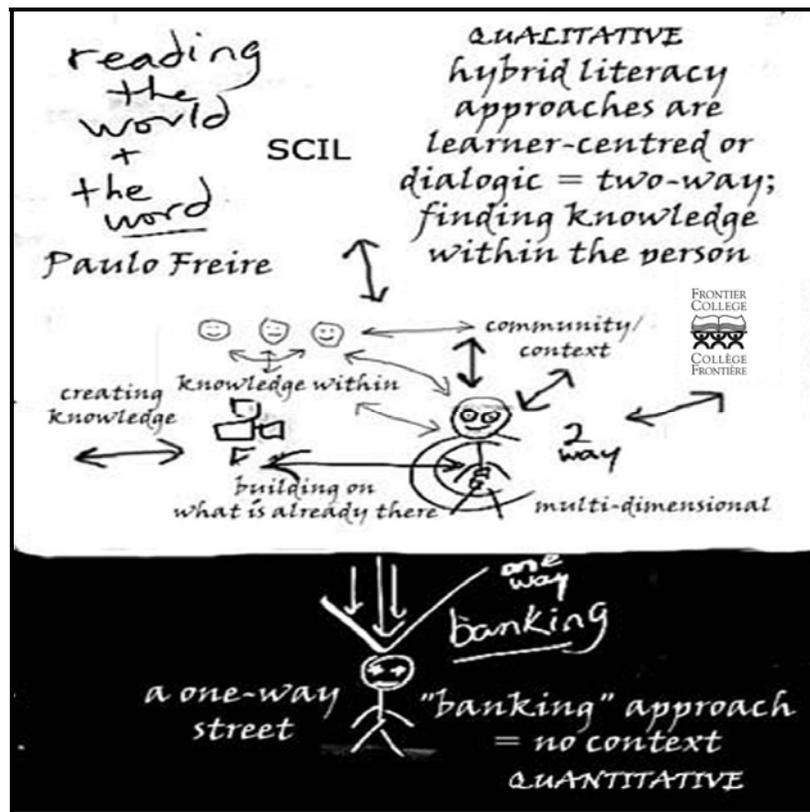


# EVALUATING LEARNING

## QUALITATIVE METHODS TO DOCUMENT AND ASSESS INFORMAL LITERACY LEARNING



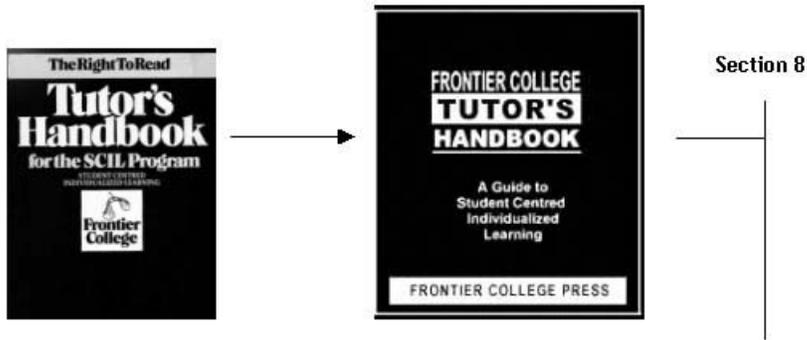
FRONTIER COLLEGE 2005

# EVALUATING LEARNING

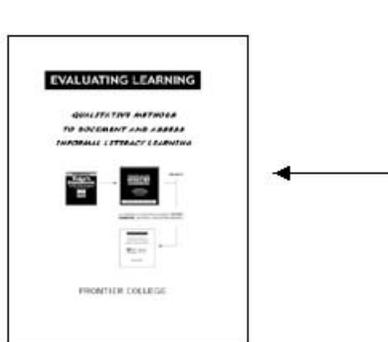
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QUALITATIVE METHODS TO DOCUMENT  
AND ASSESS INFORMAL LITERACY LEARNING

AN APPENDIX TO FRONTIER COLLEGE'S  
*TUTOR'S HANDBOOK, SECTION 8: EVALUATING PROGRESS*



AN APPENDIX TO FRONTIER COLLEGE'S **TUTOR'S HANDBOOK**, *SECTION 8: EVALUATING PROGRESS*



FRONTIER COLLEGE, 2005

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### THANK YOU

#### David Greig

Independent Studies Manager, for book concept, project development, research, idea collation, editing, writing, design management, and all digital illustrations.

#### National Literacy Secretariat

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#### *Note*

*The print quality of some of the graphics reproduced from other publications is not as good as possible because the original images were created at a low resolution.*



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**Literacy. Learning for Life.**

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## Frontier College - Our Mission

Frontier College is a Canada-wide, volunteer-based, literacy organization. We teach people to read and write and we nurture an environment favorable to lifelong learning. Since 1899, we have been reaching out to people wherever they are and responding to their particular learning needs. We believe in literacy as a right and we work to achieve literacy for all.

### Achieving our mission

We work to achieve our mission by:

- operating and refining small, high quality, literacy programs
- developing and launching new and innovative programs
- training others in setting up similar programs or in developing their own.

### Our guiding principles

The principles that guide the work of Frontier College are:

- Everyone can learn and everyone has a right to literacy.
- We go where people are, rather than expecting them to come to us.
- We value innovation and encourage people to bring us new ideas about learning.
- Students decide what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. Tutors help them do this.
- We are committed to working with people who have been rejected or not given adequate learning opportunities elsewhere.

<http://www.frontiercollege.ca/english/aboutus/mission.htm>



## INTRODUCTION

*One of the great ironies of traditional education is that teaching and learning are so inherently concerned with knowledge but those engaged in the education process have so little ownership over the "knowledge products" on which they build their careers...the majority of teachers, counselors, and administrators spend their careers at the receiving end of "manufactured" research products produced in remote university "factories" by unseen research experts. Seen this way, the conventional role of the teaching system is merely to buy and use the products of others (Quigley, 1997, p.3).*

<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/orp/orp2.htm>

One of the great strengths of Frontier College is our ability to create and produce our own educational approaches and materials. Even though we have constantly investigated and integrated external knowledge, we have a solid base of our own research and practice to build upon. We do not need to be "consumers" of other people's knowledge products; rather, we are co-producers of our own knowledge along with our students, volunteers, community partners, staff, researchers and others.

One of our most important achievements in this area is the development of the SCIL approach. SCIL means Student Centred Individualized Learning. SCIL is a wonderful qualitative educational intervention methodology that allows students' learning needs to determine the course of educational activities. It is a student-focused approach as opposed to an externally pre-determined curriculum. Anything can form the learning content.

This method has been used at Frontier College for 20 years and has been very successful. What has not been so successful is the way that we at Frontier College have documented and reported the outcomes of our educational interventions. Most of the time we have used externally-imposed quantitative methods to count or

quantify our work. We have counted hours, catalogued student numbers, provided “metrics” and compiled statistics for funders and others. What is ironic is that using these quantitative methods for documenting learning outcomes is essentially antithetical to SCIL. If SCIL is a flexible, student-centred, qualitative approach to learning, then why would we use quantitative methods alone to try to document the effectiveness of our learning interventions?

Frontier College needs to build up our own research base of qualitative methods to document and evaluate the successes of our SCIL-based learning interventions. This book is a first step in building up this new qualitative knowledge base. It is only a beginning and hopefully will lead to further research and publications that provide tools to record, assess and articulate the wide spectrum of person-centred, community-based informal learning that Frontier College provides to people across Canada.

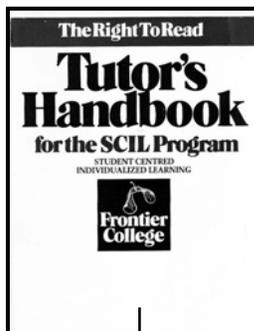
This book presents a selection of qualitative tools to help Frontier College staff document learning. The book provides an updating of SCIL and its relation to “hybrid literacy”; a brief definition of “qualitative” versus “quantitative” with examples of qualitative tools applied across three levels of practice (micro/direct, macro/indirect, meta/capacity building); various methods for recording learning progress; a brief description of qualitative software and potential uses for Frontier College; and an overview of Independent Studies’ publications that outline further qualitative methods.

It is hoped that this book will help Frontier College move our expertise into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have over 100 years of experience building up student-centred informal learning approaches. Here is a step towards documenting our work in a manner that truly portrays the profound educational impact that we continue to have on the lives of thousands of Canadians.

## SCIL: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE AND BACK AGAIN

**SCIL examines student strengths, combining them with learning needs to determine individual programs.**

What is SCIL?



The 1986 Frontier College book, *"Tutor's Handbook"* describes SCIL (Student Centred Individualized Learning) in detail.

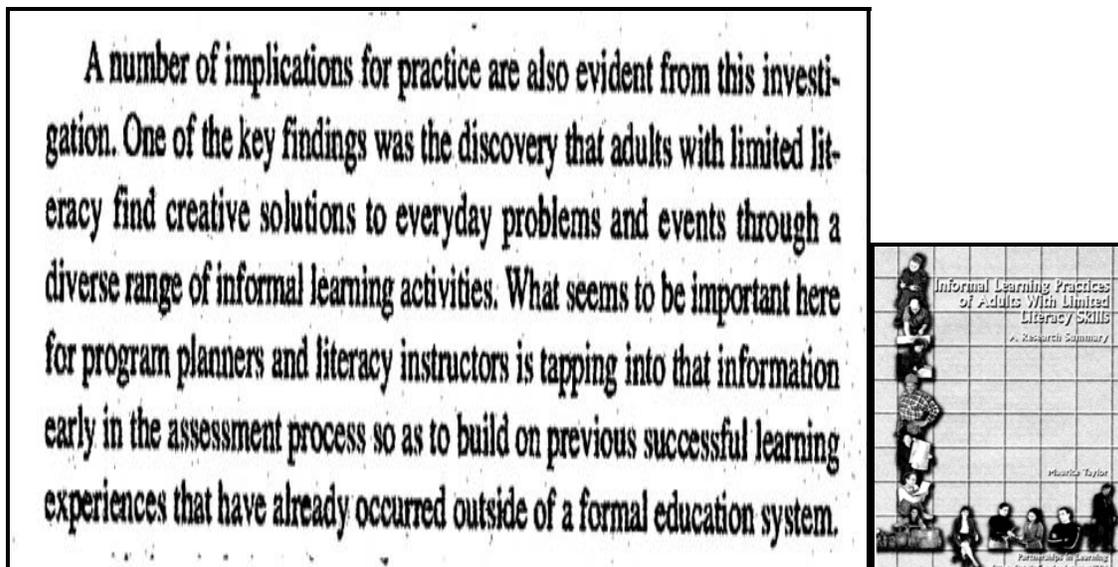
A brief definition of SCIL from the book is quoted below.

# The SCIL Program

SCIL is an approach to teaching developed by Canada's Frontier College. It is designed as a re-entry point for adults who cannot or do not wish to participate in the range of formal upgrading opportunities. SCIL is a 'prep' course. It is meant to get people to the starting point (note that each person must decide where that point is). While SCIL may satisfy the needs of some, for the majority of students, it will build their skills and confidence to the point where, if they wish, they can enter the spectrum of available formal and informal learning opportunities.

SCIL is a method for finding out what people already know how to do and then identifying which existing learning skills can be built upon and transferred to other learning situations. SCIL bases learning interventions on this strength-identification process and not on the imposition of externally-predetermined deficits in knowledge or ways of learning something.

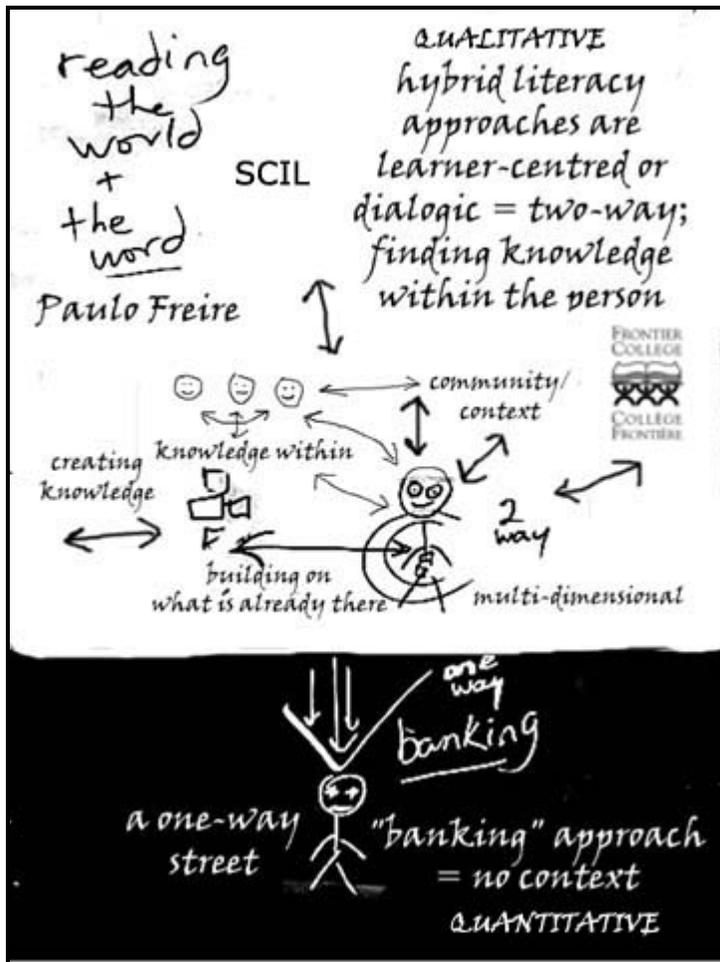
Current (2004) research by Taylor and others corroborates the validity and importance of the SCIL approach.



*"Informal Learning Practices of Adults with Limited Literacy Skills" Maurice Taylor, 2004*

Discovering the "creative solutions to everyday problems" that students bring to a learning situation is essential to effectively plan a program of study that will work for that individual person. Building on existing knowledge of how to do things (SCIL) is the key to helping someone learn new tasks.

SCIL is different than other approaches to education because it explicitly relocates the source of the educational transaction from outside of the student to inside of them.



SCIL is not (as literacy theoretician Paulo Freire put it) a “banking” approach to teaching where the student is an empty vessel and the teacher deposits their knowledge into them like putting money into a bank. Rather with SCIL, teachers function as co-discoverers of learning strategies that originate within the student. These learning strategies are then adapted for use with new learning.

**SCIL regards the individuals and their learning needs as the heart of the program. Teaching plans are tailored individually. This distinguishes SCIL from conventional education, including adult education, which teaches a pre-packaged program based on assumptions about learning needs. Usually, institutional and even some alternate education offers a pre-determined curriculum. By contrast, SCIL evolves from and responds to the learning needs of individuals. Furthermore, standardized materials are usually taught in conventional classes by one teacher, whereas adult education, SCIL style, is individualized in content and attention. SCIL is an intensely personal method of education delivery. Content built with and from students is infinitely more effective than content built independently.**

**But even seemingly excellent content in the hands of tutors lacking deep personal commitment and training usually yields little result. Therefore, SCIL stresses the nature of the tutor-student relationship as integral to successful teaching and learning.**

SCIL is person-centred and attempts to locate existing strengths and skills and then apply these skills to specific and practical new learning tasks. The range of these identified learning skills entails much more than mere quantitative cognitive abilities (like being able to add 2 plus 2). These learning skills entail elements that are emotional, psycho-social, interpersonal, meaning based, etc. Because of the holistic and integrated nature of SCIL, it is precisely any or all of these qualitative elements that make up much of the SCIL learning intervention. SCIL is in fact a methodology that is corroborated by research by David Greig into what he has coined (1999) as "Hybrid Literacy". The following description of Hybrid Literacy (David Greig, Independent Studies "Best Practices", 2003) provides an updated definition of SCIL that captures the complexity of the kinds of learning that SCIL encompasses.

**Hybrid literacy** is an approach to adult education programming that locates learning elements (including, but not exclusively, reading and writing) within the real life contexts of marginalized people's lives and communities. There are many elements that predicate, surround, comprise and support "learning", indeed make learning possible for many marginalized people.

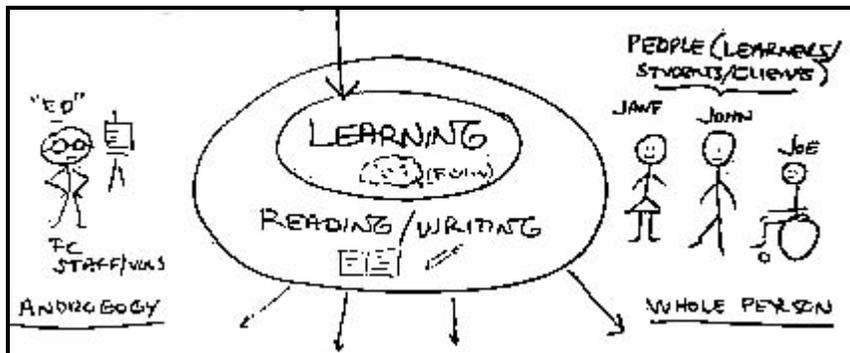
### **Hybrid literacy elements**

- 1) At the core of all Frontier College activities is **learning** for the whole person.
- 2) Surrounding this essential learning are **reading and writing skills** grounded in androgogy, which is adult-focused educational practices.
- 3) Surrounding these skills are the **contexts** in which students live and interact. These contexts are disparate and complex. Many students in our programs have needs that cover a range of contexts such as:
  - social services (*case managers, ODSP/OW/FBA/UI, social workers, etc.*)
  - medical (*disabilities, rehab, drug addictions, medications, therapists, etc.*)
  - psychological (*psychiatric survivors/services, counselling, etc.*)
  - community development (*rights, housing, CED or community economic development, etc.*)
  - parenting (*life skills, nutrition, daily life, banking, etc.*)
  - employment (*work preparation, pre-employment, etc.*)
  - school (*self-management, study skills, learning to learn, etc.*)

At Frontier College, our work takes into account all of these contexts. We devise educational interventions for people that locate the embedded learning components within these contexts. We ask: What are the reading and writing skills needed to understand and deal with the medical or parenting contexts for students? What are the learning elements embedded in understanding social services or employment preparation? We utilize real contexts in our "literacy" work to engage the whole person and integrate all of the elements into "hybrid" literacy practice.

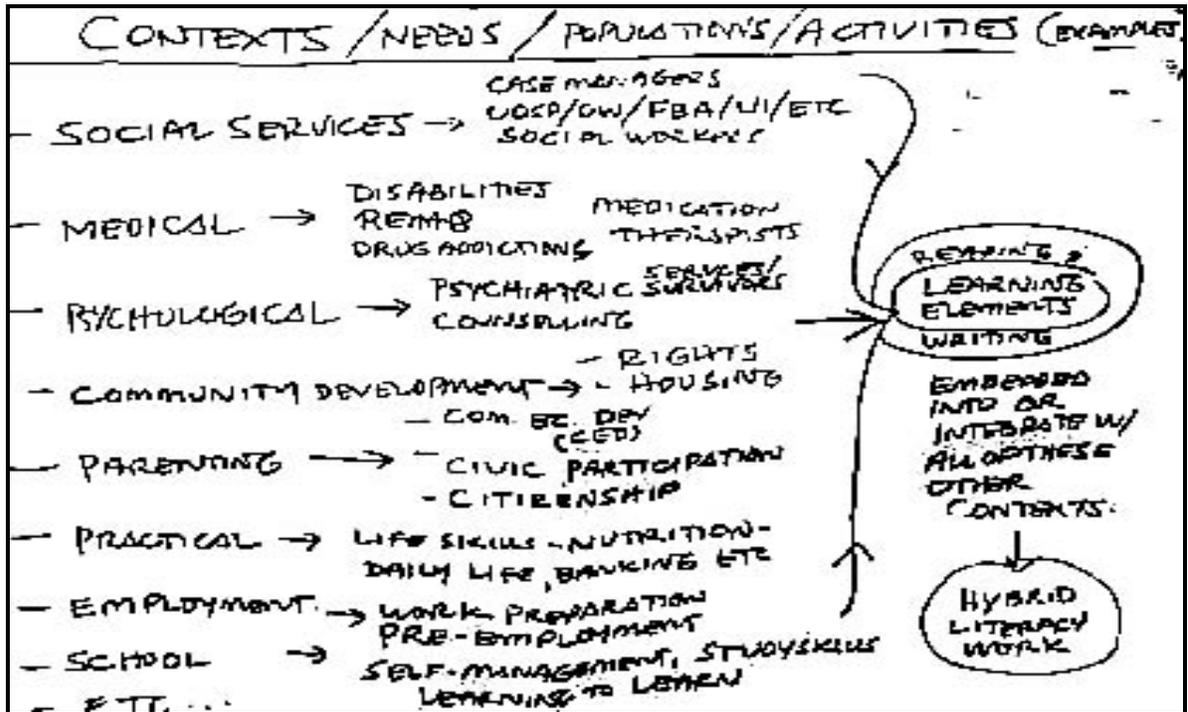
Literacy is a complex series of skills that go beyond mere reading and writing. This is corroborated by the following 2005 quote:

*"New uses of the term 'literacy' can serve to demonstrate, to the general public, how literacy is not a black and white issue of reading and writing, but a way of engaging with information on a variety of levels, while also underlining the fundamental importance of basic literacy. Perhaps this dispersion of literacies can impact the public consciousness about literacy in all its definitions, general and particular, traditional and emergent. It seems to point in a direction of increased objectivity so that an individual's lack of traditional forms of literacy might lose some stigma and be seen in a wider context of abilities - one of many. This would seem more in harmony with the reality of human capacities, strengths, and weaknesses." Glenn Pound, Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy Co-Executive Director, "Incoming" March 2005*



The focus of hybrid literacy/SCIL interventions is on **LEARNING** and ways of learning. Reading and writing are the vehicle by which to identify, develop, build, document and transfer **LEARNING SKILLS**. (If you are working with students solely on the mechanics of reading and writing, then you do not need this book or the SCIL approach - there are hundreds perhaps thousands of tools to document cognitive improvement that can be used to quantitatively measure reading and writing skills.) If you are working on learning, then you may work on some of the learning elements described on the next page.

SCIL/HYBRID LITERACY ELEMENTS - AREAS FOR LEARNING (2 views)

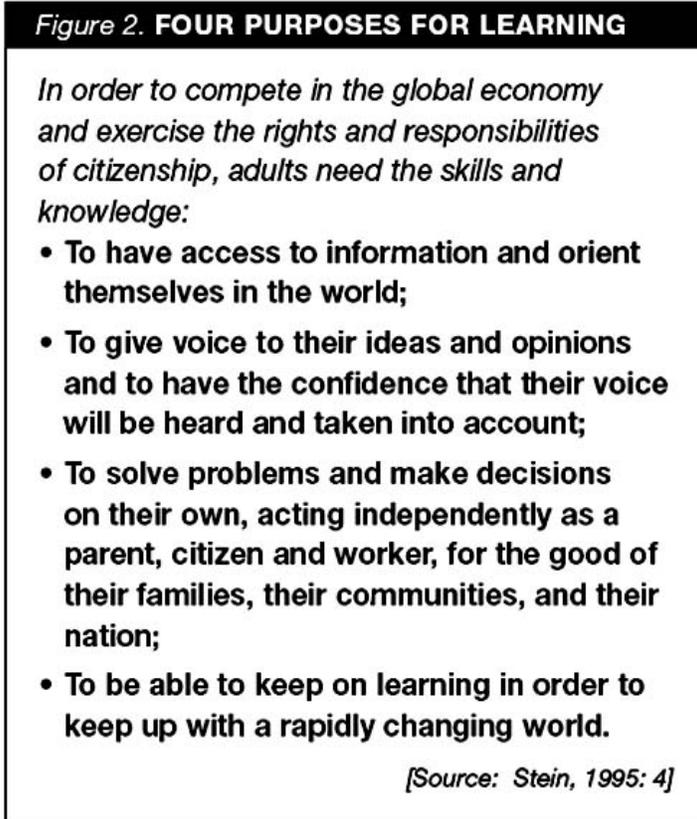


**Figure 1. CODING CATEGORIES**

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY
<i>Personal Development</i>	Daily life/tasks	<i>Job/Compete in Global Economy</i>	Get a job/better job
	Feel better about self		Keep up with change/technology
	Future orientation		Keep jobs
	Religious practice		Language and cultural skills
	Understanding the world (external)		Economic awareness
	Protection/vulnerability	<i>Roles and Responsibilities of Citizenship</i>	Job-related literacy tasks
	Able to communicate		Roles and Responsibilities of Citizenship
<i>Family/ Parenting</i>	Set a good example for children		Be an informed citizen
	Help to improve family circumstances		Participate in political process
	Help children with schooling		Understand and strive for rights
	Read to children		Understand and fulfill responsibilities
	Help children with moral/ intellectual development	Gain citizenship	
		Contribute to community	

[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs\\_services.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs_services.html)

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) in the USA has done a lot of research into something similar to what we are calling Hybrid Literacy or the SCIL approach. NIFL has a whole system of documenting non-academic learning outcomes in their national (US) literacy program “Equipped for the Future” (for more information: [http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs\\_services.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs_services.html)).



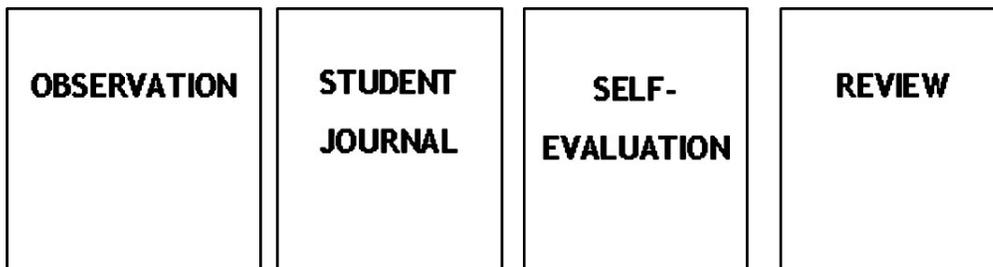
[http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs\\_services.html](http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/programs_services.html)

Beyond mere reading and writing are a myriad of other skills that are essential to functioning in today’s world. These are the skills that SCIL is trying to identify and build in students. Some examples of these skills are presented in the next chart from the NIFL.

**Figure 12. INITIAL CODING GUIDE FOR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

<b>Foundation Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing/Drawing</li> <li>• Mathematics</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Speaking</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Use of Technology</li> <li>• Learning to Learn</li> </ul>	<b>Interpersonal Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guiding and Teaching Others</li> <li>• Influencing and Advocating</li> <li>• Leading</li> <li>• Negotiating</li> <li>• Collaborating</li> <li>• Valuing Diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Extended Literacy Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying, Defining, and Processing Information</li> <li>• Resource Management, Planning, and Scheduling</li> <li>• Problem Solving, Decision Making, and Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Creative Thinking</li> <li>• Systems Thinking and Visioning</li> </ul>	<b>Personal Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics</li> <li>• Attributes</li> <li>• Personal Qualities</li> <li>• Values and Abilities</li> <li>• One's View of Oneself</li> </ul>
		<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Knowledge</li> <li>• Contextual or Experiential Knowledge</li> </ul>

To adequately document these kinds of learning outcomes, qualitative tools (such as those presented in this book and represented below) are required.



Qualitative tools record and document the range of hybrid literacy learning in FC programs (multiple co-occurring literacies: situational, informal, affective, psycho-social, interpersonal, community, civic, etc.).

Studies such as those by Casey and Drummond quoted below, corroborate the need for qualitative evaluation measures to adequately portray the complex and holistic learning that is happening in programs using SCIL.

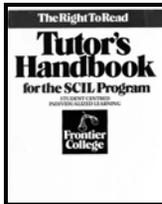


*"Factors Affecting Success in Community Based Literacy Programs", Casey & Drummond, 2004*

Some have been critical of the tendency to view outcome quantitatively, such as a reduction in the number of individuals reliant on social assistance. From the learner's perspective, other, less tangible products of literacy training may be as important. Four areas were identified in one study. Learners saw literacy as helping them to locate themselves in the world in terms of being able to read something, get the information needed, and then being able to act on it. Learners also thought it was important to gain the ability to use written and oral language effectively in interpersonal and social situations. Thirdly, literacy was viewed as a vehicle for independent action that consisted of a wide variety of activities, such as learning the skills to live on one's own, gaining increasing control over one's life, avoiding exploitation, and making independent decisions. Finally, literacy was seen as a bridge to the future, especially as a means to enable one to compete effectively in the global economy. It was concluded that adult literacy programs should serve as a tool for developing a range of life competencies and as a symbolic source of power in the realm of self-reconstruction.

Unfortunately, there has been little research in the literacy field aimed at examining outcome in a more comprehensive manner, one which considers a variety of adaptive or functional domains and that incorporates the learner's goals.

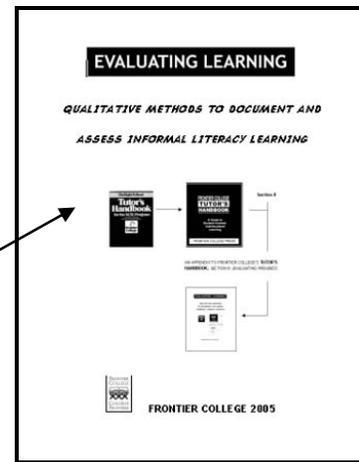
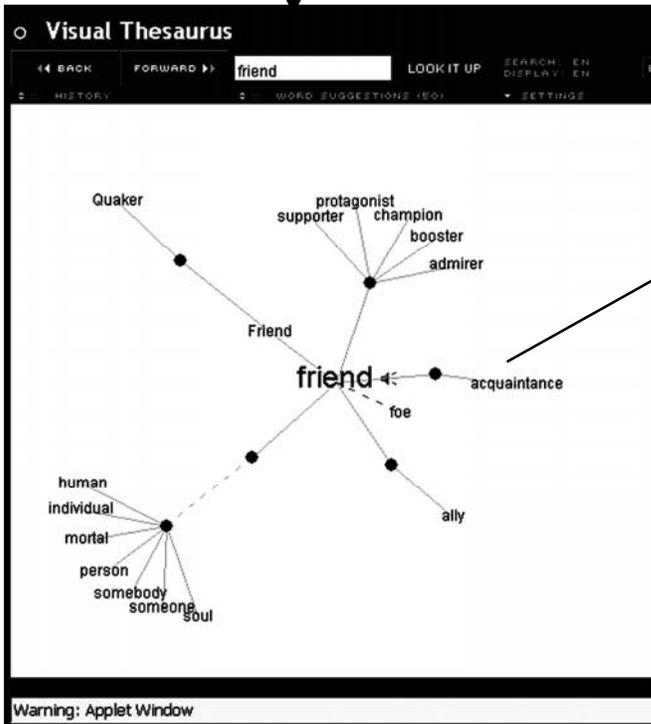
SCIL is an adaptable and unique approach to learning that has applications in many communities. From hybrid literacy to capacity building to qualitative measures, SCIL is an authentic educational intervention method that has been proven effective since 1986. To bring SCIL into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a range of qualitative methods that FC staff and others can use to better document learning are presented in this book.



1986

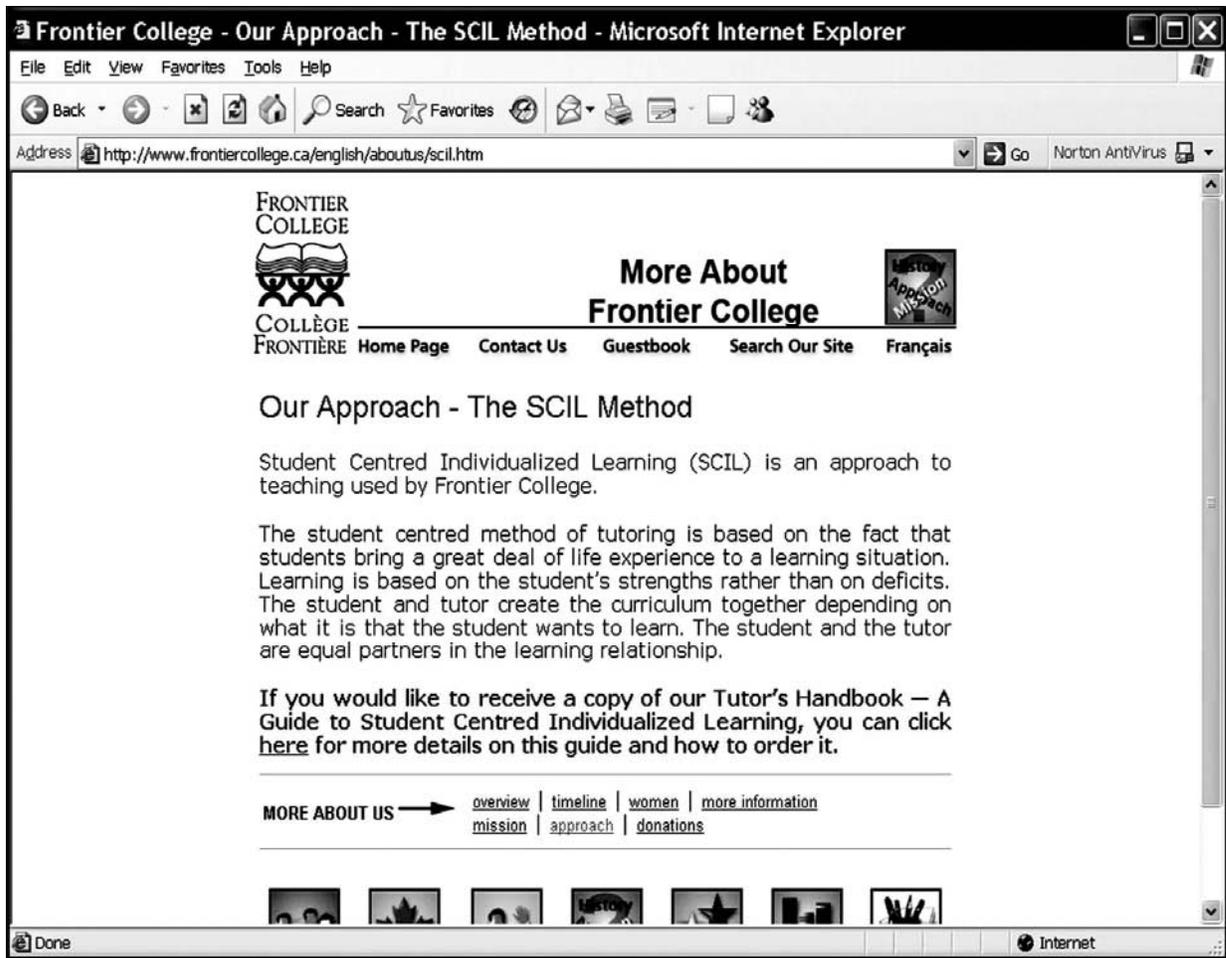


BRINGING SCIL  
(STUDENT CENTRED  
INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING)  
INTO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



2005

Qualitative learning (SCIL) = Think outside of the box!



We will also be updating sections of the Frontier College web site in 2005-2006 with more detailed information about SCIL and other methods of practice.

# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE?

Quantitative tools capture things like facts, figures, numbers or concrete data.

## Definition

*[Quantitative]: Something measured or measurable by, or concerned with, quantity and expressed in numbers or quantities.*

[www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/annexa/a.htm](http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/annexa/a.htm)

Examples of quantitative tools from a program of Frontier College.

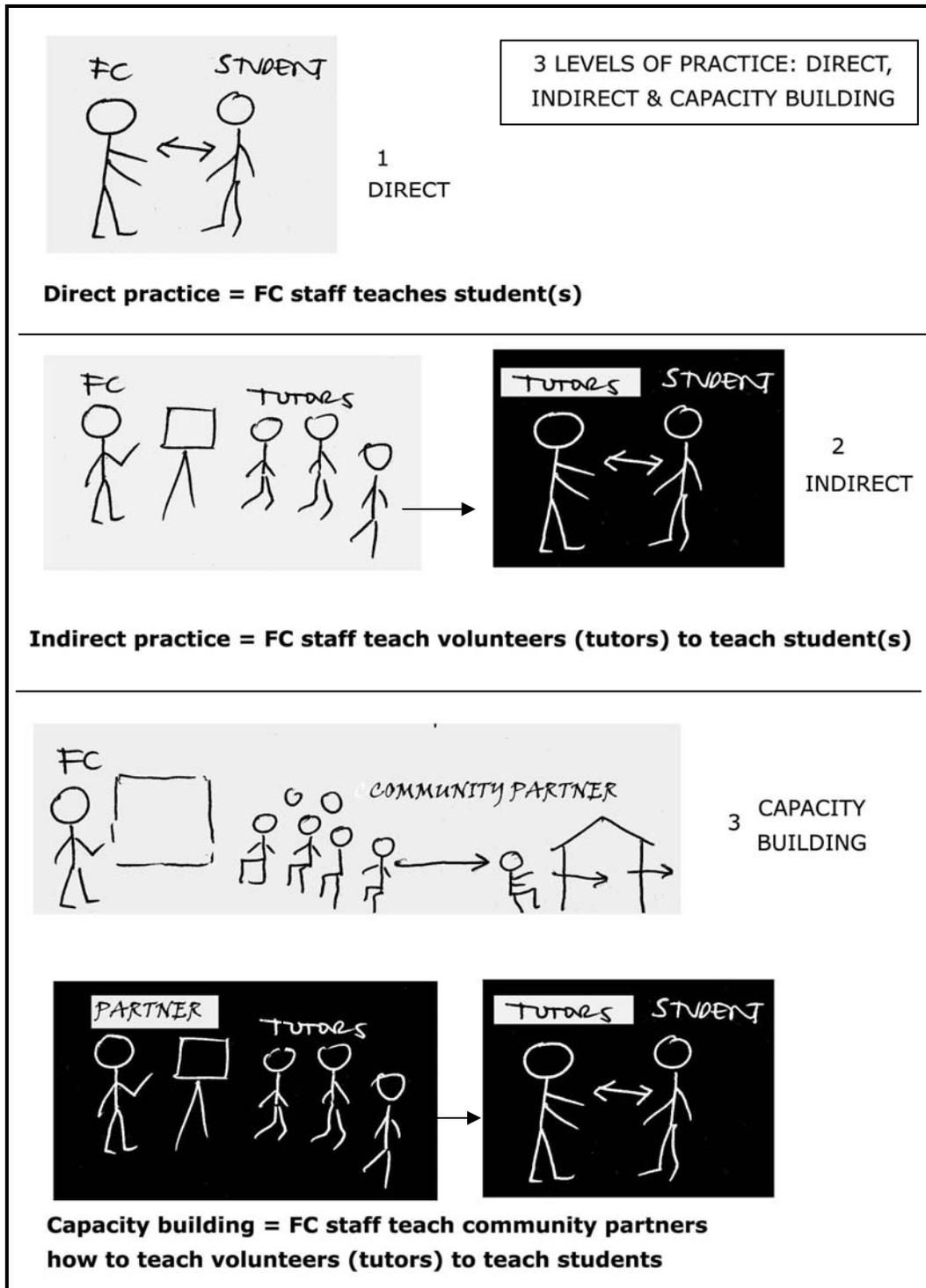
The image shows two forms from Frontier College. The first form is titled "PROGRAM ATTENDANCE FORM ONE TO ONE" and includes fields for Campus, Site (location), Community Partner, Program Type (Adult One To One Literacy, Children and Youth One to One Literacy, Other), Volunteer Tutor, and Learner. It also has a section for Sessions Dates (DOMMYY) with a table for Length of session (2 hours) and Total number of sessions held over program period. The second form is titled "Group Attendance Record - Tutors" and includes fields for Campus, Program Name/Location, and Time Period. It features a large grid for recording attendance with columns for Tutor Names, Date, and Totals (TOT x # hrs), and a row for Total Ea. Week.

*Quantitative tools can be used to count hours, sessions and attendance.*

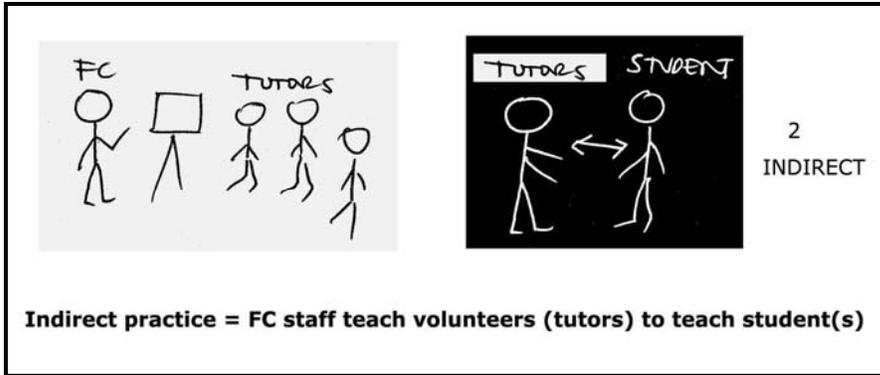


Applications of qualitative tools across types of practice:

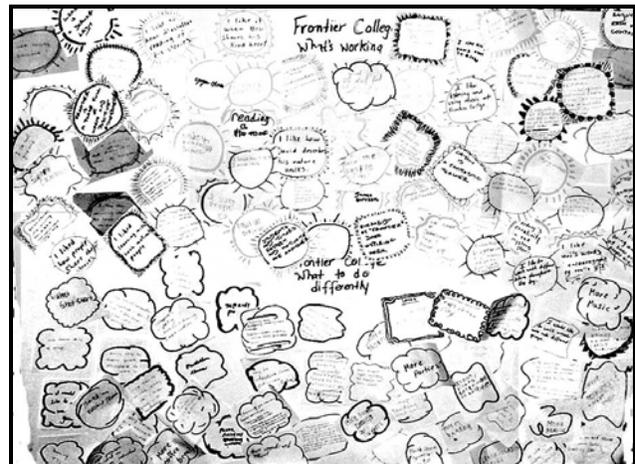
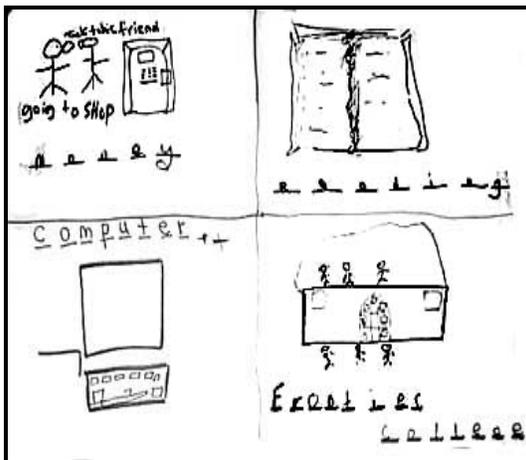
Frontier College provides three levels of practice represented by this diagram.



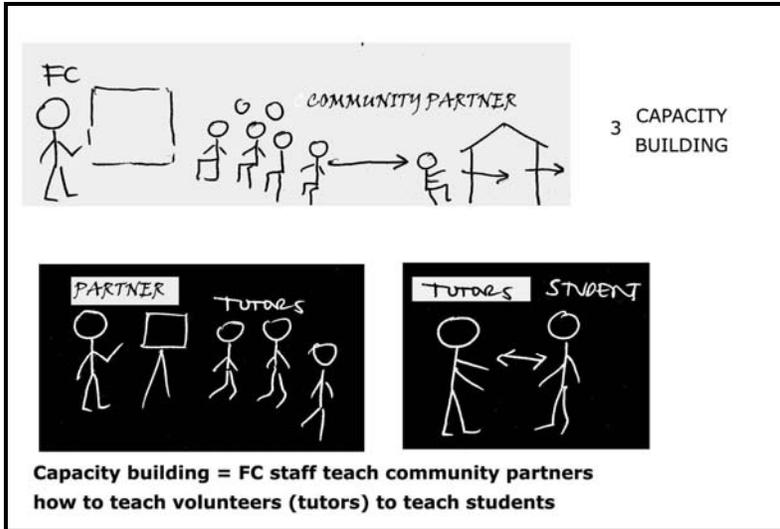




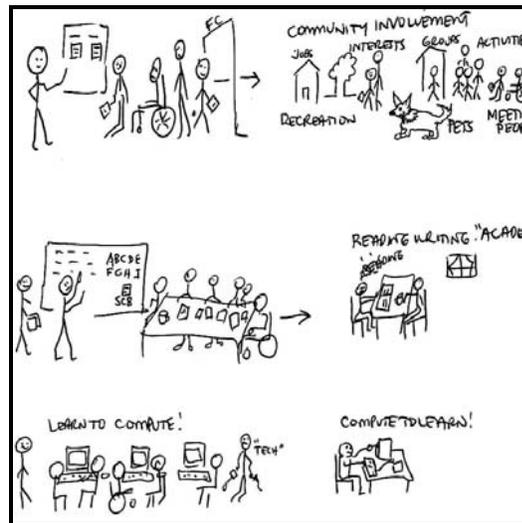
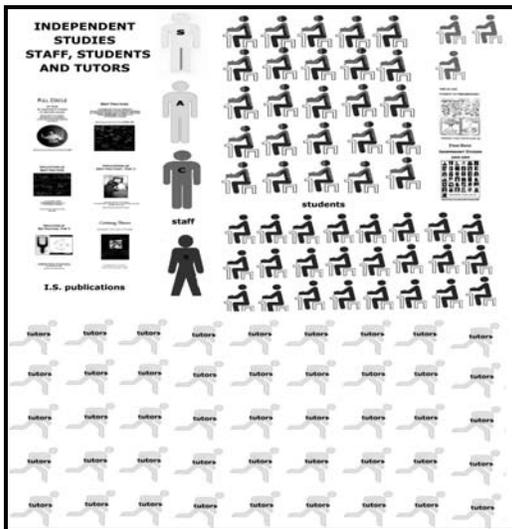
Indirect practice also lends itself well to qualitative documentation and all of the tools in this book can be applied to this form of practice.



*Qualitative tools can be used to demonstrate tutor effectiveness such as student drawings of topics covered by tutors during a term (left) and a collaged evaluation of tutors by students (right).*



Capacity building practice can also be evaluated using qualitative documentation and most of the tools in this book can be applied to this form of practice.

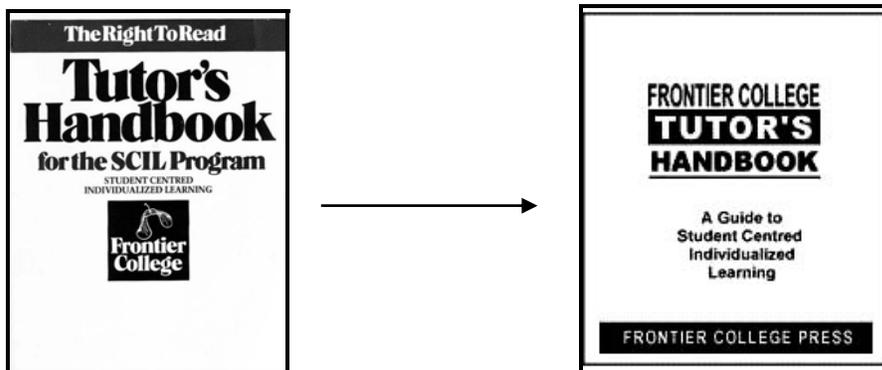


*Qualitative tools can be used to demonstrate capacity building interventions such as “mapping” the variables of an entire program to demonstrate where capacity building is needed (left) and “drawing” program activities to demonstrate the kinds of capacity building activities in a program (right).*

## EVALUATING PROGRESS (REVISED)

This section presents a series of qualitative tools for documenting hybrid learning interventions for any level of practice (direct, indirect and capacity building). The format for this section follows that from a previous Frontier College publication.

Frontier College published the original SCIL manual "Tutor's Handbook", in 1986. This book was followed up by a training manual in 1997.



In the follow up Tutor's Handbook, there is one section called "Evaluating Progress" (section 8). This section describes various methods for documenting progress and learning. However, there are only narrative descriptions of methods and no examples or tools to use. This current book acts as an appendix to Section 8 of the previous manual. It provides the examples and tools to flesh in and update the previous publication. (It is hoped that other sections of the previous manual will be similarly updated over the next year or so.)

**132 / The Right to Read: Tutor's Handbook**

**Evaluation**

Conventional evaluation tools will be inadequate in measuring the amount of success most students and tutors enjoy. There are some things you can build into the lessons from the beginning which will clearly demonstrate the progress students are making in their reading and writing skills. Evaluation will certainly be a perk for the tutor, who will long for 'evidence' of progress, but, more importantly, it must demonstrate progress to the student. If students appear discouraged or 'unmotivated', it is always because they have not seen progress. Your student deserves concrete evaluation as part of his or her programmes. Here are some suggested methods:

- 1) Keep all work and date it. Straight comparisons of work will prove the progress students make.
- 2) Keep a checklist of what the student can do independently, which tasks require some assistance, and which tasks need total assistance. Notice how the lists change over the time. (For example, when you begin, a student may need total help writing a personal opinion on a topic, and with writing business letters. Three months later, she may be able to write a personal opinion without assistance, and may need only some help composing the business letter.)
- 3) Tape record reading sessions periodically. By playing these tapes back, your student will see for himself how much his reading has improved.
- 4) In your journal, record which words are being targeted for recognition or spelling. Notice how the words increase in complexity.
- 5) Keep lists of all titles read. Try to estimate the total amount of reading your student is doing each week (in pages). Notice how the amount increases.
- 6) Analyze a piece of writing of 100 words in length. Over time, the number of sentences in the 100 word sample should decrease and the number of syllables in the sample should increase.
- 7) In the journal, keep track of all the changes you observe. Some students display greater confidence soon after tutoring begins, and this may be manifested in going out more, or joining a group or class. Sometimes, students get jobs or promotions. When one student on the program started to carry a pen with him every where he went, we considered it a sign that he was successfully beginning to perceive his image as a reading and writing person.
- 8) Note the range of subject areas discussed, read about and written about. These tend to broaden as students become aware of an expanding world through print.

Revised 1997 SCIL Manual "Section 8: Evaluating Progress" contents

<b>Evaluating Progress</b>	
<b>Why evaluate?</b>	<b>8.1</b>
<b>Forms of evaluation</b>	<b>8.1</b>
Initial student assessment	8.1
Regular review	8.2
Student journal	8.2
Observation	8.3
Self-evaluation	8.3
Progress reports	8.4
Learning plan forms	8.4
Portfolio assessment	8.4
<b>A note about more formal assessments</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Moving on</b>	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Monthly progress report (sample)</b>	<b>8.9</b>
<b>Learning Plan (sample)</b>	<b>8.10</b>

Each section that follows takes one of the techniques described in "Section 8" of the 1997 manual and provides updated qualitative examples and tools. The types of qualitative evaluation tools presented in this 2005 update are:

- ❑ Initial Assessment
- ❑ Review
- ❑ Student Journal
- ❑ Observation
- ❑ Self-Evaluation
- ❑ Progress reports
- ❑ Learning Plans
- ❑ Portfolios
- ❑ Formal Assessments

## Format

The next section presents a series of suggestions for creating tools to use to qualitatively document learning. Each tool is prefaced by the original description of an evaluation technique taken from the 1997 Tutor's Handbook. These descriptions are then updated and a tool is presented that documents the particular area described in the 1997 book. All of the tools are adapted from Independent Studies' publications and are intended to be suggestions for FC staff to modify to suit their own needs. Most tools are presented with a brief overview of the tool, some notes of theoretical validation of the technique, and then some examples of how the tool was used in Independent Studies. Student names have been rendered as initials for confidentiality.

## Experiment

Again, all of these ideas are intended to be used by FC staff to help them to document the rich learning interventions they have in their communities. FC staff are asked to experiment with the tools and ideas in this book and then share what they have done with the tools with other FC staff. None of the tools presented in this book are definitive. There are many ways to create and use qualitative tools. The tools presented are intended as ideas about how to create qualitative measures. We are hoping to establish a number of channels by which FC staff and others can share their qualitative work with one another. These channels can involve intranet, meetings, workshops, etc. These ideas will be fleshed out during 2005-2006.

Use the form on the next page to record qualitative evaluations of learning in your programs. Make copies of the form and use it as a cover sheet to record the basic elements of your program and then attach to it the qualitative evaluations you have conducted and compiled. Keep these as evidence of progress in your programs.



Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your program \_\_\_\_\_

Program location \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_



What kind of PRACTICE do you do?

- Direct
Indirect
Capacity Building (Describe)

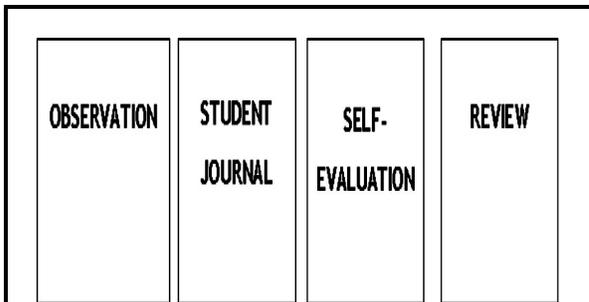
Examples of Learning Outcomes

Table with 4 columns: Foundation Skills, Extended Literacy Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Personal Development, and Knowledge. Lists various skills and knowledge areas.

What LEARNING OUTCOMES are you working on? Describe. (Use another page if needed.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Examples of Qualitative Tools



Qualitative tools record and document the range of hybrid literacy learning in FC programs (multiple co-occurring literacies: situational, informal, affective, psycho-social, interpersonal, community, civic, etc.).

What QUALITATIVE TOOL(S) are you using? Describe. (Use another page if needed.)

\_\_\_\_\_



## Initial Assessment

<p><b>Forms of evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Initial student assessment</b></p> <p>When you first meet with your student, it is a good idea to use the same process as that used by the program coordinator when the student is interviewed for the first time. The following are ideas for evaluating your student's situation at the beginning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask the student to choose a paragraph or sentence he can read. This may be from material he has brought along or something you have with you. The sentence may be three words long. Ask him to read the sentence aloud. Can he read the sentence fluently? Is he stumbling along, or is he hesitant? This will give you an idea of his competence as a beginning reader. Ask a question or two about the paragraph or sentence to check for comprehension. Praise the effort. This is a non-threatening way of finding out how well your student can read.</li><li>• Ask the student to write a sentence or two, or make a list of all the words he can spell. Does he tackle this task easily? Is he reluctant? If so, don't push it. Your student may be able to write only one or two words. This is a good start.</li><li>• To see how the student manages with numbers, try giving him a simple math problem. For example, write down the numbers 1 to 20 leaving out every fifth number. Can the student fill in the blanks?</li></ul> <p>The examples provided are for a beginning literacy student. Someone with more advanced literacy skills will necessarily require a more sophisticated evaluation process. At the same time, more advanced readers will be able to give you more information about the areas that they need to work on themselves.</p> <p>It is important to document the results of these activities because you will want to know what progress you have made as you go along.</p> <p>Here are some ideas for evaluating progress once you have begun tutoring:</p>	<p>8 • 1</p> <p>8 • Evaluating Progress</p>
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The 1997 Tutor's Handbook suggested that Initial Assessment be concerned primarily with assessing reading and writing skills. To assess students from a variety of learning perspectives, use the tools on the following pages as guides to uncover deeper information about the student's entire "learning context". Try to discover what strengths they have; what they have learned to do before, what their life is like; what their dreams and goals are; and so on. There is no one definitive initial assessment tool: the tools you develop will be based on the needs of your program and of the students with whom you work. Use the following tools as suggestions and adapt them to suit your program.

**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**Student profile**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Intake Assessment: Background Profile</b>		
<i>Program</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Assessor</i>
<i>Ask the learner to print the information below. If they can't, fill it in yourself and note this on the right.</i>		
First name: _____ Last name: _____		
Address: _____		
_____ (city)	_____ (province)	_____ (postal code)
Phone number: _____ (home) Date of birth _____		
<i>Comment on learner's ability to write personal information. Note any other first impressions.</i>		
_____		
_____		
_____		



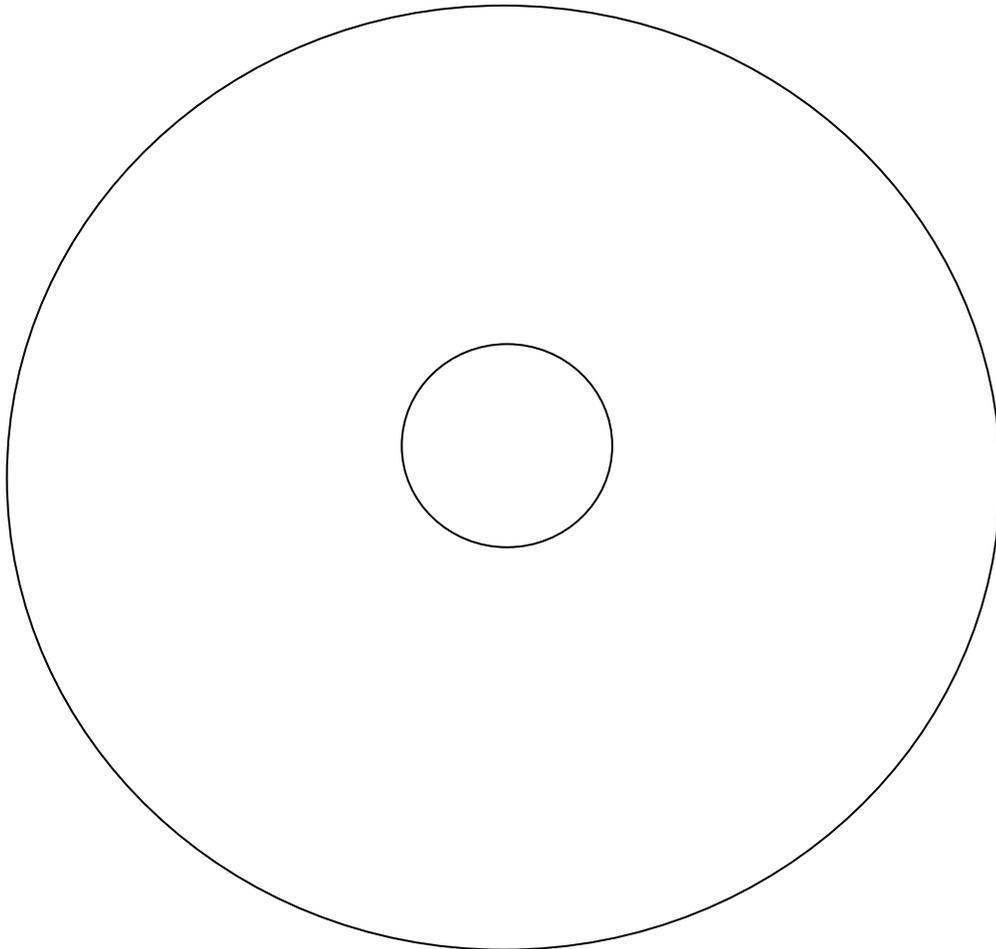
# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Log of People: Sociogram

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Start by writing your name in the inner circle. Then "map" the people in your life. Include: family; friends; co-workers; neighbours; acquaintances; doctors; therapists; advocates; professionals; etc. Show degree of closeness by distance from your circle.

**All information is strictly confidential.**



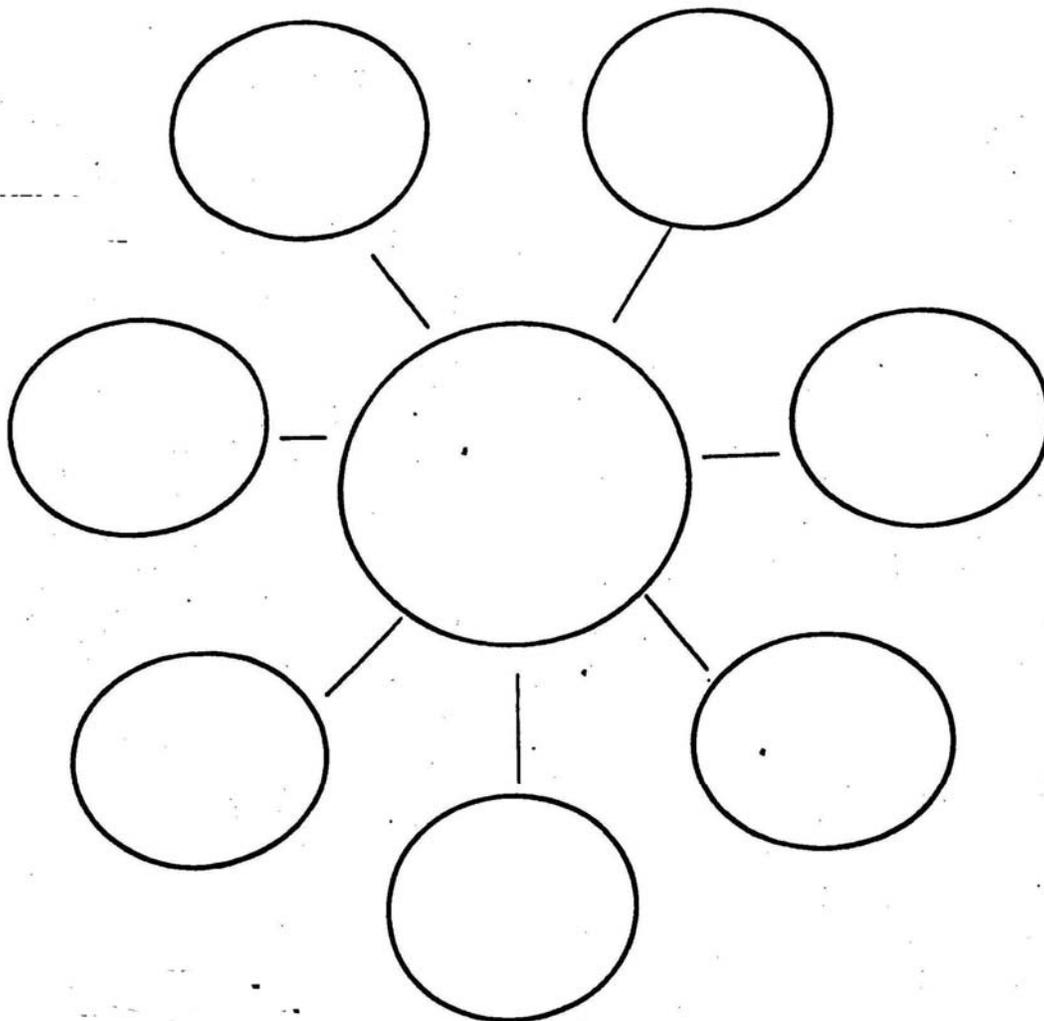
**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**Personal, Family, Health or Other Issues**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use the circles to record issues that affect you now and in the past. Place yourself in the centre circle and then use the outer circles to record anything you feel comfortable sharing that you feel affects your learning.

**All information is strictly confidential.**



**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**Log of Activities**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

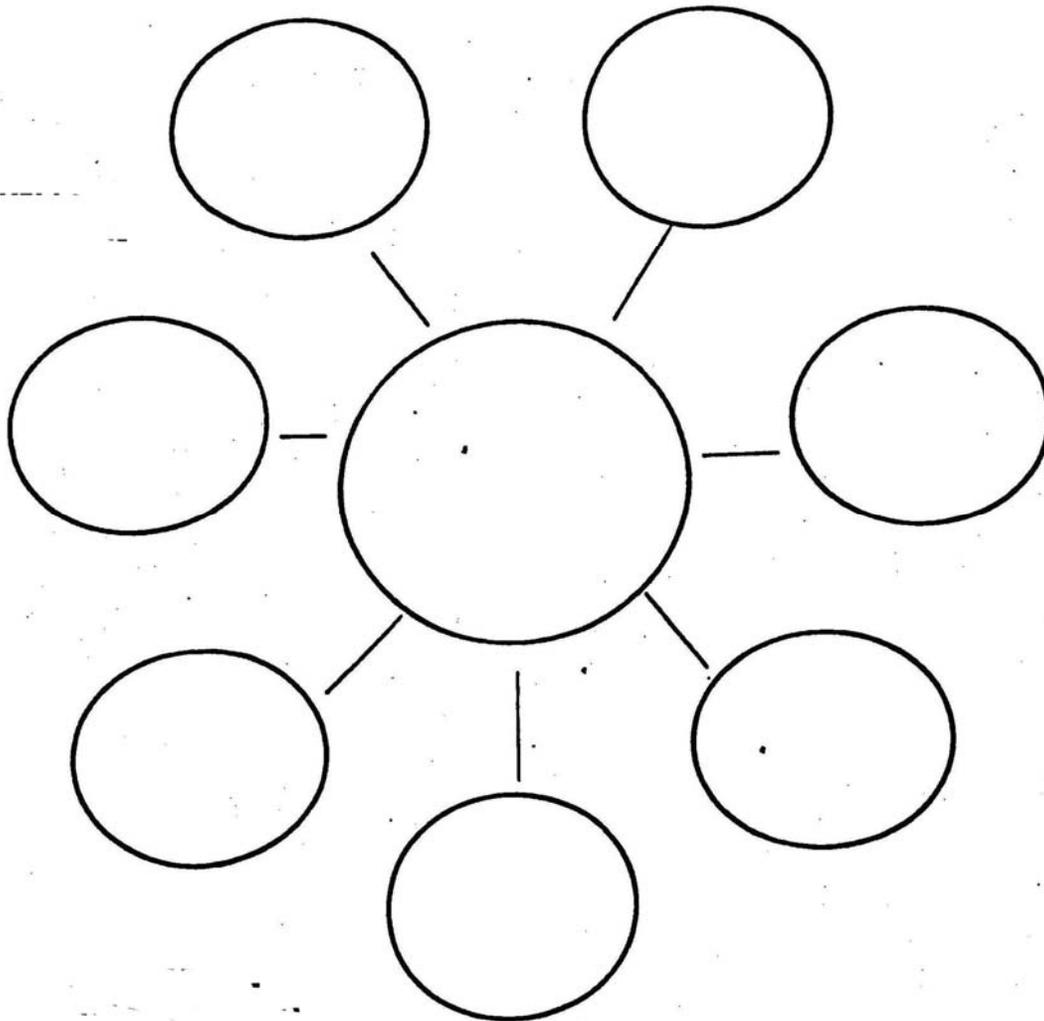
	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	NIGHT
MON				
TUES				
WED				
THURS				
FRI				
SAT				
SUN				

**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**Dreams and Goals for your Future**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Use the circles to record your dreams. What do you want in your life? Include Work, Family, Friends, Relationships, Housing, Activities, Schooling, etc. Place yourself in the centre circle and record your dreams and hopes in the outer circles.



**FRONTIER COLLEGE**  
**Pathways to reach your goals**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Goal area \_\_\_\_\_



**HOW CAN OUR FRONTIER COLLEGE HELP  
YOU TO GET TO YOUR GOAL?**

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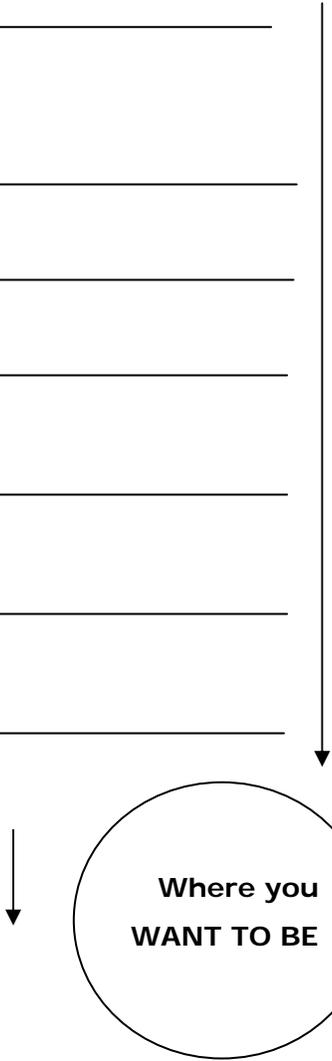
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\_\_\_\_\_



**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**Pathways to reach your goals: Outside Programs**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Goal area \_\_\_\_\_



**WHAT OTHER PROGRAMS OR PEOPLE CAN  
HELP YOU TO GET TO YOUR GOAL?**

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## Review

<p><b><i>You will know by your student's positive attitude that progress is being made.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Regular review</b></p> <p>You and your student should review progress at regular intervals. This informal meeting can take place before, during, or after a session or at a separate time.</p> <p>This review will provide an opportunity to discuss what has been accomplished and any problems that may not have been resolved during your tutoring sessions. If your student has kept a portfolio of the work that he has been doing, this would be a good time to have a look at it as a document of what the student has accomplished. We'll say more about portfolios later.</p> <p>If the student has not kept a portfolio, then you may want to ask him directly what new knowledge or skills he feels he has learned. If you have kept goal-setting records, then you can help the student determine if certain goals have been met or if they need to be revised. If you have been checking these at every session, and you have focused on achieving them, the student should be experiencing some success.</p> <p>Some questions you may want to ask your student:</p> <p><i>What are your feelings about the progress you are making? Remember how you used to be so nervous about writing? How do you feel about writing now?</i></p> <p>Keep in mind that the purpose of the interview is to recognize accomplishments, to identify problems, and to change goals or ways of doing things if necessary. If progress is being made, the student's attitude will be quite positive.</p>
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An excellent qualitative technique for regularly reviewing learning progress is described below. It is a technique of goal setting as an ongoing process. Long-term or short-term goals can be set for a course of study or for a few sessions. Also situational goals can be set for one learning session. The technique described allows for wide variation of application and is a useful way to review students' learning.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

# Goal Setting

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### Introduction to Method

There are many qualitative methods for recording and evaluating goal setting in community-based adult literacy programs. At Independent Studies, we use a number of techniques most of which include some kind of ongoing feedback from students in the program. We have worked to develop the goal setting process as an intrinsic aspect of our classroom activities. Students begin with large dreams about what they want to do with their lives. Then we break these dreams down into smaller chunks and ascribe possible routes to achieving them. The ones that “fit” within the mandate of our program are ones we pull out and begin to describe in more detail. All of our goal setting methods begin with and build on students’ strengths and not on their “weaknesses”. There are no deficits on our program: only untapped capacities. The following pages present an overview of the goal setting process from “Naming the Magic”, which presents a theoretical validation of the technique as a legitimate qualitative method for documenting student goals, both academic and Non-Academic Outcomes. Examples from our classes are also presented as models of potential utilization of this technique. The first one presents techniques for identifying strengths to build on and supports that can be identified which may assist the students in achieving their goals. The second example is of the goal setting process applied to the selection of generative themes out of which the class materials are then built.

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

### Goal Setting

#### Source

*Naming the Magic: Non-Academic Outcomes in Basic Literacy*  
Evelyn Battell, Malaspina University College, 2001  
National Literacy Secretariat; Ministry of Advanced Education Province of British Columbia;  
Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

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This is quite an elaborate technique used to give the learners leadership in their evaluation including the decision on the goal, the steps to reach the goal, how long it will take them, how they will know when they have reached the goal, who is affected by this development and who they will inform.

The instructor is a voice of experience and a facilitator, but the learners run the process. This could be done with an individual or group. At minimum it will take a number of weeks and cannot be started until there is considerable trust between learners and instructors or tutors. When learners decide to return to school and start to learn in a more formal setting, they are often at a place in their lives where they are ready to examine their progress and are, in fact, looking for ways to assure themselves that they are getting ahead, while at the same time feeling extremely vulnerable. Learners [and instructors/tutors] will design this whole process together. Right from the beginning, it is a shared activity. You will find a way for the learners to generate the suggestions as well as chose which ones to use.

Learners who have little experience in goal setting may need to develop skills to learn to recognize what constitutes progress and what is valuable to measure. Participants in a process such as this one will need to feel comfortable with the aspect of their learning that is being highlighted. Learners will need to feel ownership of both the process and the product. The instructor or tutor introduces the topic, leads discussion, and ensures that everyone has an opportunity to participate without feeling pressured to contribute. Key steps and questions [to guide the process include:] What will I try to accomplish and why? Examples include: progress with the issues of addiction, assertiveness, decision-making, co-operation, communicating better with others, listening, participation, getting along with others, being ready for class, risk-taking, etc.

Once the goal is established and the key questions worked through, each learner begins tracking the chosen behaviour. Recording progress or reporting results can be done in a number of ways... With small groups or individuals, the "goal" discussion can be established as part of the routine to be followed by the instructor or tutor so that when meeting with the learner to talk about the learners' work, they also discuss goals.

This process is a useful personal technique for independent evaluation throughout life.

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Examples of Applications of Method

### Goal Setting

#### Source

Independent Studies classes: students', tutors' and staff's ongoing learning evaluations

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#### *Example 1 of Goal Setting process (individual strengths and supports required to reach goals)*

**Student: D.**

#### What strengths can you build on to reach your goals?

- I am in good shape.
- Bike riding
- Drawing
- Ice skating
- Cross country skiing
- Writing
- Remembering dates
- Showing up on time
- Swimming
- Recording
- Working with leather and wood
- Polite
- Artistic
- Fantastic memory
- Like to challenge

#### Who or what can help you reach your goals?

- R – my support worker. I meet with him twice a week. He helps me with my spelling. We have started playing pool together. We go places together.
- J and P – They help me with my problems.
- U – my half brother. He helps me with all my stereo, video, recording equipment.
- H and B– my sister and brother-in-law. They help me, too, when I have a problem.
- Frontier College – people are friendly, no swearing, help me with my reading and writing. I meet new people, easy to talk to.
- Loblaws – my job, collecting shopping carts, sweeping, collecting baskets. I get paid for it.
- Lutheran Church – when I pass on, I will go to heaven. Learn about good things.
- Noah's Ark – I like to dance.
- My Father – I see my dad twice a year, at Christmas and my birthday.

***Example 2 of Goal Setting process: Selecting group goals and learning content in the class through a process of consensus***

*Generative Themes: What do you want to learn about next time?*

"Inuit: Learn about the people and their customs and arts; animals' habitat: foxes, wolves, deer, etc." **M**

"Mr. T; Israel: about Israel's situation." **B**

"Plumbing; carpentry; Raptors, basketball team" **E**

"Bathroom tiles; landscaping summer/winter; architecture" **D**

"Diversity: talking about the beauty of difference" **A**

"The Three Tenors: How did they learn to sing?" **M**

"What's on soon around Toronto, especially Entertainment" **J**

"Peace Activism" **B**

"How to become Mayor" **T**

"How to play curling" **G**

"Cloning: is the clone a real human or not?" **J**

*Process of theme selection:*

Select what most of us like and want to learn through consensus.

1. Landscaping (4 people out of 8)
2. Animals' habitat (2 people out of 8)
3. Inuit culture (1 person out of 8)
4. Peace activism (1 person out of 8)

After consensus building discussion: Landscaping (8 out of 8 people)

The lesson content topic for a future class selected by consensus is:

**Landscaping.**

## Student Journal

### Student journal

When you begin tutoring you can suggest to your student that he keep a journal. Do this only if he feels comfortable writing or is willing to try. You

may suggest that he write his thoughts, what has happened to him during the day or simply doodle. Ask him to make sure that he writes down the date of any entry he makes.

We have yet to see a student who has not noticed progress through journal entries. As the student gains more writing skills, the content of the journal becomes more sophisticated. For example, the sentences may become more elaborate as the student expresses more complex ideas and as his confidence grows.

Review the journal with the student regularly and note the progress that he is making.

The  
Frontier  
College  
Tutor's  
Handbook

***A good way  
to review  
progress is  
by looking at  
entries in the  
student's  
journal.***

The 1997 Tutor's Handbook focuses on Student Journals as literal journals where students write as if in a diary. If the students are at a high enough level of writing ability, this may be a good technique to use. However, for students who are not so good either at the mechanics of writing or at writing a diary, then other techniques may be more appropriate. One interesting technique that is presented next involves creating student journals as a form of project work. In the example provided, the project is very specific but can be adapted for many uses by creative FC staff. Try to use alternative and creative formats to get student to record their learning progress in other ways than writing.



## FRONTIER COLLEGE FRONTIÈRE

HELPING CANADA READ  
ENSEMBLE POUR MIEUX LIRE

### the journal

#### **The journal:**

There will be many things that can be put into the portfolio. One of these is the journal entry. It is important to note what has been accomplished in each meeting. You may choose to complete your journal entry by yourself after the tutoring session or with your learner as a closing activity.

Use the enclosed sheets to take note, on a meeting to meeting basis, of what you have done, what you have worked on with your learner.

The type of notes we suggest you take are :

- the date of the session
- what you have worked on
- what learning has happened – tracking log (sheets provided)
- a brief description of the material and exercises used
- your learner's attitude during the session
- the strengths and weaknesses of the meeting
- etc.

Here is an example to help you start with.

October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1997, we have worked on the verb "to be" at the present tense. To help my learner I presented to him some reference tools, like the "Becherelle", and I showed him how to use it. I prepared memorizing card that help him differentiate the tenses of the verb "to be". Rob seemed to have understood the present tense of the verb "to be" and seems to be able to use it in a phrase. Rob showed great motivation, and was glad to see the reference material.

Strength during the session : reference book

Difficulty : I did not insist enough on sentence composition

Above is one example (from the 1997 Tutor's Handbook) of how to create a student journal. On the next few pages is an entirely different idea about how to record information about learning that students may find creative and fun. As well they may find the use of visual prompts easier to respond to than a request for a narrative self-analysis of their use of grammar.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

### Project Work

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#### Introduction to Method

At Independent Studies, we attempt to engage students in an investigation of the world in which we all live. Our projects derive from our students' desire to find out about how or why things are. This is the essence of learning through project work: human-centred holistic inquiry. Project work is unique because it can encompass all of the techniques described previously in this monograph. Projects utilize all aspects of the learning process; encompassing a wide array of learning styles, interests, abilities and capabilities. Students also usually enjoy them because, if done correctly, they are fun. Independent Studies has a long history of undertaking interesting and challenging project work with students. We continue to create our curricula around a project model. We use some of the techniques described above to generate ideas for projects and then build in learning outcomes (academic and non-academic) needed to be developed to achieve the project. The projects are also flexible to allow for creative and spontaneous developments. The project work documented in the example below was one created over the course of a term in Independent Studies and was recorded and presented as a book called "Tree of Life" available from Frontier College.

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

### Project Work

#### Source:

*Tree of Life: Student Autobiographies*  
*Independent Studies, Frontier College, 2002*

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#### Introduction

Every year, Independent Studies at Frontier College publishes a book of student writing. We've been doing this for 20 years. This year (2002), we thought we would document a project that we worked on in our Self-Management/Literacy class from April to June of 2002. This project was about writing an autobiography. It was about learning how to do three primary things (Learning Outcomes):

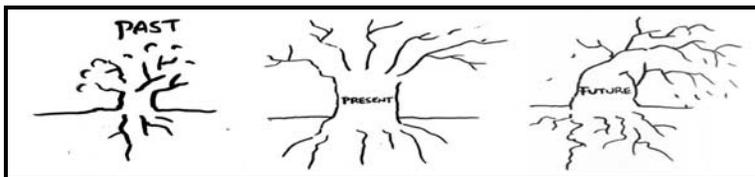
remember and record what has happened in your life in the past;  
understand and document what is happening in your life right now; and  
dream about your life in the future and capture this dream on paper.

The project was also about using drawing as a way to generate writing. This book presents the technique we used during the project. Descriptions and illustrations of the technique are presented below. We include this so that other practitioners can use our technique as a method for creating student autobiographies. The students' stories are presented under the title, "Tree of Life". The trees of our lives begin as small seedlings, mature into adult growth and then age and decline. This is an authentic process of life. This process is reflected and honoured here in the stories by students in the Independent Studies program.

#### A Technique with Illustrations

We decided to develop the idea of autobiography using graphics as a way to generate writing. We used drawings of trees as a starting point. There were three trees. The first one represented the past; the second one, the present; and the third, the future.

First, David, the project facilitator, drew three trees on a large white board in the class. The trees are presented below.



Each one of the three facilitators (David, Cathy and Susan) took turns providing personal information for one of the trees. David did all the actual writing to model the process. First, David described some memories of his past as a child. He wrote down the names of people who were important in his life in the past. Then he described activities or places or things that he'd enjoyed in the past.

He wrote these words and phrases all around the past tree. When this was finished, David asked Cathy the same questions about her present life and used this information to fill in the present tree. Finally Susan provided information about her future for the future tree. We had three completed example trees, past, present and future (presented below).

We then asked students to draw their own trees. During each class, we created one tree (the past trees during one class, the present trees during the next class, and so on).

Students were assisted by tutors and by other volunteers. The students really got creative in their drawings. We used large (3 feet by 2 feet) paper so that there was plenty of room to create. They used markers, crayons, pens, pencils, colours, etc.

Next, the students were asked to write in information about themselves on each of their trees. This required a lot of prompting and eliciting. We created a list of prompt questions to help elicit more information. (There is no definitive list of questions to ask. Almost any questions will work.)

Often a volunteer would ask questions and would record one-word or short-phrase answers on a separate piece of paper and the students would copy this onto their trees.

When the trees were done, it was time to start writing their autobiographies. Again, we used the prompt questions to flesh out the one-word or short-phrase responses on the trees. The information written on the trees provided the source material to flesh out during the actual writing process.

The finished trees were actually brainstorming maps that contained the essence of what each student would then write about in more detail.

Staff and volunteers worked with students over the course of the term to complete their full autobiographies. The final drafts were then copy-edited by staff for consistency in type, style, form, etc.

The tree graphics were photographed digitally and photo-edited for inclusion in this book.

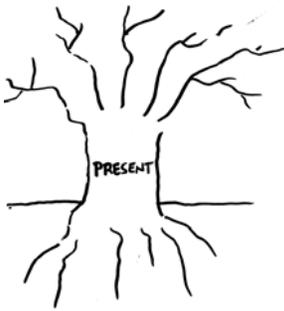
Blank trees are provided on the next pages with prompts to help you get started creating your own Tree of Life.

#### Blank Trees

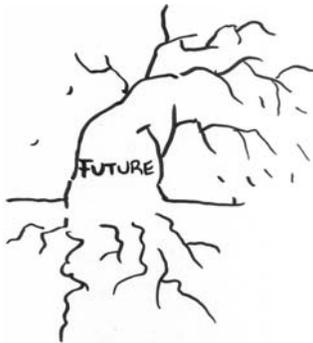
- *On the following pages are copies of blank trees for you to use.*
- *Each tree is on a separate page for photocopying.*
- *Use the writing prompts on each page and have students fill in their trees with information about themselves.*
- *Use this information as a starting point for writing their autobiographies.*
- *Keep their trees to include in a book you can assemble that presents each student's finished autobiography.*



Try to remember when you were young (a child or teenager). write in the people you had in your life when you were young. write in the activities or places or things you remember enjoying when you were young.



Think about your life right now. write in the people you have in your life right now. write in the activities or places or things you enjoy in your life right now



Try to imagine your life when you are old. write in the people you would like to have in your life when you are old. write in the activities or places or things you would like in your life when you are old.

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Examples of Applications of Method

### Project Work

#### Source:

*Tree of Life: Student Autobiographies*  
*Independent Studies, Frontier College, 2002*

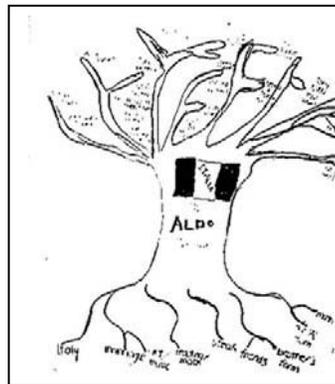
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#### Examples of Project Work showing students' Tree of Life Drawings and their resulting Autobiographies

On the following pages are autobiographies written by students in the Independent Studies day classes at Frontier College. Included with each story are graphics of the tree drawings produced by each student.

#### A's Tree of Life Drawings

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#### A's Autobiography generated through Tree Drawings

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##### ***A's Past Life***

I was born on February 10, 1966 in a hospital in Toronto. I am 36 years old. I'm Italian. I get sad and upset when I think about my cousin and Aunt C. who passed away. I miss them. My brother took me for a ride on his three-wheeler. I felt excited. We went through the fields and I was hanging on.

### ***A's Present Life***

I have many special people in my life. They are my sisters, T, L and A, my parents, and B and T. I have many cousins in Italy. The great person in my life is T. She is my fiancée. I love her. We are getting married. We are going to have a good life. T has Down's Syndrome. She lives in an apartment program. She is nice to me. Best friends are buddies. R is my best friend. We go bowling together. Sometimes we don't get along but we are still friends. I work at McDonalds. I make sundaes. I also clean the counters. I also make apple pies. I like working there. I enjoy riding horses. My brother's horses are named R, M and C. M is my favourite horse because he is all white. I like to drive my brother, T's, four-wheeler with him. It is exciting and makes me feel free. My brother is knocking down his farmhouse today and is rebuilding a new home. My favourite holiday is Christmas. The special food that we enjoy at Christmas time is lasagna and rack of lamb. We usually celebrate at my sister's house. I enjoy opening presents. I like what I get. I like coming to Frontier College to learn to read and write to get my license. I like country music a lot. I also enjoy watching the "A-Team" because they make things out of scrap material.

### ***A's Future Life***

When I am old, I will be married. I want a large reception. I want to have sex to have kids. I will live with my wife, T, in our apartment. In the future, I will own a big house by the lake. I will put on a wet suit and go scuba diving. I will have a big party with my family and friends. We will also go golfing. I will learn to water-ski by myself. I also plan to play tennis and buy a trailer. One day I will own a motorcycle and I will ride it by myself. I will also take a cruise to Italy.

## Observation

<p><b>Observation</b></p> <p>In your sessions you will usually notice changes in your student's attitude or behaviour which are good indicators that he is making progress. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student is more active in the tutoring session (answering questions readily, making decisions on what he would like to do next, etc.)</li><li>• The student is always on time and rarely misses sessions. This often indicates a high level of satisfaction, which is, in turn, a consequence of meaningful learning.</li><li>• The student is willing to take more risks (willing to try something new even at the risk of initial failure).</li><li>• The student begins to bring stories or books he has found interesting to share with you.</li><li>• The student may want to do more work on his own time (a very good indication that he wants to move ahead).</li><li>• The student may become more involved in his community (more attuned to what is going on as a result of being more literate).</li></ul>	
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One of the most common qualitative techniques for recording observations of students' learning progress is Anecdotal Reports. A description of Anecdotal Reports and their uses follows.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

### Anecdotal Reports

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#### Introduction to Method

When Independent Studies' instructors listen to students and actually "hear" them as people, then the instructors become students themselves and learn from these anecdotal conversations the genuine measure of their dialogical educational interactions.

Anecdotal reports are a traditional qualitative method of recording and documenting learning. In Independent Studies, we use a variety of anecdotal methods. Staff and volunteers provide continuous verbal feedback about students' progress. We meet regularly and discuss students' abilities and needs. We record these observations in a number of formats. We also ask the students to provide their own anecdotal reports on their own progress. We often ask them to comment on the content of lessons or on the entire term's work. We also ask students and volunteers to provide anecdotal evidence of other students' progress. These examples are presented in this section.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

## Anecdotal Reports

### Source:

*Naming the Magic: Non-Academic Outcomes in Basic Literacy*  
Evelyn Battell, Malaspina University College, 2001

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This technique involves the instructors or tutors [or students] making notes of incidents and stories that demonstrate positive changes that are happening for the learner. The following are examples of demonstrated non-academic outcomes in literacy learners.

"A learner came to school on the last day of term in spite of worries about her husband who was having heart difficulty. When we asked her about why she came she explained that she had a job to finish here. She also said she was worried about her husband's health partly because she would not be able to come back in the fall."

This anecdote illustrates that the commitment of the learner to the program ranked as high as her family concerns. This had not been true in the past. Her behaviour also demonstrated what participation in the program meant to her. The possibility of losing this place/activity where she belonged was real worry for her. The sense of belonging had not been present in the past and she was able to say approximately, when, in the year this had occurred. Commitment to the program and a sense of belonging are the two non-academic outcomes illustrated by this anecdote. "A learner was seen going through her binder and throwing away scrap paper."

This learner had difficulty finding things because of the mess in her binder. This behaviour demonstrated she was learning to keep her materials sorted. "A learner agreed to produce on the computer a sign for a display. She had maintained that she 'couldn't do computers'. After this, she readily volunteered to make things on the computer." [This anecdote shows that] she demonstrated a willingness to be led into new tasks and to realize when she had learned a new skill and was making use of this skill.

"A learner who had not taken part very much, but rather sat in the corner reading, asked one say if the instructor 'minded' her just sitting and reading. The instructor answered 'No, but you might find some value also in the other activities.' The learner then explained she didn't know what else she should be doing." This anecdote shows how the learner demonstrated sensitivity to the relationship with the instructor and a slowly developing ability to ask for information and admit confusion.

Questions to ask the learner to enhance Anecdotal Reporting:

- *In what way (if any) has coming to school changed your life?*
- *Do you feel different about yourself now that you are in school? Please explain.*
- *Do you speak up more? Can you give an example?*
- *Is there anything you do now that you wouldn't have done before starting school?*
- *Has anyone commented on changes in you? Can you give an example?*

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Examples of Applications of Method

## Anecdotal Reports

### **Source:**

*Independent Studies classes: students, tutors and staff's ongoing learning evaluations*

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***Example 1 of Anecdotal Report showing evaluations of individual class sessions by students and tutors at the end of the class.***

I.S. Class: Jan 14, 2003

***Evaluation: What worked today?***

"I love to come here because you are teaching." **B**

"I liked to learn spelling." **M**

"I liked learning a computer." **J**

"I like to learn a computer." **D**

"I liked to learn computers." **C**

"I love to learn computers." **E**

"I liked the democratic process." **M**

"I liked talking about the project." **A**

I.S. Class Wed Jan 15, 2003

***Evaluation: What worked today?***

"I liked the discussion about women's beauty and I liked the brainstorming." **I**

"I liked discussion about women's beauty." **M**

"I understood what everybody said." **D**

"I liked the process of choosing our topic." **C**

"I liked computers." **J**

"I liked computers." **M**

"I like that we choose money math for the topic." **K**

"I learned how to move the mouse." **D**

"I liked reading about Dani." **R**

***Evaluation: What worked today?***

"Breaking down the information for the KWL project was interesting." **I**

"I liked typing tutor on the computer." **E**

"I enjoyed typing tutor on the computer." **D**

"I learned about the Shuttle." **A**

"Learning the alphabet on the computer was interesting." **B**

"Talking about the write-a-thon with Judith Snow was interesting." **M**

"I liked doing the project and learning about current events." **J**

***Example 2 of Anecdotal Reports showing evaluation/feedback on student's goals and progress by other students and by tutors in the I.S. program at the end of a term.***

**D.**

- gentle and caring person, willing to help others
- skills - reading and writing improved much, much able to get ideas on papers, reading level improved phenomenally
- has been open in conversation about his situation, fairly comfortable about his personal challenges, gained trust with group
- sees F.C. as a safe haven
- too bad no men's group here
- he wants to learn the computer and is asking me to help
- very polite, and willing to speak about himself
- he has confidence in the group
- students look up to him, he is a role model
- last year every word was a struggle; now not so much; a lot of it is confidence
- was limited in his conversation; now has expanded his horizon and conversation; now interested in other things and ideas
- he read to another student who doesn't read and he was so proud
- he is keen, like a sponge
- I thought he was a tutor because he helped other students
- shows great initiative

## Self-Evaluation

### Self-evaluation

You can also devise a simple self-evaluation questionnaire for your student which he can fill in to indicate how he assesses the progress he is making. For example:

At this time, I can read:

- some sentences in a newspaper
- a whole story in a newspaper
- a whole page in a newspaper
- almost all of the newspaper

Rather than focus solely on reading and writing progress, students may want to self-evaluate other aspects of learning. The following technique called Multimedia Approaches provides some creative ways that students can evaluate their own learning.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

# Multimedia Approaches

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### Introduction to Method

At Independent Studies, all learning interactions are about making a difference in students' lives. This undertaking is complex and often needs equally complex methods to document it. Multimedia Approaches provide flexible and creative ways in which to document changes that result from learning interactions intended to enhance community and build social capital. The use of media of many kinds is not new; however, computers and scanners and digital cameras have allowed for far greater scope in the documentation of visual and multimedia projects. At Independent Studies, we have used multimedia techniques for many purposes. The process of creating work using drawing or mind mapping or collages, for example, provide enormous range of possible expression and stimulation for students. Multimedia approaches tap into simultaneous learning styles allowing visual and kinesthetic and conceptual styles to be combined and worked on with a group of different students. A selection of digital photos of multimedia projects completed by I.S. students is presented below. The quality of some of the reproductions are not as clear as we would like because the original materials were of unusual colours or textures or the digital images were photographed at inconsistent resolutions making them difficult to reproduce adequately.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

## Multimedia Approaches

### Source:

*Naming the Magic: Non-Academic Outcomes in Basic Literacy*  
Evelyn Battell, Malaspina University College, 2001

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Since some learners have difficulty with reading and writing words, and sometimes with expressing themselves orally, this method was developed as a way for learners to keep a record of outcomes using pictures, diagrams, artifacts and objects to express and document changes in themselves, their actions and their goals, as a result of learning. (The technique is also valuable for learners with stronger literacy skills.) You will provide time and space for learners to use collages, pictures and diagrams to describe their starting points and ongoing learning and some method of keeping the created works so they provide an ongoing record. In general, this is a qualitative way to record outcomes. It is also participant-centred; documentation will vary in content and form. However, over time, learners may be able to identify themes in what they document. For example, “speaking out”, “reading more”, or “using writing to get my feelings out” may be goals or changes that are noticed. These themes could be a focus for assessing changes over time. For example, a learner may note that “I am writing more” or that “I write at home”.

Keeping an ongoing record is a challenge when you are using symbols to show outcomes. A scrapbook for each learner or for the class provides a way to keep things in order, although things have to be small enough to fit on the page somehow. A folio keeps things separate, but whole. Learners could put many things in their books – an important piece of writing, a picture of themselves at some moment of achievement, the top of a test that has their name, the date and the great mark they got, a photocopy of the cover of a book they loved... [etc.]. If you have room on the walls, you might want to make a “timeline” of important events, starting with the first day and adding pictures, words and things regularly to the end of the class [or term]. When it is time to take down a collage that has been on the wall, take a picture of it. If learners are keeping their scrapbooks or portfolios, you can invite them to talk with you about their creations on a regular basis. The creations provide a focus for discussions about change and goals. If you write some comments about the discussion on sticky note, the learner may decide to stick the sticky to the relevant page, adding to the ongoing record.

A photo album or “timeline” collage helps everyone remember how things were, to make comparisons, and to notice change. For example, if the class is taking on a large project like a learner event, a field trip, or inviting the community in for any reason, you might start by putting up large pieces of paper on the wall. As the class works through the project, choose some symbols or pictures that show the process, the challenges and the moods. After the event, when you are evaluating the activity, use the collage as a starting point to remind people of the various stages, challenges and emotional ups and downs that occurred along the way.”

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## Examples of Applications of Method

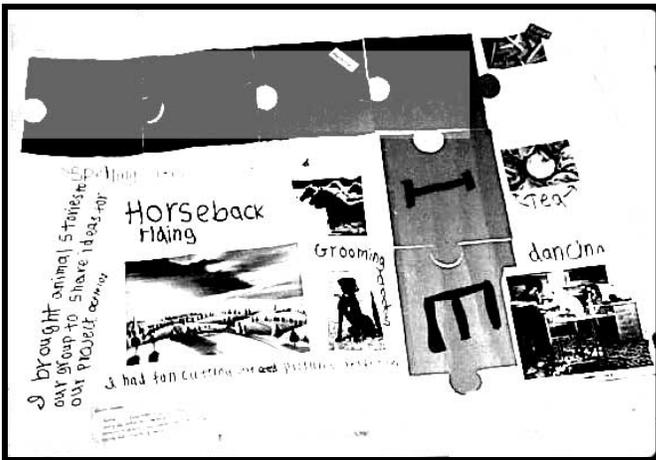
### Multimedia Approaches

**Source:**

Independent Studies classes: students, tutors and staff's ongoing learning evaluations

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Example of Multimedia Approaches showing Independent Studies' student goal setting and self-evaluations done in multimedia stages (drawing, collage, digital photos, writing, etc.) and digitally produced.



#### Evaluating areas of interest



#### Evaluating strengths

Hummingbirds have no sense of smell. They are attracted by colours.

Some flowers that attract hummingbirds are:

- Butterfly bush
- Honeysuckle
- Morning Glory
- Bee Balm
- Coral Bells

They eat insects for protein, so don't use pesticides.

They need perches such as twigs, leaf stems, and cat tails (between feeders).

Evaluating research compiled for an essay

Cooling

Money

Frontier College

Healing

Evaluating what was learned during a term

Selling my plug and...  
lots of money

Wagner...  
Andreas...  
First Circle:  
Second Circle:  
Third Circle:  
Fourth Circle:

Circle of Support (Friends)

FAMILY Doctor

Frontier College

Shoe

Evaluating strengths in a student's life

## Progress reports

<b>8 • Evaluating Progress</b>	<h3>Progress reports</h3> <p>In Frontier College programs, tutors and students are asked to fill out a monthly progress report together. This is to identify what has been learned, what goals have been set and achieved, and what plans are made for the next period. In addition, students are encouraged to report anything else they would like. These reports are submitted to the program coordinator who reads them over and takes action as necessary. They are also often used as data for reporting to funders. One copy is made for the student's portfolio. (There is a sample at the end of this section.)</p>
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Another good way to regularly assess progress is to use End of Term Evaluations. These are reports written about any aspect of students' learning at the end of a period of learning.

<b>Monthly Progress Report</b>	<b>The Frontier College Tutor's Handbook</b>
Student: _____	
Tutor: _____	
Month: _____	
These are my long-term goals      Date to reach: _____	
_____	
_____	
_____	
These are my short-term goals	
_____	
_____	
_____	
These are the things we did this month	
_____	
_____	
_____	
This is what I learned this month	
_____	
_____	
_____	
This is something else I would like to say	
_____	
_____	
_____	
Today's date: _____	<small>Frontier College</small>

This is one way to approach Progress Reports (from the 1997 Tutor's Handbook). Another way is presented on the following pages.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

# End of Term Evaluations

---

### Introduction to Method

Unlike many conventional educational situations, Independent Studies actually uses our end of term reports to expand our ability to meet the needs of our students and not merely as an exercise in institutionalized, bureaucratic busy-work. End of term reports are a traditional method of academic evaluation used in many schools and other learning situations. They are popular because they serve a very useful function. They sum up the learning and progress for a particular student in a very individualized manner. In Independent Studies, we use end of term reports in a qualitative manner: documenting observed improvements or changes in target areas identified in the goal setting process as areas for work. Students can be assessed individually as well as in groups. Having a selection of end of term reports, especially over a few terms, allows for analysis of trends in development across students in the classes. In Independent Studies, we analyze our end of term reports to determine the mix of students for classes in the subsequent term. Sometimes, students are moved around to achieve a better fit with other students who are working on similar goals or who have similar skills and capacities. A selection of end of term reports from I.S. is provided below as an example of one way in which this method can be used.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

## End of Term Evaluations

### Source:

*Naming the Magic: Non-Academic Outcomes in Basic Literacy*  
Evelyn Battell, Malaspina University College, 2001  
National Literacy Secretariat; Ministry of Advanced Education Province of British Columbia;  
Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

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This technique is a guide for instructors or tutors to develop a written report for others to see. It takes into account academic and non-academic development. It [can include things like] using a portfolio of learner work and a checklist kept by the learner; these are then brought to a session where a report is drafted.

This process involves the instructor [and/or] tutor observing and recording behavioural [or other] changes in the learner throughout the duration of a literacy program [or part of the program such as a term]. Possibly the learner is also keeping a checklist of these behavioural changes.

End of term reports have traditionally emphasized academic results. As instructors, we have often been uncertain about describing the other changes and developments we have seen.

This technique gives us a basis for discussing and/or reporting these changes in the end of term report. It also helps convince learners of the importance we place on these changes; they too, are worth reporting to outside audiences.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Examples of Applications of Method

## End of Term Evaluations

### SOURCE:

*Evaluation of students' strengths in the Self-Management/Literacy class of the Independent Studies program by Cathy Berry, 2002*

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### *Example of End of Term Evaluations of students in the I.S. classes by the class instructor*

#### **R.**

- ✓ R. brings a real sense of creativity to the classroom with all his fresh ideas
- ✓ R. is an excellent motivator for the other students in the class. He is often verbally encouraging them to keep on trying, or often adds on to their ideas to show the value of the idea and motivation to continue to think of more.
- ✓ R. often volunteers to participate during class. He is eager to read aloud and offer his ideas.
- ✓ R. brings such great ideas and energy to the classroom. R. at times gets antsy and leaves the class. R. needs to understand that when he leaves so does the wonderful participation he brings to class.

#### **D.**

- ✓ D. is a very motivated individual. He enjoys learning more and expanding his horizons.
- ✓ At times he will assist teachers with lesson plans.
- ✓ He is always at College on time. Often he comes early and assists with setting up the room.
- ✓ He is trying slowly to learn the basics of the computer because he knows the importance of using one to assist him getting a job. He understands that this will take time, so he stays patient and spends many hours learning.
- ✓ D. is a great help to the other students in the class. He helps them with their work in class like a peer tutor.
- ✓ D.'s personal self-confidence had flourished since attending Frontier College. D. now needs to see that he has the ability to help others, and work on his confidence in the area of teaching.

## Learning Plans

	<p><b>Learning plan forms</b></p> <p>Goal-setting is a vital part of the tutoring process (see the section called <i>Goal setting and lesson planning</i>). Learning plan forms (also known as goal-setting sheets) are a good way to assess what skills or knowledge have been learned, but also what skills or knowledge need to be learned. Completed forms can be used as a guide for lesson planning. (There is a sample at the end of this section.)</p>
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There are endless ways to create Learning Plans. On the following pages are some examples from the 1997 Tutor's Handbook and other FC sources. Following these examples, are a series of Learning Plans that are used in Independent Studies (and have been adapted for use in the Labourer Teacher program by LT staff). These new learning plans are less reading and writing focused and provide more latitude to record any kind of learning goal and the steps needed to achieve that goal.

### Learning Plan

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your goal?
2. To do this, what do you need to know?
3. Which of these skills do you already know?
4. What do you need help with?
5. Which of these would you like to start with?
6. When do you think you'll be able to reach your goal?



**FRONTIER COLLEGE FRONTIÈRE**

HELPING CANADA READ  
ENSEMBLE POUR MIEUX LIRE

### the learning plan

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor : \_\_\_\_\_

1. This is what I want to learn (my goal) :
2. These are some things about \_\_\_\_\_ that I already know :
3. These are some things I would like help with :
4. This is what I want to work on first :
5. This is what I want to work on next :
6. This is how much time I think I need :
7. This is how I will know how I have reached my goal :

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

### Learning plans

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#### Introduction to Method

It is important for students to be able to keep a record of their goals and learning and the demonstrations of their skills. In Independent Studies, we use a very simple form that helps students identify a goal and design a plan to meet the goal. Staff and tutors help the student to fill out their Learning Plan with ideas for lessons and methods they can use to reach the goal. A demonstration of learning is also recorded so that the student and the tutor have something to work towards to show progress towards the goal.

A blank learning plan form is presented in the next page. After this, there are a few examples of completed learning plans to demonstrate how they can be used in a number of different learning situations.

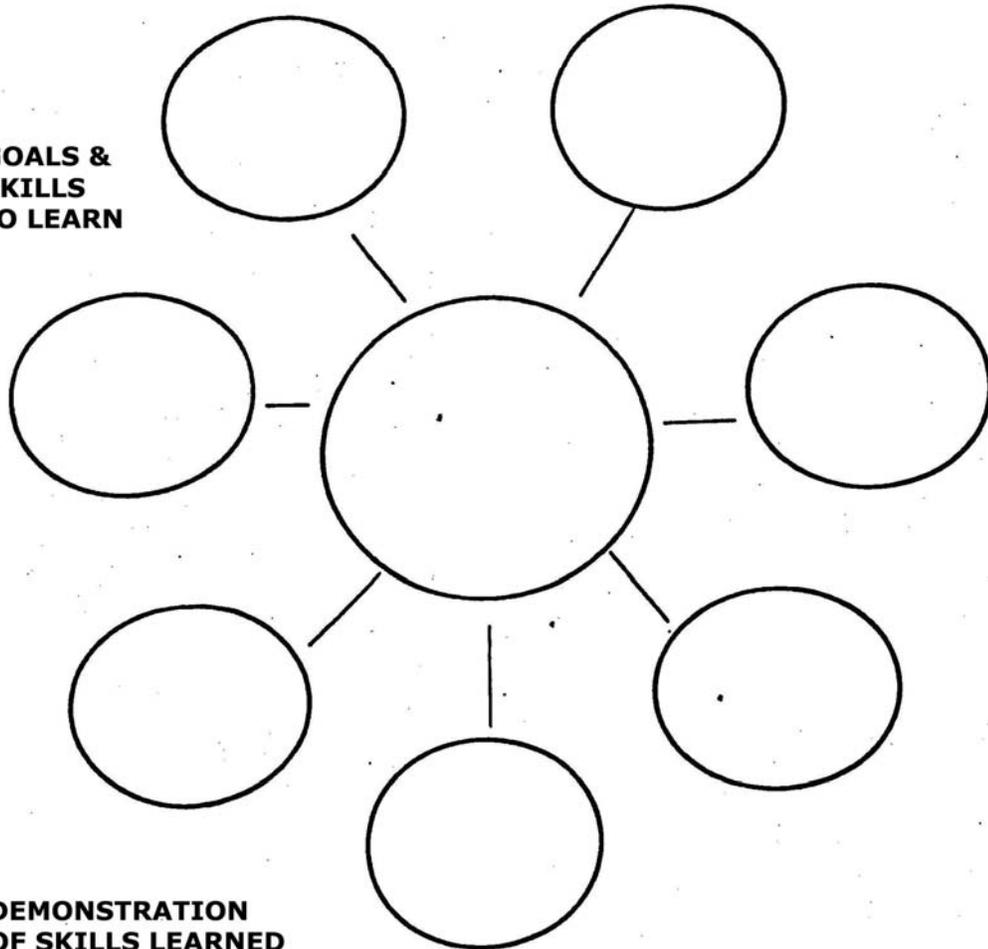
(Note that in some of the examples, the Learning Plan is called a Training Plan. This is because of requirements of specific funders and is merely semantic.)

# INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN

STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

2 **GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**



3 **DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL:  
WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO  
TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED  
THE GOAL?

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION 

**MOVE ON TO  
A NEW GOAL**

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: LEARN TO COMPUTE SKILLS

INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN

STUDENT JOE DOE DATE SEPT 2003

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

AFTER 3 MONTHS, JOE WILL DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS LEARNED BY HAVING STAFF WATCH HIM AS HE PERFORMS ALL THE TASKS ON PAGE 1 TO 3 OF THE LEARN TO COMPUTE SYLLABUS DEC 03 DEMO

**DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL:**  
WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THE GOAL?

NEW GOAL: THE REST OF THE LEARN TO COMPUTE SYLLABUS

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: COMPUTE TO LEARN

INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN

STUDENT JOE BLOE DATE SEPT 2003

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

SHOW STAFF HOW TO GET TO AN EMPLOYMENT WEB SITE TO FIND OUT ABOUT PARTICULAR JOBS AVAILABLE IN TORONTO -- TARGET DATE: DEC 2003

DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL: WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THE GOAL?

NEXT GOAL: SELECT ANOTHER THEME TO RESEARCH IN THE NET  
AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: ACADEMICS

INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN

STUDENT JOE SHMOE DATE SEPT 2003

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

TUTOR AND STAFF WILL PREPARE A "TEST" BASED ON PHONIC SKILLS AND THE STUDENT WILL DO THE "TEST" AND PASS DEC 2003 IF READY OR MAR 2004

DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL:  
WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THE GOAL?

SELECT A NEW LANGUAGE GOAL

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: BOOK CLUB PROJECT

**INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN**

STUDENT JOE FLOW DATE SEPT 2003

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

```

graph TD
    G((TO EXPAND THE LOVE OF BOOKS AND DEVELOP A LOVE OF READING)) --- S1((USE THE BOOK CLUB PROJECT))
    G --- S2((WORK WITH BOOK CLUB MEMBERS TO SELECT BOOKS TO READ))
    G --- S3((READ BOOKS))
    G --- S4((PROVIDE VERBAL FEEDBACK ON THE BOOK (GROUP DISCUSSIONS)))
    G --- S5((LEARN MORE ABOUT OTHER BOOK CLUBS))
    G --- S6(( ))
    
```

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

VERBALLY DESCRIBE ONE OR MORE BOOKS READ DURING THE BOOK CLUB

DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL: WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THE GOAL?

SELECT A NEW GOAL

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: READING SERIES PROJECT

**INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN**

STUDENT JOE SNOW DATE SEPT 2003

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

DESCRIBE VERBALLY THE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES YOU ATTENDED AND WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THEM

DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL: WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED THE GOAL?

SELECT NEW GOAL

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

## Portfolios

<p><b><i>A portfolio is like a résumé.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Portfolio assessment</b></p> <p>Portfolio assessment is a way of evaluating a student's progress by keeping samples of the work he has accomplished in one place. It is, in fact, a form of a résumé. The student keeps ongoing work in folders and from time to time selects and transfers his best work to another folder — the portfolio. The concept of a portfolio is very similar to the graphic art portfolio where the artist keeps samples of his best work to show prospective clients. The thoughtful portfolio provides a snapshot of a student's capabilities and achievements at a given time.</p> <p><b>How to put together a portfolio</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduce the idea of a portfolio to your student, explaining why you think it is a good idea to use this type of assessment. If your student agrees, go ahead. If not, don't press the issue.</li><li>2. Once you and your student have decided to try putting together a portfolio, plan for it. Working together, decide on the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What will you collect for the portfolio? The materials you collect should reflect the student's learning goals and interests.</li><li>• How often you are going to select materials for the portfolio?</li><li>• What criteria are you going to use to determine what is to be selected? Remember the portfolio is both a process and a product.</li><li>• Where will the portfolio will be kept?</li></ul></li></ol>
--	--

The  
Frontier  
College  
Tutor's  
Handbook

There are many ways to keep portfolios. Some excellent suggestions from the 1997 Tutor's Handbook and other FC sources are presented below. These are then supplemented by a creative approach to portfolios from Independent Studies where we ask student to use Photostories to record their learning progress. Students pick a theme area and then create a photostory to document what they learned. The finished piece forms a portfolio representing a range of learning skills demonstrated through the photostory process (planning, organization, reading, writing, design, photography, visual and conceptual skills).

### How to organize the materials

The material collected for the portfolio should be organized to fit the needs and interests of your student. Here are some ideas on how to organize the material:

#### Chronological order

The sample contains work organized from the earliest to the most recent. This can prompt a good discussion on what progress has been made by the student and how best to display this progress.

#### Level of complexity

Start with work of less complexity and add work of greater complexity as the student progresses. For example, for a beginning literacy student, you may begin to collect examples of first attempts at writing sentences. As your student progresses, you can include samples of more complex sentences, paragraphs, stories, etc.

#### Talents, skills, or areas of knowledge

These samples can be related to activities or accomplishments at work, at home, as part of a hobby, or a volunteer activity in the community. For example, if your student likes fly-fishing (which lends itself nicely to various reading and writing activities), you may collect fly-fishing articles that he has read, lists of books about fly-fishing, instructions of how to tie flies, examples of flies that the student has tied, journal entries about fly-fishing etc.

#### Theme

Samples of work can be collected for such themes as personal growth, risk-taking, career development, personal goals, etc.

**Organize the portfolio to reflect the student's goals and interests.**

### Examples of materials that can be kept in a portfolio

- writing samples of various types
- notes on the student's strengths and needs
- lists of student's short-term and long-term goals
- career plan charts
- lists of books, magazines, and articles the student has read
- attendance sheets
- student self-evaluations
- highlights of journal entries
- awards
- test results
- photographs
- artwork
- various certificates
- letters of reference or commendation

8 • Evaluating Progress

**Student evaluations are both a process and a product.**

Keeping a portfolio is an effective way of providing a literacy or ESL student with a means of critical self-evaluation of what progress he is making. It is a tool for empowering students and tutors to think about student evaluation as a process as well as a product.

# FRONTIER COLLEGE

## EXAMPLES OF APPLICATIONS OF METHOD

### Photostories

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#### Photostory project

Digital cameras will be used to document a story you would like to write about. The topics for such a project could range from a family memoir to a story on your interest in nature. Students and tutors will learn how to use the digital cameras in the computer lab, step by step, and will then venture into the community to test their knowledge. After the photos are taken and downloaded onto the computer, a story in the form of captions for the pictures will be written to complete the photo story.

#### Learning Outcomes embedded in the Photo Story Project

- self-direction (organization, time management)
- computer skills (cameras, downloading, cutting into Word)
- reading and writing skills
- creativity and imagination
- community involvement
- group work
- communication: speaking and listening skills
- logic, sequence, storytelling skills

#### Process suggestions

- Learn to use the digital cameras
- Learn to download pictures
- Learn to cut pictures into Word
- Select a personal community theme to investigate and record the theme
- Storyboard the photo story (see illustration)
- Go out in the community and take the photographs
- Download the photos and arrange them in order in Word
- Write captions as a story to explain the photographs
- Finish the photo story book with a Title, Author's note, brief intro saying what is the photo story about, and the final story with pictures

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN: PHOTO STORY PROJECT

**INDEPENDENT STUDIES TRAINING PLAN**

STUDENT JOE KNOW DATE SEPT 2005

**1** DISCUSS STUDENT'S GOALS AND RECORD THE GOAL IN THE CENTRE CIRCLE AND THE SKILLS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL IN THE SMALLER CIRCLES (INCLUDE NOTES ON LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS TO USE TO ACHIEVE THE SKILLS)

**2 GOALS & SKILLS TO LEARN**

**3 DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS LEARNED**

PRODUCE A FINISHED PHOTOSTORY BY DEC 2005

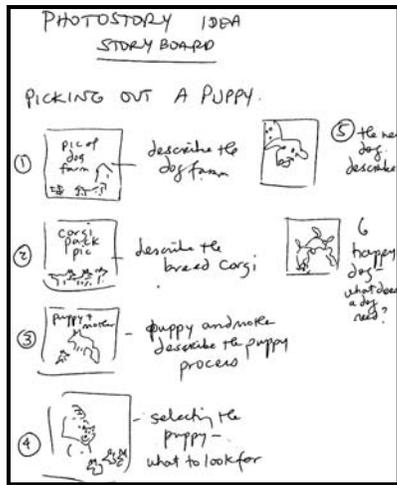
DEMONSTRATION OF GOAL:  
WHAT WILL THE STUDENT DO  
TO SHOW THEY HAVE ACHIEVED  
THE GOAL?

SELECT A NEW GOAL

AFTER YOUR DEMONSTRATION **MOVE ON TO A NEW GOAL**

USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET IF NEEDED

## Photostory: technical instructions



- 1) Select a theme and create a storyboard of what you are going to say in your photostory and what kinds of photos you need to take.



- 2) Take your photos using the digital camera. Tutors and students who have not yet used the digital cameras should ask staff for a brief introduction.

## Suggested Themes for Photostories

- your family history
- your community
- your neighbourhood
- what I like about Toronto
- interesting places to visit
- museums or art galleries
- hobbies or activities
- people you find interesting and why
- disability issues
- issues that are important to you (environment, pollution, human rights, politics, etc.)
- arts and leisure: music groups, dance companies, theatre, books, fine art

## Sample student photostory

### Photostory 2 by Edward



Edward at Frontier College

Example of a PhotoStory as a record for a portfolio. The student's project was to find out about FC and describe his relations with the people there. This photostory format is used in his portfolio instead of narrative pieces of writing.



Ken Martin

This summer Ken met me at the Jimmy Simpson Park near my home. I volunteered to help him with the reading tent. It was fun to read with the kids. I like Ken.



Edward with Susan



Dave Page

Sometimes I see Dave and his family at our library. We meet to go to the coffee shop. Dave is a nice guy because he talks to me.



Edward with Min



David Greig He has an old-fashioned office at Frontier College, it is 104 years old. it is a beautiful office.



Edward Uyeyama for President!!! Here I am working hard in the presidents office.



Sandra D.  
She is the receptionist at Frontier College.  
She answers the phone, and she calls me if I am absent.



Edward with Alice



Edward with Sandra H.



Edward with Julienne



Edward with Marlene



Edward with Barb

## Formal Assessments

### **A note about more formal assessments**

In some literacy programs, especially those that are classroom-based, there may be tests that students are required to take to determine their literacy level. There may also be tests given to determine whether a student has learned something over the course of the program. For many of the students who come to Frontier College, this can be very intimidating. Many of our students have had negative experiences in the formal education system. At Frontier College, we try to remove some of the anxiety by focusing on informal assessments of progress.

This is not to say that students should never take tests or learn how to do this effectively. Some students want to take a driver's test or want to work towards a high school equivalency certificate. This is completely appropriate and your program coordinator can give you further advice and resources on how best to help your student achieve these goals.

Evaluation of progress is connected to what goals you and your student have set for yourselves. Informal assessment processes are useful not only for capturing a wide range of learning, but also for the particular needs of literacy students. Information collected from informal assessments can reflect gains in skills and knowledge and also foster positive changes in attitude and behaviour.

Instead of viewing formal assessments merely as standardized tests of reading and writing, why not think outside of the box. The following qualitative technique presents an idea for doing formal assessments of another kind of learning outcome, something called Self-Management and Self-Direction. Try to use these ideas to assess students for other areas of learning beyond mere reading and writing. Use the Self-Management tools to assess the essential skills that surround and support learning.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

Name of Method:

# Self-Management/Self-Direction

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### Introduction to Method

"There is no doubt that the general attitude of society is that a 'developmentally handicapped' or 'slow' or 'delayed' or 'retarded' adult (an amazing number of labels can be used here) cannot be taught to read and write... How much of this attitude has the learner-in-question internalized, to the extent that they too believe that they cannot learn? If the person who comes to our program with one of those labels learns only to identify the burden of the label, then they have **learned a great deal**... Those of us who have not had to live with those kinds of labels attached cannot even begin to imagine what it must be like... If a learner has come to the realization that it was hell to go through a life where no one ever expected very much of you, and where it was assumed that your contribution would always be next-to-nothing, then this learner has **made a breakthrough** equal to, of not greater than, a discrete reading and writing advance."

### LITERACY: A TOOL FOR INDEPENDENCE

By Tracy Carpenter Odell

undated paper: circa mid-1980 [emphasis mine]

### What Exactly is Self-Management?

By David Greig, Program Manager, Independent Studies  
from a report to funders, April 2001

"In the late 1990s, Independent Studies' primary public funder, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) began to require that literacy programs quantitatively demonstrate that students were progressing towards goals, primarily of further training and education. The literacy "system", known as LBS (Literacy and Basic Skills) was funded so that students could develop the prerequisite skills to enable them to move on to colleges or employment. This was a very logical development for many literacy programs across the province. But it was equally problematic for just as many others, especially for programs like Independent Studies.

The work of Independent Studies over the years has always been about more than reading and writing and definitely much more than college and employment preparation. We have been funded to provide "rehabilitation services to the disabled".

We provided these rehabilitation services in the form of learning opportunities with “learning” defined in an extremely broad and holistic way. Our work has a very specific focus: the integration of all people, especially people with disabilities (physical, developmental, psychiatric, cognitive and other) and other marginalized people into a community of learning to work with people on needs and issues pertaining to their whole lives and not merely to “academic” or “training” needs that they may or may not have.

And so, the fit with our other funder, MTCU, became somewhat challenging. The challenge was to try to align our program so that it continued to meet the requirements of our funder yet retained its integrity and authenticity. In 1999, David Greig had worked with the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) writing a report that would develop an LBS “domain” that complemented the other LBS “domains” of Communication Skills and Numeracy. This third domain was called Self-Management/Self-Direction (SM/SD).

It was conceived as a learning domain that encompassed all the elements that surround and support learning. The OLC document fleshed out the definition of SM/SD by providing examples of areas that could be worked on in a literacy program that were not reading and writing, but were all the other attitudes, skills and behaviours that make reading and writing possible for adult students, especially students with multiple challenges.

We concretized the idea of SM/SD into the I.S. program over the course of a year or so. It was difficult work because we needed to ensure that we made the fit work “the right way around”: meaning, that we were not intending to change the essence of our work to fit into the SM/SD description, rather we were fitting the SM/SD description to fit our work. We developed our Self-Management/Literacy classes and Independent Studies was successful in our efforts to reorganize our program and yet retain our integrity and authenticity. We continue to receive funding from both Ministries and carry on with what we’ve been doing for 20 years.

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Theoretical Validation (Supporting Research)

## Self-Management/Self-Direction

#### SOURCE:

The Level Descriptions MANUAL Ontario Literacy Coalition, 2000 By David Greig, et al

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Features and Examples of Self-Management and Self-Direction Learning Outcomes:  
Features that surround and support learning that may impact progress towards a goal.

- **concentration/memory skills**
- **goal setting skills**
- **learning styles**
- **personal advocacy skills**
- **problem-solving skills**
- **self-assessment/self-reflection skills**
- **self-confidence building skills**
- **thinking skills**
- **time management/organization skills**
- **working with others skills**

*Self-Management/Self-Direction: Possible skill sets with four potential examples for each*

#### Concentration/memory skills

- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates ability to focus on one task at a time
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates ability to persevere with a task until completion
- ✓ learner develops and uses strategies to increase memory
- ✓ learner develops and uses techniques to improve retention of information

#### Goal setting skills

- ✓ learner sets long-term goals based on self-assessment of own skills, interests and abilities
- ✓ learner understands and uses strategies for breaking long-term goals into short-term goals that build towards the long-term goal
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates an ability to understand the skills and knowledge needed to work on to achieve the short-term goal
- ✓ learner demonstrates an ability to evaluate their own progress towards their short- and long-term goals

#### Learning styles

- ✓ learner understands and can explain the basic idea of learning styles
- ✓ learner understands and can explain their own preferred learning style
- ✓ learner develops and uses strategies to deal with learning material that is not presented in their own learning style
- ✓ learner develops and uses strategies to deal with a different types of learning materials

#### Personal advocacy skills

- ✓ learner understands and can explain what “learner centred” means to them
- ✓ learner demonstrates an ability to co-develop (with literacy staff/volunteers) an individualized training plan based on their own learning needs
- ✓ learner reports a family member, friend, co-worker, or supervisor noticing an improvement in his/her skill
- ✓ learner shows increased readiness to take responsibility for own work

#### Problem-solving skills

- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates ability to identify problems and generate ideas about possible solutions/options
- ✓ learner uses a variety of approaches to deal with problems encountered in the learning environment
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates techniques for breaking problems down into manageable parts
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates ability to transfer problem-solving skills from one situation to another

#### Self-assessment/self-reflection skills

- ✓ learner shows increased readiness to accept praise for own work
- ✓ learner shows increased readiness to take constructive criticism of own work
- ✓ learner shows increased readiness to offer constructive criticism of own work
- ✓ learner can demonstrate an accurate understanding of their own learning strengths and weaknesses

#### Self-confidence building skills

- ✓ learner reports greater confidence in their own skills
- ✓ learner demonstrates increased readiness to attempt to work independently
- ✓ learner demonstrates increased readiness to try new learning challenges and assignments
- ✓ learner reports a successful application of newly-acquired skills in a real-life context

#### Thinking skills

- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates reasoning and logic skills through practice
- ✓ learner demonstrates that they can transfer knowledge from previous learning to complete a new task
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates ability to clearly explain and convey ideas
- ✓ learner develops and uses a variety of learning approaches/activities (e.g. outlining, reviewing, organizing, etc.) to deal with new information

#### Time management/organization skills

- ✓ learner shows improved/steady attendance
- ✓ learner shows that assignments are completed on prescribed or agreed upon time
- ✓ learner completes sequential tasks in order, finishing one task the next
- ✓ learner plans several activities in advance for a day/month/year

#### Working with others skills

- ✓ learner develops and uses strategies for dealing with interpersonal
- ✓ learner develops and demonstrates an ability to work as part of a team
- ✓ learner demonstrates increased participation in the program
- ✓ learner shows increased readiness to offer constructive criticism

## FRONTIER COLLEGE

### Examples of Applications of Method

## Self-Management/Self-Direction

### SOURCE:

*Independent Studies classes: students, tutors and staff's ongoing learning evaluations*

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### *Examples of Self-Management Evaluations*

#### D.

##### **Self-confidence building**

D. is great addition to the literacy classes at Frontier College. His insightful and thought provoking comments along with his determination to succeed, despite all odds, are both motivating and inspirational to other students in the class.

##### **Goal setting**

D. is able to identify his literacy and self-management goals with confidence and has many ideas to achieving these goals. His most critical long-term goal is to improve his feelings of self- doubt and to work on improving his self-confidence. D. continued to actively work towards this goal using hard work and positive self-talk. He is determined to surround himself with positive influences and chooses to attend the literacy classes at Frontier as a way to be included in a group that welcomes and respects him for his ideas and contributions.

##### **Personal advocacy**

D. confidently articulates other goals that he would like to achieve. He identified that he would like to come to Frontier College in the hopes of learning to feel more comfortable speaking with others, both one on one and in a group setting. He would like to work on telling time, find alternatives to deal with rejection and practice reading so as to be able to read to his niece with confidence and ease.

##### **Concentration/memory**

D. has very good concentration and memory skills. This is demonstrated by the information that he has both learned and remembered once completing his project on the Don River Park.

##### **Self-assessment/self-reflection skills**

D. is self-motivated and this he demonstrates by arriving early to take out all the necessary resources needed for the class. This, as well, identifies his willingness to be a contributing member of a group. His efforts are noticed by many of the other students. D. works and lives independently outside Frontier College and chooses to be around confident people. He works hard at avoiding negative people.

##### **Problem solving**

D. continues to improve on his problem solving skills. He is more aware that he needs to take a step back from the problem and both discuss it and think about it more carefully.

This process has helped D. deal with some problems that have arisen outside Frontier College. As D. continues to make more friendships, he is able to turn to more people for guidance with some of his personal problems.

### **Learning styles**

D. knows what his interests and strengths are and knows that by learning more about different topics he is interested in, will only further his knowledge and understanding of such topics.

### **Time management/organization**

D. likes to challenge himself by reading complicated stories and books. He is not deterred by the small print or difficult words; rather he finds them a challenge. He is learning to break down and sort out information to organize his readings and projects.

### **Working with others**

D. recognizes that he learns faster with one to one support however understands that working with a variety of people, both in small and large groups, is good for his self-esteem. D. is an excellent listener and thoughtfully adds his comments and feedback to the speaker with a deep sense of respect and genuine interest.

## **J.**

### **Goal setting**

J. is a very enthusiastic student with a keen interest to learn. She is very interested in practicing her writing skills and realizes that she needs tutoring with spelling. J. indicated that one of her main goals was to gain more confidence in coming to the literacy classes. She enjoys the class dynamic and conversations encompassed within, however has difficulty initiating her ideas into the discussion. She asked for support to reach her goal.

### **Concentration/memory**

J. shows great concentration and enjoys reading aloud to the group as a whole. She follows along conscientiously when others read and knows where to begin reading when her turn comes around. Reading aloud to the group provides J. with more confidence. J. is a confident reader and likes to share this gift with others around her.

### **Self-confidence building**

J. gets a true sense of achievement when she accomplishes an assignment. She welcomes challenging work in the class. She says she "feels happy" when she accomplishes something.

### **Self-advocacy**

J. prefers to work independently or with a tutor. She challenges herself when participating in a group as she feels she must contribute her ideas despite having difficulty to do so sometimes. She asks for support with this.

### **Time management/organization**

J. has excellent time management skills and feels that "it is important to be on time so that I can get my work done."

### **Working with others**

J. brings, to the class, a great sense of enthusiasm to learn something new. This exuberance is motivating for others in the class.

## NEW DIRECTIONS: QUALITATIVE SOFTWARE

### What is it?

#### Qualitative Research Software

Qualitative data analysis is a term for a very wide range of methods for handling rich data records (text, images or sound), without merely reducing them to numbers.

These methods are used across disciplines and professions, including all social and health sciences, market and business research, information, legal, political and historical studies, life histories and policy evaluations.

Analysis of qualitative data requires sensitivity to detail and context, as well as accurate access to information. The researcher aims to create new understanding of a situation by exploring and interpreting complex data from interviews, group discussions, field notes, archival documents or other records. Methods involve examining text and recording growing understanding in annotations or memos, coding and reviewing coded material by topic, rigorously searching for patterns, building theories or explanations and grounding them in the data, displaying models and producing convincing reports.

<http://www.qsrinternational.com>

### What is an example?

#### NVivo

NVivo is designed for researchers who need to combine subtle coding with qualitative linking, shaping and modelling. A fine-detailed analyser, NVivo integrates the processes of interpretation and focused questioning. Rich text records are freely edited and coded and linked with multimedia. A project starts as soon as ideas start. NVivo enables you to take qualitative inquiry beyond coding and retrieval, supporting fluid interpretation and theory emergence.

NVivo is useful for:

- Fine interpretation of text or multimedia images
- Rich text, freely edited, to represent the richness of your data
- Detailed annotation and flexible record of interpretations
- Developing and testing your understanding of meanings
- Framing, filtering and focusing questions, scoping the enquiry
- Fluid linking to memos and multimedia data
- Visually displaying matrices or rich text reports

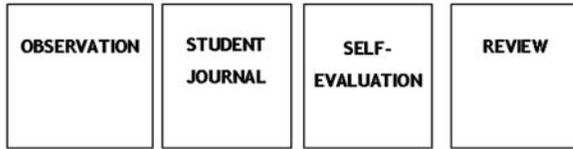
Ideal for those working with complex data, such as multimedia, wanting to do deep levels of analysis. Also allows researchers to import and export data to and from statistical packages. For those researchers wanting to merge several projects, Merge for NVivo is available as an add-on-module.

<http://www.qsrinternational.com>

### What will we do with it?

There are of course many exciting uses for qualitative software. We plan to develop an understanding and expertise in this software over the next year. The benefits of using qualitative software have been represented by the diagrams on the next pages. Again, the use of qualitative software is another attempt to bring SCIL fully into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



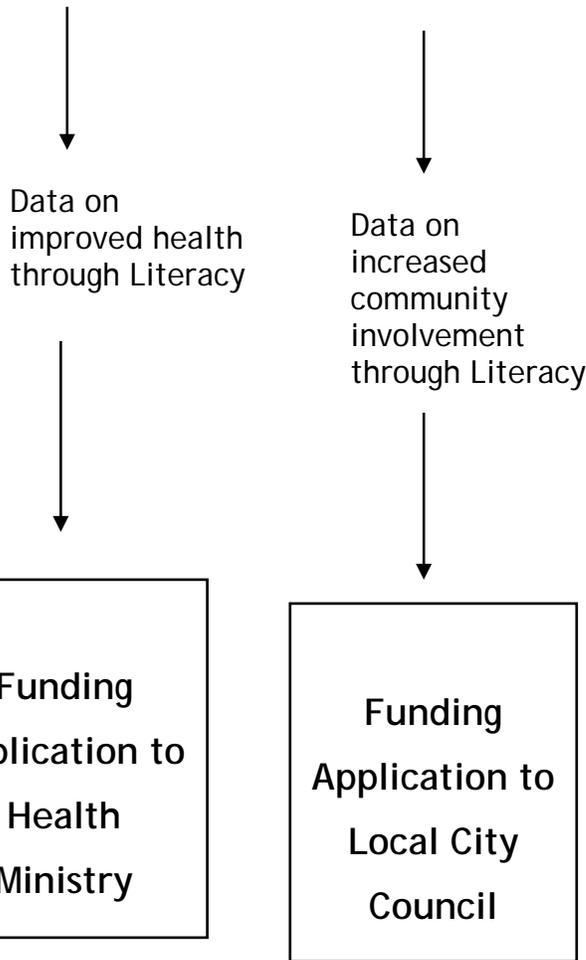


Qualitative tools record and document the range of hybrid literacy learning in FC programs (multiple co-occurring literacies: situational, informal, affective, psychosocial, interpersonal, community, civic, etc.).



**QUALITATIVE SOFTWARE**

Create data reports on various outcome areas

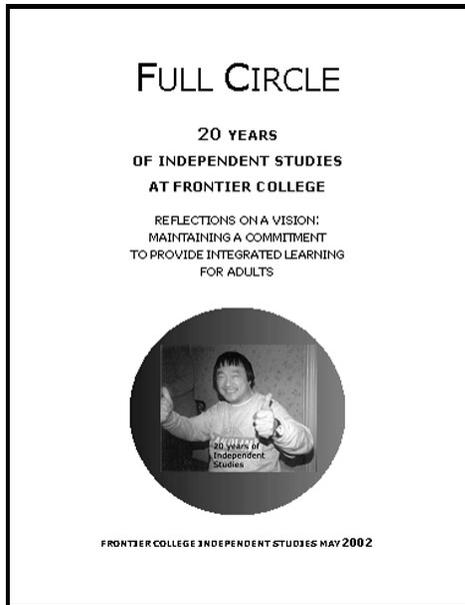


Qualitative records of various learning interventions are entered into the qualitative software to create reports that can analyze almost any area that the program needs to be highlighted. For example, programs may want to document health outcomes or community involvement or parenting skills or access to reading materials, etc. These specialized areas of inquiry can be analyzed using qualitative software to produce reports for various uses. For example, funding applications to health funders can use the qualitative health data from one program. Or funding applications to civic funders can use qualitative community involvement data from another program, and so on. Reports created from the data collected by qualitative tools have endless uses by Frontier College for things like fundraising or program planning or androgogical legitimacy.

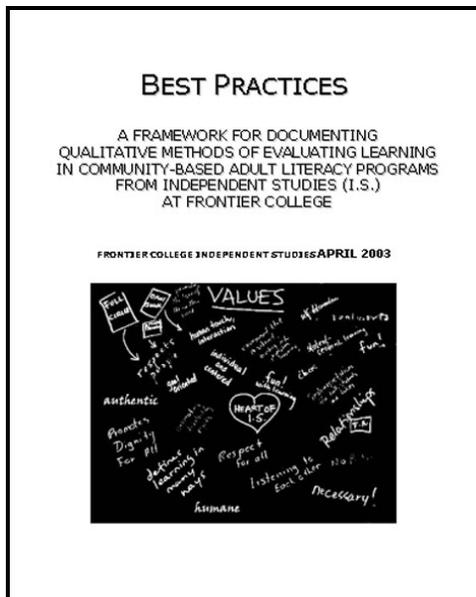
## INDEPENDENT STUDIES INSTRUCTIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Many of the tools and ideas presented in this book originated in a series of publications created by the Independent Studies (I.S.) program at Frontier College. We have spent the past five years in I.S. experimenting with ideas and approaches, methods and methodologies. We have been developing our expertise in documenting qualitative educational interventions such as non-academic outcomes, informal everyday learning, learning challenges and learning modifications, and so on. We work four days a week with 45 adult students in our program in Toronto. The students, volunteer tutors, staff and others (placement students, etc.) all work together to develop a qualitative learning environment. A record of our attempts is presented in our books; the covers of each are presented on the next few pages along with the contents of each book.

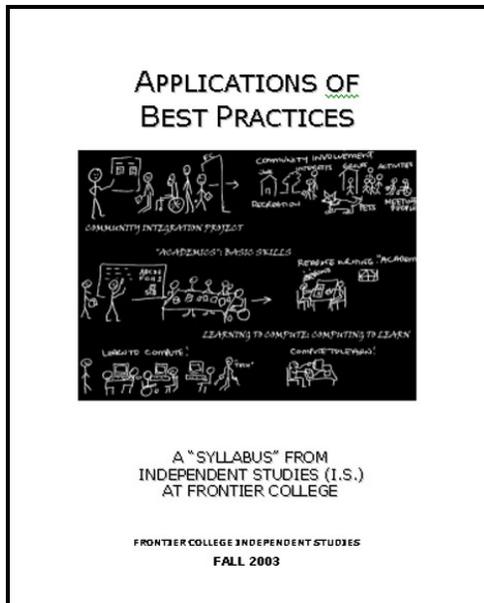
All of these I.S. books will be fully available as *downloadable full-document .pdf files* on the forthcoming Independent Studies web site that will be up and running by summer 2005.



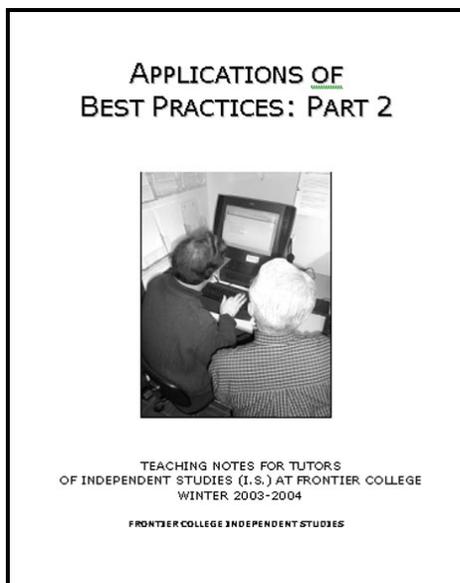
- Preface by John Daniel O’Leary
- Introduction by David Greig
- The Vision: Shaping a Philosophy of Education for Integration of People Labelled “Disabled”
- Archeology: Uncovering Fragments
- Ed Wadley’s Reports
- Reflections by Susan Macdonald
- What Exactly is Self-Management?
- Implementation: Philosophy of Inclusion
- Reflections by Cathy Berry
- Examples of Self-Management Reports
- Student Writing 2002



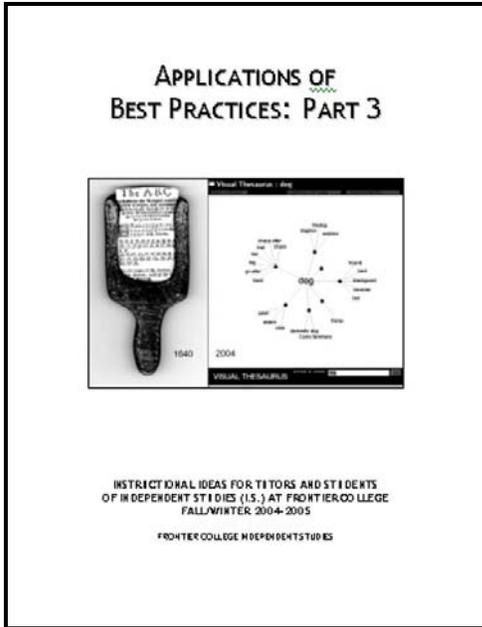
- Introduction by David Greig
- Independent Studies Theory and Practice
- Methods
- Self-Management/Self-Direction
- Goal Setting
- Anecdotal Reports
- Multimedia Approaches
- End of Term Evaluations
- Project Work



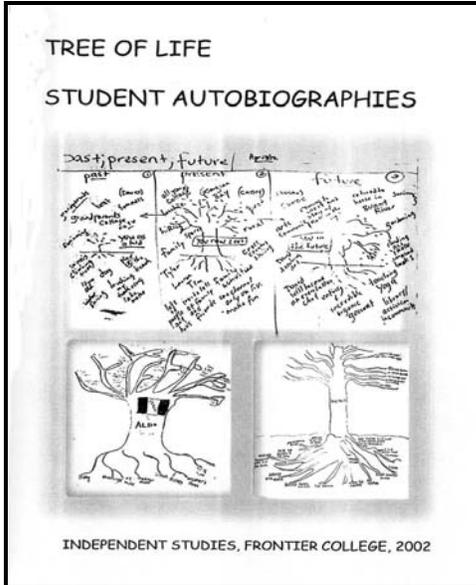
- Introduction by David Greig
- Learning to Compute: Computing to Learn
- "Academics": Language Basics
- Community Integration Project



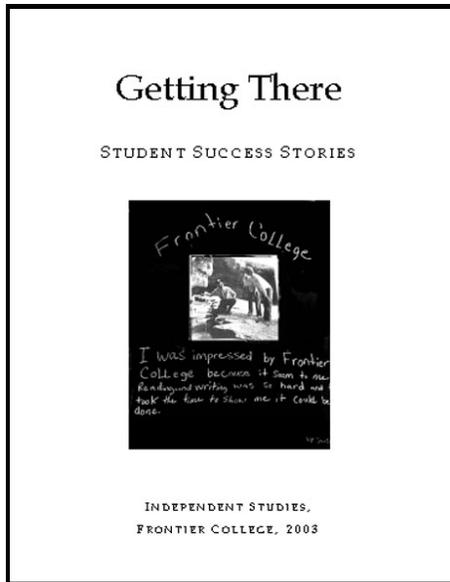
- Introduction by David Greig
- Tutor roles
- Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Working with Diversity
- Lesson Planning
- Teaching Tips
- Instruction Techniques
- Group Work Techniques
- Modifications to Help Learning
- Managing Difficult Student Behaviours
- Ideas for Language Activities



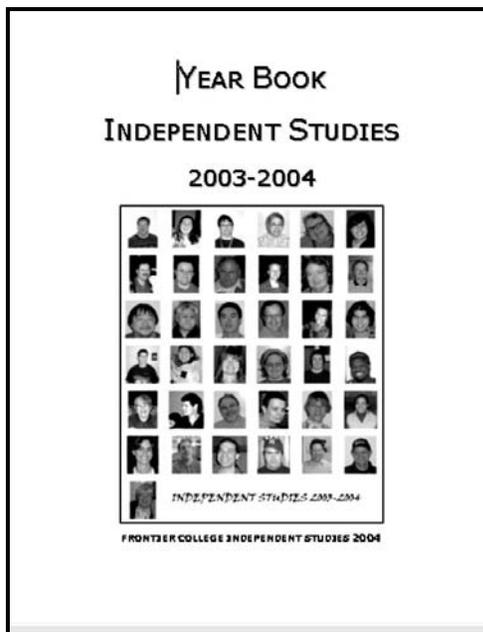
- Introduction by David Greig
- Computer Lab: Learning to Compute and Computing to Learn
- Photostories
- Book Club / Reading Group
- Books on Tape
- Alpharoute: Online Learning
- Monday Night Drop-in



- Introduction
- A Technique with Illustrations
- Blank Trees
- Student Autobiographies



- Introduction
- 30 Students' Stories
- 30 Students' Collages



- Introduction
- Tribute to Mark Tench
- Computer Class
- Tutor Year Book
- Student Year Book
- Staff Year Book
- Student Work: Writing
- Student Work: Photostories

**HYBRID LITERACY: A MODEL OF PRACTICE**

Towards the development of current models of practice at Frontier College, in the tradition of Frontier College developed models such as *Reading Levels or SCIL*, are solid on the concepts of *Hybrid Literacy* and *Three Levels of Practice Models* presented in this paper as food for thought for everyone working with Frontier College.

BY DAVID GREGG, 2003



**Notes on "Hybrid Literacy: A Model of Practice"**

**WORKSHOP ON LITERACY AND DISABILITIES**

**WORKSHOP NOTES**



**INDEPENDENT STUDIES  
AT FRONTIER COLLEGE**

**MAY 27, 2004**

**Workshop notes from a Workshop on Literacy and Disability.**