Alberta Reading
BENCHMARKS

Sharing the Journey with Adult Indigenous Learners:
A Teaching Reading Strategies Guide

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Prologue

The Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB) provide another way to categorize individuals within our community who are facing social determinants that affect why they are not at mainstream education's standard. Educational institutions have not been inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and now there is evidence to show that system has not worked with Indigenous populations throughout Canada. Various institutions are now bringing Indigenous people to engage in discussions. This strategies guide is an example of an effort to include Aboriginal people in their own education.

Industry is dictating how educational and essential skills standards are set. More educational emphasis is being directed to Indigenous peoples because of a shift in the population — Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Canada and will become crucial participants in the workforce.

Inequity within systems has always favoured the mainstream while Indigenous communities have endured neglect and yet continued to survive. Governments and citizens have to address inequity in order to do better than the status quo because in the long run it will cost more to ignore social inequities. Poverty is more expensive to everyone because of the cost of services being used by those who don't have the basic necessities of life, including health care and education.

Education is a way out of cycles of poverty in the material sense but we must be cognizant of what is being taught and be culturally attuned to how the Indigenous learner might be able to participate in a system that acknowledges, embraces, and meets their world view and is sensitive to their cultural milieu.

If education and literacy are to be revered within Indigenous communities, they must include the voice of the people they're addressing. If Shakespeare or *Anne of Green Gables* have no intrinsic value to Indigenous people, no true meaning-making processes happen to those who encounter that literature. When we include material that is based on Indigenous people's common experience — that relates to their own lived experience and enhances their organic knowledge — we will see progress in the population of Indigenous learners.

A very important factor in empowering Indigenous learners is to ensure that they are being taught in accordance with article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (See appendix C.)

—Roxanne Blood and Melanie Quinn, 2013

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Introduction

This guide is a teaching companion to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB). It explains the different benchmarks and how certain teaching strategies can be applied to help Indigenous learners with their skills in reading English printed text. It suggests learning activities and outlines possible lesson progressions for levels 1a to 2b which loosely correspond to Grades 1 to 9. The higher ARB levels are not addressed here because they are considered to be above the level of basic adult literacy. Many of the teaching strategies in this guide were contributed by practitioners around Alberta (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who have worked with Indigenous adult learners and have volunteered their time to help compile strategies they've used that are effective with their learners. This guide provides suggestions only. Each practitioner can, of course, use and modify different strategies to address the unique reading skill development needs of the learners s/he works with.

A Note for Context

The Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB) are a series of descriptors meant to provide a system of standards for identifying reading levels. These standards are founded on western and Eurocentric ideals of reading literacy descriptors. There are therefore "bridging challenges" when addressing Indigenous knowledges and teaching English. This guide was developed with the understanding that Eurocentric standards do not correlate with Indigenous standards of literacy. It focuses on suggestions for helping Indigenous learners read "English" text only.

The ARB are *not* intended to be used as an assessment tool and are not meant to replace any strategies that literacy programs already find useful.

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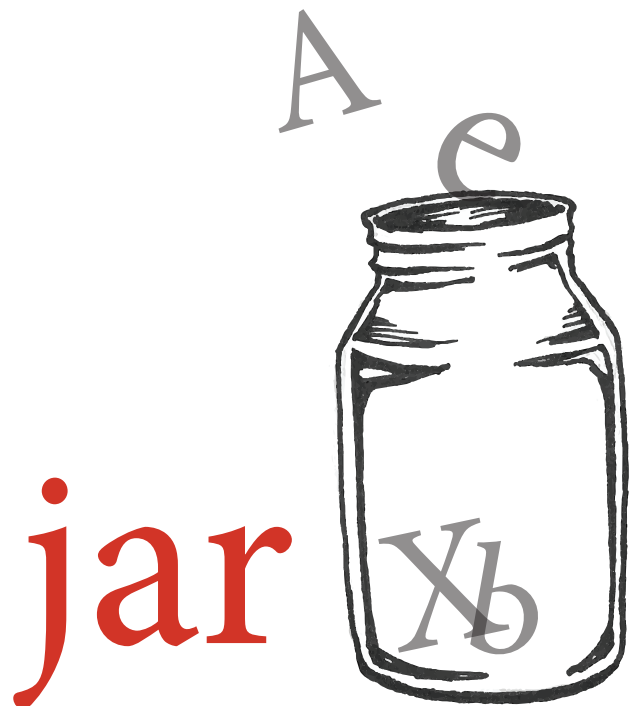
How to Use this Guide

This guide has the following sections:

ARB Background and Context helps practitioners to situate both themselves and the use of the ARB in their practice with Indigenous adult learners. This section of the guide addresses fundamental background information that will particularly help practitioners who are new to working with Indigenous learners and who have not had much exposure to Indigenous learning principles.

Indigenous culture-based practices and principles of learning are presented with the acknowledgement that the philosophies of Indigenous peoples cannot be accurately captured in writing. This section aims to help practitioners understand overarching philosophical considerations and learning principles that should be reflected upon when you work with Indigenous learners. The information has been collected from a wide selection of literature on Indigenous learning principles and literacy practices. There is a list of references at the back of the guide for any practitioners wishing to do further reading.

Teaching Strategies for Indigenous Learners offers some general teaching strategies that respect Indigenous adults and can be modified for any benchmark level. Some of the literacy practitioners who contributed to this guide identified these strategies as effective in motivating readers, regardless of reading level, and helping create a positive learning environment. The overall purpose of these strategies is to encourage learners to become comfortable with reading aloud by combining reading with orality, to have fun with stories, and to help develop a feeling of community among readers and practitioners. Such strategies arise from research that shows how a safe and trusting environment in which to learn is a major factor for successful learning for many Indigenous adult learners (Kreiner 2013; Hauer 2008).

Alberta Reading Benchmarks Level Descriptors explain the types of text, reading tasks, decoding, and vocabulary abilities of readers at each level. These descriptors are general in nature, but experienced practitioners with good program-assessment tools should find it possible to place readers according to the ARB levels.

Appendix A: ARB Task Samples contains examples of the types of tasks learners should be able to do at each ARB level. These tasks have been taken from *Read Forward* (Bow Valley College 2011) tests because they correspond with ARB levels. However because *Read Forward* does not address level 1a, there are no sample tasks for this level.

Appendix B: Teaching Strategies and ARB Levels discusses strategies that correspond to specific ARB levels. Each level has corresponding task examples to help practitioners situate their learners at ARB levels. These strategies originate from the *Teaching Strategies Guide for Alberta Reading Benchmarks* (Roberts 2013) and are *not* specific to working with Indigenous adult learners. Practitioners should apply those teaching strategies that they feel resonate with their learners.

Appendix C is article 14 from the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

References are provided that have influenced this teaching guide's content. These articles and other resources provide more in-depth information about Indigenous literacy, Indigenous literacy programs, and culture-based learning principles.

Reading Resources are also provided at the end of this guide with accompanying ARB levels and general education levels (e.g., Grade 3). This resource list is by no means exhaustive and has been compiled to provide some general resource ideas for various levels. Although all of the resources focus on Indigenous content, some may not be suitable for your students. This is not to say that all learning material must have Indigenous content, but it's a good idea to include some because research indicates the importance of using culturally relevant material in developing healthy world views and self-esteem (Anuik and Ningwakwe 2010; Hampton 1995; Doige 2003). Some readings are Indigenous children's books which may or may not be appropriate for all learners. Unfortunately, there is a limited selection of level 1a-1b reading material with adult Indigenous content. The early literacy material I provide comes with recommendations from literacy practitioners and publishers, but it's up to each practitioner to determine its appropriateness for his or her learners.

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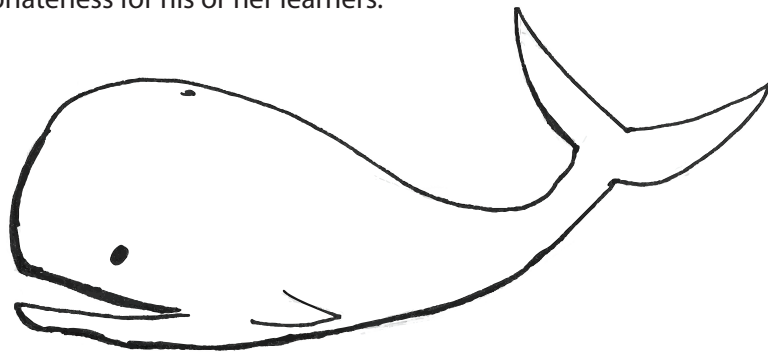
Additional considerations when using Indigenous literature are noted in *Aboriginal Literatures in Canada: A Teacher's Resource Guide*, which advocates contact with authors whenever possible.

> **Teachers are encouraged to teach Aboriginal literature linked to communities close to their school so that contacts can be made more easily. The advice to meet the people is informed by the awareness that:**
>
> ➤ books may reflect an assumed, but not a real expertise;
> ➤ while books simplify, conversations with people show complexities;
> ➤ published literature is only one medium of expression and communication—oral communication exists side by side with the written.

Aboriginal writing is not simple, and it comes from living cultures that are subject to change like any other culture. To hear from Aboriginal authors and "experts" directly without meeting them personally, refer to published interviews or conduct online discussions between the author and the students. Although these methods do not ensure contact with different community voices, they may help avoid misinterpretations of the literature that could perpetuate stereotypes (Eigenbrod, Kakegamic, and Fiddler 2003, 4).

Electronic resources, apps, and devices offer some suggestions for electronic teaching/learning tools that are available. Some websites are free to access, while other suggestions are programs or devices that can be purchased.
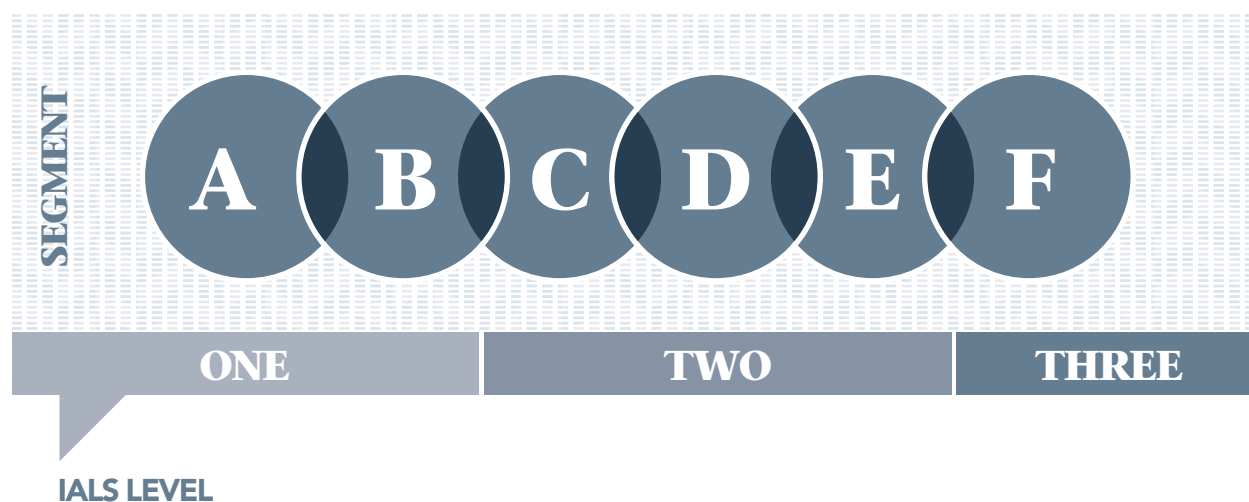
ARB Background and Context for Indigenous Learners

The Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB) tool was developed in response to a series of global changes that needed to be locally responded to. Governments around the world have been making efforts to assess and track adult literacy in order to determine the economic potential of regions and nations. These assessment efforts have all been modelled on Eurocentric ideals of literacy and economic development. The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) reflect adult literacy levels in several countries (according to Eurocentric standards). In response to IALS and PIAAC, the Alberta government sponsored the development of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks so that adult literacy practitioners could situate their learners within a certain literacy skill level or standard so that the practitioner and learner could further develop English reading skills. "It provides information for policy development and consistent ways to report on literacy activity and needs. Having a consistent province-wide reference that identifies reading-skill levels also makes it easier for learners to move from one literacy program to another (in different cities and colleges) and between program levels. The benchmarks are meant to provide a system of standards for identifying reading levels so that people's skills can be recognized by others" (Roberts 2013, 1).

It is hard not to see Western-dominated socioeconomic trends as the drivers of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. Within this context, an inherent assumption around literacy skill development is that learners will be motivated to learn based on economic advancement (i.e., employment). Many literacy programs — by association, through funding requirements, and by using literacy tools and strategies — similarly function on the unspoken assumption that literacy learners are driven by external motivators, such as economic success, in pursuing their goals in reading literacy.

"For many Indigenous learners, learning is a lifelong journey that integrates all aspects of one's being."

These assumptions are incorrect for many learners, particularly learners outside of mainstream (Western Eurocentric) cultural influence. By unravelling and reflecting on some of the driving principles behind the ARB, one begins to notice some tensions in its use and application in Indigenous culture-based literacy programs and with Indigenous learners in mainstream literacy programs. A principle focus of Indigenous education is "learning to be a human being or how to live a life of the utmost spiritual quality" (Manitopeyes qtd. in Doige 2003, 149). This principle is grounded in the idea that learning is an internally motivated process that requires the learner to see learning's value from a multidimensional perspective. Making sense of how learning will enhance one's whole life, one's community, and one's family is as or more important than determining how learning will enhance the development of a skill. In this context, extrinsic motivators, such as economic success, have limited power in motivating learners.

For many Indigenous learners, learning is a lifelong journey that integrates all aspects of one's being (body, mind, spirit, and emotions). Given that authentic learning requires the integration of all levels of being (holistic learning), it is very difficult to separate reading literacy from other aspects of literacy development (writing, numeracy, and digital) and treat it in isolation. To do this is almost counterintuitive to Indigenous culture-based learning principles. This is not to say, however, that the ARB cannot be useful in identifying, building, and strengthening reading skills with Indigenous adult learners. But literacy practitioners need to develop a balance in their approach to working with Indigenous learners and develop teaching strategies that honour the whole student in the context of his or her culture.


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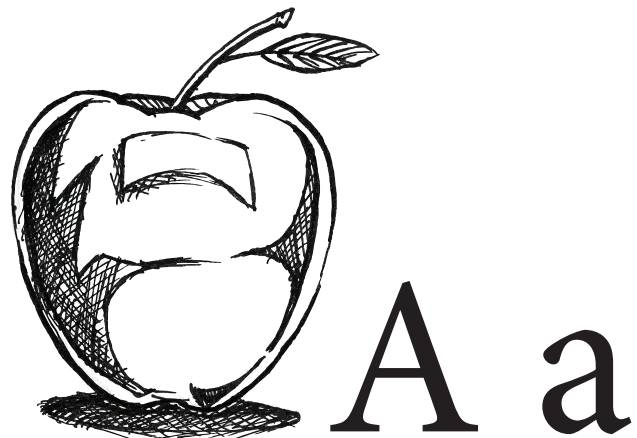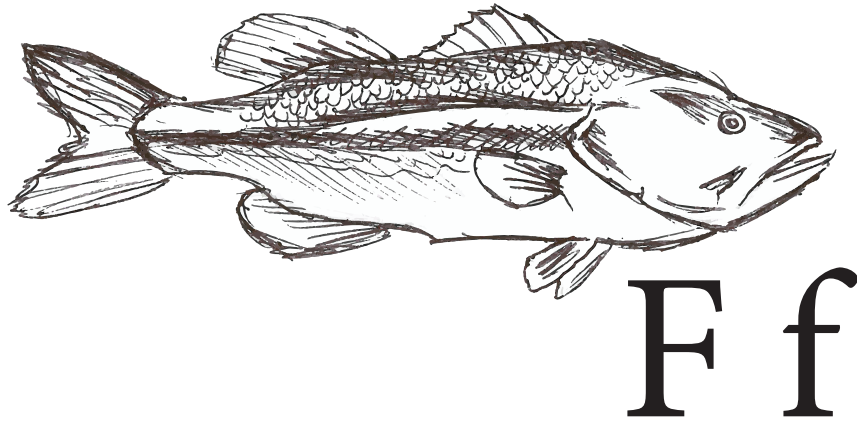
Indigenous Culture-Based Practices and Principles of Learning

Important Philosophical Considerations

While this guide focuses on reading skills, the separation of reading from other forms of knowledge is in fact an artificial division as far as Indigenous culture-based learning principles are concerned. It's also important to remember that the ARB were developed for English-as-first-language speakers. Some or all of the Indigenous adults in a literacy program may be English-as-second-language speakers, which leaves a grey area when applying ARB descriptors to students' abilities. Even if English is the first language spoken by Indigenous students, students' understanding of English comes from a world view that is not English and is often founded on orality. These are considerations that practitioners should keep in mind when using benchmarks to describe student reading abilities.
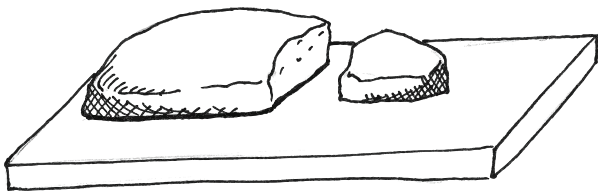
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On a larger scale, "Indigenous literacy" itself is a contested idea, given that knowledge in Indigenous cultures transcends those skills defined by IALS or other non-Indigenous literacy categories. Research in Indigenous education defines "Indigenous literacy" to include Indigenous knowledge that moves through all aspects of life and cannot be coded or assessed in standardized ways (Steeves 2010; McIsaac 2000; Couture 2000; Castellano 2000). This definition leads to a deeper understanding of how standardization and mainstream (Eurocentric) assessment have inaccurately captured individual and collective Indigenous knowledge and ability. Indigenous pedagogy also emphasizes the reciprocal nature of learning, where both the teacher and learner exchange roles throughout the learning journey. As one practitioner noted, "it is when you open the door and ask students to share their knowledge or help others achieve some task that true learning takes place for everyone and trust emerges from this sharing" (my paraphrase).

While a learner may "score" low on an English reading assessment, practitioners need to be aware that the learner's ability to read and interpret the world around him or her may in fact be quite sophisticated. Cultivating this awareness requires practitioners to suspend predetermined values and beliefs about what constitutes "knowledge" and "knowing" based on assessment outcomes. Open dialogue around topics of interest to learners may reveal deep understandings of realities that define learners' lives.

"Imagine what we can be capable of when we are clear in the knowledge that what we know is **valid**."

The knowledge that a family carries might not be the kind of knowledge that is considered meaningful to mainstream society, but put into the context of familial knowledge and passing information down through the generations, it takes on a new and renewed importance for people (Cooper 2006, 61).

For example, a learner might have a familial background involving hunting or trapping. This learner will have developed strong skills in reading signs in the environment and how those signs relate to animal patterns of movement in an area, changes in weather, environmental changes, etc. This strength creates an opening for working together on reading skill development by providing meaningful contexts for reading material, while also offering a place where learners can walk beside practitioners in the learning journey, sharing their knowledge and having this knowledge valued. As Nancy Cooper puts it, "imagine what we can be capable of when we are clear in the knowledge that what we know is valid; that what we bring to the table is listened to and respected by others" (Cooper 2006, 31-32).

Practices and Principles of Learning

Many practitioners in Indigenous literacy programs (George 2003; Paulsen 2003; Battiste 1986; Doige 2003; Kawalilak 2011; Antone, Gamlin, and Provost-Turchetti 2003) emphasize the need to:

➤ respect, accept, and integrate Indigenous epistemology as a basis for learning. "Situating Indigenous people within epistemological and ontological space is imperative; Indigenous literacies are not necessarily based on the written word. It is a world view primarily of orality" (Blood and Quinn, personal communication).

➤ establish relationships with learners to create a safe environment that reflects respect and a healthy community (Doige 2003).

➤ encourage authentic learning experiences through open dialogue and facilitating "real" experiences, not hypothetical or irrelevant experiences.

➤ maintain an understanding that an oral tradition is the foundation of all traditions and is woven into the fabric of Indigenous cultures (Blood and Quinn, personal communication).

➤ help students understand and overcome barriers that may affect individual or collective learning by including social healing in the literacy program work (this should be approached through consultation with and inclusion of cultural professionals in the community).

In keeping with authentic dialogue, it is important to remember that, depending on the cultural background of Indigenous learners, verbal and non-verbal communication cues can differ from non-Indigenous communication cues (Philips 1983). It is critical that practitioners are observant and respectful of these differences in order to maintain open and effective learning communication. If you, as a practitioner, are unsure about why some teaching strategies are not working, your communication style may be a barrier.

In general, Indigenous learners perceive learning differently from non-Indigenous learners. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (2012) has identified key principles of learning that apply to Indigenous learners of all ages. These principles say that:

Learning ultimately supports well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations. (8)

Teaching Strategies for Indigenous Learners

An open-door policy for elders to come into the classroom to learn with the rest of students ensures that learning is authentic to Indigenous world views. If an elder wishes to teach, it should be welcomed. This ensures the sharing of authentic, raw knowledge as learning unfolds (Blood and Quinn, personal communication, 2013).

Because many practitioners working with Indigenous learners develop strategies that have evolved to address the needs of specific individuals or groups, a lot of the strategies here should be thought of as emergent rather than as a prescriptive approach. The strategies represent an overview of ideas that practitioners find effective when working with Indigenous literacy learners in Indigenous territories around Alberta and they are generally focused on experiential approaches to teaching/learning. These methods can be modified and used when approaching the development of any reading level. Some of the group-based teaching strategies may be more appropriate in Indigenous literacy programs, while others may be adapted for mixed literacy programs (that include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students).

Personal stories help encourage learners to develop their reading skills from a place of strength. Oral communication is often a more comfortable place for learners than text is. How the sharing is done—one to one or in groups—should be negotiated with learners. Each story should be recorded and scribed, either by a practitioner or volunteer so that the learner has a written visual copy of his or her story.
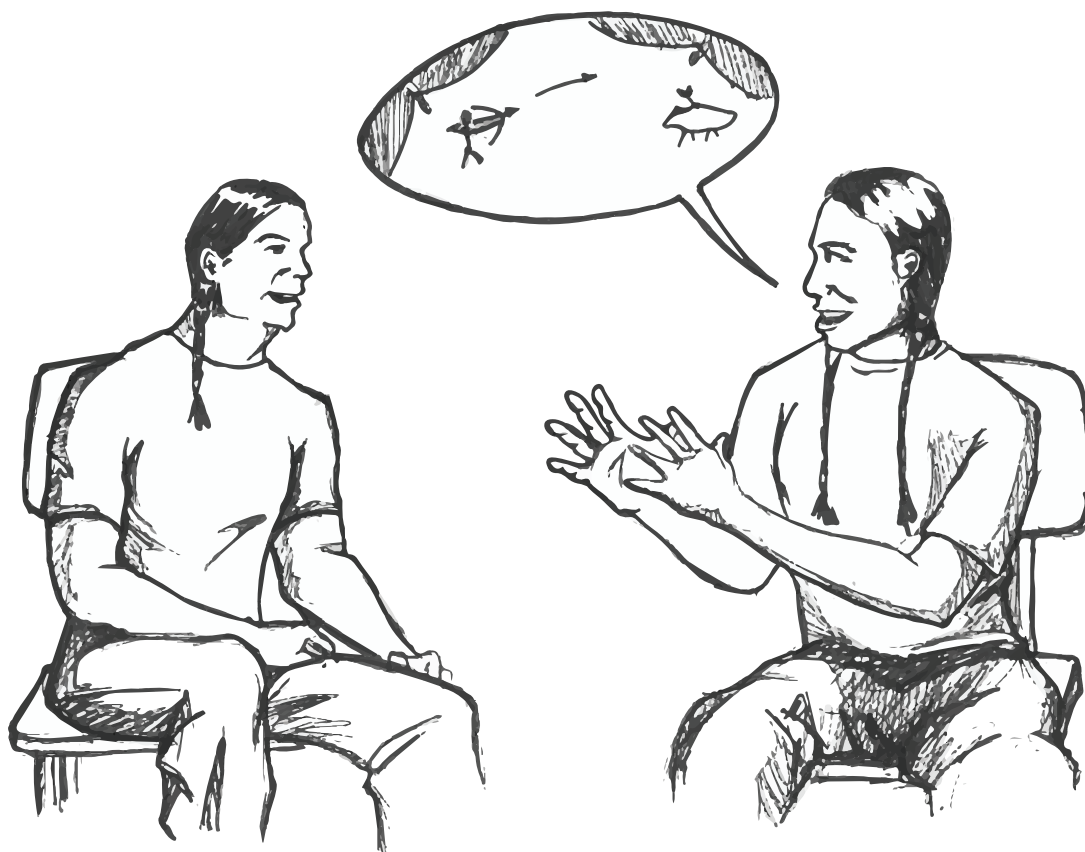
➤ For strengthening a learner's vocabulary the learner should have an active role in identifying words that are meaningful to him or her. For example, when starting a program, a student could be encouraged to tell a story one-on-one with the practitioner about a topic the learner identifies with (e.g., family, community, a funny incident, or children). The practitioner will help the learner transcribe the story and create a word ring (see appendix B, ARB level 1a "Vocabulary Building").

➤ Engaging learners in sharing a story about "what brought you to the program" or sharing their goals around learning English reading skills is sometimes a good place to start. This topic helps centre learners in what motivates them and what drives them in their learning. (Stories that come out of these discussions can be recorded and revisited at times when the learner might feel overwhelmed or frustrated to help revitalize the learner's motivation.)

➤ By using words and/or content from these initial stories as the starting point of vocabulary acquisition, sentence development, or more complex reading, the learning experience becomes relevant for learners. Words from these stories can be used by learners to create a word ring or word bank (see level 1b, appendix B).

➤ This initial approach also helps practitioners identify the learner's interests, which will help guide them in their choices of relevant reading material.

➤ Having a learner tell their own story also builds the learner's sense of empowerment with their literacy skills and learning capacity.

Readers Theatre has been identified as a motivational exercise for readers of all reading levels. By participating in reading, action, visualization, and character development, readers become more engaged in the content and hence more willing to take risks and have fun with reading.

➤ Almost any short story or excerpt from a novel can be adapted for Readers Theatre. There are suggestions for Readers Theatre scripts in the resources section of this guide that have an Indigenous origin, but some require a subscription to a website for access. Practitioners say that they often adapt a legend or story of local origin and create a script that students can work from (often with the students' help).

➤ Be sure to introduce new vocabulary that students will encounter in the story prior to reading aloud (phonics exercises, cloze exercises, and vocabulary practice).

➤ For reluctant readers, practise their roles one-on-one until they feel confident with pronunciations and characterization. This can be done with practitioners, reading assistants, or peers (depending on the students' level of comfort).

➤ As a group, practise reading lines and stage directions until everyone is comfortable with their roles.

➤ Encourage students to physically act out their roles, and create costumes and sets where possible.

➤ The Northwest Territories Literacy Council has a helpful "how to" on supporting learners in Readers Theatre (see http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/theatre/theatre.pdf).

Storytelling circles are an excellent way to create an atmosphere of sharing and safety. Although storytelling is not "reading," orality is a very important part of Indigenous culture and establishes a sense of community.
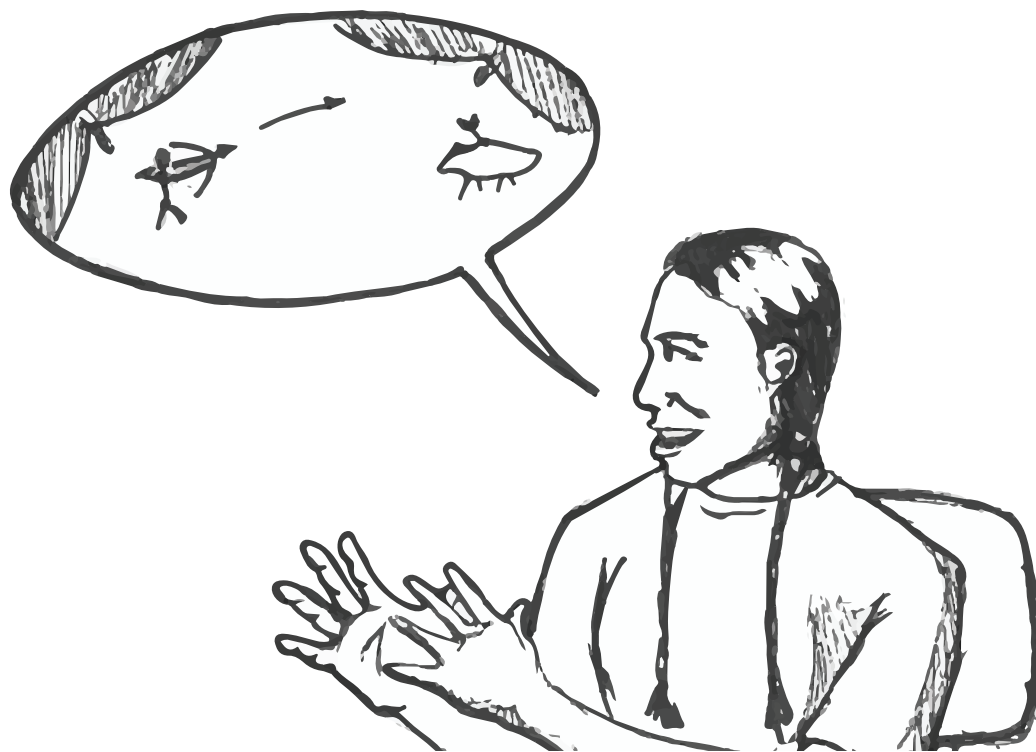
➤ Prior to introducing the idea of storytelling circles, practitioners want to ensure that students feel comfortable with one another. One practitioner noted that storytelling circles were introduced after about the third month of students learning together. The practitioner knew it was time when students stood together during breaks sharing stories and laughing. One benefit of such sharing was described by a student who said: "I have lived with these guys my whole life (on the reserve) but never really got to know them as people. Sharing stories and laughing together has let me see each person here and I feel way more connected to my community now" (my paraphrase).

➤ Make sure that each student knows he or she can "pass." No one has to speak if they have nothing to share at the time.

➤ Stories can include local legends and myths, personal experiences, songs, or fictional stories.

➤ Set boundaries around appropriateness so that all students understand the expectations around equity, respect, and safety.

➤ An additional exercise is to record some of the stories (with students' permission) and transcribe them to create a book. Students can illustrate the stories and edit them. They can then share this book with children, family, and friends.

Inviting elders to participate in storytelling events will help engage many Indigenous learners. Practitioners should request guidance from Indigenous learners or the Indigenous community to determine who would be appropriate guests and what protocol is appropriate for inviting an elder to share his or her stories and knowledge with the group. Often an honorarium or other protocol for an elder is appropriate and should be determined with the help of the elder's community.

Independent projects provide a meaningful point of entry to reading for some learners who are empowered to engage in a topic or issue that's important to them.

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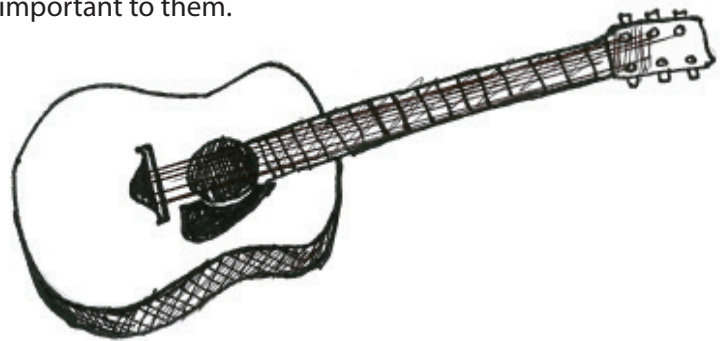
➤ Practitioners dialogue with learners to discover their interests. From these interests, a topic for research may emerge. The practitioner and learner can then brainstorm how to research this topic—that is, using the computer, library, local documents, maps, charts, or interviews with community members, etc.

➤ Depending on the learner's reading skills, practitioner guidance may be needed to decide on accessible Internet sites or other printed documents.

Modelling involves practitioners showing how something is done, perhaps a number of times, to prepare learners to try the skill themselves.

➤ Often learners are more comfortable watching and hearing someone do something before they are ready to try it. Observing a skill performed before trying it themselves can help to build learners' confidence.

➤ Modelling how to scan for information, how to figure out the meaning of a word using context clues, how to use a dictionary, or how to search for information on the Internet are some practices that can develop reading skills.

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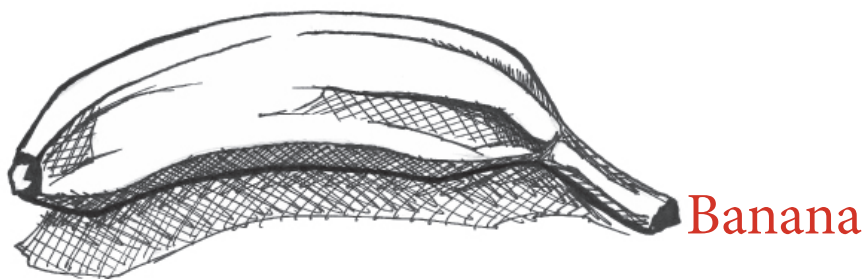
Visualization helps learners "see" ideas, themes, and concepts they encounter in the written world.

➤ Visualization encourages learners to draw the meaning of things they read in order to add another dimension to their understanding. These drawings can be about fictional information, or directions for how to do something (e.g., change oil in a car).

➤ Visualization helps with vocabulary development as learners draw what a word means to them. Creating a picture in one's mind is a powerful tool in learning and memorization.

Oral reading is a powerful approach to developing a connection between the written word and making meaning for the learner. Connecting words on a page to an oral message that's of some interest to a learner helps her or him develop a context for why reading skills are useful.

➤ The practitioner may read to learners for a while (modelling) until learners feel confident to try reading out loud.

➤ This practice is often best done one-on-one with a practitioner at the beginning to help learners build confidence.

➤ Over time, reading circles may emerge where learners sit in groups and read aloud to each other. Practitioners often note that learners are really supportive of each other and help one another decode words. Discussion around the content emerges from these circles and some very profound teaching/learning moments evolve with learners.

Community projects can provide an opportunity for students to engage in their community and enhance their literacy skills. Projects should focus on benefiting the community at large and can range from a community barbecue to raising awareness about the literacy program, collaborating with other groups to organize a community clean-up project, or larger ideas that involve multilevel support and participation in the community (e.g., organizing the development of a youth, family, or sports program).

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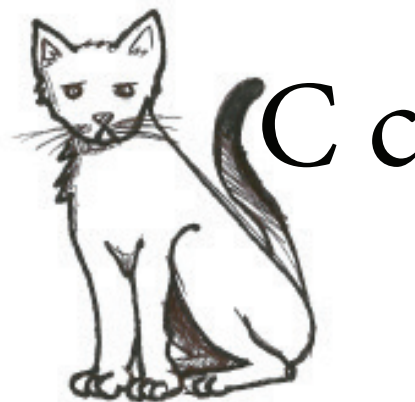
➤ Practitioners are advised to listen carefully to learners when considering developing a learning program that focuses on a project to benefit the community. You want to make sure that the project is meaningful to students and is actually generated by them.

➤ These types of projects should include all reading levels because each learner can contribute different skills while also learning new ones.

➤ As the project evolves, it is best if practitioners can step back from the process, acting more in an advisory/support role and allowing learners to take lead positions and make decisions. This type of project empowers learners and lets them direct their own learning in areas they feel are important. Inevitably, literacy will be enhanced through all learners' participation.

Community engagement is important to practitioners working with Indigenous adults. Inviting members of the Indigenous community to share knowledge and skills with learners helps make learning relevant. Asking learners for ideas both about what they want to learn and who they want to invite opens the doors to an equitable and interactive learning/teaching environment.

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➤ Some examples of this sharing include: craft circles with either women or men or both, depending on the type of craft and the community member's interests; nature walks, including talks on plant use and/or animal tracking; music; cooking/canning; and storytelling.

➤ Any event can be coupled with encouraging reading skill development for all levels of readers. For example, after workshops or presentation, learners can be encouraged to research a topic related to the experience, or create word cards for concepts they've learned.

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My Story of Community Project Work and Engagement

After I'd been working a few months in an Indigenous adult upgrading program on a small reserve in Alberta, our program had created an environment where students began to feel safe to voice concerns and problems in their lives that extended beyond "literacy." I felt it was really important to let these moments of frustration happen, but I also felt it was important to open the door to collectively brainstorm possible solutions. During these brainstorming sessions, I asked "if you could get community support, what would you do that would benefit this community most?" Almost unanimously they identified having a youth program as a top concern—a place where young residents (twelve to twenty-five years old) could have a place to go and feel safe, to share art and music, to eat, or just hang out.

After so many disappointments and broken promises in their lives, it was crucial that I did my homework before suggesting we move this idea to the realm of reality in the community. I spoke with other agencies on the reserve and got a solid commitment from two that could help us apply for funding to support the project. As a group, we researched other youth programs. We visited a successful program in a town close by and also had two speakers come in from other reserves who had developed programs in their communities to provide ideas and warn us of the pitfalls and challenges ahead.

As a group, we learned how to write an application for funding to the government; we developed a budget and activity and volunteer schedules. We partnered with another program on the reserve to renovate the church basement and share the space between programs. These activities built on learners' reading, writing, and math skills and empowered them to make positive changes in their community. Students solicited donations by composing and printing flyers explaining the project, and local ranchers, businesses, and programs donated sports equipment, musical instruments, furniture, and other support. Once this project got rolling, one of the agencies on the reserve helped maintain it and it is still operating four years later, with one of our literacy students employed by the program. This project had tremendous learning opportunities for every skill level in our program and produced empowering and catalytic energies as learners moved forward to gain agencies' support in developing a tournament-quality baseball diamond and adjacent playground area.

Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB)

The ARB explain the types of text, reading tasks, decoding, and vocabulary abilities of readers at each level. These descriptors are general in nature, but experienced practitioners with good program-assessment tools should find it possible to place readers according to the ARB levels.

Level 1a Descriptors

Level 1a represents a very early English literacy level.

Types of Texts

Readers at this level are characterized by the ability to read very simple single-syllable words that are common to everyday life (e.g., *exit, open, stop, sign, hair, name*). Level 1a readers may be able to identify letters of the alphabet and corresponding sounds of those letters.

Types of Reading Tasks

Combinations of words, even very simple ones, are usually beyond this reader's abilities.

Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

Level 1a readers have little or no decoding ability and struggle to sound out most words. Vocabulary is limited to very common simple words.

General Suggestions for Skill Development

To encourage level 1a readers to learn words and sounds, it's helpful to encourage them to tell a story from their own lives. These stories can be recorded and transcribed with words from them isolated for learning. By using words from these initial stories as the starting point of vocabulary acquisition, the learning experience becomes relevant for learners.

Level 1b Descriptors

Level 1b describes a reader with minimal English reading skills who can perform more complex word associations than someone at level 1a. (Please see appendix A for task samples for level 1b)

Types of Texts

A reader at this level is able to read simple texts of short length and familiar content (e.g., a shopping list, a simple menu with prices, simple forms like band registration or driver's license application, flyer ads, and simple advertisements). The content generally contains information directly related to the task (e.g., choosing a meal on a basic menu, associating a sale item with a price and location).

Types of Reading Tasks

Level 1b readers can focus on words rather than phrases or sentences. For example, in a task that asks the reader to read the sentence "The boy lives in Slave Lake" and identify where the boy lives, the reader can identify "Slave Lake" as the location.

These readers can identify common concrete words (e.g., *car, doctor, house, street, apples, meat*).

They are able to recognize formats in order to locate specific information, such as finding a telephone number on a form or an address on an envelope.

They can match word for word what is written in a text, for example, answering the

question "When is the meeting?" based on a text that states "Meeting: April 22, at 3:00 PM."

Level 1b readers are able to deal with reading tasks that involve simple comparisons, such as a task that asks the reader to identify the most expensive and cheapest of two items.

Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

Level 1b readers can usually decode simple words that are easy to sound out (i.e., phonetically simple). Reading vocabulary usually consists of simple concrete nouns and simple action verbs that are one and two syllables in length (e.g., *dog, pay, table, run, eat, walked, pencil, grandma*).

Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB)

Level 1c Descriptors

Level 1c readers are at a basic level of literacy and are generally able to read longer texts (simple syntax several sentences long) and search for simple/common words in a text or choose an appropriate answer given several clear choices. (See appendix A for task samples at level 1c)

Types of Texts

Readers at a level 1c can read lists similar to those of readers at level 1b, but longer. They can comprehend a text with simple sentences that is several sentences long. The range of text topics is generally limited to familiar ones. Level 1c readers can also read simple forms that require them to fill out personal information (e.g., registration forms, application forms).

Types of Reading Tasks

Level 1c readers are able to search simple text to identify simple and common words (e.g., *salt, school, amount, total, address*). Readers can choose a correct answer from several choices. For example, when asked to identify who is driving the car after reading a text about it, the reader can identify the correct person out of two or three names in the text, only one of whom is the driver.

They are able to fill out forms that require name, telephone number, and personal address.

They are able to choose the appropriate answer based on understanding the meaning of a word rather than relying on familiarity with a format to guess at what's required, for example, filling out a registration form that asks the parent's name before the child's name.

Level 1c readers can perform comparisons in tasks that ask for the first/last or most/least measured item in a text that provides information comparing three or more items.

Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

Level 1c readers can decode common words such as *parent, tomorrow, please, washroom*. Their reading vocabulary includes some three-syllable words. They have moderate decoding skills and are able to sound out words of up to two syllables that follow common spelling/sound relationships.

Level 2a Descriptors

Level 2a readers are able to read texts that are more than one paragraph in length and may contain more distracting formatting (subheadings) and visuals (graphs). (See appendix A for task samples of level 2a.)

Types of Texts

At this level readers are competent with somewhat longer and more complex sentences than at level 1c. Sentences may contain more than one clause, and an entire text may be several short paragraphs in length. For example, they can typically read work memos, simple operating instructions, health brochures, flyers, and classified notices on the Internet or in newspapers.

Types of Reading Tasks

Level 2a readers are able to cycle through multiple pieces of information to find the information they require. Cycling means the reader has to read through the text more than once to locate information and integrate it to make meaning. For example, they have to answer the question "List two skills Joe has" in an article that describes Joe at work.

Readers can also work through more complex comparisons between items or people in a text (for example, if asked to "identify the cheapest runners made by Runner" within an advertisement listing several runners made by Runner and other shoe companies).

Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

Level 2a decoding skills are strong enough to orally sound out most words a reader is familiar with. Reading vocabulary consists of more complex and longer words (e.g., *transportation, advertisement, application*).

Level 2b Descriptors

Level 2b readers have developed a stronger independence in their ability to decode unfamiliar words and in completing complex reading tasks than Level 2a readers. (See appendix A for task samples at level 2b).

Types of Texts

Readers are able to manage longer texts (up to 500 words in length) that have a more complex level of vocabulary and organization than level 2a readers. Texts may contain synonyms and include more information than is necessary to complete a task.

Types of Reading Tasks

2b readers can find designated pieces of information from a text while being provided with multiple pieces of information. This requires an ability to decide what information is relevant and which information should be ignored. For example, in an article that describes common ailments and home remedies, they can locate information about how to treat the common cold. Readers are also able to use text format to find required information — titles, headings, subheadings, and inset captions — to find required information. For example, in a university calendar readers can use subheadings to locate information on how long it takes to complete a bachelor's degree.

Readers are also able to state in the negative, for example, when asked "Who will not be at the meeting?"

These readers have the capacity to become involved in more complex searches for information that require organizing information from several parts of a text. Information may not be stated directly, but may require the reader to make judgments or inferences based on what information is provided. This skill requires students to "read between the lines" in order to answer questions or complete an idea.

Decoding Skills and Vocabulary

2b readers have well-developed decoding skills and can sound out most words. Reading vocabulary includes some abstract words such as: *convenient, insist, prefer, flexibility*.

Level 1a
There are no samples available for 1a because *Read Forward* does not address this level in the test series.

LEVEL 1b

Types of text samples

▶ *Circle the word that matches the picture.*

1 book   tell   piano   bell

2 star   moon   salt   guitar

3 other   map   mother   uncle

JOB SEARCH

F/T RECEPTIONIST

For a busy dermatology clinic. Experience preferred. Must have excellent telephone manners. Fax resume to 403-716-7123.

COOKS NEEDED

Min. one year experience. 40 hrs/wk $13.25/hr. Days or nights available. Apply in person at 34 Eastside Ave. S.E.

CALL TODAY!

Apprentice trainee HVAC. $2600 guaranteed + bonuses. Immediate openings F/T. Email resume to mike@hvacsystems.ca

GAS ATTENDANTS

P/T day shifts. Cashier experience an asset. Start immediately. Inquire at 403-949-3222.

Use the Job Search ad to answer the following questions.

1. Which job has part-time (P/T) positions?

   _____

2. Which job pays $13.25 an hour?

   _____

3. Which position requires that the resumes be faxed?

   _____

LEVEL 1C

Types of text samples

▶ *Follow the directions.*

4 Circle the best before date for chocolate milk.

BEST BEFORE
JULY 03 (2013) »

CHOCOLATE MILK

BEST BEFORE
JULY 12 (2013) »

SKIM MILK

5 Write your name on the luggage tag.

Adventure Bus Lines
LUGGAGE TAG

FROM: Sudbury

TO: Thunder Bay

NAME:

TAG #34
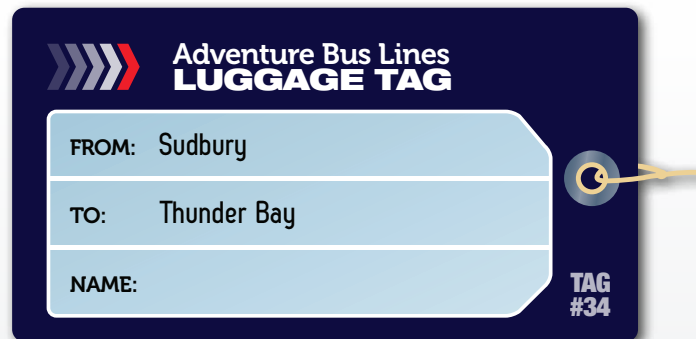
6 Which apartment costs the most? _____

FOR RENT	FOR RENT
Riverview Apartment – Downtown Edmonton $950 per month Call 780-435-9877	**Hillside Apartment – South Edmonton** $1000 per month Call 780-432-6747

LEVEL 1C   Types of reading task samples

Use the Bank Statement to answer the following questions.

1. How much is the bank service fee for October?

   _____

2. What is the opening balance on this statement?

   _____

3. What transaction happened on October 27?

   _____

DBC **Bank Statement**

Branch Number	Account Number	Account Type	Opening Balance
31240	321-56782	Joint chequing	847.27

Date	Transactions	Withdrawal	Deposit	Balance
Oct 24-11	Great Hair Design	20.80		826.47
Oct 26-11	Sandwich Hut	10.27		816.20
Oct 27-11	Econo Mortgage	254.18		562.02
Oct 28-11	Bank Machine Withdrawal	21.50		540.52
Oct 29-11	Universal Child Care Benefit		200.00	740.52
Oct 30-11	Cable X3L6A8	111.20		629.32
Oct 30-11	Phone X3L6H1	26.66		602.66
Oct 30-11	Gasel Energy X3L6B3	261.27		341.39
Oct 31-11	Hargita Express Pay		680.66	1022.05
Oct 31-11	Bank Service Fee	24.95		997.10

Use the What is Influenza? information to answer the following questions.

16. Name the three body parts through which the influenza virus can enter the body.

    _____

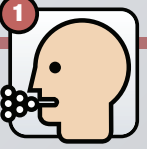17. When is the best time to get the influenza vaccine?

    _____

18. Besides getting immunized, what else can you do to prevent getting influenza?

    _____

WHAT IS INFLUENZA?

A GUIDE TO PREVENTION

1. How it affects the body
Influenza is an infection of the lungs and airways caused by a virus. The influenza virus passes from person to person by droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. It can enter the body through the eyes, nose or mouth.

2. How to protect yourself
The number one thing you can do is to get immunized. The best time to be immunized against the influenza virus is during October to November, just before the influenza season starts, because it takes 2 weeks for the vaccine to become effective.

Next to immunization, the single most important way to prevent influenza is frequent hand washing. Regular soap and water or alcohol hand rubs are the most effective ways to wash hands and prevent the spread of infection.

OCT - NOV

LEVEL 2a

Types of texts and reading task samples

Use the Repair instructions to answer the following questions.

1. How should CDs or DVDs be stored?

   _____

2. What product removes grease?

   _____

3. How do you dry the disc?

   _____

HOW TO REPAIR
a Scratched CD or DVD

CDs and DVDs are very sensitive to storing and handling. Since even a little dust can scratch the surface of the disc, they are best stored in a case or a holder. A protective covering will minimize smudges, scratches and spots but even with such precautions, some damage to discs is inevitable.

Here are a few steps to follow to get scratched discs back into working properly again:

1 Clean the disc with warm water to remove dust.

2 Use a liquid soap to gently rub off stubborn grease. LIQUID SOAP

3 Polish the disc with a small amount of toothpaste (but not gel) applied to a soft, clean, lint-free cloth. TOOTHPASTE

4 Rinse the disc thoroughly with warm water to remove polishing product from disc and let it air dry.

5 If polishing doesn't work, wax the disc with a very thin coat of Vaseline. VASELINE

Use the Pay Stub to answer the following questions.

4. What is another name for a pay stub?

   _____

5. What is the pay period of this pay stub?

   _____

6. What is the net pay on this pay stub?

   _____

Statement of Earnings (Pay Stub)

Employee Name	Employee Number	Employer Number	Pay Period
Hye won Kim	0052374	15-27	2012/08/16 - 2012/08/31

Earnings					Employee Deductions		
Type	Hours	Rate	Amount	Y.T.D.	Type	Current	Y.T.D.
Regular basic pay	40	11.00/hr	440.00	880.00	Federal tax	68.20	136.40
					EI	7.92	15.84
					CPP	15.20	30.40
					LTD	8.35	16.70

Summary	Gross Pay	Deductions	Net Pay	Paid By
Current	440.00	99.67	340.33	Cheque

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LEVEL 2b

Types of texts and reading task samples

Use the Roof Repair Procedure information to answer the following questions.

1. What are two reasons to avoid working on rainy days?

   _____

   _____

2. Why is it suggested to wear flat-soled shoes when on your roof?

   _____

3. To repair shingles you may have to replace nails. What do you need to put on the tops of the nails?

   _____

Roof Repair Procedure

Leaks and broken shingles are common problems with roofs. With a little work, these problems can be fixed and you can avoid having to replace the entire thing. To get started, choose to look at your roof on a sunny day, as the rain can make it slippery. Then follow the tips below:

1. Check for any rotten areas and walk carefully, using flat-soled shoes. This will keep the roof in good condition.

2. Search for any cracks or holes in the roof and mark the spots.

3. Check out all the vents and other features of the roof. If you find any trouble spots, they will need to be repaired.

4. It is important to find and mark any water marks and the origin of all leaks. Repair any leaks you find and remove any nearby vents. Clean up any dirt and water around the leaky areas.

5. Replace any vents you have detached and put cement into any holes still remaining. Do not work on a rainy day as the cement will take too long to dry.

6. It is important to repair any leaks that appear in the shingles. Roll up the sides of the shingle and put cement over the leaky area. You may have to remove and replace some of the nails. Put cement over the tops of them.

7. Try to work on a mild day because cold weather makes the shingles crack or split.

Use the Upcoming Community Events listings to answer the following questions.

4. How much will three months of yoga cost?

   _____

5. Where do most of the events take place?

   _____

6. How can you find out when the blood donor clinic will be held?

   _____

Upcoming Community Events

BLOOD DONOR CLINIC
LOCATION   At the Town Social Centre
WHEN   Times to be announced or call 780-632-3100 for more details.

FARM & HOME SHOW
LOCATION   Exhibition Grounds
WHEN   April 6th, 7th, & 8th. Friday, April 6th: 3-9pm, Saturday & Sunday, April 7th and 8th: noon-9pm
CONTACT: RUSSELL AT 780-232-0932. Come and see what's new for your homes and for your farms. Entrance fee: $5.00. Displays will include housing and renovation supplies, gardening equipment, and small farming equipment. Displays will have items for sale and prices will vary.

FAITHFUL YOGA
LOCATION   Community Church
WHEN   Thursdays, September – November. 7:00 p.m. (90 minute classes)
CONTACT: VERA. Faithful Yoga offers you low impact yoga along with meditation. Each class takes you through a series of poses where you will find inner peace, flexibility, balance and strength! You will exercise your body and your mind. $110.00 for three months. For registration and information contact Vera at 780-345-3156

FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND SHOW'N'SHINE
LOCATION   Exhibition Grounds
WHEN   June 21st and 22nd, noon-4pm
Come out to our annual Father's Day Weekend Show 'n Shine event. Whether you drive your antique car here for display or just come to look, you will have a great afternoon. In addition to seeing all the antique cars that are around town, we will also have displays of antique toy cars and trucks. Contact the Town Exhibition Society at 780-321-1810 for more details. Note that if you plan to bring your antique toys to display, or drive your antique car, you must register ahead of time.

Appendix B: Specific Strategies for Teaching Reading Skills to the General Population

These strategies are provided as suggestions for literacy practitioners to adopt as starting points in their work with adult learners in general. They are by no means meant to be prescriptive. When working with individuals, practitioners develop their own awareness of what methods do or don't resonate with learners. By adhering to basic Indigenous teaching and learning principles addressed in the early parts of this guide, practitioners will become adept at noticing when ideas are engaging learners and encouraging skill development, and how to modify ideas to make them meaningful and relevant for learners.

Most of the strategies rely on *Teaching Strategies for the Alberta Reading Benchmarks* by Cari-Ann Roberts (2013) which I've modified slightly for this guide.

**Level 1a Readers**

Alphabet and Sound Letter Correspondence

➤ Use alphabet cards for these activities. Cards can be store bought, but creating them as a learner group activity may be more meaningful for participants. Cards should include both lower-case and upper-case samples of each letter, common blends such as *sh, ch, er,* and *ar,* and vowel pairs such as *ea, ee,* and *ai*.

➤ If possible, have students work in pairs or groups calling out letter sounds or letter names and finding the corresponding card. Start by using familiar letters and blends and then add complexity by adding more letters as learners become more confident and comfortable.

To increase difficulty:

➤ Add additional letters in different fonts. For example G, g, **g**, *G*.

➤ Use letter cards and corresponding picture cards and have learners match. For example: the **Dd** card matches a card with a picture of a dog. The simpler and cleaner the image the better.

D, d, **d**, *D*
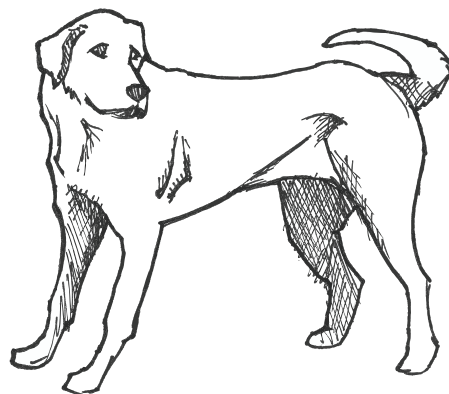
When working with individuals, practitioners develop their own awareness of what methods do or don't resonate with learners.

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Alphabetization

➤ Provide a model alphabet for initial reference.

➤ Use a set of alphabet cards (all one case).

➤ How you choose to approach practice depends on the learner's confidence and knowledge of letters. Some possible suggestions, which can be done individually or in groups or pairs, include:

▶ Giving the learner(s) the first third of the alphabet scrambled. The learner(s) puts them in order. Then give the learner(s) the next third, then the final letters.

▶ Giving the learner(s) all of the scrambled letters to put in order.

▶ Giving the learner(s) only some letters randomly to put in order (e.g., *b, g, k, r, i, n, u, w*). Once s/he has put these in order with spaces left in between, give another random group of letters to fill in the spaces, and then another group, until the alphabet is complete and in sequence.

To increase difficulty:

➤ Use a set of simple, single-syllable word cards instead of alphabet cards. Make sure no two words start with the same letter. Have learners place these words in alphabetical order based on the first letter of each word (for example: *dog, rat, mole*).

A B C D
E F G H
I J K L
M N O P
Q R S T
U V W X
Y Z

Vocabulary Building

Word Ring

A word ring is a collection of flashcards that are hole-punched and put on a ring. They can be large cards or cut into small pieces to fit in a pocket, pouch, or purse. Words included on a word ring can be chosen based on frequency of use, importance, and relevance to the learner.

➤ For strengthening a learner's vocabulary it's best if the learner has an active role in identifying words that are meaningful to him or her. For example, when starting a program, a student could be encouraged to tell a story one-on-one with the practitioner about a topic s/he identifies with (e.g., family, community, a funny incident, children). From this story, the practitioner will help the learner transcribe the story and create a word ring.

➤ The learner can be encouraged to read words on the word ring daily.

➤ Add new words as they arise and the learner expresses an interest in learning how to read certain words.

➤ When the learner reads a word without hesitation, place a check mark on the back of the card. When a card has ten check marks, the word can be removed from the ring and stored for future review.
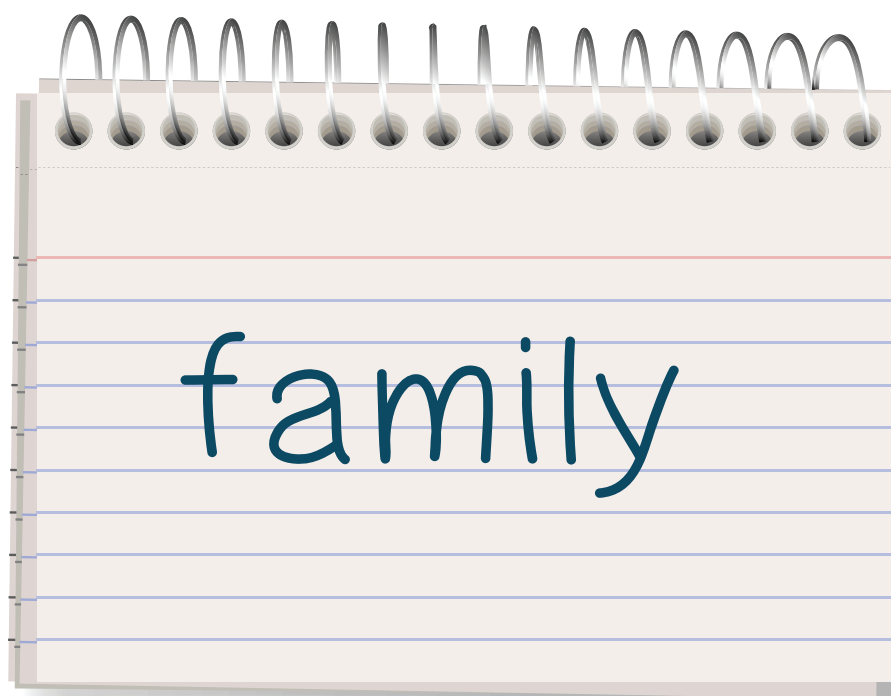
family

Words included on a word ring can be chosen based on frequency of use, importance, and relevance to the learner.

Labelling

Labelling involves writing the names of common items on slips of paper and asking the learner to place the piece of paper on the corresponding object. For example, the word *door* placed by a door, the word pencil placed by a *pencil*, etc. The same can be done with details in a picture (*cat, car, tree,* etc.).

➤ This practice can be used to complement word-ring practice, either by using words on the word ring or by adding new words from this activity to the word ring.

MILK

M m

Decoding

To become confident readers of English, learners are encouraged to use a combination of decoding strategies.

➤ Sounding it out relies on a learner's phonetic skills and ability to identify sound-letter correspondences. This skill is limited to a learner's knowledge of the alphabet, the oddities in English spelling, and pronunciation.

➤ Using visual cues is a common strategy people use to make sense of unknown words. Learners can be encouraged to look for accompanying pictures or graphics for hints about what a word means. For example, the word *push* is on a door, but the visual cue for the meaning of the word *push* is the door itself.

➤ Using background knowledge requires a learner to think about and apply what they know from experience to decode unknown words. For example, past experience lets the learner know that doors either pull or push open.

. . . the visual cue for the meaning of the word *push* is the door itself.
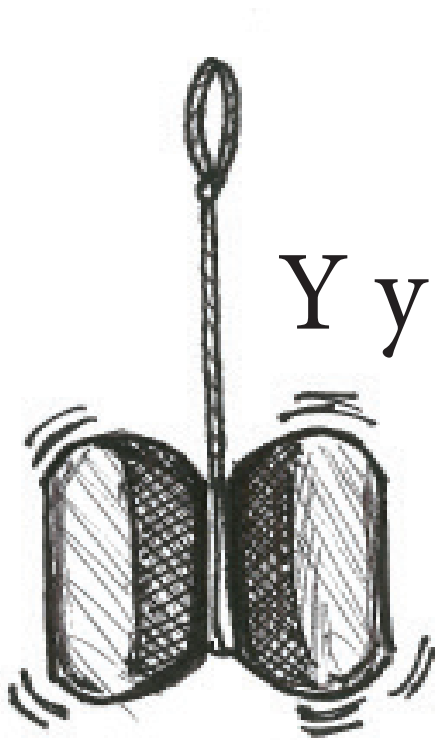
By combining these strategies, readers at any level will increase their success in decoding words. As learners become more comfortable with the sounds of letters and letter combinations in the English alphabet, their ability to sound out words will increase. By combining these skills with observation of where a word occurs, what information (visual) accompanies the word, and what a learner already knows about the context the word is situated in, a learner will gradually become more and more adept at decoding. This type of learning complements the idea that each learner enters complete with knowledge; it is the practitioner's job to help the learner bring that knowledge out.

Games

The Northwest Territories Literacy Council (www.nwt.literacy.ca) has some very useful suggestions for Literacy work with adult learners in their "How-to Kit" series. Their "Literacy Games for Adults" in this series provides game suggestions that can be adapted for beginning and more experienced readers (bingo, scrabble, paper bag skits, and penny storytelling. With the demise of the penny, we might need to change the game's name to nickel storytelling!) The resources in this series have Indigenous content and offer fun interactive approaches to developing reading skills in English.

Y y

Level 1b and Level 1c Readers

Vocabulary Building and Decoding

In addition to increasing the difficulty of strategies listed in 1a in this appendix, the following strategy can also be used for building vocabulary and decoding skills.

Word Banks

Word banks are collections of words from student lessons or stories. At the 1b level, grouping words by noun categories (*food, animals, people*); by sound (phonetic); or by the tense of simple verbs (walk, walking, walked) helps keep confidence strong because learners can make inferences based on the type of grouping and through association.
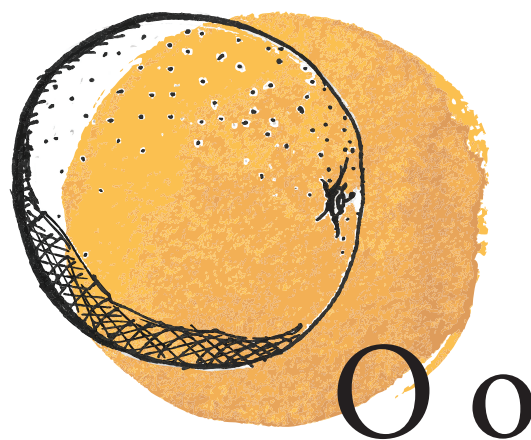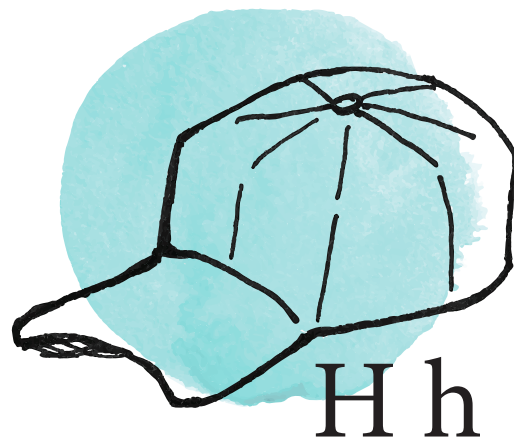
Active Reading

Readers Theatre has been identified as a motivational exercise for readers of all reading levels. By participating in reading, action, visualizing, and characterization, readers become more engaged in the content and therefore more willing to take risks and have fun with reading.

The native tale called "The Long Winter," as told by Elaine L. Lindy and adapted into a play by Lindsay Parker, is appropriate for level 1b readers and addresses the theme of community. Web links that tie into this particular story are provided in the reading resources found at the end of this guide. Many other Readers Theatre plays are available on the Internet and are often identified by the culture from which they originate. In order to access some of these plays you'll require a subscription.

The Northwest Territories (NWT) Literacy Council has created a document called "How to Kit—Readers Theatre" that describes in helpful detail the advantages of working in Readers Theatre with students and how to create your own plays. This link is available in the resources section of this guide.

Readers Theatre has been identified as a motivational exercise for readers of all reading levels.

Comprehension

Predicting and activating background knowledge

These strategies are teaching and learning strategies to encourage learners to think about what they already know and apply it to what they are reading. They're a good way to introduce new reading material.

1. Show or tell the learner the title and picture (if there is one). For example, if the material is a lost dog notice, the title might be *Lost Dog*.

2. Ask the learner what information s/he expects to find on the notice. Use questions to lead the learner to the answers: date lost, location last seen, description of the dog, the dog's name, telephone number to call, etc.

3. Move on to reading the notice and completing the reading tasks.

Pre-teach vocabulary

Before beginning to read, a practitioner should pre-teach vocabulary that is topic specific and key to understanding the text. For example, if the text is about rental listings, the pre-taught vocabulary might include the acronyms *NS*, *NP*, *W/D*, and words like *damage deposit*, etc. Published teaching-reading materials often identify these words for you, either in bold or at the start of the text.

Cut-up sentences

Cut-up sentences are a good practice activity that encourages the learner to attend to print.

Eat   fruits and vegetables   every   day.
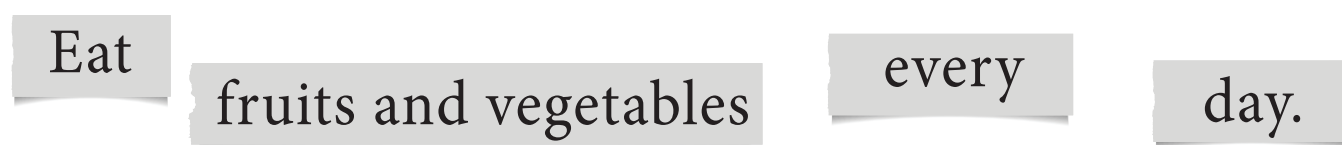
1. Either select a sentence or have the learner select a sentence from the day's reading activity. The learner copies the sentence, including punctuation, onto a strip of paper. Put the reading material away.

2. Check for errors and then cut up the sentence into noun and verb phrases. Scramble the pieces.

3. The learner must unscramble the words back into the/a correct sentence.

4. The cut-up sentence can be taken home for the learner to practise for homework.
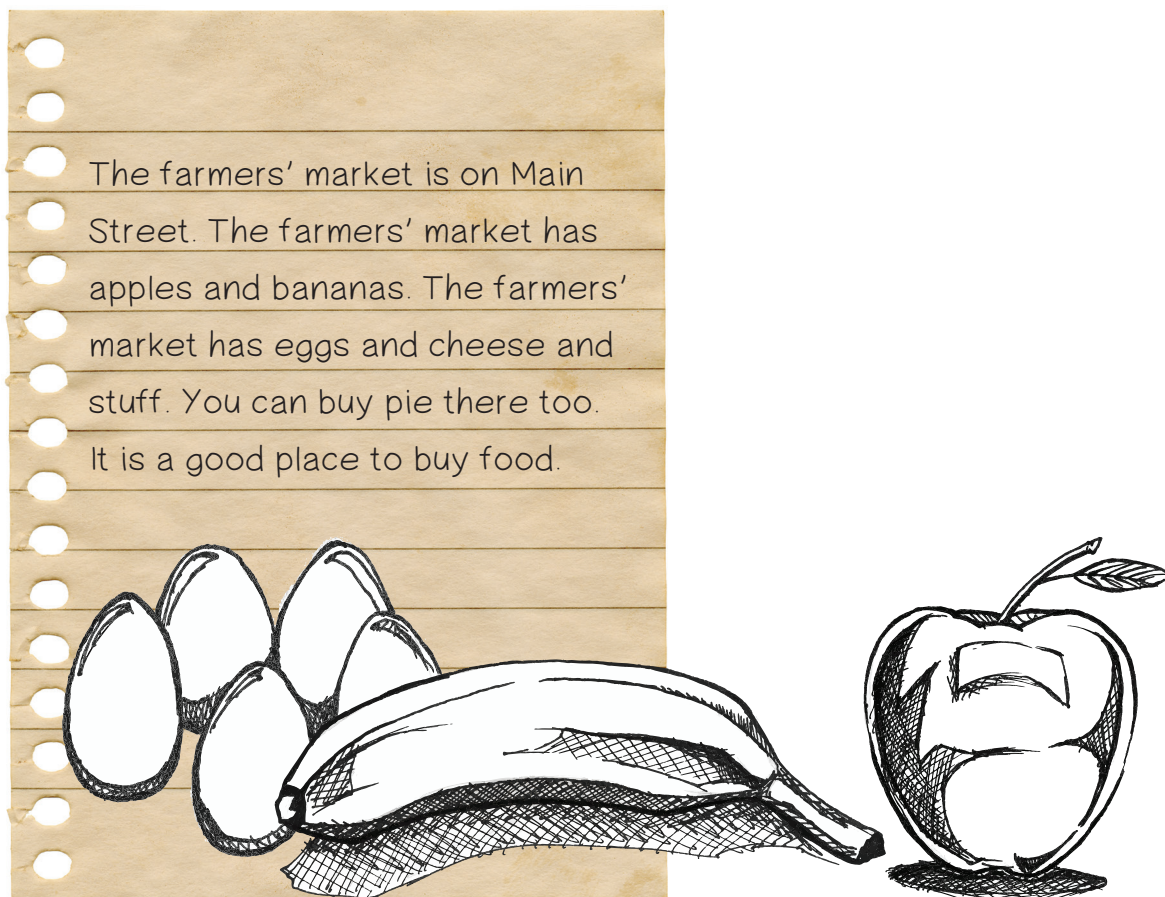
Language experience

Language experience involves writing about an experience and then using the learner-generated text as reading material. Often learners go on a field trip or attend a special event as the experience to write about, but they could also describe a personal experience. This strategy bridges a learner's oral language skills and their reading abilities, so it is particularly appropriate for those from cultures with strong oral traditions such as Indigenous learners. The learner generates sentences and the practitioner acts as a scribe. Although practitioners want to model correct grammatical structures, including slang used by the learner will make the text authentic for him or her. This example uses a field trip to a farmers' market.

1. Tell the learner you are going to write about the trip to the farmers' market. Ask the learner what to write.

2. The learner generates sentences verbally for you to record.

3. Write simple, correct sentences.

4. Read the written text aloud together.

The resulting text might look something like this:

The farmers' market is on Main Street. The farmers' market has apples and bananas. The farmers' market has eggs and cheese and stuff. You can buy pie there too. It is a good place to buy food.

5. Complete reading tasks appropriate for this level using the learner-generated text as the reading material.

Level 2a Readers

Vocabulary Building

Word banks

Word banks are collections of words from student lessons. At this level words could be grouped either by categories (food, clothing, housing), spelling patterns (*light, night, flight*), or in word families (*talk, talking, talked*).

Decoding and Meaning Making

Sound it out

The use of phonics or sound-letter correspondence is essential, but limited by the learner's knowledge of the alphabet, the oddities of English spelling, and pronunciation errors.

Use visual clues

If a word is unknown the learner looks to accompanying pictures or graphics for a hint about what the word is.

Visualize

Good readers make a picture in their head as they read which helps them to construct meaning. See level 1c for an example.

Part of the word known

In this strategy the learner looks for something familiar in the word and then uses other strategies to complete decoding the word. See level 1b for an example.

Chunking

Chunking is a similar strategy to "parts of the word known" except that with chunking the learner looks at the morphemes, or the parts of the word that alter the meaning of the root word. For example, if the learner encounters the word *learner* and s/he knows what the word *learn* means and knows that the suffix *–er* means a person who does the root word, then s/he knows the meaning of *learner*.

Skip an unknown word

Skipping an unknown word encourages learners to use the rest of the sentence and other strategies to decode a word and prevents the learner from getting stuck on unknown vocabulary. See level 1b for an example.

Context clues

Context clues are used when the learner does not know the meaning of a word in a sentence. See the section on level 1c for more information.

Multiple strategy use

Good readers use a combination of strategies. For example, a reader may look at the first sound, recognize part of the word s/he knows, and look at a picture to decode a single word.

Task Completion

Scanning

Scanning is the strategy used by good readers to locate information quickly and easily. Instead of reading every word of a text, they look for key words, dates, numbers, or other hints such as capital letters for proper nouns to find the information they need.

Comprehension

Predicting and activating background knowledge

These strategies are teaching and learning strategies to encourage the learner to think about what s/he already knows and apply it to what s/he is reading. They are a good way to introduce new reading material. See level 1b for an example of these strategies.

Pre-teach vocabulary

Pre-teach vocabulary that is topic specific and key to understanding the text before beginning to read. Published teaching-reading materials often identify these words for you, either in bold or at the start of the text. See the level 1b section for an example.

Retelling

Retelling is a good teaching strategy for checking comprehension and for consolidating learning. When retelling, the learner puts the text away and tells what the text was about—from memory and in their own words. This can be tricky for learners who often try to memorize rather than understand a text if they know they'll have to retell the information or message they read.

Language experience

Language experience involves writing about an experience and then using the learner-generated text as reading material. The learner generates the sentences verbally and the practitioner acts as a scribe. See the level 1b section for more information and an example.

Running records

Running records are a good strategy for error analysis and can provide the learner with positive feedback. A running record will show practitioners the learner's repetitive errors to be focused on.

Two copies of the text are necessary for a running record. Ideally the practitioner copy is a plain copy with widely spaced text. As the learner reads aloud, the practitioner:

➤ puts a checkmark above each word read correctly;

➤ crosses out words that have been omitted;

➤ crosses out words that are substituted with another word. The substituted word is written above the crossed-out word.
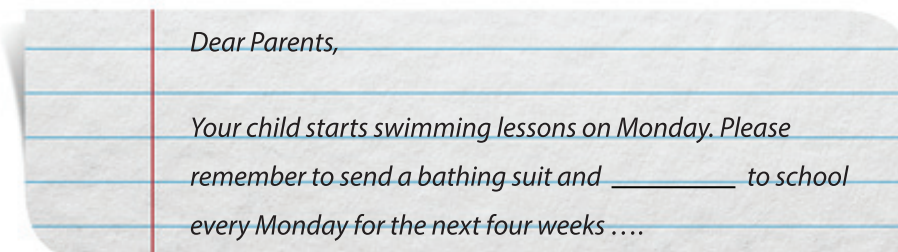
➤ writes in additional words.

Here is a sample running record:
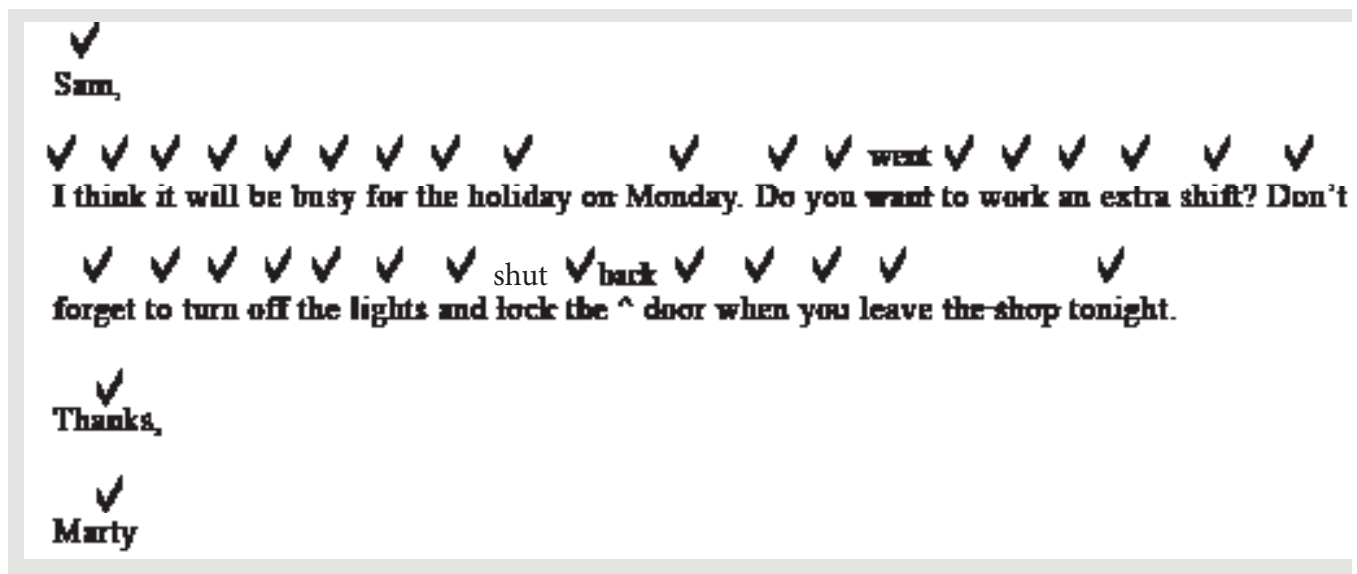
If the learner makes many print-based errors like substituting *went* for *want*, lessons should focus on reading for meaning using learning strategies like skipping an unknown word and teaching strategies like the use of clozes. If the learner makes meaning-based errors like *shut the back door* instead of *lock the door*, lessons should focus on attending closely to print. Tracking with a finger as they read may help reduce these kinds of errors. Another excellent strategy is to read the text aloud back to the learner as s/he reads it, including any error. Most often the learner can then self-correct the mistake.

Clozes

Clozes are texts with some words blanked out that can be determined using the meaning of the sentence. Clozes can be found in many published texts or created by practitioners. To create a cloze yourself, blank out a limited number of predictable words in a text appropriate to the learner level. Leave the first line complete to provide the learner with the context. For example:

Dear Parents,

Your child starts swimming lessons on Monday. Please remember to send a bathing suit and _____ to school every Monday for the next four weeks ….

Repeated readings

As the learner can read increasingly longer texts, it is important to provide opportunities for repeated readings of the same text to increase learner fluency and comprehension. Repeated exposure to the same words and phrases is critical to processing them automatically. Automaticity reduces a learner's need to decode frequently. (Frequent decoding reduces reading comprehension). Some suggested ways a learner can read the same text are to:

➤ Read silently.

➤ Read aloud to oneself.

➤ Read aloud to the practitioner, other learners, or someone at home.

➤ Answer questions about the text.

➤ Write questions about the text.

➤ Sketch a picture or diagram of the information presented in the text.
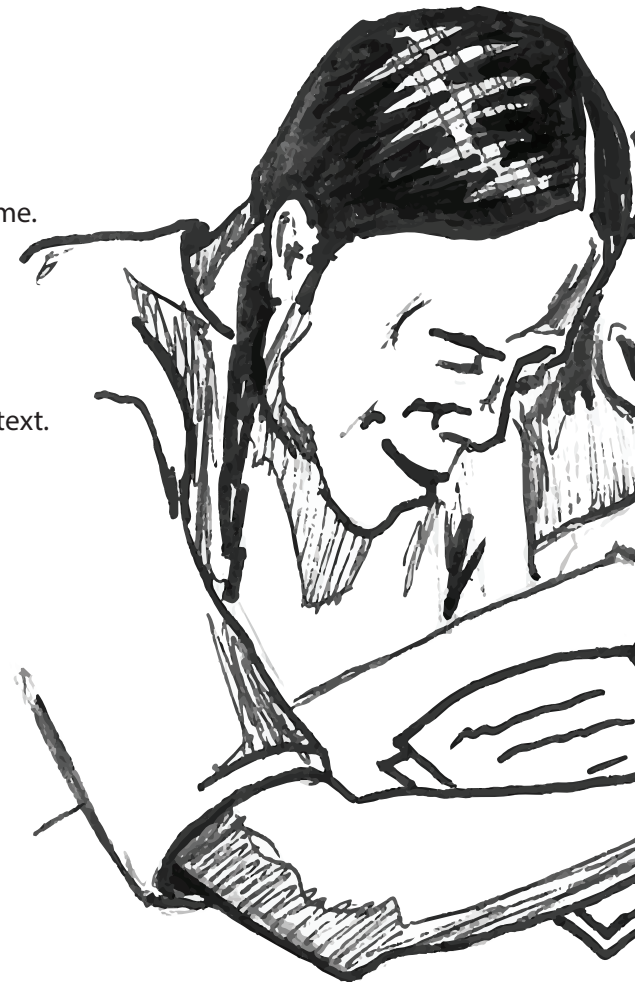
Level 2b Readers

Vocabulary Building

Word banks

Word banks are collections of words from current student lessons. At this level word banks grouped by synonyms or word families are appropriate. Word banks can be compiled on paper for easy reference in the front or back of a binder or in a separate booklet. For example:

By word family:	**Noun**	**Verb**	**Adjective**
	employment employer employee	employ	employable
By synonyms:	wage	pay salary earnings	

Decoding and Meaning Making

Part of the word known

In this strategy the learner looks for something familiar in the word and then uses other strategies to complete decoding the word. For example, with the word *embedded* the reader may recognize the word *bed* and then sound out surrounding letters to arrive at the word.

Chunking

Chunking is a similar strategy to parts of the word known except that with chunking the learner looks at the morphemes, or the parts of the word that alter the meaning of the root word. For example: *employability* may look confusing, but the reader may know the root of the word *employ* from which s/he can then sound out the ending.

Ask

Does that make sense? Does it look right? Does it sound right? This simple strategy helps learners to read for meaning and monitor if their decoding has been correct. At the end of each sentence the learner should ask themselves if what they have interpreted makes sense.

Ask questions

Good readers unconsciously ask themselves questions about what they are reading as they read. For example, as they are reading directions to a job interview, they may be asking themselves "I wonder how long it will take to get there?" Then, when they get to the text that states the expected duration of the trip, they are easily able to make sense of what they are reading.

Skip an unknown word

Skipping an unknown word encourages learners to use the rest of the sentence and other strategies to decode a word and prevents the learner from getting stuck on unknown vocabulary.

Context clues

Context clues are used when the learner does not know the meaning of a word in a sentence. Teaching this strategy involves walking students through the context clues in the text, identifying the known information, and then using it to figure out the meaning of the unknown word. Underlining the clues in the sentence will help the learner understand this strategy.

Multiple strategy use

Good readers use a combination of strategies. For example, a reader may recognize part of the word s/he knows and use the context of the sentence to decode a single word.

Comprehension

Predicting and activating background knowledge

These strategies encourage the learner to think about what s/he already knows and apply it to what s/he is reading. They are a good way to introduce new reading material. This type of exercise is effective when done in a larger group or pairs.

Pre-teach vocabulary

Before beginning to read, the practitioner pre-teaches vocabulary that is topic specific and key to understanding the text. Published teaching-reading materials often identify these words for you, either in bold or at the start of the text.

Retelling

Retelling is a good teaching strategy for checking comprehension and for consolidating learning. When retelling, the learner tells what the text was about—from memory and in their own words. The Making Tracks strategy described below helps learners to retell.

Language experience

Language experience involves writing about an experience and then using the learner-generated text as reading material. The learner generates the sentences verbally and the practitioner acts as a scribe.

Running records

Running records are a good strategy for error analysis and provide the learner with positive feedback. A running record will show practitioners the learner's repetitive errors to be focused on in lessons.

Clozes

Clozes are texts with some words blanked out that can be determined using the meaning of the sentence.

Repeated readings

As the texts the learner reads grow in length, it's important to provide opportunities for repeated readings of the same text to increase learner fluency and comprehension. Repeated exposure to the same words and phrases is critical to processing them automatically. Automaticity reduces the need to decode frequently which is valuable since decoding reduces reading comprehension.

Task Completion

Scanning

Scanning is the strategy used by good readers to locate information quickly and easily. Instead of reading every word of a text, they look for key words, dates, numbers, or other hints such as capital letters for proper nouns to find the information they need.

Skimming

Skimming is what one often does while standing in the grocery checkout line—we skim the covers of magazines to quickly get the gist of their content. In an academic or work setting skimming is used to find the topic we are looking for. It is different from scanning which focuses on specific details or bits of information—skimming looks for the topic or idea the text is about by looking for key words, bolded words, and subheadings. For example, a learner may flip through a driving manual for the section on parallel parking, ignoring the unrelated sections to concentrate on the relevant section. Skimming and scanning are often used in tandem—the learner may skim for the parking section of a driving manual and then scan for the word *parallel*.

Inferring

To find information learners at this level may need to make inferences that involve looking at evidence to reach a conclusion that's not explicitly stated. For example, if a community event poster states that children's events are for those ten and under and the learner must answer the question "Can a twelve-year-old attend a Halloween party?" they must infer that a twelve-year-old cannot attend those particular events.

Making tracks

At this level learners are reading longer texts and may have more information to work with than can be mentally tracked. Many good readers manage information by making margin notes. As an alternative to writing in shared books, sticky notes can be used for the same purposes. The following activity provides the learner with practice tracking, identifying key information, and retelling.

1. Provide the learner with a pad of mini sticky notes.

2. Instruct the learner to read the first paragraph of the text.

3. Ask the learner what the important information was in the text.

4. Work with the learner to decide on three to five key words to write on one sticky note that will help them remember the important information. This can be very challenging because most learners find it very difficult to summarize so succinctly and they often choose words that will not help them to retell.

5. Have the learner read the next sections of the text, writing three to five words on each sticky note—one per paragraph.

6. Remove the sticky notes from the text. Lay them out on a blank piece of paper and put away the text.

7. Have the learner retell the content of the text using the sticky notes to aid in recall (Fagan cited in Roberts 2013).

Appendix C: Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language. (United Nations 2008, 7)

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Indigenous Reading Resources

This list is organized by Alberta Reading Benchmark (ARB) level in ascending order. Although I've made my best efforts to provide a few ideas for reading material at each ARB level, adult Indigenous content resources for ARB levels 1a and 1b are difficult to locate. Each resource has the target audience identified to help practitioners choose material. Texts identified for children are best used in family literacy programs or provided to adult learners to read to young children in their lives.

ARB Level	All
Source	Northwest Territories Literacy Council. *Annotated Bibliography of Aboriginal Books—Pre-school to Adult,* Volume 2. Yellowknife: NWT Literacy Council, 2008. Available at: http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/biblio08/biblio08.pdf
Audience	Practitioners and Adult Learners
Genre	Non-fiction: annotated bibliography (resource)
Format	Online
Description	A comprehensive bibliography of Aboriginal books that is coded by icons to indicate the origins of the material. This resource provides title, author, subject, a brief description of each book, and its intended reader. It's divided into age categories: children, young adult, and adult.
Comments	A very useful collection of references for Aboriginal books. References do not address readability but rather age for which a title is suitable, so some interpretation around suitability may be necessary when working with early adult literacy learners. Previewing material is suggested, but this resource gives practitioners a starting place and contains many current works by Indigenous authors.

ARB Level	All
Source	Northwest Territories Literacy Council. *Families Learning to Read and Write Together*. Retrieved May 2013 from: http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/famlit/family_tutoring/family_tutoring.pdf
Audience	Literacy practitioners
Genre	Non-fiction instructional resource
Format	Online
Description	This 700-page online resource provides step-by-step suggestions for starting and maintaining a family literacy program in any community. It describes each phase of the program and provides templates for various teaching strategies. Sessions focus on both vocabulary and reading development, as well as practical life skills development that encourage community participation and engaging in children's school life. While the emphasis is on working in NWT communities, the content can be adapted to a variety of communities.
Comments	This resource is thorough and well organized. While it's geared toward family literacy programs, it has very useful suggestions for reading strategies that can be adapted to full adult upgrading programs. Highly recommend for any literacy practitioner. Good resources section.

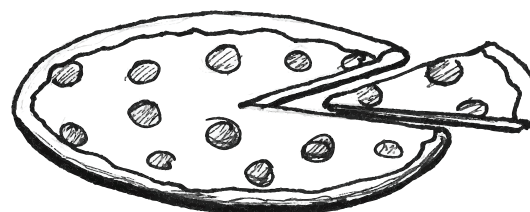|	
ARB Level	1a
Source	Manuel, Margaret. *See Me*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 2010.
Audience	Pre-school
Genre	Non-fiction
Format	Baby board book
Description	This book is great for adult literacy learners who have babies in their lives. The board book has images of infants' daily activities and each image has an English caption. Under the caption is a space for translating the word into the student's own language.
Comments	This book provides an interactive element (translation) while engaging students in an important part of their lives (their children).

ARB Level	1a
Source	Wheeler, Jordan. *Chuck in the City*. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 2009.
Audience	Children (age 3 – 5)
Genre	Children's illustrated
Format	Book
Description	A boy named Chuck ends up getting lost when he visits his grandmother in the city. Appropriate for children ages 3 to 5.
Comments	While this book is intended for children, it has many good illustrations combined with minimal words to help introduce adult literacy learners to reading. The story involves inner resourcefulness and the importance of observing one's surroundings. This is a great book for adults to share with children at home, in the learning centre, or through paired readings with the local elementary school.

ARB Level	1a –1b
Source	Northwest Territories Literacy Council. *Photo Stories for English 110: To Support the NWT Adult Literacy and Basic Education Curriculum*. Yellowknife: NWT Literacy Council, 2009. Retrieved from: http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/resources/adult-lit/en110/en110.pdf
Audience	Adult
Genre	Non-fiction (teaching and learning guide)
Format	Online
Description	This guide provides some activities for early literacy based on visual prompts and stories on themes from the north.
Comments	The well-laid-out guide provides different tools for helping students learn letter and word sounds including pre-reading exercises, vocabulary practice, vowel practice, and extended learning ideas. Stories are combined with visuals that learners can interpret and respond to, as well as a written piece that relates to the picture. Most of the practices in this guide lend themselves to level 1b, but some ideas can be adapted to level 1a and 1c.

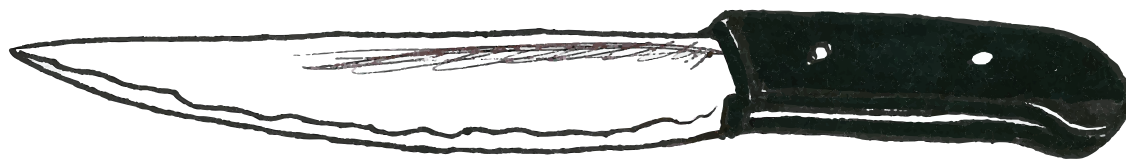|	
ARB Level	1a –1c
Series	How to Kit
Source	NWT Literacy Council. *How to Kit: Readers Theatre*. Yellowknife: NWT Literacy Council. Retrieved May 2013 from: http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/theatre/theatre.pdf
Audience	Practitioners and youth/adult
Genre	Non-fiction
Format	Online instructional resource
Description	This resource provides tips on how to write, direct, and organize Readers Theatre, as well as some Readers Theatre scripts learners can work from.
Comments	This kit has very helpful information for practitioners who have not had much experience working with Readers Theatre. Even for the experienced practitioner, the kit has good suggestions for encouraging student engagement and creating an inclusive positive experience.

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ARB Level	1a – 1c
Series	How to Kit
Source	Kue, Deninu. *How to Kit: Literacy Games for Adults*. Yellowknife: NWT Literacy Council. Retrieved May 2013 from: http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/howtokit/games/games.pdf
Audience	Adult
Genre	Non-fiction
Format	Online instructional
Description	This online booklet has suggestions for a variety of word games designed for adults that can be adapted for any reading level to strengthen word recognition and build confidence around vocabulary development. The game suggestions also help build writing skills.
Comments	This kit has some fun suggestions that can be modified and adapted to any learning level, language, or cultural environment. By approaching English language reading through games, learners can let go of some inhibitions and have fun experimenting with sounds and word patterns, while also learning valuable reading skills.

ARB Level	1a – 1c
Source	Redvers, Peter. *Mother Raven Nursery Rhymes*. Hay River, NWT: Crosscurrent Associates, 1989.
Audience	Children to adult
Genre	Poetry
Format	Book
Description	This book is a collection of nursery rhymes that have been converted to First Nations contexts and content. The rhymes are quite humorous and each rhyme is illustrated.
Comments	This book is great for teaching phonetics because there is a lot of rhyming. The vocabulary involves one- to two-syllable familiar words. This book provides a fun format for reading literacy development.

ARB Level	1a – 1b
Series	Empowering the Spirit II: Native Literacy Curriculum
Source	Hawker, Brian. *Empowering the Learner 2: Native Literacy Workbook*. Owen Sound, ON: Ningwakwe Learning Press, 2005
Audience	Youth to adult
Genre	Non-fiction (instructional)
Format	Workbook for learners
Description	This workbook provides learners with culturally based information upon which to develop literacy skills. Each reading is followed by skill-building exercises that strengthen vocabulary, context clue development, cycling, and overall comprehension.
Comments	While the reading level for this workbook is best suited for ARB level 1c, with assistance a reader can work with content for level 1b. The workbook offers culturally meaningful topics that can be extended through research for higher-level readers. Exercises can be used as templates and modified to challenge readers at ARB levels 1c – 2b.

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ARB Level	1b
Source	Lindy, Elaine L. "The Long Winter." Retrieved 15 February 2013 from http://www.storiestogrowby.com/script.html
Audience	Youth
Genre	Fiction and play
Format	Readers Theatre
Description	This story was adapted from a First Nations story to Readers Theatre format by Lindsay Parker. The story has simple content and vocabulary. The characters are animals and the story explores working as a community.
Comments	Turning the story into a play provides opportunities for students to get quite creative with characterization and costumes. There are ten roles in the play plus a narrator role. The website provides vocabulary practice, teaching ideas around plot, theme, and characterization, as well as the play script.

ARB Level	1b
Series	Seven Generations Graphic Novel Series. Edmonton, AB: Grassroots Press, 2013.
Source	All titles are by Robertson, David A. and Scott B. Henderson and published by Grassroots Press (Edmonton, AB) in 2013. ———. *Ends/Begins*. ———. *Stone*. ———. *Scars*. ———. *The Pact*.
Audience	Young adult to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Graphic novel
Description	These stories from the Seven Generations series available through Grassroots Press have been modified for readability and are rated as Grade 2-3 level. (They were originally published by Portage and Main Press for readers at a Grade 9 level and above. See level 2a for that version.) *Stone* is the first book in the series. It begins set in the present day and then shifts to a historical view of the Plains Cree. *Scars* is the second book and is set during the smallpox epidemic in the 1870s. It focuses on the experiences of an orphan boy named White Cloud. *Ends/Begins* is the third book in the series. It tells the story of two boys in residential school. *The Pac*t is the series' fourth and final book. The past is reconciled and characters begin a new journey.
Comments	Content may be disturbing. Practitioners should preview each story in the series to determine how appropriate it is for particular students. Interesting and thought-provoking discussions can be initiated about events encountered in each novel in this series, depending on student readiness.

ARB Level	1b
Series	Novels for adult learners
Source	Ferris, Kate. *The Scowling Frog*. Edmonton: Grassroots Press, 1997.
Audience	Youth to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Two men and a woman travel to Haida Gwaii to steal a totem. In their travels they encounter many problems that appear to be connected to disrespecting a sacred object.
Comments	The main characters (two men and one woman) are from the USA. Although the main characters are not First Nations, this story speaks to the issues of respecting sacred artifacts. Vocabulary and plot are simple and students may enjoy researching Haida culture and artifacts as a pre-reading activity. Readability is for Grades 3 to 5.

ARB Level	1b – 1c
Source	Hudson, Jan. *Sweetgrass*. New York: PaperStar, 1984.
Audience	Youth to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Set in the 1830s, *Sweetgrass* is the story of a Blackfoot girl whose strength evolves as her tribe faces more and more challenges as a result of colonization.
Comments	This novel is appropriate for Grade 6 to 7 reading skills. It focuses on a female protagonist, highlighting the roles of women in traditional Blackfoot culture.

ARB Level	1c – 2b
Source	Tovani, Cris. *I Read It But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Learners*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2000.
Audience	Practitioners
Genre	Non-fiction (pedagogy)
Format	Book
Description	This instructional book for practitioners provides ideas and strategies to help students understand what they are reading and connect with how they understand material. Its exercises encourage self-reflection in the learning process and self-assessment in meaning-making.
Comments	Although the book is a bit dated, it provides useful ideas/strategies for working with more advanced readers (Grades 8 +).

ARB Level	1c
Series	News 4 Youth
Source	*What in the World?* Victoria, BC: LesPlan Educational Services. Available at: http://www.whatintheworld.ca.
Audience	Young adult to adult
Genre	Non-fiction
Format	Interactive online website
Description	This website offers links to news events around the world over a three-year period. The links are clear and the easy-to-follow topics are well organized. It also offers links for voting on current issues, discussing events, and tips for learning new skills.
Comments	This easy-to-navigate website offers learners opportunities to engage in current affairs nationally and internationally and to vote or comment on larger issues affecting our lives. The site is a great portal for engaging learners and encouraging participation in areas of personal interest for learners.

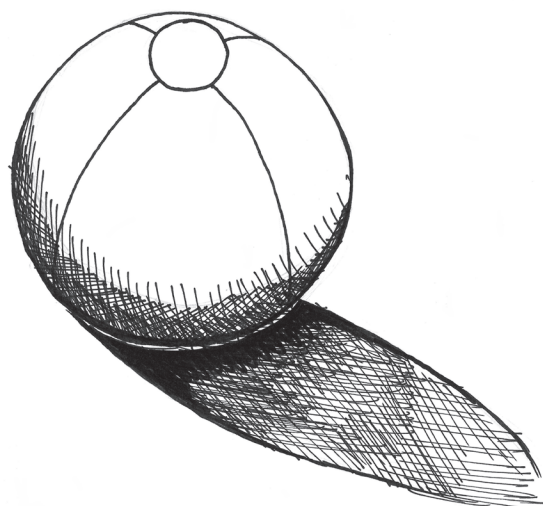| ARB Level	1c
Source	Friesen, John W., and Virginia L. Friesen. *More Legends of the Elders*. Edmonton: Grassroots Press, 2013.
Audience	Young adult to adult
Genre	Legends
Format	Book
Description	This book's legends represent twenty different First Nations (Woodland Cree, Plains Cree, Blackfoot, Iroquois, Anishinabe, and Assiniboine). Readability is for Grade 6 to 7. It introduces students to First Nations traditional stories and includes elders' spiritual and sacred legends.
Comments	As the teaching principles section of this guide notes, instructors need to be respectfully aware of students' interests and protocol when reading legends from either the students' cultural group or from different tribes.

ARB Level	2a – 2b
Source	Mikaelsen, Ben. *Touching Spirit Bear*. New York: Harper Collins, 2001.
Audience	Adolescent to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	Cole, a troubled and angry youth, is given the choice between juvenile jail or trying circle justice. Thinking he can manipulate the system and get off easy, Cole chooses circle justice. This choice is the start of a difficult and life-altering journey. With the guidance of Aboriginal elders, Cole learns to let his hate and anger go.
Comments	Although the main character in this book is non-Indigenous, the story revolves around the power of a justice circle in one boy's healing journey. The story explores west coast Indigenous values around conflict resolution, self-empowerment, and healing in contrast to Western punitive systems of justice.

ARB Level	2a
Source	Wallis, Velma. *Two Old Women*. New York: Harper Collins, 1994.
Audience	Adolescent to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Book
Description	This moving story is based on an Athabasca legend from the Upper Yukon region of Alaska that has been handed down from mother to daughter for generations. The main characters are two old women who are abandoned by their tribe. Rather than give in to the harsh winter, they struggle together to survive. Rich in narrative detail, the story explores topics of friendship, co-operation, forgiveness, and resilience.
Comments	Many adults who read this tale have thoroughly enjoyed it and have shared it with others in their lives. The book contains many issues for discussions about hope, strength, compassion, and forgiveness, as well as traditional ways of life.

ARB Level	2a
Series	Seven Generations Graphic Novel Series.
Source	All titles by David Robertson and Scott B. Henderson. Winnipeg: High Water Press (an imprint of Portage and Main), 2010. ———. *Ends/Begins*. ———. *Stone*. ———. *Scars*. ———. *The Pact*.
Audience	Young adult to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Graphic novel
Description	The novel's format is appropriate for Grade 9 + readability. *Stone* is the first book in the series. It begins set in the present day and then shifts to a historical view of the Plains Cree. *Scars*, the second book, is set during the smallpox epidemic in the 1870s. It focuses on the experiences of an orphan boy named White Cloud. *Ends/Begins* is the third book in the series. It tells the story of two boys in residential school. *The Pact* is the series' fourth and final book. The past is reconciled and characters begin a new journey.
Comments	Content may be disturbing. Practitioners should preview each story in the series to determine its appropriateness for students. Interesting and thought-provoking discussions can be initiated about events encountered in each novel, depending on student readiness.

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ARB Level	2b
Source	Robertson, David A. *The Life of Helen Betty Osborne*. Winnipeg: Portage and Main Press, 2008.
Audience	Young adult to adult
Genre	Bio-fiction (fictionalized biography)
Format	Graphic novel
Description	This novel is a mix of biography and fiction. The story of Helen Osborne is based on fact. She was a First Nations woman who was brutally murdered in Manitoba. Her story is told by a fictional character, Daniel, who represents human hope and growth in the face of tragedy.
Comments	Content may be disturbing for some students. The novel addresses redemption and hope through Daniel's character. Portage and Main have developed a useful teacher's guide which is available for download from: http://www.portageand-mainpress.com/book_detail.cfm?biD=253.

ARB Level	2b
Source	Alexie, Sherman. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*. New York: Little Brown, 2007.
Audience	Adolescent to adult
Genre	Fiction
Format	Illustrated novel
Description	This story is written in a diary style with cartoon illustrations throughout. The story follows the thoughts and experiences of an adolescent Indigenous boy who struggles as he straddles two worlds—his life on a Spokane reservation and his days attending an all-white school in the local town. It's a story of determination, humour, and hard life experiences—a moving and meaningful tale about pursuing one's dreams.
Comments	This story has been criticized for containing topics that may be disturbing. There are issues of alcoholism, bullying, disabilities, and violence. The story is also layered with humour and the cartoon illustrations create an effective link to the narrator's inner world. The author notes that every adolescent and adult can relate to some parts of his tale because all of our lives contain hardship as well as moments of strength and success. Good discussions can emerge from this story around issues of racism, addictions, dreams, pursuit of goals, and the power of humour.

Electronic Resources, Apps, and Devices for English Reading Skill Development

Software	Notes on how the program enhances engagement with reading or types of skills developed
Inspiration	A mind-mapping software that provides a visual way to generate ideas. Students can use shapes, colour, text, and pictures to build relationships to help with comprehension.
Webspiration	An online mind-mapping software that provides a visual way to generate ideas. Students can use shapes, colour, text, and pictures to build relationships to help with comprehension.
Read and Write	Speech-to-text software that supports students with their reading. Read and Write will read text in Microsoft Word or on the Internet out loud for the student. It reads aloud and highlights text on screen.
Reading Horizons	Online reading program that contains exercises to help build on vocabulary, spelling, fluency, and comprehension skills. Students can access the library to read online. Program contains audio and comprehension questions.
Reading Detective	Building upon reading comprehension, software addresses various reading levels. Students have access to a variety of stories to read, then they answer comprehension questions.
Paragraph Punch	Students select a topic to write about then the software prompts them with questions to help them learn how to write a paragraph. Program includes different types of paragraphs: reason, detail, example, and cause and effect.
Spelling Fusion	Beginner to advanced levels: program teaches a wide range of language and literacy skills. Over 3,500 key words arranged in 12 main groups and 95 topics with exercises, audio, and practice word games.
English Grammar I	Beginner level of grammar concepts. Includes exercises and audio.
English Grammar III	Intermediate level of grammar concepts. Includes exercises and audio.
Tense Buster	Students practise with examples from a newspaper article or a dialogue. The student is then introduced to a grammar concept and can practise with an exercise.

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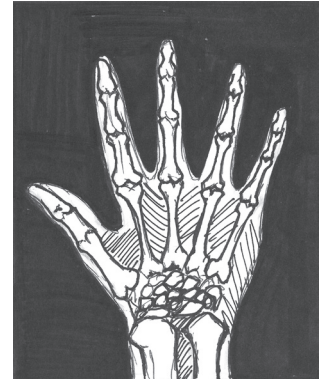
Devices	How the device enhances engagement with reading or types of skills developed
Electronic dictionaries	Look up and listen to words and definitions. If a word is entered incorrectly, a word list of possible words appears on the screen for the student to select.
Livescribe Pen	Students can record and write down what they understand. They can then play it back using the livescribe "paper." Students can also transfer their notes and recordings to their computer. They can use the search feature and create online notebooks.
Sentence Building Dominoes	Scrabble with words: students use the letter dominoes to create words.
Classmate Reader	Portable audio book player that helps with comprehension and vocabulary. Reads aloud and simultaneously displays and highlights texts.
Reading Comprehension Flashcards	To practise with reading strategies and building vocabulary.

Apps	Note: List of different apps to support reading.
Bow Valley College (BVC) – Learner Success Services Website – Learning Toolbox – Reading http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/campus-services/learner-success-services/counselling-and-specialized-support/tools-for-learning/apps.html#reading	• Word Stack Free • Word Domino Free • Word Jigsaw • Phonics Genius • Sentence Maker • Merriam Webster • Dictionary.com • Voice Dream • iBooks

Websites	Notes
Bow Valley College – Learner Success Services Website – Learning Toolbox http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/campus-services/learner-success-services/counselling-and-specialized-support/tools-for-learning/links.html#reading	Various websites for reading.
Bow Valley College Study Guides – RGO Library and Learning Commons http://www.bowvalleycollege.ca/campus-services/library-and-learning-commons/e-resources/study-guides.html	Study guides for writing, grammar, and English.
TV411 – Tune into Learning http://www.tv411.org/	Various reading practice opportunities with comprehension and learning strategies. Students work through different activities and build upon their various strategies.
BBC Skillwise – English and Math for Adults http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise	Various reading practices with comprehension and learning strategies. Students work through different activities and build upon the strategies. (Some British word usage. E.g. "maths")
Merriam Webster's Learner's Dictionary http://www.learnersdictionary.com/	Like a conventional print dictionary, allows students to search for terms but also to listen to words. It provides definitions and example sentences.
Spelling City http://www.spellingcity.com/	Practise spelling with a variety of spelling lists.
Look Cover Write and Check http://www.amblesideprimary.com/ambleweb/lookcover/lookcover.html	Interactive spelling practice. Students use the strategy, look at the word, cover the word, spell the word, then check the word.
Adult Learning Activities http://cdlponline.org/	Reading activities: students can listen to the stories then practise with new words. (Note that the site sometimes has distracting if not exploitive advertising. Practitioners can explain the ads as another literacy activity.)

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Websites	Notes
The Hockey Sweater http://www.nfb.ca/film/sweater	An online video about the well-loved short story by Roch Carrier.
Interactive Spelling Bee http://www.learner.org/interactives/spelling/spelling.html?s=g6-8	Students read and listen to different stories and practise their spelling of specific words. Contextual clues are used to help students understand meaning.
Read Write Think http://www.readwritethink.org/	Students have access to the different learning activities in reading and language arts. Includes reading strategies and vocabulary development.
Visuwords Online Graphical Dictionary http://www.visuwords.com/	Visual mind mapping for words—a fun way to mind map.
Sparknotes http://www.sparknotes.com/	Study guides and interactive quizzes. Students can learn more by reading analyses of characters, themes, and plots.
Schmoop http://www.shmoop.com/	An interactive website that contains study guides, quizzes, and flashcards.
Quizlet http://quizlet.com/	Students can create online flash cards for their reading.

AUTHOR

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Patricia has worked in adult literacy for the past eight years. Much of this time was spent working with Indigenous adults on a small reserve in southern Alberta where she explored experiential learning with learners. While working on her Master's in Education, she further explored her interest in experiential and transformational learning in adult education, driven by the belief that the motivation to learn is stronger for individuals if it is contextualized in socially and culturally meaningful ways. Currently, she works with the Adult Literacy Research Institute at Bow Valley College.

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