



Seeds for Change

A Curriculum Guide for
Worker-Centred
Literacy



Canadian Labour Congress
Congrès du travail du Canada



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Seeds for Change:

A Curriculum Guide for worker-centred Literacy

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FORWARD

This guide has been developed by the Workplace Literacy Project of the Canadian Labour Congress as part of its *Learning in Solidarity* series. Created to share our collective wealth of experience, our hope is that the series will help unions play a more active role and have a stronger voice in worker-centred literacy.

Seeds for Change is an important addition to the series, as it brings a union approach to both the content and the process of worker-centred learning. To that end, we have drawn heavily on the expertise developed within and beyond the labour movement over the years, and want to thank the many advocates, instructors and participants who continue to help shape labour's vision.

I would like, in particular, to thank Jean Connon-Unda for her excellent work in researching and writing the handbook and Tamara Levine, Coordinator, CLC Workplace Literacy Project, for coordinating and providing direction to the project.

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Much appreciation goes to the Canadian Union of Public Employees for sharing its excellent "*Water Watch*" campaign with us. Special thanks to former BEST instructor Judith Vin all of UFCW local 459 who took the Day of Mourning materials and, with her participants at the Heinz plant in Leamington, Ontario, created some of the dynamic real life learning and growing experiences contained in *Seeds for Change*.

Jean-Claude Parrot
Executive Vice-President
Canadian Labour Congress



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Who It Is For

This curriculum guide is for trade union educators who are involved in setting up and implementing literacy programs for union members. The guide identifies what makes a trade union approach different from other approaches to workplace literacy. It provides guidelines for curriculum writers and instructors who need to develop materials for union programs. It describes the key elements of a worker-centred literacy curriculum and provides examples of materials that demonstrate how the recommended approach can be applied in practice.

We have assumed that the users of the guide have training and hands-on experience in worker-centred union literacy, whether as instructors or program coordinators. The guide is not meant to take the place of good instructor training, both with regard to trade union education and adult literacy.

How It Can Be Used

This manual can be used:

- by instructors or program coordinators who want to develop worker-centred literacy materials
- in instructor training courses for literacy instructors who need to learn about worker-centred union based literacy curriculum for union contexts
- by trade unionists who are involved in setting up and implementing workplace literacy programs and who want to develop an understanding of the essential elements of a trade union approach



How the Guide is organized

SECTION 1:

A Framework for Curriculum and Materials Development

Provides an overview of worker-centred union literacy and outlines a union approach to literacy curriculum.

SECTION 2:

Examples of Materials for Worker-Centred Union Literacy

Presents two practical examples of literacy materials to illustrate a union approach to curriculum development:

- Fight for the Living
- The *Water Watch* Campaign.

SECTION 3:

Summary of Guidelines for Developing Materials for worker-Centred Union Literacy

Describes why materials development for literacy programs is important to unions and provides tips on how to go about creating materials for union literacy programs.

SECTION 4:

Implications for Union Education

Provides suggestions for how labour educators can adapt their approaches to make trade union education courses more accessible to members with literacy needs.

SECTION 5:

Resources

Presents a bibliography of relevant resources.



SECTION 1

A FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum is a Political Issue

Curriculum provides the framework for the learning that is to take place in a particular program. Designing a curriculum entails many decisions, such as, **who** the program is for, **what** the content of the learning is, and **how** the learning is to be facilitated. Curriculum design includes establishing learning goals and planning learning experiences to enable participants to meet these goals. While designing a curriculum requires some technical know-how and experience, it is not just a technical task. Curriculum is first and foremost a political issue.

Education is not neutral. Underlying every education program is a particular vision of society and what it means to be human. If we look at corporate training programs in the workplace, for example, we see that they aim to develop values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that fit the corporate world view. When it comes to content, if it doesn't serve corporate goals it is not permitted in the curriculum. If we look at the public education system, we see an ongoing struggle over what is to be taught in our schools with corporations attempting to exert a bigger and bigger influence on curriculum decisions made by government education ministries. The struggle over curriculum is essentially a struggle over whose interests the education process is to serve.

Education is not neutral. Underlying every education program is a particular vision of society and what it means to be human.

Trade union education is not neutral; it reflects a worker-centered vision and values. In order to ensure a trade union perspective for labour education courses, we don't farm out curriculum development to people who don't have a trade union perspective. Yet, when it comes to literacy for workers, unions sometimes think that literacy courses are just about generic literacy skills and that mainstream literacy curriculum will serve the purpose. This is a mistake, however. Like all education, literacy education is not neutral. Worker-centered union literacy must be understood first and foremost as trade union education.



Literacy is Trade Union Education

Through the union, we engage in collective struggles to improve our lives and those of our families and communities. Labour's overall goal is to advance workers' collective aspirations for a more just society. A union's concern with improving the literacy skills of members has to be understood in this larger context. Thus, worker-centered union literacy must share the goals of trade union education in general. These are to:

Worker-centered union literacy must be understood first and foremost as

- strengthen workers individually and collectively, and
- strengthen the union's capacity to engage in the struggle for social justice.

As well, worker-centered union literacy espouses the general principles of trade union education.

The principles of labour education call for an educational process that:

- is participatory, inclusive and deeply democratic in both its aims and its methods
- acknowledges and builds on the experiences and skills of workers
- involves hearts as well as minds
- promotes solidarity and respect among workers
- enhances workers' capacities for critical reflection and action
- links education with action in the world in a project of social transformation

Thus, it is only within the larger context of the union and trade union education that we can begin to understand worker-centered union literacy - what it is and what it stands for.



Literacy for What?

It is important to distinguish labour's conception of literacy from corporate conceptions of literacy for workers. As far as corporations are concerned, worker literacy is defined in the context of corporate goals regarding productivity and profits. Where the production process, and more recently, the participatory management process, requires workers to use literacy skills to follow instructions, say, or fill out reports, then corporations may be interested in worker literacy.... This corporate conception of literacy is a narrow one. It is based on a limited understanding of the worker and of the worker's need for literacy in terms of his/her role as a cog in a work

Unions know that a worker's need for literacy is much more extensive than the requirements of their current job. In a changing economy and workplace, it is obvious that we also need literacy skills to equip us for new jobs or for further training or education. But, unlike the corporate view, labour sees the worker as a full human being whose life exists beyond the job - a human being who also has a range of roles in their family, union, community and society. Literacy is required for these roles, too.

Yet, even in our roles outside the workplace, the fact that we are workers colours our experience in significant ways. We know how working conditions - pay, hours, health and safety, benefits or lack of them - affect all aspects of a worker's life. Our jobs have an impact, for example, on where we live, the shape and texture of our family life, how we spend our leisure time and with whom, the quality of our communities and natural environment, and the services to which we have access. As the Sweet Honey and the Rock song Footnote * goes, "We take more than a paycheck to our loved ones and families." We take home, also, particular stresses and challenges. Thus, being a worker affects not only how we live but also how we understand our lives, and the perspective we bring to social issues. Our experience as workers has implications for how we engage as citizens and the concerns and hopes we bring to our participation in public life. So workers also need literacy for participating in democratic institutions. Indeed, the literacy skills required to be an active and engaged citizen - or union member - often far surpass in complexity the literacy skills needed on many jobs.

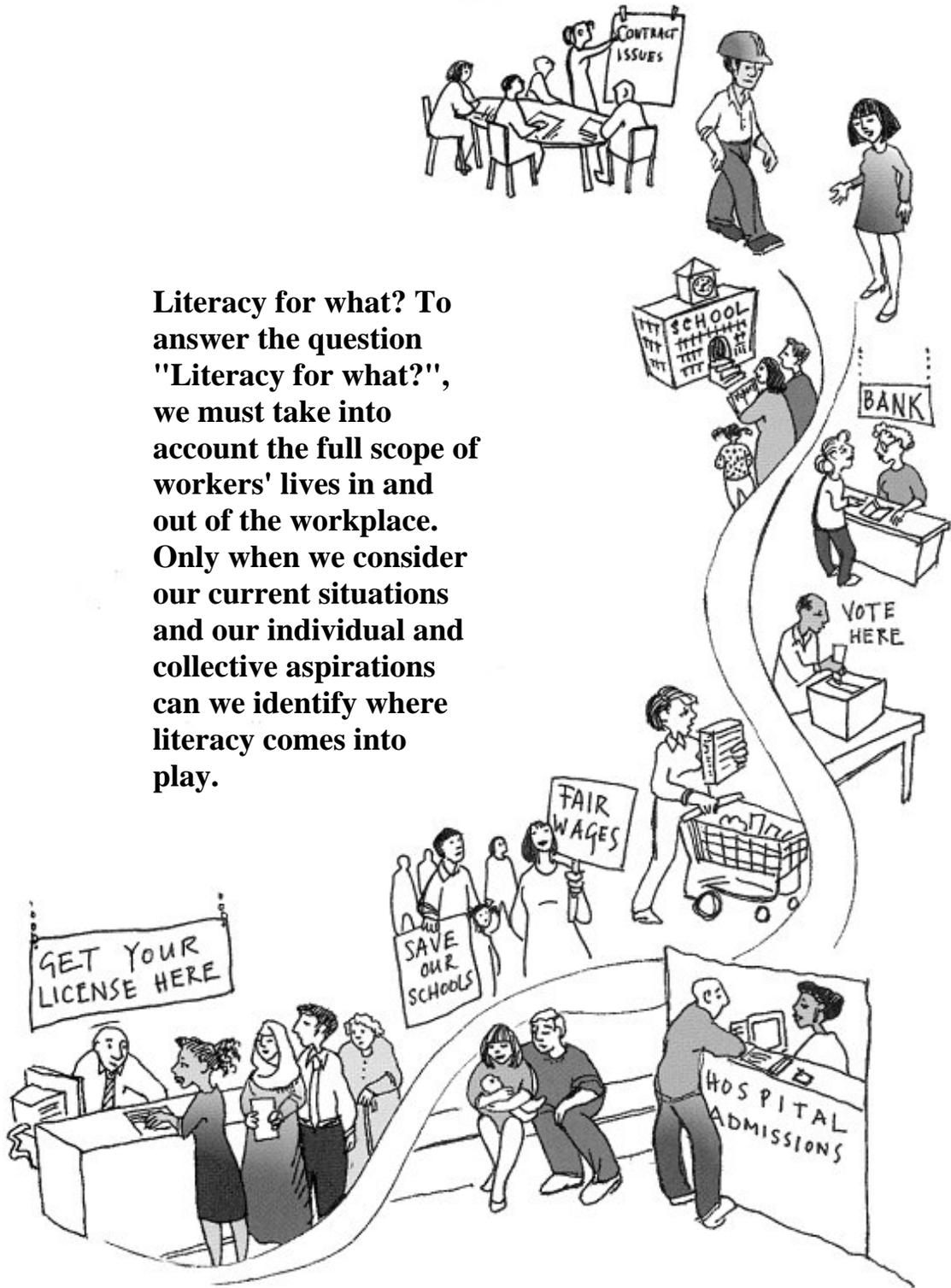
... labour sees the worker as a full human being whose life exists beyond the job - a human being who also has a range of roles in their family, union, community and society.

...the literacy skills required to be an active and engaged citizen - or union member - often far surpass in complexity the literacy skills

* Ysaye Maria Barnwell, "More than a Paycheck"



Literacy for what? To answer the question "Literacy for what?", we must take into account the full scope of workers' lives in and out of the workplace. Only when we consider our current situations and our individual and collective aspirations can we identify where literacy comes into play.





So, to answer the question "Literacy for what?", we must take into account the full scope of workers' lives in and out of the workplace. Only when we consider our current situations and our individual and collective aspirations can we identify where literacy comes into play.

Defining Literacy

Now we turn to the important question, *What do we in labour mean when we use the term literacy?* Indeed, there is only one definition of literacy that is consistent with a labour perspective. As trade unionists committed to action on behalf of human wholeness and social justice, we must understand literacy in its fullest sense - as the exercise of critical reflection and action, both individual and collective.

This definition does not mean that we are not concerned with what are commonly considered to be the building blocks of literacy. These include the ability to carry out **tasks** like reading a recipe, writing a letter of complaint or filling out a form as well as the smaller components of literacy, **skills** such as recognizing words in print, handwriting and spelling.

Our definition of literacy includes both **tasks** and **skills**. Yet our definition goes one step further by taking into account the social and cultural practices - often institutionalized as systems - which structure our lives. Let's look at some examples of **systems, tasks** and **skills**.

If we look closely at examples of real life literacy activities, we will soon see that they are embedded in and carried out in the context of social systems. Indeed, any given literacy task cannot be dealt with in isolation - it can only be "read" and critically understood in the context of the larger system of which it is a part. This is what Paulo Freire meant when he said, "Reading the world precedes reading the word."*

As trade unionists to action on committed behalf of human wholeness and social justice, we must understand literacy in its fullest sense- as the exercise of critical reflection and action, both individual and collective.

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* Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press, New York. 1970.



Let us consider an example of a real-life literacy activity - filling out an accident report form at work. We know that this form is part of the Workers' Compensation system. It is obvious that being able to fill out this form entails much more than simply decoding the words on the page and writing words in the blanks. In fact, to really grasp the significance of the accident report form we have to know quite a bit about how the Workers' Compensation system works: for example, what the specialized terms mean within that system, what the procedures and rules are and the nature of our rights and obligations. Only then can we complete the form effectively in order to access our rights in the system.

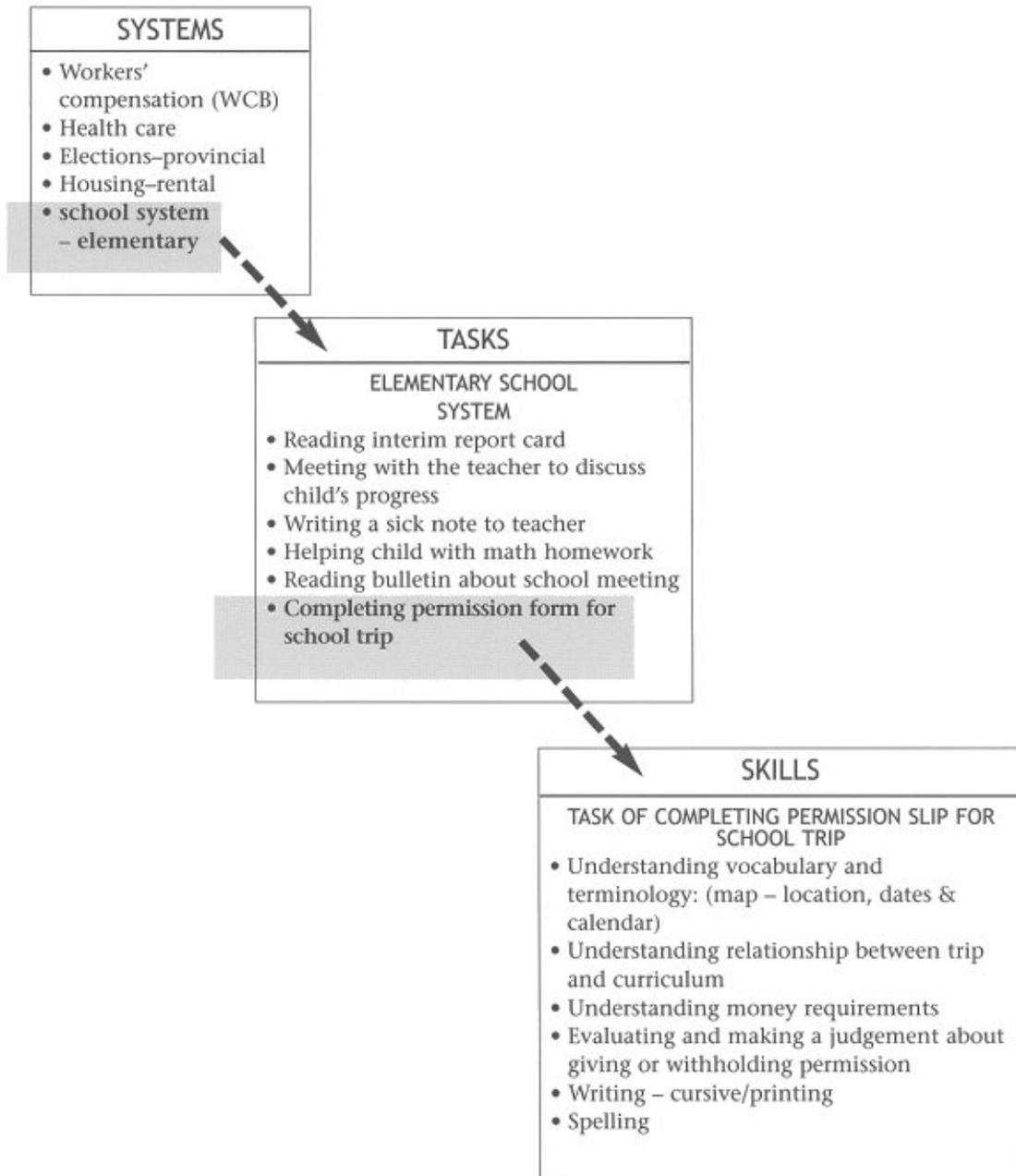
Furthermore, knowing something about the larger system and critically reflecting on how it affects us as workers helps us realize that merely filling out the form correctly may not be enough to ensure that we access our rights. Indeed, we may need to develop individual and collective strategies to both deal with the system and to change it. Taking action to change a system like Workers' Compensation requires one to learn about the even larger systems of government and the processes of influencing and bringing about legislative change. Thus, there is a whole other level of literacy tasks and skills in the context of dealing with systems. Some of these are outlined below.

*...literacy as the of
critical practice
reflection and
action can make the
union strong.*

To summarize, our definition of literacy includes the ability to use critical thinking, oral and written communication and numeracy for the goals we set ourselves in the course of our daily lives. This entails carrying out a wide range of **tasks** and using a whole array of **skills** both at the micro level and at the macro or system level. Unfortunately, it is this **system** level that is usually ignored by mainstream literacy definitions. Yet, it is only when we include literacy skills for dealing with this level of activity that we can claim to be developing literacy for democratic participation, indeed, for citizenship. As trade unionists, we must aim for nothing less. Furthermore, literacy as the practice of critical reflection and action can make the union strong.

It is clear that literacy as the practice of critical reflection and action entails much more than simply reading and writing. Developing critical literacy requires engagement in an ongoing process of action and reflection in the world. The worker-centred union literacy program provides a space where workers can come together to engage in collective discussion and reflection in order to **read the world**. And this means to read the world not from a corporate perspective but from the perspective of our own lived experiences as workers. It is only in this larger context of meaning that we can begin to make sense of particular reading and writing tasks.

Literacy Includes Systems, Tasks and Skills





SYSTEM LEVEL TASKS AND SKILLS

- making sense of the system - for example, terminology, concepts, structure, roles and player
- participating in the system - for example, understanding rights and obligations, getting information about procedures and rules, asking for clarification, making requests, complaints, and appeals
- critically reflecting on the system - for example, getting insight into the values on which it is based and how the system got developed, and analyzing how it affects workers and whose interests it serves
- taking action to change the system - for example, analyzing possibilities for action, debating and setting goals, identifying allies and opponents, developing strategies, educating and mobilizing for action

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Curriculum - Weaving Content Process

The what of curriculum is the content that is the focus of the learning program. This includes, for example, the knowledge and skills to be gained. But education is not simply a matter of directly acquiring content. How we learn something - the **process** we engage in as a means to learning - has implications for **what** we actually learn. In particular, the process of learning affects our attitudes about what learning is and our capacities as learners. For example, when learning primarily entails a process of rote memorization, then learners develop attitudes of passivity and deference to external authority.

In particular, the process of learning affects our attitudes about what is and learning our capacities as learners.

As trade unionists we know the importance of process in education. We know that countless workers have suffered injuries to their self-esteem as a result of schooling experiences that did not acknowledge, value and build on who they were and what they already knew. As we saw earlier, the principles of trade union education call attention to process. Indeed, trade union education principles are process principles, calling for a process that is participatory, inclusive and deeply democratic in both its aims and its methods; acknowledges and builds on the experiences and skills of workers; involves hearts as well as minds; promotes solidarity and respect among workers; enhances workers' capacities for critical reflection and action; and links education with action in the world in a project of social transformation. (See box pg.4)

In regard to this vital issue of the **process** of education, Paulo Freire made a distinction between what he called the **banking approach**, which aims at the transmission of information, and a **problem-posing** approach, which aims at engaging participants in a process of action and reflection. Our definition of literacy as critical reflection and action calls for curriculum that incorporates a problem-posing rather than a banking approach to process.

The Banking Approach

- instructor seen as possessing all essential information
- learners seen as "empty vessels" needing to be filled with knowledge
- instructor talks
- learners absorb passively

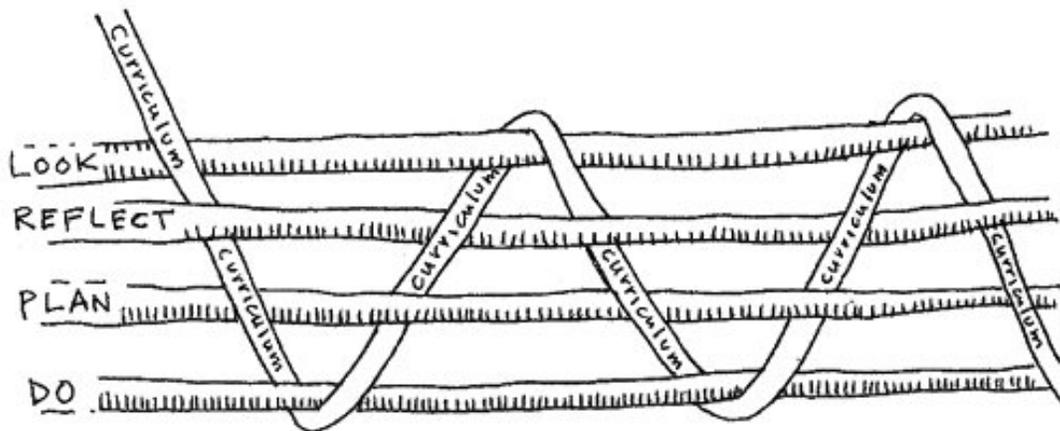
The problem-posing Approach

- learners seen as thinking, creative, active participants
- facilitator provides a framework for participants to consider a common problem and find solutions
- facilitator raises questions: Why? How? Who?
- participants are active - describing, analyzing, suggesting, deciding, planning

The Action and Reflection cycle

In the action and reflection cycle, participants engage in a process with four phases: description, analysis, strategizing and action.

- 1. Look** ➔ **Description** ➔ describe reality. Description starts from where the person is, describing their reality as they experience it in their own words. Only later do we go on to consider descriptions from other perspectives.
- 2. Reflect** ➔ **Analysis** ➔ reflect on and analyze reality, identify problems, goals and possibilities for action. Analysis includes looking at the larger context and identifying the various forces that block or further the realization of our goals. Analysis involves hearts as well as minds. Reflection entails both thinking and feeling - it is a process where we consider not only what is and how it works but also our values and how we feel about things.
- 3. Plan** ➔ **Strategizing** ➔ decide on goal and strategize action. Strategizing takes into account the analysis of the larger context. It includes considering various alternatives for action and making decisions about the what, who, when, where and how of the chosen action. It involves identifying the various steps and tasks and then planning how to carry them out.
- 4. Do** ➔ **Action** ➔ carry out action to transform reality. The education program can provide a practice place for action. The various tasks required for action and the skills required for those tasks can be practiced in the class. Then the participants carry out the action in the context of their lives beyond the program.





Let's consider an example of an action and reflection cycle from a literacy class for hospital workers.

Identification of theme/issue:

One day, during the opening check-in where participants share personal news, Maria says that she is nervous about the performance review she will have with her supervisor the following week. The co-worker instructor goes to the flipchart and writes **performance review**.

Description:

The instructor facilitates a group discussion, asking participants to share what they know about this management procedure. She records key words and phrases, clarifies terminology and draws out what the group knows about the process.

Analysis:

Maria is asked to talk about her concerns - why she is nervous. Maria feels her relationship with her supervisor is not a positive one and she fears she will be given a poor performance review that will adversely affect her goals of getting a promotion she has been working toward. This problem identification begins the **analysis** phase. It continues with exploration of relevant background information about the supervisor and Maria's relationship with her. The group reflects on Maria's situation in light of relevant sections of the contract. Participants share relevant experiences that further contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation and possible alternatives for action.

Strategizing:

In the **strategizing** phase, the group helps Maria assess the pros and cons of possible courses of action. Maria decides to consult the union steward and the group helps her plan how to go about that.

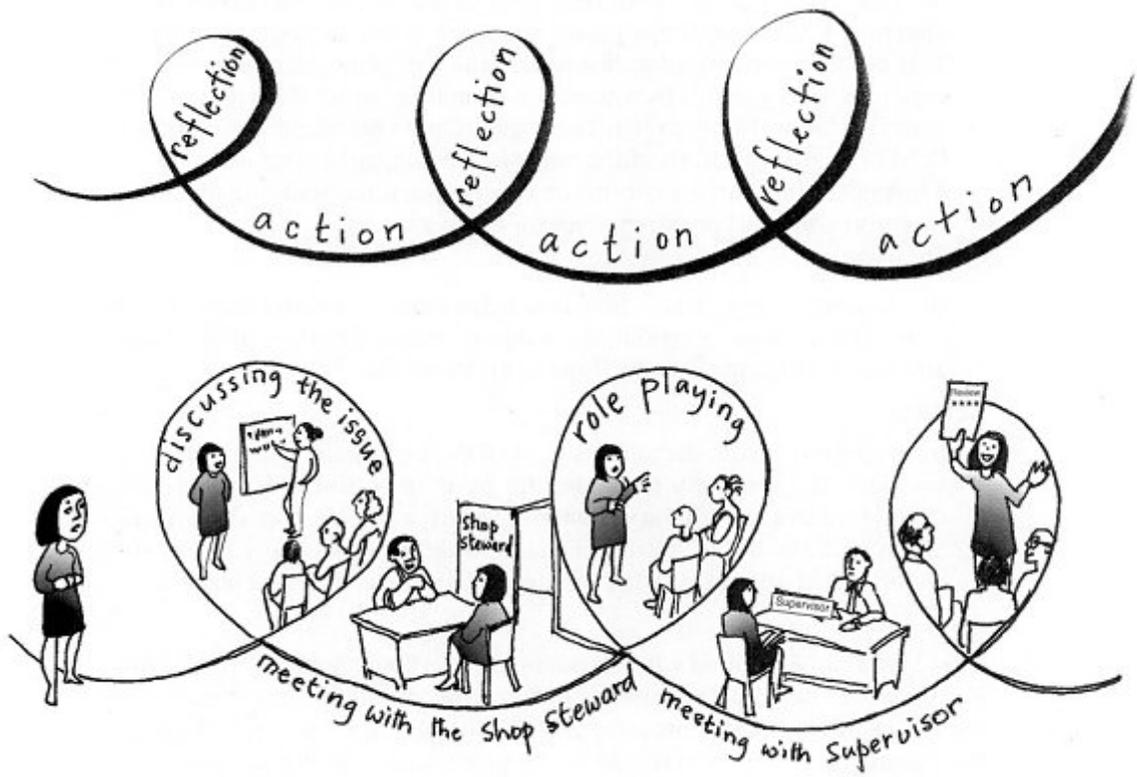
Action:

In the **action** phase, the various tasks of the action are first practised in the class. The instructor facilitates the group in writing a clear and concise summary of Maria's situation. Participants role-play the consultation with the union steward. Later, outside the class, Maria makes an appointment and meets with the steward to discuss her problem.

After Maria has consulted with the steward, she reports back to the group. Not only may her situation change in some way as a result of her action, but Maria and her fellow program participants have gained new insights into their shared reality. This may lead to the generation of new goals and the action-reflection cycle begins again.

A problem-posing approach is generative. As participants describe and reflect on their situations and develop skills, knowledge and critical awareness that enable them to engage with their situations in new ways, both they and their situations are transformed. Reflection on this new reality leads to new goals and so, as the participants evolve, so, too, must the curriculum. A problem-posing curriculum goes through cycles - as one cycle is completed, a new cycle is generated.

As we can see from our practical example of the action and reflection cycle, we cannot know in advance what is going to arise when participants engage in a problem-posing process. Therefore, this approach requires sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to permit the integration of the significant learning experiences generated by the action and reflection cycle.





Developing Curriculum for a problem-posing Approach

Now we turn to the question of how to develop curriculum based on a problem-posing approach. To answer this question, we first need to distinguish between two different types of curriculum development- prescribed and emergent.

Prescribed Curriculum

This type of curriculum is tightly controlled - almost everything is **prescribed** beforehand and there are very few choices left to the instructor and participants. The development of a prescribed curriculum may be based on findings from initial needs assessments - whether of the whole organization or of individual participants. But these assessments are carried out prior to curriculum development and the resulting curriculum is a **prescription** that is based on an initial diagnosis of need in a manner reminiscent of the medical model of health care.

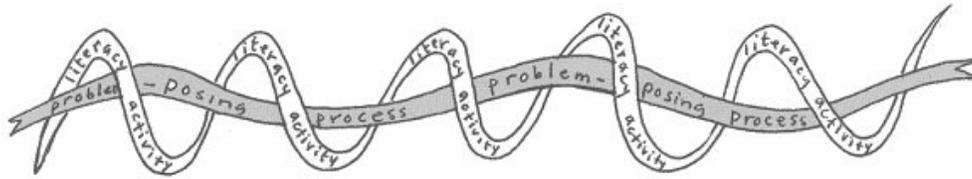
In developing a prescribed curriculum, all major decisions are made up front - goals are defined, content and skills are selected, learning objectives or outcomes are articulated, materials and learning activities are created, evaluation procedures are specified. The instructor is provided with directions for guiding the learners through the prescribed content and activities. At the end, learning is evaluated to see to what extent learners acquired the prescribed objectives in terms of knowledge and skills.

Emergent Curriculum

At the other end of the spectrum is an **emergent** curriculum. It is much more flexibly defined and less is prescribed beforehand. What is specified in advance is the **who**, **when**, and **where** of the learning program. The **what**, or content, is allowed to emerge from the participants as they engage in the program and for that reason this is called an **emergent** curriculum. Yet an emergent curriculum does not mean an absence of structure. Rather, it means that structure is achieved through predictable processes rather than predetermined content. Indeed, an emphasis on process is at the core of the emergent curriculum. The **how** of learning is specified through process guidelines that lead to recurring types of activities and it is these that provide a sense of order in a relatively open-ended learning program.

...an emergent curriculum does not mean an absence of structure. Rather, it means that structure is achieved through predictable processes rather than predetermined content.

- 
1. a problem-posing process that involves an action and reflection cycle, and
 2. instructional techniques required for developing literacy skills.



Each strand of this dual process typically involves recurring types of activities. On the one hand, problem posing and the action and reflection cycle involve the activities of describing, analyzing, strategizing and taking action. On the other hand, the instructional techniques for developing literacy skills involve activities that focus on various aspects of reading, writing, oral communication, and math. As well, to effectively implement these techniques, the instructor must be able to assess participants' literacy skills and provide activities at appropriate levels of challenge.

A curriculum for worker-centred union literacy must provide for the weaving together of these two essential strands. While both strands are essential, it is the problem-posing process that provides the central thread, and the literacy activities must be woven in and out. The direction, the forward momentum in the curriculum, comes from the problem-posing process.

The direction, the forward momentum in the curriculum, comes from the problem-posing process.

An emergent curriculum requires a dynamic process of on going development. It is a generative and participatory process in which the participants and the instructor engage together. Each group process is unique, so it is necessary to document it as it goes along. Indeed, the entire curriculum for a particular group of learners cannot be known in advance. It can be known only at the end of the program - retroactively - as an account of what actually happened over time.

Although the entire curriculum cannot be prescribed at the beginning, this does not mean that an instructor cannot layout abroad overall plan of action for a course. A flexible curriculum outline would be developed on the basis of background knowledge of the context and participant needs assessments. It would include program goals, timelines, participant goals, potential problem-posing themes and issues, and key literacy tasks and skills to be developed. The outline would block out routines - daily, weekly, monthly, beginning and end of term, and beginning and end of program. These predictable routines would provide shape to the overall program. Examples of daily routines include opening check-in, journal writing, a break, news, evaluation of the session, and so on according to the needs and interests of the group. Assessing progress and goal setting are routines that might be carried out on a monthly, and term basis. The curriculum outline would also list materials and activities to be used - both prescribed and optional. A flexible curriculum outline of this sort would allow an instructor to:



- plan individual sessions while keeping in mind the overall goals for the program; and
- be responsive to participant interests and needs as they emerge.

Documentation is an essential element of an emergent curriculum. At regular intervals during the program, through what is called a portfolio process, participants and instructor look back and document the topics dealt with, the materials used, the activities carried out. They identify, describe and provide evidence of the specific knowledge and skills developed and demonstrated by participants - both in and out of the classroom. Evaluation comes from reflection on this documentation, and on the basis of this evaluation, new goals are generated.

Clearly, instructors need adequate and effective training for implementing this approach to worker-centred union literacy. Since it is impossible to create an "instructor-proof" manual for this approach, it is necessary to develop appropriate knowledge, skill and awareness in the instructors. At the same time, instructors cannot be expected to create everything from scratch. They require relevant and appropriate materials for use in facilitating a worker-centred program.

A flexible curriculum outline

to include:

- program goals
- timelines
- participant goals
- potential problem-posing themes and issues
- key literacy tasks and skills to be developed
- relevant materials and activities (prescribed and optional)
- ways to assess progress and set goals at specific intervals
- specific routines for beginning and ending the course, as well as daily, weekly and monthly.



Materials for Worker-Centred Union Literacy

Individual programs will vary in terms of content focus and course objectives and the degree to which they aim toward an emergent curriculum. Since there can be no lock-step, prescribed curriculum manual for all programs, what kinds of materials can union programs provide to help instructors facilitate an open-ended process that responds to participants' interests and needs?

Useful materials come from three sources - authentic real-life materials, published educational materials, and materials developed by union literacy programs. Most programs will use some combination of materials from all three sources. Depending on union priorities, program goals and the findings of initial needs assessments, some curriculum decisions will be made up-front about particular themes and materials to be included in the program. Other decisions will be made during the course of the program in response to what emerges from participants.

Authentic real-life materials are those we encounter in the course of our daily lives - for example, forms, schedules, menus, directories, ads, letters, flyers, posters, labels, signs, maps and so on. Whenever relevant, authentic materials should be integrated into activities for problem-posing and literacy development.

Published literacy materials are available from commercial publishers, educational institutions and some union literacy programs (see Resources, Section 5). Some of these can be used in union programs, provided care is taken to select materials that are relevant and that lend themselves to a worker-centred approach. When considering published materials, you can refer to the *Guidelines for Reviewing Materials for Union Programs*, at the end of Section 3.

Materials can also be developed by union literacy programs themselves. Union-developed materials are based on themes and issues that are relevant to workers. They adhere to the principles of trade union education and they provide instructors with activities that incorporate the two strands of problem-posing and literacy development. These materials can be prepared in advance and made available to instructors to draw on as appropriate for a particular group of participants. In Section 3 of this manual, you will find guidelines for developing such materials. But before proceeding to those guidelines, we will look at examples of materials that demonstrate our approach in Section 2.

Union-developed materials are:

- *based on themes and issues relevant to workers*
- *adhere to the principles of trade union education*
- *provide instructors with activities that incorporate the two strands of problem-posing and literacy development*

Curriculum Materials - seeds for on Emergent Curriculum

The examples of materials provided in Section 2 consist of two units: *Fight for the Living* and The *Water Watch* Campaign. Each unit was inspired by authentic print material from the labour movement. The first was based on the Day of Mourning flyer published by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the second was based on a binder distributed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

When looking at these examples, it is important to keep in mind that curriculum material for worker-centred union literacy is to be understood as a seed. It can come to fullness only when it is planted in rich soil - the complex and particular lived experience of a group of workers in a specific time and place. Only then can it develop further and eventually bear fruit, a fruit that comes from the workers themselves and their active engagement. Such development is organic rather than mechanical- it cannot be precisely controlled or predicted but only supported and nurtured.

The *Fight for the Living* example includes both a description of the "seed" itself as well as a description of how the material was actually used by a particular group of participants and the activities and learning that emerged from that open-ended process. At the time of writing, the *Water Watch* Campaign material had yet to be used in a program and so it remains a seed still waiting to be planted.



...curriculum material for worker-centred union literacy is to be understood as a seed. It can come to fullness only when it is planted in rich soil - the complex and particular lived experience of a group of workers in a specific time and place.





SECTION 2

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS FOR WORKER-CENTRED UNION LITERACY

1. Introduction to the Examples

In this section, we present two examples of materials for worker-centred union literacy - *Fight for the Living* and *Water Watch*. Both units are based on authentic print materials produced by the labour movement and both units take their names from these original sources. The two sample units provide illustrations of how the curriculum framework in Section 1 can be applied in practice. Each unit consists of a series of activities that weave together the dual strands of problem-posing and literacy development. The detailed descriptions of the activities, plus participant handouts, provide instructors with materials that they can actually use in their programs.

Materials - product and process

In so far as these materials provide a curriculum resource for instructors, they are a **product**. As products, the materials can be used - or consumed - for program instruction. Yet, these materials are not intended merely as **products** to be consumed and put aside. They - and the curriculum guide as a whole - are intended to model and generate certain kinds of processes.

For instance, our examples can be seen as prototypes for a process of materials development based on the worker-centred union literacy curriculum framework. There is a great need for worker-centred materials in union programs. These units are but two limited examples of the many that might be produced. It is hoped that these examples, along with the guidelines for materials development in Section 3, will spark and provide support for further creative efforts by trade unionists involved in union-based literacy - efforts that will result in materials development projects reflecting the diversity across the country.



Demystifying the process of materials production

Because we want our examples to stimulate others to engage in the materials development process, we have made efforts to reveal to readers our own process of production. Our aim is to demystify the process so users of the guide will want to undertake projects themselves. For this reason, we have included in each unit the following elements: the source of the material, the rationale for its selection, and the way the material and activities were developed.

Using the materials for instructor development

These units can provide an opportunity for instructors to engage in an experiential process of instructor development in regard to worker-centred union literacy. Using the units in their own programs with their own participants, instructors will gain hands-on experience with facilitating a process that weaves together the two strands of problem-posing and literacy development. Following the processes mapped out in these units will also give instructors a practical opportunity to gain personal insight into what is meant by an emergent curriculum. Thus, the units - and the curriculum guide as a whole - can be used in instructor training.

One way to use this guide in instructor training would be to have a group of instructors first read the *Fight for the Living* unit as a whole and then discuss it in preparation for using it in their own programs. They would then use it and afterwards come back together to share and reflect on their experiences. The reflection process would include practical instructional issues and would eventually move into an analysis of curriculum and definitions of literacy. At that point, the curriculum framework in Section 1 could be presented and discussed, relating it to instructors' experiences with *Fight for the Living*.

Next, instructors would read and discuss the *Water Watch* unit, again in preparation for using it in their own programs. They would go on to use the unit, whole or in part, and then gather once again to share and reflect on their experiences. Through engaging in an action and reflection process of their own, instructors could come to an understanding of the curriculum framework that is both deep and practical. As a result of an instructor training experience of this sort, instructors might decide to follow-up by initiating materials development projects of their own.

Using the units in their own programs with their own participants, instructors will gain hands-on experience with facilitating a process that weaves together the two strands of problem-posing and literacy development.



Unit Format

Each unit is organized as follows:

- what - the source of the material
- why - the rationale for its selection
- how - the way the material and activities were developed
- unit objectives
- unit contents
- detailed description of activities plus participant hand-outs
- suggestions for follow-up actions by the group

Handouts

As you go through the examples, you will see reduced images of the handouts. These are located next to the description of the activity where they are to be used. Full size copies of the same handouts - for reproduction and use in programs - can be found at the end of each unit.

How the units differ

The original authentic text

The original authentic texts from which the two units were developed are very different. The *Fight for the Living* unit was developed from a single information pamphlet - an 8"x14" sheet of paper folded in three and printed on both sides. In contrast, the *Water Watch* unit was developed from an authentic text that is much more extensive and complex - a large manual in binder form that serves as a resource for a public campaign. As well, the unit drew additional material from current newspaper coverage of water issues.

The length and complexity of the units

Although presented in a similar format, the two units are quite different in terms of length and complexity. The *Fight for the Living* unit, based on a brief source text, consists of eight activities. The *Water Watch* unit, based on much more extensive source material, is correspondingly longer and more complex. It is divided into six parts and each of these, in turn, is composed of various activities. Because of these differences in length and complexity, the two units will require different amounts of program time and may prove suitable to different levels.



Experience using the materials

Fight for the Living, developed several years ago for use in the Ontario Federation of Labour BEST (Basic Education for Skills Training) programs, has been used widely. At the end of the unit, we have chosen to include a case study of what happened when the material was used in a particular program. This account illustrates what emerged from the participants' engagement with the materials - the actions they were inspired to undertake, and the changes that came about as a result of these actions. The account ends with a description of what the participants learned.

In contrast, *Water Watch* has not yet been used in a program, so there is no account of usage to be shared here. Instead, we have included three additional sections in the unit's introduction: participant learning, adapting *Water Watch*, and using *Water Watch* in a program.

The instructor's role in bringing the problem-posing process to life

Since *Fight for the Living* is a relatively short unit - eight activities in all - it is easier to discern the problem-posing process as it starts with **description** and moves through **analysis, strategizing** and **action**. These are explicitly identified in the instructions for the activities. When you look at *Fight for the Living*, you will see that strategizing and action come up only in the two final activities of the unit. In activity 6, for example, it is suggested that participants find out about possible local actions in support of the Day of Mourning. This will require them to strategize about how to do the research and, depending on the results of their investigation, they may have to strategize about actions they want to initiate. While there are discussion questions in the unit to spark strategizing and action, these phases can only come into being when a group engages with them. The case study at the end of *Fight for the Living* describes how the strategizing and action phases were lived out by a particular group of participants.

The instructor has a tremendously important role - to stimulate, value and support the movement of the participants beyond what is explicitly laid out in the materials. This requires an attitude of openness, a willingness to risk and to

The instructor has a tremendously important role - to stimulate, value and support the movement of the participants beyond what is explicitly laid out in the materials and to venture beyond the confines of the class. This means going with the participants into the unknown - beyond curriculum as **prescription** and toward an **emergent curriculum**. This requires an attitude of openness, a willingness to risk and to take time. It means leaving behind certainties and engaging possibilities - What if ..? Why not...? How about...?



This kind of instructor commitment is essential for an emergent curriculum to be realized. The instructor must value the experiences that are generated by the problem-posing process. This entails a readiness to integrate the emerging activities into the process of literacy development, so that participants' experiences of engaging with their reality are at the core of the curriculum, rather than on the margins. The case study that accompanies *Fight for the Living* demonstrates the meaningful and potentially transformative learning that can occur when an instructor is committed to an emergent curriculum process.

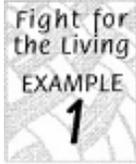
Water Watch has not yet been used in a program, so there is no case study describing how the strategizing and action phases were brought to life by a particular group. As well, because *Water Watch* is a much larger unit that consists of six distinct parts, there is a full cycle of problem-posing within each part. The four phases of the problem-posing process have not been named in the description of activities but it should not be difficult for readers to identify where they occur. The **strategizing** and **action** phases generally come into play regarding the possible follow-up activities identified at the end of each of the six parts. As we will see in the *Fight for the Living* case study, it is up to the instructor and participants to select from among the possibilities for follow-up that arise out of the group's description and analysis of the issues. Then they must decide what action, if any, they would like to take. Only then can strategizing and action come into play.

Participants' experiences of engaging with their reality are at the core of the curriculum, rather than on the margins.

Preparing to use the materials in a program

The units were designed for wide distribution. The primary goal was to provide instructors in diverse settings with a generic array of activities that demonstrate how to weave together the two strands of problem-posing and literacy development. As you look at the examples, keep in mind that these units were not developed for your specific program - each instructor will need to customize them to meet the particular needs and interests of their group. For example, it will be necessary to examine the activities to assess where they might be adapted to suit the local context as well as the skill levels and background knowledge of the particular participants. Additional activities may need to be included and others simplified or even omitted. As well, some of the written texts may need to be re-written in clearer language before they can be used with certain participants.

Remember - each program is unique in multiple ways- e.g., context, location, goals, timeframe, and participant characteristics and literacy levels. The judgements that are necessary to fine-tune these materials for use with a unique group can only be made by the instructor of that group.



FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

What - the source of the material

The material is *Fight for the Living*, a unit of activities based on a pamphlet produced by the CLC for the Day of Mourning for workers who have died or been injured on the job. (See pages 35 to 42 for hand-outs for activities). The current version of the pamphlet can be found in the back pocket of this Guide.

Why - the rationale for its selection

The rationale for the selection of this pamphlet for materials development was two fold:

1. the Day of Mourning and the issue of health and safety are relevant to all workers
2. group sets of the original pamphlet were widely distributed by the CLC to unions and labour councils across canada

How - the way the material and activities were developed

This unit of material was developed by the BEST Training officer for optional use in BEST programs. The design of the learning activities was based very closely on the original pamphlet. The types of activities that have been applied to the material integrate a dual process of problem posing and literacy development. The materials use instructional techniques which, ideally, form part of a literacy instructor's tool kit. These are: pre-reading discussion using key words; silent reading and discussion; assisted reading; and various reading comprehension activities such as true/false statements, a cloze exercise, and scrambled sentences. These techniques represent only a partial selection of the many possible activities that could have been used with these materials.

Unit Objectives

Participants will:

- become familiar with the Day of Mourning - what it means, how it came to be, and how it can be used to further workers' struggles for healthy and safe working conditions;
- find out about activities in their own workplace and community and learn how to get involved;
- on health and safety issues in their own workplace and reflect identify problems from their own experience; and
- learn about the union's role in health and safety and how members' concerns can be brought forward.



5. Labour proclaims Day of Mourning - Reading comprehension

Give participants copies of **handout # 5** - Labour proclaims Day of Mourning. Read silently and then discuss as a group. Have participants re-word the objectives as statements language beginning with We want ... Record these statements in clear on the flipcharts.



6. Labour proclaims Day of Mourning - Unscramble the Facts

Next, give participants **handout # 6** - Facts. This reading comprehension exercise has been created by selecting key facts from the reading passage in handout # 5. Key facts have been written as scrambled sentences. The task for participants is to read the passage and then unscramble and re-write the sentences to create a summary of the facts. It is a dual comprehension and writing exercise. Again, this activity can be carried out individually, in pairs or in small groups. Check responses as a group.



7. Supportive Action - Reading and Discussion

Distribute **handout # 7** - supportive Action. Participants are to read the passage and make a point form list on the flipcharts of possible actions to support the Day of Mourning. These include:

- get employer to lower the flag
- get employer to observe one minute of silence
- participate in Day of Mourning activities in local community
- petition municipal representatives to officially proclaim April 28 as labour's Day of Mourning
- support and encourage union efforts to negotiate stronger health and safety clauses in contract

Write "*through union representation*" on the flipcharts and clarify what this means. Ask participants, *what does it mean to encourage the employer "through union representation"?*



8.

SUPPORTIVE ACTION - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is health still considered in your workplace? If yes, how well is it observed?
2. If not, how representative of your local union asked the employer to improve April 20?
3. For your municipality officially proclaimed April 20 as the Day of Mourning? If yes, how well is it observed?
4. If not, does your local labour council have a petition for people to sign urging the municipality to officially proclaim April 20 as the Day of Mourning?
5. If nothing is happening in your workplace or municipality, what can you do to try and get some thing done?

HEALTH AND SAFETY - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the health and safety problems at your workplace?
2. Are there any health and safety regulations in your workplace that need to be made stronger? Where can the union do about this?
3. Invite a representative of your local union to come to your program and talk about health and safety issues.

Use the supportive Action - discussion questions on **handout # 8** to facilitate a problem-posing process about local supportive action for the Day of Mourning. In order to answer the questions, participants will need to investigate what, if anything, is going to take place. They will need to "dig" to identify who might have the information they want. They will also have to formulate the questions they want to ask. They may have to consult with various sources outside the class and, if they discover that nothing is happening in the workplace or community, they may be moved to consider options for taking action themselves. Thus, the discussion questions can serve as a catalyst for a process of action and reflection: describing, analyzing, strategizing and action. During this group process, the flipchart can be used to document possibilities and plans for action.

8. Health and safety - Action and Reflection

The Health and safety discussion questions on **handout # 8** can be used to facilitate a discussion and problem-posing process about health and safety in the participants' workplace. Participants are to describe problems and these can be recorded on the flipchart. participants may have to consult various print and human resources to get information about health and safety regulations. They may critically reflect on these regulations and on the problems in the workplace. They may decide to invite a representative from the local union to talk about health and safety issues. Prior to the meeting, they may want to prepare their questions in writing. Again, the discussion questions serve as a catalyst for a process of action and reflection.

Planting the "seed" and watching it grow - Case study

As we said at the end of Section 1, curriculum material is to be understood as a seed to be planted. It comes to fullness only when planted in rich soil - the complex and particular lived experience of a group of workers in a specific time and place. Only then can it develop further and eventually bear fruit, a fruit that comes from the workers themselves and their active engagement.

Fight for the Living was used in many BEST programs throughout Ontario. It goes without saying that no two experiences with *Fight for the Living* will be the same. What follows is a description of one unique experience. It took place in a BEST program sponsored by UFCW local 459 at the H.). Heinz plant in Leamington, Ontario. It shows what emerged from the participants' engagement with the Day of Mourning theme, as sparked by activities in the *Fight for the Living* unit.



Fight For the Living - a case study

What happened

The instructor introduced the materials in late March. Since the Day of Mourning takes place on April 28, the timing was appropriate. The instructor handed out the set of materials and the participants carried out some of the activities. The discussions were lively and the group took various actions as a result. These actions were not planned in advance by the instructor but one action just seemed to lead naturally to another, as the group engaged in a variety of interactions with others in their workplace and community. The instructor facilitated this process by responding positively to the group's impulses toward action and by providing practical and technical support as necessary.

The sequence of activities emerged, as follows:

1. When the group investigated and found out that there were no local activities planned for April 28, they decided to take the initiative and write a letter to the company requesting that they lower the flag to commemorate the Day of Mourning.
2. The company responded positively to the request and they, in turn, asked that the group make posters to let their fellow workers know about the Day of Mourning and the lowering of the flag. The group created posters which were displayed on bulletin boards and walls throughout the workplace.
3. The group invited the local union health and safety rep to attend a class to discuss health and safety. During this discussion, participants learned about the joint health and safety committee and how it worked. With the rep, participants engaged in a discussion about the workplace and identified health and safety issues in the departments where they currently worked.
4. As a follow-up to the discussion with the rep, the group wrote letters outlining the problems they had identified and sent these letters to the rep so that he could present them at the next meeting of the joint health and safety committee. As a result of this meeting, a company memo was distributed describing action to be taken on one of the issues identified by the group.
5. Next, the group wrote an article about the Day of Mourning and the lowering of the flag for the union newsletter.
6. The group also wrote a letter to the local newspaper to inform members of the wider community about the Day of Mourning and the activities taking place at the plant. As a follow-up to this letter, a reporter from the newspaper published an article on April 26 about the activities that would be taking place at the plant on April 28 to commemorate the Day of Mourning.

7. participants wrote and shared personal stories about what the Day of Mourning meant to them. One of these stories was widely distributed to other BEST programs to be used for reading and to spark discussion and reflection among participants.

Participant Learning

It is clear that through the experiences generated by this material, participants developed their skills and knowledge in many areas. The problem-posing process was integrated with literacy development. Indeed, the actions taken required a fair amount of writing, in particular, the creation of posters and the writing of letters. The instructor seized this opportunity to work on the mechanics of letter writing, including spelling and grammar, with the group. Participants also gained confidence in dealing with the local union and management. Most important through voicing their concerns and taking collective action, they contributed to making a difference in their workplace and community. And they gained confidence in their collective capacity to effect change.

Thus we have seen how activities written into a set of materials can be used to generate further activities that themselves go on to become part of an emergent curriculum. Materials for worker-centered union programs ought to be generative in this way - sparking critical reflection and action that engages participants in applying and developing their literacy skills in the process of transforming their situations.



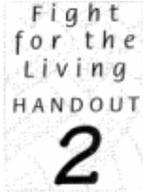


Fight for the Living!

Mourn for the Dead

pre reading discussion - key words

die / died / dying / dead / deaths to
toxic substances accidents / exposure
diseases / ailments / sicknesses
injured / disabled / killed victims
mourn / mourning nationwide
recognition of April 28 stronger
health and safety regulations



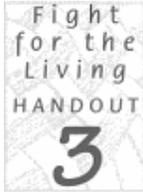
Dying on the Job

Canadian workers are dying. Workplace accidents and occupationally related diseases are cheating them of their lives. Still others are seriously injured and permanently disabled on the job each year. Last year, in Ontario alone, some 300 workers were killed, 1.2 million suffered compensable injuries and thousands died from occupationally related diseases. In recognition of these ongoing losses and injuries, the Canadian Labour Congress declared April 28 labour's official, national "Day of Mourning".

Persistent lobbying by local labour activists prompted many municipalities and some employers to recognize April 28 as an official "Day of Mourning". To commemorate the day, flags are lowered to half mast and one minute of silence is observed at 11:00 a.m. Although not all municipalities or employers acknowledge the occasion, strong petitioning and lobbying by labour groups is ensuring the day receives wider recognition each year.

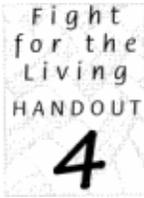
The CLC's ultimate goal is to end the carnage through the enforcement of stronger health and safety regulations in the workplace. Until that time, the CLC is determined to have April 28 recognized nationwide as the day on which all Canadians mourn the loss of their fellow workers.

1. *Read silently.*
2. *Discuss.*
3. *Assisted reading.*



True or false?

- ___ 1. April 28 is a Day of Mourning for victims of workplace accidents and disease.
- ___ 2. The Day of Mourning is recognized by all municipalities across Canada.
- ___ 3. One way to commemorate the day is to lower the flag to half mast.
- ___ 4. Workers in every workplace will observe one minute of silence at 11 a.m. on April 28.
- ___ 5. Local unions can encourage employers to recognize April 28.
- ___ 6. Labour groups have to work to get April 28 recognized nationwide.
- ___ 7. CLC stands for Canadian Labour Council.
- ___ 8. We can fight for the living by trying to get stronger Health and safety regulations in the workplace.



Dying for the Job

Canadian workers are _____. Workplace _____ and occupationally related _____ are cheating them of their lives. Still others are seriously _____ and permanently _____ on the job each year. Last year, in Ontario alone, some 300 workers were _____, 1/2 million suffered compensable _____ and thousands _____ from occupationally related diseases. In _____ of these ongoing losses and injuries, the Canadian Labour Congress declared April 28 labour's official, national "Day of _____".

Persistent _____ by local labour activists prompted many _____ and some employers to recognize April 28 as an official "Day of Mourning". To _____ the day, _____ are lowered to _____ and one minute _____ of is observed at 11:00 a.m. Although not all municipalities or employers acknowledge the occasion, strong _____ and lobbying by labour groups is ensuring the day receives wider recognition each year.

The CLC's ultimate _____ is to end the carnage through the _____ of _____ health and safety _____ in the workplace. Until that time, the CLC is determined to have April 28 recognized _____ as the day on which all Canadians _____ the loss of their fellow workers.

killed	injured	commemorate	injuries	accidents
goal	labour	nationwide	municipalities	mourning
flags	mourn	silence	enforcement	petitioning
died	disabled	dying	half mast	regulations
diseases	stronger	recognition	lobbying	injuries



LABOUR PROCLAIMS A DAY OF MOURNING

Workers are encouraged to contact their community labour councils to sign petitions supporting the adoption of the CLC proclamation within their municipalities or to lend their support to other activities planned for April 28.

FACTS:

- Every year, more than 1,000 Canadian workers are killed on the job.
- Thousands more are permanently disabled.
- Hundreds of thousands are injured.
- Thousands of others die of cancer, lung disease, and other ailments caused by exposure to toxic substances at their workplaces.
- On April 28, support the Canadian Labour Congress efforts to declare that day as:

OBJECTIVES:

- a Day of Mourning for victims of workplace accidents and disease;
- a day to remember the supreme sacrifice made by workers in order to earn a living;
- a day to renew approaches to governments for tougher occupational health and safety standards, and more effective compensation;
- a day to rededicate ourselves to the goal of making Canada's workplaces healthier and safer.





LABOUR PROCLAIMS DAY OF MOURNING

FACTS

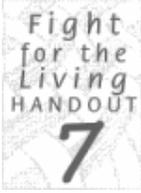
Unscramble the facts. Write the sentences.

1. Workers year job 1,000 Canadian every than on are the more killed.

2. permanently are thousands disabled.

3. injured of thousands are hundreds.

4. ailments workers of exposure thousands die to toxic their substances by workplaces of caused at.



SUPPORTIVE ACTION

The Canadian Labour Congress encourages each member of the labour force to support its efforts to have April 28 proclaimed labour's official "Day of Mourning", nationwide. Recommended actions include:

1. Encouraging your employer, through the union representation, to lower the flag to half mast.
2. Encouraging your employer, through the union representation, to observe one minute of silence at 11:00 a.m. on April 28 or the closest weekday to that date.
3. Participating in either CLC or union coordinated "Day of Mourning" activities in you community.
4. Petitioning your municipal representatives to officially proclaim April 28 as labour's "Day of Morning".
5. Supporting and encouraging your union's efforts to negotiate stronger health and safety clauses into existing collective agreements.

DAY OF MOURNING ACTIVITIES IN YOUR AREA

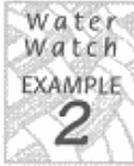


SUPPORTIVE ACTION - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is April 28 recognized in your workplace? If yes, how will it be observed?
2. If not, have representatives of your local union asked the employer to recognize April 28?
3. Has your municipality officially proclaimed April 28 as the Day of Mourning? If yes, how will it be observed?
4. If not, does your local labour council have a petition for people to sign urging the municipality to officially proclaim April 28 as the Day of Mourning?
5. If nothing is happening in your workplace or municipality what can you do to try and get some-thing started?

HEALTH AND SAFETY - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the health and safety problems at your workplace?
2. Are there any health and safety regulations in your workplace that need to be made stronger? What can the union do about this?
3. Invite a representative of your local union to come to your program and talk about health and safety issues.



WATER WATCH

What - the source the material

This unit of literacy activities is based on the *Water Watch* campaign launched by the Canadian union of Public Employees (CUPE) with the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The focus of this campaign is to stop the privatization of water.

Why - the rationale for its selection

The rationale for the selection of this topic for workplace literacy materials development is as follows:

- water is essential for life, so this is an issue that all workers can relate to
- the topic allows exploration of a wide range of sub-topics relevant to workers' lives
- the materials are available across the country
- campaigns come up frequently in the labour movement and it is important to look at ways to integrate them into workplace literacy programs as they are a valuable means to mobilize members and build the movement
- this campaign is one that builds bridges between labour and other progressive organizations
- it connects local issues to larger issues at the national and global levels

How - the way the materials and activities were developed

The materials for the *Water Watch* campaign are so extensive that they could not be used as is for developing literacy materials. A selection had to be made. We started by reading the campaign material and becoming familiar with the issues and the content. Next, we tried to imagine an overall problem-posing "path" by which we could take participants through a process of learning about and critically reflecting on issues of water distribution in their own communities and beyond.



The path needed to start with a description of participants' own experiences and build from there, eventually connecting with the campaign and potential action in their communities. This path was broken down into six sections, each made up of various activities. Key vocabulary and concepts had to be developed within section so that each one provided a foundation for the next. Each The description and analysis phases of the action and reflection cycle are incorporated into the activities within each section. The strategizing and action phases come into play with the follow-up activities for each section as well as for the unit as whole.

In order to develop the materials and activities that would take the participants through the path we had envisioned, we had to make appropriate selections from the background information provided in the campaign materials. In some instances we incorporated actual sections of written text. In order to include the Walkerton issue*, which had come to public attention after the Water watch campaign materials were printed, we used information and text from the public media.

Unit Objectives

Participants will:

- become familiar with and critically reflect on water distribution services in their local community
- learn about issues related to public water services and privatization - local, provincial, national and international
- find out about actions being taken to safeguard water as a basic human resource
- learn how they can get involved

Unit Contents

The Water watch unit consists of six parts, each with several activities:

1. Using a collage to generate a discussion about water
2. Reading a water and sewage Bill
3. The privatization of water
4. Water in the media - Walkerton, Ontario
5. The Water watch campaign
6. Water Jig Saw - The Big picture



Participant learning

The overall theme of this unit is water, but it also provides an excellent learning opportunity for participants to develop basic knowledge and skills that can be applied in various aspects of workers' lives. The sub-topics within the *Water Watch* unit include geography, levels of government and taxation as well as transfer payments, the water distribution system, utility bills, privatization, cutbacks in public services, and some effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In addition to general knowledge, the activities develop a wide range of basic skills in oral communication, reading, writing, numeracy and critical thinking. Most important, these skills are developed not in isolation but in a context that is meaningful, relevant and practical. Participants can apply the knowledge and skills acquired from this unit in the home, in the community, as citizens and as trade unionists.

Adapting Water Watch

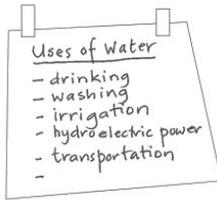
This unit may be used whole or in part, according to the characteristics of the specific group. Obviously, skill level is an important consideration, as well as time available and interest. Parts 1 through 5 form the essence of the unit - they can be adapted for use with most groups. For participants at a more basic skill level, some of the small group activities can be carried out in the large group with the instructor facilitating. As well, some of the readings can be re-written in a more basic form.

Part 6 introduces international water issues. It consists of *Jig Saw* activities. The class is to be divided into three groups and each group is given a different reading with associated tasks to carry out independently. At the end, each group presents what they have learned to the rest of the class so that all participants become familiar with the contents of all three readings. If the jig saw approach is too challenging for the group, or if there are not enough participants to divide the class into three groups, then the instructor can present the activities one at a time to the whole class. If necessary, more difficult activities may be simplified or omitted altogether. If activities are omitted, however, it is crucial to note key vocabulary and concepts that may be required if participants are to understand the content of subsequent activities.



Using Water Watch

The Water watch unit can be used to provide a coherent thread that runs through a series of sessions in a workplace literacy program. This "thread" connects various aspects of participants' lives and experience. It can provide a sense of continuity and an opportunity for participants to grow in confidence as they experience their knowledge and skills building with each activity. Yet, the Water Watch unit should not be the only theme the group deals with during an extended period. Parts of the unit may be used at specific intervals, say every week or every few weeks. The unit should be used in combination with materials and activities that grow out of other issues and needs that participants bring to the program.



Part 1.

Using a collage to generate a discussion about water

Preparation

For this activity you will need to prepare ahead of time by making a collage of pictures of water and some of the ways we use water. You can do this by cutting up two copies of the glossy blue **Water Watch pamphlet** for the general public - *They can't buy the air we breathe ... so they want to buy the water we drink.* You may add more pictures from magazines if you wish. Be sure there are no words on the collage.

Activities

Use the collage to generate a discussion about water. This discussion will draw out participants' knowledge and experience and develop key vocabulary and concepts as a foundation for later reading activities using *Water Watch* print material. The discussion deals with:

- uses of water
- sources of water
- water as a natural resource
- the water distribution system

Uses of water

Ask, "*What are some of the many ways we use water?*" List participants' ideas on a flipchart.

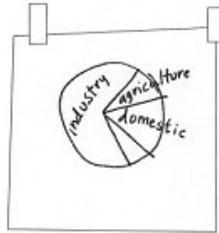
Water is used, for example, for:

- drinking
- washing
- watering plants and growing food - irrigation for agriculture
- transportation
- generating electricity - hydroelectric power (2/3 of our power in Canada)
- manufacturing industries
- recreation
- habitat - place to live - for a wide variety of plant and animal life



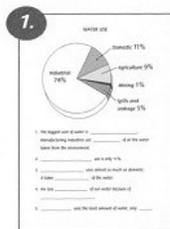
Now write on the flipchart and explain the 5 major categories of use as follows:

- agriculture
- industrial
- domestic
- mining
- spills and leakage

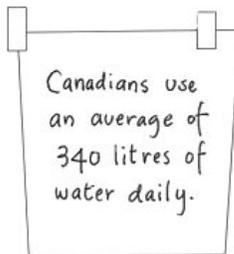


Pie chart of water use

Draw a large circle on the flipchart and explain that you are going to cut the pie to show how much of Canada's total water consumption is used by each category. To begin, ask participants to guess which category uses the most water. Which category is the biggest user? Have someone volunteer to draw a piece of the pie to show how much water is used by the biggest user. Label the piece. Now ask participants to guess which category uses the least water. Which category is the smallest user? Again have someone volunteer to draw and label the piece of the pie for this category. Continue with the other categories. Since there will be differences of opinion in the group, you may want to draw a second pie and repeat the exercise with other volunteers.



Now distribute the *Water Use hand-out # 1*. Compare the pie chart on the hand-out with the group's pie charts. Discuss any surprises and reflections. Have participants do the sentence completion exercise on the hand-out. Read aloud to check. If relevant, work with the group to go through the process of converting percentages to fractions and reducing the fractions where possible.



Write the following sentence on the flipchart.

Canadians use an average of 340 litres of water daily.

Ask what participants think this means. Does it mean we each use 340 litres a day? what does average mean? How do we arrive at this average? what is the calculation? We start with the total use and divide it by the number of people in Canada - the population. But what number do we use for the total use? If we use the total for domestic use and divide that by the total population, then 340 litres reflects average personal domestic use.



If, on the other hand, we use the total for all categories, then it includes industrial, etc. If this is the calculation, is 340 litres per person an accurate reflection or not? what does it mean when we are told as individuals to cut down on domestic use and to conserve water in the summer, for example? who are the biggest users? what does this mean for conservation efforts? what are your experiences and feelings about water conservation?

Sources of water

look at a map of Canada to identify the main bodies of water. On the flipchart, record key words as they come up, for example, oceans, rivers, and lakes. Distinguish freshwater from saltwater and add these two words to the flipchart. Ask participants for other sources of freshwater besides rivers and lakes, for example, springs and wells. Well water comes from underground springs. It is called groundwater. Add these words to the flipchart. Ask participants to share what they know about wells and springs, perhaps in rural areas.

Water is a natural resource

On the flipchart write, "*Water is a natural resource.*" Ask participants to name other natural resources and record these, for example, **trees** (wood and pulp for paper), **rocks** (minerals), **oil** and natural **gas** (for fuel).

Now, look at a map of the world. Ask participants to estimate what fraction of the earth's surface is made up of water. Record these estimates on a flipchart. Do calculations to convert fractions to percentages.

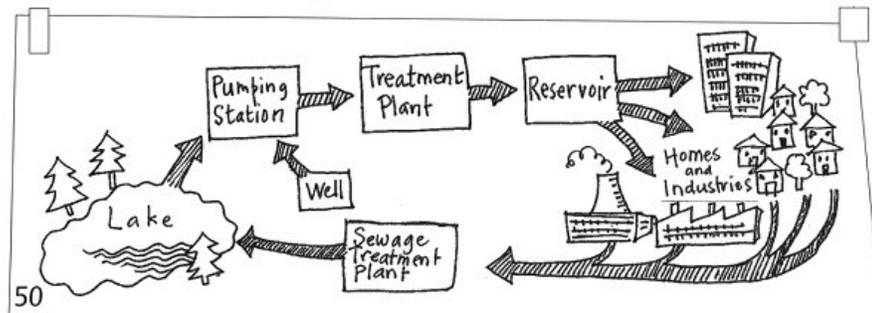
Compare Canada with other countries in regard to sources of freshwater. Have participants estimate how much of the world's total freshwater is located in Canada. Record these estimates in fractions and convert to percentages.

- pumping station that brings water from the source of surface water (eg. lake) into the distribution system
- wells to bring groundwater to the surface
- treatment plant to purify the water
- reservoir where the water is kept ready for further distribution
- pipes that take water into homes, and other buildings
- from homes, industries, etc. pipes that take sewage away
- sewage treatment plant

Ask, "what happens if untreated sewage goes back into the natural source of water?" Add the word pollution to the flipchart.

Brainstorm a list of causes of water pollution:

- fertilizers
- industrial wastes
- pesticides
- seepage from landfills, mining operations and industrial sites
- seepage of animal wastes from factory farms
- domestic sewage
- radioactive materials
- thermal pollution from cooling towers
- dumping of garbage





Ask participants, *What are some of the ways these pollutants might get into the water supply?*

Note that pollution not only affects lakes, rivers and oceans but also affects groundwater, thus contaminating wells and springs. Ask participants if they know how this happens - for example, through seepage of contaminants into the soil and then into the groundwater and from there into wells and springs. Draw this sequence into the flowchart, indicating possible sources of seepage from industry and agriculture.

Relate the flowchart to the participants' local community by having them identify the locations of any parts of the water system that they are familiar with in their community - for example, a local reservoir or water treatment plant or perhaps a place where raw untreated sewage is dumped directly into a body of water. Have participants share experiences related to the water distribution system.

Personal writing on the theme of water

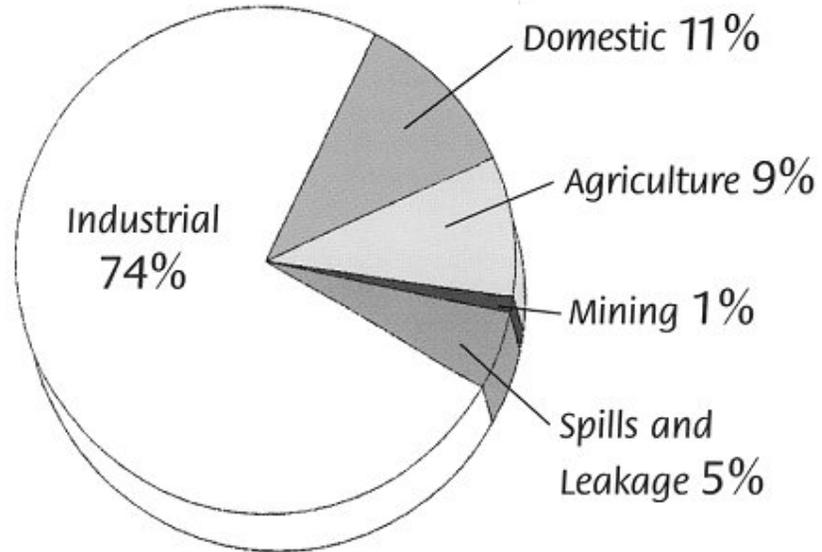
Following the discussion, some participants' stories may be recorded on the flipchart. These stories may be about anything personally meaningful that was triggered by the discussion about water - whether thoughts, feelings or personal experiences. Participants may also write their own stories and share them with the group.

Possible follow-up activities

participants can:

- make poster collages about water, using pictures from magazines
- visit landmarks related to the local water distribution system
- volunteer to visit the water system and take pictures to show the class
- begin to track water issues in the media - local, provincial, national and international - and share news up-dates with the group

WATER USE

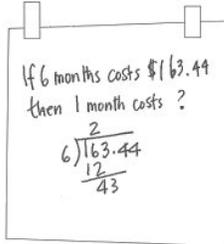


1. The biggest user of water is _____ Manufacturing industries use _____ of all the water taken from the environment.
2. _____ use is only 11%.
3. _____ uses almost as much as domestic. It takes _____ of the water.
4. We lose of our water because of _____.
5. _____ uses the least amount of water, only _____.

2a



2b



Part 2. Reading a Water and Sewage Bill

Preparation

Handouts # 2a and 2b are a photocopy of an authentic water bill. You will need to substitute the handout in the unit with a copy of a water and sewage bill from your own local municipality. Photocopy both sides. Make sufficient copies for the whole group. Also take the original bill to show the class, as it will be more recognizable in its authentic form.

Activities

Show the group the authentic water and sewage bill and distribute copies of the same bill. Ask participants, "What is this bill for? Do you receive this bill? How often?"

If they don't receive the bill because, for example, they live in an apartment, ask, "Who does receive the bill for your water?" Make sure it is clear that the water bill is one of several utility costs usually included in the cost of rent. Write the word utilities on the flipchart and add others that participants come up with: e.g. gas, oil, electricity.

List the following items on the flipchart and have participants locate them on the water bill:

- the length of time this bill covers - the billing period
- the rate - i.e., flat rate or other rate
- the amount charged for water
- the amount charged for sewage
- the total amount charged

On the flipchart, calculate the monthly cost of water and sewage as follows:

**If 6 months costs \$163.44,
then one month costs \$27.24.**



municipal government
public Utilities
Commission - (PUC)

What are the costs?
- infrastructure
- labour costs
water testing

Water - a public service

Ask, "Who provides this service, i.e. whom do we have to pay?
How do you know this - what does it say on the bill?"

Write *municipal government* on the **flipchart**. Contrast with the other levels of government - provincial or territorial and federal. Identify where the municipal government is located locally, as well as the name of the mayor or reeve. See if participants know the name of the councillor for their area. Write names on the flipchart.

Write *Public utilities Commission - PUC* - on the flipchart. Ask if participants know where it is located.

Turn the bill over and look at the telephone numbers listed for various inquiries and problems, e.g., emergency, water supply, meter readings, billing, water quality, industrial waste control, waste and water info. Discuss examples of problems that might make it necessary to call any of these numbers. Ask participants about personal experiences of dealing with any of these problems. Role-play examples of such phone calls where relevant.

Referring to the flowchart made during the discussion about the water distribution and sewage system, ask, "What are the various costs in this system?" Record key words and concepts on the flipchart. Distinguish between:

- **infrastructure** - building and maintaining physical plant or facilities
- **labour costs** of workers' wages and benefits who operate system

Refer once again to the flowchart developed by the group in Part 1 of this unit. Ask participants to identify the various physical facilities involved in the water system, for example, pumping station, treatment plant, reservoir, pipes and sewage treatment plant. Note that this infrastructure costs money to build as well as to maintain and update.



Ask participants to identify the different kinds of labour required to operate the water and sewage system. Be sure that **water testing** gets named. Write it on the flipchart. Add *water testing* to the flowchart in the various locations where it should be carried out - for example, treatment plants, reservoirs, pipes and wells. Add *water-testing labs* to the flowchart and note that these are also an infrastructure cost.

Financing public water service

Tell participants that the value of Canada's water treatment plants is \$100 billion. Write this figure on the flipchart.

Ask, "*Do you think the water and sewage bill pays for all of these costs? What proportion of the total cost do you think the bill might cover? How does the municipal government pay for the other costs? Where does the municipal government get its money?*"

Write property tax on the flipchart. Ask participants to identify other public services that the local municipal government provides: e.g., schools, garbage collection and recycling, policing, parks and recreation, etc. Write on flipchart, *Water is a public service. Contrast public service with private service.*

Ask, "*Where do provincial or territorial governments and the federal government get their income?*" write income tax on the flipchart. Explain that, while this money is collected by the federal government, some of it is passed on to the provincial government which in turn passes some on to the municipal government. These are called transfer payments. Transfer payments are necessary to adequately finance local infrastructure and public services - other wise municipalities have to finance local services by raising property taxes. This is particularly difficult for small and rural communities that have a smaller tax base. Discuss what happens when a municipal government is short of money. Ask for examples and personal experiences of cutbacks in municipal services. Write key words on the flipchart.



Possible follow-up activities:

Participants can:

- phone the municipal government office to get information about electoral districts and the names and telephone numbers of their elected local representatives
- find out who their provincial and federal representatives are
- plan and carry out a visit and guided tour of the municipal government building
- bring in other utility bills to use for further activities
- locate articles about municipal issues in the local newspaper
- track and clip media articles about cutbacks in public services
- write and share stories about participants' personal experiences with cutbacks in public services



Account Number 000438597		FLAT RATE	 Toronto Water Section Box 6000 Toronto, Ontario M2H 5B3
Service Address			
PIN Number		This is your new Flat Rate Water & Sewage Bill	
Every water customer has a new account number.			
If you pay your bill by telephone banking or pc/internet banking, you must re-register with your bank.			
Please read the enclosed brochure: "Important Information About Your Water Bill".			
Payable Before		\$ 155.66	
Due Date		31/Jan/2000 Day/Month/Year	
Payable After		\$ 163.44	
PLEASE RETAIN THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS			

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Beginning Balance	\$ 0.00
Previous Balance	\$ 0.00
Current Billing for January 1 to June 30, 2000	
Water & Sewage Charge	\$ 163.44
Total Water & Sewage Charge	\$ 163.44
Total Current Billing	\$ 163.44

Pd. Feb. 5

RECEIPT STAMP

ENQUIRIES

For enquiries pertaining to your water account, such as mailing and service addresses, discount, payment options, billing dates, meter readings, consumption, account balance, payments, arrears, water certificates, final reads, and other water and sewer related services, please telephone or fax the following numbers.

TELEPHONE: (416) 338-4829
FAX: (416) 392-0363
TDD: (416) 392-0719
 (Telephone Device for the Deaf)

EMERGENCY

For emergency (basement and sewer) or water supply (pressure and volume) problems, please call:

Former East York: (416) 392-7645 (day),
 (416) 396-2800 (after hours)
Former Etobicoke: (416) 392-7645 (day),
 (416) 394-8615 (after hours)
Former Scarborough: (416) 396-4714 (day),
 (416) 396-4808 (after hours)
Former Toronto: (416) 392-7645 (day),
 (416) 392-7737 (after hours)
Former York: (416) 392-7645 (day),
 (416) 394-2630 (after hours)
Former North York: (416) 395-6205 (day),
 (416) 395-6333 (after hours)

WATER QUALITY (416) 392-2894

INDUSTRIAL WASTE CONTROL (416) 392-9940
 To report a spill or waste dumping into a sewer, catch basin or water course.

WASTE AND WATER INFO (416) 392-4546
 For information on Toronto's water supply and sewer systems, and water efficiency programs and services.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

By mail addressed to:
Treasurer, City of Toronto
 Box 6000
 Toronto ON M2N 5V1

Please note that the City cannot accept responsibility for payments received after the due date which are due to circumstances beyond the City's control. Your cancelled cheque is your receipt.

At the cashier's wickets
 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday:

- East York Civic Centre**, 850 Coxwell Avenue
- Etobicoke Civic Centre**, 399 The West Mall
- North York Civic Centre**, 5100 Yonge Street
- Scarborough Civic Centre**, 150 Borough Drive
- Toronto City Hall**, 100 Queen Street West
- York Civic Centre**, 2700 Eglinton Avenue West

At most financial institutions (there may be a charge for this service). If paying your water bill through an automatic teller, please pay before the due date; retain your receipt. Payments may be made through telephone or personal computer banking if this service is provided through your financial institution.

At payment drop boxes You can deposit City of Toronto tax, water and hydro payments (cheques only — no cash) in the specially marked drop boxes at City Hall, Civic Centres (at a location listed above in #2) and the following locations:

- East York** Dawes Road Library, 416 Dawes Road
 Leaside Library, 165 McPhee Drive
 Todmorden Library, 1081 Pape Avenue
- North York** all public libraries
- Scarborough** Cedarbrae Library, 545 Markham Road
 L'Amoreaux Rec. Centre, 30 Sewells Road
 Albert Campbell Library, 496 Birchmount Road
- York** all public libraries

Specialized water and sewer services If you require specialized services, additional charges may apply. For example:

Water certificates	Collection — field visit
Special/final reads	Turn-offs/turn-ons for repairs
Consumption statements	Meter flow testing
Returned cheques	Frozen meter replacement

DISCOUNT

Failure to receive a bill does not extend the privilege of the discount. Accounts in arrears are subject to overdue charges and are liable to have service disconnected. A charge will be made for each reconnection.

Leaks cost you money. Don't waste water!

- A hole this size wastes 0.77 m³ (170 gallons) in 24 hours
- A hole this size wastes 4.41 m³ (970 gallons) in 24 hours
- A hole this size wastes 16.37 m³ (3600 gallons) in 24 hours



Part 3. The Privatization of Water

Preparation

Prepare puzzles using **hand-out # 3** - They can't buy the air we breathe ... so they want to buy the water we drink. This is a copy of the front page of the CUPE flyer about the Water watch campaign. Make multiple photocopies of the handout - one for each participant. Cut along the dotted lines. Put each cut-up puzzle into a separate envelope

Pre-reading activity

Hand out puzzle envelopes. Depending on skill levels, participants can work alone or in pairs to put the puzzle together.

In small groups, ask participants to read and discuss the message that is visible on the completed puzzle - *They can't buy the air we breathe ... 50 they want to buy the water we drink*. Ask them to consider the following questions written on the flipchart:

1. Who do you think they are?
2. Why would *they* want to buy the water we drink?
3. How can this be done?

In the large group, discuss participants' ideas.

Reading comprehension and discussion

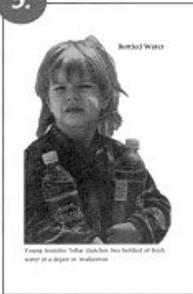
Distribute **handout # 4** - *Water is a basic human right ...* Have participants read silently both the story and the list of missing words and then do the doze exercise. They can work individually or in pairs. Read aloud to confirm responses. Discuss.

From the reading, find answers to the three questions and record on the flipchart:

1. Who? = corporations/private sector/investors/shareholders
2. Why? = profit
3. How? = privatizing this public service by offering to "help" municipal governments who don't have enough money to pay for an adequate water and sewage system



5.



Ask participants, what parts of the water and sewage system might be privatized? Refer to the flowchart of the water system and note parts of the system - both infrastructure and labour - that might be privatized. Discuss the reasons why municipal governments might want to give over responsibility to private corporations. Identify possible conflicts between the public need for universal, safe public water service and the profit motive of private corporations.

Bottled water

6.



Distribute **handout # 5 - Bottled Water**. Look at the photo and read the caption. Ask participants, *what do you know about Walkerton? what has bottled water got to do with events in Walkerton?* Write contaminated *water* on the flipchart.

Ask, *How many of you drink bottled water? Why? Has the consumption of bottled water been affected by the Walkerton crisis? How do you know?* Have participants share experiences and observations.

Ask, *who profits from this situation? Who pays?*

Distribute **handout # 6 - Bottled water no safer than tap water, says Health Canada**. Read the article to find answers to the following questions:

Where does bottled mineral or spring water come from? where do other bottled waters come from? what is the difference between tap water and bottled water when it comes to water safety?

Note that bottled water is controlled by the canadian Food and Drugs Act that requires regular testing for quality. Tap water is also safe when testing is controlled by government regulations. Deregulation and privatization take testing and safety out of public control. This situation jeopardizes the safety of tap water and creates increased consumer demand for bottled water.

Distribute **handout # 7 - After visiting the water treatment plant, this is the only water I'll drink**.

Ask participants, what will make us feel safe about drinking tap water? Read the article to identify the public safety measures required to ensure the safety of tap water.



Possible follow-up activities

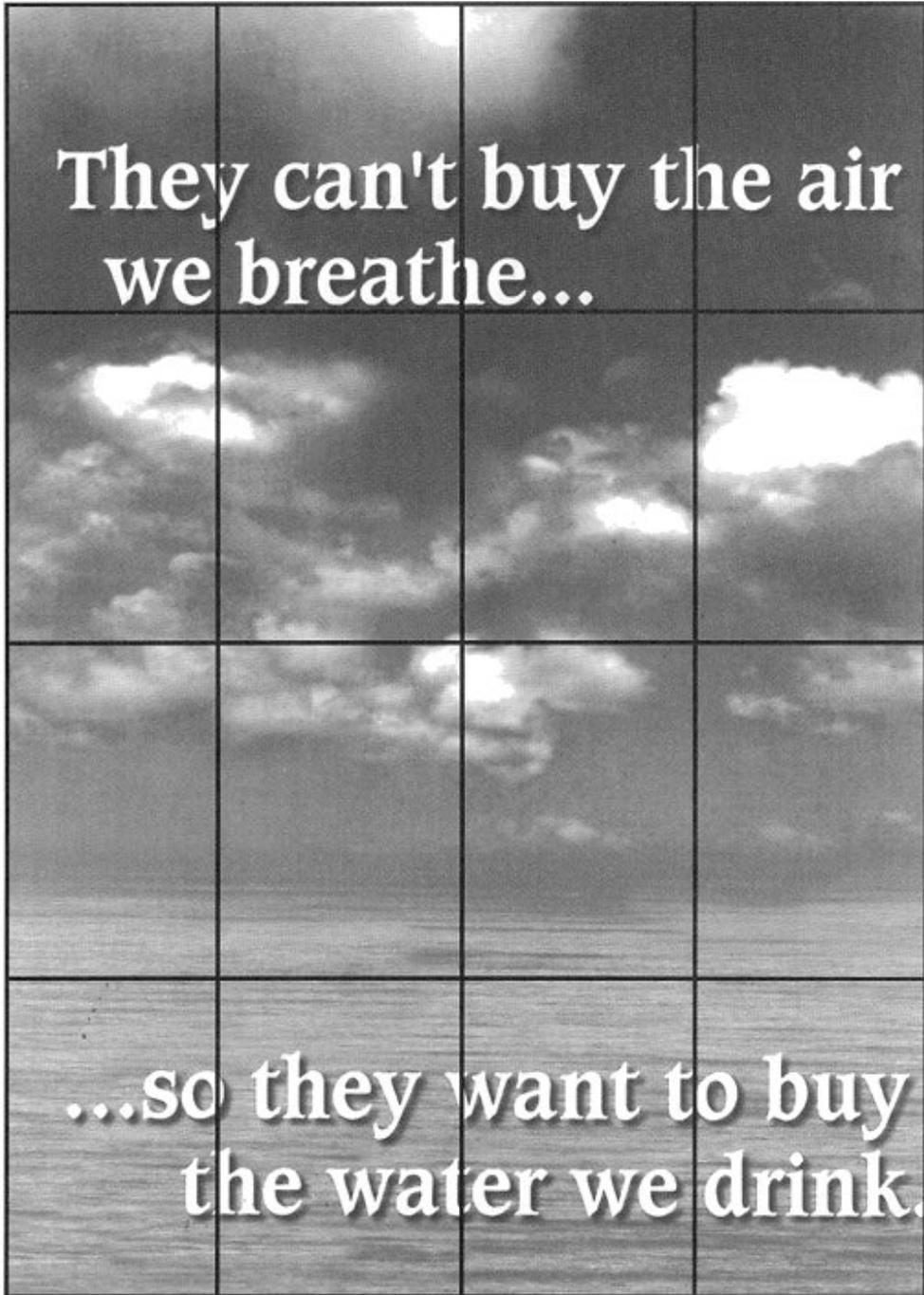
Participants can:

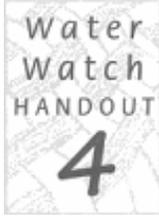
- call the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of the local community to find out if any part of the water service has been privatized
- arrange to visit the local water treatment plant
- talk with elected municipal representatives about water service issues
- discuss other public services where privatization is taking place
- watch the media for news about cutbacks and privatization of public services



Water
Watch
HANDOUT
3

Cut to make a puzzle





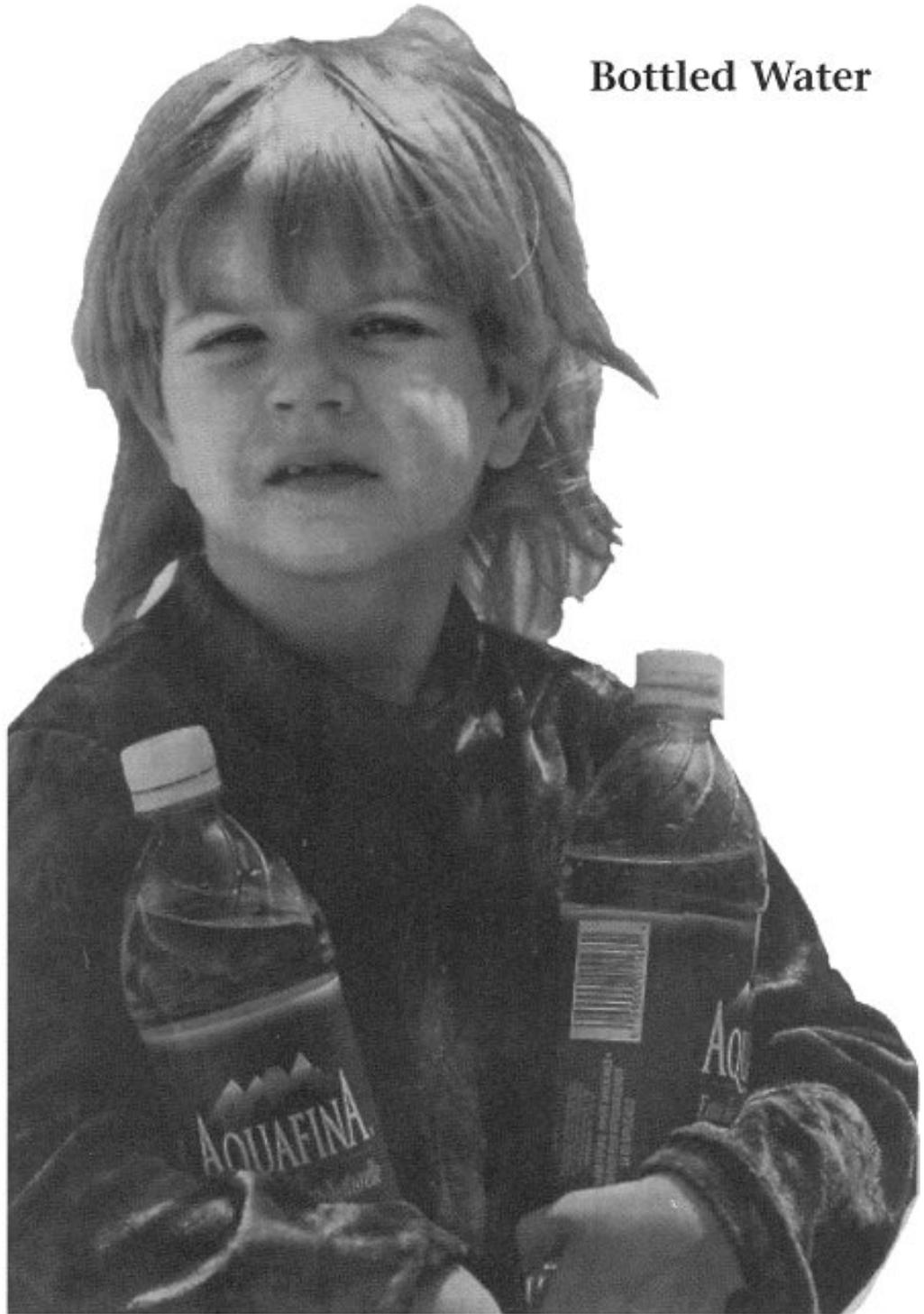
Water is a basic human right. ... we need water to survive....

All living things need _____ to breathe and _____ to drink. Our _____ are 70% water. Our planet is 71% water. One fifth of the world's _____ supply is located in Canada. Water is a public trust and a vital irreplaceable _____. We need to _____ it for ourselves and for _____ generations. No one should be allowed to _____ our water supply out from under us and then force us to buy it back, one drop at a time. Today, in communities across Canada, water services are under threat. Corporations are targeting cash strapped _____ governments, offering them a quick financial fix to today's pressing cash flow problems, by selling off _____ of our water supply. Canadians have learned from experience that the _____ sector only gets involved in services when they see a clear opportunity for _____. When it comes to _____ resources and meeting basic human needs, we believe the public is best served by keeping control safely in the hands of the _____ as a whole. Help us ensure our federal, provincial and municipal governments work to _____ our water supply.

Missing words:

Protect	control	private	bodies	community
Safeguard	buy	air	natural	freshwater
Future	profit	resource	municipal	water

Bottled Water



Young Jennifer Tellar clutches two bottled of fresh water at a depot in Walkerton



Bottled water no safer than tap water, says Health Canada

Everyone drinks bottled water these days, but is it really any safer than the plain old from-the-tap kind?

Health Canada says there is no evidence to support the claim that bottled water is, on the whole, safer than tap water, but to the best of its knowledge there haven't been any disease outbreaks caused by bottled water.

Only water that comes from an underground source can call itself mineral- or spring water in Canada.

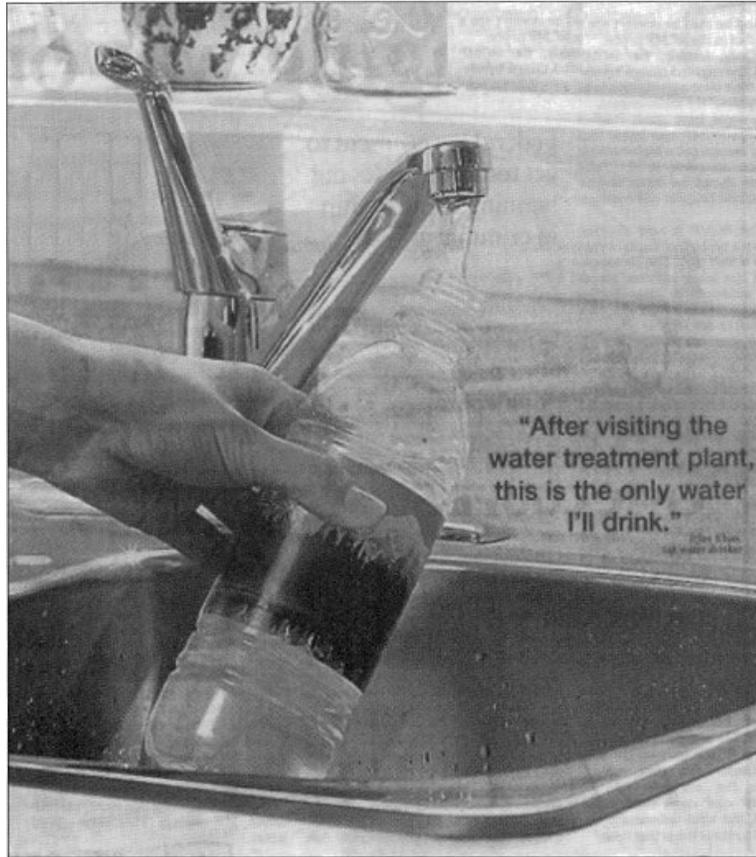
Bottled waters that don't sell themselves as mineral or spring can be made from "any source (municipal water, well water, etc.) that can be treated to make it fit for human consumption," says Health Canada.

It's possible some bottled water is ordinary tap water purified by carbonation, ozonation, filtration or other treatments.

Health Canada also points out that bottled water is about as safe to drink as tap water from a microbiological and chemical safety standpoint. And since bottled water is controlled by the Canadian Food and Drugs Act, it is subject to regular testing for quality.

Buyers shouldn't be deceived by fancy water; bottle labels that claim the product is refreshing and pure. Health Canada says it's always wise to read the label to see what purifying procedures were taken to clean the water before buying the bottle and quenching your thirst.

Water
Watch
HANDOUT
7



Clean drinking water? Toronto's squeaks its so clean.

In fact, your tap water is pumped in from in takes up to 3 kilometres from shore and 10 metres below the surface of Lake Ontario.

And to ensure its purity, the water is tested 300,000 times per year for any irregularities.

We use only the necessary chemicals to treat the water, including chlorine, to kill E. Coli and any other bacteria that may be present

Then, a tiny (and harmless) amount of chlorine is left in the water to ensure its continued safety as it travels to you.

But that's not good enough. So drinking water samples are then taken every four hours to confirm the absence of bacteria. Any irregularities in a water sample are reported to Toronto's Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of Environment. The public is notified if necessary.

For all the information we have on tap, please call the Waste and Water Information Line 392-4546 or visit our web site, www.city.toronto.on.ca/water.



And if you want to be sure we're coming clean, visit a water treatment plant. Call 392-3566.

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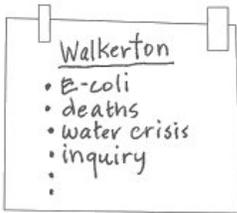
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And if you want to be sure we're coming clean, visit a water treatment plant. Call 392-3566.



Part 4. Water in the Media - Walkerton

Pre-reading collage

Facilitate a pre-reading discussion using **handout # 8** - a collage of newspaper headlines about the water crisis in Walkerton, ontario in 2000. It involved contaminated water that resulted in sickness and deaths. Locate Walkerton on a map of canada so participants can see where it is in relation to their own community - is it near or far? In the same or a different province?

Identify key words and phrases from the headlines and record on the flipchart:

- E-coli
- deaths
- water crisis
- inquiry
- test labs
- treatment plants
- pollution
- no staff

Discuss the key words and have participants share what they know about what happened in Walkerton. Have participants use each word in the collage to make a statement about what happened at Walkerton. Record the statements on the flipchart.

Chronology of the events in Walkerton

In preparation for this activity, you will need to make photocopies of **hand-out # 9**. Cut each copy into strips following dotted lines. Put each set of strips into an envelope - one for each participant. Make additional uncut copies of the handout.

Distribute the envelopes and ask participants to read the strips and put them into chronological order. They can work individually, in pairs or in small groups, depending on skills levels. When they have finished, distribute uncut copies of the handout so that they can check the chronology.

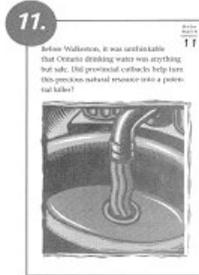
Read aloud, clarify as necessary and discuss.



Ask, "From this chronology, what role do you think the Ontario government had in the deaths in Walkerton?" Discuss ideas and opinions. Record key points on the flipchart.

Ontario admits role in deaths

Distribute **hand-out # 10** - Ontario admits role in deaths. Have participants read silently and sum up in their own words. Clarify as necessary. Re-write the statements as direct quotes.



Ask, "From the chronology, what were the guidelines that the government violated?"

Point out that before privatization, the ministry and the medical officer of health would have been told of problems. Government labs could have been disciplined for not following those guidelines - they would be held accountable. Private labs have no legal duty to report contamination to health authorities.



Ask, "Why do you think these guidelines were violated?" If participants come up with cutbacks and privatization, write these words on the flipchart. If not, consider participants' opinions and then proceed to the next activity.



Distribute **hand-out # 11** - Before Walkerton ... Read aloud and discuss. Write key words and points on the flipchart.

The high cost of common sense

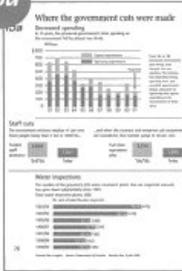
Write the words *common sense* on the flipchart. Discuss the possible meanings.

Ask if participants know how these words were used by the Ontario Conservative Party and its leader, Mike Harris. Write *Common Sense Revolution* on the flipchart. See if participants know what kinds of promises the party made and record key points on the flipchart - e.g. government downsizing, tax cuts, cutbacks in public services, municipal reform.

Ask, "What did this have to do with the Walkerton water crisis?" Discuss ideas. Write key words on the flipchart.



13a



13b

Where the government cuts were made

1. The total number of water treatment plants in Ontario is _____.

2. The number of water treatment plants inspected in the last year of the 1990s was _____.

3. The number of water treatment plants inspected in the last year of the 2000s was _____.

4. The number of water treatment plants inspected in the last year of the 2010s was _____.

5. The amount of money spent on the inspection of water treatment plants in the last year of the 1990s was _____.

6. The amount of money spent on the inspection of water treatment plants in the last year of the 2000s was _____.

7. The amount of money spent on the inspection of water treatment plants in the last year of the 2010s was _____.

Distribute **handout # 12a** - The high cost of common sense. Have participants read the article silently, then discuss the main gist as a group. Write key points on the flipchart. Have participants reread the article silently.

Turn to **handout # 12 b** and have participants read the statements and fill in the blanks. They will need to refer to the article to do this. participants can work individually or in pairs. When finished, have participants read aloud to check their responses. Discuss.

Now, return to the news article and do assisted reading as a group. The instructor reads one paragraph at a time aloud while participants follow along silently. Then the instructor and participants read aloud together. Finally, ask for volunteers to read aloud.

Where the government cuts were made

Distribute **handout # 13a** - *where the government cuts were made*. Have participants look at the three charts on the 1st page of the handout and discuss what the charts are about.

Clarify which chart relates to each of the following:

- the number of water plants inspected each year
- the number of people employed by the ontario Ministry of the environment
- the amount of money spent by the ontario government on the environment

See if participants can make some statements and draw some preliminary conclusions about the cuts.

Now, have participants turn to **handout # 13b** and complete the blanks in the statements. They can work in pairs or in small groups Demonstrate how to calculate percentages as necessary. When the participants have finished, check the responses and review the calculations.

Ask participants, *What do these cuts tell us about the priorities of the conservative government in Ontario? who pays? who profits?* Discuss.



Possible follow-up activities

Participants can:

- watch the media for further reports on Walkerton
- watch the media for water testing reports on other communities
- watch the media for reports on the Ministry of the Environment
- find out who your local provincial members of parliament are and talk with some of them about water issues and privatization

3 more deaths probed

Investigators' findings may push Walkerton toll to 21

Water crisis

Worst is over, but water's still not safe



Harris takes heat over E. coli tragedy

Walkerton

New regulations, but no staff, to safeguard water supply

Test labs inundated with calls

Frightened Ontarians checking on water safety

Inquiry needed in water scare

New Ontario test blitz reveals problems at more than half water treatment plants studied

Concern grows about pollution from megafarms

Fight against huge factory operations gains attention as manure a suspect in outbreak



Chronology of the events in Walkerton:



Cut and put in chronological order

A private lab notified the ontario Ministry of the Environment about coliform bacteria in Walkerton water samples in January and again in April.

✂.....

The lab reported to the ministry, but ministry officials did not pass on the report to the medical officer of health for Walkerton.

✂.....

The test results sat in the Walkerton PUC offices for 5 days in April.

✂.....

During this time, hundreds of people fell seriously ill.

✂.....

The sick people showed the symptoms of E. Coli infection. Symptoms include bloody diarrhea and in some cases kidney failure.

✂.....

Health officials tried to search for the cause of the E. Coli. E. Coli is one of many strains of coliform bacteria. Not all kinds of coliform bacteria are harmful.

✂.....

On May 20, the ministry got an anonymous phone call. The caller said that the local water was the source of the deadly infection.

✂.....

Several people died of the E. Coli infection and many, many people got sick.

✂.....

People in Walkerton had to stop using the local water and use bottled water instead.



Ontario admits role in deaths

Water guidelines not followed
in Walkerton
pollution tragedy,
minister says

Change these indirect reports to direct quotations

1. The Ontario government admitted that it violated its own guidelines. It failed to tell health officials about water contamination.

The Ontario government said, "We _____

_____".

2. The Ontario government admitted it had known for at least six years that Walkerton had problems with its water supply.

The Ontario government said, "We _____

_____".

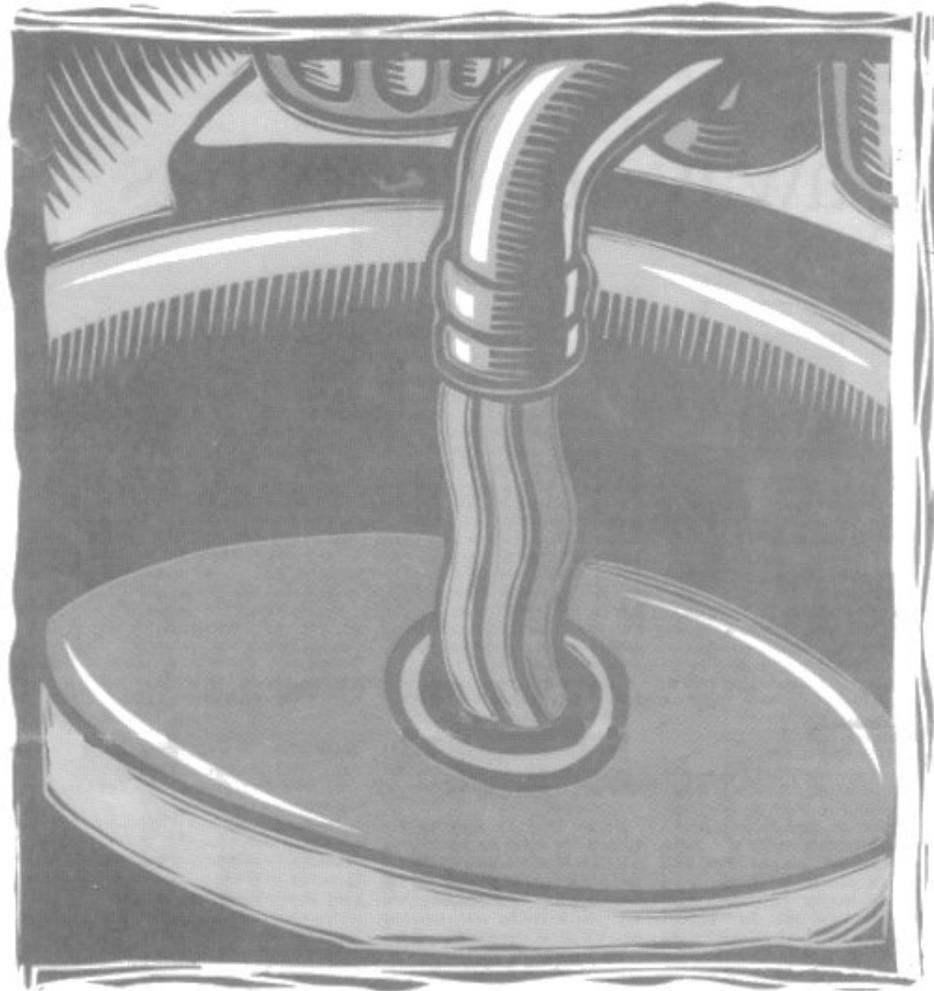
3. The Ontario Ministry of the Environment admitted it had made recommendations for the Walkerton Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to fix the problems but did not go back to check if the PUC followed through on the recommendations.

The Ontario ministry said, "We _____

_____".



Before Walkerton, it was unthinkable that Ontario drinking water was anything but safe. Did provincial cutbacks help turn this precious natural resource into a potential killer?





JOHN IBBITSON
ON ONTARIO

The high cost of Common Sense

Make no mistake: The Mike Harris government's environmental policies contributed to the deaths in Walkerton.

Two paths converged in Walkerton: government downsizing and municipal reform. When they came into office in 1995, the Harris Conservatives vowed that their Common Sense Revolution would make government smaller and more efficient. In the Environment Ministry's case, this meant, among other things, slashing the ministry's budget by 40 per cent over five years, while taking away many of its responsibilities and eliminating much of its staff. To keep the workload for the survivors manageable, the Tories privatized much of the ministry, letting industry monitor standards once watched over by bureaucrats and selling off provincially owned labs that tested municipal water. The municipalities would, in future, hire private firms to do the testing, with the provincial government setting and monitoring overall standards.

“Cutbacks were popular in Walkerton-Bruce area”

At about the same time, the Tories decided to reorganize the responsibilities of local and provincial governments. Queen's Park would take over control of education; the municipalities would look after "hard services," including sewer and water.

But there are municipalities and municipalities. Toronto and Ottawa enjoy sophisticated governments and bureaucracies. Rural counties struggle to keep the roads plowed. As their responsibilities multiplied, poorer jurisdictions were tempted to fiddle, to raid one account to find money for another.

Globe and Mail, 30 May 2000



The high cost of common sense

1. The Common Sense Revolution _____ to the deaths in Walkerton.
2. Government _____ means making government smaller.
3. The Tory government cut the ministry of the environment budget by _____ per cent over _____ years.
4. The Tory government took away many of the ministry's responsibilities and cut a lot of _____.
5. The Tory government _____ much of the work of the environment ministry.
6. The Tory government sold provincial _____ that did municipal water testing.
7. Municipal governments had to hire _____ labs to do water testing.
8. The Tory government let private industry monitor _____ that government used to watch over.
9. Municipal reform means reorganizing the _____ of local and provincial government.
10. The Tory government took control of _____ away from municipal governments and they gave municipal governments the responsibility for services like _____ and _____.
11. Small municipalities have less _____ than big municipalities.
12. Poorer municipalities, like _____, find it difficult to finance adequate water services and they take chances by trying to cut expenses.

Missing words:

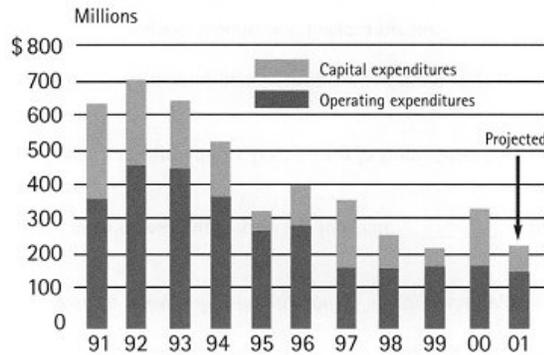
Walkerton	sewer	education	5
Money	private	water	privatized
Labs	staff	contributed	standards
Downsizing	40	responsibilities	



Where the government cuts were made

Decreased spending

In 10 years, the provincial government's total spending on the environment fell by almost two thirds.



From '94 to '98 (inclusive) environment and energy were merged into one ministry. The ministry has separated energy spending here, and provided approximate dollars allocated for operating and capital expenditures for environment in these years.

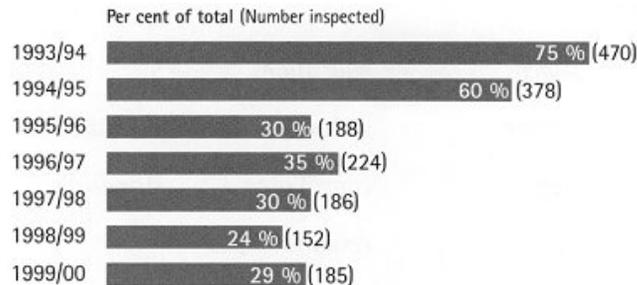
Staff cuts

The environment ministry employs 41 per cent fewer people today than it did 1994/'95 and when the contract and temporary job assignments are considered, that number jumps to 58 per cent.



Water inspections

The number of the province's 630 water treatment plants that are inspected annually has gone down substantially since 1993. Total water treatment plants: **630**





Refer to the newspaper charts to fill in the blanks:

1. The total number of water treatment plants in ontario _____.
2. The number of ontario's water treatment plants inspected in the last year of the NDP government, 1993-94 _____.
3. The number of water treatment plants inspected in the year when the Harris government came to power, 1995 _____. This equals _____percent of the total.
4. The number of water treatment plants inspected in 1998-99 _____. This equals only _____percent of the total. This equals a _____percent cut since 93-94.
5. The number of people employed by the ontario Ministry of the Environment in 1994-95 _____and in 1999-2000 _____. This equals a _____percent cut since 1994-95.
6. The amount of money spent on the environment in 1994 was approximately _____million dollars.
7. The amount of money spent on the environment in 1999 was approximately _____million dollars. This represents a _____percent cut from 1994.



Part 5. The *Water Watch* campaign

Pre-reading discussion

Present the **Water Watch logo** to the group by posting it on the flipchart for all to see. Ask them the following:

*"We have been learning a lot about issues related to water. Look at this logo called '**Water Watch**'. What do you think this is about?"*

Note the eye in the centre of the logo. Ask participants to name the kinds of things we need to be watching out for or "*keeping an eye out*" for in regard to water. List responses in point form on the flipchart.

*Reading the **Water Watch** pamphlet*

Hand out a copy of the blue **Water watch** pamphlet to each participant. There is one copy included in this guide and you can order multiple copies from the address listed on the pamphlet.

participants will be familiar with parts of the pamphlet that were used in earlier activities. Have them read the pamphlet silently to find out:

- what **Water Watch** is
- what it aims to do.

Discuss the questions as a group. Then have participants identify:

- the founding organizations
- who can participate
- how to get further information

*Viewing the **Water Watch** video*

Introduce the **Water Watch video***. Have participants make some predictions about what they might expect to see in the video. The video lasts 10 minutes. After the viewing, invite questions and comments from participants. Make a group summary on the flipchart about the key points made in the video.

Ask participants, "*How does this relate to us? Why might we want to get involved? How could we get involved?*"



* Get the video from CUPE at 1 877-CUPE-H20 or www.cupe.ca

Action Research - Getting more information about the campaign

On the flipchart, generate a list of questions that participants have regarding **Water Watch** activities in the local community. For example:

- Is there a **Water Watch** Committee in the local community? where? when does it meet?
- Which CUPE locals in the area are involved?
- Is the local labour council involved?
- Is our union involved in any way?
- What other groups are involved?
- Is local water service being privatized?

Strategize about how to get more information about the campaign. Brainstorm a list of possible sources of information - human and print. The research process will be different for participants who are CUPE members than for those who are members of other unions. It is important that, wherever possible, research tasks be carried out by members of the group. Perhaps a participant has access to the internet and can volunteer to get information and print it out for the group. Perhaps. A participant can phone the CUPE number listed and report back to the group. Role-play phone calls and making research requests. Delegate tasks to be carried out outside of class.

Possible follow-up activities

Depending on the results of the action research, the group may decide to pursue further activities such as:

- invite a guest speaker
- make a presentation and show the water watch video at a local union meeting
- attend a labour council meeting
- attend a local **Water Watch** campaign committee meeting
- Write a letter to the editor of the newspaper
- Write a letter to government representatives as relevant-municipal, provincial, or federal (Samples of letters from the **Water Watch** campaign are included for use as models where appropriate.)
- check out relevant internet sites for information on water (To begin, see list - *what's online?* - at the end of this part of the unit)



Source: *Water Watch* Campaign



Sample Letters to the Editor

- If your municipal council is considering privatization

For publication

To the Editor;

Imagine opening your mail to get a bill for the air you've breathed over the last month.

A scenario nearly as unimaginable may soon become reality in our community. Corporations that can't control the air we breathe want to own and control the next best thing: the water we drink. And our municipal council is considering handing our water services to just such a corporation. The health, environmental and economic consequences will be devastating.

Our water is a public service we trust and rely on. Corporations see water services as a lucrative source of profit. They'll cut corners and hike prices to make that profit.

Water privatization experiments around the world have resulted in contaminated drinking water, increased incidences of diseases like dysentery and Hepatitis A, skyrocketing water bills and lower environmental standards. Here in Canada, Hamilton harbour had the largest sewage spill in its history soon after a private company took over the water treatment plant.

Facing a cash crunch thanks to countless services downloaded to municipalities, council is considering a shortsighted decision that will cost all of us dearly. Experience shows public financing, ownership and operation of water facilities is the efficient, safe and environmentally sound choice.

Once we hand away our water; we lose control of it forever. Citizens are saying no to water for profit. We can't let the unimaginable happen.

Sincerely

YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION

Source: Water Watch Campaign



To the Editor.

We all drink tap water without worrying if it's safe to do so. We all flush our toilets knowing the waste is being properly treated. We all rely on our public water system.

If council goes ahead with plans to hand our water system to a private corporation, we lose that security. Council says it's about saving money and keeping costs off the books, But corporations don't take over public services as a gesture of goodwill. They do it to make a profit.

So where's that profit going to come from? I have a few educated guesses, First they'll cut staff and lower standards. That will in turn increase the risk of sewage spills and contaminated drinking water: Once corporations have a monopoly on the system, they'll raise the prices for their captive customers,

Sewage spill clean ups, health hazards, new user fees and unemployed workers don't add up to savings in my books. Let's keep our water public.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION



To the Editor,

Hepatitis A and dysentery aren't what you expect when you turn on your kitchen faucet, But we should all be concerned that these and other serious health risks could be on tap if municipal council surrenders control of our water services.

It's exactly what British people faced after private corporations took over the country's water,

Our council is being courted by water mega-corporations eager to turn a profit by running our water system. If council hands our water treatment facilities to private operators and owners, we're all in trouble.

Privatization of water services has failed around the world. Prices shot up in Britain, as did the number of people cut off because they couldn't pay their water bills, Water- borne diseases increased. Sewage spills and other contamination increased as quality and safety plummeted.

There is no good reason to privatize our water, and every good reason to keep it public. I urge council to listen to the community.

Sincerely

YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION

Source: *Water Watch* campaign



What's online?

Want to learn more? Check out these Internet sites:

http://www.ec.gc.ca/water/e_main.html

Environment Canada's web site on safe drinking water and water usage.

www.cgwa.org

Canadian Ground Water Association. Has information on ground water usage and safety.

www.lifewater.ca

Lifewater Canada is a non-profit organization that helps the rural poor obtain safe drinking water. Lots of links here to sites on drinking water safety around the world.

www.cwra.org

Canadian Water Resources Association. Information on water safety and usage.

www.ocwa.com

Ontario Clean Water Agency. Has a detailed explanation of the





Group A

14.

A Global Water Crisis

1 Read silently
2 Read aloud
3 Discuss

There is a global water crisis. Many people in the world live in areas where there is not enough freshwater. Canada has one of the most water-rich regions of the world. It has a lot of water. But not everyone has as much water as we have. Many people in the world do not have enough freshwater. They often have to travel long distances to get water. This is a problem. We need to find ways to use water more wisely. We need to find ways to get more water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

True or False

- ... Fresh water is not as easy to find as you think it is.
- ... We have a lot of water in Canada, but not everyone has enough.
- ... We need to find ways to use water more wisely.
- ... We need to find ways to get more water.
- ... We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.
- ... We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.
- ... We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

Group B

15.

Effects of Water Privatization

1 Read silently
2 Read aloud
3 Discuss

Water is a natural resource. It is essential for life. In the 1980s, many governments began to privatize water. This means that they sold the water supply to private companies. This has led to a number of problems. In some places, water is now more expensive. In other places, the quality of water is worse. In some places, the water supply is not as reliable. This is a problem. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

True or False

- ... Water is a natural resource.
- ... In the 1980s, many governments began to privatize water.
- ... This has led to a number of problems.
- ... In some places, water is now more expensive.
- ... In other places, the quality of water is worse.
- ... In some places, the water supply is not as reliable.
- ... This is a problem.
- ... We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

Group C

16.

NAFTA vs. Canadian Control of Water

1 Read silently
2 Read aloud
3 Discuss

NAFTA is a trade agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It has led to a number of changes in the way that these countries trade with each other. One of the things that NAFTA has led to is a change in the way that water is traded. This has led to a number of problems. In some places, water is now more expensive. In other places, the quality of water is worse. In some places, the water supply is not as reliable. This is a problem. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water. We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

True or False

- ... NAFTA is a trade agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico.
- ... It has led to a number of changes in the way that these countries trade with each other.
- ... One of the things that NAFTA has led to is a change in the way that water is traded.
- ... This has led to a number of problems.
- ... In some places, water is now more expensive.
- ... In other places, the quality of water is worse.
- ... In some places, the water supply is not as reliable.
- ... This is a problem.
- ... We need to find ways to make sure that everyone has enough water.

Part 6. Water Jig Saw - The Big Picture

Pre-reading discussion

Write the following titles on the flipchart and ask the accompanying questions:

- *A Global Water crisis* - Is there one? what might it be?
- *Effects of Privatization* - what do you think they are?
- *NAFTA versus Canadian Control of Water* - what is NAFTA? what has it got to do with water?

Ask participants to make some guesses about these questions. Record key words from the discussion on the flipchart.

Tell participants that they are now going to read to find out more about the questions.

Small group activities

Divide the participants into three small groups according to reading level. Distribute **hand-outs** as follows:

- Group A - basic level - **handout # 14** - *A Global Water crisis*
- Group B - intermediate level - **handout # 15** - *Effects of Privatization*
- Group C - advanced level - **handout # 16** - *NAFTA versus Canadian Control of Water*

Participants in each group are to work together on the set of activities provided. They are to read and discuss together and then participants are to complete the written exercises on their own set of handouts. Participants are encouraged to help each other as needed. All three groups have the same kinds of activities: silent reading, reading aloud together. Reading comprehension (true/false) vocabulary critical thinking and writing



Presentations

The final activity for each small group is to prepare a presentation on its own article to share with the rest of the class. In this way, participants work together to "digest" the content in order to explain it clearly to others. Allow about an hour for all the presentations to be made - approximately 20 minutes per presentation, including time for questions and discussion. This activity is an example of the Jig Saw approach - a large reading or research task is divided into parts and delegated to different groups and then at the end they are all put together again - through presentations and discussion - to form the whole. As a result of the presentations, all participants will be familiar with the content from all three articles.

Large group discussion

After the presentations, the whole group considers the following question:

"You have heard about the global water crisis, the privatization of water and about NAFTA and the Canadian control of water. In your opinion, what are the problems and what are the solutions?"

Record a summary of problems and solutions in list form on the flipchart.

Finally, distribute copies of **hand-out # 17 - Five Things You Should Know About Water**. Explain that this article is from Canadian perspectives, winter 1999. This is a publication of the council of Canadians. Tell participants that the readings they have just read and discussed and the presentations they have just heard are all based on this article. They should now be able to read and make sense of the article in its original form.





A Global Water Crisis

1. *Read silently.*
2. *Read aloud.*
3. *Discuss.*

There is a global water crisis. Many people in the world live in areas where there is not enough freshwater. Canada has 20% of the total world supply of freshwater. Private companies want to export freshwater from Canada. They want to sell Canada's water to other countries that do not have enough freshwater. These private corporations want to sell water for a profit. This will not help people in other countries who do not have enough clean water. Only people with enough money will be able to buy the water. Some countries have water problems when there is a drought. These countries will not be able to afford to pay for all the water the country needs to import from Canada. Also, people who are poor will not be able to pay for water. Each country needs to develop a good public system to supply clean freshwater locally. If countries can import water from Canada, they will not have to find local ways to solve the water problems in their own countries.

TRUE OR FALSE

- ___ private companies want to import freshwater into Canada.
- ___ Some countries do not have enough water when it does not rain for a long time.
- ___ Every country in the world has a good public system to supply clean freshwater to all its people.
- ___ Private companies want to sell Canada's water to help other countries who need water.
- ___ Because private companies want to make a profit, they sell water for a high price.
- ___ Selling Canada's water to other countries will not solve the global water crisis.



VOCABULARY

Find words in the story that mean the same as the following:

worldwide _____ business _____
not enough rain _____
find solutions _____
sell something to another country _____
buy something from another country _____
one fifth _____

Find words or phrases in the story that mean the opposite of the following:

public _____ dirty _____
too much _____ buy _____
import _____ global _____
rich _____



THINK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions with the other people in your group:

1. Why do you think some countries want to import fresh water? Why do they have problems with freshwater supplies locally?
2. How do you think these countries could improve their freshwater problem without importing freshwater from other countries?
3. Do you think private corporations should export and sell Canada's water to other countries for a profit? Why or why not?

MAKING A PRESENTATION

With the other members of your group, prepare a 5- to 70- minute oral presentation using the information from the article you read. Organize your presentation as follows:

1. global water crisis - what it is
2. why some countries have problems with local supplies of freshwater
3. why private corporations want to export and sell Canada's fresh- to other countries water
4. reasons why the export of Canada's water will not solve water problems in other countries
5. what local solutions to water supply problems are possible

Use a flipchart for your presentation, if you like. Be prepared to answer questions from the audience.



Effects of Water Privatization

1. *Read silently.*
2. *Read aloud.*
3. *Discuss.*

Investors see water as the oil of the 21st century. Although Canada's freshwater is publicly owned and controlled, increasingly, private companies are vying for control of water treatment, delivery and sewage services. Some municipalities are exploring public-private partnerships in the provision of water services. The Ontario government has been pushing water privatization for years.

But privatization comes at a price. In England and Wales, where water services were privatized in the late 1980's, customers have seen their rates soar, water shortages have been severe, and thousands of low-income people have had their water disconnected, raising serious concerns about the public health consequences. Little has been reinvested in the aging infrastructure, and the actual savings from privatization - the result of massive layoffs, pay cuts and union busting - have been poured into lavish salaries, higher shareholder dividends and capital to buy other utilities worldwide.



TRUE, FALSE, OR? (7 = not enough information)

- Investors want to make lots of money from water, the way they did with oil.
- Private corporations made huge profits from selling oil during the oil crisis when people were worried that there would not be enough to meet the need.
- In Canada, freshwater is owned and controlled by government.
- Private corporations want government to keep control of water treatment, delivery and sewage services.
- The Ontario government is against the privatization of water.
- Privatization of water services in England and Wales resulted in lower water rates for customers.
- Privatization of water services resulted in serious shortages of water in England and Wales.
- Many low-income people in England and Wales had their water disconnected because they could not afford the higher rates charged by private water companies.
- When some governments are short of money and are having trouble covering the costs of water services, they think that private businesses can help them to provide good service.
- When water services were privatized in England and Wales, the corporations improved the service by using profits from sales to fix the worn-out infrastructure and to hire more workers and raise their pay.
- When water was privatized in England and Wales, corporations used their profits to buy other utilities in other countries.



Find words in the story that mean the same as the following:

people who invest in private corporations to make

money _____

more and more _____

cost _____

huge _____

very bad _____

competing _____

worries _____

advocating _____

results or effects _____

wages _____

globally _____

getting old or wearing out _____

turned off _____

increase by a lot _____

considering or thinking about _____

Find words that mean the opposite of:

hire _____

stingy _____ cause _____

high-income _____ union organizing _____

early _____

private _____ a lot _____

connected _____

expenditures _____

pay increases or raises _____

last century _____

imagined savings _____



THINK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions with the other people in your group:

1. Why do you think governments might consider public-private partnerships for the provision of water services?
2. What promises do you think private corporations might make in order to convince governments that privatization is the answer to good water service?
3. Who do you think gains from privatization of water? How? who loses? How?

MAKING A PRESENTATION

With the other members of your group prepare a 5 to 10 minute oral presentation using information from the article. Your responses to the discussion questions may help you organize your presentation. Use a map to show where England and Wales are located. Be sure to explain terms that may be unfamiliar to your listeners. Use a flipchart if you like. Be prepared to answer questions.



NAFTA VS. Canadian control of Water

1. *Read silently.*
2. *Read aloud.*
3. *Discuss.*

Canada already permits the sale and export of bottled drinking water. Unfortunately, we lack a comprehensive national water policy and legislation prohibiting the bulk export of freshwater. On December 4, 1998, in British Columbia, Sun Belt Water, Inc., a U.S. company, launched a lawsuit against Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Sun Belt is suing Canada because the government of British Columbia prevented Sun Belt from exporting billions of litres of freshwater from B.C. to California. Last year, the Nova Group of Sault Ste. Marie announced it had been given a five-year permit from the Ontario government to draw up to 10 million litres of fresh water a day from Lake Superior for export to Asia. A few months later, the McCurdy Group of Gander announced it was applying to export 52 billion litres of water a year from Gisborne Lake in southern Newfoundland. Under NAFTA, Canada could lose control of its fresh water once it becomes a tradable commodity. The Nova Group has since withdrawn its application, on the understanding that it will be first in line at Lake Superior if water ever does become tradable; the Newfoundland application is still being considered.

Our government should:

- First, introduce an immediate moratorium on the bulk export of Canadian freshwater to stop further export threats.
- Second, make legislation prohibiting large-scale water exports.
- Third, open negotiations to exempt water from NAFTA, or, even better, kill the NAFTA deal completely.
- Fourth, develop a broad national water policy that keeps ownership and control of Canada's fresh water in public hands.
- Fifth, join with other countries and progressive organizations to promote more efficient use and maintenance of local freshwater supplies.



TRUE, FALSE, OR? (? = not enough information)

- ___ The sale and export of bottled water is illegal in Canada.
- ___ There is an official policy in Canada that says that large quantities of our fresh water cannot be exported and sold to other countries.
- ___ As a result of NAFTA, the Canadian government is finding it hard to make trade decisions on the basis of what is best for Canada and Canadians.
- ___ U.S. companies use NAFTA to sue the Canadian government when it makes decisions that do not favour U.S. interests.
- ___ The Ontario government is not in favour of exporting freshwater.
- ___ The government of British Columbia is in favour of exporting freshwater.
- ___ Currently in Canada, water is not a tradable commodity but NAFTA may change this.
- ___ If water becomes a commodity that can be traded, then Canada will lose control of our freshwater.



VOCABULARY

Find words or phrases in the article that mean the same as:

stop

daily

allows

a commodity that can be traded

made an announcement

we don't have

no more than

Find words or phrases in the article that mean the opposite at the following:

permit

non-tradable

include water in NAFTA

promises

win

small-scale



THINK ABOUT IT

Discuss the following questions with the other people in your group:

1. If water becomes a tradable commodity, who do you think would profit? who do you think would be hurt?
2. Why do you think the provincial government of British Columbia is against the export of freshwater, while the government of ontario is in favour of it?
3. What do you think canada should do to help other countries that have problems with their local supplies of freshwater?

MAKING A PRESENTATION

With the other members of your group, prepare a 10 to 15 minute oral presentation about the threats posed by NAFTA to the Canadian control of freshwater. Include recommendations for the government. Use information from the article and from your responses to the discussion questions. Use a world map to show the various locations that you mention. Be sure to explain the meaning of terms and concepts that may be unfamiliar to your listeners. Make sure your presentation is well organized and be prepared to answer questions from the audience. Use a flipchart if you wish.



Five Things You Should Know About Water

On December 4, 1998, Sun Belt Water, Inc. of Santa Barbara, became the third U.S. company in a year to launch a lawsuit against Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Sun Belt is suing Canada because of an earlier British Columbia decision preventing the company from exporting billions of litres of freshwater from B.C. to California. The case is important, not only because it demonstrates - again - the power of foreign businesses to sue our government under NAFTA, but also because it highlights mounting efforts by business to privatize and export Canadian freshwater abroad - efforts the federal government appears unwilling (or unable) to stop.

1 A global water crisis

Growing numbers of the world's people are living in areas where freshwater is a scarce resource, creating a global water crisis. Canada holds 20% of the world's supply of freshwater and investors are proposing to export and sell bulk quantities of it abroad for profit. None of the schemes proposed would help people who lack access to sustainable supplies of clean water. Water shipped abroad would be brought only by the few who could pay for it. Drought-stricken nations and the poor would be least able to afford it. Furthermore, countries that import Canadian water would be less inclined to find better, local solutions to their water problems.

2 Priming the privatization pump

Investors see water as the oil of the next century. Although Canada's freshwater is publicly owned and controlled, increasingly private companies are vying for control of water treatment, delivery and sewage services. Some municipalities are exploring public-private partnerships in the provision of water services. The Ontario Government has been pushing water privatization for several years.

But privatization comes at a price. In England and Wales, where water services were privatized in the late 1980s, customers have seen their rates soar, water shortages have been severe, and thousands of low-income people have had their water disconnected, raising serious concerns about the public health consequences. Little has been reinvested in the aging infrastructure, and the actual savings from privatization - the result of massive layoffs, pay cuts and union busting - have been poured into lavish executive salaries, high shareholders dividends and capital to buy other utilities worldwide.

3 Corporate water giants

France, an even earlier convert to water privatization, has had similar experiences, spawning in the process their own corporate water giants. Lyonnaise Des Eaux (LDE), one of the world's biggest promoters of water privatization, owns Degremont Infilco Ltee of Lachine, Quebec, which supplies water treatment facilities to many municipalities. It also owns most of the second largest water utility in the U.S., United Water Resources. Many worry that, under free trade, if water is allowed to be privatized and exported to the U.S., we won't be able to turn the tap off and companies with large holdings in the U.S., like LDE, will be more concerned with healthy profits than healthy drinking water for Canadians.

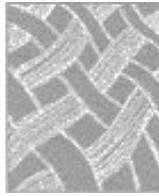
4 Leaky trade

Canada already permits the sale and export of bottled drinking water. Unfortunately, we lack a comprehensive national water policy and legislation prohibiting the bulk export of freshwater. Last year the Nova Group of Sault Ste. Marie announced it had been given a five-year permit from the Ontario government to draw up to 10 million litres of freshwater a day from Lake Superior for export to Asia. A few months later the McCurdy Group of Gander announced it was applying to export 52 billion litres of water a year from Gisborne Lake in southern Newfoundland. Under NAFTA, Canada could lose control of its freshwater once it becomes a tradable commodity. The Nova Group has since withdrawn its application, on the understanding that it will be first in line at Lake Superior if water ever does become tradable; the Newfoundland application is still being considered.

5 What our government should do

First, introduce an immediate moratorium on the bulk export of Canadian freshwater to stave off further export threats. Second, enact legislation prohibiting large-scale water exports. Third, open negotiations to exempt water from NAFTA or, preferably, kill the deal. Fourth, develop a broad national water policy that ensures ownership and control of Canada's freshwater remains in public hands. Fifth, join with other countries and NGOs worldwide to promote more efficient use and maintenance of local freshwater.





SECTION 3

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING MATERIALS FOR WORKER-CENTERED UNION LITERACY

Having presented a framework for worker-centred union based literacy curriculum in Section 1, and examples of materials based on this framework in Section 2, we will now present a summary of guidelines for implementing materials development projects. In this section we will consider:

- what labour has to gain from implementing materials development projects
- ways to prepare the ground for materials development
- tips to keep in mind when developing materials

What labour has to gain from implementing materials development projects

Basing literacy materials on labour print resources is an excellent means for unions to strengthen communication with the general membership. When participants in union-based literacy programs read, discuss and relate union issues to their own lives, they go back out into the workplace and the community as informed members and As union communicators. Union-based literacy programs that use materials with a worker-centred perspective become available forum for organizing the organized.

Materials development projects can be implemented at various levels within labour:

- by an instructor for use in an individual class
- by a program for use in multiple classes
- by an affiliate union for use in programs sponsored by that union
- by a labour council for use in programs in that area
- by a provincial federation of labour for use in programs in that province
- by the CLC for use in programs in all parts of Canada



Ideally, materials development projects can be undertaken at all these levels. Each would have a different focus, dealing with the content and issues specific to the context served. So, for example, a federation of labour could focus on provincial issues while an affiliate could focus on issues specific to its members in different parts of Canada. By working in different contexts and networking about what we are doing, we can avoid unnecessary duplication and build on each other's contributions. Information about projects in process could be shared and finished materials distributed so that there would be a rich supply of materials for worker-centered union literacy programs.

Preparing the ground for materials development

When implementing a materials development project, there are some things that need to be done to prepare for developing the materials. These include:

- becoming familiar with the program context and goals
- learning about the program participants
- collecting relevant authentic real-life print resources
- selecting any relevant and appropriate ready-made learning materials

Context

We start by becoming familiar with the overall context where the materials are to be used - for example, the union, workplace(s), sector, geographic area and the community. This includes getting background information about systems, key players and issues. A lot of this information can be collected during an organizational needs assessment process, if one is carried out. As we learn about the context, we also learn about union goals for the program(s) as well as key themes and issues from a worker perspective.

Participants

As we become familiar with the program context, we also try to learn about the program participants - whether actual or potential. If programs have progressed to the individual needs assessment stage, then we can learn from the participants themselves - who they are, their goals, their location in the larger context and how they are affected by the key themes and issues. In many cases, we may have to learn more general background about potential program participants. This will entail talking to people in the specific settings from which program participants will be drawn, looking at demographic information about the composition of the membership, and so on.

Authentic real-life materials

Authentic materials provide valuable raw material for future materials development. We can start collecting authentic materials at the same time as we begin research into the program context and the participants. Authentic materials include pamphlets, newsletters, bulletins, contracts, letters, forms, flyers, posters, maps, schedules, directories, and so on. We collect any print material that participants may have to engage with in the process of carrying out real-life tasks in the workplace, union and the various systems they encounter in the community.

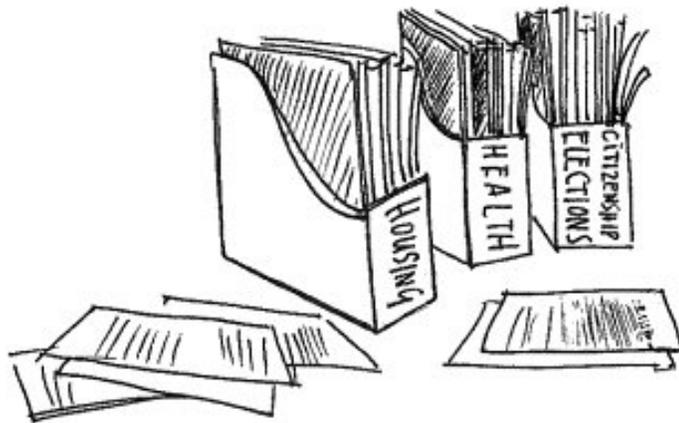
Collections of authentic materials can be organized around themes and issues relevant to different worker populations, for example:

- CLC - national materials for all affiliated unions and their members
- provincial federations of labour - provincial issues for affiliated unions and their members
- national affiliate unions - materials for members of a specific union
- sectors - materials for workers in specific sectors of the economy
- local workplace/local union - materials for workers in a specific workplace
- local labour councils - materials for unions affiliated with a labour council

We collect any print material that participants may have to engage with in the process of carrying out real-life tasks in the workplace, union and the various systems they encounter in the community.

Collections of authentic materials can also be organized around general themes and issues relevant to systems that impact on workers' lives outside the workplace; for example:

- housing
- health
- education
- transportation
- consumer issues
- citizenship and elections
- environment
- family life
- community
- leisure





In addition to providing raw material for materials development, collections of authentic materials provide essential resources for an emergent curriculum. Instructors who have access to such collections can find the resources they need to respond to interests and issues as they emerge from the group. Collections can be developed collaboratively - by a program coordinator, for example, and several instructors. Materials can be stored in magazine file boxes, labelled by theme. Housed in a central location, the materials can be accessed by instructors as needed. If a collection is to be used by several instructors, it is essential to have multiple copies of each item. Be sure to mark one of each item *file copy* so that one sample always remains as a reminder to replenish supplies.

In addition to providing raw material for materials development, collections of authentic materials provide essential resources for an emergent curriculum.

Ready-made learning materials

Before beginning to develop materials, it is important to avoid duplication of effort by identifying any relevant ready-made literacy materials that are available from other union-based programs and instructors or from publishers. When selecting materials from non-labour sources, we have to be sure that they are appropriate for use in a union program. At the end of this section, we have included a tool that may help you when making selections - **Guidelines for Reviewing Materials**. Whenever a decision is made to use materials that don't meet these guidelines, it is essential that the instructor engage participants in critical reflection on the materials.



Tips to keep in mind when developing materials

1. Select relevant topic/s and raw material

Begin by consulting the list of major themes and issues from research into the context. In light of the program goals and what you know about the participants - actual or potential - identify likely key topics for the curriculum. Select relevant items from the collections of authentic print resources and appropriate ready-made literacy materials. Some of these can be used as is, others can be adapted and integrated into materials and activities that you develop yourself.

2. Start where the participants are

How does this topic relate to the participants' lives? As an opener into the topic, develop materials and activities to get participants talking about what they know, feel, think, imagine, want. Have them situate the topic in the context of their lives.

3. Identify what participants might need to do or to know in real life

What are the real life tasks and systems related to the topic/issue? What additional knowledge or skills might participants want or need? Develop materials and activities to build background knowledge and concepts, to practice real life tasks and develop relevant skills.

4. Identify problems and issues for critical reflection

What are the real-life problems participants experience regarding to this topic/issue? What changes might they like to see? Who else has a stake in this issue? Why? What are the various conflicting interests? Has this issue been in the media recently? Is there a difference between the corporate view and the labour view? How does this issue relate to larger issues and/or systems? Develop materials and activities that provide opportunities for participants to reflect critically - to analyze their experience and develop a deeper understanding of the issues.

5. Identify possibilities for collective action

What action might be taken on this issue? What avenues for action currently exist - in the union, in the community? What action, if any, has been taken on this issue and by whom? How might participants get involved? Develop materials and activities that provide opportunities for participants to identify alternatives and strategize for action. Include activities that allow for practising tasks and developing skills related to collective action.



6. Build participants' capacity to deal with authentic materials in the real world

As much as possible, use authentic material as is. When participants cannot go directly into difficult authentic material, it is important to create an "access ramp" consisting of activities that prepare participants to deal with the original material eventually. The aim is to build confidence and to demystify. Even if participants can't understand the original material perfectly, they can grasp the gist of what it's about - some of the key terminology, for example, and how it fits into the larger system. Lead-up activities can use clear language summaries or simplified versions of the original material - whole or in part. Include materials and activities to develop background concepts, information and vocabulary that will enable participants to eventually engage with and make some sense of the material in its authentic form.

7. Develop activities that can be adapted by instructors for different levels

When developing materials for use in diverse programs, don't try to work out activities for every possible skill level. Remember that the materials are a tool to be used by skilled instructors who will have to make judgements and adapt the materials and activities to their specific participants. What is most important is to provide instructors with materials and activities that weave together problem- posing and literacy development. The work of adapting the materials and activities for use with participants with different skill levels can best be carried out by the instructors who know them.



GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING MATERIALS FOR UNION PROGRAMS

Union literacy materials for workers should:

- show workers' experiences from workers' perspectives and reflect the many different life experiences of workers
- celebrate workers' strengths, respect workers' sense of dignity, value what workers bring to society and encourage workers to be proud of these
- show workers in a variety of jobs and roles, including those that may seem unusual for workers
- recognize that workers have their own ways of knowing and their own ways of learning
- support workers' desire to learn and to educate themselves according to their own hopes and dreams
- recognize that there are many levels of oppression for workers and that society often treats workers differently because of race, class, gender, religion, age, education, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation, ethnic background and language
- recognize that workers do share some common experiences because they are workers
- make sure that workers are not blamed when bad things happen to them because they are workers
- show how workers' lives are enriched by striving toward a common goal through collective action
- never discriminate against people because of their race, class, gender, religion, age, education, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientation, ethnic background and language
- be inclusive and acknowledge the value of diversity
- show, as clearly as possible, how materials are developed so that workers can understand the process of writing, producing and publishing them
- be easy to read, with language, layout, print, illustrations, format and binding that make them as clear as possible for all workers to use
- be written mostly by workers

These guidelines have been adapted from Guidelines for Reviewing Materials for Women - Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CLOW)



SECTION 4

LITERACY IMPLICATIONS FOR UNION EDUCATION

Literacy is an important issue for all union educators. Since forty-eight percent of Canadians have some difficulty reading and writing, a significant proportion of union members will also have difficulties. Unions must take this into account. While providing worker-centred union literacy programs is an essential step, it is only the beginning. Unions must also look at ways to make their ongoing processes and programs more accessible so that members who have difficulty reading and writing can participate fully.

One big access issue is clear language. The CLC has developed a manual for unions called *Making it Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications*. (See Section 5 - Resources)

Another key access issue is union education courses. Literacy needs to be an important concern for all union educators. Here are some ways to take literacy into account in union education:

1. Do make sure print materials are in clear language. Use the CLC clear language manual when developing union courses. Have materials checked for clear language before they go to print.
2. Don't assume that all participants are equally skilled or confident in oral communication, reading, writing and numeracy. Create an inclusive atmosphere - one where differences in skill level and background knowledge do not exclude people from participating fully.
3. Do establish a positive learning culture where it's okay to not know and where questions are expected and valued. Participants need to be able to say when they don't understand and to feel comfortable asking for explanations of unfamiliar terms or concepts.
4. Don't rely on print material alone. When information is important, make sure plenty of time for discussion is built into the course so participants have an opportunity to really understand.



5. Do plan for plenty of small group activities where participants get opportunities to work together on shared tasks - reading, discussing, integrating new information, relating to life experience, recording ideas on flipcharts and reporting back to the large group. In small groups, participants can contribute to the task according to their different backgrounds and abilities. Members of the group work together to make sense of the course content.
6. Do ask for volunteers when reading aloud is part of an activity.
7. Do provide supplementary cassette recordings of key course readings so that participants have the option to listen and read along at their leisure.
8. Do include literacy in all basic instructor training courses. Union educators need to be sensitized to the issue and learn how to use instructional approaches that make their courses accessible to participants with literacy needs.
9. Do promote union education courses to members who are participants in union literacy programs. Make sure the information is in clear language. Do the outreach in person. Find out from them what kinds of courses they would like to attend.
10. Do develop some special introductory trade union education courses to be offered alongside other courses; for example, at weekend schools. These courses could combine union content with literacy development. They could be developed collaboratively by trade union educators and union literacy instructors.
11. Do target relevant sections of union education courses to be used as a basis for developing curriculum materials for union literacy programs. Such materials would link literacy programs with union education courses, creating a continuum of experience for union members.
12. Do include union literacy instructors in networks and activities of trade union educators. Share experiences and ideas. Visit each other's programs. Learn from each other. Build bridges. Find ways to work together to meet the needs of union members.



SECTION 5

RESOURCES

In this section you will find selected resources that support the worker-centred union approach to literacy as outlined in this guide.

Background Resources

Arnold, Rick, Bev Burke, Carl James, D'Arcy Martin, Barb Thomas. *Educating for a Change*. Doris Marshall Institute for Education and Action, Toronto: Between the Lines. 1991.

Canadian Labour Congress: *Learning for Our Lives: A Union Guide to Worker-Centred Literacy*. Canadian Labour Congress, Ottawa. 2000.

Bargaining Basic Skills: What Unions Should Know About Negotiating Worker-Centred Literacy programs. Canadian Labour Congress. 2000.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press, New York. 1975.

Gowen, Sheryl Greenwood. *The Politics of Workplace Literacy*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University, New York. 1992.

Haney, Ann and Howell. *The Integrated Learning Program: a curriculum sample*. UNITE Local 459.

MacLean, C., Wedel, R. and Acosta, J. *Workplace Curriculum for Healthcare*. Capilano College, British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. 1997.

Making Connections: Literacy and EAL Curriculum from a Feminist Perspective. The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities For Women, Toronto. 1996.

Judith Marshall. *Training for Empowerment: A Kit of Materials for Popular Literacy Workers Based on an Exchange Among Educators from Mozambique, Nicaragua and Brazil*. International Council for Adult Education, Toronto.



Sarmiento, A.R. and Kay, A. *Worker-Centered Learning: A Union Guide to Basic Skills*, AFL-CIO Working for America Institute, 1999.

Training for Transformation. Mambo Press, Gweru, Zimbabwe. 1991.

Instructional Materials

Auerbach, Elsa Roberts and Nina Wallerstein. *ESL for Action: Problem Posing at Work*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. Reading, Mass. 1987.

Publications of the Metro Labour Education Centre, Toronto, Ontario:

- *Crosswords and Wordgames for Workers*, Volume I, 1990 and Volume 11, 1992.
- *Heritage of Struggle: Canadian Labour History Workbook*. 1996.
- *In Our Own Words*. 1990.
- *Labour Verses: Poetry of Anger, Poetry of Faith*. 1992.
- *Our Stories*. 1992.
- *Unseen Healers: A History of Hospital Workers*. 1990
- *Working in the Hospital*. 1990.

Ontario Federation of Labour, BEST publications (English):

- Problem Solving Union Style
- Paper - It Doesn't Grow on Trees
- An Injury at Work
- Shoes in Canada
- The Long Road Home
- The Open Window
- Go For It

Clear Language

Making it Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications, Canadian Labour Congress, Ottawa. 1999.