



Building Community Capacity: **Focus on Literacy**

**Community Impact Evaluation
Literacy Practitioner Impact Evaluation**



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These reports are on the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) at:
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Acknowledgement is also given to the many local services, agencies and businesses in 11 Alberta communities who partnered with the participants to reduce literacy barriers and make their communities more literacy friendly.

This course was designed based on the *Connecting Literacy to Community* project. Publications from the *Connecting Literacy to Community* project can be ordered from:

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They can also be found on the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) website at:

“Connecting Literacy to Community: Building Community Capacity: Focus on Adult Literacy” (handbook)

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/connect/focus/cover.htm>

“Connecting Literacy to Community - Building Community Capacity: Literacy Audits and Strategic Planning”

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/connect/audits/cover.htm>

“Connecting Literacy to Community - Literacy Specialists: Prior Knowledge and Experience”

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/connect/prior/cover.htm>

“Connecting Literacy to Community - Literacy Specialists: Competencies and Practices”

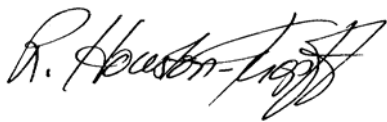
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An Evaluation Approach - View from Both Sides

The idea behind the project **Building Community Capacity - Focus on Literacy** was to develop a course and train literacy specialists. These specialists would focus on literacy in their communities and work with local services, agencies and businesses to promote awareness, understanding and organizational change. Literacy, as a social issue, is multi-dimensional. The lack of literacy skills can affect a person in many ways: employment, health, family and community life to mention a few. The lack of literacy can set up both personal and community barriers. Building community capacity to strategize and make a more accessible, literacy friendly community was one of the project's goals. Now the challenge: how do you meaningfully evaluate the learning and change process?

The project partners, Bow Valley College and Literacy Alberta, resolved the dilemma by evaluating both sides of the learning and change process. The first report, **Community Impact Evaluation**, uses qualitative and quantitative approaches to look at the impact of literacy specialists as they worked with services, agencies and businesses in eleven Alberta communities. The second report, **Literacy Practitioner Impact Evaluation**, is a research in practice approach evaluating new skills practitioner developed, analyzing how they implemented these skills and assessing how the course enhanced their professionalism.

The expertise Bill Holbrow and Audrey Gardner brought to this evaluation will be a valuable contribution to the literacy field. Their teamwork and ability to analyze and evaluate created this report for you - a view from both sides.



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August 2005

Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy

Community Impact Evaluation

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Summary

In 2004 Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College partnered to develop a training course for literacy practitioners called *Focus on Literacy – Community Literacy Consultant Training Project*. The Project had two parts. Part One involved the design and development of the course and the practicum. Part Two saw the delivery of a pilot of the course to eleven “literacy specialist” participants from eleven different Alberta communities. The training was designed especially for practitioners who were already working in the field of literacy. The project furthered the successes of the *Connecting Literacy to Community (CLC) Project* that ran previously.

The course was 65 hours in duration with 32 hours delivered in class over 4 days and the rest completed on-line along with the practicum. From the training course the literacy coordinators took on the role of a literacy specialist for their 3-month (100 hour) practicum in which they applied their learning and practice, knowledge and skills, acquired in the course. The Practicum utilized a model of building community capacity, like the CLC Project before it, by having the literacy specialists, who participated in the Project’s training course, work with agencies, services and businesses in the 11 Alberta communities. The mandate of the literacy specialists was to strengthen community knowledge about literacy and positive literacy practices, and to apply their skills and knowledge in order to train professionals and others.

The practicum had three (3) evaluative components: learning objectives, the agency assessment of literacy specialist performance, and a statement concerning the impact of the literacy specialist’s work on the agency. The practicum evaluation took place when the eleven literacy specialists applied their training in the communities. The evaluation analyzed the effectiveness of the practicum to meet the Training Course’s objectives. It also documented the key indicators of change (improved literacy environment) in the communities. Quantitative measures were used to track the number and kinds of services provided by literacy consultants, and some aspects of the assessment of literacy specialist performance. Most of the Practicum data was qualitative.

An analysis of the data collected during the Practicum, indicates that Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College achieved a number of the goals of the Focus on Literacy Project’s Training Course. Further, representatives of the agencies rated highly the performance of the literacy specialists in each of the following categories:

- Making Contact/Introducing and Promoting Services to the Community,
- Providing Presentations/Facilitating Audits and Workshops/Facilitating Learning and Encouraging Sustainable Change,
 - Personal and Professional Effectiveness/Gathering and Using Information/Process Management Skills, and
 - Building Working Relationships and Partnerships.

Using a variety of techniques, including appreciative inquiry, the literacy specialists delivered literacy awareness, plain language, and verbal communication workshops as well as conducted literacy audits. The impact on the agencies and the people working in those agencies was well documented in the feedback received through the impact assessments. From those assessments, it appears that not only was the awareness of literacy issues and the importance of addressing literacy needs increased, but also that both immediate change took place and additional near-future change was planned. Agencies reported immediate improvements in their attitudes toward and the ways in which they interact with clients, as well as to the print materials including brochures, signage and on-line documents that are directed at clients. In total, agency representatives felt that these developments have both improved their agencies' abilities to serve their clients better, and removed barriers that have hindered clients' use of agency resources. Further, these same agencies indicated an intention to resolve other literacy-related issues with changes to existing written materials and the development of new ones, in addition to changes to policies, procedures and processes.

Two recommendations were offered to improve the training and practicum portions of the course. One concerns learning objectives, the other the assessment of the literacy specialists' performance.

The practicum portion of the *Focus on Literacy – Community literacy Consultant Training Project* was successful in accomplishing its primary purposes. Literacy awareness has increased in those Alberta communities served by the literacy specialists. The literacy environment in Alberta appears to have been enhanced, and people with literacy barriers appear to have improved access to services provided by those agencies served by the literacy specialists. Finally, capacity has been built in those Alberta communities served by the literacy specialists, through the training of non-literacy professionals to integrate positive literacy practices into their workplace.

1. Background and Introduction¹

In 2004 Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College partnered to develop a training course for literacy practitioners called *Focus on Literacy – Community Literacy Consultant Training Project*. The Project had two parts. Part One involved the design and development of the course and the practicum. Part Two saw the delivery of a pilot of the course to eleven “literacy specialist” participants from eleven different Alberta communities. The training was designed especially for practitioners who were already working in the field of literacy. The project furthered the successes of the *Connecting Literacy to Community (CLC) Project* that ran previously.

During the CLC Project, which ran in three Calgary communities and three rural communities, it became apparent that those community services (e.g., health care providers, women’s centers, multi-agency referral centres), whose clients were often people with limited literacy skills, had little awareness of literacy and few strategies to assist clients with literacy barriers. Furthermore, many community services had no operational or training policies to address literacy as an access to services issue. The impact on the clients with literacy issues is that they often experience difficulties. The Project concluded that organizations of all sizes including business and services that have clients who could be literacy barriered could improve client service by having staff members who have received training or consulting from a literacy specialist.

1.1 The Training Course²

The course was 65 hours in duration with 32 hours delivered in class over 4 days and the rest completed on-line along with the practicum. *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* is a professional development opportunity for literacy coordinators to increase their knowledge and skills in community capacity-building and advance awareness of literacy within their communities. From the training course the literacy coordinators took on the role of a literacy specialist for their 3-month (100 hour) practicum in which they applied their learning and practice, knowledge and skills, acquired in the course. Learners received a credit for each of the course and the practicum.

In the course, literacy specialists learned a number of important skills that became the desired activities and outcomes of their practicum experience.

¹. Adapted from Focus on Literacy: A Course for Community Literacy Consultant Training - Project Proposal; Submitted to: National Literacy Secretariat by Bow Valley College & Literacy Alberta, June 2003

². Adapted from Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy; Bow Valley College and Literacy Alberta; Bow Valley College 2004

These training course activities and anticipated practicum outcomes were:

- Explore the following concepts and incorporate them into their day-to-day literacy specialist practices.
 - Community capacity-building and community development
 - Literacy as social practice and New Literacy Studies
 - Appreciative inquiry
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - Organizational and social change
 - Social marketing
- Conduct a literacy assets and gaps scan of their community
- Create a practicum work plan
- Demonstrate how to balance and integrate a literacy specialist approach with their everyday work
- Expand professional skills in relationship and partnership building when working with people in their community
- Strengthen presentation and group facilitation skills through providing:
 - Workshops on literacy awareness, plain language and verbal communication
 - Literacy audits and action plans
 - Strategies to improve referrals for individuals looking for literacy programs
- Support and participate in community initiatives that promote literacy and life long learning

1.2 The Practicum

While this Project addressed several needs including the training of literacy professionals, the primary purposes of the practicum component were to:

- increase literacy awareness in Alberta communities;
- enhance the literacy environment in Alberta so that people with literacy barriers have improved access to services; and to
- build community capacity by training non-literacy professionals in communities to integrate positive literacy practices into their workplace.

The Practicum utilized a model of building community capacity, like the CLC Project before it, by having the literacy specialists, who participated in the Project's training course, work with agencies, services and businesses in the 11 Alberta communities. The mandate of the literacy specialists was to strengthen community knowledge about literacy and positive literacy practices, and to apply their skills and knowledge in order to train professionals and others.

2. Evaluation of the Practicum

The practicum had three (3) evaluative components: learning objectives, the agency assessment of literacy specialist performance, and a statement concerning the impact of the literacy specialist's work on the agency.

Learning Objectives

Each literacy specialist identified specific learning objectives for their practicum. The purposes of the Learning Objectives were to establish a link between the theory of the training course and the practical application of that theory in the practicum, and to provide the literacy specialists with goals or "signposts" to help guide their Practicum activities. A copy of the Learning Objectives form can be found in Attachment 1.

Agency Assessment of the Literacy Specialist's Performance

Those agencies and organizations, for which the literacy specialist delivered literacy services, provided feedback describing the literacy specialist's performance. Further, the assessment provided the Project's Practicum Supervisor with data to evaluate the application of theory to practice and a means to validate the information presented by the literacy specialist in the On-line Journal and Data Sheets. See Attachment 2 for a sample of the Agency Assessment of Literacy Specialist's Performance.

Impact of the Literacy Specialist's Services

Those agencies and organizations, for which the literacy specialists provided literacy services, commented on the immediate impact and changes that took place and plans for other change that resulted from the literacy specialist's work. The practicum impact statements also provided the Project's Training Supervisor with valuable performance data.

The practicum evaluation took place when the eleven literacy specialists applied their training in the communities. The evaluation analyzed the effectiveness of the practicum to meet the Training Course's objectives. It also documented the key indicators of change (improved literacy environment) in the communities. Quantitative measures were used to track the number and kinds of services provided by literacy consultants, and some aspects of the Assessment of Literacy Specialist Performance. Most of the Practicum data was qualitative.

3. Practicum Data

3.1 Learning Objectives

The literacy specialists' learning objectives can be divided into 3 broad categories. These categories are literacy research and knowledge; presentation; facilitation and communication skills; and relationship and

partnership development and maintenance. Each of the following three categories contains learning objective quotes from the literacy specialists.

Literacy Research and Knowledge

- Enhance skills in research and general knowledge of literacy statistics
- Manage and balance the expectations of the literacy specialist role
- Utilize the talents of literacy ambassadors
- Improve ability to gather and use information
- Improve ability and effectiveness in conducting literacy audits
- Learn more about plain language and clear verbal communication
- To have an extensive knowledge-base on literacy issues

Presentation, Facilitation and Communication Skills

- Improve presentation skills
- Strengthen research and facilitation skills through discussions, workshops and presentations
- Literacy presentations that emphasize building community capacity
- Strengthen presentation and group facilitation skills
- Communication skills – knowing the audience
- Be less directive and provide more opportunities for input from others
- Improve facilitation skills and become a more effective persuader
- Improve ability to facilitate
- Use appreciative enquiry

Relationship and Partnership Development and Maintenance

- Build on existing relationships and create new self-sustaining partnerships
- Be a utilized resource for building literacy-friendly services
- Communicate ... information about literacy specialist work ...
- Increase the number of follow-up calls and contacts
- Develop and nurture sustainable relationships
- Formalize relationships with community agencies
- Expand relationship- and partnership-building skills
- Participate in and support leadership in community initiatives that promote literacy and life-long learning
- Encourage sustainable change by facilitating literacy audits and helping organizations set goals
- Build relationships by following-up with organizations
- Marketing – motivate individuals and organizations to use services
- Increase the number of cold calls
- Know more about the community organizations
- Make and follow-up on contacts in a timely and systematic fashion

3.2 Practicum Activity

The literacy specialists worked in 1 urban and 10 rural communities. The population of each of the rural communities was in the range of 1,500 to 20,000 people. Of the 229 visits to community agencies, organizations, businesses and interagency meetings, 25 (10.9%) were in urban settings and 204 (89.1%) were in rural locations.

Category of visits by the literacy specialists

The following table describes the 4 categories of visits made by the literacy specialists.

Category	Urban			Rural			Total	
	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %
Agency/Service	22	88.0	10.9	179	87.7	89.1	201	87.8
Business	3	12.0	15.0	17	8.3	85.0	20	8.7
Individual	0			6	2.9	100	6	2.6
Learner	0			2	1.0	100	2	0.9
Total	25	100.0	10.9	204	100.0	89.1	229	100.0

Types of Agencies and organizations where the literacy specialists consulted and delivered literacy services:

- A college
- A church
- Chambers of Commerce
- Public libraries
- Government agencies
- Community service organizations
- Health care organizations and societies
- A literacy group
- A learning centre
- A native community group
- Family and community support and service centres
- An adult learning program
- An infant care society
- A food bank
- A community school
- An employment services agency
- A community learning council

Services provided by the literacy specialists

The following table describes the services provided by the literacy specialists during their visits.

Category	Urban			Rural			Total	
	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %
Information	6	24.0	5.6	101	49.5	94.4	107	46.7
Learner referral	1	4.0	100.0				1	0.4
Media				10	4.9	100.0	10	4.4
Workshop	13	52.0	17.1	63	30.9	82.9	76	33.2
Other	5	20.0	14.3	30	14.7	85.7	35	15.3
Total	25	100.0	10.9	204	100.0	89.1	229	100.0

Number of Participants

The following table describes the number of participants that attended the visits/functions provided by the literacy specialists.

Category	Urban			Rural			Total	
	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %	Row %	Number	Column %
< 5	13	52.0	11.9	96	47.1	88.1	109	47.6
5 – 10	7	28.0	15.2	39	19.1	84.8	46	20.1
> 10	5	20.0	6.8	69	33.8	93.2	74	32.3
Total	25	100.0	10.5	204	100.0	89.5	229	100.0

3.3 Agency Assessment of Literacy Specialist Performance

Thirty six (36) agencies and organizations, for which literacy services were provided, offered quantitative and qualitative feedback on the literacy specialist's performance. The quantitative feedback was on a "1 to 3" scale in which "1" was "Outstanding", "2" was "Satisfactory" and "3" meant "Needs Improvement". The following table summarizes the performance attributes and the average rating as expressed by representatives of the 36 agencies.

Performance Attribute	Rating
Prepared and well planned	1.1
Provided helpful information that is relevant to our programs and services	1.2
Verbal communication skills (speaking and listening)	1.2
Written communication skills (flipcharts, overheads, handouts)	1.4
Facilitation and presentation skills (encouraged learning and participation)	1.2
Professional manner (positive attitude, respectful of others)	1.0
Knowledge about agency programs and services	1.2
Overall rating on literacy specialist service	1.1

In addition to the quantitative assessment, the agencies and organizations were invited to comment on the literacy specialists' outstanding qualities and areas in which they could improve. While the "Qualities to Improve" section was either most often not answered or responded to with little information, those who completed the evaluation form provided a significant number of comments concerning the literacy specialists'

“Outstanding Qualities”. A summary of these qualities is presented below in 4 groupings: knowledge, communication, personal and professional qualities, and presentation and facilitation skills.

Knowledge

This grouping contained 23 responses, some were:

- Lots of information
- Strong working knowledge of literacy
- Supports presentation with statistics relevant to literacy rates in this community
- Very aware of the other organizations and agencies locally and cooperates with them
- Understands her materials and subject matter
- Able to answer questions
- Comprehensive understanding of program
- Knowledgeable about our community, agency, clientele

Communication (Verbal and Written)

This grouping contained 14 responses, some were:

- Very open to questions and feedback
- Can talk to people of all abilities
- Plain language
- Ability to recognize audience level of understanding and match material to that level
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to offer constructive criticism without rancor
- Ability to get to the point using clear concise language
- Public speaking
- Clear voice, easy to follow

Personal and Professional Qualities

This grouping had the largest number of comments at 43, some were:

- Personable
- Patient
- Adaptable
- Sincere
- Demonstrates genuine interest and concern
- Very perceptive of the needs and feelings of those to whom she is presenting
- Interest in the agency
- Dedication
- Persistence
- Approachable and positive
- Willing to change for suitability of group
- Tremendous asset to the community

- Very committed to improving the literacy skills of people in the area
- Very respectful and confidential with clients
- Makes every effort to provide clients with the services they need
- Flexibility - time of presentations
- Willingness
- Organizational skills
- Friendly
- Accommodating
- Non-judgmental
- Gentleness and compassion
- Respectfulness
- Time management
- Leadership
- Prepared
- Enthusiastic
- Ability to guide the group without influencing our decisions
- Helpful
- Concern for people
- Warm, professional presentation

Presentation and Facilitation Abilities

This grouping had 29 comments, some were:

- Respectful approach to the group
- Helped to make literacy very personal for all of us
- Raised awareness of both problems and potential solutions
- Very good at creating a comfortable atmosphere
- Presentation informative and to the point
- Quickly opened the audience's eyes
- Adaptable - change presentation style
- Presentation was thoroughly researched and very detailed
- Comfortable presentation style
- Making information relevant to our use
- Ability to apply knowledge to our programs & services
- Information and tools provided
- Ability to communicate important information to audience
- A passion for literacy issues
- Makes the material interesting
- Presents new information
- Relates info to daily work
- Uses exercises that help you to remember main messages
- Ability to make literacy problems clear using practical and easy activities
- Passion for literacy and learning
- Group facilitation and management skills
- Well prepared

The qualities, which the Literacy Specialist should strive to improve:

Although few comments were provided, the areas in which agency contacts felt that the literacy specialists could improve can be grouped in 4 categories as follows;

Preparation

- Under-researched the organization
- Assessing the areas that need the most focus

Presentation

- Presentations could be improved by being a little more dynamic
- Change pacing of parts of workshop
- Clarify instructions for activities
- Clarifying group tasks

Promotion of literacy services

- More promotion to let business and industry know
- A quick reference sheet
- Need more extensive presentation
- More outreach to community is needed

3.4 Impact of Literacy Specialist Services

One of the most important aspects of the Practicum was the impact and change that resulted from the work of the literacy specialists. While two agencies reported no changes, the majority of respondents indicated that immediate change(s) occurred, and many expressed their plans for changes in the near future.

Agency representatives were asked to comment on three aspects of the services provided by the literacy specialists. We wanted to know about the immediate short-term changes that occurred in their agencies since the literacy specialists' work. We also wanted to determine the effect of the changes on the organizations' abilities to serve clients better. Finally, we wanted to see if the work of the literacy specialists had generated any further plans to make the organizations more literacy friendly.

What has changed in your agency since the literacy specialist service?

Respondents from agencies and organizations indicated a number of immediate changes that can be grouped into 4 categories: awareness, different approach to clients, written/print materials, and other or more general items.

Awareness

There were 25 responses that indicated an increase in awareness of literacy issues and needs both in general and more specifically as those issues concern the clients of the organizations. Some comments from respondents were:

- More aware of literacy needs [and solutions] in general
- Increased awareness in dealing with public
- Staff are more aware of the print resources they are producing - readability, language level
- We feel the communities have become more aware of our services
- A greater awareness of the importance of clear language
- Management and staff in general are more aware of the changes that need to be made
- Staff has been more aware of language and pacing when delivering courses to families
- Library more aware of literacy issues
- Awareness of the needs of ESL parents
- Awareness of how confusing some forms are
- Awareness of literacy friendly thinking has been enhanced
- A greater awareness of the literacy levels that we do or could encounter

Written / Print Materials

The second highest ranked category describing immediate changes brought about by the literacy specialists' activities concerned changes to written or print materials. Some comments were:

- Making promotion material easier to read
- All new basic information posters will be in black and white
- Simplifying handouts and instructions
- Excess printed material has been removed from our bulletin boards
- Plans have been made to change signs and notices of rules
- Have consulted with an outsider re: input on one of our client packages
- Changed the format of our brochure to include more white space and graphics
- Added signage with symbols
- Changing upper case to lower case
- Using more pictures
- More help with form completion and letters written in a more understandable format and language
- Added a map to our brochures

Different Approach to Clients

Some of the comments among the 14 that were made concerning changes to the ways in which the organizations and their staff interact with clients were:

- Program now has a resource for our students, potential students and local community
- A different approach to all clients in general; asking if people need assistance to fill out forms
- Helped us to consider our processes from the point of view of someone with literacy challenges
- Staff don't use as much organizational jargon when speaking with clients
- Can better identify that a client may have literacy needs
- Can provide services with greater consideration of the client
- The agency will enhance our services to be more literacy friendly
- We are in the process of changing our reception area to better serve the public
- More sensitivity to client's needs

Other

Several significant comments were made concerning other changes that resulted from the work of the literacy specialist are also important:

- Greater desire to be involved
- We are approved for additional funding to service some of the gaps ...
- We have more respect for the literacy specialist work
- Intend to have all staff trained in language and literacy awareness
- Discussed literacy and materials at a staff meeting

How have these changes affected your agency's ability to serve your clients better?

The most significant category of comments provided by respondents were those concerning the changes in attitude and interaction with clients by those working in the organizations served by the literacy specialists.

Attitude Change / Easier Access for Clients

When asked how the changes brought about by the literacy specialists' work and the subsequent activities of those in the organizations affect the agencies' ability to serve their clients, over 30 comments offered by those working in the organization referred to either a change in attitude towards their clients or to providing easier access for the clients. Some of the comments were:

- Respect and consideration for those who may have literacy needs
- Clients have more privacy when doing intake forms and may be more willing to ask for help
- Our events posters may attract more people
- More awareness in one-on-one dealings with clients
- Written messages are better utilized and more client-friendly
- We will now be able to provide services to a clientele that we were previously under-serving
- Our information for clients will be presented in plain language and use simple terms
- We are certainly more empathetic, more willing to understand and be understood
- Clients seem to understand better
- Clarity of message to clients
- Staff think about how their daily work is affected by literacy
- A better understanding of some of the frustrations of those with literacy problems
- Better recognize the signs of literacy problems in clients
- Students and parents feel more comfortable coming to the school and talking to the teachers
- Services are more accessible, user-friendly
- Directors are more equipped to represent the council's services
- Increased efficiency in delivering the service
- When completed, the changes will provide clear understanding of what the library offers and what is expected of the reader
- Staff more helpful with clients
- With the change in the reception area, the clients are met personally as they enter the building and then may be directed to the information they are looking for
- The resources area will be more accessible
- To be more direct, "do you want to fill out forms here together"
- More aware of client limits in other areas - job applications; ability to follow employer's rules
- We hope that these changes will help provide easier access to all community members in their need for programs and services

Other

Several significant comments were made concerning other changes that are affecting the agencies' ability to serve their clients:

- Our agency is now benefiting from the support of the local media and town council
- We have put aside funds to help gather the necessary books needed to be used in this program

- Regular process for reviewing brochures, etc.
- Recognize need to have all staff aware of these issues
- Our agency is aware of what appropriate program marketing should and should not include
- Directors have a better understanding of what our volunteer tutors do

What else do you intend to do to make your agency literacy friendly?

When asked about intentions regarding further plans to make the organizations more literacy-friendly, respondents indicated that they planned a significant level of literacy related activities. These plans can be divided into 2 categories as well as a set of other meaningful comments.

Change Existing or Develop New Materials

The most often cited intention for further change to make agencies more literacy-friendly was that of either changes to existing materials or the development of new ones. Some comments were:

- Review our printed materials that have been in use for some time to determine if they really meet our clients' needs
- Simplify forms, posters, training material
- Improve signs in the Centre
- Develop a reading level for the agency for any parent/client handouts and materials
- Look for videos for a resource library for parents so they can review information as needed to understand
- Like to see multiple languages of our print material
- Develop a consistent format so people know where to find material
- Large collection of audio books
- Use of plain language on report cards, notices and permission forms
- Create marketing materials and reports using plain language
- Create guideline for future publications
- Review web site for possible changes
- We intend to go through all our advertising and signage.
- We will keep clients with limited literacy in mind when designing any posters, brochures or pamphlets
- Will look at rewriting current forms

Policy, Procedure or Process Changes

The second grouping of comments concerns changes to policies, procedures or process. Some comments were:

- We will be changing our office brochure to posting just our phone number
- Telephone or in-person registration for programs

- Assist people with finding information to inquiries
- Expand assistance to people who need to fill out forms for income assistance, access to community services and employment
- Other staff in literacy awareness workshops
- Change procedures regarding evaluation forms
- Help clients to be more comfortable with the staff
- Promote our tutoring service to members of the community
- Staff will plan to ensure that we meet literacy needs
- Revisit this matter annually
- Ask people if they need help filling out forms
- Make sure staff are able to recognize the behaviors that may indicate a person has literacy problems
- Always be aware of literacy levels of our clients
- Staff will now be more direct (but friendly) in addressing parents regarding registration forms, membership forms
- Staff more available to circulation desk in the evening
- Will put this project forward as part of the Dept's "Service Excellence" program
- I've had a staff member realize she can work at the circulation desk in the evening shift, thus being physically available if someone needs help.

Other

Several significant comments were made concerning other intentions to implement changes that will make the agencies more literacy friendly.

These comments were:

- Raise issues of literacy at community/networking meetings with other service providers
- Keep people aware & up-to-date on continued support & educate them to these needs
- We hope to do more literacy awareness programs and have more participation in the future
- We have shared some of what we learned with our resource development department
- Considering having a literacy audit
- Continue to address learning needs of those with literacy concerns
- Intend to make learner satisfaction surveys more appropriate for ESL students
- Re-work workshop presentations
- All staff have been made aware of the issues around literacy at the workshop

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

An analysis of the data collected during the Practicum, indicates that Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College have achieved a number of the goals of the Focus on Literacy Project's Training Course. For the purposes of this report, these proposed outcomes have been placed in 4 groupings. They are:

- Making Contact/Introducing and Promoting Services to the Community,
- Providing Presentations/Facilitating Audits and Workshops/Facilitating Learning and Encouraging Sustainable Change,
- Personal and Professional Effectiveness/Gathering and Using Information/Process Management Skills, and
- Building Working Relationships and Partnerships.

Making Contact/Introducing and Promoting Services to the Community

The literacy specialists carried out 229 visits in 1 urban and 10 rural Alberta communities. Almost 80% of the literacy specialists' activities were directed toward providing information (46.7%) and conducting workshops (33.5%). Moreover, 95% of these visits were with a wide variety of agencies (87.8%) and businesses (8.7%), which provide or support a broad range of client-focused services.

As a result of this activity, agencies and organizations reported an increased awareness of literacy, literacy needs and the importance of addressing those needs in their daily interactions with clients. As well, several agencies reported an increase in their overall awareness and understanding of the literacy services, which are available to them, through both literacy specialists and other community based agencies.

Providing Presentations/Facilitating Audits and Workshops/Facilitating Learning and Encouraging Sustainable Change

The category of presentation, facilitation and communication skills was one of the 3 broad learning objective categories identified by the literacy specialists prior to their practicum experiences. Further, it embodied a grouping of attributes that were evaluated by agency representatives during the literacy specialists' performance assessment. The attributes of professional manner, facilitation and presentation skills, verbal communication skills, providing helpful information, and having planned and being prepared for the agency's assignment were all highly assessed. The average score for these literacy specialists' performance attributes was 1.2 out of 3 where "1" represents perfect or outstanding performance, even though "Written Communication Skills" received the lowest average score assigned to any of the attributes, with a rating of 1.4. As well, agency respondents had many positive things to say about the literacy specialists' presentation and facilitation, and communication abilities.

Using a variety of techniques, including appreciative inquiry, the literacy specialists delivered literacy awareness, plain language, and verbal communication workshops as well as conducted literacy audits. The impact on the agencies and the people working in those agencies was well documented in the feedback received through the impact assessments. From those assessments, it appears that not only was the awareness of literacy issues and the importance of addressing literacy needs increased, but also that both immediate change took place and additional near-term change was planned. Agencies reported immediate improvements in their attitudes toward and the ways in which they interact with clients, as well as to the print materials including brochures, signage and on-line documents that are directed at clients. In total, agency representatives felt that these developments have both improved their agencies' abilities to serve their clients better, and removed barriers that have hindered clients' use of agency resources. Further, these same agencies indicated an intention to resolve other literacy related issues with changes to existing written materials and the development of new ones, in addition to changes to policies, procedures and processes.

Personal and Professional Effectiveness/Gathering and Using Information/Process Management Skills

This group of topics represents one of the 3 most often mentioned learning objectives by the literacy specialists. As well, agency respondents, where literacy presentations and workshops were delivered, gave the literacy specialists' "Professional manner (positive attitude, respectful of others)" category, on the "Agency Assessment of Literacy Specialist Performance" form, a perfect score of "1".

Consistent with this was that more positive comments were made, by these same respondents, concerning the literacy specialists' highly regarded personal and professional qualities than any other performance assessment category.

While some agency respondents indicated that the literacy specialists could have done more thorough research of their organizations and assessment of the organizations' most important needs, most felt that the literacy specialists were knowledgeable about literacy, the agencies and organizations, and the community as well. Overall, the literacy specialists appeared to be successful in linking the information they gathered concerning the agencies, with both the literacy tools and solutions, which effectively addressed the agencies' literacy needs, and effective presentation and facilitation techniques.

Building Working Relationships and Partnerships

The literacy specialists were successful in building working relationships and partnerships not only between themselves and the agencies they served, but also in some cases between agencies. Developing and maintaining relationships and partnerships was one of the most frequently mentioned learning objectives by the literacy specialists. The ranking that the agency respondents gave to the literacy specialists' professional and personal qualities as well as the rankings given to the attributes that contribute to the literacy specialists' abilities to gather information, to apply their literacy knowledge, and to effectively present and facilitate separately and collectively contribute to the building of relationships among the literacy specialists, the agencies and the communities they serve.

Through their participation both with particular agencies as well as in broader community initiatives that promote literacy, the literacy specialists have contributed to community capacity building and development.

The practicum portion of the *Focus on Literacy – Community literacy Consultant Training Project* was successful in accomplishing its primary purposes. Literacy awareness has increased in those Alberta communities served by the literacy specialists. The literacy environment in Alberta appears to have been enhanced, and people with literacy barriers appear to have improved access to services provided by those agencies served by the literacy specialists. Finally, capacity has been built in those Alberta communities served by the literacy specialists, through the training of non-literacy professionals to integrate positive literacy practices into their workplace.

Recommendations

As has been noted, the practicum portion of the *Focus on Literacy – Community literacy Consultant Training Project* has achieved its primary purposes. However, two minor weaknesses could be addressed. One concerns learning objectives, the other the assessment of the literacy specialists' performance.

Learning objectives, like goals, should be "SMART": Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable, and Time-limited. Many of the learning objectives cited by the literacy specialists were not "SMART". Some were not specific, for example, "Communication skills – knowing the audience." Others, like "Manage and balance the expectations of the literacy specialist's role." or "Literacy presentations that emphasize building community capacity." were difficult to measure.

Some additional effort could be directed toward helping the trainees develop "SMART"er learning objectives. For example, rather than a literacy specialist trainee stating "Improve ability to facilitate" as a learning objective, a more meaningful learning objective might be, "Utilize 3 appreciative enquiry techniques [or specifically named appreciative enquiry techniques] to facilitate 4 literacy [or plain language] workshops." The first learning objective, "Improve ability to

facilitate.” is both vague and difficult to measure. For example, what is the scale for measuring “improved ability to facilitate?” Is one component of facilitation to be assessed or are all the elements that contribute to an effective facilitation to be assessed? How is “improve” measured without a comparison of the trainee’s facilitation skills and abilities at the entry point to the training with those at the conclusion of the practicum? Again, the key to learning objectives is that they be SMART.

Consideration could be given to modifying or eliminating the “Agency Assessment of Literacy Specialist Performance” form. The quantitative scale that was designed to facilitate the assessment of particular literacy specialists’ performance qualities may be misleading. The near perfect scores may not provide an accurate picture of the literacy specialists’ performance or contribution to the agency in which the literacy services were delivered. Most of the literacy specialists’ primary activities were of a short duration in a short-term relationship with any particular agency. An insufficient amount or level of interaction between the literacy specialist and the agency contact may have taken place to effectively assess performance on an “Outstanding”, through “Satisfactory”, to “Needs Improvement” continuum. Although potentially more difficult for the agency contact person to complete, a more accurate assessment of the literacy specialists may come from the qualitative response to the questions concerning the literacy specialists’ strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the literacy services provided by the literacy specialists. So, for example, strengths and weaknesses identified for the literacy specialist providing a plain language workshop might be different from those for the same person doing a literacy audit.

Further, of the two forms, the performance assessment and the “Impact of Literacy Specialist Services” the latter is more informative both about the impact of the work and the implied assessment of the literacy specialists’ “job” performance. Perhaps, questions that allow agency respondents to provide qualitative comments about the literacy specialists’ performance could be added to an impact assessment form. Further, consideration could be directed toward modifying the impact assessment to include a question about the agency’s intentions to sustain the near-term changes, which are being reported, over the longer term. Attachment 4 provides a draft version of a modified Impact & Assessment of Literacy Specialist Services & Performance.

Attachment 1: Practicum Learning Objectives

Literacy Specialist

These learning objectives enable the College to determine the learning value of the literacy specialist's practicum experience. Please consider the learning themes when writing your learning objectives.

At midpoint and at the end of the practicum, the literacy specialist and the practicum supervisor will evaluate the level of attainment of each objective and relative value of each objective to the course learning themes.

Learning Objective	Literacy Specialist	Practicum supervisor
1.		
2.		
3.		

Rating Scale

- 0 - Zero objective accomplishment
- 1 - Minimal objective accomplishment
- 2 - Average objective accomplishment
- 3 - Above average objective accomplishment
- 4 - Objective fully accomplished

Literacy Specialist signature

Practicum Supervisor signature

Date

Date

Attachment 2: Literacy Specialist Performance Assessment

Today's date: _____

Agency Name: _____

Name and Position: _____

Phone: _____ Date of service: _____

Email: _____

Name of Literacy Specialist: _____

Instructions

To be completed by the agency contact and mailed directly to Audrey Gardner, Literacy Specialist Practicum Supervisor at Bow Valley College(see self addressed envelope).

<i>Skills and Attributes</i>	Outstanding	Satisfactory	Needs improvement	Not applicable
Prepared and well planned	1	2	3	n/a
Provided helpful information that is relevant to our programs and services	1	2	3	n/a
Verbal communication skills (speaking and listening)	1	2	3	n/a
Written communication skills (flipchart, overheads, hand outs)	1	2	3	n/a
Facilitation or Presentation skills (encouraged learning and participation)	1	2	3	n/a
Professional manner (positive attitude, respectful of others)	1	2	3	n/a
Knowledgeable about agency programs and services	1	2	3	n/a
Overall rating on literacy specialist service	1	2	3	n/a

Please see over→

Please respond to the following statements:

1. The literacy specialist's outstanding qualities are:

2. The qualities, which the literacy specialist should strive to improve, are:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this, please return it in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope. This questionnaire is private and confidential.

Audrey Gardner
Community Education: Projects and Research
Academic Foundation
Bow Valley College
332 – 6 Avenue. SE
Calgary, Alberta
T2G 4S6

Attachment: 4

**Draft: Impact & Assessment of Literacy Specialist
Services & Performance**

Today's date: _____

Agency Name: _____

Literacy Specialist Service: _____

Date of Service: _____

Name of Literacy Specialist: _____

First, please focus on the impact, on your organization, of the service provided by the literacy specialist.

1. What has changed in your agency since the literacy specialist service?
2. How have these changes affected your agency's ability to serve your clients better?
3. What else do you intend to do to make your agency literacy friendly?
4. What will be done to sustain the changes that your agency is making?

Now, please comment on the literacy specialist's performance as it relates to the literacy service noted above.

5. What are the literacy specialist's strengths or outstanding qualities?
6. What are the literacy specialist's weaknesses or qualities that could be improved?

Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy

Literacy Practitioner Impact Evaluation

Audrey Gardner
Bow Valley College

Published June 2005
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Bow Valley College
and Literacy Alberta

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Summary

The *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* training project was a 5-month learning initiative piloted with literacy coordinators of volunteer tutor adult literacy programs in Alberta, Canada. The focus of the project was to train literacy practitioners to use a community capacity building approach to increase awareness about adult literacy and reduce literacy barriers to community services and programs in their communities. The project consisted of a 65-hour course and 100-hour practicum.

The training project was designed based on the *Connecting Literacy to Community* project (CLC). The purpose of the CLC was to broaden a community response to adult literacy. Central to the project was having a literacy specialist work with local organizations and services to increase their literacy awareness, to support individuals to connect with literacy programs, and to improve access to, and the quality of, community services and programs. The role of a literacy specialist is a change agent, a community catalyst for adult literacy. The *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* project involved training literacy practitioners to take on the role of a literacy specialist.

This impact evaluation presents the learning and professional changes expressed by participants (Literacy Practitioners) in the *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* course and practicum. In other words this report describes how participants built their own professional capacity to enrich their work and strengthen their community's capacity to address adult literacy. Three methods of participant documentation were reviewed to identify indicators of participant learning and change. The three methods of documentation include: Shared Reflection Journal; Practicum Learning Objectives; and Participant Questionnaire.

The approach used for this evaluation is based on a research-in-practice model, which makes this evaluation more of a qualitative inquiry. The design of the impact evaluation centered on reading and reflecting on participant's statements (written and verbal) about their learning and practicum activities. The steps in the design process were: develop the evaluation outline, and invite participants to analyze the data and provide feedback on the draft report.

Based on the data analysis of the participant's learning and professional change, the findings indicate that the project achieved three of the project objectives:

- To build capacity in literacy practitioner training using a credit course
- To fulfill a need for a flexible delivery model for literacy practitioner education by including in class, e-learning and mentorship as part of the delivery
- To measure the effectiveness of the training course

The success of the project is very much based on the effort and commitment of the participants. Although this was a pilot training project based on a pilot community capacity building project, with many open-ended possibilities, the participants quickly came together in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and supported each other in their learning and risk taking. The participants shared their values on learning, equality and social inclusion, and with their strong prior knowledge and experience they set the stage for the success of this experimental training project.

Recommendations to improve the training were offered by the participants, including: reduce weekly submissions to the Shared Reflection Journal to once every 2 weeks; extend the time of the practicum; have the instructor visit the participants in their practicum and observe the delivery of a literacy specialist service; have another on-campus session at the end of the practicum; maintain a combination of on-campus, on-line and practicum; and, reduce the amount of pre-course readings and ensure that the readings on the internet are easily accessible. The participants also recommended that this course and practicum be part of the professional development framework for literacy coordinators. Further recommendations include revising the instructions for the practicum learning objectives to be more concise and measurable, and to continue to develop a research-in-practice framework for the training.

As instructor, I have learned a tremendous amount about the process of learning through connecting classroom (on-campus) and community (practicum) by respecting and valuing authentic contexts for learning and change. I am convinced that a community capacity building approach through the lens of the New Literacy Studies is one of the most effective ways to broaden and deepen our work in adult literacy. I feel this project was very successful. In the role of instructor I was able to carry out the principles of literacy specialist work. Literacy specialists foster inquiry and support action, which is lead by those impacted the most: the participants. They molded their learning to fit the uniqueness of their communities, and in cooperation they willingly shared ownership and worked exceptionally hard to make local communities more compassionate and respectful for people who struggle with reading and writing.

1. Background and Introduction

The *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* training project was developed in partnership between Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College to provide a professional development opportunity for literacy practitioners in Alberta. The focus of the project was to build a community development and capacity building approach to increase awareness about adult literacy and reduce literacy barriers to community services and programs. The project consisted of a course and practicum over a 5-month period.

The course was 65 hours, which included a pre-course written response to articles reflecting course learning themes, a 4-day on-campus training workshop, and a 10-week on-line shared journal and electronic communication conferencing. The 100-hour practicum occurred in each participant's community over a 4-5 month period. The learning approaches used in the course and practicum included research-in-practice, experiential learning, and peer-based learning. The learning strategies and activities were: written response to literature, cooperative learning, group discussions and activities, independent work, reflective writing, on-line communication, practicum recording and role playing.

The *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* course and practicum had 13 literacy practitioners participate. The majority of the practitioners were literacy coordinators in volunteer tutor adult literacy programs. Of the 13 practitioners 11 enrolled for credit and two audited the course. Most of the participants lived in rural communities throughout the province.

The training project was designed based on the *Connecting Literacy to Community* project (CLC)¹. The purpose of the CLC was to broaden a community response to adult literacy. Central to the project was having a literacy specialist work with local organizations and services to increase their literacy awareness, to support individuals to connect with literacy programs, and to improve access to, and the quality of, community services and programs. The role of a literacy specialist is a change agent, a community catalyst for adult literacy. The CLC was a partnership project between Bow Valley College and at least six urban and rural communities in Alberta.

The *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* project involved training literacy practitioners to take on the role of a literacy specialist, which uses community development and capacity building approaches. Part of this role is to raise awareness about adult literacy as a social issue. The literacy specialist helps organizations make their programs and services easier to access for people who experience literacy barriers in their everyday lives.

¹ Adapted from (2003) *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Adult Literacy Handbook*. Found at <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/connect/focus/cover.htm>

Services offered by the literacy specialists (participants) in their practicum included providing information on adult literacy, facilitating workshops on literacy awareness and sensitivity, plain language and verbal communication, conducting literacy audits, and working collaboratively with others to organize community events and initiatives for adult literacy. Exploring how acting as a literacy specialist has impacted the participant's sense of professional self was part of the training course. The purpose of this report is to identify the learning and changes experienced by participants and how this has impacted their professional identity and their work. As plain language was an important part of the training project, I have made a conscious effort to write this report based on principles of plain language.²

2. Evaluation of Participant Impact

The evaluation of participant (Literacy Practitioners) impact presents the learning and professional changes expressed by participants in the *Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy* course and practicum. In other words this report describes how participants built their own professional capacity to enrich their work for adult literacy in their community. This report presents efforts and successes as indicated by participant's, which address three of the project objectives.³

- To build capacity in literacy practitioner training using a credit course
- To fulfill a need for a flexible delivery model for literacy practitioner education by including in class, e-learning and mentorship as part of the delivery
- To measure the effectiveness of the training course

Three methods of participant documentation were reviewed to identify indicators of participant learning and change. The three methods of documentation include: Shared Reflection Journal; Practicum Learning Objectives; and Participant Questionnaire.

Shared Reflection Journal:

Each week during the 10-week on-line component of the course the participants were required to submit a one-page reflection about their practicum and/or in response to a question posed by the instructor. See Attachment 1 for Shared Reflection Journal Instructions.

² Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. (1994). Plain Language: Clear and Simple. Ottawa: Canada Communications Group.

³ Focus on Literacy: A Course for Community Literacy Consultant Training – Project Proposal; Submitted to National Literacy Secretariat by Bow Valley College & Literacy Alberta, June 2003

Practicum Learning Objectives:

Participants identified learning objectives for their practicum specific to individual learning needs. Participants engaged in two phone conversations with the instructor to discuss their progress toward their learning objectives. See Attachment 2 for Learning Objectives form.

Participant Questionnaire

At the end of the course and practicum, participants completed a questionnaire, which was conducted by the Learning Resources Services department at Bow Valley College. 73% of the participants completed the questionnaire. See Attachment 3 for Questionnaire.

2.1 Evaluation Approach

The approach used for this evaluation is based on a research-in-practice model⁴, which makes this evaluation more of a qualitative inquiry. The design of the impact evaluation centered on reading and reflecting on participant's statements (written and verbal) about their learning and practicum activities. The steps in the design process were:

- Instructor develop guiding questions and process outline (see Attachment 4)
- Invite 1- 2 participants to assist with data analysis of the Shared Reflection Journal
- One participant and the instructor analyze the Shared Reflection Journal data to identify themes and patterns in learning and change
- Instructor re-look at the Shared Reflection Journal data with the course and practicum learning themes as categories
- Instructor conduct data analysis of Learning Objectives and Participant Questionnaire responses
- Invite participants to provide feedback on report draft

3. Participant Impact Data

3.1 Shared Reflection Journal

⁴ Horseman, J. and Norton, M. (1999) A Framework to Encourage and Support Practitioner Involvement in Adult Literacy Research in Practice. Alberta. The Learning Centre Literacy Association. Horsman and Norton state that " research in practice includes: reading and responding to research ; reflecting on practice in light of research; applying research findings to practice; doing research about practice". P. 4. Found at <http://www.nald.ca/ripal/RESOURCES/Framwrk/4.htm>

Each week during the 10-week on-line component of the course the participants were required to submit a one-page reflection about their practicum and/or in response to a question posted by the instructor. Participants submitted their reflection and responded to other's submission. For this report only the submissions were reviewed.

The Shared Reflection Journal provided a significant forum for participants to extend the connections and support they built during the 4-day on-campus workshop. Many of the participants commented how important it was to stay connected as a group, and they appreciated the support among the group throughout their practicum. The Shared Reflection Journal spanned over the first 10-weeks of their 4-5 month practicum.

The participants indicated that their learning and skills had improved in all of the learning themes. See Attachment 5.

- Building Knowledge
- Personal and Professional Effectiveness
- Gathering and Using Information
- Building Relationships and Partnerships
- Facilitating Learning and Encouraging Sustainable Change
- Process Management

While the learning themes intersect and overlap, expressions of learning by participants are organized according to each learning theme.

Building Knowledge

Participants deepened their knowledge of concepts that contribute to understanding adult literacy as multiple (literacies), action-oriented, and culturally and socially specific. The literacy specialist approach views literacy as social practice as described in the New Literacy Studies⁵ (NLS). NLS explores how people use literacy (text, oral, image) in their everyday lives to get things done. Through this lens the participants utilized a community development and community capacity building approach⁶, which incorporated strategies that contributed to greater understanding of adult literacy, and initiated action for positive changes in local organizations and community groups.

⁵ Hamilton, M. (2000). *Sustainable Literacies and the Ecology of Lifelong Learning*. Working Papers of the Global Colloquium on Supporting Lifelong Learning. Found at http://www.open.ac.uk/lifelong-learning/papers/393CCAC1-000B-67AA-0000015700000157_MaryHamilton-paper-noabstract.doc

⁶ Frank, F. Smith, A. (1999). *The Community Development Handbook: A Tool to Build Community Capacity*. HRDC Canada. Ottawa. Found at http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/epb/sid/cia/comm_deve/cdhbooke.pdf

Understanding literacy as social practice and how to build community capacity for literacy incorporates other concepts which complement these approaches, including Appreciative Inquiry⁷, Social Marketing⁸, diversity and inclusion, and organizational and social change. Participants noted that exploring these concepts through reading, reflecting, writing and discussing as a group contributed to their ability to articulate key messages about adult literacy in their practicum.

I guess this week I learned a bit more about Appreciative Inquiry, and maybe even some social marketing. Of course the inclusion piece is always in the forefront and always interesting when dealing with agencies with a variety of cultural backgrounds.
June

My hope is to change some perceptions about literacy, the literacy program, and those who access our services. It is not just about people who cannot read, learning disabilities or people learning a new language. It is about each one of us and our day-to-day use of literature and communication.
Heather

Community asset building can be many things – from libraries to training ESL instructors.
Linda

In my attempt to get adult literacy recognized as a social issue, not an individual problem, a member of the audience stated that it was more 'socially acceptable' to be an alcoholic than to admit to literacy difficulties.
Shelley

Many of the participants continued reading and reflecting on the concepts throughout their practicum. Some participants stated that they felt they gained the ability to converse about literacy as social practice, and most importantly have service providers in community agencies and organization see that addressing adult literacy in their agency was valuable.

Personal and Professional Effectiveness

⁷ Hammond, S., Hall, J. (1998). *What is Appreciative Inquiry?* Thinbook Publishing. New York. Found at <http://lib1.store.vip.sc5.yahoo.com/lib/thinbook/whatisai.pdf>

⁸ Smith, B., Peavey, K. (1996) *Marketing Your Adult Literacy Program: A "How To" Manual.* Glenmont, NY. Hudson River Center. Found at <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/hudson/market/cover.htm>

This learning theme required participants to engage in activities and reflection on one's personal values on literacy, literacy work, and their community. The participants also shared their values on social justice issues such as equality, social responsibility and inclusion as they relate to adult literacy. Skill development in this theme included problem solving and analytical skills, as well as risk taking, creativity, and flexibility. Also, work ethic, professional identity, and personal coping and wellness are part of the theme.

Most of the participant's learning related to this theme. How the participants viewed themselves professionally and their willingness to broaden and enrich their connections with others in their community were the two main areas of change indicated by participants. Noticeable changes occurred as they reflected on how they engaged with professionals, volunteers and residents in their community. Most of the practitioners indicated that they experienced growing confidence in themselves as presenters and facilitators, as well as being able to respond to situations and opportunities to increase connecting with others.

My report this week is about a part of my practicum that I did not plan for. It does, however, demonstrate something that I have noticed happening to me since I started the FOL work. Exciting opportunities occur when you least expect them and they often come from unsuspecting sources.

Kathy

I also sit here scrambling to organize myself for a morning workshop. I was ready to fold tonight when I remembered that everything is laid out nicely (in the handbook and workshop guidelines). I still have modified things to work with the organization but I can go to sleep with confidence that tomorrow will go well because I am prepared.

Heather

Talk about flexibility!! I am learning fast about changing and adapting.
June

Many participants indicated that they did not realize how many people and places they can connect with to promote awareness of adult literacy. Part of this realization was learning how to talk and listen to others and to be able to relate literacy to all aspects of everyday living.

One area that produced much conversation among the participants was the literacy specialist title. The participants were asked at the beginning and end of the on-line section of the course to share their thoughts about changes in their professional identity, including this title. While less than half felt comfortable calling themselves literacy specialist by the end of the

on-line section, they all stated that their professional role and identity had changed. This was indicated through comments about how other service providers, community stakeholders and volunteers viewed them.

I think that agencies in our area are starting to see me as someone who knows something and has something to offer other agencies. I think I am more of a resource person rather than a specialist to them.
Linda

I believe that the Literacy Specialist training has breathed new life into my role as a coordinator and into the program in general. I feel inspired to reach out to others-agencies, organizations, and businesses and encourage them to focus on literacy.
Heather

My professional identity has solidified and I find that others accept what I am doing without any hesitation, maybe because I put myself forward in a more professional manner now. I have learned a great deal about what community is, and have managed to look at issues involving inclusion and diversity.
June

I personally feel more comfortable with the term specialist. I can help them (agencies) serve their clients in a more friendly efficient way. I just feel so good about being able to help them serve their clients, who happen to also be my clients in a better way.
Kathy

I think that I personally feel the same. In terms of how other view me, I think that there has been a shift to see more of the “bigger picture”. I have learned to be increasingly comfortable using the more outgoing side of my personality than I have been in the past.
Bonnie

The title “literacy specialist” is the only title that adequately describes the degree of coordinating, advocating, and consulting that I accomplish on any given day.
Martha

While some participants chose to refer to themselves as literacy consultant, literacy facilitator, or remain with literacy coordinator, by the end of the practicum all of the participants indicated that their community viewed them as the resource professional for adult (and all community) literacy needs and issues. All participants stated that their confidence and capacity for their work had increased through taking on the role, if not the title, of literacy specialist.

Gathering and Using Information

Learning how to effectively gather and use information was successfully achieved by participants, which indicates skill development in deciphering and prioritizing information and oral and written communication. The key assignment for this theme was conducting a literacy asset and gaps scan. Participants were able to link national and local statistics and information on adult literacy and make it relevant to the various organizations and groups (audiences) in their community. This was effective as it triggered much interest in adult literacy and participants received requests for presentations, audits and workshops.

Taking the time to focus my attention on completing the Literacy Assets and Gaps Scan has opened up my mind to possibilities I had not thought of before.

Martha

Yesterday I went to have my hair done and we had quite the conversation going in the salon. It is interesting how it gets in your blood, so to speak, and you just seem to start talking statistics and literacy where ever you go.

Carol

I completed the Assets and Gaps scan and was pleased the information matched what I was hearing from people. I prepared a summary to be distributed to those that participated.

Bonnie

It seems that most of the activities that I do result in me learning a lot about my community that I did not know before.

Kathy

Participants noted that they also learned more about their community while listening and looking to see where literacy programming and awareness was happening.

Building Relationships and Partnerships

Participants stated that they were successful in building relationships with organizations and groups in their community. While developing partnerships was not required in the project, some participants joined in partnership with others to produce community events and plan collaborative projects. This theme intertwines with Personal and Professional Effectiveness and Gathering and Using Information. Building Relationships and Partnerships is a process of creating supportive and

safe environments, mutual respect and trust, and sharing knowledge, resources, and tools.

I had a meeting with a Director of (agency) here in town. I went to talk about what he saw as gaps with that group of people. His first statement was that he didn't think he had anything much to offer. But by the time I left, he had identified three needs that I think our Literacy program can assist with."

Carol

I finally tracked down the manager for (agency). We talked for an hour. I didn't get much for the assets and gaps sheets but we really came up with a lot of ways to work together."

Linda

This past week has provided me with the opportunity to contact individuals for their input into the literacy assets and gaps scan. Because of this I was able to connect with individuals with whom I had not previously developed relationships. By keeping the focus of my conversation on what their needs were in relation to serving their low-literate clients I was able to facilitate lengthy discussions.

Martha

The librarian asked me what I wanted the library to do. I said I would like to see the library develop a Literacy/ESL collection and I would like them to provide space for volunteer tutors and learners. He asked me to write up a proposal. I am hoping this will lead to a formal partnership between (school board) and the (library).

Shelley

When I checked the learning themes I saw that I started out to gather information, I certainly built my knowledge of the school and how one professional viewed my program, and most of all I felt good because there was respect and trust shown, attitudes were altered, there was positive communication and most of all there is an opportunity to build a strong relationship between the adult literacy program and the school.

Kathy

The participants used many strategies to build relationships, from conversations that used an Appreciative Inquiry approach to marketing their literacy specialist services as an asset to organizations and groups, and a willingness to collaborate with others.

Facilitating Learning and Encouraging Sustainable Change

By using positive approaches in building relationships, participants were able to deliver workshops, presentations and literacy audits to many organizations and groups in their community. Almost all of those organizations and groups made some changes to reduce literacy barriers in their services. Facilitating learning and change involves working with others in a spirit of fostering inquiry, demonstrating respect and reflection, identifying existing positive practices, working together to create action plans, and participating in taking action.

I asked at the end of our discussion, if the (learning council) Board was OK with having a standing agenda item on Literacy (at board meetings) and they said absolutely. I think we've started to grow Literacy Champions!

Ginette

I was impressed with the level of understanding that the staff had and I think that they felt that they benefited by making their action plan. I felt that the group worked really well in discussion.

Bonnie

In with all the other work I have to do, I am trying to make an effort to revisit the readings and do a bit more research to really solidify my presentation and facilitation skills.

Heather

I know that more community groups know about the (adult literacy tutoring) program now and they are more likely to consider the program as a community asset.

Linda

Building community capacity for literacy requires commitment in one's own workplace. Most of the participants facilitated learning in their organization, such as with committees, staff, tutors and boards. Some participants indicated that they experienced a significant shift in their literacy organization, including revising printed material into plain language, and board and committee members becoming vocal literary champions.

This theme intertwines with Personal and Professional Effectiveness and Building Relationships and Partnerships learning themes as it is very important in the literacy specialist role to gently lead and go with the flow of the group. It is the learning experienced by service providers and other community member that has the power to make their organization more

literacy friendly. Many participants expressed their appreciation and joy in how their community was open to learning and change.

Process Management

The participants initially felt challenged by trying to balance their responsibilities as literacy coordinator of the volunteer tutor program and their new role as literacy specialist. However, by the end of the practicum the participants had created strategies to organize and manage their expanding role(s). This learning theme involves skill development in time management, organizational skills, record and material creation and maintenance. Some participants created promotional material that combined the tutoring program and the literacy specialist services.

I have organized the course material, found additional resources in our collection, run ideas by people in the know, made some initial contacts, run off some stats and of course connected with other course participants through the journal folder. I've spent more time on eLit over the last week than I've probably spent in the last year.

Linda

I began organizing my information better that I had on possible workshops and started to organize a presentation for our Rhyme Time moms on why Family Literacy programs are good to take the time to attend and the importance of reading to your children.

Carol

The wealth of knowledge and information I have learned from this project to date is having an extremely positive impact on my work as an adult literacy coordinator.

Ginette

The participants indicated that they felt this course and practicum strengthened their ability to enhance their literacy programs both through building their knowledge and skills to expand their involvement in their community, and through tangible ways such as rewriting their program material in plain language.

3.2 Practicum Learning Objectives

Each participant identified 3 learning objectives for their practicum particular to their own learning needs. Participants engaged in 2 phone conversations with the instructor to discuss how they were making progress toward their learning objectives. The phone conversations occurred at the mid-point and end of the practicum. The participants were

encouraged to self-assess their progress with the instructor asking the following questions.

1. How have you worked toward your learning objectives? Share specific examples.
2. What can you build on that will help you meet your learning objectives?

Other questions asked by the instructor referred to how they plan to end their practicum, and how they plan to support their community to sustain the positive changes that have occurred.

As described in the Community Impact Evaluation report,⁹ the participant learning objectives can be divided into 3 broad categories: literacy research and knowledge; presentation, facilitation and communication skills; relationship and partnership development and maintenance. Participants indicated that they were making progress with their learning objectives through describing examples of practicum activities, which reflect application of skills and learning specific to their objectives. Although the pace of the practicum varied among the participants (some were off to a quicker start than others), by the mid-point phone call all were making progress toward meeting their learning objectives.

Literacy Research and Knowledge

Participants stated that they had deepened their knowledge of broader literacy issues and local literacy needs. They also continued learning about plain language, facilitation and presentation skills, and how to involve others in their community to build a literacy friendly community. Some final comments from the participants include:

- Feeling more confident in sharing information with others
- Using Appreciative Inquiry approaches to learn more about their community
- Presenting information from a strengths rather than deficit based perspective
- Using statistical information in relevant ways
- Increased knowledge on literacy issues, particularly understanding literacy as social practice and literacy as multiple (literacies)

⁹ Holbrow, B. (2005) Community Impact Evaluation. Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy. See prior report in this document, or found at <http://nald.ca/fulltext/connect/impact/cover.htm>

Presentation, Facilitation and Communication Skills

This category captures much of the practicum activities such as making contact, providing presentations and facilitating workshops and audits. Using their skills and abilities in personal and professional effectiveness, participants indicated progress in their efforts to engage with others in the community. Some final comments from the participants include:

- Noticing that their facilitation skills are improving
- Able to listen and relate to other's needs and ideas about literacy issues
- Strengthening their ability to tailor workshops and presentations to specific groups and organizations
- Able to respond positively to opportunities to link literacy to diverse situations
- More comfortable making initial contacts with groups and organizations
- Greater understanding in how to use Social Marketing strategies for literacy

Relationship and Partnership Development and Maintenance

Participants who identified learning objectives in relationship and partnership building intended to expand and strengthen their skills in this area, including informal and formal relationships. Some final comments from the participants include:

- Knowing how to work collaboratively
- Feeling more confident in knowing what to bring to working relationships
- Being successful in developing effective partnerships
- Strengthened relationships between the adult literacy tutor program and community organizations and groups
- Experienced successful outcomes from risk taking
- Increased learner and tutor referrals and inquiries to the adult literacy tutor program

All of the participants were able to identify improvement with their individual learning objectives. Most participants experienced very positive responses from their communities, while others struggled to varying degrees to find many open doors to engage in looking at and acting for literacy. However, all felt that they had made significant strides in their efforts to improve and broaden their work for literacy in each of their communities.

3.3 Participant Questionnaire

At the end of the course and practicum, participants completed a questionnaire, which was conducted by the Learning Resources Services department at Bow Valley College. 73% of the participants completed the questionnaire. Overall the feedback from participants was very positive, and all respondents stated that they benefited personally and professionally.

Participants identified the following changes in their professional practices:

- Increased confidence and professionalism
- Increased awareness of literacy issues
- Being viewed as a resource for others in the community
- Knowledgeable about community literacy needs
- Increased public relations
- Increased ability for community capacity building
- Expanded goals and job scope, and a broader vision for their role

Some participants successfully negotiated expansion of their job description and increased work time to continue to provide literacy specialist services in their community.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the data analysis of the participant statements and feedback the training project successfully achieved those project objectives noted at the beginning of this report. Most of the success lies with the effort and commitment of the participants. They were the ones that made their learning so successful.

In the process of reflecting, analyzing, and writing about how this project has impacted the participants, I am in awe of the passion, risk taking, camaraderie, and dedication by the participants. As instructor, I was very much inspired to give my best with this group of experienced professional literacy practitioners. Although this was a pilot training project based on a pilot community capacity building project, with many open-ended possibilities, the group quickly came together in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and supported each other in their learning and risk taking. The participants shared their values on learning, equality and social inclusion, and brought their strong prior knowledge and experience to this experimental project. During the first day on campus, the participants shared their values and commitment to literacy and their community, a vital combination for the success of their learning, and of the training project.

As instructor, I have learned a tremendous amount about the process of learning through connecting classroom (on campus) and community (practicum) by respecting and valuing authentic contexts for learning and change. I am

convinced that a community capacity building approach through the lens of the New Literacy Studies is one of the most effective ways to broaden and deepen our work in adult literacy.

This project incorporated multiple delivery methods (on-line, face-face, practicum) and had a very intensive schedule. The participants shared their recommendations to improve the training:

- Reduce the weekly submissions for the Shared Reflection Journal to once every 2 weeks instead of every week
- Extend the time of the practicum
- Have the instructor visit the participants in their practicum and observe the delivery of a literacy specialist service
- Have another on-campus session at the end of the practicum
- Maintain a combination of on-campus, on-line and practicum, all three components are necessary
- Reduce the amount of pre-course readings and ensure that the readings on the internet are easily accessible

Further to the participant's recommendation, I suggest that this training initiative continue to build a research-in-practice framework. Key to the success of the project was including time and support for participants to research, reflect, and communicate as a group about how they were applying their learning in practical ways. The participants respectfully created their own community of learners and shared their thoughts, ideas, strategies, resources, and experiences in how to build a literacy friendly community.

Another recommendation I agree with is suggested in the Community Impact Evaluation report, which recommends using a SMART format for the practicum learning objectives (SMART = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reasonable, and Time-limited) Having clear, specific learning objectives for the practicum enables easier progress measurement.

A number of the participants spoke about how this training has greatly improved their ability to coordinate their volunteer tutor program. Some contacted their funder to advocate that the training be part of the professional development framework for literacy coordinators in Alberta. I strongly support this recommendation from participants: that this training course be available to literacy coordinators (and other literacy practitioners) in the future. Comments from some participants were:

I was speaking with (program funder) last week and telling her about the Connecting Literacy to Community and how wonderful the learning has been for me. I thought I'd benefit from our conversation as she was interested in the project of why I thought all literacy coordinators should have this type of training for their jobs.

Ginette

The other change in perspective is that I see the literacy coordinator position as one that should enable service providers to help clients with literacy challenges to access their services. This is a fundamental shift away from the volunteer adult literacy program directly helping literacy learners to an indirect approach. Other funders allow indirect participation to be reported so I don't see why this shouldn't be part of our mandate.

Linda

Finally, in reflection I feel this project was very successful. In the role of instructor I was able to carry out the principles of literacy specialist work. Literacy specialists foster inquiry and support action, which is lead by those impacted the most: the participants. The participants molded their learning to fit the uniqueness of their communities, and in cooperation they willingly shared ownership and worked exceptionally hard to make local communities more compassionate and respectful for people who struggle with reading and writing.

Attachment 1:

Shared Reflection Journal Instructions **Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy Training Course**

(Excerpt from the Instructor Guide)

Instructor will facilitate and support participants to submit their reflections and encourage communication among the participants. Bring in the learning themes and course objectives into the discussions.

Week One

Reflection Questions: Take some time to reflect upon how you view your professional identity now that you will be introducing new services to your established role as literacy coordinator. Please submit approximately one page of writing for each of the questions:

How do you foresee your professional identity in your community changing now that you are offering literacy specialist services?

Where in your community did you begin connecting with others, and how are you doing it?

Week Two - Nine

(You must submit 8 reflections during these weeks)

Reflection on Practicum Experience: Share your learning from your practicum with the rest of the group. Please submit approximately one page for each submission. Use the questions below to guide your reflection:

- What was the purpose of the activity or event
- What actually happened
- What you did in preparation for the activity
- What the impact of the activity was
- What you learned from the activity
- Relate to key concepts in the course

Week Ten

Reflection Question: Now that you have been providing literacy specialist services in your community for two months please reflect on how you see changes in your professional self.

How do you think service providers and others in the community perceive your professional role, and how do you feel your professional identity has changed?

Attachment 2:

Practicum Learning Objectives

Literacy Specialist

These learning objectives enable the College to determine the learning value of the literacy specialist's practicum experience. Please consider the learning themes when writing your learning objectives. At midpoint and at the end of the practicum, the literacy specialist and the practicum supervisor will evaluate the level of attainment of each objective and relative value of each objective to the course learning themes.

Learning Objective	Literacy Specialist	Practicum supervisor
1.		
2.		
3.		

Rating Scale – based on SMART outline

- 0 - Zero objective accomplishment
- 1 - Minimal objective accomplishment
- 2 - Average objective accomplishment
- 3 - Above average objective accomplishment
- 4 - Objective fully accomplished

Literacy Specialist signature

Practicum Supervisor signature

Date

Date

Attachment 3:

Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy Training Course

Participant Questionnaire

You were a participant in the Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy Project. Bow Valley College would appreciate your feedback on this course. Information will be used for a final report to National Literacy Secretariat and to assist Bow Valley College make improvements for future offerings.

Please respond to the following questions by either circling one letter associated with a response option, or by writing in the space provided. Please do not write or sign your name.

The course refers to all of the pre-assignment, on-campus, on-line, and practicum components.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
1. The learning goal, outcome, objectives, and/or expectations for the course were clearly stated.	A	B	C	D	E
2. The stated learning goal, outcome, objectives, and/or expectations were met.	A	B	C	D	E
3. My personal expectations for this course were met. For number 3 only - if you responded Disagree or Strongly Disagree please explain.	A	B	C	D	E
<hr/>					
4. The course content was well organized.	A	B	C	D	E
5. The pre-course was valuable to me.	A	B	C	D	E
6. The four-day on-campus classroom session was valuable to me.	A	B	C	D	E
7. The ten-week on-line learning session (eLit) was valuable to me.	A	B	C	D	E
8. The resources for this course were useful. Please comment on resources.	A	B	C	D	E
<hr/>					
9. For me, as an individual, the practicum was beneficial.	A	B	C	D	E
10. For me, as a professional, the practicum was beneficial.	A	B	C	D	E

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 11. | I could apply the learning principles from the course to my practicum. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 12. | My practicum work was valuable to the “community” I served. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 13. | I would recommend this course to other Literacy Practitioners. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 14. | What other professionals or professional groups would benefit? | | | | | |
-
-

The instructor:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 15. | Was knowledgeable of subject matter. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 16. | Was enthusiastic about the course. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 17. | Was well organized. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 18. | Was approachable. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 19. | Was able to help me, but let me do my own work. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 20. | Provided support and support during practicum.
Comment. | A | B | C | D | E |
-
-

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 21. | Made the course interesting. | A | B | C | D | E |
| 22. | Consider the delivery method for this course. Which option from the list below would you recommend? (Please circle letter below). | | | | | |
| | a) Pre-course assignment, four or five days in classroom, ten weeks on-line, plus practicum. (As you experienced.) | | | | | |
| | b) Pre-course assignment, two days in class, twelve weeks on-line, plus practicum. | | | | | |
| | c) Pre-course assignment, twelve weeks on-line, plus practicum. | | | | | |
| | d) Other Please specify. | | | | | |
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-

Please answer the following questions in the space provided

23. What skills or knowledge did you gain? (List the top three.)

24. How did this course change your professional practice?

25. What overall impact has this course had on you as a literacy professional?

26. What are your plans for continuing to implement your skills developed in this course?

27. The greatest strength of this course is:

28. This course can be improved by:

Thank you for your time and cooperation; it is greatly appreciated.

This questionnaire is being conducted under the guidelines of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. If you have any concerns or would like further details on how this information will be used, please contact:

Daph Crane, MDE
Program Evaluator
Learning Resource Services
Bow Valley College
Tel: (403) 410-1655
E-mail: dcrane@bowvalleycollege.ca

Attachment 4:

Outline and Guiding Questions for

Participant Impact

Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy Training Course

The purpose of this research-in-practice reflective inquiry is to examine the learning and changes that the participants experienced from the course and practicum. This report will accompany the report on the community impact from the practicum.

The data will be collected from:

- The on-line shared journal entries
- The mid-point and final phone conversations about progress on practicum learning objectives
- Comments from the feedback questionnaire by participants

Guiding Questions for the RIP

1. What was learned?
2. How did the participants apply this learning?
3. How did this learning change their view of their professional identity?

Procedure

- Inform participants of intended research
- Request permission from participants to quote directly
- Invite one or two participants to join in on the research
- Gather journal entries
- Gather practicum learning objectives data
- Review participant questionnaire responses
- Analyze
- Write report
- Invite participants to review

Attachment 5:

Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy Training Project Learning Themes

(Adapted from course guide)

Six learning themes flow throughout the course and practicum. The learning themes were developed from research in the Connecting Literacy to Community project, 2001-03. The research had two focuses. One was to identify the core competencies or skills used by the literacy specialists, and the other was to explore the connections between prior knowledge and experience and how literacy specialists carried out their work. From this research the following 6 learning themes were identified as critical to role of Literacy Specialist.

1. Building Knowledge

On the following concepts

- Community capacity building and community development
- Literacy as social practice and New Literacy Studies
- Appreciative inquiry
- Diversity and inclusion
- Organizational and social change
- Social marketing

2. Personal and professional effectiveness

Explore personal and professional values about literacy and community.

- Personal values on literacy, equality, and social responsibility
- Work ethic and professional identity
- Analytical and problem solving skills
- Risk taking and flexibility
- Creativity
- Self-reflection
- Personal coping and wellness

3. Gathering and using information

Strengthen skills in gathering and sharing relevant and up-to-date information on literacy and related social issues.

- Research skills
- Organizational skills
- Deciphering and prioritizing
- Knowing your audience

- Communication skills

4. Building relationships and partnerships

Expand knowledge and skills to be able to develop, care for and conclude partnerships and to be able to engage in constructive working relationships that build community capacity for adult literacy.

- Supportive and safe environments
- Mutual respect and trust
- Support for literacy champions
- Positive communication
- Collaborative problem solving
- Sharing knowledge, resources, and tools

5. Facilitating learning and encouraging sustainable change

Strengthen skills in group facilitation and presentations/public speaking. Based on the Appreciative Inquiry approach, practice ways to facilitate learning and decision-making that will improve community services for people who experience literacy barriers

- Create awareness
- Foster inquiry
- Encourage reflection
- Demonstrate positive communication
- Respect responsibility
- Design action plans
- Support action

6. Process management skills

Broaden ability to balance and integrate the work of the course and practicum (literacy specialist approach) with other work, and establish a system of documentation

- Time management
- Organizational skills
- Record creation and maintenance
- Promotional material for literacy specialist services
- Filing system
- Report writing

About the Authors

Bill Holbrow

Bill is president of **the Holbrow group Inc.** He has worked in the field of performance management and evaluation as an internal and an external consultant to a variety of organizations for over 20 years.

Bill's interest in literacy is evident in his long-standing work with Literacy Alberta and Bow Valley College. He has conducted numerous studies and advised individuals, groups and organizations on planning and assessment matters including those related to literacy.



Audrey Gardner

Audrey was the lead content expert and designer of the **Building Community Capacity: Focus on Literacy** course. She also instructed the initial course in 2004-2005. With over 10 years of experience in the non-profit sector Audrey has brought her experience of community building to the adult literacy field. She has been a literacy specialist with the Connecting Literacy to Community project at Bow Valley College since 2001.

