "Adult Learning Principles in Adult Basic and Literacy Education"(1998) has been reprinted in this appendix.

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Adult basic and literacy education (ABLE) is a complex undertaking that serves diverse learners with a variety of needs, and many individual ABLE programs successfully attract and retrain students. Only 8 percent of eligible adults participate in funded programs, however, and, of those who do, most (74 percent) leave during the first year (Quigley 1997). A number of reasons exist for the nonparticipation and high attrition rates, including the complicated nature of the lives of many adults. The way ABLE programs are structured may also be a factor. The fact that most ABLE programs still resemble school (Quigley 1997; Velazquez 1996) may mean that many eligible adults may not choose to participate or, once enrolled, do not find a compelling reason for persisting until their educational needs are met. Structuring programs around adult education principles can be one solution to developing programs that are more appealing to ABLE learners. This *Practice Application Brief* describes how adult education principles can be used in ABLE programs. Following a discussion of adult education principles, it provides recommendations for practices, based on the principles and literature related to adult basic and literacy education.

### Adult Education Principles

No definitive list of adult education principles exists in the literature, but there is a great deal of agreement about what constitutes good practice in adult education. The list of principles that follows was developed by synthesizing information that appears in a number of sources (Brookfield 1986; Draper 1992; Draves 1997; Grissom 1992; Imel forthcoming; Knowles 1992; Vella 1994).

**Involve learners in planning and implementing learning activities.** Including learners in the planning and implementing of their learning activities is considered to be a hallmark of adult education. Their participation can begin with the needs assessment process where members of the target population help establish the program goals and objectives and continue throughout the learning activity to the evaluation phase.

**Draw upon learners' experiences as a resource.** Another often-cited principle of adult education revolves around the idea of using the experiences of participants as a learning resource. Not only do adult learners have experiences that can be used as a foundation for learning new things but also, in adulthood, readiness to learn frequently stems from life tasks and problems. The particular life situations and perspectives that adults bring to the classroom can provide a rich reservoir for learning.

**Cultivate self-direction in learners.** Self-direction is considered by some to be a characteristic of adulthood but not all adults possess this attribute in equal measure. In

addition, if adults have been accustomed to teacher-directed learning environments, they may not display self-directedness in adult learning settings. Adult learning should be structured to nurture the development of self-directed, empowered adults. When adults are encouraged to become self-directed, they begin "to see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances rather than as reactive individuals, buffeted by uncontrollable forces of circumstance" (Brookfield 1986, p. 19).

**Create a climate that encourages and supports learning.** The classroom environment should be characterized by trust and mutual respect among teachers and learners. It should enhance learner self-esteem. Supporting and encouraging learning does not mean that the environment is free of conflict. It does mean that when conflict occurs, it is handled in a way that challenges learners to acquire new perspectives and supports them in their efforts to do so.

**Foster a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting.** Collaboration in the adult classroom is frequently founded on the idea that the roles of teachers and learners can be interchangeable. Although teachers have the overall responsibility for leading a learning activity, in adult learning settings "each person has something to teach and to learn from the other" (Draper 1992, p. 75). Adult learning is a cooperative enterprise that respects and draws upon the knowledge that each person brings to the learning setting.

**Use small groups.** The use of groups has deep historical roots in adult education, and adults learning in groups has become embedded in adult education practice. Groups promote teamwork and encourage cooperation and collaboration among learners. Structured appropriately, they emphasize the importance of learning from peers, and they allow all participants to be involved in discussions and to assume a variety of roles.

The principles discussed here reflect some of the widely held beliefs about adult learning. The next section provides recommendations for using these principles in adult basic and literacy education programs.

### ***Recommendations for Practice***

A growing number of ABLE programs base their practices upon many of the principles described, and recent resources have advocated programs that are more student centered and participatory in nature (e.g., Auerbach 1992; Fingeret 1992; Nonesuch 1996; Sissel 1996; Stein 1995). The following recommendations for practice that reflects adult education principles are based on information found in several of these resources.

**Involve adults in program planning and implementation.** The need to consult adults is a theme that is woven throughout the ABLE literature (e.g., Auerbach 1992; Nonesuch 1996; Sissel 1996; Velazquez 1996). Adult basic and literacy educators frequently give lip service to the importance of learner involvement, but they do not always follow through. They must listen to what adults say about their previous educational experiences and their current learning goals and use this information in program development. Auerbach (1992) provides a rationale for using a participatory approach that is based partly on the idea that "adult education is most effective when it is experience-centered, related to learners' real needs, and directed by learners themselves" (p. 14). In participatory ABLE programs, activities reflect students' lives and are student centered. ABLE programs can involve students in program planning and implementation in any number of ways, including asking them to assist with orientation for new learners, appointing them to serve on advisory boards, and soliciting their suggestions for learning activities.

**Develop and/or use instructional materials that are based on students' lives.** An important part of the participatory approach is using instruction that reflects the context of students' lives. Sometimes referred to as contextualized learning, this instruction--and the instructional materials--draw on the actual experiences, developmental stages, and problems of the learners. Students are the center of the curriculum and it is directly relevant to their lives (Auerbach 1992; Dirkx and Prenger 1997; Nash et al. 1992). Dirkx and Prenger (1997) refer to this approach as "theme based" and describe how it promotes the integration of academic content with real-life problems. Furthermore, it has the advantage of integrating academic skills; rather than focusing on learning academic subjects separately, the theme-based approach focuses on their commonalities and promotes learning them in ways that are meaningful to the student. By using this approach, the classroom becomes more authentic because adults learn to use skills in real-life situations.

**Develop an understanding of learners' experiences and communities.** Engaging in participatory adult literacy begins by respecting learners' culture, their knowledge, and their experiences (Auerbach 1992). Within adult basic and literacy education, a great deal of attention has been focused on individualizing instruction to meet individual needs. Although there is nothing inherently wrong with this concept, preoccupation with serving individuals can suppress issues of gender, race, and class, issues that reproduce the realities of the lives of many adult literacy students (Campbell 1992). A growing number of adult literacy educators are advocating for understanding learners both as individuals and as members of their particular communities or groups (Nonesuch 1996; Sissel 1996)

and tailoring instruction to address those particular contexts. For example, Nonesuch (1996) describes how the experiences of women can be used effectively in developing a curriculum.

**Incorporate small groups into learning activities.** Small groups can help achieve a learning environment that is more learner centered and collaborative than either large group or one-on-one, individualized approaches to instruction. In addition, learning in small groups more accurately reflects the contexts in which adults generally use literacy skills. Small groups have a number of advantages including providing peer support for learning and easing the distinction between teachers and learners by creating a cooperative, participative environment that is less hierarchical than environments produced by traditional approaches. Small groups can be an effective tool for generating themes and ideas that will form the basis for learning activities (Imel, Kerka, and Pritz 1994).

ABLE programs that incorporate these recommendations will foster increasing self-directedness and critical reflection in learners. Learners who are involved in planning and carrying out contextualized learning activities will develop heightened awareness of their own particular circumstances and the ability to make changes in it.

## Conclusion

If adult basic and literacy educators are to be successful in attracting and retaining more adults in their programs, they must change how they think about their programs (Quigley 1997). The schooling model that predominates must be exchanged for one that is based on adults' perceptions of their goals and purposes and that addresses the realities of their lives. Using adult education principles can be one vehicle for effecting this change.

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