Best Practices in Action

Best Practice Statements, Key Elements and Indicators

(Validation Document)

NWT Literacy Council

Aurora College

Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment

Table of Contents

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- *ABE Program Quality Framework*, British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
- *Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit*, British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
- *The BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy*, Literacy BC
- *Best Program* Practices, Saskatchewan Literacy Network
- *Quality Standards for Adult Literacy,* Ontario Training and Adjustment Board
- "Best Practices in Family Literacy", Debbie Purton and Leona Gadsby in *Foundational Training in Family Literacy: Practitioners' Resource*
- *Family Literacy in Canada: Profiles of Effective Practices*, A. Thomas

Introduction to *Best Practices in Action*

Adult Literacy and Basic Education in the Northwest Territories

The history of adult education in the north spans about fifty years. During that time, many changes have occurred as a result of an on-going process of development, reflection and review.

In recent years, significant changes have occurred in the field of literacy, including a broader definition of literacy, new forms of literacy programming and increased awareness of the importance of literacy. Today literacy includes a broad range of adult programming, such as ABE, Aboriginal literacy, ESL literacy, workplace literacy and family literacy programs.

Along with the changes come opportunities to expand our program offerings based on the identified needs of our learners, and to share the collective wisdom we have gained from our experiences in adult programming over the past fifty years. But change also brings challenge. The challenge is to be open to those changes, yet at the same time, maintain a high standard of programming in *all* our programs.

What are Best Practices and Why Are They Important?

Research and reflection on practice is critical to planning, developing, delivering and sustaining high quality community-based adult literacy and basic education programs. Over the years our research and our reflection on our experiences have led to a philosophy of adult literacy that we can translate into statements of best practices. These

statements reflect our "best thinking" to date and our best understanding from a variety of perspectives on how to provide effective programs for literacy learners. They describe the key ingredients or components that contribute to effective programs and are a way of guiding their development.

Britain has used the term "good practice" for a number of years, while in North America, the terms "best practices" and "quality standards" tend to be used. Sometimes people use '"best practices" and "quality standards" interchangeably. However, they are different. A "standard" is something set up and established by a person or an organization with the authority to do so. It provides a rule for a measure of value or quality. Quality standards often form part of a larger accountability or evaluation framework. Best practices simply describe practices that support our philosophy of adult education, that people have tried and that we know work. They are an ideal or a goal to work towards. Quality standards' may incorporate best practices into them, since many elements may be similar. In that case, the terms may be interchangeable.

Best practices are useful to both new and experienced adult educators, to policy makers and to service providers in a variety of ways. They can:
- Be a goal to work towards
- Form a framework for effective practice
- Be a guide to promote good practice in program planning and development
- Be a guide to inform and improve practice

- Encourage reflection on critical issues by those developing, implementing and evaluating adult literacy and basic education programs
- Transform practice

Best practice statements are *not* meant to:
- Be mandatory or definitive
- Force all programs to be the same
- Be a means of formally monitoring or evaluating programs

Best Practice Statements for the NWT

In 2002, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, Aurora College and the NWT Literacy Council began the Best Practices in Action Project. A Best Practices in Action Working Group with representatives from a variety of organizations involved in literacy programming was formed to guide the project.

The idea was to create a comprehensive framework of best practices that would encourage literacy providers to reflect on their practice and learn from others. The framework has four components:

1. **Statements of best practices**
   Each statement of best practices describes a key concept that we have identified as an effective adult literacy practice from current research and from practitioners in the field in the NWT and elsewhere. In all, there are 17 best practice statements.

2. **A checklist of indicators for each best practice**

One or more key elements with a range of indicators to support them have been identified that could be undertaken to achieve each best practice. Instructors will be able to use the key elements and indicators as a tool to gauge the strengths of their programs, and to identify areas where they want to make improvements. The indicators will serve as a means for continuous improvement in programs.

3. **Case studies of best practices in action in the NWT**

   Several community-based adult literacy programs have been identified that demonstrate some best practices principles. These programs are examples, or models, of practices that people can adapt and build on for their own situation.

4. **A resource of ideas to help support best practices**

   No matter how experienced and skilled practitioners are, they always welcome new ideas. Adult educators across the north have shared their "best" ideas with us and we have compiled them into a resource to share with adult educators.

Originally, we intended that the *Best Practices in Action* document would be useful for all programs that included adults, such as family literacy and workplace literacy programs. However, as the drafts changed over time, we realized that much of it is classroom-based and that it could not be all things to all people. We are therefore focusing on adult basic education programs.

Guiding Principles

The materials build on the five principles for adult literacy and basic education programs set out in the Directive on Adult Literacy & Basic Education:

- Learner-centred programming and services

- Accessible programming and services

- Coordinated and integrated programming and services

- Community-based programming and services

- Respect for cultural diversity.

User Guide

Completing the questionnaire

We have tried to design the questionnaire to fit a range of situations. We believe literacy providers, administrators and funders will be able to answer all or many of these questions. We recognize that the ways in which people use the questionnaires will vary from one to another. We highly recommend that, wherever possible, all those involved with the program complete the questionnaire together in a participatory way. This might include an adult educator, one or more interested learners, a regional coordinator, a Board member (where appropriate) and one or more community members.

The questionnaire is really a tool to get you started on thinking about your own best practice reflection process.

Completing the checklist

1. Quickly scan the whole questionnaire to get an overall impression of it.
2. Now focus on one best practice at a time.
3. Read through the best practice statement. Then look at the key elements and supporting indicators.
4. Put a checkmark beside the indicators that describe your program at present.
5. If you choose "Other", please specify.

Completing the planning section

Once you have completed the checklist, you will come to a planning section for that particular best practice. This

section will help you plan areas where you would like to improve.

Answer each of the three questions as fully as you can. Be realistic about what you might achieve for the following year.

You may note some overlap among the indicators under different best practices. For example, in the sections on Community and Organizational Linkages and Partnerships, some of the indicators are quite similar. We reduced as much of the overlap as possible, but decided it was essential in some sections. We think you will find that the focus changes a little according to the different best practices.

Profile

Name of program: _____

Date: _____

Participants' names: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Contact: _____

Contact phone number: _____

Glossary

The definitions in this glossary can be debated at length. We have tried to keep them general, but reflect the best practices in the document. We also believe that debate about the terms is healthy and useful!

Accountability	An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions. Often used when talking about public funding.
Authentic assessment	Aims to evaluate learners' skills and knowledge in "real-world" contexts. They are asked to apply their skills to "real" tasks and projects, such as writing reports, doing research, etc.
Community	An interacting group of people living in a common location; may also refer to people in a particular place with common interests
Community-based	Located in the community; specially developed according to the identified needs of the community
Community development	A long-term process that builds on the existing strengths of a community and involves local people in designing and making change, and learning from it
Empowering	Makes people feel more confident and more in control of their lives
Outreach	The provision of services to individuals or groups who might otherwise be neglected
Practice-based	Grounded in what actually happens, for example in classrooms, rather than on theory
Program	A plan of activities to be done or things to be achieved; in this case, the development of activities (often in a carefully planned sequence) that will improve literacy knowledge and skills

Philosophy
A quality adult literacy and basic education program has a clearly stated philosophy and mission that guide its work and practices

The program's philosophy and mission are the basis for its decision-making

The program uses its philosophy and mission to guide its planning ☐

The program uses its philosophy and mission to define its goals and objectives ☐

The program reviews and updates its goals and objectives regularly against its philosophy and mission ☐

The program's philosophy is shared with people involved in the program through its mission, goals and objectives, and practices

The program encourages people involved in the program to participate in developing its philosophy and mission

The program's philosophy and mission are communicated to people involved in the program

> ➢ The program's mission statement, goals and objectives are clearly written ☐

> ➢ The program displays its mission statement prominently and includes it in communications about the program, where appropriate ☐

> ➢ The program's practices reflect its philosophy and mission ☐

Philosophy
A quality adult literacy and basic education program has a clearly stated
philosophy and mission that guide its work and practices

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Philosophy?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Program Planning
A quality adult literacy and basic education program engages regularly in a
program planning process

A planning process is in place to support implementation of the program's philosophy and mission

Planning sessions are held regularly and are based on a schedule, such as yearly ☐

The program has a planning process that includes items such as:

> ➢ Needs and priorities ☐

> ➢ Goals and objectives ☐

> ➢ Outcomes ☐

> ➢ Strategies to support the goals and objectives ☐

> ➢ Facilities and infrastructure ☐

> ➢ Budgeting ☐

> ➢ An implementation plan ☐

> ➢ A promotional strategy ☐

> ➢ A process to monitor implementation ☐

> ➢ An evaluation process ☐

> ➢ Other _____ ☐

The planning process is cyclical—the plan is developed, then reviewed and revised, or re-done, as necessary to ensure its effectiveness ☐

People involved in the program are included in the planning process in an effort to meet their needs

People involved in the program are consulted and have opportunities for input into the plan ☐

Program Planning

A quality adult literacy and basic education program engages regularly in a program planning process

A variety of means, such as focus groups, surveys, questionnaires or individual meetings, is used to gather the input ☐

The needs and priorities of the following groups are determined and included in the plan as appropriate:

➢ The learners ☐

➢ The community ☐

➢ The program staff ☐

➢ Employers, business and industry ☐

➢ Partner organizations and agencies ☐

➢ Others _____ ☐

The plan is reviewed with people involved in the program to ensure it is on track, and if not, what changes should be made ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Program Planning?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Program Evaluation

A quality adult literacy and basic education program continuously evaluates how well the program is meeting its goals and objectives and uses that information to direct future planning

Evaluations are an ongoing, integral part of the program

Evaluation is included in the program planning process and is part of the program design ☐

Both formative evaluations (throughout the program) and summative evaluations (at the end of the program) are conducted ☐

People involved in the program are included in program evaluations and the findings communicated back to them

The program gathers feedback from a variety of groups including:

    ➤ The learners ☐

    ➤ The community ☐

    ➤ The program staff ☐

    ➤ Employers, business and industry ☐

    ➤ Partner organizations and agencies ☐

    ➤ Other _____ ☐

Evaluation reports are prepared and made available ☐

Evaluations are comprehensive and use a variety of evaluation tools

Processes are in place to ensure evaluations cover all aspects of the program, such as:

    ➤ Program delivery ☐

    ➤ Instruction ☐

    ➤ Learning ☐

Program Evaluation

A quality adult literacy and basic education program continuously evaluates how well the program is meeting its goals and objectives and uses that information to direct future planning

- ➢ Learning materials and resources ☐
- ➢ Community support ☐
- ➢ Partnerships, where appropriate ☐
- ➢ Other _____ ☐

The program collects a range of information that includes both:

- ➢ Qualitative data, through tools such as narrative reports ☐
- ➢ Quantitative data, such as program statistics ☐

A variety of evaluation tools is used to gather a broad range of information, such as:

- ➢ Statistical reviews ☐
- ➢ Interviews
- ➢ Questionnaires / Surveys ☐
- ➢ Focus groups ☐
- ➢ Classroom assessment techniques, such as SGIF (Small Group Instructional Feedback) or minute papers ☐
- ➢ Anecdotal reports ☐
- ➢ Narrative reports ☐
- ➢ Other _____ ☐

The information from evaluations is used to inform and improve the program

The information from evaluations is used to help identify future program needs ☐

The information from evaluations is used to help set future goals and objectives ☐

Program Evaluation

A quality adult literacy and basic education program continuously evaluates how well the program is meeting its goals and objectives and uses that information to direct future planning

The information from evaluations is used as a basis for ongoing program changes or to develop new initiatives ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Program Evaluation?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Organizational Linkages and Partnerships

A quality adult literacy and basic education program works collaboratively with other organizations and agencies to support the program, the learners and the program staff

The program is proactive in establishing effective relationships with other organizations and agencies

Where the partnership is formal:

> ➢ Agreements are in place that outline roles and responsibilities ☐

> ➢ The agreements and partnership arrangements are reviewed regularly ☐

The program regularly takes part in advisory or interagency groups, or advocates establishing such groups if they do not exist ☐

The program shares information about community, program, staff and learner successes, challenges or needs with groups, such as**:**

> ➢ Elders and youth ☐

> ➢ Community organizations and governing bodies ☐

> ➢ Education groups ☐

> ➢ Health and social service agencies ☐

> ➢ Employers, business and industry ☐
.

The program keeps other organizations and agencies informed about activities in which they have a common interest

> ➢ The program reports regularly to its partner organizations and agencies ☐

> ➢ The program invites its partner organizations and agencies to participate in program events, where appropriate ☐

> ➢ Partner organizations or agencies visit the program, where appropriate ☐

> ➢ The program collaborates with other organizations and agencies with common interests to improve coordination and prevent duplication of services ☐

Organizational Linkages and Partnerships
A quality adult literacy and basic education program works collaboratively with other organizations and agencies to support the program, the learners and the program staff

The program has adequate time for liaising with funders and other partners ☐

The program draws support from, and provides support to, its partner organizations and agencies

The program receives expertise, resources (materials, facilities, etc.) or other forms of support from, and provides support to, its partner organizations and agencies ☐

The program works with its partner organizations or agencies to identify emerging needs and respond to them ☐

The program participates in shared or jointly sponsored projects, such as NWT Literacy Week, or career fairs ☐

The program receives professional support through its links with territorial and national organizations ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Organizational Linkages and Partnerships?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Funding
A quality adult literacy and basic education program has adequate ongoing funding to run the program

The program has adequate, stable, consistent, ongoing funding to meet its goals and objectives

Adequate funding is available for all aspects of the program, such as:

- ➤ Staffing ☐

- ➤ Facilities/ infrastructure costs ☐

- ➤ Materials/ equipment ☐

- ➤ Operations and Maintenance ☐

- ➤ Technology ☐

- ➤ Library/ resource materials ☐

- ➤ Learner support services ☐

- ➤ Contracts ☐

- ➤ Program planning and evaluation ☐

- ➤ Other _____ ☐

The budget reflects real costs, including in-kind support where appropriate ☐

The program receives information about its funding in sufficient time to plan for it and spend it appropriately ☐

Multi-year funding is available, where appropriate ☐

The program has a diversified funding base, where appropriate ☐

Funding is easy to access, flexible and fair

Funders consult people involved in the program when setting program and funding priorities ☐

Funding

A quality adult literacy and basic education program has adequate ongoing funding to run the program

Funders promote the availability of funding ☐

Funders direct programs to funding sources ☐

The guidelines/criteria for funding are clear and flexible ☐

Information on changes to guidelines/criteria is timely ☐

The application process is simple ☐

Funding supports a variety of programs and activities ☐

Funding
A quality adult literacy and basic education program has adequate ongoing
funding to run the program

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Funding?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Accessibility
A quality adult literacy and basic education program respects differences and is accessible to the broadest range of potential learners in the community

Program delivery is flexible

The program offers options that increase flexibility, such as:

- ➢ Learners may enter and exit the program at different times, where appropriate ☐

- ➢ A variety of delivery approaches, such as part-time, distance education or evening classes, is available ☐

- ➢ Instruction is offered at times (seasons, days, hours) convenient for learners and potential learners ☐

- ➢ The location of the program is flexible, where appropriate, to meet learner needs ☐

Opportunities are provided for all learners to participate equitably in the program

The program's recruitment practices are inclusive of different cultures, race, gender, and special needs ☐

A variety of promotional materials is used to reach all potential learners ☐

A process is in place to allow learners to appeal decisions related to access ☐

Processes are in place to identify learners' needs, goals or barriers to learning, and to respond appropriately to them (through referrals, support services, specialized equipment etc.) ☐

Program facilities are accessible

Program facilities are safe and well-lit ☐

People with physical disabilities can access the program facilities ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Accessibility?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Community

A quality adult literacy and basic education program ensures a strong community focus by being engaged in the community and actively engaging the community in the program

The program identifies and responds to the needs of the community

Community needs are identified through processes, such as:

➢ A regular needs assessment process ☐

➢ Establishing and/or participating in a community training/education advisory group ☐

➢ Consulting with community groups as part of the planning process ☐

➢ Formal and informal communication, such as meetings or conversations ☐

The community has opportunities for input into the program ☐

The program reflects community needs ☐

The community is actively involved in the program

The program works closely with other community organizations, where appropriate ☐

The skills and expertise of community members or groups, such as the following, are recognized and used within the program:

➢ Elders and youth groups ☐

➢ Community organizations and governing bodies ☐

➢ Education groups ☐

➢ Health and social service agencies and groups ☐

➢ Employers, business and industry ☐

➢ Cultural organizations ☐

➢ Others _____ ☐

Community

A quality adult literacy and basic education program ensures a strong community focus by being engaged in the community and actively engaging the community in the program

Community representatives are welcome to participate in program events ☐

Learner success is recognized and celebrated with the community through activities such as:

- ➢ Newsletter/radio/poster announcements ☐

- ➢ An awards banquet ☐

- ➢ An end of year celebration ☐

The program publicly credits the community for its support ☐

The program, learners and program staff are actively involved in the community

The program is involved in community projects and events ☐

The program has field trips into the community ☐

The program shares its skills and expertise with other organizations and individuals in the community to assist in community development ☐

The program contributes to the life and development of the community ☐

The program builds community capacity by training local people, including tutors and volunteers ☐

Program staff are active, visible and available in the community ☐

Community

A quality adult literacy and basic education program ensures a strong community focus by being engaged in the community and actively engaging the community in the program

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Community?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Instruction

A quality adult literacy and basic education program offers instruction that enables adult learners to progress towards their goals

The program fosters self-direction in learners

Learners are involved in decision-making related to their learning ☐

Learners generate guidelines and policies, such as group agreements, for their classroom ☐

Learners are partners in managing the learning environment ☐

Learners are active participants in the learning process and assume responsibility for their own learning ☐

Learners are involved in developing an individualized learning plan for themselves that reflects their particular needs, goals and learning styles ☐

Enrollment in the program is voluntary ☐

Program content and delivery support and promote the development of transferable skills and lifelong learning ☐

The program respects diverse talents and ways of learning

The program assesses learners' strengths, needs, interests and learning styles ☐

The program starts from where learners are at and builds on their existing strengths, needs, interests and learning styles ☐

The program actively draws on learners' knowledge and experiences, such as land skills, sewing or storytelling, and encourages learners to share them with others ☐

The program uses a variety of instructional strategies to accommodate individual needs, learning styles, etc., such as:

- ➢ Individual, group, one-on-one work ☐

- ➢ Peer tutoring ☐

- ➢ Labs, simulations and field trips ☐

- ➢ Computer-assisted learning ☐

Instruction

A quality adult literacy and basic education program offers instruction that enables adult learners to progress towards their goals

- ➢ Multi-level instruction ☐

- ➢ Multi-media resources ☐

- ➢ A holistic approach that integrates subjects, including literacy, across the program ☐

A variety of delivery models is available to accommodate individual needs

- ➢ Full-time ☐

- ➢ Part-time ☐

- ➢ Modular learning ☐

- ➢ Flexible scheduling ☐

Materials and resources are relevant to the needs, interests, culture and learning styles of learners ☐

The program creates a climate that encourages and supports learning

Peer support and dialogue are part of the learning process ☐

The program encourages a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting ☐

High expectations are communicated to learners ☐

Learners' successes are recognized and celebrated through awards and special events ☐

The teaching/learning process is dynamic, interactive and cooperative

The teaching/learning process is two-way ☐

Program staff are facilitators of learning and co-learners with their learners ☐

Program staff share their experiences, attitudes and values with learners ☐

Learning activities promote active learning

The program conducts ongoing assessment of learning using a variety of appropriate tools

> ➢ See Learner Assessment (P. 38)

Instruction
A quality adult literacy and basic education program offers instruction that enables adult learners to progress towards their goals

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Instruction?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Culture

A quality adult literacy and basic education program recognizes and values the culture of the learner and incorporates it into the program

The program recognizes the importance of culture to learners' identity and self-esteem

The program encourages learners to have pride in their culture ☐

Learners share their cultural knowledge and traditional skills as part of the program ☐

The culture of learners is incorporated into the program, wherever possible ☐

Local culture and history are included in the program ☐

Traditional knowledge and language are integral parts of the program

The expertise of community people, such as elders, hunters, carvers and other artisans, is used in the program ☐

Some learning activities take place outside the classroom in the context of the culture of the community ☐

First language/mother tongue literacy is encouraged ☐

➢ Courses/sessions in appropriate NWT official language(s) are offered ☐

The language of the community is visible in the program in ways such as the following:

➢ Materials/resources are available in the language ☐

➢ Signs are written in the language ☐

➢ Speakers/staff from the language group are involved in the program ☐

Program staff are sensitive to different cultures

Program staff have opportunities for cross-cultural training ☐

Program staff are aware of and sensitive to culturally based communication and interaction patterns ☐

Culture
A quality adult literacy and basic education program recognizes and values the culture of the learner and incorporates it into the program

Program staff are aware of and respond to different learning styles ☐

Program staff select materials and topics that are culturally relevant for learners ☐

Culture
A quality adult literacy and basic education program recognizes and values the
culture of the learner and incorporates it into the program

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Culture?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Learning Materials
A quality adult literacy and basic education program uses a variety of appropriate learning materials

Learning materials support program goals and objectives

The program identifies and recommends appropriate learning materials ☐

The program has the recommended and supplementary learning materials available, as well as a broad range of additional materials ☐

Program staff use the appropriate learning materials ☐

Learning materials respect and reflect the needs, interests, abilities, and diversity of learners

Learning materials are relevant to learners' experiences, culture, background and concerns ☐

Learners have access to a wide variety of learning materials suitable to their needs, such as:

> Career-related materials ☐

> Course-related materials ☐

> Material artifacts, like specimens etc. ☐

> Multi-media resources ☐

> A library or wide variety of books ☐

Learning materials are suitable for adults ☐

Learning materials are free from gender, racial and cultural bias, except where used to generate critical thinking ☐

Learning materials are current

The program has access to up-to-date books, computer and science equipment, maps, etc. ☐

Learning Materials
A quality adult literacy and basic education program uses a variety of appropriate learning materials

Learning materials reflect current research and are up-to-date ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Learning Materials?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Staff Development and Support
A quality adult literacy and basic education program values its staff and places a priority on staff development

Program staff are familiar with the organization, the community, and the program

New program staff receive orientation

> ➢ To the organization ☐

> ➢ To the program ☐

> ➢ To the community and its available resources ☐

> ➢ To the culture of the community ☐

Program staff have adequate program information, like curriculum, program manuals, ☐ accepted practices, policies and guidelines

Program staff are proactive in meeting the community ☐

The program recognizes the value of professional development and training opportunities to ongoing program improvement

Program staff have ongoing professional development and training opportunities, as ☐ identified through performance appraisals

Program staff are aware of and take advantage of training and professional ☐ development

Program staff have opportunities to keep up-to-date professionally, through a variety ☐ of means, such as access to current information, publications, videos, etc.

Structures and processes are in place for a "buddy" system to enable experienced ☐ staff to provide guidance to new staff

Funding and release time are designated for program staff to participate in training ☐ and professional development

The program values its staff

The program communicates in an open and ongoing basis with staff ☐

Staff Development and Support
A quality adult literacy and basic education program values its staff and places a priority on staff development

Processes are in place, such as contact with supervisors, performance appraisals, etc., to support staff ☐

The program has strategies to recognize staff contributions and achievements ☐

Program staff have opportunities to network with colleagues and other professionals in the literacy field through a variety of means, such as the use of:

➢ Technology ☐

➢ Regular regional meetings and/or conferences ☐

➢ Regular staff meetings ☐

➢ A newsletter or website to share information with staff ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Staff Development and Support?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Respect and Support for Learners
A quality adult literacy and basic education program respects its learners and supports them to achieve their goals

Structures and supports are in place to facilitate learner success

The program is aware of and sensitive to the multiple roles of adult learners ☐

The environment is safe, orderly, comfortable and conducive to learning ☐

The program provides information about available support services ☐

Program activities regularly include learners' families ☐

The program is pro-active in supporting learners in a variety of ways, such as:

 ➢ Program staff identify learners' support needs during intake interviews ☐

 ➢ Program staff follow-up with learners who are not participating in the program to determine if they are facing barriers and require additional support services ☐

 ➢ The program recognizes learner strengths and builds on them ☐

The individual needs of learners with special needs are recognized and responded to

Guidelines/policies are in place regarding learners with special needs ☐

Program staff have access to training and information on special needs ☐

The program provides information on supports that are available for learners with special needs, such as assessment, specialized equipment, transportation. ☐

A process is in place to assist learners to access support services, where necessary ☐

The program respects and values its learners

The program maintains a good rapport and promotes mutual respect among learners, staff and others involved in the program ☐

The program creates a supportive learning environment ☐

Respect and Support for Learners
A quality adult literacy and basic education program respects its learners and supports them to achieve their goals

The program uses positive language to refer to learners ⬚

The program maintains the confidentiality of learners' records and information

➢ See Program Administration (P. 44)

Respect and Support for Learners
A quality adult literacy and basic education program respects its learners and
supports them to achieve their goals

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Respect and Support for Learners?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Learner Assessment

A quality adult literacy and basic education program monitors learner progress on an ongoing basis through a variety of participatory assessment procedures

Learner assessments direct instruction and enhance learning

The program makes learner assessments an integral part of teaching and learning ☐

Learner assessments are linked to instruction and guide program staff in planning lessons ☐

Learners' prior learning is documented as part of the intake assessment process

➢ A prior learning policy is in place ☐

➢ A process to credit learners' prior learning is in place ☐

Learner assessments identify any special learning needs among learners ☐

Learner goals are reviewed and modified with learners, based on their assessment ☐

Learners receive information on why and how they will be assessed ☐

The importance of 'breakthroughs' and 'non-academic' outcomes, such as changes in ☐ self-esteem or self-confidence, is recognized

The program reports learning outcomes/results clearly and provides learners with copies of their progress ☐

Appropriate procedures are used to ensure assessment is effective and participatory

A variety of assessment tools, both formal and informal are used, including:

➢ Authentic assessment techniques, such as

▪ Checklists (writing, reading, etc.) ☐

▪ Portfolios ☐

▪ Journals ☐

▪ Instructor/learner conferences (individual and group) ☐

Learner Assessment

A quality adult literacy and basic education program monitors learner progress on an ongoing basis through a variety of participatory assessment procedures

- ▪ Learning contracts ☐
- ▪ Learner progress logs ☐
- ▪ Learner self-assessments ☐
- ▪ Group projects ☐
- ▪ Presentations ☐
- ▪ Peer evaluation ☐
- ▪ Simulations ☐
- ▪ Observations ☐

- ➤ More traditional assessment techniques, such as
  - ▪ Questionnaires ☐
  - ▪ Tests or exams (E.g. final or exit exams) ☐
  - ▪ Standardized tests (E.g. CAT) ☐
  - ▪ Quizzes ☐
  - ▪ Essays ☐

Program staff meet with learners to discuss:

- ➤ Their interests ☐
- ➤ Their goals ☐
- ➤ Their learning styles ☐
- ➤ Their progress ☐
- ➤ Their difficulties ☐
- ➤ Their specific learning needs ☐

Learner Assessment
A quality adult literacy and basic education program monitors learner progress on an ongoing basis through a variety of participatory assessment procedures

Learners are involved in designing assessment procedures ☐

Learner assessments are a positive experience for learners

Learner assessments validate learners' strengths and help develop self-confidence and self-esteem ☐

The program ensures the assessment environment has a positive impact on the learner ☐

Program staff are sensitive to learners' issues, like test anxiety or special needs, when assessing learners ☐

Sufficient time is available to ensure that the assessment and placement processes are thorough ☐

Assessments are kept confidential and not released without permission ☐

Learner assessments are ongoing

Learners receive immediate and meaningful feedback on a regular basis ☐

Assessment takes place:

  ➤ On intake ☐

  ➤ During the program ☐

  ➤ On exit ☐

  ➤ Other _____ ☐

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Learner Assessment?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Outreach

A quality adult literacy and basic education program reaches out to the community to attract potential learners and gain the support of the community

The program uses a variety of strategies to recruit potential learners and volunteers

The program offers a broad range of programming to meet the needs of adult learners in the community ☐

The program knows who its target groups are ☐

The program determines which recruitment strategies are successful in attracting the various target groups and volunteers and uses them ☐

The program uses a variety of means to publicize the program ☐

The program uses the experiences of former learners and staff to create awareness of the benefits of the program ☐

The program gains support from the community for literacy, the program and its learners

The program advocates in the community on literacy policy and support issues that affect learners ☐

The program initiates a public awareness program to share information regularly with relevant organizations and individuals through means such as:

     ➢ posters ☐

     ➢ brochures ☐

     ➢ newsletters ☐

     ➢ reports ☐

The program makes and maintains contacts with relevant media ☐

Outreach
A quality adult literacy and basic education program reaches out to the community to attract potential learners and gain the support of the community

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Outreach?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Transferability of Learning
A quality adult literacy and basic education program has procedures and practices in place to help learners transfer their learning to further education, training, employment or community life

Program content and delivery support and promote the development of transferable skills and lifelong learning

The program uses appropriate resources and curriculum guidelines ☐

The program clearly identifies, documents and communicates to learners what the intended outcomes are of the program

➢ Clearly stated outcomes are developed for each course and program ☐

➢ Achievement of learners' goals is documented ☐

➢ Learners' knowledge and skills are documented when they exit the program ☐

➢ Learners' satisfaction with the program is documented ☐

➢ Other programs are satisfied with learners' knowledge and skills ☐

➢ Employers are satisfied with learners' performance ☐

The program has community and organizational links to help learners move successfully from one program to another, to greater community involvement, to further training or to employment ☐

Literacy is integrated into the broader educational and training system ☐

The program promotes the transferability of knowledge, skills and attitudes that learners acquire in the program ☐

Transferability of Learning

A quality adult literacy and basic education program has procedures and practices in place to help learners transfer their learning to further education, training, employment or community life

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Transferability of Learning?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Accountability

A quality adult literacy and basic education program is accountable to the learners, funders, community and partners, who also share responsibility for the program's success

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Procedures are in place to ensure accountability

An accountability framework is in place that includes items such as the following:

➢ Reporting relationships, roles and responsibilities with regard to accountability are clearly defined   ☐

➢ Accepted criteria and guidelines are established   ☐

➢ Reporting requirements are established   ☐

The program follows the accountability requirements   ☐

The program delivers what it says it will deliver   ☐

The program provides information that demonstrates its accountability   ☐

The program is administratively responsible

The program keeps accurate statistical and financial information related to the program   ☐

The program operates within its budget   ☐

People involved in the program share responsibility for it

People involved in the program demonstrate commitment to it, such as:

➢ Instructors ensure a quality program, provide feedback, communicate success, etc.   ☐

➢ Learners attend regularly, complete work, etc.   ☐

➢ Funders provide funding in a timely manner, etc.   ☐

Accountability
Accountability
A quality adult literacy and basic education program is accountable to the learners, funders, community and partners, who also share responsibility for the program's success

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Accountability?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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Program Administration

A quality adult literacy and basic education program is well-managed and well-run/ effectively managed through appropriate policies and procedures

Policies and/or procedures are in place to manage the program

The program establishes and follows policies and procedures related to learners, such as:

- ➢ Attendance policies ☐

- ➢ Learner assessment ☐

- ➢ Intake and exit procedures ☐

The program establishes and follows policies and procedures related to program staff, such as:

- ➢ Personnel policies ☐

- ➢ Staff support, e.g. professional development ☐

The program establishes and follows policies and procedures related to the program, such as:

- ➢ A standardized curriculum ☐

- ➢ Program accountability ☐

The program maintains accurate records

The program maintains detailed, orderly and up-to-date records for:

- ➢ Learners ☐

- ➢ Program staff ☐

- ➢ The program ☐

- ➢ Program finances and administration ☐

The program reviews its records on a regular basis ☐

Program Administration
A quality adult literacy and basic education program is well-managed and well-run/ effectively managed through appropriate policies and procedures

The program has current job descriptions for all program staff ☐

The program maintains the confidentiality of records and information

Program staff are aware of and follow the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and associated policies and guidelines ☐

The program follows established confidentiality guidelines, such as:

➢ The program uses a release of information form ☐

➢ The program has a signed consent for use of learner materials, photos, etc. ☐

➢ Learner conferences are conducted in private ☐

➢ Learner and program staff records are kept in a secure location ☐

The program discusses the issue of confidentiality with staff and learners at the start of the program ☐

The program is accountable

See Accountability (P. 33)

Program Administration

A quality adult literacy and basic education program is well-managed and well-run/ effectively managed through appropriate policies and procedures

Planning

What other activities in your program reflect this best practice? (If possible, provide specific examples.)

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What could your program do to improve its practices in supporting Program Administration?

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What assistance will you need to achieve this?

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