



What Learners Want

A Summary of Focus Groups and Interviews
with Adult Learners in Saskatchewan

October 2006

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September 2006

A. Introduction:

Executive Summary:

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network (SLN) is committed to providing the highest level of support services for adult learners. In an effort to evaluate and improve support services at the regional level, the SLN conducted eight focus groups with seventy-three adult learners in five communities in the spring of 2006.

An adult learner is someone who wants to increase the literacy skills that are needed for everyday life such as reading, writing and number skills. An adult learner is also someone who commits to literacy learning or is part of a literacy program.

Since 2002, The SLN has been providing support services for adult learners in five communities around Saskatchewan: Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, Prince Albert and North Battleford. These services range from providing monthly coffee and discussion groups to field trips. Funding for the provincial Learner Coordinator position is from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) while financial support for the groups has recently shifted from the NLS to Saskatchewan Learning. Each community has a learner volunteer who organizes the group and provides direction as well as a library, college or community school that provides varying levels of support.

The goal of the focus groups was to acquire information from as many learners as possible to set the direction for support groups in each community. Key findings from the focus groups include:

1. There are four main areas to concentrate support services for regional groups: Courses for Learners, Field Trips, Sports Activities, and Learning Programs for Families.
2. To attend support programs, adult learners require: transportation, childcare, food and incentives.
3. Television, posters and word of mouth are the best ways to advertise support programs.

As part of the review of SLN services, three learners involved in all of SLN learner programs were interviewed to provide insight for improvements to provincial programs. Their comments shaped recommendations for improving the provincial Learners Focus Committee, Learners' Speakers' Bureau and board membership.

The Learners' Focus Committee (LFC) was established in 2001. Members of the group are learner representatives from different regions, different literacy programs and different literacy strands (ESL, Aboriginal and special needs) across the province. The committee has planned two mini-conferences and informed government literacy initiatives (including Benchmarks and the provincial literacy strategy) on policy and the importance of plain language. Learners on the LFC have identified that the committee has inspired major life changes and the courage to continue learning to a higher level. The LFC also sends a Saskatchewan representative to sit on the national committee of learners - the Movement for Canadian Literacy's Learners' Advisory Network.

Key recommendations for this group include:

1. A shift in focus to the future instead of focusing on past learning difficulties,
2. Continue to provide learning opportunities and a conference,
3. Ensure that learner involvement is forefront in SLN activities.

The Learners' Speakers' Bureau (LSB) invites adults to share their stories of struggles with learning and the impact low literacy has had on their lives. Their speeches are shared with other learners, politicians and the media. This program has proven to be one of the most effective ways to recruit other learners to literacy programs and increase awareness of literacy needs, issues and opportunities.

Key recommendations to improve this service include:

1. Ensure learners are reaching the goals of each audience.
2. More prevention-based speeches should be delivered.

3. Develop Level 2 trainings: "Speaking to the media" and "Speaking to Politicians".
4. Provide learners with more speaking opportunities.
5. Use learners who are already trained speakers to recruit new people to SLN programs.
6. Develop a marketing strategy for the Learners' Speakers' Bureau.

Learners have been represented on the SLN's board of directors since 1996. Every year, at least two learners are encouraged to put their name forward for board positions. In 2005 the SLN was the only provincial organization in Canada to have an adult learner as president of the board of directors.

Key recommendations to improve this experience include:

1. Provide learner members with extra orientation.
2. Establish a mentoring system for new board members.
3. Ensure that the social needs of learner members are being met.
4. Staff and board need to be aware of each other's activities.

Learners are central to the SLN's organizational philosophy and we strive to provide the highest level of support for them in regional groups, Learners' Speakers' Bureau, provincial Learners' Focus Committee and board membership. In order to evaluate our programs, eight focus groups and three in-depth interviews were conducted in the spring of 2006.

B. Summary of Focus Groups:

Description of Participants:

Eight focus groups were held with a total of 73 participants. Demographic information and names were purposely not gathered in order to put learners at ease and to simplify the focus group process.

Seven organizations in five communities participated. A mix of colleges and community-based programs were selected. Level 1 and Level 2 learners from all strands of literacy were represented.

Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST) Kelsey Campus (Saskatoon): Two Basic Education classrooms participated in the focus groups. In the first group, nine learners from the Literacy Centre participated. The Literacy Centre provides adults with less than a Grade 6 reading level an opportunity to improve their reading, writing, spelling and mathematics skills. The second group of seven was a mix of learners at Level 1 and Level 2 who have learning disabilities.

SIASST Wascana Campus (Regina): The Learning Centre provides adult learners with the opportunity to study basic writing, reading and mathematics as well as study English as a Second Language (ESL) communication skills. Ten learners from this program were involved in the focus group.

Dumont Technical Institute (Saskatoon): DTI provides quality educational opportunities and services for Métis people in Saskatchewan. 10 learners from the Literacy and G10 classrooms participated.

Riverside Community School (Prince Albert): A large PreK -8 Community School that has run a regional support group for adult learners in partnership with the SLN since 2002. Eleven learners shared their ideas for future support groups.

Radius Community Centre for Education and Employment Training (Saskatoon): Radius offers education and employment training for adults. 10 learners trying to attain their GED or gain employment participated in this focus group.

Northwest Regional College (North Battleford): The college offers Academic Upgrading, GED preparation and Literacy courses in their adult education program. Seven people shared their needs for future support programs. Four were learners and three were tutors. Tutors were instructed to think like a “lifelong learner” and share what support programs they would attend to meet other “lifelong learners.”

Cypress Hills Regional College (Swift Current): Basic Education programs include Adult 12 Secondary Program, GED preparation, Adult 10 program, General Studies and ESL courses. Nine learners were involved in this focus group.

Focus Group Process:

The goal of the focus groups was to acquire information from as many learners as possible to set the direction of support groups in each community. To achieve this goal, it was important to keep the learners feeling as comfortable as possible in order to elicit frank responses. Focus groups were held in the classroom or meeting room of the organization the learners belonged to. Food was offered and the meeting agenda was structured to slowly gain the attention and trust of the participants.

The Learner Coordinator for the Saskatchewan Literacy Network facilitated the discussion, with four of the focus groups being co-facilitated with an adult learner. The co-facilitators were all members of the Learners’ Speakers’ Bureau and each delivered a speech about learning at the beginning of the group.

After the agenda (please see Appendix 1) was shared with the participants, a summary of the purpose and uses of the focus group results were verbally given. A set of “Group Guidelines” were posted and read aloud. After an explanation of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network’s activities, learners participated in a light icebreaker. The questions on the agenda were shared one at a time and learners were encouraged to randomly shout out answers while the facilitator was writing them on flipchart paper. When the group had exhausted their suggestions, a vote (by raised hands) was taken to see how many people agreed with the idea. This enabled the facilitator to prioritize each point.

At the end of the questions, the learners were given the option of becoming Saskatchewan Literacy Network members and to

sign up for information about SLN programs in the fall. In total, 37 people signed up for free memberships, 24 people signed up for information about the provincial Learners' Focus Committee, and 34 were interested in the Learners' Speakers' Bureau.

When the results from each of the focus groups were compiled, a copy was sent to the participating organizations.

Recommendations for Future Focus Groups:

- Facilitator must be prepared to give definitions of "Literacy" and "Learner". Although some groups were very familiar with the terms, others were confused by them.
- Co-facilitating with an adult learner is the most effective way of gaining trust and interest in programs. Four of the focus groups were co-facilitated with adult learners from SLN programs.
- A clear explanation of the uses of the information is crucial. Also, letting learners know that they were not committing to any programs (only offering ideas) was extremely effective in eliciting a wide variety of responses.

Question by Question Analysis:

A wide-variety of responses were gathered from each of the groups. The following is an analysis of the most popular answers from across the province although it does not indicate group priorities. For a complete list and priorities of each of the groups, please see Appendix 2.

Question 1: Types of Activities Requested

“If you were going to attend a program for adult learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?”

Every group suggested that courses for learners would be an ideal way to get together with other learners. The types of requested courses varied from formal skill development (running a cash register, first aid, WHMIS training) to life skills (cooking on a budget, wellness, parenting courses).

All groups were also keen to attend field trips. Local art galleries, museums and camping were common destinations.

The third most common suggestion was sports activities. Many groups named a multitude of team sports such as basketball, volleyball, badminton and bowling as a way to meet other learners.

Programs for families were suggested in five of the focus groups. These activities included reading and writing with your family and physical activities like swimming. It should be noted that one of the groups outright rejected the suggestion of involving families, preferring to have the support activity just for the adult learners.

The other activities on the list (book clubs, potluck suppers, study/discussion groups, volunteer activities, work experience activities and presentations/speakers) were only suggested in certain groups. This does not mean that learners in other groups would not participate in these activities, it only indicates that the suggestion was not made during the focus group. The following chart shows which groups suggested the activities, however, it does not indicate priority.

	Saskatoon				Regina	Swift Current	North Battleford	Prince Albert
	SIAST Kelsey (1)	SIAST Kelsey 2	Radius Community Centre	Dumont Technical Institute	SIAST Wascana Campus	Cypress Hills Regional College	Northwest Regional College	Riverside Community School
Courses for Learners								
Field Trip								
Sports Activity								
Programs for Families								
Book Club								
Potluck Suppers/ BBQ								
Study/ Discussion Groups								
Volunteer Activities								
Work Experience Activities								
Presentations/ Speakers								

Question 2: Open or Closed Programs

“Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners in your program?”

82% of the participants would like the support program to be open to all learners in their community, 10% would prefer that it is only open to members of their group and 8% invoked their right to pass.

Question 3: Ideal Locations for Activities

“Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?”

The local library was suggested as a location in seven of the eight focus groups. Although many of the learners voted that they would attend a program at the library, in some cases it was a reluctant agreement. The willingness to attend does not indicate the current use of library services and each community placed meeting at the library in a different priority.

The second most popular location was the setting of the learners’ current literacy program. This is not surprising as many of the adults already feel

comfortable with the other learners and the location. All other suggested locations tended to be specific to each community.

The following chart indicates which communities suggested each idea:

	Saskatoon				Regina	Swift Current	North Battleford	Prince Albert
	SIAS Kelsey (1)	SIAS Kelsey 2	Radius Community Centre	Dumont Technical Institute	SIAS Wascana Campus	Cypress Hills Regional College	Northwest Regional College	Riverside Community School
Library								
Program location								
Drop-in Centres								
Civic Centres								
Church Facilities								
Community School								

Question 4: Required Supports

“What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?”

When prioritizing responses, the facilitator prompted groups with “What would make it easier or more likely for you to attend?” Although travel and childcare were given as examples to the learners to clarify this question, all groups cited that they were important supports to have. Learners described transportation as anything from bus tokens to car pools depending on the community.

When childcare was suggested, the facilitator prompted the groups: “Would you prefer to have childcare at the location of the learner group or would you prefer to be given money to make your own arrangements?” The priority of the different childcare options varied with each community.

Other factors that encourage learners to attend a support program include food, incentives (like door prizes and certificates), a warm environment, free supplies, money to attend, and receiving information well in advance. Again, not all groups suggested each of the ideas and all of the ideas seem to correlate with the list of “Tips for an Effective Learner Support Group” (see Appendix 3). The following chart indicates which focus groups made each suggestion:

	Saskatoon				Regina	Swift Current	North Battleford	Prince Albert
	SIAST Kelsey (1)	SIAST Kelsey (2)	Radius Community Centre	Dumont Technical Institute	SIAST Wascana Campus	Cypress Hills Regional College	Northwest Regional College	Riverside Community School
Transportation								
Childcare (at location of group)								
Childcare reimbursement								
Food								
Incentives (door prizes, certificates)								
Warm environment								
Free supplies								
Money to attend								
Information well in advance								

Question 5: Best Times for Activities

“When is the best time for an activity?”

The responses varied widely in priority for each region. Learners could vote more than once on each of the following options:

Weekend: 52%

Evening: 56%

Weekday (provided it did not interfere with regular classes/ jobs): 62%

Question 6: Advertising

“How should we advertise these activities?”

After the flurry of brainstorming in each group, the facilitator prioritized each idea with the question, “please raise your hand if you would pay attention to a learner support group advertised on...(a poster, television, etc.).” For two of the suggestions (television and newspapers) every group suggested the idea. Therefore, the percentages of the learners who would pay attention to the message in these mediums are accurate. All other percentages are out of the total number of learners (73), even if there were groups that did not suggest the medium.

All focus groups suggested that television was the best medium to advertise learner support activities. In total, 67% of all learners in the focus groups shared they would pay attention to an advertisement about a learning support group on television.

The second most popular suggestion was posters, even though one group did not suggest this medium. To supplement the suggestion, the facilitator asked “What would catch your attention on a poster”. Answers included: colourful, stars, big letters, native artwork, free, fun, pictures of real adults, multicultural pictures, bright, and well-designed. Some groups even suggested local places to hang posters that would catch people’s attention.

Six of eight focus groups (56%) shared that they would pay attention to someone telling them about the group or they would attend because of “word of mouth.” This included a friend inviting them or another learner/ speaker inviting them. If you include the 26% of learners who would attend if their instructor invited them, “word of mouth” is an extremely effective way to advertise learner support groups.

Local radio stations, newspapers, pamphlet/brochures, internet, newsletters, sides of buses, billboards and bulletin boards all received varying interest in different communities.

	Saskatoon				Regina	Swift Current	North Battleford	Prince Albert
	SIAST Kelsey (1)	SIAST Kelsey (2)	Radius Community Centre	Dumont Technical Institute	SIAST Wascana Campus	Cypress Hills Regional College	Northwest Regional College	Riverside Community School
TV (67%)								
Posters (58%)								
Word of mouth (56%)								
Radio (51%)								
Newspaper (49%)								
Pamphlet/ Brochure (41%)								
Internet (33%)								
Instructor tells you (26%)								
Newsletter (25%)								
Side of Bus (23%)								
Billboards (22%)								
Bulletin Boards (10%)								

C. Personal Interviews regarding other SLN services for learners:

Description of Participants:

Three learners that are/have been involved in the Learners' Speakers' Bureau, the Learners' Focus Committee and the SLN board of directors were interviewed on how to improve our programs and support for learners. Although the learners all agreed that they are pleased with the current level of services, they offered several suggestions for improvement.

Interview Process:

Each learner was interviewed one-on-one over an informal lunch. As the interviewer was quite familiar with each of the participants, lunch began with conversation and progressed into the interview. Approximately one week prior to the meetings, the interviewer had orally shared the questions that would be asked and how the answers would be used. Answers were written-down in point form as the learner was speaking and then the interviewer read the final answers aloud to verify she had captured the essence of the conversation. The interviewer has grouped the responses into recommendations.

Recommendations for Learners' Speakers' Bureau:

The Learners' Speakers' Bureau (LSB) invites adults to share their stories of struggles with learning and the impact low literacy has had on their lives. Their speeches are shared with other learners, politicians and the media. This program has proven to be one of the most effective ways to recruit other learners to literacy programs and increase awareness of literacy needs, issues and opportunities.

Key Recommendations:

1. Ensure learners are reaching the goals of each audience. Every Learners' Speakers' Bureau (LSB) training needs to stress the importance of reaching the goals of an audience. For example, young mothers and politicians will want to hear different ideas. When evaluating speeches, one needs to ask "Did the speaker reach the goal of the audience?" As well, all trained learners should gather once a year to update speeches.
2. More prevention-based speeches should be delivered. Currently, the majority of speeches are being delivered to other literacy programs/learners, politicians and the media. Although these audiences should still be a priority, speeches should be offered to groups in order to prevent literacy-related problems. "Stay in School" speeches should be offered to all schools. People training to be professionals (ie: nursing students) should be aware of the issues so they can continue into their jobs with a sensitivity towards people struggling with low literacy.
3. Develop Level 2 trainings: "Speaking to the media" and "Speaking to Politicians". The learners identified that speaking to the media and to politicians requires a higher level of responsibility and often results in emotional strain. To address this, learners have requested that additional, specific training be developed to reach the goals of each audience. As part of this training, the "real" emotions and responsibilities need to be addressed. Only dedicated and qualified representatives should be chosen to participate in the trainings and they should receive incentives to participate.

4. Provide learners with more speaking opportunities.

A concentrated effort should be made to find a way to make more of a difference and impact more people. The SLN needs to actively seek more speaking engagements for learners and provide opportunities for as many learners as possible to speak.

5. Use learners who are already trained speakers to recruit new people to SLN programs.

The learners identified that they are in a good position to recruit other learners to SLN programs. Every time they shared their speech at the focus groups there was an excellent response and people signed up to be trained as speakers. Using our male speakers may also be effective in recruiting other males to SLN programs. Clearly outlining the benefits of becoming involved (receiving \$25/speech) should also be shared with potential speakers or committee members.

6. Develop a marketing strategy for LSB.

The SLN needs to develop an effective pamphlet to advertise learners and their speeches. Speakers should also receive business cards so that they can personally advertise their services (on behalf of the SLN). A price list for speakers needs to be considered for business audiences or speaking engagements in which the learner needs to travel (although offering free speeches is integral to the program). Pairing up with community schools and advertising through the parents is one way to reach a wider audience. As well, using the angle that "learning is empowering" is a way to advertise speakers to other non-profit organizations in each community.

Recommendations for the Learners' Focus Committee:

The Learners' Focus Committee (LFC) was established in 2001. Members of the group are learner representatives from different regions, different literacy programs and different literacy strands (ESL, Aboriginal and special needs) across the province. The committee has planned two mini-conferences and informed government literacy initiatives (including Benchmarks and the provincial literacy strategy) on policy and the importance of plain language. Learners on the LFC have identified that the committee has inspired major life changes and the courage to continue learning to a higher level. The LFC also sends a Saskatchewan representative to sit on the national committee of learners - the Movement for Canadian Literacy's Learners' Advisory Network.

Key Recommendations:

1. Focus on the future.

As one learner shared, "A lot of learner programs request that learners reflect on the past. An additional focus on the future (where do you see yourself in 2 years) would allow a positive goal-oriented spirit. This would also help us to move people through the committee in two years as the group encourages them to accomplish the next steps in their goals." Another way to accomplish a positive, future-oriented program is to keep portfolios for learners on the committee.

2. Continue to provide learning opportunities and a conference.

Ensuring that learners are prepared to sit on a formal board of directors is very important to the interviewees. As one learner said, "The provincial Learners Focus Committee should have a formal board structure to part of the meetings to prepare learners for possible future board appointments. This formal part of the meeting should be first thing in the morning so that people have to be there on time, learn to pay attention, and learn confidentiality."

Each learner also shared that a conference is a requirement because it teaches learners leadership skills and is empowering. In order to plan the conference and reach the goals of the group, the committee needs to meet at least three times a year. More workshops delivered in various communities would also be helpful.

As well, all learners on the committee should be encouraged to write for "Literacy Matters", the SLN newsletter.

3. Ensure learner involvement in forefront.

All SLN materials aimed at learners should be shared with the committee for review. A volunteer learner co-facilitator will teach learners new skills and inspire other learners to become more active in the group. As well, learners from the committee need to become more involved with other organizations such as the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission and Saskatchewan Learning.

In January 2006, members of the Learners' Focus Committee shared the ways that committee has improved their lives. Here are the responses:

- new awareness of what is going on
- feel well-informed
- have a cross-Canada view of literacy
- am a stronger learner
- connected to a lot of people, organizations, and programs
- no longer feel alone
- feel comfortable joining other boards
- good experience
- meeting new people with similar stories
- inspired to see more happening
- have a greater awareness of literacy
- we're a link to each others' communities
- encouragement
- opportunities to discuss events and be with other learners
- feel safe, free to learn
- have a lot of laughter
- the group is like a family
- we've all grown
- we want this group to always continue
- the most positive group I've ever been to
- it's given me the courage and strength to pursue a career helping others
- can encourage others
- I make my community stronger
- gives a feeling of importance
- gave me the power to express myself
- increased my self-worth
- good training for being on other boards or circumstances
- increased confidence
- Learner Speaker Bureau training good for my life
- pride for life experiences

Involvement in the SLN board of directors:

1. Provide learner members with extra orientation.

The comments from learners are very telling:

Needed more orientation to how important being a part of a board is...how much power you actually have. It's very important to know what's going on.

We need more orientation for learners before they join the board. Sometimes learners feel as though they have to participate right away although they may not know much about the topic being discussed. Letting them know that it takes all board members time to feel comfortable and gain a good understanding of issues is important.

Roles need to be explained extremely clearly. The confidentiality rule needs to be extremely clear. It also needs to be clear that you do not "bad-mouth" the board...ever.

Other suggestions include providing a couple years worth of minutes or Annual Reports so that the learner has a sense of the history of the SLN. As well, the Learner Coordinator could be at the board orientation to answer questions and help learners to feel at ease.

2. Establish a mentoring system for new board members.

Learners feel that they would benefit from a formal mentoring system of retiring learners to new learners on the board. Another suggestion is a formal mentoring system between all board members or a staff/learner mentoring system.

3. Ensure that the social needs of learner members are being met.

The social room for board member's families was a highlight. Everyone feels so welcome.

The learners requested that there was more personal connection with the Executive Director through phone calls rather than e-mails. It was also suggested that the board has a teleconference every couple of months with social time.

4. Staff and Board need to be aware of each other's activities.

The learners really appreciate when the staff gives presentations about their work at the board meetings. One suggestion is a regular, detailed activity list from staff (upcoming and recent activities) so that the board members always know and can speak to what the SLN is doing.

When there are staff changes in the organization, the learners feel that all board members and committees (including learner committees) need to be notified of the change as soon as possible. As well, they requested that the front staff need to be aware of all meeting dates, changes to meetings, etc.

D. Report Summary:

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network (SLN) is committed to providing the highest level of support services for adult learners. In an effort to evaluate and improve support services at the regional level, the SLN conducted eight focus groups with seventy-three adult learners in five communities in the spring of 2006.

The recommendations from the focus groups and interviews are in the process of being implemented in Saskatchewan Literacy Network programming. All regional groups are required to have a focus group and conduct services based upon the information. The Learners' Focus Committee is currently planning the learner stream of "The Spirit of the Community" conference in November 2006 as well as planning training in portfolio development at their next meeting. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network's Executive Director and board are also implementing many of the suggested changes.

After all, it's all about the learners.



Appendix 1

Agenda for the Focus Group

1. Introduction and Group Guidelines
 - a. you have the right to pass (although it makes for a better focus group if you share your ideas),
 - b. there is no such thing as a bad answer,
 - c. be appropriate,
 - d. be respectful (no interrupting, respect others' ideas),
 - e. spelling doesn't count (with the explanation that the facilitator would be the only one writing)
2. Icebreaker
3. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
4. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
5. Where would your ideal location for a support program/activity be?
6. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
7. When is the best time for an activity?
8. How should we advertise the program?
9. Wrap-up

Appendix 2: Focus Group Summaries

1. Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) Kelsey Campus (Saskatoon) – Group 1
2. SIAST Kelsey Campus (Saskatoon) – Group 2
3. SIAST Wascana Campus (Regina)
4. Dumont Technical Institute (Saskatoon)
5. Riverside Community School (Prince Albert)
6. Radius Community Centre for Education and Employment Training (Saskatoon)
7. Northwest Regional College (North Battleford)
8. Cypress Hills Regional College (Swift Current)



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Summary of Focus Group SIAST-Kelsey (Group 1) Saskatoon May 10, 2006

9 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 9/9 (100%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Welding
 - Carpentry
 - Electrician
 - Cooking
 - Auto body
 - Construction
 - WHMIS
 - Plumbing
 - Sewing
 - Beading
 - Painting
 - Parenting
 - CPR (1st Aid)
 - How to run a register/till
 - Things that are good on your resume
 - Cultural Camps
 - Youth Worker
 - Math Help
 - Creative Writing
 - Life Skills (emotional)
 - Tutors
 - 9/9 (100%) field trips
 - Powwow's
 - West Edmonton Mall
 - Camping
 - Tours of factories (rubber, orchards, blueberries (Berry Ranch))
 - Bright Water
 - Horse back Riding
 - 9/9 (100%) sports for learners
 - Horseshoe tournament
 - Soccer
 - Volleyball

- Baseball
 - Basketball
 - Horseback riding
 - Football
 - Bowling
 - Boxing
 - Wrestling
 - Tennis
 - Martial Arts
 - Skiing
 - Tobogganing
 - Golf
 - Go-Carting
 - Relaxing on Beach
 - Bike riding
 - 8/9 (89%) activities with your children
 - Swimming
 - Nature walks
 - Camping/Fishing/Trapping
 - Movies
 - Museums
 - Walks at University
 - Tours
 - 7/9 (78%) Volunteer Activities
 - Salvation army
 - Food Bank clothing department
 - Feed homeless downtown
 - Friendship Centre
 - Stockers
 - University Games
 - Jazz Festival
 - 6/9 (67%) Work Experience Programs
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - 8/9 (89%) All learners
 - 1/9 (11%) only learners from SIAST program
 3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 9/9 (100%)prefer SIAST Kelsey Campus
 - 6/9 (67%) Cosmo Civic Centre
 - 2/9 (22%) Main library
 - 1/9 (11%) Salvation Army
 4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
 - 9/9 (100%) transportation to activity
 - 9/9 (100%) Certificates

- 9/9 (100%) Coffee Room/ lounge just for learners
- 9/9 (100%) Free lunch/ Food
- 9/9 (100%) positive atmosphere (a lot of laughing)
- 9/9 (100%) Door prizes/ draws
- Perfect attendance=free bus pass
- 8/9 (89%) childcare
 - 3/8 :at the location
 - 6/8: money provided to organize childcare at home

5. When is the best time for an activity?

- 9/9 (100%) would attend on the weekend
- 5/9 (56%) would attend in the evening
- 3.5/9 (39%) weekday (around other classes)

6. How should we advertise these activities?

- 9/9 (100%) would pay attention to posters (colourful, stars, big, native artwork)
- 9/9 (100%) Instructor tells you
- 8/9: newspaper/ Sunday Sun
- 7/9 (78%) flyers/ brochures
- 7/9 (78%) sides of buses
- 7/9 (78%) letters to apartments
- 6/9 (67%) TV (Shaw, APTN, Channel 10, Community News Channels)
- 6/9 (67%) Air Balloon
- 4/9 (44%) Radio (C95, 102, 92.8)
- 2/9 (22%) Internet
- 1/9 (11%) Church Congregation
- 1/9 (11%) Pep Rally



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Summary of Focus Group SIAST-Kelsey (Group 2)

Saskatoon

May 10, 2006

7 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 7/7 (100%) of group would attend: Field Trips
 - Camping
 - Forrestry Farm (Zoo)
 - Exhibition
 - Hiking
 - Swimming
 - Fishing
 - BINGO
 - Casino
 - Museums
 - 6/7 (86%) courses for learners
 - CPR
 - Cooking Class
 - Crafts
 - Boat Safety
 - Safe Food handling
 - WHMIS
 - Driver training
 - Safety Workshop
 - Mechanic/ Basic Care Maintenance
 - 6/7 (86%) BBQ
 - 5/7 (71%) sports for learners
 - Swimming
 - Hockey
 - Soccer
 - Football
 - Figure Skating
 - 5/7 (71%) activities with your children
 - Reading and writing with them
 - Communication
 - CPR
 - Walks
 - Finding jobs
 - 4/7 (57%) Programs with Children and Animals

- 2/7 (29%) Beer Drinking Contest
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - 7/7 (100%) All learners
 - 0/7 (0%) only learners from SIAST program
 3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 7/7 (100%) prefer SIAST/Kelsey Campus
 - 5/7 (71%) Friendship Inn
 - 5/7 (71%) Main library
 - 2/7 (29%) Food Bank
 - 2/7 (29%) Credit Union Centre
 - 2/7 (29%) White Buffalo
 4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
 - 7/7 (100%) drinks and snacks
 - 5/7 (71%) Draws or Rewards
 - 5/7 (71%) Childcare
 - 1/5 :at the location
 - 3/5: money provided to organize childcare at home
 - 4/7 (57%) Transportation (Bus tickets)
 - 4/7 (57%) Money
 - 2/7 (29%) Beer
 5. When is the best time for an activity?
 - 6/7 (86%) would attend on the weekend
 - 6/7 (86%) would attend in the evening
 - 2/7 (29%) weekday (around other classes)
 6. How should we advertise these activities?
 - 5/7 (71%) would pay attention to posters (colourful, bright, big letters, fun, free)
 - 5/7 (71%) Instructor tells you
 - 5/7 (71%) TV
 - 5/7 (71%) Radio
 - 3/7 (43%) Newspaper
 - 1/7 (14%) sticker on the back of a truck



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Summary of Focus Group SIAST/ Wascana Campus Regina

May 26, 2006 10 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 9/10 (90%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Drama
 - First Aid
 - Cartooning
 - Manicure
 - Musical Instruments
 - Photography
 - Painting
 - Drawing
 - Dancing
 - Pottery
 - Sculpting
 - 9/10 (90%) Group Talks
 - 8/10 (80%) field trips
 - Museums
 - Tunnels
 - Bird watching
 - IMAX
 - 8/10 (80%) presentations from other groups/speakers
 - 8/10 (80%) Volunteering
 - 7/10 (70%) Potluck
 - 7/10 (70%) Carwash
 - 7/10 (70%) Sports
 - Basketball
 - Football
 - Volleyball
 - Swimming
 - Jetskiing
 - Canoeing
 - Fishing
 - Hunting
 - Hiking
 - Bike riding
 - Weight lifting

- Soccer
 - Frisbee
 - Badminton
 - Cross country skiing
- 6/10 (60%) Cards
 - 6/10 (60%) Playing Pool
 - 4/10 (40%) Icebreaker Games
 - 3/10 (30%) BINGO
 - 2/10 (20%) Watching TV
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
- 8/10 (80%) All learners
 - 1/10 (10%) Just learners from SIAST
3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
- 9/10 (90%) Downtown
 - 8/10 (80%) Library
 - 7/10 (70%) Park
 - 6/10 (60%) hotel (Regina Inn, Delta)
 - 6/10 (60%) Community Centres
 - 6/10 (60%) Centre of the Arts
 - 4/10 (40%) Music Stores
 - 4/10 (40%) Lawson Leisure Centres
 - 2/10 (20%) YMCA
 - 2/10 (20%) Friendship Centre
4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
- 10/10 (100%) Information before hand
 - 9/10 (90%) Good location
 - 9/10 (90%) Good time
 - 9/10 (90%) Shuttle bus
 - 6/10 (60%) Food
 - 5/10 (50%) Other activities like painting/reading for older children (over 12)
 - 4/10 (40%) Childcare: $\frac{1}{4}$ at location, $\frac{3}{4}$ money to organize at home
5. When is the best time for an activity?
- 7/10 (70%) during the day (if doesn't interfere with classes/jobs)
 - 6/10 (60%) Evenings
 - 6/10 (60%) weekends
6. How should we advertise these activities?
- 8/10 (80%) Word of Mouth
 - 8/10 (80%) TV (community channel, commercials)
 - 7/10 (70%) Posters (big, bold letters, pictures of real adults, multicultural pictures)

- 6/10 (60%) Newspapers
- 6/10 (60%) Flyers to mailboxes
- 5/10 (50%) Billboards
- 5/10 (50%) Children's Schools
- 4/10 (40%) Night Clubs/ Bathroom Stalls
- 4/10 (40%) Restaurant Menus
- 4/10 (40%) Stores
- 3/10 (30%) Website
- 3/10 (30%) Transit busses
- 3/10 (30%) Newsletters
- 2/10 (20%) Community Centres
- 2/10 (20%) Social Services
- 2/10 (20%) Cansask Employment
- 1/10 (10%) Band Offices



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Summary of Focus Group Dumont Technical Institute

April 11, 2006

10 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 10/10 (100%) of group would attend: learning field trip
 - Trips outside the city
 - Going to sweat lodges
 - Look at wildlife
 - 10/10 (100%) learners, elders or motivational speakers
 - 9/10 (90%) study groups
 - Science
 - Reading
 - Math
 - 9/10 (90%) Courses for learners
 - Computer classes
 - Woodworking
 - Sewing
 - Making sashes
 - Typing
 - Creative Critical thinking
 - Life Skills
 - Memorization tips for exams
 - Skills for working with the public
 - Cultural Crafts
 - Cultural Cooking
 - Wellness (smudging, medicine wheel)
 - 9/10 (90%) programs for families
 - 8/10 (80%) sports for learners
 - Softball
 - Slowpitch
 - Basketball
 - Bowling
 - Badminton
 - Swimming
 - Stretching
 - 8/10 (80%) work experience activities
 - 8/10 (80%) book club
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?

- 8/10 (80%) All learners in Saskatoon
 - 2/10 (20%) Only DTI learners
3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 9/10 (90%) prefer Downtown
 - 9/10 (90%) Friendship Centre (Wall Street)
 - 8/10 (80%) Downtown Library
 - 8/10 (80%) White Buffalo
 - 6/10 (60%) Citizen's Hall (Avenue F)
 - 2/10 (20%) a Gym
 - 2/10 (20%) St. Mary's School
 - 0/10 (0%) Miracle Manor
 - 0/10 (0%) St. Thomas Wesley Church
 4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
 - 8/10 (80%) would be more likely to go if there are: supplies (pens, paper, binders)
 - 7/10 (70%) travel money
 - 7/10 (70%) incentives (door prizes, 50/50 draws, food, certificates, group picture)
 - 7/10 (70%) childcare (5 people would like money for own childcare, 7 people would like to have childcare at the location)
 5. When is the best times for an activity?
 - 8/10 (80%) would attend on: Weekends
 - 8/10 (80%) weekday evenings
 - 3/10 (30%) weekday if didn't have other courses or work
 6. How should we advertise these activities?
 - 9/10 (90%) would pay attention to: Word of Mouth (friend, instructor/speaker invites you)
 - 9/10 (90%) radio (NBC, CBC, CJWW)
 - 7/10 (70%) television
 - 7/10 (70%) flyer/poster
 - 5/10 (50%) website
 - 5/10 (50%) newsletters
 - 4/10 (40%) bookmarks
 - 3/10 (30%) newspaper
 - 2/10 (20%) pamphlets (library, bus stop, laundry mats, doctor's offices)
 7. Additional Notes:
 - Presentations by learners is the best way to invite people
 - Feeling comfortable with the facilitator is key



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Summary of Focus Group Adult Learner Support Group Riverside Community School Prince Albert

May 25, 2006 11 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 11/11 (100%) Traditional Ceremonies/Learning about other cultures (all cultures)
 - 10/11 (91%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Communication
 - Positive Discipline
 - Leadership
 - Massage Therapy and Reflexology
 - CPR
 - Driving
 - Powerpoint
 - Interviewing Skills
 - Community Development
 - Life Skills (budgeting)
 - Property Maintenance
 - 10/11 (91%) field trips
 - Berry Picking
 - Camping
 - Hiking
 - Concerts
 - Regina Science Centre/ IMAX
 - Western Development Museum
 - 10/11 (91%) Potluck Suppers
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - 5/11 (45%) All learners
 - 1/11 (9%) Just learners from around the school
3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 100% prefer Riverside Community School

4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
 - 8/11 (72%) food
 - 7/11 (64%) Good environment/friendly people
 - 6/11 (55%) transportation
 - 6/11 (55%) childcare: 4/6 at location, 2/6 money for childcare at home
 - 6/11 (55%) free supplies
 - 5/11 (45%) contact person

5. When is the best time for an activity?
 - The group agreed that they already attended the last Thursday of the month from 1-3 and this was the best time.

6. How should we advertise these activities?
 - 6/11 (55%) Word of mouth
 - 6/11 (55%) TV (Shaw)
 - 6/11 (55%) Community School/ SLN Newsletters
 - 4/11 (36%) Flyers
 - 4/11 (36%) Bulletin boards
 - 2/11 (18%) e-mails/website
 - 1/11 (9%) newspaper



Summary of Focus Group Radius Community Centre

April 11, 2006

10 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 9/10 (90%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Computer classes
 - Cooking on a budget
 - Installing soft ware
 - Using common computer programs (excel spreadsheets, etc)
 - Mechanical classes
 - Real-life math/basic math
 - 8/10 (80%) sports for learners
 - Badminton
 - Golf
 - Skiing
 - Boating
 - Canoeing
 - Hiking
 - 8/10 (80%) star gazing
 - 7/10 (70%) field trips
 - 7/10 (70%) programs for families
 - Teaching your own children
 - Sharing experiences
 - 4/10 (40%) book club
 - Get a novel, read for pleasure, discuss
 - 3/10 (30%) programs for people that are deaf and hard of hearing
 - Sign language, reading skills
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - All learners in Saskatoon
3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 10/10 (100%) prefer conference rooms in the library
 - 8/10 (80%) Downtown locations
 - 8/10 (80%) by the river
 - 7/10 (70%) at a church
 - 7/10 (70%) at a recreation centre
 - 6/10 (60%) city hall

- 4/10 (40%) exhibition grounds
 - 4/10 (40%) go -karts
4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
- Knowing where it is and what transportation is available
 - Knowing in advance
 - Snacks and drinks
 - Childcare: 40% at the location (with the note that the parents need to know everything about the childcare provider including activities children will be participating in, ratio of caregivers to children, etc), 10% would prefer money to pay their own daycare
5. When is the best time for an activity?
- 9/10 (90%) would attend on Weekends
 - 7/10 (70%) weekday if didn't have other courses or work
 - 3/10 (30%) weekday evenings
6. How should we advertise these activities?
- 9/10 (90%) would pay attention to Word of Mouth (instructor/speaker invites you)
 - 8/10 (80%) ad in Star Phoenix
 - 7/10 (70%) ads on side of bus
 - 7/10 (70%) radio/television commercials
 - 6/10 (60%) look up activity on website
 - 6/10 (60%) billboards
 - 6/10 (60%) pamphlets
 - 4/10 (40%) posters (suggested places to hang: malls, CanSask building, library, churches, grocery stores, post office, schools)
7. Additional Notes:
- Activities/promotion needs to sound easy
 - Should point out what people can gain
 - Promotion needs a simple message: ask a question or hearing a learner's story
 - Facilitator can not be "too stuffy", not in a suit. Should be a learner who has accomplished a lot in their life – mentoring.



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Summary of Focus Group Northwest Regional College North Battleford

May 18, 2006 7 people (4 learners, 3 tutors/instructors)

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 6/7 (86%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Cooking
 - Planting/Gardening
 - Sewing
 - Knitting
 - Nutrition Class
 - Architecture/ House blueprinting
 - GED courses
 - Beadwork
 - Playing Instruments
 - Fundraising
 - 6/7 (86)% field trips
 - Museums
 - Art Galleries
 - Zoos
 - Hiking/Camping
 - 6/7 (86%) Coffee and Discussion
 - 6/7 (86%) Book Club with books for adults
 - 3/7 (43%) Garage Sale
 - 2/7 (29%) Bake Sale

Tutors/Instructor added that they would like to be:

- Observing what others are doing in their programs
- Networking
- Being paid to be involved in programs
- Seeing good resources for tutors and learners

2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - 7/7 (100%) All learners

3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 100% prefer college
 - 7/7 (100%) Public Library
 - 6/7 (86%) Don Ross Centre
 - 6/7 (86%) church basements
 - 5/7 (71%) Alex Dillabough Centre

4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)? (Only the 4 learners responded to this section)
 - 4/4 (100%) transportation/carpools to activity
 - 4/4 (100%) paid to attend
 - 4/4 (100%) good instructors/facilitators
 - 4/4 (100%) certificates
 - 4/4 (100%) recognition/ invite the mayor
 - 3/4 (75%) bring own supplies
 - 3/4 (75%) Free supplies offered
 - 2/4 (50%) childcare at the location (not money for childcare at home)

5. When is the best time for an activity?
 - 7/7 (100%) weekday (around other classes)
 - 4/9 (57%) would attend in the evening
 - 0% would attend on the weekend

6. How should we advertise these activities?
 - 7/7 (100%) someone handing out posters
 - 6/7 (86%) radio (swap & Shop)
 - 5/7 (71%) Word of mouth
 - 5/7 (71%) Posters (pictures of people, free, large printing, bright colours)
 - 5/7 (71%) public speakers to invite people
 - 3/7 (43%) Bulletin boards
 - 3/7 (43%) TV - Global
 - 3/7 (43%) Newspaper
 - 2/7 (29%) internet



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Summary of Focus Group Cypress Hills Regional College Swift Current

May 1, 2006

9 people

1. If you were going to attend a program for learners (outside of your regular program) what kinds of things would you like to do?
 - 8/9 (88%) of group would attend: Courses for learners
 - Basic Computer classes
 - Construction
 - Autobody (body work)
 - Cooking
 - Gardening
 - How to use a till (register)
 - Driver's training
 - Parenting (learning how to raise your kids)
 - First Aid Course
 - 8/9 (88%) field trips
 - Tours (historical)
 - Tunnels of Moose Jaw
 - Museums
 - Scenery
 - Galleries (art)
 - Tours of 1st nations communities
 - Zoos
 - 5/9 (56%) sports for learners
 - Volleyball
 - Basketball
 - Floor/ Street Hockey
 - 3/9 (33%) activities with your children
2. Would you prefer that the program is open to all learners in your community or only to learners from your program?
 - 7/9 (78%) All learners
 - 2/9 (22%) only learners from their program
3. Where would your ideal location for a support program/ activity be?
 - 100% prefer college

- 6/9 (67%) high school
 - 5/9 (56%) El Wood Building
 - 4/9 (44 %) Public Library
 - 3/9 (33%) Civic Centre
 - 3/9 (33 %) Elementary School (with a comment: I'd be too embarrassed to go there)
 - 2/9 (22%) a hall
4. What would you need to attend this program (travel, childcare money, etc.)?
- 7/9 (78%) transportation to activity
 - 6/9 (67%) travel reimbursements
 - 6/9 (67%) living expenses (to supplement losses if not working)
 - 3/9 (33%) childcare at the location (not money for childcare at home)
5. When is the best time for an activity?
- 9/9 (100%) would attend in the evening
 - 5/9 (56%) weekday (around other classes)
 - 0% would attend on the weekend
6. How should we advertise these activities?
- 7/9 (78%) would pay attention to TV (community channel, channel 5)
 - 6/9 (67%) Radio
 - 5/9 (56%) Instructor inviting them
 - 5/9 (56%) Posters
 - 5/9 (56%) Billboards (bouncy main street, Pharmasave lights, Signs & such)
 - 4/9 (44%) Internet (SLN website, Swift Current on-line)
 - 4/9 (44%) Newspaper
 - 4/9 (44%) Newsletter
 - 4/9 (44%) Word of Mouth
7. Additional Notes:
- Posters/ promotional material: Need to be well-worded, bright, colourful and well designed
 - Promotion needs a simple message: ask a question or hearing a learner's story
 - Facilitator can not be "too stuffy", not in a suit. Should be a learner who has accomplished a lot in their life – mentoring.

Appendix 3:



Tips for a Successful Learner Support Group

Shared by the Provincial Learners' Focus
Committee

1. Open-mindedness
2. Friendliness
3. Continuous Funding
4. Positive Environment
5. Competent Leader/Facilitator
6. Humour
7. Comfort Food/Beverage
8. Flexible, Task-Oriented Agenda
9. Plain Language Used
10. Respect in the Group so all have their voices heard

March, 2004