

Learner Centred Intake And Assessment Process

for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan



SASKATCHEWAN
LITERACY
NETWORK



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Introduction

“Assessment is not only an indication of knowledge, skill and progress; instead it engages learners in an active process to assess interests, goals, learners’ strengths and areas of difficulty. The purpose of assessment is to enhance learning by making instruction and direction relevant to the advancement of the learners and their goals. It has value far beyond the classroom and develops self-confidence and self esteem and relates to the life and goals of the learner. Assessment should be on-going, adaptable, flexible, respectful and confidential.”

Ann Perry, Circle Project, Regina (SLN,1)

Overview of this Resource

This resource provides:

- a learner-centred guide for initial intake processes for Levels 1 and 2 literacy programs
- a guide for initial, on-going, and exit assessment processes
- guidelines for the intake process and an exploration of the phases of assessment
- an outline of the strengths and limitations of various types of assessment tools
- guidelines for using a portfolio as an assessment tool
- suggestions for things to consider in selecting tools for assessment

The appendices in this resource contain a selection of sample tools and an updated list of resources.

Note About Terms Used

In this resource, the term **practitioner** is all-inclusive. It refers to everyone who is involved in planning or presenting adult literacy programs, whether paid or volunteer. The term **learner** refers to all participants in adult literacy programs, regardless of the type of educational program they attend: formal, non-formal, group, individual, etc. Gender references to learners (masculine or feminine) alternate between sections and are all inclusive.

Purpose of this Resource

In 2008, the *Learner Centred Intake and Assessment Processes for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan* document was revised to reflect current practices in literacy and Adult Basic Education (ABE).



Specifically, the purpose of the revision was to:

- align initial intake and assessment processes in the document with the standards and principles described in *Intake and Assessment Framework for Basic Education and Related Programs for Adults*.
- connect assessment philosophy and sample assessment tools with *The Circle of Learning: Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2*, and
- update the Annotated Bibliography, resources and sample assessment tools provided in the document.

Background in the Development of this Resource

The “Towards a Standardized Intake and Assessment Process” project was initially developed by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network (SLN) in 2001 with funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. The goal of the project was for the SLN, in consultation with the literacy field, to develop a common understanding of intake and assessment processes among literacy practitioners in Saskatchewan ¹.

One outcome of the project was the development of a manual to guide intake and assessment processes: *Learner Centred Intake and Assessment Processes for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan*. This manual also included resources and sample informal assessment tools.

Developers of the original manual were also members of the provincial framework reference group. However, because the original manual was developed prior to completion of the provincial framework, a review is needed now to ensure that it is congruent with the new provincial standards that have been developed in the recent past.

In the past ten years, there have been several initiatives in the province that have influenced Literacy and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. These initiatives resulted in changes in programming and delivery processes and contributed to the need to review and revise the *Learner Centred Intake and Assessment Processes for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan* guide.

Some of these initiatives are outlined below:

¹ For more information about the purpose and processes used to develop the original document, please refer to Appendix A.



Basic Education Program Review (1999)

In 1999-2000, Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, (then called Post Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST), conducted a formal evaluation of Literacy and ABE programs and services in the province. The evaluation led to the formation of three working groups to develop:

- a provincial framework for intake and assessment;
- a provincial literacy strategy; and
- a vision for redesigning ABE.

Intake and Assessment Framework for Basic Education and Related Programs for Adults (2003)

This framework was created by a reference group consisting of representatives from community-based organizations, public institutions, career and employment service delivery organizations and the provincial government.

The framework outlines:

- the guiding principles for the development and delivery of quality initial assessment and intake services
- a provincial initial assessment model
- baseline standards for data collection
- protocols for information gathering and sharing
- processes for the implementation and evaluation of the model (Saskatchewan Learning, 5)

The Circle of Learning: Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2 (2006)

A need for provincial literacy Benchmarks has been expressed by practitioners and learners for many years. The work of the Provincial Literacy Steering Committee (2001-2004) and the ABE Redesign Task Team (2001- present) re-affirmed this need. The Literacy Steering Committee identified development of literacy benchmarks as a goal in their action plan and supported the establishment of a Benchmarks development team.

The ABE Redesign Task Team included the development of literacy benchmarks as part of the redesign process. Consistency in the application of guiding principles, development processes, implementation strategies and sustainability planning has occurred with all work done in literacy (Levels 1 and 2) and Adult 10 (Level 3) programs².

² Refer to Basic Education Redesign. Phase 1: Planning and Foundations at <http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/abe/> redesign for a definition of ABE and a description of the foundational work related to the redesign process and conceptualization of literacy benchmarks.



A partnership was formed between the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Advanced Education, Employment, and Labour (formerly Saskatchewan Learning), and the Office of Literacy (formerly the Literacy Commission). Funding support for the partnership came from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (formerly the National Literacy Secretariat) and the province of Saskatchewan. In 2003, development of the Benchmarks began with the hiring of a project manager and the formation of a provincial advisory committee.

The Circle of Learning Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2 document was finalized in 2006 and the Benchmarks were implemented throughout the province in 2007.

Working with Adult Learners

Adults tend to seek out learning opportunities in order to make life changes. Learning is relevant and purposeful for adults. In other words, learning is more problem based or context driven as opposed to memorizing facts and content. The learning is generally a means to an end, and not an end in itself. It needs to be recognized that adult learners come with a wealth of diverse backgrounds and experiences and they possess different stages of understanding and varying attitudes towards learning.

Effective educators adopt the role of a facilitator or resource person rather than that of a lecturer or evaluator. They base their practice on adult learning principles as outlined by Imel. (SPSEST, p. 17) (SLN, 10)

Effective adult educators:

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

In conversation with Lynda Richards, a Saskatchewan adult learner, she shared what she believes is important for practitioners to consider when working with adult learners. Ideally, instructors should have an adult learning background to ensure that learners are treated respectfully as adults. (May 2008)

"A lot of times adult learners bring baggage and labels with them thinking they are stupid. Adults have knowledge and specific learning styles. Learners may not have identified their learning styles."



Lynda's suggestions for a supportive adult program include the following:

- Build a rapport with learners and find out what they have for a support system.
- Create comfort right from the very beginning.
- Identify learning styles of the learner and teach them about how they learn.
- Take the end goal and break it into smaller goals so that learners can reflect back and feel success, thereby being motivated to keep going.
- Help learners to recognize the skills they already have from life experiences such as being "just" a stay at home mom.
- Include group activities so that learners can build a support group in the program. Working only with individualized programs can create a feeling of isolation.
- Provide program content information, in plain language up front, so learners know what to expect and can decide if the program is what they want.
- Provide a package of information about community and program resources that are available in case the learner needs extra help. Include: who does what, where the service is located, contact information and the cost.
- A program recruiter may not be the best person to help learners set up their programs. They may have a specific perspective and it is important for learners to explore all options.
- Have tutors available when learners need a little extra help. This will help learners get over a difficult patch.



I. Intake Process

Many types of literacy programs will use this resource. We'd like to stress that **not all programs conduct intake processes in exactly the same way, nor is it recommended that they should do so.**

What follows is a **guideline** for intake processes. The examples in this resource describe an intake and assessment approach that operates in the best interests of the learner and provides both the learner and the program with the information they need.

A. What is the Purpose of the Intake Process?

The intake process is an initial information gathering/sharing process for both the practitioner and the learner.

The **practitioner** needs basic information to:

- provide a starting point for exploring learner goals
- ensure the learner meets the program criteria
- help the learner plan a program that is appropriate for her individual needs and skill levels.

The **learner** needs basic information to:

- understand how the program works
- know if the program will work for her and what commitment is required/desired
- decide if she will enter the program now.

A well planned and implemented intake process helps the learner and program staff determine if they are a good match.

As a practitioner it is important to:

- understand what your program can and cannot do
- be aware of other literacy programs that are available in your area
- be prepared to refer learners to other programs if you cannot meet the needs expressed by the individual learners.

The intake process should allow enough time to ensure that the prospective learner understands the program. The learner will require information and reflection time to decide if this is the appropriate program to meet her goals.



B. Am I Part of the Intake Process?

The intake process begins when the learner first connects with the literacy program. For a learner whose past experience with the formal education systems has been negative, her initial contact with your program can be a critical turning point. If a learner experiences an open, positive and encouraging environment in the initial stages of the intake process, she is likely to develop a positive picture of the program. A positive emotional and mental picture can help the learner let go of previous negative experiences, and inspire a new beginning in her learning journey.

Everyone in the agency or program who has contact with the learner at the start of a program is part of the intake process. This includes the person who greets learners as they arrive, answers the phone, or responds to e-mails, as well as programmers and practitioners.

It takes tremendous courage for the learner to make that initial contact so it is imperative that it be a positive, affirming experience. Staff members who hold initial contact positions need to understand how important they are to the learner’s literacy experience and they should be well trained in your process.

C. Guidelines for Intake Interviews

A successful intake interview must take a holistic approach in considering the learner’s needs. The stages of an intake interview are interrelated rather than linear.

Stages of an Intake Interview





1. Create the Environment

The purpose of the intake interview is to give the learner an opportunity to talk freely about her literacy needs. The learner may share past educational experiences, goals, fears, successes and challenges. The learner will feel more comfortable sharing her needs and aspirations in a safe and respectful environment.

Tips for creating a safe and respectful environment:

- Hold the intake interview in a private room or office where disruptions are minimized. It is hard to build a sense of trust and safety in the midst of interruptions.
- Titles may put a barrier between you and the learner. When introducing yourself, use the learner's name and invite her to use yours.
- Put the learner at ease by offering her coffee or a cold drink as a show of hospitality. The learner is creating an initial picture of your program and a friendly gesture can go a long way in helping ease any fears or anxieties.
- Let the learner know that the interview is part of the learning process and that she is an equal partner in that process.
- Describe the process of the interview. If you take notes during the interview explain that it is to help you remember not to report on her.
- Encourage the learner to:
 - ask questions
 - pause when needed
 - provide only the information she is comfortable sharing
- Explain your agency's confidentiality policy to the learner.
- Use clear language and allow the learner enough time to think about and answer your questions.
- Check with the learner to ensure that the questions make sense and are being interpreted and answered with the same intent as they are asked.
- If the intake interview will include an assessment or test, the learner should understand:
 - what the assessment will require of her
 - why it is being done
 - how the results will be used
- The intake interview should not take so long that it overwhelms the learner. The literacy practitioner should be aware of the learner's physical, emotional and mental comfort. If more time is needed to fully assess the learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes, a second meeting can be scheduled.



2. Provide Program Information

During the intake interview, describe your literacy program. The learner should be made aware of exactly what the program can and cannot do for her. Some programs can provide individual learning plans to meet learners' specific needs while others cannot. The learner needs program information to make a decision about the program.

Have a clearly written (plain language) fact sheet that contains key program and contact information available in case the learner has questions after the initial interview is over.

Have information and contact numbers available for other programs in the area in case your program is unable to accommodate the learner's needs. Provide the learner with assistance in contacting other programs if needed. Ensure that the door stays open for the learner to come to your program at a later date.

3. Determine Learner Goals

"Three little words. When strung together to form a question, they instil terror in the hearts of the strongest people. 'What's your goal?'"

(Ontario Literacy Coalition, 2)

Goal setting is a dynamic process that will evolve with the learner throughout their time with the literacy program and beyond.

Some learners come to the intake interview with clearly defined goals in mind. The intake interview then becomes an opportunity to decide if the program is appropriate and to begin discussing an action plan to achieve those goals.

Other learners may have difficulty defining personal "goals". However, most learners will know the answer to the question:

"What do you want to be able to do?"

The answer(s) to this question become the learner's goal(s).

Defining the skills needed to accomplish the goals then becomes the role of the practitioner. The skills and goals checklists in Appendix C of the Circle of Learning (pg. 151) provide information to assist with this task.



Whether the learner comes with goals in mind or develops them as part of the intake process, her goals will become the starting point for the development of a learning plan. With Levels 1 & 2 learners, a completed learning plan will not likely happen in the initial intake interview as it will require some work by the learner and practitioner to determine learning activities to meet the goals.

It may be helpful to discuss the possible challenges the learner thinks she may encounter, as she works toward her goals.

Challenges may include:

- **Financial stress** - Extra money or help may be needed for transportation to the program or to pay for childcare.
- **Accessible childcare** - Accessible, affordable, safe childcare may not be readily available.
- **Life style** - Creating a daily routine around getting up on time, budgeting funds, and managing family responsibilities can create unexpected changes in the learners' daily lives as they start a new program. Learners may need help/support in planning for the changes.
- **Fear of change** - Having a family member start on a formal learning journey can be a big change for the whole family. Sometimes change creates fear and family and friends may not provide the support needed.
- **Health concerns** - Some learners may have health issues that need to be dealt with to ensure success in the program. They may also need glasses or a new prescription for existing glasses. Practitioners should know where to refer learners for any help they need.
- **Violence** - Some learners may be dealing with past or current violence issues. Learners who are victims of violence may feel isolation, shame, guilt and/or fear. It is important to create a safe environment where victims of violence do not feel judged or re-violated if they choose to share their stories. (Please see Appendix D for resources dealing with violence and learning.)
- **Addiction** - Some learners may have challenges arising from their use of drugs, alcohol or gambling. Learners with addiction problems may become ill, have poor attendance or be unable to concentrate on learning. (Please see Appendix D for resources about addictions or information on specific drugs.)
- **Learning disabilities** - Some learners may have disabilities that challenge their ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of their brain. Diagnosis of learning disabilities requires referral to a trained professional. (Please see Appendix D for resources on learning disabilities).

The process of discussing these challenges and planning ways to meet them can create goals in a learner's overall plan.



It is important for both the learner and practitioner to recognize that goals need to be reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. Involving the learner in an on-going review of goals and adjustment of the learning plan helps her take charge of the plan. This can start her on the path to becoming a lifelong learner.

4. Collect Demographic Information

The learner should be told that sharing personal information is voluntary. She should feel comfortable saying no to any requests for information that she doesn't wish to share. On your form(s) have the learner fill in as much as she is comfortable doing. Provide help to her as needed, or if necessary, do the writing for her. This literacy task can provide valuable information about the learner's reading, writing and problem solving skills.

The types of learner information requested during the intake interview can include:

- Personal Information
 - Name and contact information (address, phone number(s), emergency contact number)
 - Identification numbers if required by funders (Social Insurance Number (SIN), date of birth, driver's license, health card, Treaty or Métis card)
 - Source of income (only if required by funder)
 - First language
- Education History/Academic Skills
 - Last completed grade and date of completion
 - Courses taken or currently taking
 - Certifications
 - Learning experiences including successes and challenges
- Employment History
- Life Interests /Activities
- Career Aspirations and Career Plan
 - Has she a career in mind?
 - Has she done any research?



- Challenges and Accommodations Needed
 - Does she have previously identified learning challenges that may need accommodations?
 - Does she have health issues that might need accommodations?
 - Does she have lifestyle challenges such as children, finances, part-time employment that requires accommodations?
(Saskatchewan Learning, 14)

Take a critical look at the intake interview forms used by your program:

Review the purpose of each question. Ask only for information that:

- will be used by the literacy practitioner and learner to make decisions about the learner's program
- will benefit the learner's program
- is required by funding or program agencies

It is important that your intake forms are clearly written and easy to read. Use plain language methods, i.e., offer clear definitions for any terms used, avoid passive sentences and words with more than three syllables and try to keep sentences short.

CAUTION: The Human Rights Code of Saskatchewan protects our rights to equality without discrimination based on the following categories:

- Age
- Race
- Ancestry
- Family or marital status
- Mental or physical disability
- Receipt of Public Assistance
- Religion
- Sexual harassment
- Sex, pregnancy or sexual orientation

If you ask for any information that fits in these (above) categories, it must first be explained to the learner that they only need to answer if they wish to do so.

CONCERNS?

The Human Rights Commission will give you feedback on the legality of your forms and assist you in understanding relevant federal and provincial laws.

Contact them at 1-800-667-9249 or 1-800-667-8577
or via their website at www.gov.sk.ca/shrc/



5. Assess Skills, Knowledge & Abilities

Skills assessment may be part of the intake process or it may be done in the initial stages of the program. However, whether the assessment is done prior to or during the program, it should be done in the context of the goals the learner has set for himself.

Initial assessment will determine the learner's current skills, knowledge and abilities. The practitioner will then define the skills, knowledge and abilities that are needed to achieve the learner's goals. Any gaps between the skills needed to achieve the goal and the learner's current skills will form the foundation for the initial learning plan.

A detailed description of assessment processes and tools is included in Section III of this document.

Consider the time and focus involved for the learner. If the interview and literacy skill assessment will take more than 1 to 1 ½ hours, a second interview should be scheduled.

TESTS AND FEAR: SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

Many learners experience test anxiety and don't perform well in a formal testing situation. If your program requires formal testing as part of the intake process you can lower the level of anxiety by:

- explaining why the test is being done, how it will be done (length of time, number of parts, etc.) and how the results will be used
- ensuring the learner feels comfortable and has time to ask questions
- by starting the test as soon as the learner understands and is comfortable with the process.

6. Close the Interview

End the interview on a positive note for the learner.

Provide the learner with next steps and program information:

- who will contact her
- timeframe for the contact (for example, 'Sue will call you by the 15th'.)
- where to go the first day (office, classroom)
- what to expect the first time she attends
- her practitioner's name
- program details (start date, start and end times)
- lunch, break times and facilities available (vending machines, cafeteria, washrooms)
- materials she may need



Provide a plain language program fact sheet she can take home. Encourage the learner to call back if she has any questions or concerns. A toll free number or a program's willingness to accept collect calls is of real value to learners living outside of the local call area.

D. After the Initial Intake Interview

The time between the intake interview and the program start date is important for the learner and practitioner. For some learners this time is filled with anticipation and excitement and for others it is filled with anxiety.

It is essential that the program:

- follow through on any commitments it has made to the learner
- keep in touch with the learner until the program starts
- contact the learner to reschedule if appointments or meetings are missed
- provide support as needed to deal with challenges individual learners encounter



Things to Think About:

1. Does your agency or program have a welcoming environment?
2. Is it easy for learners to contact you and receive information?
3. Does the learner share control over the intake process?
4. Do all staff members understand how important their role is in creating a positive and encouraging environment?
5. Are all staff members well trained in the intake process?
6. Are you aware of how your cultural, technological or educational background affects the content and style of your learner interviews?
7. Is the information gathered during the intake process kept confidential and is the learner aware of this?
8. Do you have a good understanding of other programs in your community?
9. Have you developed a plain language outline of the relevant program details that can be given to the learner during the intake process?



II. Assessment Types and Processes

A. Assessment Processes

"...an assessment is not just about the parts. It's about the whole, too, how the parts fit together to create something more than themselves. Assessment helps you and the learners determine:

- If the learner is in the right program at the right agency
- What the learner can already do and what he needs to learn to reach his goal
- The best way to deliver the program for the individual learner
- The effectiveness of the programming."

(Ontario Literacy Coalition)

Effective assessment processes start by putting the learner at the centre. Good literacy practice attempts to move the learner towards independence in his learning. Effective assessment is a key step in the move to independence.

The assessment process should use a variety of techniques to create a holistic view of the learner that includes:

- what he knows and can do as part of a family, a community and a workplace
- how he views himself as a learner
- how he uses literacy skills
- his goals as a family, community and workplace member
- a realistic action plan that will meet his goals

Effective assessment meets a diversity of needs for a range of stakeholders.

Effective assessment is important to the **learner** because:

- it helps him decide where he wants to go and what he needs to do to get there
- it tells him how far he has come
- it encourages him to keep going

Effective assessment is important to literacy **practitioners** because it shows them:

- what progress is being made
- the work that still needs to be done
- whether or not the program is working effectively



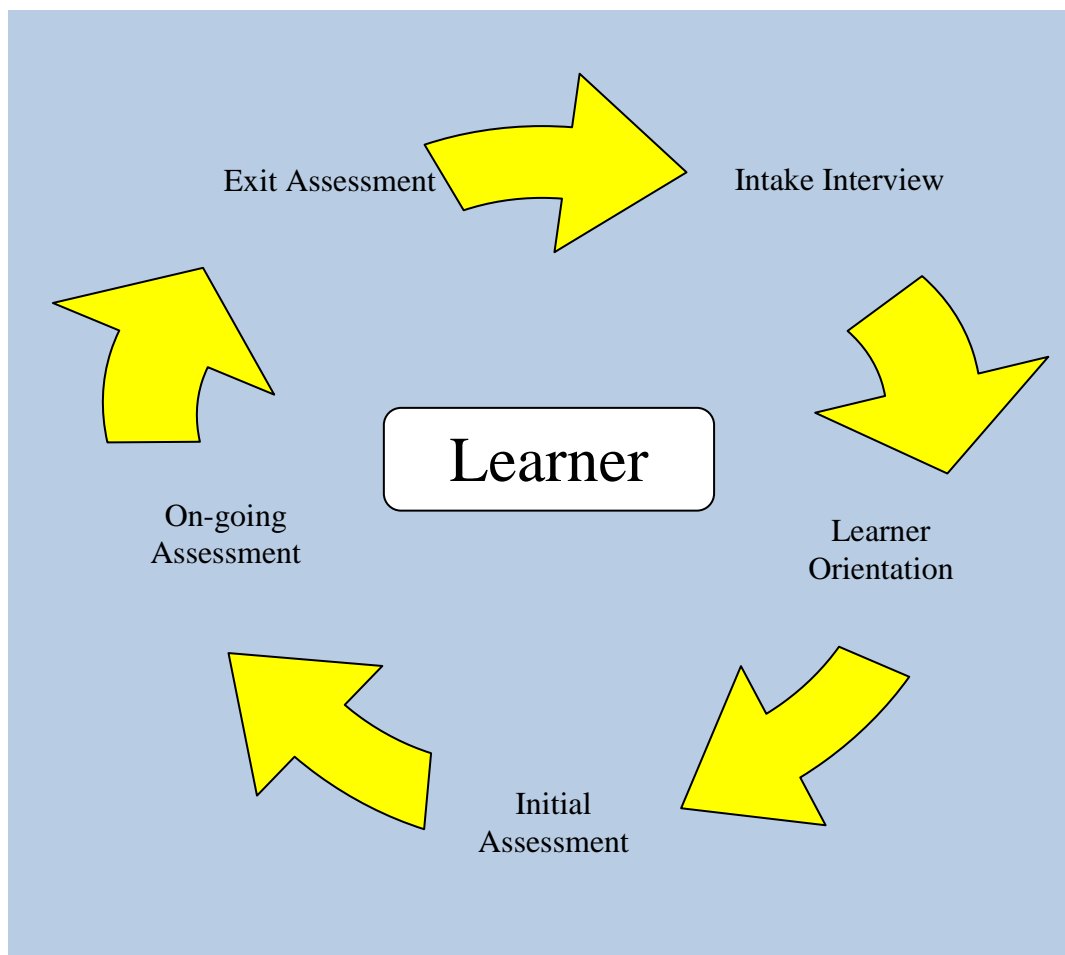
Effective assessment is important to **agencies and institutions** because it:

- provides a framework of service
- validates their work to learners, funders and themselves

Reflecting on the ethics of your assessment processes is central to the development of effective assessment tools and processes.

B. Assessment Types

This manual separates assessment into three categories: **initial, on-going** and **exit**. This separation works well on paper but in practice these processes may overlap or take place at various times during the program. Assessment is an on-going process that is intended to engage the learner throughout the learning process.





1. Initial Assessment

Initial assessment starts at the beginning of a learner's involvement with a program. It identifies the skills and strengths that the learner brings to the program and helps him identify and develop his goals. Initial assessment is the basis for the development of his learning plan.

Initial assessment of skills can be done during the intake interview process or after the learner has started in the program. If the program can accommodate various levels of individualized learning plans, skills assessment can be done once the learner is in the program. If the program can accommodate only learners at a specific level, assessment of skills must be done during the intake process to ensure that the learner and the program are a good match.

The initial assessment uses a variety of tools:

- interviews
- interest surveys
- learning styles inventories
- checklists
- demonstrations
- formal & informal assessments
- portfolios
- samples from past learning experiences

2. On-going assessment

On-going assessment is done by the learner and the literacy practitioner throughout the program. On-going assessment should be contextual in that it assesses learner progress in relation to goals he has set in his learning plan. On-going assessment can also help the learner integrate new information and frames of reference into his action plans. It is important for the learner to track and document his progress. This allows mobility between literacy programs and provides the learner with a record of how his skills have improved.

During on-going assessment, the learner can give and receive feedback about adjustments that need to be made for more effective learning. Documenting what he has accomplished during the time spent in the literacy program will build confidence in his abilities as a learner.

Creating a portfolio provides both the process and the tool for this on-going tracking of learner achievement. A portfolio is discussed in greater detail in the Tools section, Appendix C of this document.



It is important that the learner take the lead role in the on-going assessment process. Assessment done “with” the learner rather than “to” the learner encourages the development of the skills that support lifelong learning.

On-going assessment uses a variety of tools:

- interviews/conferences with practitioner and/or other learners
- portfolios
- demonstrations
- checklists
- rubrics
- journals
- Circle of Learning Benchmarks
- formal and informal tests
- work samples
- dated goal charts with space for revisions and additions
- learner diaries
- reflection sheets

3. Exit Assessment

Learners leave literacy programs for a variety of reasons and at various points throughout the program. Whatever the reason (or timing) for leaving, an exit assessment is a good way for the learner and the program to assess what has been accomplished and what needs to be worked on from both the program and learner’s points of view.

For the learner, the exit assessment can establish a record of the skills he now has. As practitioners we can provide a consistent standard for learners by describing progress in terms of the Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 & 2. (SLN, 24)

For the program, the exit assessment can provide information to help the program make adjustments to better meet learner needs and can provide reporting information for funders and program managers.

Exit assessment measures learner progress (up until the exit point) in relation to the goals set in his individualized learning plan. As with the initial intake process, the exit assessment needs to be handled sensitively, with the needs of the learner foremost.

Not all learners reach all the goals set out in their learning plan so it is necessary to establish that progress has been made. The exit interview can provide the learner with a framework of action for continuing in another program or to return to yours when he is able.

How a learner feels upon leaving a program will strongly influence whether he continues



on with his literacy goals and action plans, so it is essential to put the emphasis on strengths and accomplishments rather than on things left yet to accomplish.

The learner's portfolio can provide the basis for the discussion of accomplishments and strengths. You may ask him to identify:

- goal areas where he has made progress
- changes he sees in his skills as they relate to his goals
- what effect his learning has had in other areas of his life
- ways this program can assist him in his next steps

When learners leave literacy programs unexpectedly, follow-up with the learner may gather valuable information for the program and may provide encouragement for the learner to continue on his learning path when he is ready.

As in all assessment, gathering and sharing information with the learner as he exits the program is critical. Both the learner and the program need to know:

- what learning has occurred relative to the learner's goals
- what challenges have been met
- what strategies worked well
- what changes are needed
- what the next step is

Exit assessment uses a variety of tools:

- interviews/conferences with practitioner and/ or other learners
- portfolios
- demonstrations
- checklists
- rubrics
- journals
- Circle of Learning Benchmarks
- formal and informal tests
- work samples
- dated goal charts with space for revisions and additions
- learner diaries
- reflection sheets

Questions asked in exit assessments such as: "What worked in the program for you?" and "What could we do differently to make it work better in the future?", can provide a basis to make improvements in the program.



Things to Think About:

1. Is the assessment process you are using based on the best interest of the learner?
2. Do your intake and assessment processes recognize the learner's beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitudes? Is there room for their beliefs, knowledge, skills and attitudes to act as a framework for identifying their goals and action plans?
3. Does the assessment process use a variety of tools to create a holistic picture of the learner?
4. Does the learner understand why you are using the assessment tools and how they work?
5. Can the learner refuse the assessment without having to leave your program? Why or why not?
6. Does the learner receive the results of the assessment in a thorough and sensitive way?
7. Will the results of the assessment be used to shape the instruction that the learner receives?



III. Assessment Tools

A. Types of Assessment Tools

There is no single assessment tool that will generate all the information needed by practitioners and learners as they create the learning plan. The learner is better served if the program uses a mix of assessment tools to develop a holistic picture of the learner.

Three types of assessment tools are commonly used in literacy programs: informal assessments, formal assessments and informal reading inventories. All have advantages and limitations. In working with level 1 & 2 literacy learners it is recommended that you use a variety of assessment tools, keeping your learner's needs and context as the focus of all assessment activity.

1. Informal Tools

Informal assessment tools are developed by a literacy practitioner, program or agency to meet the specific needs of their learners and their programs.

One of the challenges in adult literacy assessment is measuring the skills of level 1 & 2 learners. Most formal assessment tools cannot provide valid assessment for learners with minimal literacy skills, so many literacy practitioners develop tools, such as checklists, rubrics, and portfolio activities that work for them. Even an intake form can be an informal tool as you assess how the learner completes it.

Interview questions can also be part of informal assessment:

- What does she read now (street signs, bus schedules, signs on doors)?
- Can she write her name and address?
- Is there someone in her life who helps her with reading tasks?

Strengths of Informal Assessment Tools:

- can be contextualized for individual learners or groups of learners
- can provide valid assessment for learners with low reading levels
- can be short and very specific
- can be used by learners for self-assessment

Limitations of Informal Assessment Tools:

- can be time consuming to create
- are often used one-on-one so can be time consuming to use
- can be racially, culturally or socially biased



2. Formal/Standardized Assessment Tools

Formal assessment tools are commercially developed and have timed, standardized administration, scoring and interpretation procedures. Standardized test scores are usually referenced to specific groups of people or specific sets of skills. They may also have specific qualifications for those administering the assessment tool. Standardized tests often produce grade level scores which programs sometimes use to determine learner placement.

PLEASE NOTE: Some learners may want to know their grade level. If for some reason you have done a grade level assessment, the learner is entitled to know her result. However, the practitioner should help the learner understand that what she needs and how she will get there are more important than the label of a specific grade. “Let’s look at your goal, what you want to learn and what we need to do for you to get there.”

Since grade levels do not show what specific skills the learner has or does not have, grade level scores are not particularly helpful in developing contextual learning plans with learners. Practitioners working with level 1 & 2 literacy learners are better served by assessments designed to assess specific skills that the individual learner needs to possess to meet their goals.

Strengths of Standardized Assessment Tools:

- are usually an economical way to assess groups of learners
- have high levels of reliability and validity
- can be completed in a short time
- are easy to administer and score

Limitations of Standardized Tools:

- do not provide enough detailed information to plan for instruction
- can be racially, culturally or socially biased
- only measure a select set of skills
- do not acknowledge the functional nature of literacy because they take literacy tasks out of the context of learners’ lives
- often intimidate adult learners who have been unsuccessful with them in their past learning experiences

Each program must decide if formal testing fits with the philosophy and goals of the program and is in the best interest of the learners.



3. Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs)

Informal Reading Inventories are another way to determine a learner's reading level. IRIs can help literacy practitioners determine a learner's grade level for placement in programs, and can highlight the areas the learner needs to work on to improve reading and comprehension skills. An IRI consists of a set of graded word lists, graded passages and a set of factual and inferential questions for each passage.

IRIs measure three reading levels:

- the independent level (the learner is able to read and understand the passage without help)
- the instructional level (the learner can read and understand the passage with help from the practitioner)
- the frustration level (the learner would be frustrated trying to read the passage even with help)

The administration of IRIs can also provide the practitioner with information about how a learner approaches literacy tasks.

Strengths of IRIs:

- IRIs are relatively inexpensive.
- IRIs provide information about how the learner is reading, as well as information about specific areas of difficulty.
- IRIs can provide opportunities for the learner to read orally and to retell the story. This enables you to see how she uses text information and prior knowledge to decode unfamiliar words and to comprehend passages.
- Some IRIs have several passages at each grade level which means that a learner can choose which passage she wants to read within a particular grade level.

Limitations of IRIs:

- reading passages are not contextualized for individual learners
- can be time intensive as they are administered individually
- do not provide valid assessment for beginning readers
- can be racially, culturally or socially biased
- only measure a select set of skills



B. Portfolio as an Assessment Tool

Portfolios provide a framework for learner self-discovery, for personal record keeping and for on-going holistic assessment. Portfolio can be a tool for assessment “of” learning, as well as for assessment “for” learning.

The concept of portfolio will be new and challenging to many learners. Introducing the portfolio early in the program can help the learner take ownership of the process. Issues of confidentiality and ownership of the portfolio need to be clearly outlined. While the program may require access to portions of the portfolio that relate specifically to the program, the portfolio belongs to the learner and she has the right to decide how much of her portfolio is shared.

Portfolios can help learners to:

- identify and record personal skills and abilities, accomplishments, growth and new learning
- set life, learning and career goals
- demonstrate skills and knowledge relevant to a specific task, job or academic credit
- take control of their own learning and assessment

1. What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is:

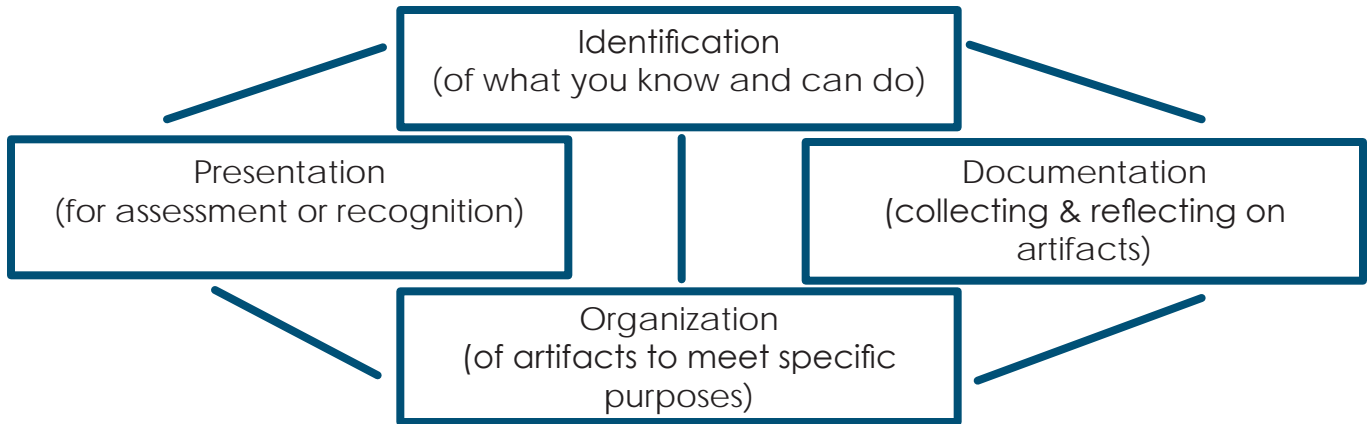
A Concept. It is a way of thinking about learning that emphasizes the value of all learning, regardless of where or how the learning takes place.

A Process. It is a systematic way to identify, think about, document, organize and demonstrate learning.

A Product. It is an organized collection of artifacts that demonstrate what a learner knows and can do at a given point in time. It is a living product that develops and evolves with the learner.

2. What is the portfolio process?

The portfolio process presented in this description appears very linear, but in reality all four stages are on-going so there is no right or wrong order.

**A Portfolio helps with identifying these elements:**

- what the learner already knows and can do
- what the learner would like to be able to do (goals)
- learning styles
- what the learner has accomplished in the program
- life changes the learner has made and reflection on the value of those changes

Tools Used to create a Portfolio:

- interviews
- learning style inventories
- checklists
- photographs
- videos
- reflection sheets
- goal statement sheets
- artwork samples
- certificates received
- records of previous learning activities

Documentation found in a Portfolio:

- On-going selection or creation of artifacts to demonstrate learning and achievements.
- Reflection on the learning that has occurred. Reflecting, identifying and naming specific skills can be a powerful piece in the learner's journey to self awareness. The learner can reflect this knowledge with specific skill statements such as, "I have gained the ability to write sentences and have evidence of this in a paragraph I wrote about fishing".



- Artifacts that demonstrate new skills gained in the learner's personal, community, or work life can also be added to the portfolio.
- Conferences to guide the learner in reflection. Discuss criteria for including something in the portfolio: Why is it chosen? Is it the best piece? What was learned? Does it show progress towards specific goals? Initially this reflection time with the instructor may occur weekly or bi-weekly, but as the learner becomes comfortable with the process, responsibility for portfolio maintenance can move to the learner.

"It should be possible to conduct individual conferences on a monthly basis during the first three months, while also asking learners to engage in personal portfolio reflection. Both learner and practitioner discuss the learner's current strengths and what should be worked on, inserting conference notes in the portfolio. These conference sessions may [take approximately fifteen minutes] after some practice. It is well worth taking extra time in the beginning to introduce the portfolio idea and establish learner routines for storing materials, regular learner reviews and practitioner-learner conferences."
(Thomas, 61)

Tools Used:

- reflection sheets
- program work samples
- life maps
- videos
- CD's
- pictures
- letters of recommendation
- workplace assessments
- certificates earned
- instructor signed rubrics or checklists
- copies of standardized test results
- attendance records...

Organization is important as it:

- provides easy access to artifacts
- makes progress more easily identified

The structure of the learner's portfolio may vary dependent on the purpose of the portfolio.

**Tools Used in Organizing the Portfolio:**

- suitable container
- cover sheet
- dividers
- table of contents
- summary sheet of contents
- a system for selection of artifacts

Presentation:

There can be a variety of purposes for portfolio presentations. The purpose of each presentation must be clearly understood by the learner and the practitioner. For example, what is presented to demonstrate learning in a program differs from what is presented for a job interview.

Purpose of the presentation can be for:

- Self-assessment of learner's progress towards her goals.
- One-on-one assessment and planning discussions between the learner and the practitioner.
- Small and large group sharing to improve and assess communication skills.
- Assessment of the portfolio itself. Some programs require that every learner create a portfolio as part of the completion requirements so periodic evaluation of the portfolio itself may be done. It can be done as part of a learner/practitioner conference or with other learners in the program.

Tools Used for presentations:

- conferences
- small group presentations of individual pieces
- discussions between learner and instructor
- video tapes of practice presentations
- checklists of oral communication skills
- reflection questions ...

3. What goes into a portfolio?

The contents of a portfolio will vary from learner to learner and will depend on the purpose for which it is being used. Learners should be encouraged to develop a holistic portfolio that develops and presents a picture of the whole person. The learner can then use it or just parts of it for specific purposes, for example:

- For program progress assessment – the learner selects artifacts that demonstrate progress towards her goals set in the program.



- For job interviews – the learner selects the artifacts that demonstrate that she has the skills needed for that specific job. These artifacts can be a confidence booster that show she can do the job and she can also show them to the employer as proof of her skills or knowledge.
- For program entrance or credit – the learner selects artifacts that show she has the knowledge and skills needed to meet the program entrance or credit requirements.

General Content Tips:

1. Include a variety of artifacts so the portfolio represents as complete a picture of the learner as possible.
2. Include both draft and finished forms of work.
3. Include artifacts from inside and outside of the literacy program that provide evidence of skills, knowledge and/or abilities.
4. Include originals or photocopies of work.
5. Portfolios can include more than written evidence. Learners may have photos of projects, tapes, or discs that demonstrate their progress.
6. Plan the portfolio container so it can accommodate various types of evidence.
7. The learner should lead the selection process and include evidence in the portfolio that relates directly to her personal, employment, and learning goals.

Specific Examples of Content:

- **Cover sheet** – contains basic information about the learner. This may be an expression of individual creativity or simply her name. It is important that the learner feels she owns the portfolio so the cover could reflect this ownership.
- **Table of contents** – explains the organizational structure of the portfolio so artifacts can be located easily.
- **Summary sheet** - includes dates, names or descriptions of the items included. The learner can add to the summary sheet each time she adds an entry into her portfolio.
- **Goal statements** - Goals are vital to the effectiveness of portfolio assessment. Entries in the portfolio should show progress towards the goals that the learner has identified, stated and is working towards. Goal statements should be reviewed regularly by the learner and updated as required. Revised or updated goal statements should be included in the portfolio.
- **Personal historical artifacts** – things that demonstrate the strengths and skills the learner has developed over time and brings into the program. This could include pictures, crafts, certificates, projects, journal entries, work samples from prior programs, written grocery lists, household budgets.



- **Records of current progress being made:**
 - Checklists - interest inventories, attitude checklists, skills checklists
 - Work samples – showing progress towards goals in their learning plan
 - Attendance records- verified by practitioner
 - Records of standardized tests - record the name of the test, the test date and the scores. This may reduce the testing needed if the learner moves to another literacy program that requires standardized test scores.
 - Pre/post quizzes - results of tests, dated copies or originals
- **Reflection sheets** - containing reflections from the learner about her learning and, if the learner wishes, reflections or comments about her progress from the literacy practitioner. Learners with low reading or writing levels can share their reflections orally or can have them recorded by a scribe who reads it back to the learner to ensure accuracy.

When using a portfolio as an assessment tool, it is important for the learner to engage in **reflection**. **Reflection puts the focus not only on the experiences, but more importantly, on what is learned and how the learner will use what she has learned.**

“Encouraging analysis of one’s work through self-reflection adds an important dimension to literacy instruction. This process of self-reflection can lead to recognition and acknowledgement of progress and improvement, which results in superior performance and increased positive self esteem. Increased self confidence becomes a chief motivator.” (Taylor, 9)



The following table provides some examples of artifacts that might be used to demonstrate learning as it relates to specific Benchmarks in the Circle of Learning Document.

Benchmark	Level	Artifact
Communications - Observing and Viewing: "Observe and view actively."	1	Video tape of class discussion, journal entries about body language, labeled collage of visual formats, descriptions of positive and negative body language at a family gathering
Communications - Observing and Viewing: "Observe and view critically."	2	Pictures of participation in a cultural ceremony, taped demonstration of skill learned by watching someone else, set of questions prepared for a political speaker, journal entry that shows understanding of personal biases/ opinions
Communications - Listening: "Listen to short messages actively and respectfully."	1	Summary of message left on answering machine, list of reasons for listening to different kinds of speakers, picture of something made following oral directions
Communications - Listening: "Listen to long messages actively and respectfully."	2	Note to summarize message of a speech, journal entry on body language of friend describing a personal problem, list of "books on tape" read, notes to show understanding of fact vs. opinion in speech, tape of class discussion of controversial issue, instructor checklist
Communications - Speaking: "Speak in familiar situations so others can understand."	1	Tape of story told to children, script written for introducing two people, list created of anxiety reducing activities when speaking in public, samples of "I" statements, tape of story reading, script for meeting with children's teacher



Benchmark	Level	Artifact
Communications - Speaking: "Speak in new situations so others can understand."	2	Script for message to be left at work, tape of small group discussion, video of presentation made to community group, list of strategies to control anxiety over speaking out
Communications - Reading: "Read short paragraphs with understanding."	1	Personal dictionary pages, alphabetical list of friends' phone numbers, diagram showing understanding of short text, lists of words arranged alphabetically, work samples illustrating knowledge of sentence parts
Communications - Reading: "Read 1-2 pages of text with understanding."	2	Samples of fiction and non fiction with explanation of differences, picture of furniture assembled from written directions
Communications - Writing: "Write sentences and a short paragraph that others can understand."	1	Samples of alphabet written and printed, grocery lists, notes to teacher, original and edited samples of paragraphs, instructions written for a craft, sample business letters
Communications - Writing: "Write long paragraphs that others can understand."	2	Personal synonym dictionary, copy of daily work log, copies of different types of written communications, graphs created, job application completed, resume, cover letters
Numeracy - Demonstrate basic numeracy skills: "Solve simple numeracy problems in daily life"	1	Recipes doubled (picture of muffins made), cheque registry, baby weight gain charts, wage comparison charts, map drawn of proposed trip with mileage shown and totaled, copy of completed cancelled cheque, statement from automated teller machine, video of helping child count with blocks



Benchmark	Level	Artifact
Numeracy - Demonstrate complex numeracy skills: "Solve complex numeracy problems in daily life."	2	Journal entry explaining a math process, floor plan of room with calculations for carpeting and paint, list of prices calculated from an attached percentage off flyer, explanation of pay stub, bar graph of incomes for various jobs, coupons with savings comparisons and calculations shown, scale drawings
Interpersonal Skills: "Enhance self-reflection and engage in positive relations with others."	1 & 2	Journal pages, artwork, tape of job interviews, group skills checklist, tape of group discussions or storytelling, thank-you note
Lifelong Learning: "Participate in creating, monitoring and adjusting one's own learning plan."	1 & 2	Goal setting charts showing adjustments over time, journal entries, tapes of conferences, work samples with reflection of learning shown, skills checklists.

4. Strengths of Portfolio Assessment:

- Portfolio assessment is learner centered.
- The learner is an active participant in the assessment process. She set her goals for learning and assesses whether she is achieving these goals. This contributes to the learner's sense of control over her own learning and helps in the development of lifelong learning skills.
- Portfolio assessment allows the learner and literacy practitioner to identify strengths and challenges across a wide range of skill sets.
- Portfolio assessment displays the diversity of literacy tasks learners engage in on a daily basis.
- Portfolios can illustrate even small changes in a learner's literacy development. This encourages the learner as progress is evident in a very short timeframe.
- Portfolios integrate instruction and assessment.
- Portfolio assessment can guide instruction by helping the learner set goals and by providing evidence of progress.
- Portfolio assessment accommodates different cultural backgrounds and learning styles.



5. Limitations of Portfolio Assessment:

- It takes time to start and maintain a portfolio.
- There is a significant amount of paperwork involved in the creation and maintenance of the portfolio. It may be difficult to ensure confidential and safe storage.
- Training time for literacy practitioners and learners is required.
- The holistic nature of portfolio work may bring out sensitive issues for learners. Practitioners must know their limitations and know where appropriate resources are available in the community.

For portfolio information in a Saskatchewan context,
The Circle Of Learning: Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2
has a well developed section on portfolio in Appendix C (pg. 146).

A Journey of Self Discovery: Facilitators Guide to Reflection and Portfolio Development
also provides resources for practitioners using portfolio in their program.
(please see Annotated Bibliography)



C. Choosing Appropriate Tools

Because literacy programs vary widely, the types of assessment tools chosen will vary widely. Selection of assessment tools will depend on the needs of your learners and your program.

In choosing appropriate assessment tools the following are some things to consider:

- **the best interest of the learners**
 - are tools and processes contextual?
 - are they at the appropriate level?
 - are they valid?
 - are they reliable?
 - are they racially and culturally unbiased?

- **the length and structure of your program**
 - does it offer individualized programs at various levels?
 - can individual goals be set for each learner or is there a defined curriculum?
 - is the initial assessment done before the start date or is it part of the program?

- **the resources you have available (both human and financial) to purchase or develop tools**

- **the type of information the program and the learner need to get from an assessment**
 - is a grade level required by the program or the funder?
 - are specific tools part of the program outline?
 - what information is needed to plan individual programs?

- **staff qualifications**
 - is your staff qualified to use any standardized tools you select?

- **the age of the test**
 - tests that have not been revised in the past 10 years may not be relevant to your learners.



Things to Think About:

1. Do you use a mix of formal and informal assessment tools and processes with your learners?
2. Does your personal assessment philosophy align with portfolio assessment? How is it different?
3. Do you have a personal portfolio? Can you model the reflection and critical analysis skills needed to maintain an effective portfolio?
4. How will you encourage the learner to make on-going additions to and reflections on their portfolio?
5. What measures are in place to ensure the contents of the learner's portfolio are kept confidential?
6. Do learners leave your program with a positive go-forward-approach to the next steps?
7. During the exit assessment, do learners participate in the evaluation of their progress?
8. Do learners have an opportunity to evaluate the literacy program?
9. Are the results of the exit assessment used to improve services?
10. If you use standardized tests, do they measure what they are supposed to and are they normalized to the population that you are working with?



IV. Appendices

A. Initial Development - Purpose and Processes

In 2000, the “Towards a Standardized Intake and Assessment Process” project was initiated to:

- Identify intake and assessment procedures currently used in literacy programs.
- Maintain ongoing communication with Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training’s Basic Education Assessment Reference Group to ensure compatibility of intake and assessment processes within the larger provincial network.
- Explore options for linking assessment processes with IALS levels.
- Research assessment tools used in literacy programs across Canada.
- Incorporate a learning portfolio approach into program assessment procedures and practices.
- Develop assessment kits for use by the literacy field within Saskatchewan.
- Provide training for practitioners on adult literacy assessment and the “assessment kits”.

The initial stage of the Intake and Assessment Project was the formation of the committee that provided expertise and guidance to the project coordinator. Committee members were literacy practitioners included for their experience and interest in assessment processes. Research of print and web-based material was conducted. A survey of 74 agencies in Saskatchewan was initiated to determine what was being done in intake and assessment and what the needs of the literacy field were. Information from literacy programs across Canada was requested through the provincial literacy coalitions.



B. Works Cited

Saskatchewan Learning. Intake and Assessment Framework for Basic Education and Related Programs in Saskatchewan. 2003.

Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Learner Centred Intake and Assessment Processes for Literacy Programs in Saskatchewan. 2001

Saskatchewan Literacy Network et al. Circle of Learning Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2. 2006.

Saskatchewan Post secondary Education and Skills Training. Basic Education Redesign-Phase 1 Planning And Foundations. 2001

Saskatchewan Literacy Network et al. Circle of Learning Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2. 2006.

Taylor, Maurice. Literacy Portfolio Assessment. Ottawa; University of Ottawa, 1994

The Ontario Literacy Coalition. Inside Outcomes: The Sequel. Issue 2. (2000)

The Ontario Literacy Coalition. Inside Outcomes: The Sequel. Issue 3. (2000)

Thomas, Adele & Bram Fisher. Assessment and Evaluation Strategies in Family Literacy Programs. 1966. <http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/aesrtat/pg.61.htm>.



C. Annotated Bibliography

Campbell, Pat. Measures of Success. Edmonton, AB: Grassroots Press, 2007.

Measures of Success is a set of resources that include a collection of writings by professionals in the field of assessment and accountability in Adult Basic Education. It also includes two CDs that provide demonstrations of both performance and diagnostic assessments.

Campbell, Pat and Brokop Flo. Canadian Adult Reading Assessment. Edmonton, AB: Grassroots Press, 2000.

“The Canadian Adult Reading Assessment” (CARA) is an Informal Reading Inventory consisting of graded word lists and reading passages. It is designed to provide information about how an adult reads in an actual, real life reading situation. The reading passages are well developed and Canadian in content.

Centre for Literacy Studies. Seeds of Innovation: If Only I Could Read, Write, Spell. 2001. Retrieved January 25, 2008 from www.slincs.coe.utk.edu/pdf/Read-Write-Spell.pdf.

This document is part of an action research project. It provides an overview of assessment and learning difficulties. There are helpful sections on assessment tools, instructional strategies and resources. The authors share an overview of the action research project, their roles and learning.

Damm, Kateri Akiwenzie. Empowering the Spirit: Native Literacy Curricula. Ontario: Ningwangke Clearinghouse, 1997.

This curriculum assists Native Literacy practitioners to provide appropriate materials for Native learners at various ages and levels of literacy. The curriculum was updated in 2004.

Fineret, Hannah Arlene. It Belongs to Me: A guide to Portfolio Assessment in Adult Education Programs. Durham, NC: Literacy South Central, 1993.

This guide provides a philosophy and practice for portfolio assessment. It includes a comprehensive resource listing and selected annotated bibliography for more information about portfolio development.

Fox, Judith and Strohmaier, Rosemary. CABS: Common Assessment of Basic Skills, Third Edition, Initial Assessment in 5 Levels. Kingston Ontario: Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, 2000.

This manual is a collection of informal assessment activities directly related to the 5 levels of Literacy recognized in the Ontario Literacy System. It contains learning outcomes and informal assessment tools. The section of additional resources will be of use to many literacy programs outside of Ontario. These assessment tools include numeracy basics, goal setting, information about learning disabilities and English as a second language.



Glazer, Susan Mandel. *Assessment IS Instruction: Reading, Writing, Spelling and Phonics for ALL Learners*. Norwood, MA.: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc., 1998.

This resource examines the issues around assessing learner progress. It includes a guide for planning and implementing instruction that reflects the needs of the learners, which have been identified through formal and informal assessment. There is a focus on classrooms and school age children so some of the tools and techniques may not be appropriate for adult learners.

Hill, Diane. *Aboriginal Access to Post-Secondary Education: Prior Learning Assessment and its use within Aboriginal Programs of Learning*. Ontario: First Nations Technical Institute and Loyalist College, 1995.

This manual includes a comprehensive section on portfolio development within a First Nations perspective. The document is intended to provide the reader with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal learners, their unique cultural beliefs and practices and the interconnectedness of education experiences within this framework.

Horsman, Jenny. *Saskatchewan Level 2 Drawing the Line: Dealing with Affective issues in Literacy*. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 2001

This level 2 workshop kit provides a hands-on look at how violence affects learning. It provides background information and tools for practitioners who want to improve their skills in helping learners deal with violence in their lives.

Jacobson, Erik et al. *Creating Authentic Materials and Activities for the Adult Literacy: A Handbook for Practitioners*. 2003. National Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy. Retrieved January 12, 2008 from www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/jacobson.pdf)

This Literacy Practitioners' handbook provides a reflective overview of the use of authentic tasks and assessments within the classroom. It pays particular attention to 'meaning making' and the important role the literacy practitioner plays in assisting learners to construct meaningful literacy activities in and outside of school.

Literacy Ontario. *Common Assessment in the Literacy and Basic Skills Program*. Ontario: Literacy Ontario, 2000.

This document provides a step by step guide in understanding the importance of common practice in assessment to engage learners and increase their portability of skills and knowledge. It offers a critical line of inquiry that provides a framework for literacy practitioners to question the structure of their current assessment practices.



Saskatchewan Learning . *A Journey of Self-Discovery: Facilitator's Guide to Reflection and Portfolio Development*. Regina: Saskatchewan Learning, 2005.

This guide has been developed to support facilitators as they lead learners through a process of activities that encourage and support reflection. Reflection is the foundation to portfolio development. The activities are general and enable the facilitator freedom to adapt to the needs of their groups.

Saskatchewan Learning. *Intake and Assessment Framework for Basic Education and Related Programs for Adults*. Regina: Saskatchewan Learning, 2003.

This framework document describes guiding principles for the development and delivery of quality initial assessment and intake services. It provides an initial assessment model, standards for data collection, procedure for information gathering, sharing, as well as, a method to implement and evaluate the model in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Literacy Network and Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment. *The Circle of Learning: Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks Levels 1 and 2*. Saskatoon: Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 2006.

This document provides the foundation for using the Level 1 & 2 Literacy Benchmarks developed in Saskatchewan. It provides the history and underlying philosophy behind the development of the Benchmarks. It places the Benchmarks into 4 quadrants and provides related learning outcomes, knowledge and skills sets and activities. It also provides how-to information for theme based planning and portfolio assessment.

Schneider, Melody. *Dimensions of Change: An Authentic Assessment Guidebook*. Greensboro, NC: Peppercorn Press and Books Inc., 1999.

This resource lays out a theoretical base for authentic assessment, provides stories to make the theory concrete, and provides a guide to develop your own assessment system. It also contains sample assessment tools.

Manitoba Education and Training. *Creative Student Assessment A Guide to developing Meaningful Evaluation*. 2003Winnipeg, MB: Adult Learning and Literacy, 2003.

Retrieved October 2008 from www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/publications.

This manual contains, theory, examples and some excellent informal tools for assessing learners with minimal literacy skills.



D. Web Site Resources

Advanced Education Employment and Labor
<http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca/>

Common Assessment of Basic Skills Test
www.lleo.ca/cabs3/index.html

How to Learn
<http://www.howtolearn.com/personal.html>

Human Resources Development Canada
www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca

LdPride
www.ldpride.net/learningstyles

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada
http://www.ldac-taac.ca/Defined/defined_new-e.asp#top

Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan
<http://www.ldas.org/>

Learning to Learn
<http://www.centredebat.qc.ca/>

Manitoba Education and Literacy
www.edu.gov.mb.ca

Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential(MAPP)
www.assessment.com

Movement for Canadian Literacy
<http://www.literacy.ca/>

National Adult Literacy Database
<http://www.nald.ca/>

National Institute for Drug Abuse.
<http://www.nida.nih.gov>

Parenting Education Saskatchewan
<http://www.parenteducationsask.ca/>



Appendices

Saskatchewan Literacy Network
<http://www.sk.literacy.ca>

University of Georgia
<http://ttc.coe.uga.edu/surveys>



E. Sample Assessment Tools

Things to Note:

- Included in this section are tools that may be helpful in assessing Level 1 & 2 learners. Many of the tools included here can be used as written or oral activities, with results being written by the learner or scribed by the practitioner, depending on the skill level of the individual learner.
- This section is not meant to be exhaustive. The tools are intended as a starting point for the literacy practitioner to build on through experience and inquiry. Use them as is, or adapt them so that they work for your learners and your program.
- When adapting the tools use resources that are familiar to your learners. Using transit schedules may work in an urban setting but reading schedules may need a different resource in a rural setting.
- The skills and goals checklists found in the Circle of Learning (pg. 151 – 172) can be adapted to develop individual learner's programs. These lists can also be a starting point for creating rubrics or checklists to provide contextual assessment tools that are specific to the learning plans of individual learners.
- Computer Self Assessment Skills lists are also found in the Circle of Learning. (pg. 174)
- Many of these tools can be completed and included in a learner's portfolio with reflection attached. A series of tools (with the date of completion added) could also be used in the learner's portfolio to demonstrate progress towards individual learner's goals.