

# Growing Our Way

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A Report on the  
Professional Development  
Project



**Literacy**  
*Alberta*

# Growing Our Way

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Professional Development  
Project

Literacy Alberta, 2004

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# Foreword and Acknowledgements

The Professional Development Project (PDP) was initiated by the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (now Literacy Alberta) to research and plan professional development for coordinators of community adult literacy programs. The National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, funded the project in partnership with Alberta Learning.

During the PDP I was reminded again and again of how literacy coordinators value learning in order to do the best job possible. I am therefore quite delighted to announce that Literacy Alberta is initiating a new project: *Strengthening pathways to professional development for coordinators of community adult literacy programs*. The purpose of this project is to develop and deliver a systematic professional development program for coordinators of community adult literacy programs.

The new project reflects the contributions of the many people, listed on the next page, who were part of the PDP. I wish to thank the 73 coordinators who contributed their time and ideas to the project, the research team for their careful and thoughtful work, the Project Advisory Committee for their enthusiastic support and insights, and The Learning Centre Literacy Association for providing project coordination and administrative support. I would also like to thank the people in other provinces and territories who provided information about professional development for literacy educators in their areas.

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# Introduction

Coordinators of community adult literacy programs share a passion for learning that inspired the formation of the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA) in 1986. In the years that followed, the LCA coordinated a range of professional development opportunities. New Coordinator Training, Advanced Coordinator Training, annual conferences, the regional networks, and various projects all offered pathways to learning for adult literacy coordinators.

Building on this history, the LCA launched the Professional Development Project (PDP) in the fall, 2002, to research and plan additional pathways to learning for literacy coordinators. Between November 2002 and June 2003, 73 coordinators of community adult literacy programs participated in one or more of the PDP research activities. During this time, the LCA merged with the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL) to form Literacy Alberta, which assumed responsibility for the PDP.

Although coordinators' experiences and ideas were the main focus for the PDP research, information was also gathered through literature and website reviews, and through informal consultations with staff of government departments and literacy organizations in other provinces. The ideas and recommendations from coordinators, along with ideas from the other sources, were used to plan a professional development program that builds on the strong foundation laid by the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. Literacy Alberta has since received National Literacy Secretariat funding for a project to begin to develop and implement the program.

The purpose of this report is to document the PDP research process, to report on learnings from the research, and to present the proposed professional development program. Copies of research resources are included on the CD appended to this report, so that others undertaking similar research may use or adapt them.

# Context for Conducting the PDP Research

Each year, 2000 or more women and men attend community adult literacy programs that are located across Alberta. Most of these adults are matched with a volunteer tutor. Learners and tutors meet one or more times a week, to teach and learn together, focusing on topics and skills the learners choose. In each community adult literacy program, a coordinator or coordinator team carries out a range of tasks to create and maintain a program that meets participants' needs.

Most community adult literacy programs in Alberta are funded by the provincial government department of Advanced Education through the Adult Learning, Community Programs branch.<sup>1</sup> Under the Community Adult Learning Programs policy and operating requirements (2002), Advanced Education funds Community Adult Learning Councils (CALC)<sup>2</sup> and Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs (VTALP).

VTALP are funded to provide one-to-one and small group tutoring by volunteers for adults to improve their “functional literacy skills for further education, employment preparation or personal reasons” (Community Adult Learning Programs, 2002, p. 23). Alberta Advanced Education provides annual grants to 74 VTALP. Located in rural and urban communities across Alberta, these programs comprise the majority of community adult literacy programs in the province.

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<sup>1</sup> The Departments of Advanced Education and Human Resources and Employment share responsibility for delivery of adult literacy and Adult Basic Education through post-secondary institutions and through community-based programs. For the most part, ABE programs in the postsecondary sector are intended to prepare people for employment or for training or further education that would lead to employment. Financial support to attend programs is also aimed at helping people move into the workforce.

<sup>2</sup> The CALC coordinate and promote adult learning in a council area, and distribute grants to subsidize non-credit literacy, ESL, community issues and employability enhancement programs. In many communities, the CALC are also responsible for the VTALP, although some VTALP are sponsored by other agencies or operate as independent societies.

Professional development for the coordinators of these programs was the main focus of the PDP, although the resulting professional development program may be open to others.

Alberta Advanced Education provided annual funding to the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta to offer professional development for coordinators of VTALP. Since the merger of LCA into Literacy Alberta, Literacy Alberta has been contracted to provide this professional development.<sup>3</sup> As well, LCA/Literacy Alberta have sponsored or been a partner in a variety of projects, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, which have contributed to coordinators' professional development. Professional development activities provided through LCA and Literacy Alberta are described in Appendix A, page 38.

## The PDP Research Process

To initiate the PDP, the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta contracted a coordinating researcher who had long-term experience as a coordinator, professional development facilitator and researcher. She prepared a research plan, following a participatory model that placed coordinators at the centre of the research. (Intentions for the research plan are included in Appendix B, page 44.)

### Advisory Committee

A seven-member advisory committee was formed of experienced community adult literacy coordinators from rural and urban centres, the Alberta Advanced Education consultant responsible for liaison with LCA/Literacy Alberta, and a staff person from the Centre for Family Literacy. The Literacy Alberta Manager of Professional Development and Regions also attended committee meetings. The committee met four times in person or by teleconference to review and respond to the research plan, to receive and respond to reports on

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<sup>3</sup> Literacy Alberta's Manager of Professional Development and Regions coordinates and organizes professional development for coordinators and other Literacy Alberta members.

the progress of the research, and to make recommendations regarding the proposed professional development program. Committee members also suggested relevant professional development resources and projects to review, provided links to relevant organizations, and encouraged coordinators to participate in the research.

## Research Team

To carry out the research, the coordinating researcher formed a team of herself and three research associates.<sup>4</sup> The associates were selected for their experience in the community-based adult literacy field, for their research experience, and in order to provide opportunities for people from the field to further develop their research skills. With the coordinating researcher as facilitator, the team worked collaboratively to prepare research resources and carry out the research. A research assistant was also contracted to collate and type information gathered during the research.

## Research Activities with Coordinators

Coordinator participation in the research

Research activities with coordinators included a mail-in questionnaire, telephone interviews and focus group meetings. The first set of focus groups engaged coordinators in responding to learnings from the questionnaires and interviews. A concluding focus group focused on identifying attributes (knowledge, skills, abilities) that coordinators need to do their jobs. The research activities are described in subsequent sections. Research resources are included on the CD that is appended at the end of the report.

A poster and brochure were developed to inform coordinators about the PDP, and a presentation about the project was made at the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta annual general meeting in 2002. Soon after, a letter introducing the PDP was sent to 83 coordinators of community adult literacy programs whose names and addresses had been provided by the LCA. The letter invited coordinators to

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<sup>4</sup> A fourth associate, who was also contracted, had to resign due to other commitments.

complete the enclosed PDP questionnaire and to indicate if they were interested in participating in other research activities. In the eight months that followed, seventy-three coordinators participated in one or more of the research activities.

Number of coordinators who participated in:		Number of coordinators who participated in:	
Questionnaires	64	One activity	21
Interviews	48	Two activities	22
Focus Group (Response)	40	Three activities	26
Focus Group (Attributes)	7	Four activities	4
		Total number of participants	73

TABLE ONE. **Coordinator participation in research activities**

Questionnaire      The purpose of the questionnaire was to introduce the PDP, to invite participation in research activities, and to collect some demographic and related information about coordinators' jobs, job roles and professional development experiences. The coordinating researcher developed the questionnaire and reviewed and revised it with the research associates. The questionnaire and an accompanying letter and information sheet were field tested with four coordinators. They were asked to provide feedback about the time it took to complete the questionnaire and about any questions that were not clear. (The questionnaire is included on the CD.)

As noted, questionnaires were sent to eighty-three coordinators of community adult literacy programs in November 2002. Coordinators were invited to respond by December 18 in order to be eligible for a draw for one of two \$50 certificates to purchase books for their programs. Over forty coordinators replied by December 18. Sixty-four coordinators responded by the end of February (77% of 83 coordinators). The research assistant collated the responses to the questionnaires.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> One questionnaire was omitted from the collation process, because the respondent was no longer coordinating a community adult literacy program, although her name had been included on the list provided by LCA. Hence, responses from 63 questionnaires were

Interviews The purpose of the interviews was to learn about reasons for attending professional development, topics of interest, delivery preferences, interest in recognition/certification, and barriers to and supports for professional development. Starting with a framework prepared by the coordinating researcher, the research team prepared mostly open-ended interview questions related to the purposes of the interview.<sup>6</sup> Each member of the team conducted a pilot interview, and questionnaires were refined, based on experiences with the pilot interviews. (Interview questions are included on the CD.)

Research team members contacted questionnaire respondents who had said they would or might participate in an interview and arranged an interview time. Coordinators who had not completed questionnaires, but who had otherwise indicated an interest in participating in interviews, were also contacted.

A letter to confirm interview arrangements, along with a consent form, was sent to those who agreed to an interview. A list of coordinators' job roles was included with the letter for reference during the interview.

Research team members completed 48 interviews with coordinators in January and February 2003 (59% of 83 coordinators). Interviews were conducted by telephone<sup>7</sup> and tape recorded with participants' permission. Participants received a \$20 book certificate to acknowledge their time for the interview. Team members transcribed

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collated. Her interview responses were included with other interview information because they reflected her previous experience.

<sup>6</sup> Open-ended questions were intentionally used to allow for a breadth of responses and to provide opportunities for discussion and reflection about the topic of professional development. However, an open-ended approach meant that more time was required for analysis. In retrospect, the quantitative approach could have been combined with the analysis completed by the research team. In future, the responses to these interviews could provide starting points to develop checklists of possible responses to the questions.

<sup>7</sup> One of the research associates conducted face-to-face interviews in a few instances, as she worked in the same location as the coordinators being interviewed.

tapes and/or made detailed notes of responses. Copies of transcripts were sent to coordinators who had asked to review them.

Following completion of the interviews, the researchers reviewed the transcripts and identified key words and phrases that responded to the interview questions. The team met twice to group the key words and phrases into possible topics or themes related to each question. The topics or themes thus identified were used to report to the focus groups and as background for planning the professional development program.

Focus groups to respond to learnings from questionnaire and interviews

Four focus group meetings were held in the spring, 2003. The purpose of these meetings was to present and extend the learnings from the research and to invite coordinators' ideas for a professional development plan. Forty coordinators attended focus group meetings.

Location	Calgary March 11	Lethbridge April 10	Edmonton May 2	Grande Prairie May 9
Number of participants	15	7	12	6

TABLE TWO. **Participants in focus group meetings**

The daylong focus group meetings were planned to invite interaction, reflection and creative imagining. Each participant was provided with a folder of materials that included a “workbook” outlining topics and questions to address during the day, a summary of responses to the questionnaire, a summary of learnings from the interviews, and a page of questions to prompt reflection about the questionnaire and interview responses. (A description of the focus group activities and copies of the handouts are included on the CD.)

Rooms were arranged to be as comfortable as possible and coloured pencils, paper, and manipulative objects were placed on the tables to encourage people to fiddle and doodle as desired.<sup>8</sup> Each focus group

<sup>8</sup> Manipulatives were provided both to help participants stay present during a long day of interaction, and to prompt creativity.

meeting, which was co-facilitated by the coordinating researcher and an associate, started with an introduction to the concept of “Maiden, Mother, Crone”<sup>9</sup> as a framework to encourage participants to draw on their range of experiences and on their creative and reflective energies. Then, in order to collect information and to anchor the next activities, participants named and discussed key attributes—what coordinators need to know, what they need to be able to do and how they need to “be” in order to do their jobs. The rest of the day included individual and interactive activities to review PDP learnings and to develop and present possible plans for professional development.

At the end of the day, participants were asked to write about what they liked, didn’t like, and would change about the focus group meetings. Although this feedback was requested to help plan subsequent focus groups, it also provided insights about participants’ responses to participatory processes, and was thus an additional source of information for planning delivery of professional development.

Focus group about attributes needed for coordinators’ roles

Seven coordinators attended a concluding focus group meeting in Edmonton in May 2003. Using the lists of key job areas identified in the questionnaire, coordinators worked in pairs to identify attributes for the roles of involving and supporting learners and tutors. Each attribute was recorded on a sticky note and posted on a flip chart sheet. Along with information collected in the other focus groups, this focus group meeting provided a preliminary list of attributes that coordinators need to do their jobs. As well, it tested a process for developing a more complete inventory, should this be desired at some point.

Consent

Coordinators were asked to provide consent to use information gathered through each of the research activities.<sup>10</sup> A question regarding

<sup>9</sup> The “maiden” was used to represent the energy of possibilities, the “mother” to represent creativity, and the “crone” to represent the energy of reflection.

<sup>10</sup> Consent forms also asked coordinators if they wanted their names to be included in the research report and indicated that their names would not be used with any quotes that

consent was included in the questionnaire. Consent forms were sent to interview participants, reviewed and completed at the start of the interview, and returned to the coordinating researcher. Consent forms were also completed during each focus group meeting.

## Other Research Activities

Review of professional development in Alberta and other provinces Contact was made with literacy coalitions and/or government offices in most provinces and the territories, including Alberta. In-person or telephone conversations about delivery of professional development in the province or territory were completed. Notes from the conversations were augmented through website reviews. The conversations provided information about some models for provision of professional development, and suggested possibilities for collaboration with other organizations on some professional development activities.<sup>11</sup>

Literature search An initial electronic literature search was completed in the summer, 2002. Articles and reports were obtained and were reviewed for relevant information. A bibliography of relevant literature is included in Appendix C, page 46. The literature search also included a review of policy documents and reports related to providing community adult literacy programs in Alberta.

Identifying providers of professional development Websites of colleges and universities in Alberta and elsewhere were reviewed to identify courses and programs that are relevant to coordinators. Online courses

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might be included. The latter approach recognized that quotes would be selected to reflect many participants' views, rather than to represent an individual.

<sup>11</sup> A summary of professional development activities in other provinces and territories has not been included in the report because the information would now be out of date. The information and contact names have been provided to the Literacy Alberta Manager of Professional Development and Regions.

provided by universities in other provinces were also identified. A list of providers is included in Appendix D, page 46.

## Learnings from the Research

In this section, learnings from the various research activities are reported and discussed to provide background for presenting the proposed professional development program. Information from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups with coordinators is also documented systematically in Appendices E to H.

### Changing Contexts for Professional Development

Provision of literacy education through VTALP has evolved since the late 1970s when the Further Education Services (FES) of Alberta Advanced Education and Manpower funded two literacy projects proposed by community groups. Both projects involved volunteers, reflecting a belief that learners would respond most readily to confidential, one-to-one tutoring, and building on approaches used in other parts of Canada and in the United States. With growing awareness about adult literacy, community colleges throughout the province began to sponsor FES-funded literacy projects. Although some other approaches to literacy provision were explored, most of these projects involved volunteer tutors. By the mid-1980s, a number of rural Further Education Councils (now CALC) had initiated volunteer tutor literacy projects, and by the mid-1990s there were volunteer tutor programs in every Alberta city and in most counties and improvement districts. Professional development for literacy coordinators in the 1980s and '90s focused on preparing coordinators to support learners and tutors.

At a visioning workshop in March 2002 for the then-proposed Literacy Alberta organization, participants, including coordinators, identified key features of a vision for literacy education in Alberta. These included literacy education in the context of lifelong and lifewide learning; wide access to a range of ways of learning (e.g.,

classes, groups, tutoring) and community learning centres (literacy and learning) (Literacy Alberta Development Project, 2002).

A study of rural VTALP (Bradley Wells Management Consulting, 2003) identified a decline in participation in literacy programs in some rural communities. As well as suggesting a province-wide initiative to promote literacy, Bradley Wells identified limitations of the volunteer tutor model and suggested a

more flexible approach, where tutors and paid staff work side by side, technology enables some self-direction, both classes and individual instruction are available, and literacy services are closely linked to other services in the community including K-12, post-secondary, health, employment and social services systems. (p. 33)

Although all VTALP-funded programs involve volunteers as tutors, some programs, using other sources of funding, have explored additional ways to help adults develop literacy and numeracy, including small group learning, computer-based learning, classes and learning centres (Table Three). As well, 68% of questionnaire respondents indicated that they also coordinated or facilitated family literacy programs.

Type of service offered by programs	Number of responses (n=63)	Percent of responses
One-to-one tutoring	63	100
Small group learning	42	66
Computer-based learning	23	37
Classes	21	33
Workshops for the general public	21	33
A learning centre	12	19

TABLE THREE. **Types of services offered by community adult literacy programs (PDP Questionnaire, 2002)**

Literacy programs have a key role in providing opportunities for learning, but they can also be catalysts for expanding points of access (Hamilton, 2000) for literacy, within an understanding of lifewide learning. The concept of lifewide learning recognizes the range of

formal, nonformal and informal settings in which people learn, the range of people who facilitate learning, and the range of ways in which learning may be demonstrated. Points of access could include any site where people engage in literacy-based activities, including libraries, workplaces, clinics, and community centres. The *Connecting literacy to communities* project (Gardner, 2003) explored ways to expand points of access by integrating literacy awareness and development into community settings. Learnings from this project are being applied in a follow-up project, *Focus on literacy*.<sup>12</sup>

While coordinating Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs continues to be a focus of programs funded by Alberta Learning, the changing context needs to be considered in planning professional development for coordinators. Other changes to be considered include the growing understanding about the value of research in practice as a means for professional learning (Drennon, 1994; Horsman and Norton, 1999; Quigley and Norton, 2002). Recent research in practice about using holistic approaches to address the impacts of violence on learning also offers ideas for both the processes and content of professional development (Morrish, Horsman and Hofer, 2002; *Violence and learning: Taking action*, 2004).

PD is extremely valuable. It provides direction and focus.... Society changes and your community changes, so there is never a time when PD has run its course. (*A PDP interview participant*)

There is also a need to coordinate professional development for adult literacy coordinators with training for those involved in family literacy. A number of interview and focus group participants mentioned that they had participated in family literacy training. As well, it should be

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<sup>12</sup>During the *Connecting literacy to communities* project, “literacy specialists” worked in four communities to learn about adult literacy in each community, to help service providers and other community members understand issues of adult literacy, and to help service providers improve services and promote literacy. The *Connecting literacy to communities* project was sponsored by Bow Valley College, Calgary. Literacy Alberta is a partner with Bow Valley College in the *Focus on literacy* project.

noted that Literacy Alberta provides professional development for all its members, including coordinators, other practitioners, tutors, and students. Linking professional development for coordinators and other Literacy Alberta members offers possibilities for making it more widely available for all.

## Coordinators' Education and Experiences

Coordinators of community adult literacy programs have a breadth and depth of pre-service and on-the-job education, learning and experience which must be accounted for in planning professional development with them.

Regarding formal pre-service education, 71% percent of questionnaire respondents had a Bachelors' degree; 38% had a BEd and 33% had a degree in another area. As well, 17% of respondents reported having Masters' degrees and two indicated they had a Doctorate or PhD. Respondents also reported having certificates or diplomas in a range of areas, including adult, early childhood and family life education; counselling women; volunteer management; personnel management; social work; business administration; and fitness leadership.

Once on the job, coordinators participate in a range of professional development activities, including events sponsored by Literacy Alberta (previously LCA) and other activities (Tables Four and Five). The rates of participation in various types of activities point both to coordinators' commitment to professional development and to the types of delivery which are accessed most. For instance 98% of questionnaire respondents had attended the Provincial Literacy Conference and 92% had participated in regional meetings.

Type of program	Number of responses (n=63)	Percent of respondents
Conferences (LCA/PLC)	62	98
Regional Meetings/workshops	58	92
New Coordinator Training	41 <sup>13</sup>	65
Advanced Coordinator Training	28	44
Resource Person (RP) Training	14	22
Other <sup>14</sup>	6	10

TABLE FOUR. **Participation in LCA-sponsored professional development activities during the previous five years (PDP questionnaire, 2002)**

Type of program	Number of responses (n=63)	Percent of respondents
Workshops	52	83
Vitalize (Volunteerism conference)	31	49
Other conferences	24	38
Non-credit courses	21	33
Credit courses	10	16
Program (e.g., several courses that lead to a diploma)	9	14
Conferences sponsored by literacy organizations in other provinces/territories	6	10
Literacy BC Summer Institute	4	6
Other	13	21

TABLE FIVE. **Participation in other professional development activities during the previous five years (PDP questionnaire, 2002)**

Regarding years of experience in the field, 65% of questionnaire respondents had been in their jobs as coordinators for four or more years, and 25% had been coordinators for more than nine (Table Five). This percentage may reflect a year when there were fewer resignations and new hirings than in other years; however, it does

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13 The questionnaire asked respondents to check off the professional development activities they had participated in during the previous five years. Those with six or more years of experience likely would not have taken part in New Coordinator Training during that time.

14 For a list of other professional development activities, see Appendix E.2, page 63.

point to a need for professional development that addresses the interests of coordinators at various stages in their careers. In focus groups, participants recommended extended training and support for new coordinators, while also advocating for continuing professional development for those with more experience.

Number of years	All	Less than 1	1-3	4-6	7-9	More than 9
Number of responses	63	6	16	19	7	15
Percent of responses	100	10	25	30	11	24

TABLE SIX. Number of years as a coordinator in a community adult literacy program (PDP Questionnaire, 2002)

The number of experienced coordinators, along with coordinators' range of learning, also point to possibilities for involving them in providing professional development. This idea was discussed in interviews and focus groups, and is reported on in a later section about providing professional development.

## Coordinators' Working Conditions

Coordinators' working conditions have a bearing on when and how they can participate in professional development. For instance, the majority of questionnaire respondents (57%) work in programs that are located in rural towns or villages and almost half (48%) of respondents are the sole employees in their programs.

For the most part, interview participants were employed for 9 or 10 months a year (70%), although 24% are employed for 12 months.<sup>15</sup> Although some interview participants said that the summer months, when they are not employed, was a possible time for professional development, others were clear that summer months were devoted to family and other non-work activities.

Hours of employment per week varied among questionnaire respondents, from fewer than ten to full-time, with the majority (87%)

<sup>15</sup> Coordinators who work full time and/or for 12 months per year were generally employed in programs in Edmonton or Calgary.

working part-time. Some questionnaire respondents commented on the challenges of doing all of their work in the hours they are paid for.

Number of hours/week	Less than 10	10-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-40	NA
Number of responses	3	13	20	15	3	7	2
Percent of responses	5	21	32	24	5	11	3

TABLE SEVEN. **Number of hours of paid employment per week (PDP Questionnaire, 2002)**

Although rate of pay was not specifically asked about, the topic came up in some interview discussions about a certification process. Some interview participants hoped that having a certificate might lead to increased pay, while others commented that it would not, given fixed funding. Both views implied that the rate of pay for coordinators is below professional standards. The issue of hours and pay needs to be considered in planning professional development.

## Barriers to and Support for Participation

Interview participants reported on the challenges of fitting professional development into already full schedules. Fifty-four percent of interview participants said that time was the main barrier to participating in professional development. Other challenges to participation, reported in interviews, included cost (42%), travel and distance (23%), and personal and family considerations (21%). Distance and winter travel conditions are a particular challenge in Alberta. Other barriers included the need for childcare and having another part-time job.

Support to participate in professional development varied widely among coordinators. Although the questionnaire did not ask about the costs of professional development, these would also vary among coordinators, depending on the cost of individual events, distance to travel, how many events they wish to attend, and when the events are scheduled.

<b>Paid costs/time</b>	<b>Number of responses (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent of respondents</b>
Some PD costs	32	51
All of my PD costs	31	49
None of my PD costs	0	0
Some paid time	38	60
All the paid time I need	22	35
No paid time	3	5

TABLE EIGHT. **Support that programs provide for coordinators to attend professional development (PDP questionnaire, 2002)**

When asked about how many days or hours of paid time they might take for professional development, 43% of respondents indicated “as required” or reported that it depended on budget, the cost of the activity, and/or the time needed. Many respondents indicated that their program had no specific policy regarding professional development, and 25% did not reply to this question.

Variations in support for professional development have implications for planning a more comprehensive program of professional development for coordinators. Interview participants suggested that subsidies or bursaries could reduce barriers, as could having professional development closer to home or offered through the regions. Other supports included distance delivery, providing advance information to facilitate planning, offering an event more than once, and providing support for childcare. As well, coordinators might be encouraged to develop guidelines to help programs clarify policies regarding professional development. Despite challenges, participants in the interviews and focus groups articulated a strong commitment to professional development.

I feel very passionate about PD.... (*A PDP interview participant*)

## Topics for Professional Development

Information about topics for professional development was collected by asking coordinators about their job roles and the attributes needed to do their jobs, by asking about their reasons for participating in

professional development, and by asking them to name topics they were interested in learning about. Responses provide a base for planning content for professional development.

Coordinators' roles           The PDP questionnaire included a list of 57 job roles, organized in the following categories: program planning and management, involving and supporting learners, involving and supporting volunteers, administration, and community liaison. Coordinators were asked to check off all of the roles they do in their jobs, and to add any roles that were not listed.<sup>16</sup> (Appendix E.1, page 59, includes a list of job roles and responses.) Every job role but four was checked by 50% or more of questionnaire respondents, and over half of the job roles (35) were checked by over 80% of respondents. Additional roles were added to each job category as well.

There has been such an increase in skills that you're supposed to do now as a coordinator...It is quite jam packed with not a lot of hours, but you do have to be knowledgeable in many areas.  
*(A PDP interview participant)*

Attributes co-ordinators need to carry out their roles           Attributes identified by focus group participants are listed in Appendices G and H. One surprising learning from the focus groups was the number of attributes that came under the "how coordinators need to be" category, such as empathetic, non-judgmental, creative and enthusiastic. There was some discussion about whether and how professional development can help people acquire these attributes, for instance through modeling and mentoring.

Coordinators' reasons for participating           Sixty-five percent of interview participants said that they attended professional development in order to do their jobs well. A

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<sup>16</sup> The list of job roles was developed from one prepared by Susan Devins for the *Standards Implementation Project* (Phase I).

similar reason was implied in many of the other responses, including to keep current (40%), to extend knowledge (27%), and to improve skills and abilities (13%). Twenty-one percent of interview participants noted that they attended professional development for personal well-being, among other reasons.

Fifty-six percent of interview participants said that networking was an important aspect of professional development, with a number noting how much they learn from other coordinators. The importance of networking was reflected in further comments about preference for face-to-face delivery. (See section on preferred delivery modes, page 20.)

Networking and sharing is so important. PD is about sharing knowledge to do our jobs better.  
(*A PDP interview participant*)

Topics of current interest

Questionnaire respondents identified topics in each of the five areas of their jobs. Table Nine lists the topics that were most frequently named. (Appendix F includes a complete list.)

Topic	Number of responses (n=48)	Percent of respondents
Tutor training	18	38
Proposals/grant applications/funding	17	35
Assessment	14	29
ESL	13	27
Learning disabilities	13	27
Volunteer recruitment	12	25
Learner recruitment	11	23
Board/advisory committee development	10	21
Promotion	9	19
Administration/office management	8	17

TABLE NINE. **Most frequently named topics for professional development (PDP Interviews, 2003)**

As well as naming personal wellness as a reason to attend professional development, a small number of interview participants identified

topics related to self-care and wellness, such as “feel good” sessions for stress relief, how to prevent burnout, and workshops to energize. Given coordinators’ range of jobs and circumstances of work, self-care and wellness are important topics to include in professional development. Professional development can also be planned to include activities, time, and space for coordinators to reflect and “recharge.” Participants in one of the focus group meetings commented about the importance of having professional development in settings close to nature.

We work hard and this isn’t an easy field, and there are often heartaches around.... It shouldn’t be all nose to the grindstone. We should be able to have some fun. *(A PDP interview participant)*

A small number of coordinators also mentioned the importance of professional development in prompting reflection about practice. Although only mentioned by a small number, this topic relates to the growing awareness of the value of reflection and research in practice for professional and program development. As well, some coordinators mentioned the importance of hands-on, practical learning that can be applied directly in their programs. A professional development program can address the need for practical knowledge and include time and activities to support reflection.

## Coordinators’ Preferred Delivery Approaches

Seventy-nine percent of interview participants said that they prefer face-to-face learning opportunities, again noting the importance of learning through interaction with others (50%). Interest in learning from each other, along with the feedback about the focus group processes, points to a need for participatory delivery processes that draw from and build on coordinators’ knowledge and experiences. It should be noted, however, that a small number of coordinators said they do not like group work and prefer to learn from a presenter with expertise in an area.

In response to the open-ended question about delivery, 30% of interview participants said they appreciated opportunities for independent and distance learning. When asked specifically about their interest in online delivery of professional development, 46% of participants said they would try it and 25% said they would possibly try it; 29% said they would not. Participants also offered comments that pointed to the advantages and disadvantages of online learning, some of which mirrored each other.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can take on own time, fits schedule, allows time to reflect	Challenge to fit into schedule Workload is greater - reading
Can do it from home or office	
Accessibility Reduces travel time/winter travel; good for rural community	Rural access can be a problem
Quick, immediate and cost effective	Concerned about cost (for modem, etc.)
Can meet people from different places Good for reflection/ sharing	Lack of interaction with people
	Issue of feeling “safe” (cannot see facial expressions or hear tone of voice)

TABLE TEN. **Advantages and disadvantages of online delivery of professional development (PDP interviews, 2003)**

As with the more general question about preferred delivery methods, some coordinators reiterated that they prefer face-to-face learning. Coordinators also mentioned that online learning is not their learning style, that they would need to be highly motivated, and that it could be an option for others.

Given that many coordinators are located at great distances from each other and from sites where professional development is offered, online learning is one way to provide more comprehensive professional development. As well, online learning could also facilitate collaboration with organizations in other provinces and territories to

offer professional development. Although the majority of interview participants were positive about online learning, a notable number were not. Given these responses and the general interest in face-to-face learning, professional development needs to be provided with a balance of delivery modes. As well, online delivery can be designed to meet coordinators' preferences for interaction and collaboration (Care and Udod, 2000). Orientation sessions would also be important to invite coordinators to try online learning.

## Involving Coordinators in Providing Professional Development

Eighty-nine percent of interview participants said that coordinators could be involved in providing professional development. A number mentioned that coordinators have “all kinds” of background and expertise, and that they understand the field. Suggested ways for coordinators to be involved included: facilitate workshops (23%), participate in round tables/sharing (21%), and mentoring (10%).

Some interview and focus group participants suggested that coordinators might be hesitant to initiate or volunteer to offer professional development, and indicated that finding time to prepare such activities could be a challenge. However, when asked about personal interest in providing professional development, 48% of interview participants said they would be interested and many named topics about which they could do a workshop. A professional development program could actively invite, support, and pay coordinators to provide professional development for their peers.

## Coordinators' Interest in a Certificate Program

Certification has been a topic of interest among literacy coordinators in Alberta since the early 1990s<sup>17</sup> and discussion about certification was one impetus for initiating the PDP. Elsewhere in Canada, the

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<sup>17</sup> In 1993/94, Pat Campbell reviewed the literature on certification for adult educators for the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta, in response to coordinators' interest in the topic.

Ontario Literacy Coalition has investigated certification (Rowen, 1998) and in Manitoba, Adult Learning and Literacy (Department of Advanced Education and Training) offers a three-level *Literacy Practitioner and Tutor Professional Development Certificate* (2004).

Interview participants were asked about their interest in taking professional development that would lead to certification. Seventy percent responded positively (56% said yes; 21% said possibly). Ten percent said no and 6% said that they were not sure. Interview participants also said that a certification process needs to recognize prior learning (43%) and not be mandatory (30%). They spoke about the range of knowledge and experience in the field, and did not want a certificate process to exclude people from working as a coordinator.

Interview participants were asked to suggest reasons for and against offering certification. Primary reasons for certification were credibility (46%) and standardization of training (33%). Coordinators suggested that if they had a certificate, their program would be more credible in their communities, and possibly with funders. Other reasons for certification included professionalism, standardized and/or increased rate of pay, improved job skills, increased confidence, and ease of job mobility or change.

The main reasons interview participants suggested for not offering certification were time constraints (27%) and cost (19%). Some participants expressed concern that a certificate process could be used to exclude people (10%). Individual coordinators also commented about the need to recognize program differences, the need to involve coordinators in developing an assessment process, and the challenges of developing a certificate process.

In a review of the literature on certification of ABE teachers in the United States (Sabatini, Ginsberg and Russell, 2002), the authors also recognize the challenges of establishing a certificate process. The authors advocate creating flexible systems with multiple options for educators. They also note the need for practitioners to reflect about the knowledge, skills and proficiencies they need to do their jobs.

## The Need to Develop a Professional Development Program

The PDP included research about professional development provision in Alberta and in other provinces and territories. Relevant projects and approaches were identified as resources for planning professional development for Alberta coordinators. For example, the Manitoba Adult Literacy and Learning branch offers a certificate program, previously referred to, and the Centre for Family Literacy in Alberta offers Foundational Training. Ontario Community Literacy has produced a training manual for practitioners. However, no single approach was found that would reflect the context of community literacy programming in Alberta, build on professional development that has been offered to date, and meet the expressed interests of coordinators in Alberta.

Thus, the learnings from the PDP research were used to plan a program for professional development for literacy coordinators in Alberta, and to propose a project to develop and implement the proposed program. The program is described in the next section.

## Planning the Professional Development Program

The first set of PDP focus group meetings included time and activities for coordinators to share and document ideas for a systematic program of professional development. (The CD includes a description of the focus group process.) This work was a key starting point to develop a plan for professional development for coordinators of community adult literacy programs in Alberta. The planning also drew from the literature about professional development (e.g., Imel, 1995; Lawler, 2003) and reflected the changing context and emerging approaches previously described.

Focus group participants recommended extended training and support for new coordinators and many cited the Foundational Training offered by the Centre for Family Literacy as a model. Participants also advocated continuing professional development for experienced coordinators and identified topics of interest. A number also

expressed a desire for a more systematic offering of professional development, so that they could plan their professional development over a longer term. They also stressed the importance of the regional system in providing professional development, and recognized the need for program funding and coordination.

In June 2003, the Advisory Committee met to review the focus group suggestions and to outline a possible program. The coordinating researcher drafted a program plan that was presented to the Committee in the fall, 2003. The plan was completed and included in a March 2004 proposal to the National Literacy Secretariat for a project to develop a professional development program (*Strengthening pathways to professional development for coordinators of community adult literacy programs*). The proposal was approved, with some modifications, and Literacy Alberta initiated the project in the fall 2004.

## The Proposed Professional Development Program

### Guiding Principles

Drawing from the research, the following principles were outlined to guide development and delivery of the proposed professional development program. The program will:

- aim to be participatory and inclusive at all stages and levels of implementation;
- include teaching and learning processes that honour and engage the whole person (body, mind, emotions and spirit);
- build on the foundation for professional development that was created by the LCA;
- recognize that coordinators bring perspectives, knowledge, abilities and skills to their work and learning, and that these provide bases for further learning, as well as for teaching, mentoring and sharing with other coordinators;
- engage and support coordinators to develop and deliver program modules, as possible;

- draw from the experience and knowledge of other providers of professional development for adult educators and literacy coordinators;
- draw from current theory and practice of professional development for adult educators to provide a balance between addressing coordinators' interests and perspectives, and introducing new perspectives and information;
- develop programs that can be adapted for various delivery modes;
- develop programs that coordinators can access in terms of time, cost, delivery modes;
- encourage and assess the application of professional development to practice;
- encourage reflective practice;
- provide models for facilitating and teaching in programs;
- encourage and support well being and personal as well as professional growth.

## Program Development Staff

The following staff will be responsible for developing and implementing the program: the Literacy Alberta Manager of Professional Development and Regions (PD manager), a program designer, module and course developers, content consultants and an administrative assistant. An advisory committee will be formed to provide input and feedback regarding program development activities.

## Program Overview

The proposed program of professional development includes three cycles, with the intentions and audiences noted on Table 11. The term “cycles” rather than levels is used because coordinators will not need to complete all of one cycle before participating in another.

	<b>Cycle One</b>	<b>Cycle Two</b>	<b>Cycle Three</b>
<b>Title</b>	Frameworks for coordinating community adult literacy programs	Extending knowledge and skills for best practice	Integrating knowledge/ reflecting on practice
<b>Intentions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to help coordinators develop perspectives, knowledge, skills and confidence to coordinate their programs and continue their professional development</li> <li>b) to facilitate a process for coordinators of community programs to have common knowledge and skills</li> <li>c) to provide a base for a certificate process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to help coordinators extend their perspectives, knowledge and skills for coordinating literacy programs</li> <li>b) to help coordinators update knowledge and skills</li> <li>c) to provide a base for a certificate process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to provide experienced coordinators with resources and support to step back from their day-to-day work, read about and discuss theory, research and practice, and relate their learnings from the readings to their own settings and practices</li> <li>b) to provide a base for a certificate process</li> </ul>
<b>Audience (short term)</b>	<p>Coordinators with up to two years experience</p> <p>Other coordinators who want to refresh or develop frameworks knowledge and skills</p>	All coordinators (Coordinators with less than two years experience will be encouraged to complete Cycle One, but that will not be prerequisite.)	Coordinators who have worked in a community based program for three or more years
<b>Potential audience (in the long term)</b>	Tutors and other literacy educators with an interest in relevant modules	Tutors, other literacy educators and others with an interest in a topic that is offered	Other literacy educators

TABLE ELEVEN. **Three cycles for professional development**

## Program Description

My vision for PD is to have...a variety of courses with modules, and you can measure where you are going, but [with] lots of room for creativity.  
(*A PDP interview participant*)

**Format** Cycles One and Two will include a number of core and optional modules on a selection of topics. Each module will include a number of three-hour units (based on the time required for face-to-face delivery.) For example, Module One (Cycle One) could include 4 units (total 12 hours).

Cycle Three will be similar to a course that is delivered online over several months, with some face-to-face meetings. Coordinators would need to commit to participate in the whole course.

	Cycle One	Cycle Two	Cycle Three
Number of modules/units	10 modules (total of 25 units)	At least 8 modules (total of at least 25 units)	13 modules of 1 unit each
Number of hours for delivery	75	75	39
Hours for reading and assignments	25	25	61
Total number of hours	100	100	100
Time to complete	1 – 3 years	Up to 5 years	10 months

TABLE TWELVE. **Time to complete each program cycle**

**Content and delivery** CYCLE ONE content will address core knowledge and skills that coordinators need to do their jobs, as identified through the PDP research process. For purposes of current planning, the job roles have been grouped in the following categories, which provide topics for five modules:

- Program development and management (2 units)
- Involving and supporting learners (5 units)
- Involving and supporting volunteers, including tutor training (5 units)

- Administration (2 units)
- Community Liaison (2 units)

As well, the following topics are suggested for additional module topics. Some of these topics could be incorporated into other modules in the Cycle One program:

- Orientation to adult literacy theory, policy and practice (1 unit)
- Addressing impacts of violence on learning (2 units)
- Planning for professional development (1 unit)
- Self-care (2 units)
- Integrating learnings into practice (1 unit)
- Other topics that may identified through development or evaluation

#### Cycle Two

Cycle Two<sup>18</sup> content will vary to address perennial questions (e.g., learning difficulties) and emerging topics (e.g., integrating literacy in the work of community agencies). Coordinators would choose to participate in the modules that address questions they have about their practice or topics they want to know more about.

A list of topics that was identified through the PDP will provide a basis for planning the initial four modules for Cycle Two. Topics for additional modules, to be developed after the project is completed, will be identified each year through coordinator surveys and review of developments in the field.

The modules for Cycles One and Two could be offered over periods of time and in various locations and delivery modes, including online learning. Modules could be delivered as stand alone events and/or in conjunction with the regional system and the Provincial Literacy Conference. Modules could be delivered one at a time or in

<sup>18</sup> Cycle Two will be similar to the current “Best practices” (formerly Advanced Coordinator Training) that is offered by Literacy Alberta. However, Cycle Two modules will have a consistent format for development and delivery, and will include follow-up components.

combination, so that face-to-face professional development events could be from a half day to a week long. For online delivery, a module could be delivered one unit per week. Some modules could be delivered more than once in a year, so if a coordinator could not attend or access a module at one time, s/he might be able to access it at another time.

#### Cycle Three

Cycle Three content will vary to address emerging topics and interests in research and practice, and participants' interests. Content may be updated from one delivery to the next, to accommodate new topics, but the process of reflective practice will be constant across offerings. Cycle Three will include two components. During the cycle, coordinators will read and discuss a selection of readings on topics about research and practice that are identified by the facilitator, in consultation with the coordinators. As well as extending knowledge and perspectives about the content of the readings, coordinators will explore ways to relate content to their practice and to reflect on their practice.

Participants in Cycle Three will also plan and undertake a reflection-on-practice project that relates to their work and interests. They might want to examine some aspect of their program or try a new approach to tutoring or tutor training. The project would be carried out over time, with opportunities to talk with others about the experience and about what is being learned through it. They would write a paper or use another approach to integrate their learnings from the readings, discussion, and their project, and to share their learnings with others.

Program development, initial provision and follow-up

The program designer will design and coordinate the development and delivery of Cycle One. S/he will confirm the content and number of modules and units for Cycle One with the PD manager and Advisory Committee, and prepare initial outlines of topics to be addressed for each module. The program designer will work with the PD manager to identify and contract module developers. As possible, coordinators with relevant knowledge

and experience in workshop/course delivery will be contracted as developers for Cycle One.

With the support or collaboration of the program designer as needed, the developers will develop modules, materials and assessment processes/assignments; facilitate delivery of the modules; and provide follow-up. Follow-up will include the developers making themselves available to coordinators for consultation about the module topic and the assignments, responding to assignments, and recommending complete/incomplete status for purposes of certification. As needed, the program designer will collaborate with module developers on writing and delivery of module materials and consult with them regarding follow-up. Content consultants will also be contracted as needed to advise on or review content.

#### Cycle Two

The program designer will design and coordinate the development and delivery of modules for Cycle Two. S/he will confirm the content and number of units for Cycle Two modules with the project manager and Advisory Committee. The program designer will work with the PD manager to identify and contract module developers who have expertise in the content areas, knowledge of the field, and experience with workshop development and delivery.

In consultation with the program designer, the developers will develop modules and assessment processes/assignments, facilitate delivery of the modules, and provide follow-up. (Follow-up will be the same as in Cycle One.)

#### Cycle Three

Cycle Three will be designed, developed and delivered by a course facilitator, in consultation with the PD manager and program designer. The facilitator will determine content, develop assignments and an assessment process, and ensure that the format of module materials is consistent with Cycles One and Two materials.

Certificate process      With coordinators' responses in mind, and using the *Literacy practitioner and tutor professional development certificate* (2004) from Manitoba Adult Learning and

Literacy as a springboard, the professional development program includes the following certificate process that could be developed and administered by Literacy Alberta.

The purpose of the certificate process would be to recognize learning and its application. Literacy Alberta would be responsible for granting certificates for completion of Cycles One, Two and Three.

Coordinators of community adult literacy programs would be able to register for the certificate process, but registration would be voluntary. Completion of one cycle would not be a prerequisite for participating in another cycle.

Coordinators who wanted to earn certificates for Cycles One and Two would participate in the required modules and complete assignments which would be reviewed by the module facilitators. The facilitators would provide a letter for each module completed, with feedback on the assignments. Coordinators would maintain a portfolio of their assignments and letters of completion. Literacy Alberta would also maintain a computer-based file of modules completed by each coordinator who registered in Cycles One and Two. When all modules were completed, the coordinator would review her/his portfolio with the PD manager, who would issue the certificate.

For Cycle Three, the facilitator would provide letters of completion for participants, based on their participation and satisfactory completion of assignments. Copies of the letter would be given to the PD manager, who would issue the certificate.

The certificate process could include provision for prior learning credit. For example, a coordinator might be able to apply for prior learning credit for taking a workshop or course that covered the same content as a program module, provided s/he could demonstrate how s/he had applied the learnings in practice.

## Coordination, Cooperation and Collaboration with Other Programs and Providers

**Literacy Alberta activities** Literacy Alberta currently provides or supports various professional development activities for its members, including coordinators, and for others with an interest in literacy. Literacy Alberta will continue to offer New Coordinator and Best Practices Training in 2004 and 2005, and will offer initial orientation and support for new coordinators while the new program is being developed. Starting in 2005, new coordinators and others will be invited to participate in Cycle One, and Literacy Alberta will continue to offer orientation and support for new coordinators through the regional system. Delivery of Cycle One and Two modules may be scheduled in conjunction with regional meetings or with the Provincial Literacy Conference. The PD manager will work with Alberta Learning staff to plan a transition from the already contracted support for New Coordinator and Best Practices Training to the delivery of Cycles One and Two.

**Other providers** The PD manager will develop and maintain links with other providers of professional development, in order to share information and resources, expand access to professional development for coordinators, coordinate professional development offerings and collaborate on offering professional development as possible. Other providers include:

- The Centre for Family Literacy
- coordinators of literacy projects with professional development components
- providers of professional development in Alberta that is relevant to literacy coordinators (e.g., University of Alberta Faculty of Extension; University of Calgary Continuing Education)
- providers of professional development in literacy organizations in other provinces.

The PD manager will keep informed about workshops that might be adapted and delivered as modules for Cycle Two.

The PD manager will also keep informed about courses that have a similar process and intentions as Cycle Three so that provision of Cycle Three could be coordinated with other course offerings. The PD manager will also explore possibilities for collaborating with other providers of professional development. For example, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network has offered online workshops. Alberta coordinators might be able to access those workshops if they are offered again. As another example, in the early 1990s, literacy organizations in three provinces collaborated on offering three courses at a Prairie Summer Institute. Two or more provincial organizations could collaborate on offering several modules of Cycle One or Two over a week or two in a summer.

## Promotion

Coordinators who participated in the PDP said they wanted advance information about professional development opportunities, in order to plan. The PD manager will coordinate development of a Professional Development page on the Literacy Alberta website. The page could include a calendar of relevant professional development and links to resources and providers.

## Access

The Literacy Coordinators of Alberta created the LCA Legacy Bursary fund to honour the work of LCA and to support continuing professional development for coordinators. The PD manager will identify ways to raise funds for the bursary fund, including grants, donations and special events. She will create and implement a fund-raising plan.

## Maintenance

The PD manager will identify sources of revenue and funding to maintain the program after development is completed. Sources include:

- Alberta Learning
- Alberta Literacy Foundation
- corporate donations
- private donations
- grants from foundations
- fund-raising events
- program registration fees

In consultation with the Advisory Committee, Literacy Alberta staff, and potential participants, the PD manager will also develop policy and procedures for literacy educators, in addition to coordinators, to participate in the three cycles of the program. Offering the program to a larger audience would allow for modules to be offered more regularly and in various locations and encourage sharing of perspectives among educators from different settings. As well, registration fees could be a source of revenue for the professional development program.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the PDP was to use a participatory approach to research needs and plan a program for professional development for coordinators of community adult literacy programs. This report has documented the PDP research process, reported on learnings from the research, and presented the proposed professional development program that grew out of the research. The research followed a participatory model that placed coordinators at the centre of the research, inviting them to take part in a mail-in questionnaire, telephone interviews and focus group meetings.

The proposed three-cycle program provides professional development for coordinators of every level of experience, acknowledges the changing context of literacy delivery, takes advantage of the wealth of experience and skills of coordinators in the field, and takes into account their expressed needs, their working conditions and barriers to their participation. At the same time, the program accounts for innovative and emerging research and practice in the field, builds on work already done by many literacy organizations, and provides for continued cooperation amongst these groups. Literacy Alberta has received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat to begin to develop and implement the proposed professional development program.

The PDP built on literacy coordinators' passion for learning, which was reflected in the high rate of participation in the project. This passion for learning, along with the LCA's previous work in providing professional development, provides a strong foundation for a program that will address coordinators' desires to provide the best possible learning opportunities for women and men in their programs and communities.

It is really timely to talk seriously about PD, especially with the new organization [Literacy Alberta]. I think the opportunity is here for us to create PD opportunities for coordinators that are quality, are consistent and recognizable and that bring us forward in the field and in the community. *(A PDP interview participant)*

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## APPENDIX A

### Professional Development for Coordinators of Community Adult Literacy Programs Provided by LCA (1986–2002) and Literacy Alberta (2002- )

The Literacy Coordinators of Alberta was formed in 1986 to provide support and professional development for coordinators of community-based adult literacy programs. In 2002, LCA merged with the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy to form Literacy Alberta, and responsibility for providing professional development for coordinators was transferred to the new organization. Literacy Alberta's Manager of Professional Development and Regions is responsible for professional development for Literacy Alberta members, including coordinators.

Alberta Learning provided annual funding to the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta to provide a core program of professional development for literacy coordinators and continues to contract Literacy Alberta to do this work. As well, LCA and Literacy Alberta have sponsored other professional development activities that coordinators have been able to access. The organizations have also sponsored or been a partner in a variety of projects, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, which have contributed to coordinators' professional development.

### Core and Other Ongoing Professional Development

#### The Regional System

The Regional Resource People Project (R2P2) was initiated by the LCA in 1987. The purpose of this project was to train a selection of coordinators who would then serve as resource people and provide training and support for coordinators in their regions. Training for the resource people included two one-week intensive courses.

The regional system was maintained after the completion of R2P2, and has continued since the formation of Literacy Alberta. A coordinator in each of seven regions is contracted as a resource person. With input from the coordinators in her region, the resource person plans two or more regional meetings per year which include a professional development activity. As well, the resource person is available for a three-hour visit to orient and assist new coordinators of programs. The resource person receives a stipend and can access a budget to pay for workshop leaders and related expenses. Coordinators in the region can claim expenses to attend regional meetings.

As well as organizing professional development in their regions, resource persons attend two meetings each year with other resource persons. These meetings include a professional development activity along with time for being updated about projects and developments that are relevant to literacy coordinators.

#### New Coordinator Training (NCT)

The LCA organized a two- to three-day session for new coordinators in the fall of each year. Coordinators who had started in their position any time in the previous year were invited to attend. They paid a registration fee, but could claim travel and accommodation expenses. New Coordinator Training continues to be offered under Literacy Alberta; in some cases sessions have been offered twice a year to accommodate coordinators who are hired mid-year.

Typically, an experienced coordinator or team of coordinators has been contracted to plan and facilitate the training. Although the content and process varies, depending on the facilitators, sessions have generally included such topics as learner assessment, tutor training, and program planning and evaluation. Sessions have also included time for meeting with government consultants responsible for community adult literacy programs.

#### Support for new coordinators

The Manager of Professional Development and Regions provides new coordinators with a welcome package and invites them to attend New Coordinator Training. Resource people are available to support new

coordinators during the first year of their work. Support can include a program visit (3 hours), sharing of resources, and telephone support. As well, new coordinators are quickly welcomed into their regional network.

In 2003, the LCA was contracted by Alberta Learning to provide additional support for coordinators of four new programs. The LCA consultant visited the new coordinators in their communities, assisted with planning, and provided other support as requested.

#### Training and support for experienced coordinators

The LCA provided a one-day Advanced Coordinator Training workshop for coordinators, usually in the spring of each year. Initially planned for experienced coordinators, the training has more recently been available to all coordinators. In 2003, the session, renamed “Best Practices,” was opened to all Literacy Alberta members and others.

Topics for workshops have been determined based on suggestions from the field and/or current developments. Coordinators pay a registration fee and in some instances have been able to apply for bursaries to assist with travel expenses.

#### Provincial Literacy Conference

Literacy Alberta hosts an annual Provincial Literacy Conference each fall. Many coordinators attend the conference, which is open to all Literacy Alberta members and others. The conference includes workshops on topics of interest to the range of Literacy Alberta members and is generally preceded by a daylong workshop on a topic of interest to coordinators and other practitioners.

#### Resource library/traveling trunks

The LCA built a collection of books, periodicals and other resources that coordinators may borrow. The resources are listed in a database, which may be searched online.

As well, the LCA developed collections of resources on specific topics. These “traveling trunks” may be borrowed by coordinators and are often requested for review at regional meetings. Topics of the current

collections include: family literacy, learning disabilities, tutor training, program administration, English as a second language, and violence and learning.

The resource collection and traveling trunks program are now administered by Literacy Alberta.

## LCA Legacy Bursary

When the LCA merged with the AAAL to form Literacy Alberta, the LCA Legacy fund was established to honour the work of LCA. Coordinators may apply for bursaries to help pay the costs of attending professional development.

## Projects

### Focus on Literacy

Literacy coordinators participated in an online course about extending literacy services in their communities and are undertaking related projects.

### Research in Practice in Adult Literacy Network

Literacy educators, including coordinators, took part in an online course about research in practice and then were supported to do research in practice about a topic of interest.

### Violence and Learning: Taking Action

Through the VALTA project, coordinators and other literacy educators participated in an online course about the impacts of violence on learning. A number then completed research in practice about how to support learning for adults in ways that account for impacts of violence.

### Standards Implementation Project

This project provided support for literacy coordinators to do program planning and evaluation, using *Setting the compass* (Skage and Schaetti, 1999) as a guide. Coordinators were also supported to develop and

deliver workshops for their peers on topics related to meeting program standards.

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## APPENDIX B

### Intentions for the Professional Development Project Research

1. Invite and engage coordinators of community literacy programs as participants in the project and research
2. Identify “what is” and “what might be” (local directions/desires/ possibilities)
  - 2.1 Programs  
Identify and clarify local directions for provision of community adult literacy programs in Alberta, in order to anticipate professional development that may be needed.
  - 2.2 Coordinators’ roles, required skills and pre-service education/experience
    - 2.2.1 Identify roles of coordinators of literacy programs.
    - 2.2.2 Identify qualities, skills and knowledge needed by literacy coordinators in order for them to be effective in their work.
    - 2.2.3 Identify the relevant “pre-service” education/experience of coordinators of community literacy programs.
  - 2.3 Professional development
    - 2.3.1 Identify professional development opportunities that are currently accessed by coordinators of literacy programs.
    - 2.3.2 Identify the needs and desires for professional development of coordinators of adult literacy programs in Alberta, including content and processes for delivery and access.
    - 2.3.3 Identify program resources that are used in community-based programs that have accompanying training programs.
    - 2.3.4 Identify professional development possibilities that may be available to coordinators of adult literacy programs in Alberta.

- 2.3.5 Identify values and principles that will underlie a professional development plan for coordinators of adult literacy programs in Alberta.
3. Extend knowledge and learn from others' experiences.
  - 3.1 Review literature related to:
    - the provision of community adult literacy programs/notions of literacy
    - identifying qualities, skills and knowledge for coordinators of community literacy programs
    - professional development for adult literacy educators.
  - 3.2 Identify and consult about professional development programs for literacy educators in other jurisdictions.
4. Develop links/connections with people and resources who might collaborate regarding provision of professional development
5. Reflect on learnings
  - 5.1 Reflect on information gathered about programs, coordinators' roles, skills and desires for professional development, in light of learnings from the literature and other jurisdictions.
  - 5.2 Identify gaps between current professional development opportunities and identified qualities, skills and knowledge of literacy coordinators.
6. Plan for action  
Recommend a long-term plan of action that includes statements of principles/values, mission and intentions.

## APPENDIX C

# Bibliography of Resources for Planning and Providing Professional Development

## Programs, courses and workshops

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### Designing professional development programs

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## APPENDIX D

### Programs and Courses for Adult and Literacy Educators Available by Distance Education to Literacy Coordinators in Alberta

The following courses and programs include courses that are offered online or for independent study.

*Certificate in adult and continuing education.* University of Alberta Faculty of Extension. For information:

<http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/cace/index.aspx>

*Certificate in adult and continuing education.* University of Manitoba. For information:

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*Certificate in adult and continuing education.* University of Saskatchewan. For information:

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## APPENDIX E

### Responses to the PDP Questionnaire

1. Which of the following best describes your adult literacy program coordinating role?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
I coordinate all aspects of an adult literacy program	55	87
I coordinate learner involvement	1	2
I coordinate volunteer involvement	2	3
Other	7	11

2. Do you also coordinate a family literacy program or facilitate family literacy?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Yes	43	68
No	20	32

3. How long have you been a coordinator in a community adult literacy program?

Number of years	Less than 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	More than 9
Number of responses (n=63)	6	3	7	6	5	6	8	1	5	1	15
Percent of responses	10	5	11	10	8	10	13	2	6	2	24

4. Are you the only employee in your program?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Yes	30	48
No	33	52

5. If you answered no to question 4, do you supervise any other staff who are employed in your program?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Yes	25	40
No	8	13

6. For how many hours per week (paid time) are you employed?

Number of hrs/week	Less than 10	10-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31 -40	NA
Number of responses	3	13	20	15	3	7	2
Percent of responses	5	21	32	24	5	11	3

7. For how many months per year are you employed?

Number of months/year	9	10	11	12	NA
Number of response	5	39	1	15	3
Percent of responses	8	62	2	24	5

8. Is your program incorporated under the Societies Act?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Yes	22	35
No	39	62
Unsure	2	3

9. If you answered no to question 8, who is your hosting authority or sponsor?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
CALC (Community Adult Learning Council)	30	48
An agency or institution (e.g., library, college)	7	11
Other [Please describe]	2	3
NA	1	2

10. How is your program administered? Check one:

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Board of Directors	29	45
Advisory Committee	22	35
Management Committee	5	8
Other	7	11

11. What programs and services does your adult literacy program offer? Please check all that apply.

	Number (n=63)	Percent
One-to-one tutoring	63	100
Tutor training for your program	59	94
Referral	47	75
Small group learning	42	66
Computer-based learning	23	37
Classes	21	33
Workshops for the general public	21	33
A learning centre	12	19
Tutor training for other programs/agencies	11	17
Other	3	5

12. In what kind of community is your program office located?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
City (over 500,000)	7	11
City (under 100,000)	10	16
Town next to a city	7	11
Town	31	49
Village/hamlet	5	8
Reserve or settlement	0	0
Other	2	3
No response	1	2

13. What area(s) does your program serve? Check as many as apply.

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Community it's located in	47	75
Neighbouring communities	32	51
County or Municipal District	34	54
Reserve or settlement	6	10
Other	4	6
No response	1	2

14. Please review the following lists of coordinators' roles and check the ones that you do in your program. As you add roles under "other" please keep in mind that the focus is on coordinating programs for adults.

(For responses to this question, see Appendix E.1, page 59.)

15. What formal education programs did you undertake (started or completed) before beginning your job as coordinator? Check all that apply and indicate the area of study, where applicable.

	Number (n=63)	Percent
High school	2	3
Certificate	18	29
Diploma	10	16
B Ed	24	38
Other Bachelors degree	21	33
Masters degree	11	17
Doctorate/PhD.	2	3
Other	10	16

16. What other education programs or learning activities did you undertake, before beginning your job as coordinator, that were relevant to this job? Check all that apply.

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Continuing education courses/workshops	37	59
Training related to your job	32	51
Training for volunteer positions	16	25
Informal learning on the job	47	75
Informal learning through volunteering	39	62
Other (Please describe.)	8	13

17. What types of job–related professional development have you participated in during the last five years of your job as coordinator? Please check all that apply.

LCA sponsored professional development	Number (n=63)	Percent
Conferences (LCA/PLC)	62	98
Regional meetings /workshops	58	92
New Coordinator Training	41	65
Advanced Coordinator Training	28	44
Resource Person (RP) Training	14	21
Other	6	10

(continued next page)

Other relevant professional development	Number (n=63)	Percent
Workshops	52	83
Vitalize (Volunteerism conference)	31	49
Other conferences	24	38
Non-credit courses	21	33
Credit courses	10	16
Program (e.g., courses leading to diploma)	9	14
Other	13	21
Conferences sponsored by literacy organizations in other provinces/territories	6	10
Literacy BC Summer Institute	4	6

(See Appendix E.2, page 63, for list of other pre-service and in-service professional development.)

18. Does your program budget include funds to pay for your professional development costs?
19. Does your program budget include paid time for you to participate in professional development activities?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
Some PD costs	32	51
All of my PD costs	31	49
None of my PD costs	0	0
Some paid time	38	60
All of the paid time I need	22	35
No paid time	3	5

20. If you answered yes to question 19, how many hours \_\_\_ or days \_\_\_ of paid time per year can you use for professional development?

	Number (n=63)	Percent
1 day	1	2
2 days	3	5
3 days	3	5
4 days	5	8
5 days	4	6
10 hours	1	2
20 hours	3	5
It depends	27	43
No answer	16	25

## APPENDIX E.1

### Coordinators' Job Roles

The PDP questionnaire (Question 14) asked respondents to review a list of job roles and check the ones they do in their adult literacy programs.<sup>19</sup>

<b>Program development and management: Job roles</b>	<b>Number (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Establish and/or maintain a program office	61	97
Develop/carry out regular planning and evaluation cycles	58	92
Provide opportunities for all learners and volunteers to take part in the planning and evaluation process	43	68
Create and revise mission and vision statements as required	55	87
Create and revise program policy and procedures as required	54	86
Write project proposals	50	79
Apply for grants and donations	55	87
Recruit and interview staff	39	62
Train staff	40	63
Supervise staff	40	63
Acquire literacy resource materials appropriate to the levels and needs of your program	63	100
Locate and/or maintain use of meeting places for tutoring pairs	60	95
Participate in professional development activities	60	95
Other	12	19

<sup>19</sup> The list of job roles was adapted from a list prepared for the *Standards Implementation Project, Phase I*. (Red Deer, AB: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta, 2000.)

<b>Involving and supporting learners: Job roles</b>	<b>Number (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Recruit learners	62	98
Meet with/interview learners (when they apply to the program and/or at other times)	61	97
Conduct assessments with learners (e.g., reading/writing skills)	59	94
Match learners and tutors	60	95
Tutor learners yourself (before making matches or ongoing)	48	76
Organize learning groups or classes for learners	37	59
Recruit and supervise volunteer or paid staff to facilitate or teach groups/classes	40	63
Facilitate or teach groups or classes yourself	29	45
Document learner achievements or ensure that they are documented	56	89
Recognize learner achievements or ensure they are recognized	54	86
Support learner representatives on the program Board or Advisory/ Management Committee	23	37
Refer learners to other learning programs as appropriate	60	95
Refer learners to other community resources and services	60	95
Provide opportunities for learners to meet other learners and /or volunteers in the program context	38	60
Provide opportunities for learners to participate in program activities (e.g., workshops, social events)	47	75
Provide opportunities and support for learners to participate in community activities	35	56
Other	3	5

<b>Involving and supporting volunteers: Job roles</b>	<b>Number (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Recruit volunteers	59	94
Interview and select volunteers	60	95
Train volunteer tutors	61	97
Train volunteers for other roles	30	48
Recruit members for Board or Advisory/Management Committee	43	68
Provide orientation for Board or Advisory /Management Committee members	41	65
Support tutors in their initial and on-going tutoring (e.g., by providing professional development opportunities, resource materials and assistance to carry out their roles)	60	95
Document volunteer contributions	56	89
Recognize volunteer contributions	60	95
Provide opportunities for volunteers to meet other volunteers and/or learners	56	89
Provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in program activities (e.g., workshops/social events)	59	94
Provide opportunities and support for volunteers to participate in community activities	1	2
Other	33	52

<b>Administration: Job roles</b>	<b>Number (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Write monthly reports to inform Board, Advisory/Management Committee or other group or individual(s) of program activities	53	84
Organize Board or Advisory/Management committee meetings	41	65
Prepare annual budget	53	84
Prepare monthly financial statements and current budget information	44	70
Prepare annual participation summary and other reporting requirements for Alberta Learning and/or other funders	60	95
Write project reports	55	87
Acknowledge donors	53	84
Carry out or supervise necessary clerical tasks	61	97
Maintain a literacy resource collection	58	92
Record learner/tutor contact hours and activities on a regular basis	57	90
Other	10	16

<b>Community Liaison: Job roles</b>	<b>Number (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Assess community needs and interests for program opportunities and respond accordingly	55	87
Promote the literacy program at community level on a continuous basis using media as appropriate (posters, radio, advertisements, pamphlets, newsletters, community publications)	62	98
Organize and carry out public education and awareness initiatives	48	76
Plan and implement special events (e.g., International Literacy Day)	58	92
Develop and maintain partnerships with other community groups, agencies, and individuals	62	98
Establish cooperative relationships with other literacy programs, local government and educational bodies	59	94
Other	4	6

## APPENDIX E.2

### Professional Development and Experience Relevant to Coordinators' Jobs

The PDP questionnaire (Questions 15-17) asked respondents to identify pre-service and in-service experience and learning that was particularly relevant to their jobs as coordinators. Responses have been grouped and organized by topic. Some topics were mentioned by more than one respondent. (A glossary of acronyms follows.)

#### Educational programs taken before and since starting job as a coordinator

Program development and management	Resource materials
Board development	<i>Writing Out Loud</i>
Evaluation	Writing poetry
<i>Setting the Compass</i>	Involving and supporting volunteers
Fundraising	Interview skills
Leadership skills	Motivation
Preparing a literacy program profile	Recognition
Policy development	Recruitment
Proposal writing	Risk management and liability
Training for Standards	Tutor training
Implementation Project	Volunteer management
Involving and supporting learners	Administration
<i>Brain Gym</i> ®	Computer courses
ESL teaching	Financial management/budget
Learning disabilities	Freedom of information policy
FAS, ADHD	(FOIP)
Cognitive difficulties	Holistic management
Learning styles	How to stretch dollars for learning
Multiculturalism	materials
Reading assessment	Report writing
<i>CARA</i>	Community liaison
Reading strategies	Community collaboration
<i>Laubach</i>	Literacy statistics
<i>Lindamood</i>	Media relations
Metacognition	Public speaking
Phonemic awareness	Plain language workshops
Readers' Theater	Promotion / publicity
<i>STAPLE</i>	

Other  
Adult education  
Anger management  
Appreciative inquiry  
Coach training  
Conflict resolution  
Connecting literacy and fine arts  
Early literacy  
Facilitation skills  
Family literacy  
    Foundational training  
    *LAPS*  
    Models  
*PAL* training  
Family violence/*VALTA*  
First aid/CPR  
Interpersonal communication  
Research training (*RiPAL* Network)  
True Colors® (personality styles)

Pre-service experience  
Assistant accountant  
Administrative supervisor (Office skills)  
Leadership roles – church; Moms and Tots group  
Serving on ESL Boards  
Teaching experience  
ABE/ESL (teacher's aid)  
Basic numeracy and literacy  
Community education programs  
Language classes  
ESL  
Young offenders' centre  
University teaching  
Volunteer tutor  
Tutor monitor

## Glossary / sources of publications

- Braingym*® For information: <http://www.braingym.org/>
- CARA* Campbell, P., & Brokop, F. (2000). *Canadian adult reading assessment*. Edmonton, AB: Grassroots Press.
- LAPS* *Literacy and parenting skills*. (1999). Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College.
- Lindamood* For information: <http://www.lindamoodbell.com/>
- PAL* Day, C. *Partnership approach to literacy*.
- STAPLE* Campbell, P., & Brokop, F. (1996). Supplemental training for Alberta practitioners of literacy education. Calgary, AB: Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. (Available from Grassroots Press.)
- True Colours*® For information: <http://www.truecolors.org/>
- VALTA* *Violence and learning: Taking action*. (2004). Calgary, AB: Literacy Alberta.
- Writing out loud* For information: <http://www.writingoutloud.ca/>

## APPENDIX F

# Responses to the PDP Interview

## Reasons for attending PD

1. Think about one professional development event you took part in recently. What was the event, and what were your reasons for taking part?
2. When you completed the questionnaire you checked the PD you've been involved in during the past five years. What were your purposes for participating in those PD activities?

Reasons for participating in professional development	Number (n=48)	Percent
Useful for my job/my program	31	65
Networking	27	56
To keep current	19	40
To extend knowledge	13	27
Personal well-being	10	21
Lifelong learning	8	17
Learning for self	8	17
Improve skills/abilities	6	13
New ideas/resources for teaching	5	10
To be recognized as professional/credible	5	10
Build confidence	4	8
Gain background/new to job	4	8

## Topics for Professional Development

3. In your day-to-day work, what questions and issues come up about your practice?
4. Now we're going to focus more specifically on your roles as coordinator. Please refer to the list of roles that is attached to your letter. Are there other questions that come up in relation to your various roles, in addition to the ones you've mentioned?

5. Your questions suggest a number of topics for PD. What other topics are you interested in?

<b>Program development and management</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Proposals/grant applications/funding	17	35
Board development/advisory committee	10	21
Planning/evaluation	6	13
Policy writing	4	8
Meeting community needs/assessment	4	8
Program management	2	4
Coordinating with other programs/CALC	1	2
Resource library—what to have	1	2

<b>Involving and supporting learners</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Assessment	14	29
ESL	13	27
Learning disabilities	13	27
Learner recruitment	11	23
Resources	6	13
Teaching approaches	5	10
Meeting special needs	5	10
Other	10	21

<b>Involving and supporting volunteers</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Tutor training /tutor PD	18	38
Volunteer recruitment/retention	12	25
Making and supporting tutor/learner matches	4	8
Volunteer management	3	6
Tutor appreciation	3	6
Getting tutors to provide information	1	2
Interviewing tutors	1	2

<b>Administration</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Administration/office management	8	17
Reporting to Alberta Learning	6	13
Computers (different levels)	6	13
Basic accounting /bookkeeping	5	10
Staff management/training	4	8
Risk management/rural	2	4
Budget	1	2
Writing project reports	1	2

<b>Community liaison</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Promotion	9	19
Community liaison	4	8
Community development	2	4
Partnerships	2	4
Advocacy	1	2
Plain language workshop	1	2
Being more available to community	1	2
Other (leadership, presenting literacy, government system, working with reserves, community resources, workforce literacy, family literacy, violence against women, literacy/justice system)	6	13

<b>Wellness</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Self-care/wellness	2	4
Feel-good sessions/stress relief	2	4
Balance in our lives/self-care	2	4
Fun topics	1	2
How to prevent burnout	1	2
Workshops to energize	1	2
Motivational speaker—keep you going	1	2

<b>Reflection on practice</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Reflection on practice	4	8
Get new insights	1	2
Help me reflect on my practice	2	4
Working through issues	1	2
Other	4	8

Delivery methods

6. PD can be delivered in a variety of ways. What delivery methods would work best for you?

Method	Number (n=48)	Percent
Face-to-face	38	79
Learning through interaction with others	24	50
Learn from others/in groups	13	27
Distance/independent learning	15	31
Workshops	14	29
Provincial conferences/other conferences	7	15
Regional meetings	7	15
Hands-on/active	6	13
Other (visit programs, mentoring, networking day, sit in on tutoring session, follow-up to workshops)	5	10

7. In the past few years, some PD has been offered online, using the Internet. Some people enjoy this method and others don't. I'd like to hear your views about online delivery of PD.

Would participate in online learning	Number (n=48)	Percent
Yes	22	46
No	14	29
Possibly	12	25

Comments about online learning

Experience with online learning/computers	Number (n=48)	Percent
Have not taken online learning	14	29
Have taken online learning	7	15
Don't have/use computer or internet/elit	7	15
I use elit	2	4
Use computer for email and information	1	2
Problems with computer access at work/home	1	2

<b>Advantages of online learning</b>	<b>Number n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Can take on own time, fits schedule/time to reflect	7	15
Reduces travel time/winter travel	3	6
Quick, immediate and cost effective/save costs	3	6
Can do it from home or office	1	2
Accessibility	1	2
Good for rural community	1	2
Can meet people from different places	1	2
Good for reflection/sharing	1	2
Good for information sharing	1	2

<b>Disadvantages of online learning</b>	<b>Number (n=48)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Challenge to fit into schedule	8	17
Prefer face-to-face	6	13
Lack of interaction with people	4	8
Workload is greater—reading	2	4
Issue of feeling safe (cannot see body language)	1	2
Concerned about cost (modem, etc.)	1	2
Problem if lines are down	1	2
Rural access can be a problem	1	2
Not my learning style	2	4

Other comments about online learning

**In favour of online:** Am open to it; I don't mind online; Online is alright too; I think it would be neat; we need to be open to new ways; I really like online; It would probably be OK; If it works it would be good; Need time to get familiar.

**Not in favour:** Not my favourite; Would use as last resort; Would use if it came; Could if I applied myself more; Definitely not; Would have to be highly motivated; Could be an option for others.

Coordinators providing professional development

8. There are a number of ways that coordinators could be involved in PD. So far we've talked about your interests as a learner. What ways might coordinators be involved in providing PD?

Ways coordinators can provide PD	Number (n=48)	Percent
Facilitate a workshop	11	23
Round table/sharing	10	21
Mentor/buddy	5	10
Organize workshops for others	2	4
Develop resources	2	4
Panel discussion (support each other)	1	2
Online learning	1	2
Write a manual	1	2
Team coordinators' with experience with another presenter with expertise	1	2
Train the trainer	1	2
Shared tutor training	1	2

General comments about coordinators providing PD	Number (n=48)	Percent
Coordinators can be involved in providing PD	42	89
Coordinators have all kinds of background/expertise	14	29
Need for (paid) prep time/need to be manageable	6	13
Maybe we need to ask people to provide PD	4	8
If they have the expertise	3	6
Coordinators may need support/build confidence	2	4
Learn more when you do it	1	2
Providing PD gets coordinators excited again	1	2
Need to hear from "experts" and people in field	1	2

9. Are you interested in being involved in providing PD. [If so, in what ways?]

Interest in providing PD	Number (n=48)	Percent
Yes	23	48
Possibly	8	17
No	10	21
Did not answer	8	15

Topics  
Accounting  
Assessment  
Creative writing  
ESL training  
Five finger lesson plan  
Family literacy  
Healing from the Criminal  
Justice system  
Literacy awareness  
Mentor  
New Coordinator Training  
Plain language  
Readers' Theatre  
Reading  
Share about projects  
Share presentations with others  
Using computers for learning  
Student publications  
Tutor training  
Volunteer management

Certification

10. Is it important to you that you have some form of acknowledgement or recognition for your participation in PD activities? If, yes, what kind? <sup>20</sup>

	Number (n=48)	Percent
Yes	15	32
No	30	63
Not sure/it depends	3	6

11. Would you be interested in taking PD that would lead to certification?

	Number (n=48)	Percent
Yes	27	56
Possibly/it depends	10	21
Yes, but not at this stage of career	2	4
Certificate to recognize prior learning	1	2
No	5	10
Not sure	3	6

● \_\_\_\_\_  
<sup>20</sup> Recognition (question 10) referred to any form of recognition or acknowledgements for participating in an individual professional development activity.

12. What are some reasons for offering certification for coordinators?

Reasons for offering certification	Number (n=48)	Percent
Credibility/public perception	22	46
Standard training /level of proficiency	16	33
Professionalism	10	21
Improve/extend skills for job	8	17
Pay	8	17
Confidence	6	13
Job change/mobility	6	13
Reduce rate of coordinators' resignations	4	8
Get better funding	1	2

13. What are some reasons for not offering certification for coordinators?

Reasons for not offering certification	Number (n=48)	Percent
Time constraints/coordinators' job loads	13	27
Cost	9	19
Could be used to exclude people	5	10
Might intimidate some people	4	8
Turnover among coordinators	3	6
Some not interested/don't want paper	2	4
Rate of pay low for certification	1	2
Concern that it would not be recognized	1	2

Other comments about certification	Number (n=48)	Percent
Recognize prior learning	21	44
Don't make it mandatory	15	32
Not just for participation, assignments	2	4
Recognize program differences	1	2
Concerned about time investment	1	2
Need coordinator input on assessment	1	2
Won't make a difference to pay	1	2
Who will decide content?	1	2
Need to expand audience	1	2
Offer through a college, not Literacy Alberta	1	2
Needs to be offered by other than funder	1	2
Has to have credibility	1	2
Build on what is already available	1	2

Barriers and supports

14. What makes it difficult for you to take part in professional development? These difficulties could be work related or personal.

Barriers to participation in PD	Number (n=48)	Percent
Time	26	54
Cost/lack of funds	20	42
Distance/travel	11	23
Personal considerations/family	10	21
Lack of confidence (new to job)	3	6
Travel costs	2	4
Child care costs	2	4
Winter travel/weather	2	4
Other part-time work	2	4
Lack of advance notice of events	1	2

15. What kinds of supports would help you take part in professional development?

Suggested supports to take part in PD	Number (n=48)	Percent
Subsidies /bursaries/funding	15	32
Have PD closer/in the region	5	10
Increase budget for regional network	2	4
Facilitate travel	5	10
Distance delivery	4	8
Advance information about PD (helps plan)	4	8
Offer an event more than once	3	6
Support for child care	3	6
Educate boards about importance	2	4
Someone to cover office	2	4
Computers and access to internet	1	2

16. Where could these supports come from?

A number of coordinators did not have a response to this question. Of those who did respond, many suggested that funds needed to come from the government (Alberta Advanced Education) and/or Literacy Alberta. One participant suggested that \$300 be allocated in program grants for professional development. One participant also suggested that it is key to have staff to organize professional development and resources. Other suggestions for sources of support included:

- Corporations
- Not from business
- Personal funds
- Not from personal funds
- More bursaries; bursaries for childcare
- Fund to buy computers/internet access
- Increased budget for regional network
- Community Adult Learning Councils
- Local literacy program
- Alberta Literacy Foundation
- Service clubs

17. Is there anything you would like to say about the support your program provides for you to take part in PD?

Participants either had no additional comments, or affirmed that their boards or advisory committees were generally supportive of professional development.

Other comments

18. What other comments or suggestions about PD would you like to make?

Participants' comments affirmed the regional system, the importance of high quality professional development and of the PDP itself. Some comments have been incorporated into the report.

## APPENDIX G

### Attributes Needed for Coordinators' Jobs

#### (From the first set of PDP focus groups)

Participants in the first set of PDP focus groups were asked to identify and share three important attributes coordinators need to do their job. Responses from the four focus groups follow. In the table, the responses are organized by category of job role; in the list they are alphabetical. Some attributes were named more than once in the focus groups.

	What coordinators need to know	What coordinators need to be able to do
Program planning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Policies and procedures</li> </ul>	
Involving and supporting learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural differences</li> <li>• Gaps/barriers to learners in our community</li> <li>• English grammar and linguistics (for pronunciation)</li> <li>• How learning happens</li> <li>• Learning styles, LD</li> <li>• Literacy materials for tutors and students</li> <li>• Programs (e.g., Canadian Language Benchmarks)</li> <li>• Reading theory—understand process, skills disabilities</li> <li>• Sources of support for clients</li> <li>• Teacher training and experience</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess where learners are at and where they want to go</li> <li>• Be cognizant of learning needs and what resources to draw from</li> <li>• Create safe space</li> <li>• Stay focused on student goals</li> </ul>

	What coordinators need to know	What coordinators need to be able to do
Involving and supporting volunteers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Volunteer Management Skills</li> <li>• Recognize and draw on volunteers' abilities/talents</li> <li>• Make people feel appreciated</li> <li>• Recognize volunteer tutor needs and abilities</li> <li>• Track tutors</li> </ul>
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Computer skills</li> <li>• Delegate when necessary</li> <li>• Organize/juggle/multi-task</li> <li>• Write (e.g., letters, newsletter, proposals)</li> </ul>
Community liaison		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation and coordination skills in the community</li> <li>• To be seen as the literacy "expert" in the community</li> <li>• Marketing knowledge and ability</li> <li>• Make good learning partnerships/connections</li> <li>• Help other literacy workers in the community (e.g. teaching/learning online)</li> <li>• Networking—especially bridging gaps</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding based on experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate/lobby</li> <li>• Facilitation skills</li> <li>• Be flexible—change plans to meet the needs of program participants</li> </ul>

## How Coordinators Need to Be

- Able to see the big picture
- Bend the rules
- Brave
- Caring
- Communication skills (written and spoken)
- Compassionate – empathy, awareness, resolve conflicts, social justice
- Committed to/willing to learn
- Creative (think outside the box)
- Curious
- Desire to help others
- Energetic
- Enthusiastic
- Good listener
- Have fun! Smile, laugh, play, tickle, ask fun questions
- Helpful
- Kind
- Learn from others
- Love reading and knowledge
- Open and accepting
- Patient
- People person; Have people skills; Put people at ease; Spend time with people; Work with variety of people
- Recognize own limits
- Persistent/tenacious
- Self-esteem
- Self-motivated and organized
- Supportive
- Scrounging, scrounging

## APPENDIX H

### Attributes Needed for Coordinators' Jobs (From the last PDP focus group)

#### 2. Involving and supporting learners

##### 2.1 Recruit learners

##### 2.2 Meet with and interview learners (when they apply or at other times)

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening skills</li> <li>• Interview skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a way to relate to students (find something positive)</li> <li>• Welcome them</li> <li>• Set and maintain parameters/boundaries (need to be “tough” sometimes)</li> <li>• Make space welcoming and comfortable—plants, pictures, safe</li> <li>• Make it a positive experience—give honest, positive feedback</li> <li>• Negotiate commitment to program</li> <li>• Help people set reachable goals within the parameters of program/learners interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show respect</li> <li>• Egalitarian</li> <li>• “Walk a mile in my shoes”</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Hospitable</li> <li>• Friendly</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul>

### 2.3 Conduct assessments with learners

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment tools/skills/approaches</li> <li>• Learning styles</li> <li>• How people learn to read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise about program. Don't patronize</li> <li>• Explain the assessment process (why, how it will be used)</li> <li>• Use appropriate tools/approaches</li> <li>• Assess</li> <li>• Interpret results</li> </ul>	

#### 2.3.1 Develop learning plan with student

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning materials</li> <li>• Learning styles</li> <li>• Appropriate goal setting—long/short term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen</li> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Make a learning plan</li> <li>• Goals/intentions</li> <li>• Strategies</li> <li>• Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Resourceful</li> </ul>

#### 2.4 Match learners and tutors

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know tutor</li> <li>• Know student's strengths, needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend time with both</li> <li>• Stay available, keep in contact</li> <li>• Make contacts a priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> </ul>

#### 2.5 Tutor learners (before making matches of ongoing tutor-learner pairs)

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching strategies</li> <li>• Knowledge of learning disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson planning for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analytical about needs (learning needs)</li> <li>• Intuitive about needs (emotional needs)</li> <li>• Tactful</li> <li>• Accepting</li> <li>• Easygoing</li> <li>• Firm</li> <li>• Set boundaries</li> <li>• Expect results</li> </ul>

2.6 Organize learning groups or classes for learners

2.7 Support/supervise volunteer or paid, contract staff to facilitate or teach groups/classes

2.8 Facilitate or teach groups/classes

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know needs of group members</li> <li>• Group dynamics</li> <li>• Facilitation skills</li> <li>• Interview skills</li> <li>• Where/how to advertise (recruit)</li> <li>• Know how to get other funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find space</li> <li>• Find funds</li> <li>• Get mandate</li> <li>• Stay on top of it!</li> <li>• Address individual needs within classroom</li> <li>• Facilitation skills</li> <li>• Classroom skills</li> <li>• Do clear lesson plans (flexible – organized)</li> <li>• Coach staff to use volunteers appropriately</li> <li>• Work with staff to involve volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Confident</li> </ul>

2.9 Document learner achievements

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know each student's program and progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing assessment</li> <li>• Record keeping</li> <li>• Keep in touch with tutors</li> <li>• Develop rationale and process for documentation, e.g., for learners, funders, board, PR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> </ul>

### 2.10 Recognize learner achievements

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where student began</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment</li> <li>• Assessment tools/ approaches</li> <li>• Understand the range of what “achievement” and “progress” means</li> <li>• Variety of ways that achievement can be recognized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contacts a priority – monthly at least</li> <li>• Provide stickers, etc. positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Individualize</li> <li>• Meaningful praise</li> <li>• Define “recognition”</li> <li>• Plan activities and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy</li> <li>• Honest</li> </ul>

### 2.11 Support learner representatives on the program board or advisory committee

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what committee is and what it does</li> <li>• Know what is expected of student representative</li> <li>• Understand needs of student re: board participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide board training</li> <li>• Inclusive of students</li> <li>• Ongoing support</li> <li>• Stay current with board activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive</li> </ul>

### 2.12 Refer learners to other learning programs as appropriate

### 2.13 Refer learners to other community resources and services as appropriate

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know learners, programs</li> <li>• Know community resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend interagency network</li> <li>• Plan for networking</li> <li>• Networking skills</li> <li>• Develop relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to go the “extra mile”</li> </ul>

- 2.14 Provide opportunities for learners to meet other learners and/or volunteers in the program context
- 2.15 Provide opportunities for learners to participate in program activities (e.g., workshops, social events)
- 2.16 Provide opportunities and support for learners to participate in community activities

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what students want</li> <li>• Know their comfort level</li> <li>• Know what’s going on in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize social events</li> <li>• Organize workshops for students</li> <li>• Teach public speaking skills</li> <li>• Do personal contacts with students</li> <li>• Do needs assessments</li> <li>• Recognize ways for students to “give back”</li> <li>• Find resource people</li> <li>• Develop and communicate a follow-up plan to stay in touch students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourceful</li> </ul>

### 3. Involving and supporting volunteers

#### 3.0 Develop a policy for volunteer involvement

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a volunteer</li> <li>• Knowledge of volunteerism e.g. volunteers’ needs and interests</li> <li>• Legal policies procedures (security, FOIP, insurance)</li> <li>• What is a learner</li> <li>• Who experiences low literacy</li> <li>• Background, contexts</li> <li>• ESL learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a job description for volunteers</li> <li>• Develop a code of ethics (including boundaries/ relationships)</li> <li>• Develop guidelines for volunteer program, e.g., expectations, support, benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughtful – careful</li> </ul>

### 3.1 Recruit volunteers

Need To Know	Need To Be Able To Do	Need To Be Able To Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding why volunteers volunteer</li> <li>• Understanding of literacy (broad sense – practices, stats)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a filing system (FOIP)</li> <li>• Keep good records</li> <li>• Develop recruitment material (brochures, posters, media ads, PSAs)</li> <li>• Public speaking</li> <li>• Develop a recruitment plan</li> <li>• Develop application forms (volunteer)</li> <li>• Be able to describe what you expect them to do</li> <li>• Be able to tell people you can't use their services</li> <li>• Develop a framework for recruiting volunteers (parameters, criteria)</li> <li>• Select and carry out different strategies to recruit</li> <li>• Create a welcoming and safe place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of humour/liking fun</li> <li>• Confident, grounded/inner strength</li> <li>• Be comfortable with people</li> <li>• Be able to trust/work with intuition</li> <li>• Open/non-discriminatory</li> <li>• Good listener</li> <li>• Communicative (listen, explain, convey)</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Interview and select volunteers

#### 3.2.1 Match volunteers

Need To Know	Need To Be Able To Do	Need To Be Able To Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as 3.0 (volunteer policy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview techniques for one-to-one, learners' backgrounds, volunteer expectations</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Prompting</li> <li>• Getting underneath</li> <li>• Clarifying</li> <li>• Balance volunteer interests, personality with learner interests, needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being present</li> <li>• Authentic</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Work with intuition (if it doesn't feel right, don't do it)</li> <li>• Ability to "tune' into people (hear what is underneath)</li> <li>• Life experiences/ maturity</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Train volunteer tutors

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult learning principles/processes</li> <li>• Tutor training resources/approaches</li> <li>• Reading, writing, ESL</li> <li>• Theory</li> <li>• Strategies</li> <li>• Special needs</li> <li>• Resources (community)</li> <li>• Strategies</li> <li>• Relationships/ boundaries</li> <li>• Know violence issues and how they affect learning</li> <li>• Learning styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a variety of activities to engage tutors</li> <li>• Prepare materials and have them organized</li> <li>• Leave enough time for discussion</li> <li>• Group management skills</li> <li>• Facilitating skills (engaging people, learner-centered, balance)</li> <li>• How to plan work</li> <li>• Develop intentions</li> <li>• Assess audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well prepared</li> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Flexible/able to adapt</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Recruit members for board or advisory committee

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of Advisory Board</li> <li>• Role of Learning Council Board</li> </ul>		

### 3.6 Provide orientation for board or advisory committee

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety/security</li> </ul>	

### 3.7 Support tutors in their initial and ongoing literacy activities by providing professional development opportunities, resource materials and assistance to carry out their roles

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what tutors need to know, want to know</li> <li>• Know where to get materials</li> <li>• Know they won't always ask—for help, etc.</li> <li>• Anticipating needs of each pair is part of the job</li> <li>• Know the resources you have/where to get other resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send tutors to <i>Vitalize</i> conference, Provincial Literacy Conference</li> <li>• Make resources accessible</li> <li>• Resource catalogue</li> <li>• Make it easy to access/approve new resources</li> <li>• Show them what's available</li> <li>• Have tutors suggest materials</li> <li>• Regular contact</li> <li>• Develop and carry out a plan to follow up with volunteers (contact after they are matched)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Vigilant (keep in contact)</li> <li>• Mind reader</li> </ul>

### 3.8 Document volunteer contributions

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize importance of statistics</li> <li>Rationale of why, for whom, how to use them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep stats</li> <li>Forms for tutor to keep track</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized</li> <li>Attentive to detail</li> </ul>

### 3.9 Recognize Volunteer Contributions

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What they did (see “keep stats,” above)</li> <li>Know what kinds of volunteer activities, gifts, etc. are available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank you cards</li> <li>Gifts</li> <li>Luncheons</li> <li>Certificates</li> <li>Take time to talk to tutors</li> <li>Volunteer recognition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appreciative</li> </ul>

### 3.10 Provide opportunities for volunteers to meet other volunteers

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of being a team member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Luncheons</li> <li>Workshops</li> </ul>	

### 3.11 Provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in program activities (e.g., workshops)

### 3.12 Provide opportunities and support for volunteers to participate in community activities

### 3.4 Train volunteers for other roles

Need to Know	Need to Be Able to Do	Need to Be Able to Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know tutor needs</li> <li>Know what’s going on in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide workshops</li> <li>Do needs assessments</li> <li>Find resource people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valuing “humans,” people’s unique contributions</li> </ul>