

Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce



A Pan-Canadian Snapshot



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Introduction

In the context of our work at CLLN we know that Literacy and Essential Skills are not the content of everyday conversations across Canada and yet Literacy and Essential Skills are key to economic development. Because they are so very important it is vital to know the competencies needed by the educators who deliver literacy and essential skills programming. There is little research that details this information and there is currently no overall picture. Much of the knowledge about literacy work in Canada is informal and anecdotal.

Adult literacy and Essential Skills development is relevant to a range of policy areas across federal, provincial and territorial boundaries. It benefits clients accessing the justice system, people who are incarcerated, people who want to be active in their local communities, people wanting to get into the workforce and people who are already in the workforce but are faced with changing demands. Literacy and Essential Skills are crucial for labour market attachment.

Low-skilled work has been most affected by technological change. There is an increasing need for entry-level employees to access, use and interpret information using digital technology. This is an issue that the L/ES workforce will need to address.

Also, with the current skills shortage in Canada, it is important that adults needing to upgrade their skills to meet current demands have access to quality programs. A fundamental foundation for quality programs is a skilled L/ES workforce that can grow to meet the skills shortage in Canada. As many L/ES educators are approaching retirement it is an appropriate time to review and address looming skills shortages in the L/ES workforce as well, and address strategies to prepare new entrants to the field. This *Snapshot* will provide a basis for that discussion.

With this in mind, it is important to examine the competencies needed by educators working in this field so that they can be recognized for the skills they possess and the impact they have on Canada's economic competitiveness. We need to consider ways to move forward so that there is support for increased labour market attachment and increased skills.

Objective:

- to explore the competencies needed to work with adults participating in Literacy and/or Essential Skills (L/ES) programs in Canada

Purpose:

- to lay a foundation from which to explore the topic of professionalism
- to identify the types of supports that the L/ES workforce needs in order to meet the changing needs of adult learners in L/ES programs
- to support the development of a well-trained and competent L/ES workforce
- to enhance the perception and understanding of the important role of the L/ES workforce

This project has been undertaken by CLLN to:

- gain a clear picture of the current competencies held by the L/ES workforce through key informant interviews
- gain an understanding of requirements for competencies through document reviews of related research in Canada and internationally.



Anticipated Outcomes of the Snapshot

This *Snapshot* aims to collect sample information from a broad range of L/ES educators dealing with participants working below IALS Level 3. For the purpose of this study, the term educator has been used to encompass people within the workforce with titles of instructor, practitioner, facilitator or other titles that refer to teaching literacy and/or essential skills.

- 1. Disseminate information about the current L/ES workforce to governments (federal and provincial/territorial), provincial and territorial organizations and other stakeholders
- 2. Develop responses to the findings of the snapshot of task profiles of the L/ES workforce, e.g. Development of Occupational Standards for L/ES workforce
- 3. Provide information that can be used for the creation of job descriptions or for developing screening questions that could be used during interviews with people entering the L/ES workforce
- 4. Provide information for the development of NOC profiles for L/ES workforce
- 5. Enhance the perception and understanding of the important role of the L/ES workforce

A limitation of the *Snapshot* is the small sample size.



Setting the Stage

Background

The **competencies of educators** are the knowledge, skills, abilities, mindsets (tangible/intangible) and behaviours (savoir, savoir-faire, and savoir-être) that lead to learners buying into the program, learning, making progress and meeting their goals. The term ‘professional development’ does not refer to initial qualifications of an L/ES educator, but to the ongoing development of the educator throughout his/her career.

The word **literacy** is sometimes seen as having negative connotations. Numerous other terms are used in its place including “foundation skills”, “employability skills”, or “basic skills”. Many literacy and essential skills providers have embraced the Federal Governments promotion of **Essential Skills** and use that as part of the description of their programs.

Programming includes reading, document use, writing, communication, thinking skills, digital skills, numeracy, working with others and continuous learning. These are the key skills that adults need to meet employment, education, training and personal literacy-related goals.

Programs often fall into the following categories:

- ▶ school board programs
- ▶ college upgrading programs
- ▶ community-based programs
- ▶ learning centres
- ▶ family literacy programs
- ▶ work-readiness programs
- ▶ pre-apprenticeship training
- ▶ workplace LES upgrading programs (unionized/non-unionized)
- ▶ programs in correctional facilities

Note: Volunteers will not be included as part of this research project, although there is a need to establish how much work is undertaken by volunteers and how much by a paid L/ES workforce. Community Literacy Ontario did work on this topic in *Literacy Volunteer: Value Added*

The following is a list of activities where L/ES educators have contact with, or influence the progress of participants in programs.

In colleges, school boards and community-based programs:

- ▶ outreach
- ▶ first contact/referrals
- ▶ intake and assessment
- ▶ program development – course structure
- ▶ development of curriculum, locating, adapting, creating resources
- ▶ lesson planning
- ▶ classroom – teaching and support
- ▶ online – including blended learning or facilitating courses
- ▶ exit interviews and assessment
- ▶ follow-up
- ▶ development of curricula and resources

In the workplace:

- ▶ organizational needs assessment
- ▶ workplace committees, e.g. labour and/or management
- ▶ analysis of employee needs, including skills, knowledge, etc
- ▶ assessment cycle – initial, ongoing, final
- ▶ program development – plan structure and develop activities
- ▶ deliver program
- ▶ wrap-up
- ▶ reports

International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) measures 5 levels of literacy. Essential Skills levels are articulated to IALS levels. IALS Level 3 is the level needed for most literacy tasks in our society. It is the level of literacy needed to graduate from high school and enter college. At the moment only a small percentage of adults needing to improve their literacy skills enter workplace, college, school board or community-based L/ES programs.

Our previous research¹¹ shows that moving Canadians from levels 1 and 2 of IALS to level 3 could create an annual return of over \$500 million, reducing by over 80,000 the number of people claiming social assistance. Raising adults' essential skills levels is estimated to cost roughly \$18 billion, but each year the earnings of individuals previously functioning at levels 1 and 2 would increase by an additional \$100 billion. This would result in an annual rate of return of more than 500%.



¹¹ CLLN and Murray. 2012, pg26

Document Review

The material in this section provides information from previous research and also identifies the areas of core competencies defined in a selection of documents about initial training and professional development opportunities in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, USA, England, Scotland, and Ireland. While the focus of this scan is not certification or professional development, it is very relevant to the *Snapshot* and helps identify and pull together the competencies that key informants have identified as being important to the L/ES field. A few samples of existing research findings have been included to illustrate the consensus that has been reached. A sample of core competencies required by a Canadian school board has been included as an example of the type of competencies currently being recognized.

Canada

While there is a considerable amount of research on the issue of literacy, there is little research or reporting related to the people who work and volunteer in the literacy sector. In December 2007, Movement for Canadian Literacy (now CLLN), produced an *Environmental Scan of Literacy Work in Canada*.

Environmental Scan of Literacy Work in Canada

This *environmental scan*, determined that knowledge gaps exist in a number of key areas. Interviews with key informants for the scan revealed that the “system” of delivery is extremely complex, fragmented and diverse across the country. Informants said that it is very

difficult to know and keep track of who is delivering adult literacy because some of the programming is project-based and operates on short-term funding. Workplace literacy programs are offered by employers and unions across the country but the extent of these programs is unknown.

The scan identified the common profile of paid literacy workers across the country (*environmental scan*, p 12), their working conditions (p 13) and pay rates (p 14).

The scan did not go so far as to define the competencies needed by educators but it set the stage for the *The Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce*.

Workplace Educator Professional Development Literature Review and Field Interview Report

This research² documented professional development programs in a number of jurisdictions. The assumption was that the educators would already have a background in adult literacy and be familiar with adult education principles and methodology. The intent was to identify the training that was needed by educators planning to move into the role of workplace educator. The *Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce* is not looking specifically at professional development but it is important to note this report identifies the difference between community-based learning and workplace learning. Notably it identifies the need in workplace programs to focus on completion of organizational needs assessments,

² Karen Geraci for Ontario Literacy Coalition, September 2002

job task analysis and a skills analysis of the participants who are going to participate in workplace education. In the key informant interviews conducted in *Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: The Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce* consideration is given to the competencies identified by both community-based and workplace educators in order to identify the similarities and differences.

Competencies of Training and Development Professionals

The Canadian Society for Training and Development (CSTD) is a professional association focused on training, learning and performance in the workplace. It has developed *Competencies* that address the needs of training professionals in a diversity of work environments and roles. The *Competencies* provide a roadmap to help guide professional development. They identify 5 competency categories:

- ▶ assessing performance needs
- ▶ designing training
- ▶ facilitating training
- ▶ supporting transfer of learning
- ▶ evaluating learning

The competencies addressed in the CSTD document focus on workplace training and don't include the additional skills that L/ES educators need when working with people with low literacy skills. The information in this document can be used by administrators and educators to reflect on the competencies needed for educators in the workplace and to a certain extent for those in other teaching situations. For more information go to: <http://www.cstd.ca/>

Adult Educator Skills List

This composite list consists of the skills and knowledge needed by literacy educators in Ontario. It consists of seven individual categories of skills, each of which details underlying knowledge and understanding, and related general awareness³. There was concern about the degree of demonstration of knowledge and skills and how they could be evaluated and within what set of standards. To date, this list has been used in Community Literacy Ontario's document, *Lifelong Learning for Literacy Practitioners*, <http://www.nald.ca/lifelonglearning/coreskil/intro.htm>

ADULT LITERACY EDUCATOR – CATEGORIES OF SKILLS

- ▶ Approaches to Adult Learning and Learner
- ▶ General Teaching Methods and Strategies
- ▶ Teaching Literacy and Numeracy
- ▶ Assessment and Evaluation
- ▶ Communicating and Working in a Learning Environment
- ▶ Professional Issues, Activities and Development
- ▶ Supplemental: Program Development and Administration

Only the headings have been included here because the document is lengthy. The following list more concisely illustrates the types of competencies to be found under each heading.



Adult Educator Core Skills List (Ontario School Board Sector)

This list⁴ was developed by the Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA)

APPROACHES TO ADULT LEARNING AND LEARNERS

Creates a positive learning environment for learner groups in their diverse socio/economic/cultural contexts

- ▶ accepts and affirms different social groups in their settings
- ▶ considers issues that affect learning (e.g. abuse, health, housing, disabilities)
- ▶ uses strategies to foster understanding among diverse learner groups
- ▶ makes adaptations which respond to individual learning styles, goals, and behaviours
- ▶ establishes and promotes an atmosphere of mutual trust and partnership in the classroom

GENERAL TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES

Develops curriculum with learning objectives and outcomes based on learners' goals

- ▶ collaborates with learners in defining objectives, learning activities and outcomes based on ongoing assessment
- ▶ incorporates learner's knowledge and experiences throughout the learning process
- ▶ develops appropriate curriculum along the continuum of LBS levels 1 to 5
- ▶ selects for training those skill sets specific to learner goal requirements

Facilitates the learning process of planning, work, and growth for individuals in a classroom setting

- ▶ encourages learners to share ideas, ask questions, make comments and cooperate with each other

- ▶ offers direction and responds to learners in an appropriate and timely manner
- ▶ fosters a cooperative, collaborative approach to classroom management issues
- ▶ accepts and gives constructive criticism
- ▶ shows sensitivity to different ways of participation based on individual and cultural factors, asking for feedback on the learning process and modifying procedures as necessary
- ▶ facilitates independent and self-directed learning through structured activities
- ▶ assists learners in developing a realistic vision for their optimum potential

Selects, adapts and creates appropriate learning materials and resources

- ▶ designs activities to meet a variety of learning styles, experiences, expectations and skill levels
- ▶ uses clear language and design in adapting/creating materials
- ▶ critically examines tools and resources within the context of LBS learning levels
- ▶ supports the use of computers and information technology in the development of literacy and numeracy skills

Communicates effectively in a learning environment

- ▶ gathers, prepares and reports statistical and program information
- ▶ promotes and models effective interpersonal skills with active listening, open-ended questioning, and sensitivity to learner diversity
- ▶ presents information clearly with appropriate tone, style and pace
- ▶ encourages and responds to learner feedback

⁴ © Continuing Education School Board Administrators

TEACHING COMMUNICATIONS AND NUMERACY

Develops strategies for the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening

- ▶ identifies the learner's initial instructional level and needs in reading, writing speaking and listening
- ▶ determines the sequence or reading and writing skill sets required by the learner's goals and the learning gaps
- ▶ plans and facilitates activities for reading, writing, speaking and listening outcomes in an integrated instructional context to support real life learning
- ▶ uses a variety of teaching methods to help learners develop specific communications skills i.e. decoding, comprehension, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary according to the learner's needs

Develops strategies for the teaching of numeracy

- ▶ identifies the learner's initial level and needs in numeracy
- ▶ organizes required numeracy concepts and skills into manageable and sequential units
- ▶ equips the learner to apply math concepts and skills to solve word problems
- ▶ plans and facilitates activities for goal required numeracy outcomes in an integrated instructional context to support real life learning
- ▶ helps learners transfer math skills to daily life situations

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Uses methods, tools and procedures appropriate to initial, on-going and final assessment and evaluation

- ▶ ensures that assessment tools meet the criteria for valid results.
- ▶ encourages regular evaluation in a collaborative process with the learner that is both confidential and meaningful.

- ▶ provides opportunities to help learners assess their own strengths and needs

Uses a goal-directed assessment process for initial assessments

- ▶ gathers information on prior learning, education and employment experiences
- ▶ helps learners identify short and long-term goals that are measurable and realistic
- ▶ identifies communication and numeracy skills and knowledge required for those goals
- ▶ develops a learning/training plan that outlines the skills and knowledge needed to successfully meet learner goals

Uses on-going assessment and evaluation process

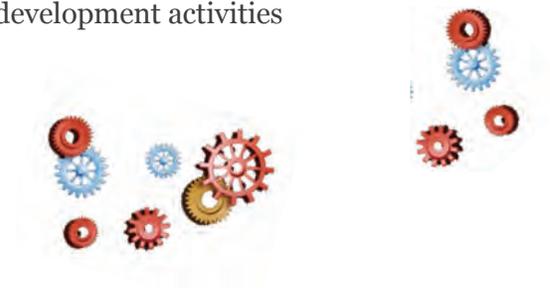
- ▶ selects or designs appropriate demonstrations to reflect learner progress
- ▶ assesses and documents demonstrations of progress based on meaningful tasks
- ▶ involves the learner in modifying the training plan, clarifying goals and exploring options
- ▶ gives regular and frequent progress feedback to the learners in both formal and informal ways

Uses final assessment and evaluation for exit, relates exit assessment tool to the goals of the learner as developed in the training plan

PARTICIPATES IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Assesses professional strengths/needs and improves knowledge and skills

- ▶ reflects critically on own practice
- ▶ sets realistic and challenging goals for personal and professional development
- ▶ engages in on-going professional development activities



Hardwired for Hope (2004)

The research in practice team consisted of a group of five Adult Basic Education (ABE) and literacy instructors from British Columbia. The goal was to find what effective instruction meant in the ABE/Literacy context. The research examined the motivation of ABE instructors as distinct from schoolteachers or university professors. The report concluded that the motivation and beliefs of the ABE instructor are powerful factors in the teaching/learning equation.

A number of recommendations came from *Hard Wired for Hope*. The research identified the need for professional development of the literacy workforce around motivation and beliefs.

Another recommendation was that all programs and unions revisit their ABE/Literacy instructor job descriptions in order that more specific attention and value be given to the full spectrum of the job to enable ABE/Literacy instructors to work effectively. The researchers also recommended that committees hiring ABE/Literacy instructors formulate their questions to elicit a clear picture of the motivation, beliefs and attitudes of the candidates. These mindsets and behaviours were seen to have equal importance to the subject area competence for a new instructor. The research found that instruction was more effective when instructors create curriculum and select materials in order to make learning relevant to their students. This was true in all subject areas and at all levels, including the upper levels of ABE/Literacy. This means that curriculum development should be seen as a key competency for L/ES educators.

A Literature Review of International Adult Literacy Policies, March 2011

This *literature review* from Ireland states that Canada has no national curriculum framework. It suggests that there are no firmly embedded, long-term workplace literacy strategies.⁵ It also finds that there is no general agreement nationwide in Canada regarding how adult literacy teachers should be trained and assessed.⁶ The lack of a framework could have an impact on the competencies of the L/ES workforce in Canada and further discussion on this issue is needed.

England

Many practitioners, policymakers and researchers argue that teacher quality is vital to student achievement and success. Hanushek⁷ (1992) showed that the difference between having a good teacher and a bad one could exceed one grade-level equivalent in annual educational progress. Rivkin⁸ et al. (1998) concluded that teacher quality is the most important predictor of student achievement. Darling-Hammond⁹ (2000) argued that the effects of teacher quality in educational outcomes could be more important than student background characteristics, such as economic deprivation or ethnic minority status. Sanders and Rivers¹⁰ (1996) suggested that the effect of teacher quality on lower achieving students is stronger than with the other students. However, defining teacher quality is problematic. The difficulties are in knowing what characteristics need to be measured and in finding ways to improve competencies. Researchers tend to agree

⁵ NALA, *A Literature Review of International Adult Literacy Policies*, Canada, pg 23

⁶ McKenna and Fitzpatrick, 2004

⁷ Hanushek, E. A. (1992) *The trade-off between child quantity and quality*. Journal of Political Economy, 100

⁸ Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A. and Kain, J.F. (1998) *Teachers, schools, and academic achievement*.

National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 6691

⁹ Darling-Hammond, L. (2000) *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. Journal of Education Policy Analysis, 8(1)

¹⁰ Sanders, W. L. and Rivers, J. C. (1996) *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement*. Knoxville, TN

that it is probably wrong to assume that teaching quality is fully measured by teaching qualifications. Most research has been done in the school system with little information about further education.

The relevance of teachers' qualifications in the subject titled 'English' may be less than those for numeracy. The knowledge needed for teaching English or ESL might be better served by teaching qualifications in languages or linguistics.

Skills for Life Teacher's Qualifications and their Learner's Progress in Adult Numeracy

The main aim of this *study* was to shed light on the relationship between numeracy and teachers' qualifications and their learners' progress.

The study was set within the context of the English government's Skills for Life strategy. Skills for Life emphasises the needs of priority groups at risk of exclusion, including unemployed people and benefit claimants; prisoners and those supervised in the community; public sector employees; low-skilled people in employment; and younger adult learners aged 16-19.

From 2001 all new teachers in the lifelong learning sector were required to complete a generic teaching qualification such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education or Certificate in Education. From 2002 teachers were also required to complete a subject-specialist qualification. From 2007 teachers have been able to take a single integrated qualification.

The study found that there is clear evidence that learners of better qualified numeracy teachers

made more progress between pre-course and post-course tests. The number of years teaching numeracy was also found to have a positive effect on learners' progress. The study also examined the relationship between teachers' qualifications and changes in learners' attitudes and self-confidence. Here the picture was more complicated. On the one hand learners have a greater positive change in their perception of math when taught by teachers holding first or postgraduate degrees in math; on the other hand, learners have a smaller positive change in their perception of math when taught by teachers with more rather than less experience. There is some evidence that teachers' possession of a math degree has a positive impact on how much learners enjoy using their own math skills. However the report also suggests that learners' self-confidence in math grows less with teachers who are highly qualified in math. When working with highly qualified teachers learners are most keenly aware of how much they have yet to learn. Perhaps teachers with lower levels of math are more able to empathize with the numeracy challenges faced by their adult learners. Those graduate and postgraduate math teachers with little or no experience or memory of struggling with their own math may need to develop a greater understanding of the challenges faced by their learners. This is consistent with Morton et al.'s¹¹ (2006, p.58) finding of 'a consensus in the literature that teachers should take part in practical professional development activities to help them to "see" the subject from their learners' point of view'.



¹¹ Morton, T., McGuire, T. and Baynham, M. (2006) *A literature review of research on teacher education in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL*. London: NRDC

Ireland

The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)

This *report* was issued by the Department of Education and Science, Ireland in July 2008. It provides information about the status and training of adult educators. There are no specific qualifications required for adult education teachers in Ireland. However in general, programs are provided by qualified post-primary teachers, the majority of whom hold full-time positions. A post-primary teacher in Ireland must hold a suitable degree and a suitable teacher-training qualification. The report found that the lack of distinct ALE career structure with specific qualification requirements and the limited number of full-time positions was reflected in the status of ALE teachers. Findings also showed that many teachers found themselves teaching adults through chance rather than through any clear cut decision to pursue a career as an adult educator.



Australia

The Professional Development Requirements of Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Programme Practitioners

This *report* examined the extent and nature of professional development required to meet the current and future needs of workplace English language and literacy practitioners in Australia. It found that engagement in professional development activities is declining. The report examined the barriers preventing the

recruitment of new practitioners and possible strategies to support renewal of the profession, including the need for a national minimum standard to be adopted, such as the *Advanced Diploma of Language, Literacy and Numeracy in Vocational Education and Training*.

Practitioners and managers identified a number of key skills and attributes required by a Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) practitioner over and above language, literacy and numeracy qualifications.

These included:

- ▶ experience working with adults
- ▶ understanding of workplace culture
- ▶ flexibility
- ▶ integrity
- ▶ empathy
- ▶ ability to work independently
- ▶ ability to deal with a range of stakeholder needs
- ▶ good communication skills

WELL practitioners are required to use these skills and attributes in a number of roles in:

- ▶ face-to-face delivery
- ▶ the provision of advice to non-WELL practitioners and industry personnel
- ▶ the development of learning and assessment resources
- ▶ negotiation
- ▶ writing WELL Programme reports and submissions
- ▶ the capacity of a representative of the registered training organization

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Practitioners commented that there were few professional development opportunities available to them, either as entry-level practitioners or accessible on an ongoing basis, noting that they were largely responsible for their own learning and development. Key issues relating to the

provision of current professional development activities included:

- ▶ decreasing opportunities to achieve adult literacy qualifications through the higher education sector
- ▶ lack of consistent induction training for entry-level WELL practitioners
- ▶ lack of opportunities for collegiate networking
- ▶ lack of opportunities to share experiences and resources
- ▶ inconsistent nature of current professional development for WELL practitioners
- ▶ lack of professional development specific to language literacy and numeracy. The most common forms of professional development were vocational, educational and training-related workshops, such as occupational health and safety (38%)
- ▶ lack of ongoing professional development; 36% had undertaken no professional development over the past two years

When questioned about the possible changes to roles of WELL practitioners in the next five years and the professional development implications, respondents noted the following issues:

- ▶ it is likely that there will be a continuation of the multiplicity of changes that have occurred over the past five years, such as integration of language, literacy and numeracy and vocational training, and the broadening of the language, literacy and numeracy skills covered by the WELL Programme
- ▶ there is growing emphasis on the need for flexible delivery
- ▶ there is increased focus on team teaching; that is, using a vocational content specialist and a WELL practitioner
- ▶ there is an increased need to access and use information and communication technologies

In the final section of the report, a number of suggestions are made, targeted at three main areas:

- ▶ establishing pre-entry qualifications through the Advanced Diploma in Language, Literacy and Numeracy Practice in VET
- ▶ facilitating professional development for entry-level WELL practitioners, including assistance in areas such as shadowing, mentoring, using the National Reporting System (a framework for reporting the language, literacy and numeracy outcomes of students) and resource development
- ▶ professional development for current WELL practitioners across a variety of issues, including assistance in areas such as the workplace environment, program management and language, literacy and numeracy practice

Additional information relating to this research is available in *The Professional Development Requirements of Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme Practitioners: Support Document*. It can be accessed from NCVET's website <http://www.ncver.edu.au>



New Zealand

National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education

The National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education is a professional qualification for adult literacy and numeracy educator competence in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Participants include existing practitioners and aspiring adult literacy and numeracy educators.

For the purposes of this qualification, adult literacy and numeracy education includes design, delivery, assessment, and evaluation, and is based on:

- ▶ engaging with learners
- ▶ taking account of learners' spiritual and/or cultural beliefs, emotional states, knowledge and skills, environments and past experiences
- ▶ meeting the specific learning needs and goals of learners in ways that are meaningful to them as an individual and as a member of particular cultures and/or communities

The compulsory section of the qualification is intended to be the recognized minimum standard, at a higher level than most current practice. The elective section allows recognition of specialization, including group, organizational, and/or computer-based contexts.

People awarded the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education:

- ▶ understand historical and theoretical issues underpinning adult literacy and numeracy education in Aotearoa, New Zealand
- ▶ are knowledgeable about Māori adult literacy are able to assess a person's literacy needs and gains
- ▶ are able to design and facilitate literacy skills development for an individual adult learner
- ▶ are able to operate as an adult literacy educator in one or more specialist context(s)



USA

Understanding the Experience of Adult Learners: Content Analysis of Focus Group Data

This American research study¹² focuses on the competencies of L/ES educators from the perspective of learners and how those learners view the value of their relationship with their educators. It examined the experiences of adult learners in adult education centres in the United States. The researchers were interested in knowing why learners attend programs, what program elements foster success, barriers to learner participation and success and possible program improvements. The research showed that learners have aspirations but often have fragile self-confidence and have had their education disrupted by life events. ABE and ESL programs can help learners reinforce their tenacity and ability to overcome obstacles with passionate, inspiring teachers, friendships and support networks. Student – teacher relationships are particularly crucial.

Analysis of the focus group information shows the importance of student-teacher relationship and the impact that committed L/ES staff have on the learning that happens in their programs.

¹² Zacharakis, Jeff; Steichen, Marie; Diaz de Sabates, Gabriela; Dianne “*Understanding the experiences of adult learners: content analysis of focus group data*”, (2011). *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Journal*, v5 n2 p84-95

Conclusions from Document Review

Competencies of L/ES educators fall within the following categories: knowledge, skills, abilities, mindsets (tangible/intangible) and behaviours (savoir, savoir-faire, and savoir-être) that lead to learners buying into the program, learning, making progress and meeting their goals.

Hardwired for Hope and professional development requirements in Australia emphasize the need to recognize the value of the competencies of L/ES educators relating to attitude and behaviour (savoir-être). The educators' ability to motivate, understand and relate to students' needs and issues is a key competency. L/ES educators need a comprehensive awareness of their own ethics, responsibilities and boundaries in addressing the personal and emotional needs of students who have been faced with a number of barriers to successful learning.

The *Workplace Educator Professional Development Literature Review and Field Interview Report, Canada*, and *The Professional Development Requirements of Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Programme Practitioners, Australia*, identified the differences between programs inside and outside the workplace. For a workplace program to be successful, L/ES educators need to have knowledge of the workplace culture and the ability to conduct organizational needs assessments, job task analysis and a skills analysis of employees who will participate in the program.

Various lists of competencies exist. They vary in their level of detail and they do not state how the competencies will be measured. Competencies include the knowledge and application of adult learning principles; an understanding of the adult learner and how to create and maintain an inclusive learning environment; general teaching methods and strategies; specific content knowledge, including the development of

essential skills in that area; developing activities, a learning framework and individualized learning/training plans; facilitation skills; and assessment and evaluation. A basic level of competency is needed in all of these areas to begin work as an L/ES educator but professional development is the key to improving skills and knowledge.

Like all adult educators, L/ES educators need an extensive knowledge of teaching adults and subject matter expertise. However they also need to understand and support students' ability to learn. Only the right approach, attitude and behaviour can make this happen. The relationship between L/ES educators and their students is a key component of successful learning.

How complexities are measured is outside the scope of this snapshot but it is an area that needs to be addressed if there is to be consistency within the provinces and territories and throughout Canada. Some research suggests that a national framework would help to pull together the work being done by L/ES educators in Canada.



Key Informant Interviews

Diana Twiss, Director of Adult and Workplace Learning, Decoda Literacy Solutions, B.C. was asked to review and comment on the questions that would be asked in the key informant interviews.

Process for Key Informant Interviews

1. Create interviewee sheet and questions for key informant interviews.
2. Review and revise the questions based on feedback from an expert in the field.
3. Identify key informants from information provided by provincial experts in the field.
4. Send potential key informant information about the project and request interviews.
5. Conduct Key Informant Interviews, using the Question Sheets to guide the discussion
6. Write up notes.
7. Send notes of interview to each key informant for them to make any necessary changes.
8. Create database containing information from the key informant interviews.
9. Analyze data and add to report.

Analysis of Key Informant Interviews

The following is a summary and analysis of information collected from key informant interviews.

Type of program

Participants came from a variety of sectors, including workplace, colleges, school boards and community-based programs. They delivered L/ES programs in a jail, store fronts, learning centres, colleges and a variety of small, medium and large workplaces.

Programs delivered were extremely varied and included essential skills for workplace success; essential skills in workplace learning, culture and

change; core essential skills tailored to specific workplaces; essential skills tailored to specific workplaces; labour market driven courses (to meet local needs); literacy, essential skills and workplace preparation; high school upgrading; leadership development; study skills; basic computer training; communications; English; English for specific purposes; and basic foundations in reading, writing, numeracy.

Educators need the skills to be able tailor programs to the needs of participants. Some programs prepare learners for the workforce and are being run along business lines, with the educator modelling an employer and the classroom being the workplace. Other programs support participants in acquiring the skills needed to volunteer in their communities. Programs that are in store fronts or community centres attract more Aboriginal participants than those that are offered in a college campus. Programs being delivered in the workplace deal with L/ES issues identified by employers and employees, often around communication, workplace culture, document use and report writing. There is constant evaluation of external events that are influencing who comes to programs.

Curricula

Individualized goal setting and delivery is a key competency of L/ES educators. Programs are created to meet the needs of participants. Most key informants adapt and create activities for their learners. For educators working with a curriculum there is still the need to develop activities to teach to the outcomes outlined in the curriculum. Many key informants felt that being able to collect, adapt or create their own resources was better than having a curriculum.

Length of time in the field

Most of the key informants had been in the field longer than 10 years. The shortest time anyone had been in the field was two years.

Familiarity with Essential Skills

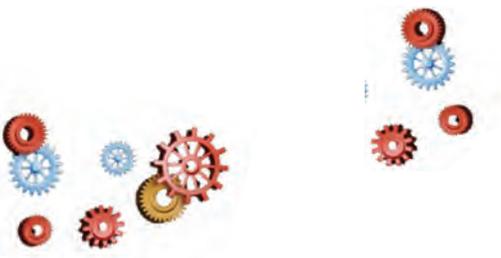
All key informants were familiar with Essential Skills and their complexity levels. Key informants resources and curricula are articulated to the levels used in their provinces and territories.

All the educators interviewed were knowledgeable about essential skills and deliver programs that include improving the essential skills of participants. The core essential skills of reading, writing, document use and numeracy are always taught but thinking skills were also considered to be crucial. A problem-solving approach is common to learning in many of the programs. Making informed decisions is an important thinking skill that is usually addressed in L/ES programs. Working together was seen as another important area to focus on in L/ES programs, in and outside the workplace.

Improving the oral communication skills of participants in L/ES programs is often a focus for L/ES educators.

There is no consistency for training L/ES educators about essential skills. One key informant found out about Essential Skills and OLES tools from a visiting trainer after he had been delivering his program for a year. He has been using them ever since. This would seem to suggest that there is a need to review the process whereby L/ES educators receive information and training about Essential Skills.

Several key informants recommended including creativity, artistic expression and special thinking as essential skills.



Role of educators in the L/ES workforce

Key informants were very clear that duties and responsibilities were both extremely important. L/ES participants are most often drawn from a population that is vulnerable and has had many challenges with education in the past and consequently they come with a lot of baggage. Key informants identified that they need skills and knowledge to meet responsibilities to participants but they also need a set of characteristics that enable them work effectively with participants.

The key informants identified educators' personal characteristics as much more important in the literacy and essential skills arena than in other teaching or training environments. Many factors affect learning for participants, such as addictions, abuse or learning disabilities. L/ES educators need to be knowledgeable about these factors when creating a learning environment. L/ES educators also need to have the personal characteristics to deal with these factors in a sensitive manner.



“We are dealing with high-risk adults with complicated lives. It is difficult to teach compassion, perseverance and grace but these qualities are needed when forming an authentic relationship with students.”

Teaching skills are obviously an important competency for L/ES educators. One key area is teaching learners how to articulate what they are thinking and enable them to express their thoughts appropriately to their audience. Another key teaching competency identified by L/ES educators is helping learners to understand how they learn. Key informants also deemed it important to be knowledgeable about community resources and to teach participants how to find out about local resources for themselves. Much of the work involves improving not only the skills of the participants but also their human

development and potential. A social practice view of education was seen by most key informants to be important. Often L/ES educators are grounded by real life experiences in other fields.



Not everyone gets it; some people will always be mechanical teachers and they don't have a place in L/ES programs. Classes shrink if L/ES educators don't have the pastoral/social work skills to support participants' readiness to learn."

Duties

Key informant interviewees were asked to describe the scope of their job. As some interviewees also held other coordination or management roles, information about other topics was collected to be used to inform other work that CLLN is undertaking.

DUTIES IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS COLLEGES, SCHOOL BOARDS AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

- ▶ Perform intake interviews and initial assessments (sometimes undertaken by coordinators)
- ▶ Identify gaps in participants' learning – create learning/training plans with participants
- ▶ Prepare and schedule courses, units of study and lesson plans that are well structured and scaffold learning
- ▶ Prepare curriculum and/or locate, adapt, create activities
- ▶ Locate, adapt, create interesting and relevant resources at different skill levels
- ▶ Teach using a variety of teaching strategies and techniques to meet the participants, learning styles and multiple intelligences
- ▶ Provide ongoing assessment related to provincial/territorial requirements
- ▶ Track learners and document their progress

- ▶ Exit assessment
- ▶ Evaluate to check that the program is meeting its objectives and the participants' needs, acting on appropriate recommendations
- ▶ If appropriate, arrange work placement opportunities, support participants/ employers during work placements

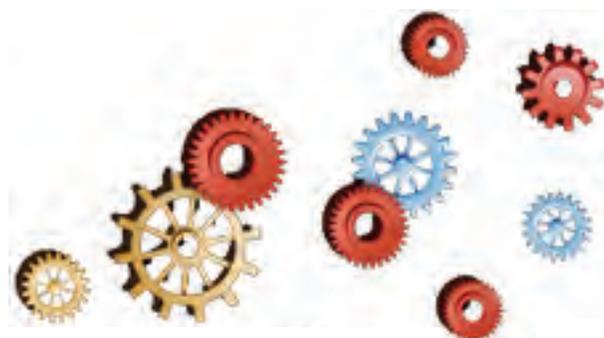
DUTIES IN WORKPLACE PROGRAMS

- ▶ Research the issues, identify what needs to be done, develop resources that are a good fit
- ▶ Meet with all levels of workforce to understand what is needed
- ▶ Create active participatory learning where the interests of the participants and the organization overlap
- ▶ Assess and evaluate to show learning



"Peer training should be 90% of total training in the workplace. It boosts the confidence of employees because they know they can do things without help... They are together 200 days a year."

Note: There needs to be great flexibility around schedules in workplaces. Programs may be offered to overlap shifts, at lunch, early or late in the day, and over different time periods. Sometimes the opportunity for employees to practise between sessions is built into the schedule.



Responsibilities to participants in an L/ES program

The following competencies were considered important in defining the professional disposition of the key informants. The competencies are built on knowledge of adult learning that is a fundamental requirement for working in an L/ES program.



“It’s important that when enthusiasm wanes, their relationship with instructors in the program keeps them going.”

ASSESSMENT AND GOAL SETTING

- ▶ Identify needs and gaps in learning with participants
- ▶ Use initial assessments as a starting point for creating individualized learning plans
- ▶ Use learners’ work and ongoing assessment to discuss progress

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Create, adapt, locate resources to meet learning plans of participants
- ▶ If using a curriculum, create learning activities to support the curriculum

TEACHING USING ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ Create a positive and welcoming environment that is conducive to collaborative learning – build rapport with participants
- ▶ Provide the best quality instruction possible with plenty of stimulating interactive activities that resonate with participants and encourage use of critical thinking skills
- ▶ Use multiple modes of learning to build skills so that participants can meet their goals
- ▶ Scaffold new learning
- ▶ Help participants to understand how they learn

- ▶ Work from participants’ strengths and build on them
- ▶ Help participants grow (self-awareness, problem-solving, consciousness raising, building soft skills, confidence building, establishing realistic expectations, building skills, making connections between education and real-life, involvement in community activities)
- ▶ Act as a role-model and mentor
- ▶ Let participants set the pace
- ▶ Demonstrate consequences of affective behaviour
- ▶ Continuously develop teaching techniques and strategies
- ▶ Make sure participants are ready for the next step
- ▶ Make participants more employable



“Getting people to talk rather than keeping their head down and pretending that everything is OK and they understand – talk up NOT shut up – not moving on until they are ready.”

WORKING WITH GROUPS

- ▶ Ask good questions and really listen to the answers
- ▶ Provide feedback to participants – factor in the vulnerability of participants
- ▶ Understand the challenges, including social and emotional needs, that are faced by participants
- ▶ Provide motivational support to all participants but especially to those in danger of dropping out
- ▶ Provide support and referrals to community services if participants are facing personal issues
- ▶ Respond to individual needs of participants so they can participate fully in learning
- ▶ Accept of diversity with a knowledge of intercultural communication - keep the peace



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Create opportunities for self-reflection
- ▶ Attend training, conferences etc.
- ▶ Participate on committees or research projects (if possible)
- ▶ Keep up-to-date with new initiatives and resources

It was common to hear key informants talk about the importance of understanding affective behaviour and the need for participants to understand its effects in the classroom and workplace so that participants develop appropriate behaviours and advocate for themselves. Asking good questions and active listening skills featured strongly in the list of competencies with educators really listening to

what participants are telling them - the overt and the hidden messages.



“Knowledge about affective behaviour – our society does not dwell on emotions and most teaching blunders are caused because educators are scared to discuss issues or they feel they need to be in control. This can cause more blunders than anything taught as subject matter.”

No matter where they work, L/ES educators embrace lifelong learning and bring a wide range of competencies to their programs. Educators emphasize the importance of being knowledgeable about adult learning and working with groups. These are fundamental competencies that embrace all aspects of program delivery. These topics need to be covered by professional development.



“Remember that you can teach skills but you can’t teach attitudes – you must get the right people in the first place.”

Important characteristics for L/ES educators

Interviewees talked about the importance of attributes that cannot be taught. They mentioned the importance of attitude and the need for educators in L/ES to have humanity, self-awareness, empathy and tolerance. Without these attributes it is unlikely the person would be an effective L/ES educator, either in the community or the workplace. The following is a list of the significant characteristics identified by the key informants.

Patience with oneself and others

Empathy

Optimism

Tolerance

Discretion

Enabling

(teaching others to find their own way)

Sense of humour

Creativity

Good judgement

Positive attitude

Friendliness/Warmth

Energy

Curiosity

Self-awareness and balance

Approachability

Risk-taking

Responsiveness

Introspection

Empowering others

Motivating others

Flexibility

Non-judgemental

Rapport building

Accommodating

Willingness to learn and grow

Interpersonal awareness

(body language etc.)

Humility

Common sense

Persistence

Subject Matter Content Knowledge

This *Snapshot* collected information about the types of programs being offered but did not go into depth on the subject matter expertise of the key informants. This is outside the scope of this project as the range of subject matter is so broad. However, it was evident that, in order to deliver subject matter content, L/ES educators needed to be knowledgeable about the stages or levels used in literacy assessment in their provinces and territories and of the assessment tools being used. L/ES educators need knowledge of Essential Skills, including how to embed them into activities, especially core skills, thinking skills and working with others. Digital skills are also becoming increasingly important.

It soon became very apparent that the *savoir-être* component of the competencies was extremely important to the key informants. They were keen to discuss their characteristics, professional disposition and subject matter expertise. It was evident that all the respondents have a good knowledge of teaching strategies and techniques and a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter required for participants to meet their goals.



How key informant interviewees got those competencies

The background of L/ES educators is varied. Most of the key informants had undergraduate degrees and some had completed masters' degrees. Many had completed a certificate in adult education or taken individual modules. Adult education was usually the only common factor in how people got their competencies. Most L/ES educators have some life experience in other fields before moving into teaching adults and recognizing L/ES as their vocation.

The best way to get competencies

It is considered important to have life experience before working in the L/ES field. If educators have changed directions themselves or have struggled with issues it helps them to recognize the importance of certain qualities or behaviours. Key informants suggested a mix of methods.

A theoretical and grounded understanding of adult education – degree or certificate course should be considered, along with practicums and observations of experienced teachers, followed by professional development.



Competencies needed to begin working in L/ES

Most key informants included all the items on the list. Others highlighted certain components as essential, with others to be gained over time, others prioritized the whole list.

If you were designing training for new instructors what would you want to see included in this training?

Setting up a Program in the Workplace

- needs assessments (workplace)
- job task analysis
- analysis of employee skills

Working with Learners

- intake procedures
- assessment cycle: initial, ongoing, final
- goal setting
- portfolios

Working with Groups

- group facilitation skills
- art of asking questions (open-ended and broad, including probing questions)
- creating positive group dynamics
- giving and receiving feedback
- building relationships
- motivating participants
- intercultural communication and dynamics
- conflict resolution

Teaching

- using adult learning principles
- creating trust in the learning environment
- learner-centred approach
- learning theories
- teaching and learning styles
- learning disabilities
- factors that affect learning
- multi-level goal setting, creating resources for use by people working at different levels and delivery of programs to multi-level groups
- general teaching strategies – e.g. teaching reading, writing, math, digital technologies, problem solving, critical thinking
- specific content relevant to courses being taught – strategies, tips, techniques, methods
- developing lesson and/or training plans
- knowledge of provincial/territorial skills levels
- using the Essential Skills framework
- using authentic materials
- assessment and evaluation procedures
- critical self-reflection of practice

New L/ES educators need to develop training plans that show their goals. They need to take training and work with mentors to build their skills in all areas of L/ES.

Competencies for L/ES Workforce in the workplace

Workplace L/ES educators made the point that it is better to come into their field with experience working in L/ES in colleges, school boards or the community. The requirements for workplace educators are broader. A workplace educator needs to be able to complete organizational needs assessments, identify what needs to be done and create programs based on the gaps identified. They need to be able to work with the

different needs of the key players – bosses, supervisors, labour and learners. They need to be able to meet with employees and draw them into their programs. Not all L/ES educators make a successful transition from the community to the workplace because of the lack of structure and the power shift from campus is hard for many. Employers know they are not experts in training and want to hire an expert.

Professional development

Professional development, as defined by the key informants is about acquiring skills that better enable them to do their job, especially addressing areas where they feel a need to acquire new skills or improve existing skills. These skills may be acquired during training or conferences, from mentors or mentoring, from exposure to other people's ideas, reading or research in practice.



“PD should also allow time for participants to get to know each other and share stories so that we have a network of people to discuss issues with outside their own program.”

Some respondents mentioned that it would be good to have longer-term PD that required educators to try out new skills and information and report back on how it had played out. Others mentioned the importance of gearing PD to the different levels of experience possessed by educators. PD is useful if you can use practical information learned back in the classroom. It is also useful if it helps you to broaden knowledge and consider other ideas.

It is clear that there is a need to carefully select and train new educators and provide professional development for existing L/ES educators.

Where possible, interactive PD should be provided that allows for discussion and peer learning. One key informant recommended that L/ES educators deliver corporate training in a workplace learning environment rather than a teaching environment. This would allow L/ES educators in the workplace to get to know

employees and get a sense of workplace environments, so that they could apply what they have learned from those situations to the classroom. Some respondents suggested that CLLN should provide PD across the country if it could be delivered in an interactive manner. Others mentioned the need to reintroduce a professional magazine, such as *Literacies*, that gave educators information about research-in-practice and hot topics in a relevant and timely manner.

Topics that could be covered by professional development

Topics for professional development fall into several categories that include broadening and deepening knowledge and skills to be more effective in delivering programming. Professional development falls into several categories: content specific training, curriculum development, working with multi-level groups and presentation skills; new skills, such as overcoming digital phobias of L/ES educators and incorporating new digital technologies into program delivery; labour market such as becoming more involved/more knowledgeable about provincial and labour market initiatives; dealing with difficult situations such as diffusing conflict through conversation and having those ‘crucial conversations’; self-knowledge and self-care such as personality assessments, time management and achieving balance.

Key informants mentioned a variety of professional development activities that had been useful to them. Cross stream conferences or conferences bringing together people from a specific field such as the provincial Corrections conference. One professional development opportunity that stands out is the Saskatchewan

¹³ © Life Skills can be defined as problem-solving behaviours responsibly and appropriately used in the management of personal affairs. Life Skills lessons focus on five content areas: self, family, community, leisure, and job/school.

NewStart Model of Life Skills⁴³. This training is also offered in Ontario. Many key informants mentioned networking during research, projects, and sitting on committees as being valuable learning experiences.

Mentoring

Key informants all had experience of mentoring, often both as a mentor and mentee. They felt that it was important for L/ES educators, especially those just starting out to be mentored. They talked about the need to consider different ways to implement it, either formally or informally. The idea of having a group of “master teachers” as mentors was discussed. Observations of experienced educators are an important component of mentorship, particularly for new instructors who often feel very isolated. Everyone found the mentoring process to be one that worked well.

Mentoring could relate to all duties or to specific duties such as the first organizational needs assessment, the first initial placement assessment or the first “crucial conversation”.



“My mentor was the first client I had in business. He taught me about the integrity of business.”

Key informants mentioned that mentors could be recruited from other fields, for example L/ES educators may want to consider the value of a mentoring relationship with emerging community leaders.

Keeping up-to-date with current trends and practices

Key informants read relevant print-based texts and access online information through sites such as NIFL, World Education, webinars and NALD at Work

Changes to the content of programs based on external factors.

L/ES educators need to be flexible and responsive to changing programming.

Key informants in Manitoba and Saskatchewan reported changes to the demographics of people entering their programs, stating that the number of immigrants had increased and the demographics were now much younger. Consequently, there is an increased demand to provide English language skills and family literacy programs to the families of immigrants new to the Canadian workplace so that all family members can participate actively and productively in Canadian society.

More programs across the country are fulfilling the need to improve to labour market attachment by shifting the focus of the programming to employability skills. The Workplace Essential Skills program in New Brunswick has been running for several years; it is based on the AWENS curriculum from Nova Scotia. However, it is gradually changing and is being adapted and custom-designed to meet the needs of employees in New Brunswick. Other provinces are looking at opportunities to connect to businesses and deliver programs in the workplace. Having L/ES educators with the competencies to make these changes and deliver quality programs that reflect the changing trends is an important factor in the successful implementation of programming.



Conclusions from Key Informant Interviews

The key informants interviewed for the *Snapshot* were recommended by pivotal individuals in the L/ES field in provinces and territories across Canada. Therefore it is likely that the key informants who were selected have already made a mark at the provincial or territorial level and have already demonstrated key competencies. Many others in the field are not well known outside their own programs. Further study is needed if we are to understand about the competencies of the full range of educators working in the L/ES field.

Overwhelming evidence shows the self-knowledge and reflective practices of the L/ES educators who were interviewed. For the purpose of this *Snapshot* skills were divided into five categories: setting up programs, working with learners, working with groups and teaching. Their skills competencies have been listed above. Competencies in the form of characteristics were identified separately.

No single qualification led to entry to the L/ES workforce. However, qualifications for most key informants included undergraduate degrees and some had masters' degrees. Several key informants believed that L/ES educators should have a B.Ed. However, not all the key informants considered this to be necessary. Everyone considered that it was important to complete courses in adult education. This was the single most common qualification and the one that most L/ES key informants considered to be crucial. Other work experience was seen as a useful requirement for understanding workplace culture. Varied life experience was seen as being valuable when supporting learners.

Although none of the key informants identified any external force exerting pressure on them to improve practice they were all striving for excellence. Critical self-reflection was seen as incredibly important for growth and continued

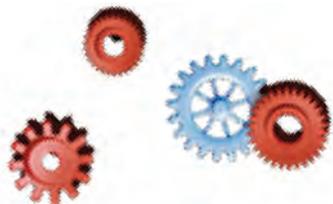
improvement of practice. Improvements in practice evolve from identifying the learners' needs and the best practice to meet those needs.

The key informants interviewed are talented individuals who are dedicated to their work. They have the types of qualifications, skills and behaviours necessary to deliver effective L/ES programs. They exhibit a professionalism that needs to be emulated by all L/ES educators. The over-arching finding from this *Snapshot* is that L/ES educators have their own set of competencies. It would be difficult to identify the province or territory of individual key informants because there was so much similarity in the responses from across Canada. The single thing that separated the responses was the fact that they are working with specific provincial and territorial levels of attainment for their students.

A professional identity emerges from the sum of the key informant interviews. Admittedly, this is a small sample of key informants but the findings have been consistent and the larger CLLN *Labour Market Study* will provide more data. The *Snapshot* revealed that there is a sense of professional identity in the L/ES field which is currently being created on an individual-by-individual basis. How widespread that is among all L/ES educators will be revealed by the broader CLLN *Labour Market Study*.

Missing from the current picture of L/ES educators is the opportunity for a collective sense of professional self. Many key informants remarked on their sense of isolation from others in the field. This makes it difficult for L/ES educators to speak collectively. It also makes it difficult for researchers to gather information that will lead to the development of the field and facilitate delivery of effective L/ES programming.





Linking the Literature Review to the Key Informant Interviews

The literature review identified certain competencies and the key informant interviews confirmed their importance while providing more information about the characteristics, values and professional identity of L/ES educators.

A Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce names the core competencies that our key informants deemed to be essential. These can be useful when developing job descriptions for L/ES educators. The characteristics needed by L/ES educators are seen as part of their core competencies. As part of this *Snapshot* we have collected current samples of job descriptions from the key informants.

There is a need for certain competencies when working in the workplace that are less important in programs in colleges, school boards and community-based programs. An understanding of adult education is crucially important for both types of L/ES programming. The skills listed under competencies for new instructors are the ones that are most needed by L/ES educators. This information comes from the literature review and was confirmed during key informant interviews.

In the future, accreditation may be a consideration. However it would be important to take into account the skills and expertise that L/ES educators develop through life experience and professional practice. Knowledge and skills can be measured in many different ways.

Next Steps

CLLN will respond to the findings gathered in *A Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce*. It will disseminate information about the current L/ES workforce to governments (federal and provincial/territorial), provincial and territorial organizations and other stakeholders. Information from this project will feed into the CLLN Labour Market Survey of Literacy and Essential Skills (L/ES).

CLLN can use the *Snapshot* to examine current competencies and those needed for new staff in order to lay a foundation from which to explore the topic of professionalism and professionalization. It will be an appropriate time to address strategies to prepare new entrants to the field and examine professional development opportunities for current staff.

CLLN will develop responses to the findings by exploring the development of Occupational Standards and NOC profiles for the L/ES workforce. It will provide information for the creation of job descriptions.

A Snapshot of Occupational Task Profiles: Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce will enhance the perception and understanding of the important role of the L/ES workforce. It will raise awareness so that educators can be recognized for their skills and the impact their programs can have on the Canadian workforce and Canada's economic competitiveness.





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