Approaches to Benchmarks Frameworks for Adult Literacy Programming

A report prepared for

the Alberta Literacy Benchmarks Project

by

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Contents

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Introduction

This report reviews literacy benchmarks frameworks[1] that have been mapped out in Canada and elsewhere. The report provides background for an Alberta project to develop "a provincial system of adult literacy and essential skill benchmarks for *reading* levels." [2]

The project reflects a goal of the Alberta government to increase the number of Albertans who have "a minimum of level 3 on international adult literacy measures" and a related priority action, namely, to: "Work with adult literacy providers … to develop and implement an articulated adult literacy system referenced to international adult literacy and essential skills measures."[3] This system would include standard learning outcomes and benchmarks; standard tools to assess learning and skill acquisition; and an articulated literacy curriculum.

Information for the report was gathered through an internet search for relevant documents and through phone consultations with government and literacy organization staff and/or practitioners in four provinces. The consultations addressed development, implementation and use of the benchmarks frameworks, strengths and challenges of implementing the frameworks, and suggestions for developing a literacy benchmarks framework in Alberta.

The report focuses on benchmarks frameworks developed in BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and includes information about a framework in Australia. The Appendices include descriptions of the frameworks reviewed. A related report reviews approaches to curriculum, assessment and adult diplomas in Canadian provinces and territories and in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland and Scotland.

Context for the review

Benchmarks

Benchmarks are commonly defined as points of reference that serve as a basis for evaluation or comparison.[4] In business, industry and formal education, "benchmarking" refers to a process of measuring institutional performance against best practices for that sector.

In Canada, the term benchmarks is used in the English Language Learning (ELL) field to name standards for "describing, measuring, and recognizing second language proficiency of adult immigrants and potential immigrants for living and working in Canada."[5]

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[1] For purposes of the report, "framework" refers to a set of benchmarks (levels, core skills, etc.). "System" refers to an array of documents and procedures (e.g., curriculum, assessment, reporting) that relate to a particular framework.
[2] Establishing Alberta Benchmarks Project, 2009.
[3] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). *Living literacy. A literacy framework for Alberta's next generation economy*. p. 7. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.aet.alberta.ca/media/219400/living%20literacy.pdf
[4] Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/benchmark
[5] What are the Canadian language benchmarks? Retrieved April 30, 2010 from the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks website: http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=206

Benchmarks, as a particular term, is not so widely used in the adult literacy field, although a number of provinces and countries have developed provincial or national frameworks that lay out points of achievement or transition. The terms benchmarks, levels, stages, competencies and core skills are all used to name these frameworks. In Canada, benchmarks related frameworks for literacy programming have been developed in BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. In some other provinces and territories, learning outcomes for various levels of literacy are outlined in curriculum guides.

Contemporary benchmarks frameworks reflect a continuum from a focus on *literacy* skills to a focus on e*ssential* skills or capacities needed for employment in particular, but also for education, training, and enhanced personal and community life. The continuum reflects changes in government policies regarding literacy, lifelong learning and economic development. The continuum also reflects particular understandings of literacy and reading.

Literacy

In the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS),[6] literacy was defined as:

> *the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*

This definition is reflected and extended in the following description included in the Alberta government's literacy framework document:

> *... While reading and writing provide the necessary foundation for learning, literacy is fundamentally about an individual's capacity to put his/her skills to work in shaping the course of his or her own life. Literacy involves "reading the word and the world" in a variety of contexts. Individuals need literacy skills to obtain and use information effectively, to act as informed players and to manage interactions in a variety of contexts whether the context is making decisions about health care, parenting, managing household finances, engaging in the political process or working*. [7]

These definitions recognize that reading not only includes reading skills and strategies but that reading is carried out for various purposes and in various social contexts. The definitions point to an understanding of literacy in terms of *social practices*.

Social practices perspectives and literacy benchmarks frameworks

In the context of a literacy program, a *social practices* perspective means that that adults learn and practice reading skills and strategies in relation to the kinds of texts they need to read and

[6] Adult literacy. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from OECD Directorate for Education website: http://www.oecd.org/document/2/0,3343,en_2649_39263294_2670850_1_1_1_1,00.html
[7] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). p. 2.

write, and in relation to the context and purposes for reading and writing. Values and feelings related to the reading task are also accounted for. [8]

Figure 1 shows the various interacting aspects involved in reading. As an example, an individual might use similar strategies [9] (e.g., scanning) with different texts (e.g., recipe, swimming pool schedule), in different contexts (home kitchen, community centre), for different purposes (e.g, check for ingredients; check if the pool is open). Or they may use different strategies with the same text (e.g., scan to check ingredients in a recipe; re-read carefully to check a measurement).

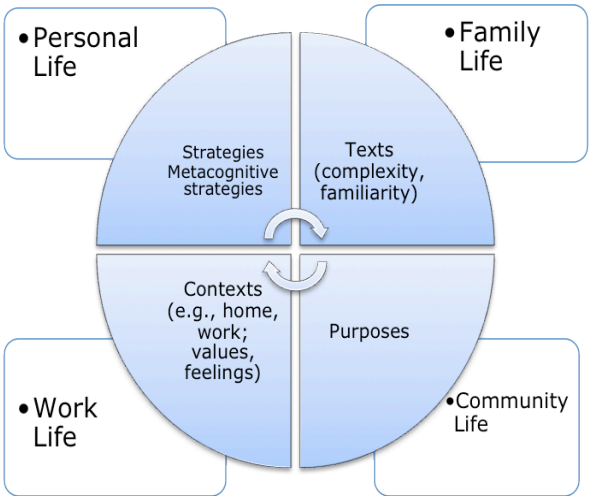

Figure 1. Reading as a social practice

It is challenging to account for all of the interacting aspects of reading in a benchmarks framework. In Canada, benchmarks frameworks for reading typically have focused on reading *skills* and *strategies* and more recently on reading *tasks*. These frameworks reflect particular reading theories.

Reading

Reading has been conceptualized as a sequence of skills or as a cognitive process. Reading as a sequence of skills is generally seen as rooted in behaviorist theory with its accompanying practices of rote, often passive learning and reinforcement. Skills are often taught in isolation of texts, or texts may be contrived to focus on particular skills. Reading as a sequence of skills typically separates "learning to read" from "reading to learn."

Reading as a cognitive process reflects constructivist theory. In this view, learning is an active, purposeful process; learners draw on their knowledge and experience to construct new knowledge. Literacy learners are encouraged to learn and practice cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies in the context of authentic (or at least realistic) texts related to their goals and purposes, and to apply what they learn in one context (e.g., a literacy program) in other one (e.g., at work).

Within the cognitive process view, some theorists also describe "cognitive processes" such as analyzing, integrating and monitoring. These processes underlie cognitive and metacognitive

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[8] *An adult literacy and curriculum framework for Scotland. (*2005). Edinburgh: Learning Connections. Communities Scotland. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.aloscotland.com/alo/files/ALNCurriculumFramework.pdf

[9] In this report, cognitive strategies refers to the procedures used to accomplish a reading task, for example, using background knowledge and text information to predict a word, or skimming an article to see if it is relevant to a question. Using strategies requires skills as well (e.g., knowledge of letters and related sounds). Metacognition refers to the knowledge base we have to complete a task and awareness of what strategies to use to complete a task. Metacognitive strategies include planning, monitoring, and "fix-up" strategies.

strategies. In a cognitive process view, learning to read and reading to learn are interwoven as learners use processes and strategies with increasingly complex texts, in different contexts and for various purposes.

Recently, some frameworks have focused on reading *tasks*, similar to the focus of international literacy surveys and the HRDSC Essential Skills model. A task-based approach focuses on the level of complexity of the task. This is explained in the next section.

International measures of adult literacy

The *International adult literacy survey* (1994-98) and the *International adult literacy and skills survey* (2003) [10] have been used to inform government policy development. Both surveys were concerned with assessing how well adults use print information and with looking at relationships between literacy proficiency and wider economic and social outcomes.

The international surveys used common tasks of varying difficulty to assess adults' literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills. A 500 point scale was used to rate the complexity of reading tasks and this scale was divided into 5 levels of reading proficiency. Assessing task complexity considered the nature of strategies used for the task (e.g., locating, matching, integrating), and the nature of the information in the task (concrete or abstract).

The following table describes strategies and text complexity at the five reading levels.[11] IALSS also considered the nature of the reading task: reading prose and reading documents.

Level	Complexity of tasks score range	Proficiency
5	376-500	Very strong skills. Able to find information in dense text and make high-level inferences or use specialized background information.
4	326-375	Strong skills. Able to integrate and synthesize information from complex or lengthy passages.
3	276-325	Adequate skills for coping in a complex advanced society. Equivalent to the skill level required for high school completion and college entry.
2	226-275	People at this level can read but do not read well. They can deal with simple clearly laid out material. May be able to cope with everyday demands but will have difficulty with new situations.
1	0-225	People at this level have difficulty reading and have few basic skills for decoding and working with text.

Table 1. IALSS reading levels

[10] Another international survey, the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) is planned for 2011.

[11] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). p. 2.
A Frontier College summary of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) 2003. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/frontier/ialss03/cover.htm

A challenge to aligning or referencing IALSS and benchmarks frameworks is that IALSS was concerned with literacy rates in the general population. Benchmarks frameworks are used with a more specific population – adults in literacy programs – and are used for a range of purposes (e.g., placement, program planning). A further challenge is that IALSS levels are based on the complexity of reading *tasks,* while some benchmarks frameworks are based on reading *strategies.*

Essential Skills (HRDSC)

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) defines essential skills as the generic skills people use to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks.
Nine essential skills have been identified by HRSDC: Reading Text; Document Use; Writing; Numeracy; Oral Communication; Thinking Skills; Working with Others; Computer Use; and Continuous Learning.

Profiles have been developed to describe the complexity and frequency of use of these essential skills in different occupational groups. Complexity rating is compatible with the IALSS levels. The Essential Skills model has informed some literacy and workplace literacy programming in Canada and is reflected in benchmarks frameworks in Manitoba and Ontario.

Benchmarks frameworks in BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario

In each of these four provinces, there is a distinction between literacy/ABE programs that might be equated with grades 1 to 9 (pre-credit) and reading/communications programs at the grades 10 to 12 (credit) levels. All of these provinces have one or more benchmarks related frameworks for literacy/ABE programming. The frameworks generally include reading, writing and numeracy; some also include oral communication and other areas such as self-management or interpersonal skills. The frameworks in BC and Saskatchewan are *not* aligned with IALSS. The Manitoba framework and the new *Ontario adult literacy curriculum* Competency Framework are referenced to Essential Skills.

In each of the provinces, the frameworks may be pertinent to one or more types of literacy program providers (e.g., community-based, college, school board). For example, in BC, the *Community literacy benchmarks* are used by Community Adult Literacy Programs and the *ABE program framework fundamental level* is used for literacy programs in post-secondary institutions. In Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, the frameworks are used across providers.

Table 2 identifies the literacy/ABE benchmarks frameworks for each of the four provinces, the levels in the framework and the providers. Credit level frameworks are also identified for information, although they are not a main focus of this review.

Province	Benchmarks Framework[12]	Levels	Providers
BC	Community Literacy Benchmarks (2008)	1-4	Community Adult Learning Programs
BC	ABE Program Framework Fundamental Level	Pre-literacy; 1-6	Public post-secondary institutions
BC	ABE Program Framework	Intermediate, Advanced, Provincial Level	Public post-secondary institutions
BC	K-12 (Adult)		School districts
SK	Circle of Learning Benchmarks (2006)	1-2	Community programs College literacy programs
SK	Adult Basic Education Level 3 Curriculum Guide. Overview Planner Adult 12	Grade 10 (can bridge from gr. 10 completion to gr.12 courses)	Community programs College literacy programs
MB	Record of Achievement Manual. Stages 1 – 3 (Revised, 2009)	1-3	Community programs Registered Learning Centres
MB		Adult 10 Mature Student High School Diploma	Registered Learning Centres, School districts
ON	LBS Learning Outcomes (1998)	1-5	Community programs, School boards, Colleges
ON	Level Descriptions Manual	1-5	Community programs, School boards, Colleges
ON	Competency Framework (Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum)	Levels 1-2 Level 3	Community programs, School boards, Colleges Colleges

Table 2. Literacy/ABE and credit frameworks in BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario

Development

Development and testing of the frameworks in BC and Saskatchewan occurred over 18 months to two years. The *Ontario adult literacy curriculum*, which includes the Competency Framework, was developed over 18 months and has recently been field tested. Implementation is planned for 2011. Development of the frameworks included numbers of people as consultants, on advisory committees, and in pilot testing, training and implementation. The Manitoba framework was developed in the 1990s and was recently revised by a team that included practitioners. More details about development in each province are included in the Appendices.

Intentions and uses

Intentions for developing the provincial literacy frameworks were identified from documents and in the consultations. The range of intentions include to:

[12] Citations for frameworks and related documents are included in Appendix 6.

- Provide ways to identify or measure learner achievement
- Ease transition among literacy programs; among program levels, and into further education, training, employment and/or enhanced personal life
- Provide a common language
- Support the development of courses and learning plans
- Support curriculum development
- Facilitate learner placement
- Enhance accountability
- Report to funders
- Provide information for policy development

Intentions that were identified across frameworks include: to provide ways to identify or measure learner achievement; to ease transition among programs or towards reaching goals; and to report on learner levels.

The main motivating intention for developing literacy frameworks varied from province to province. In BC, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour wanted a monitoring and assessment system for Community Adult Learning Programs (CALP). Information about learner levels was needed to inform policy and support arguments for literacy provision. All CALP funded programs are required to report numbers of learners at each level.

The *Circle of learning benchmarks* in Saskatchewan was developed in response to needs identified by practitioners, learners, Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. The benchmarks were seen as a means to recognize learner achievement and to ease learner transition among programs. At present, literacy programs are not required to report numbers of learners at each level, although this will be changing for programs funded by Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

The Manitoba *Record of achievement manuals*. *Stages 1-3* were developed in response to learners' desires for a way to document and acknowledge their progress. Learners who complete a manual for a stage may apply for a *Certificate in literacy and learning* for that stage. There is no requirement for learners to complete the manuals, although some do. At the same time, the manuals provide a framework for goal setting and lesson planning. The three stages identified in the manuals are also used when reporting numbers of learners to the funder.

A key intention of the new *Ontario adult literacy curriculum* and Competency Framework is to contribute to easing learners' transition to employment, further education, training and/or enhanced personal independence, as well as among educational programs. The OALC Competency Framework will also provide a guide for program planning. Related assessment resources will support monitoring and reporting.

Guiding values and principles

The benchmarks frameworks for literacy/ABE in BC, Saskatchewan and Ontario were based on particular values and principles about adult literacy, learners, teaching and learning. These are

outlined in reports and guidelines that accompany the frameworks documents. The Manitoba framework also reflects many of theses values and principles, according to the consultations. Table 3 includes a synthesis of guiding values and principles that were identified for one or more of the frameworks.

	Values and principles
Definitions of literacy	• Defining literacy as a dynamic process that enables participation in various life roles
Learners and learning	• Taking an integrated, asset based approach that builds on learners' knowledge, skills and social contexts and accounts for learners' often challenging life situations • Ensures that learners' abilities and languages are recognized and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed • Empowering all students to achieve their goals, regardless of their individual circumstances • Valuing biculturalism; reflecting cultural diversity and valuing the histories and traditions of all adults; respectful of Aboriginal culture • Respecting all types of knowledge and learning
Literacy programs	• Holistic, critically reflective and action oriented • Accessible • Moving toward transactional and transformative perspectives • Putting adult education principles into practice
Relevance and use of benchmarks	• Developing benchmarks that are relevant to learners, practitioners and society, and that apply to a range of life areas • Applicable to all pathways and streams • Recognizing that learner progress is one measure of program success • Aligning with the capacity of programs to carry out framework related tasks (e.g., assessment and reporting). This includes recognizing that many programs rely on volunteer tutors and/or part-time practitioners • Committing to renewal (of benchmarks) • Aligning to scale of national scope which has greater recognition currency (Ontario) • Results based; accountable
Transferability	• Linking with broader education and training systems • Providing for coherent transitions; opening up new pathways for further learning
Balance	• Sets high expectations for learning, while accommodating formal assessment for accountability (balances what matters to learners with what matters to governments)

Table 3. Guiding values and principles in literacy benchmarks frameworks

Points of reference in the frameworks

Refer to table 4 on p. 10.

Literacy frameworks for BC, Saskatchewan and Ontario are formatted in tables or matrices that include a "nest" of identifiers, from overarching (e.g., Communications, Reading) to specific (e.g., identify details in text). In Manitoba, the *Record of achievement manuals* are booklets of assignments; these include tasks and skills which provide points of reference.

Terms used within the frameworks vary (e.g., domains, content areas, competencies, benchmarks, learning outcomes, performance indicators). For example, the Ontario *LBS learner outcomes*, developed in 1998, was based on the grades 1 to 9 school curriculum. The domain of reading included performance indicators focussed on *reading strategies,* for example, "use knowledge of basic grammar, predictable words and structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences."

The BC *Community literacy benchmarks* (BC) are organized by *cognitive processes* and by *competencies* that include reading strategies. The processes go across all levels, and competencies are noted for each level. The developers made a conscious decision *not* to make the benchmarks task oriented. Although teaching and learning within the framework would focus on learners' goals, they wanted to be able to track the development of cognitive processes.

The *Ontario adult literacy curriculum* Competency Framework focuses on *tasks* that are needed in further education, training, work and life in general. The competency framework does not include specific reading skills or strategies needed to perform a task. Rather, this approach assumes that instructors have knowledge and skills to identify and teach prerequisite skills. The Manitoba manuals focus on assignments that include tasks and reading skills/strategies. The term "task" may be used differently in the Manitoba and Ontario frameworks.

Curriculum and assessment

Whether approached from a skills/strategies or a tasks perspective, teaching, learning and assessment within the frameworks reflect a social practices perspective, although not necessarily named as such. Documents related to the frameworks advocate that instructors teach skills/strategies in the context of texts and activities that learners need and want to accomplish. For example, the Manitoba *Record of achievement manual. Stage 1* (2009) notes that:

> *You and your tutor or instructor are free to choose the material to use as well as the ways to complete the Assignments…. The reading and writing material should be something you would see in your daily life at home, work or in the community. Together, you and your tutor or instructor may decide on the best ways to learn and practice the skills and knowledge you need to acquire.* (p. 6)

The OALC Competency Framework is intended to be a non-prescriptive, holistic approach to learning. Instructors will be able to use the OALC Guidelines to develop learning activities, based on learners' short-term goals and related learning outcomes. The BC and Saskatchewan frameworks are based on similar intentions.

BC Community literacy benchmarks	**SK** Circle of learning benchmarks	**MB** Record of achievement manuals	**ON** LBS Learning Outcomes	**ON** Competency Framework (OALC)
Domain Reading	**Content area** Communication	[Sections] Reading text Document use	**Domain** Communication	**Competency** Communicate information/ideas
Cognitive Processes with example of competency	**Benchmarks** **e.g.** Read short paragraphs with understanding.			
	Learning Outcomes e.g. Learners will read short paragraphs and simple documents for enjoyment and practical purposes.	**Assignments** e.g., find detail in text; re-tell what you read		**Task group** **e.g.** Engage in interactions
Analyze e.g. recognize personal and social sight words in text and in isolation		**Success markers** e.g., Use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words	**Performance Indicators** e.g., Use knowledge of basic grammar, predictable words and structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences	**Task statement (Level 2)** Engage in interactions, such as sharing ideas and information, exchanging opinions, explaining and discussing concepts that: [see below]
I**nterpret** e.g. use context cues (meaning and language) to figure out unknown words			**Transition markers** e.g., Identifies root words	**Qualities of task:** Involve one or more people; can vary in length; address a familiar or unfamiliar audience; may contain unfamiliar content.
Monitor e.g. recognize when unable to understand text				**Qualities of performance:** The learner shows an awareness of factors that affect an interaction such as social and cultural differences, or differences of opinions and ideas.
	What you can read e.g. Simple instructions Public Service messages			

Table 4. Examples of points of reference for Level One Reading in the literacy frameworks

Literacy benchmarks frameworks in other provinces, territories and countries

The review for this report included internet searches for benchmark frameworks in other Canadian provinces and territories. Literacy/ABE (pre-credit) and credit programming in those jurisdictions is organized in various ways. In some provinces, all literacy/ABE providers use a provincial curriculum, and these generally include an outline of learning outcomes or other measures for the program level. These are comparable to the benchmark frameworks reviewed in this report, but are integrated into the curriculum. (For more information, refer to the accompanying report on curriculum, assessment and adult diplomas.)

The review also included a search for benchmark frameworks in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland and Scotland. An Australian framework is included here as an example of a broader scope of points of reference. Frameworks in the other countries are related closely to curriculum and are reviewed in the accompanying report.

The *Core skills framework* in Australia was developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to describe and monitor performance and plan core skills training. The framework identifies five core skills, including reading.

This framework accounts for the factors that affect reading performance. Table 5 shows these factors for levels 1 and 5.

Level	**Factors Influencing Performance**			
	Support	Context	Text	Task complexity
1	• Full support • Works alongside mentor/expert • Prompting and modeling provided	• Highly familiar contexts • Concrete and immediate • Very restricted range of contexts	• Short and simple • Highly explicit purpose • Limited, highly familiar vocabulary	• Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 processes, e.g. locating, recognizing
5	• Little or no support • Initiates support from own established resources	• Broad range of contexts • Adaptability within and across contexts • Specialization on one or more contexts	• Highly complex texts • Highly embedded information • Includes highly specialized language	• Sophisticated task analysis including interpretation, analysis, reflection, synthesis, evaluation and recommendation

Table 5. Factors influence performance. [13]

Other features of the *Core skills framework* include Reading Indicators that account for purpose, strategies and text complexity. For example:

[13] Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. *Australian Core Skills Framework*. (2008). p 8.

Level 1: Identifies personally relevant information and ideas within familiar contexts

Level 5: Draws on a repertoire of strategies to maintain and understanding throughout complex tasks.

Additional features of the *Core skills framework* are described in Appendix 5.

Strengths and challenges of the benchmarks frameworks (BC, SK, MB, ON)

During the consultations, people were asked to identify and talk about strengths and challenges of their province's frameworks for literacy programs. Many of the strengths and challenges that were named referred to benchmarks *systems* (including curriculum guidelines and assessment) and their implementation, rather than to the specific *framework* and its contents.

In some cases what one person named as a strength might be named by another as a challenge. As only 4 to 5 people were consulted in each province, the comments are not generalizable, and not all of the strengths and challenges were identified in each province. However, the comments do point to areas to consider in developing an Alberta framework and system.

Strengths	Challenges
• Values-based approaches • Practitioner-led development • Learner-centred principle • Accommodates cultural diversity • Non-prescriptive, flexible, adaptable • Portfolio approach to assessment • Applies to all "pathways" • Transition oriented • More transparent for stakeholders outside programs • Portability and transferability • Appropriate learner placement • Learners and tutor see progress	• Time for development • Lack of time and funds for implementation • Limited instructional/tutoring time • Implementation by tutors /relevance • Task–oriented frameworks assumes teachers have knowledge to teach reading skills/strategies • Reporting/accountability • Assessment • Lack of alignment with IALSS • Only one measure of success • Academic terminology

Table 6. Strengths and challenges of the benchmarks frameworks and related systems

Strengths

The ***values-based approaches*** that underlie the BC and Saskatchewan frameworks were named as key strengths of those *systems.* The approaches were seen as affirming what practitioners in community-based literacy programs already do. In BC, the ***practitioner-led development*** of the framework was seen as a strength that contributed to the values-based approach. [14]

[14] There was one person who saw the benchmarks as being developed by "experts" rather and felt that practitioners involved in field testing didn't really have a say.

A ***learner-centred principle*** and related approaches were named as a strength for all of the frameworks. Based on this principle, none of the frameworks were intended to provide for standard curriculum or assessment procedures. Rather they are intended as a *guide* for teaching skills and strategies within the context of realistic or authentic materials related to learners' goals; they could be adapted for different learners, with ***different cultures*** and needs, in different situations. This ***non-prescriptive, flexible, adaptable*** approach to curriculum and assessment was also identified as a strength, with the ***portfolio approach*** to assessment seen as a major strength in Manitoba. Practitioners consulted in Manitoba and Saskatchewan who use the frameworks were enthusiastic about the learner-centred and flexible aspects. Although portfolio assessment is a feature of the Saskatchewan benchmarks system, time to implement portfolios has been an issue.

The fact that the framework ***applies to all pathways*** (further education or training, employment, enhanced independence) was named as a strength of the *Ontario adult literacy curriculum.* This strength is also implied in the other frameworks.

In BC, the ***portability and transferability*** of the benchmarks was considered a strength. In Manitoba, learners who complete assignments for a stage three certificate may apply to have the certificate recognized for up to two credits towards the Mature Student Diploma. A strength of the *Ontario adult literacy curriculum* is that it focuses ***on transition*** related to goals and pathways, rather than on learners moving from level to level. The OALC was also seen as being more ***transparent*** and understandable to stakeholders outside of programs; a related strength was that the framework provided learners with a way to talk to about their abilities. This was also identified as a strength of the Manitoba framework.

Other areas of strength identified included that the benchmarks provided ***for appropriate learner placemen***t, helped learners and tutors ***see progress,*** and provided a way for programs to be accountable.

Challenges

Lack of time and ***additional funding*** was a key challenge to implementing the frameworks in BC and Saskatchewan. It was noted that practitioners in community-based programs already have limited time to carry out a range of program related responsibilities, and that there were no funds for additional time to implement the benchmarks framework. In Saskatchewan, college-based literacy practitioners did not have time to plan lessons or portfolio assessment for individual learners. Lack of time/financial support was also identified as a potential challenge for implementing the *Ontario adult literacy curriculum*. In one Saskatchewan community-based program that implemented benchmarks, instructors had three weeks of preparation time before classes started, along with some time each day. Providing additional preparation time seemed to be a key factor in implementation.

Further, ***instructional time is often limited*** in community-based programs. Given that learners might meet for two hours once a week, some practitioners were reluctant to allocate class time to assessment for benchmarks purposes. (Note that in Manitoba, programs are required to provide for a minimum of six hours for learners. As well, there are very few volunteer tutor programs.)

Although a non-prescriptive approach was intended and generally welcomed, it was suggested that in some cases practitioners saw the frameworks as something they *had* to follow. In other instances, some, particularly tutors, needed more direction about materials to use with new frameworks. One person consulted with had prepared a range of benchmarks related materials for tutors to use. Regarding assessment, it was suggested that in retrospect, it might have been helpful to suggest a small range of assessment tools to use in relation to the benchmarks.

Implementation by tutors was also a challenge in some instances in BC and Saskatchewan. Some tutors didn't see the relevance of the frameworks for learners. In one instance, training helped tutors understand and start to use the frameworks; in another, as mentioned above, developing resources related to the benchmarks helped. Having tutors ***report on learner benchmarks*** levels was also a challenge; in one program tutors' return of levels information was about 50%. It was suggested that an online interactive system might improve reporting by tutors.

In Ontario, it was noted that teachers may need time to ***shift*** from a skills/strategies focus to the task orientation of the *Ontario adult literacy curriculum*. As mentioned, the OALC does not specify reading skills/strategies needed to complete tasks, whereas the *LBS learning outcomes* did.

Reporting/accountability on learner placement and outcomes in relation to the frameworks is a requirement in BC, MB and Ontario (it is not currently a requirement in Saskatchewan; this will change with the coming implementation of an on line reporting system). One concern raised was that reporting based on the frameworks doesn't account for the time it takes for a learner to progress from the beginning to the end of a level.

It was also noted that reporting on placement and outcomes provides data for only part of the "picture" of adult literacy learning and programming. Information is also needed about barriers to learning, in order to work on improving access. As well, learner progress is only ***one measure of program success*** [15] and progress in reading is also only one measure of learner progress. Other areas include increased confidence and having a voice.

Some noted that matching ***assessment*** results to frameworks is subjective; this raises questions about the accuracy of information being collected. The role of tutors in identifying learner benchmarks levels was also questioned by one person; others noted the reality that tutors and learners often work on their own with coordinator contact from time to time.

One person questioned why the benchmarks for her province weren't ***aligned*** with IALSS. She felt that alignment would make it easier to describe learner placements and progress when using IALSS levels for public awareness or tutor training.

[15] In Manitoba there is a set of quality standards that literacy programs are expected to meet.

Considerations for developing a literacy benchmarks framework for Alberta

People who were consulted in each province were asked to offer suggestions for developing benchmarks for Alberta. There were a number of consistent suggestions as well as some mentioned only once or twice. As well, insights gained through the review and report writing processes point to considerations for development of a framework and system for Alberta. Suggestions from the consultations and additional considerations are integrated in the following.

Place learners and practitioners at the center

- Keep in mind the range of reasons that learners have for participating in programs and the range of ways people learn. Consider how these might be reflected in a framework.

- Consider how a framework will affect teaching and learning practice in the day-to-day realities of literacy programs. Balance "what works for learners and practitioners with what works for government." [16]

Clarify intentions and approaches

- Clarify intentions for developing and implementing reading benchmarks. For instance, participants in a 2008 literacy consultation suggested that benchmarks would enable a common assessment process and support curriculum and lesson plan development in various contexts.[17] Similar and other intentions are listed on p. 7 in this report.

- Clarify what is meant by "referenced to international adult literacy and essential skills measures." IALSS and ES measures are based on complexity of tasks, including the complexity of the texts and the complexity of strategies required to complete the tasks. Is an Alberta system to be created on the same basis? Or is it a matter of aligning a "levels" framework with IALSS levels?

- Consider whether a benchmarks framework is the most appropriate *focus* to meet intentions. For instance, in some jurisdictions, such as Scotland and Nova Scotia the focus has been on developing learner-centred curriculum guidelines. These include core skills or learning outcomes. In either case, clarify what curriculum and assessment approach the framework will support. (Learner-centred, flexible approaches are advocated.)

- Clarify the ***theoretical base*** for a reading benchmarks framework. As outlined earlier, reading can be viewed primarily as cognitive strategies/processes or viewed in terms of tasks. In practice both approaches often interweave. Can a benchmarks framework capture this interweaving? Can it also account for varying contexts and purposes of reading?

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[16] *Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum.* Presentation to Adult Literacy Subcommittee, LEAG. (PowerPoint). (2009). Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

[17] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2008). *Literacy. More than words can say. Summary of input on an literacy framework for Alberta*. P. Retrieved April 10, 2010 from http://aet.alberta.ca/media/133712/summary_of_literacy_forum_input.pdf

Clarify values

Clarify values and principles that will guide development of benchmarks and systems, including those listed in *Living literacy: Literacy framework for Alberta's new economy*.[18] Values named for other province's frameworks might also inform development.

Account for learner experiences and program contexts

This includes recognizing and accounting for the following:

- Learner progress is one measure of program quality, and program quality can affect learner progress. Other program quality factors include: teacher training and access to professional development; suitable learning environment; number of hours instruction; funding and material resources, and others).
- Progress in reading, writing and numeracy are one measure of learner progress. Other measures include increase in confidence, having a voice, participating.
- Some learners will need considerable time to progress from one literacy level or stage to another. Some learners will be maintaining their skills/levels.
- There are a myriad of circumstances that affect learning and progress, including finances, health, family and work responsibilities, experiences of violence and previous experiences in school. Learners in community-based programs may have one lesson a week. Information about these issues can inform policy and program development.
- Given the number of ELL learners attending literacy programs, consider relationships between the proposed Alberta reading benchmarks and the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

Respect and build on practitioner knowledge

- Learner progress is related to the experience and training/professional development of coordinators/teachers/tutors. Frameworks that provide guidance rather than prescriptions respect practitioner knowledge and experience. They also require professional development and support for practitioners who have less experience with flexible guidelines.[19]
- Involve experienced practitioners from all sectors in development. Recognize that practitioners in community-based learning programs generally have lower pay and fewer benefits than college employed instructors. This can have implications for bringing people together from both sectors for development of benchmarks frameworks and resources.

Allocate sufficient time and funding

- Allocate sufficient time for research about levels, assessment and curriculum currently used in Alberta, and for consultations, development, pilot testing, training and implementation.
- Allocate funds for programs to have additional time to learn and implement new frameworks.

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[18] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). p. 6.

[19] Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. (2009). p. 8 includes priorities actions regarding practitioner training and sharing effective practices in assessment, curricula and instructional strategies.

Appendix 1. British Columbia (Community Literacy Benchmarks[20])

Literacy and Basic Education is provided through Community Adult Learning Programs (CALPs), postsecondary institutions and school boards. Some CALPs are delivered through postsecondary institutions. There are two benchmark frameworks for literacy/ABE programs: The *ABE fundamental level framework* and the *Community literacy benchmarks.*

The postsecondary institutions offer four levels of ABE: Fundamental (literacy); Intermediate (Grades 9-10); Advanced (Grade 11) and Provincial (Grade 12). The ABE Fundamental Level is divided into six levels. The *Fundamental level framework* lists specific skills for each level. They are intended as a guide and to assist with transferability. They were developed as part of the post secondary institution articulation process.

Community Literacy Benchmarks

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour commissioned Literacy BC to develop benchmarks as part of a monitoring and assessment system for CALP. The *Community literacy benchmarks* include 4 levels.

Relationship to IALSS and other programs

The *Community literacy benchmarks* reading benchmarks are not aligned to IALSS. Through a "cross walk" process, the benchmarks were related to the postsecondary institutions and school board levels.

Values based approach

The benchmark design team believed no approach to assessing and reporting on the progress of learners could be successful if it did not evolve from the values and principles of community-based literacy learning. Values include:

- an asset based approach
- an understanding of literacy in relation to applying skills and knowledge in various contexts
- recognition that learners face many barriers and require support to work at their own pace
- recognition that limited capacity in community based programs requires that a benchmark system be realistic and have ease of use

Development

A team of experienced practitioners guided the development of the benchmarks with the assistance of a consultant. Benchmarks were field tested and revised to address feedback.

[20] Refer to Appendix 6 for citations of documents that were reviewed.

Implementation and Use

Literacy BC was responsible for developing and providing training about using the benchmarks. Literacy BC also conducted a survey about how the benchmarks were being used. Related training is currently being developed for delivery on a regional basis.

CALP funded programs are required to report on learners' levels at the start and end of a program year.

Definitions[21]

- *Benchmarks* are described as " levelled indicators that are used to measure progress towards competency… a progression of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values."
- *Domains* are "categories of learning that can be measured."
- *Competencies* are defined as including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values (The Organization of Economic Co-operation).
- *Cognitive processes* are operations within the brain that underlie the learning of competencies.

Description

The *Community literacy benchmarks* include six domains of learning: Reading; Writing; Oral Communication; Math; Participation; and Information Technology. Each domain is organized to reflect the cognitive processes in use and the competencies that are being developed. The processes and competencies for reading are listed in Table 1.1 on page 19.

Strengths

- Value-based approach affirms community-based literacy practice
- Enables learners to establish portable, transferable credits
- Not prescriptive re. assessment and curriculum

Challenges

- Language of the benchmarks (e.g. cognitive processes) is understandable for people with reading and teaching background; may be challenging for some others
- Tutors need training and materials to use the benchmarks. Some are reluctant to use them.
- It might have been helpful to suggest a small range of assessment tools to use.
- Reading is one measure of learner progress; progress is one measure of program quality.
- Lack of time for implementation. If learner has only an hour a week, may not want to use one lesson for assessment/benchmarks.
- Benchmarks don't account for ELL learners
- Some would like the benchmarks to be aligned with IALSS and Essential Skills

[21] Monitoring and assessment in community-based adult literacy programs in British Columbia. A report to the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. Phase 1: Definition and Selection of Benchmarks. Literacy BC. p. 10. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/MandA_Report_Final.pdf

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Analyze	-match letters to sounds	-use a variety of strategies to figure out unfamiliar words in text and in isolation (e.g., word families, phonics, prediction)	use appropriate strategies to figure out words with two or more syllables in text and in isolation (e.g., structural analysis)	-use appropriate strategies to figure out difficult words (e.g. word families, phonics, prediction, structural analysis)
	-recognize personal and social sight words in textand in isolation	-recognize high frequency sight words in text and in isolation	---------->	-recognize complex and technical words by sight ---------->
	-understand basic reading practices such as read from left to right and top to bottom	-describe the purpose of simple punctuation (e.g., capital letters, end punctuation)	-describe the purpose of the comma, colon, semicolon, apostrophes, brackets	-describe the purpose of various punctuation used in written English
	-locate specific information in predictable, functional, personally relevant, or repetitive text	-locate specific information in a single piece of text and/or document	-locate information in a book or a document, using appropriate strategies and graphic organizers (e.g., pictures, index, headings)	-locate and compare information in books, documents or on the internet
	-recall information in predictable text or retell a story	-use the organization of text to understand it	-use the form and structure of poetry to understand	-use the form and structure of text to understand popular media (e.g., newspapers,
Interpret	-use context cues (meaning and language) to figure out words in familiar text	use context cues (meaning and language) to predict words and their meaning	-use context to determine meaning of difficult vocabulary	-use context to help determine the meaning of abstract words and figures of speech (e.g., metaphors, analogies)
	-use print or sound cues (phonics) to figure out unfamiliar words	---------->	-understand how a dictionary works	-use a dictionary to find meanings of unknown words
	-make a prediction and/or inference after listening to a fictional piece of text read by another person	-make inferences and predictions after reading a piece of fiction	-make inferences, predictions, and/or draw conclusions in a piece of text or document	-identify inferences and conclusions in text or document
	-identify the theme, after listening to a fictional piece of text read by another person	-identify the theme, after reading a piece of fiction	-identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions and images	-identify universal themes in fiction (e.g., loss, sacrifice, heroism)
	-identify the main idea, after listening to a nonfictional piece of text read by another person	-identify the main idea, after reading a non-fictional piece of text	-state main idea, details, and sequence in a short, non-fictional piece of text	-summarize non-fictional text
	-relate text to prior knowledge, after listening to a piece of text	-relate text to prior knowledge, after reading a piece of text	---------->	---------->
	-identify the difference between fact and opinion, after listening to a passage read by another person	-identify the difference between fact and opinion	-form opinions after reading a piece of text or	-identify propaganda in popular media
Monitor	-understand that print has meaning and some personal application	make links to prior knowledge		
	-recognize when unable to understand text	-ask questions when unable to comprehend text and/ or graphic material	-ask questions when unable to understand text or graphic material	---------->
	-recognize when unable to figure out words (decode)	- identify that reading difficulties may be because reading material is not at the right level -use appropriate strategies to assist comprehension and/or decoding difficulties	-initiate strategies to assist comprehension and decoding (e.g., re-reading, context clues, looking at	---------->

- Reader increases automaticity and fluency ---------->
- Text becomes increasingly difficult ---------->

Table 1.1. Reading benchmarks[22]

[22] Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/Benchmarks_and_checklists.pdf

Appendix 2. Saskatchewan (Circle of Learning Benchmarks[23])

Literacy and ABE programming is offered through colleges and community based programs. The four levels include Literacy 1 and 2, Adult Basic Education (Level 3/Adult 10) and Adult Secondary Completion (Level 4/Adult 12).

The *Circle of learning benchmarks* relate to Literacy Levels 1 and 2 and includes the content areas of Communications; Numeracy; Lifelong Learning: and Interpersonal Skills. The benchmarks were developed in response to needs identified by practitioners, learners, Saskatchewan Advanced Education and Employment, and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

The Adult Basic Education Level Three (Adult 10) program includes Communications; Social Sciences; Lifework Studies; Mathematics; and Science. The *Communications curriculum guide* includes an Instructor's Overview Planner, which lists skills in Reading, Writing and Speaking. The purpose of the Planner is to assist in monitoring learner progress. It may also be used to record achievement of skills.

Circle of Learning Benchmarks

Relationship to IALSS/Transferability

The benchmarks are not aligned with IALSS. The levels relate to ABE levels that have been used in the province. The benchmarks can be related to Essential Skills in terms of tasks that are included, but they are not aligned with Essential Skills.

Completing Level 2 is intended to prepare people for Level 3 (Adult 10).

Development

The *Circle of learning benchmarks* were developed over five years, beginning in 2003. The benchmarks content reflects a review of national, international and Aboriginal literacy benchmarks, the experience of the Level 3 curriculum development team, and input from 236 people including adult learners and practitioners.

Intentions

The *Circle of learning benchmarks* are intended to provide ways to:

- document and recognize learner accomplishments
- enhance transition between literacy programs and levels
- facilitate the development of courses
- facilitate appropriate placement of learners in programs
- support development of learning plans that reflect learners' interests and needs
- support a holistic approach
- outline Level 1 and 2 literacy skills

[23] Refer to Appendix 6 for citations of documents that were reviewed.

Vision, guiding principles and philosophy

The vision underlying the benchmarks is based on the contemporary definitions of literacy and ABE that are used in Saskatchewan. Guiding principles for the benchmarks include: holistic, learner-centred, equitable, affirming, respectful of Aboriginal cultures, critically reflective and action oriented, accessible and accountable.

The benchmarks also reflect philosophical foundations adopted by the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Redesign (Level 3) Task Team, namely: moving toward transactional and transformative perspectives; putting adult education principles into practice; valuing biculturalism; respecting all types of knowledge and learning; and making a commitment to renewal. The *Circle of learning benchmarks* integrate theory and practice and encourage reflective practice.

Implementation/Sustainability

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network is responsible for implementing the benchmarks. SLN has offered orientation workshops and workshops about the reading and numeracy benchmarks and portfolio development. There is funding for one more year to continue training. SLN plans to use a focus group to determine what is working and what needs to change. They also need to examine how to sustain the work, including funding for reviews and updates.

Use

The benchmarks are not meant to include information to support all contexts and learners. Users are referred to other resources, such as the Canadian Language Benchmarks, that were developed for specific audiences.

Postsecondary institutions that received funding from the Department of Advanced Education and Employment for literacy programs are expected to use the *Circle of learning benchmarks* as the framework for those programs.

Public training institutions and community organizations funded by the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission are required to participate in professional development training and to demonstrate how the benchmarks are being implemented and supported in the adult literacy programs they provide.[24]

Definitions [25]

- *Benchmarks* are defined as "points of reference that serve as a basis for evaluation or comparison." They describe functional skills adults need as family and community members, learners and workers and "standards learners should be able to reach at each level."

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[24] General information. Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks 1 and 2. p. 2. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from w.sk.literacy.ca/pdf_links/benchGeneralInfo.pdf

[25] *The circle of learning. Benchmarks levels 1 and 2* (2006*)*. Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. p. 15. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from: http://www.sk.literacy.ca/pdf_links/benchCircle.pdf

- *Learning outcomes* are ways to "identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that learners need to communicate, understand and participate well at home, in the community, and at work."

Description

The Communication content area includes Listening; Speaking; Reading; and Writing. For each level of reading, there is a benchmark, a number of Learning Outcomes and a list of materials that a learner can read at that level. Table 2.1 lists these for Reading (including Level 3).

READING Level 1	READING Level 2	READING Level 3
Benchmark: Read short paragraphs with understanding. **Learning Outcomes** • Learners will demonstrate reading readiness skills. • Learners will demonstrate the knowledge of foundations of reading. • Learners will identify the elements of a sentence and paragraph in order to improve critical thinking skills. • Learners will read short paragraphs and simple documents for enjoyment and practical purposes. • Learners will choose, monitor and adjust reading strategies as needed. • **What you can read - Level 1** • Letters of the alphabet • Sentences and short paragraphs • Menus • Simple timetables, maps and road signs • Street and shop signs • Newspaper headlines and short news items • Simple instructions • Public Service messages	**Benchmark:** Read 1-2 pages of text with understanding. **Learning Outcomes** • Learners will read short fiction and non-fiction text and simple documents in order to increase vocabulary. • Learners will demonstrate knowledge of the elements of non-fiction and simple documents to improve critical thinking skills and for public discussion. • Learners will demonstrate knowledge of the elements of fiction to improve critical thinking skills and for public discussion. • Learners will demonstrate critical thinking about fiction and non-fiction texts and documents to use for self-expression and public discussion. • Learners will read short fiction and non-fiction text for enjoyment and practical purposes. **What you can read - Level 2** • Basic documents 1 or 2 pages • Stories 1 or 2 pages long • Full length news articles • Biographies 1 or 2 pages long • Basic personal business letters; High interest low vocabulary books	**Learning Outcomes** • Learners will read with understanding for a variety of purposes, using a variety of text. • Learners will recognize that reading is a process of constructing meaning between self and text. • Learners will apply a variety of reading strategies. • Learners will read and integrate information from several sources. • Learners will demonstrate reading strategies and new knowledge, thoughts or feelings gained from reading. **What you can read - Level 3** • Newspapers • Assembly instructions • Pamphlets • Essays • Short stories • Novels • Articles from the internet • Textbooks • Encyclopedias • Workplace documents

Table 2.1. Reading benchmarks. *The circle of learning. Benchmarks levels 1 and 2.* (2006). p. 28.

The *Circle of learning benchmarks* document also includes "knowledge and skills sets" which subdivide the learning outcomes and describe examples of how the learning might be applied in contexts such as family, community or work. The benchmarks document encourages instructors to plan lessons that use real life materials and reflect learners' knowledge, experiences and learning interests. Table 2.2 includes examples.

Learning Outcome	Learners will read short paragraphs and simple documents for enjoyment and practical purposes.
Example from knowledge and skill set	Identify the different ways that information and ideas can be expressed in writing (e.g. schedules, poems calendars)
Example of application	Compare your household's meals with Canada's Food Guide in order to judge whether you are preparing healthy meals for your loved ones

Table 2.2. Examples of learning outcome, knowledge and skill sets [26]

Strengths

- The vision and values affirm literacy practice. They are considered a very good way to support learning. The focus on a learner-centred approach can encourage students to continue with their programs.
- The benchmarks are flexible and adaptable to any situation.
- It is not a curriculum that prescribes what people have to teach.
- Learning outcomes can be related to learners' goals.
- Many people are using portfolios. The benchmarks workshops help people understand portfolio use as a process as well as a product.

Challenges

- Use of benchmarks in programs varies. Factors affecting use include lack of instructor time to implement the benchmarks learning approaches or portfolio assessment. There was no additional funding for programs to implement the benchmarks.
- ABE students may be on individualized programs, with continuous intake. It is difficult for an instructor to develop a benchmarks related program for each learner.
- In tutoring programs, some tutors may not see the benchmarks as relevant for the learner they are working with.
- Some institutions require use of standardized tests.

[26] *Circle of learning benchmarks 1 and 2*. (2006). pp. 50-51

Appendix 3. Manitoba (Record of Achievement Manuals[27])

Literacy programming is delivered through the Adult Literacy Program of Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy. The program was established by the Manitoba Literacy Act (2007). Under this Act the Ministry can set regulations regarding such matters as practitioner qualifications and minimum hours of instruction.

Literacy programs are offered by non-profit organizations, libraries and Adult Learning Centres registered under the Adult Learning Centre Act. Registered Adult Learning Centres also provide high school level credit (grades 10 to 12) programming. Literacy programs levels are identified by stages 1 to 3.

Manitoba developed a *Certificate in literacy and learning: Stages 1-3* in response to learners' requests for a way to recognize learning. There is a *Record of achievement manual* for each stage.

Development/Relationship to IALSS and Essential Skills

The certificates and manuals were originally developed in the 1980s-90s, based on the stage approach for programming that was used at that time. In 1999-2001 the manuals were revised to link more closely with Essential Skills levels 1 to 3.

Transferability/Recognition

All programs delivered through the Adult Literacy Program are organized on the stages model, and learner placement is related to the stages. Adults who achieve the stage 3 certificate may apply for up to two prior learning credits towards the Mature Student Diploma.

Intentions

The stages and the *Record of achievement manuals* are a framework for assessment, goal setting and teaching/learning.

Guiding principles

The following principles are outlined in *Creative student assessment.*[28] The guide describes "valued literacy instruction" as instruction that:

- Is participatory and interactive
- Engages the learner in a broad range of authentic tasks presented in real situations and involving "real" people

[27] *Record of Achievement Manual, Certificate in Literacy and Learning: Stage 1.* (2009). Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, Adult Learning and Literacy. http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/stages/pdf/stage1_0809.pdf

[28] *Creative student assessment. A guide to developing meaningful evaluation.* (2003). Manitoba Advanced Education and Training, Adult Learning and Literacy. p. 6. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/creative_student_assessment_oct03.pdf

- Recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of literacy learning and emphasizes the processes and metacognitive aspects involved in reading
- Empowers learners by fostering independence, self-esteem and positive attitudes towards learning

Use

Completing the manuals and applying for a certificate is optional, however the manuals provide a guide for identifying learner goals and planning lessons. Programs use the *Record of achievement manuals* to guide placement and program planning with learners, as appropriate. Program agencies report learner enrolments according to the stages learners are placed in.

Description

The *Record of achievement manuals* include assignments organized in sections: Reading Text; Document Use; Writing; and Oral Communication. Table 3.1 includes examples of assignment topics for Reading Text and Document Use.

In some instances the same type of assignment is included for stages one and two or for stages two and three. However, the intent is that learners will use more complex text at the higher stage. Examples are highlighted in bold in the table.

Stage One	**Stage Two**	**Stage Three**
Text	**Text**	**Text**
• Find detail in text • Re-tell what you have read • Understand the meaning of text	• Predict text using reading strategies • Identify the main ideas and supporting details in text • Understand meaning and purpose of text • Summarize a text	• Summarize a text • Information search: (requiring a variety of reading strategies • Identify author's intended audience, opinion, purpose • Select and integrate relevant information from text • Identify characteristics of a genre
• Document use	**• Document use**	**• Document use**
• Read signs and labels • Read and follow instructions • Plan a trip using maps • Get information from tables and graphs • Read and fill out simple forms • Use reference books to find information.	**• Read signs and labels** • Read and follow instructions • Plan a journey using maps **• Obtain information from tables** • Read and enter information on forms • Use reference material/system to find information	• Complete forms • Organize materials into a useable, efficient system • Consult a reference system to find information **• Locate specific information embedded in tables or schedules** • Interpret and analyze information in documents (e.g. graphs, charts, diagrams, drawings, blueprints, schematics or flowcharts with text

Table 3.1 Reading assignments for stages one, two and three[29]

[29] Excerpted from the Record of achievement manuals, stages 1 to 3.

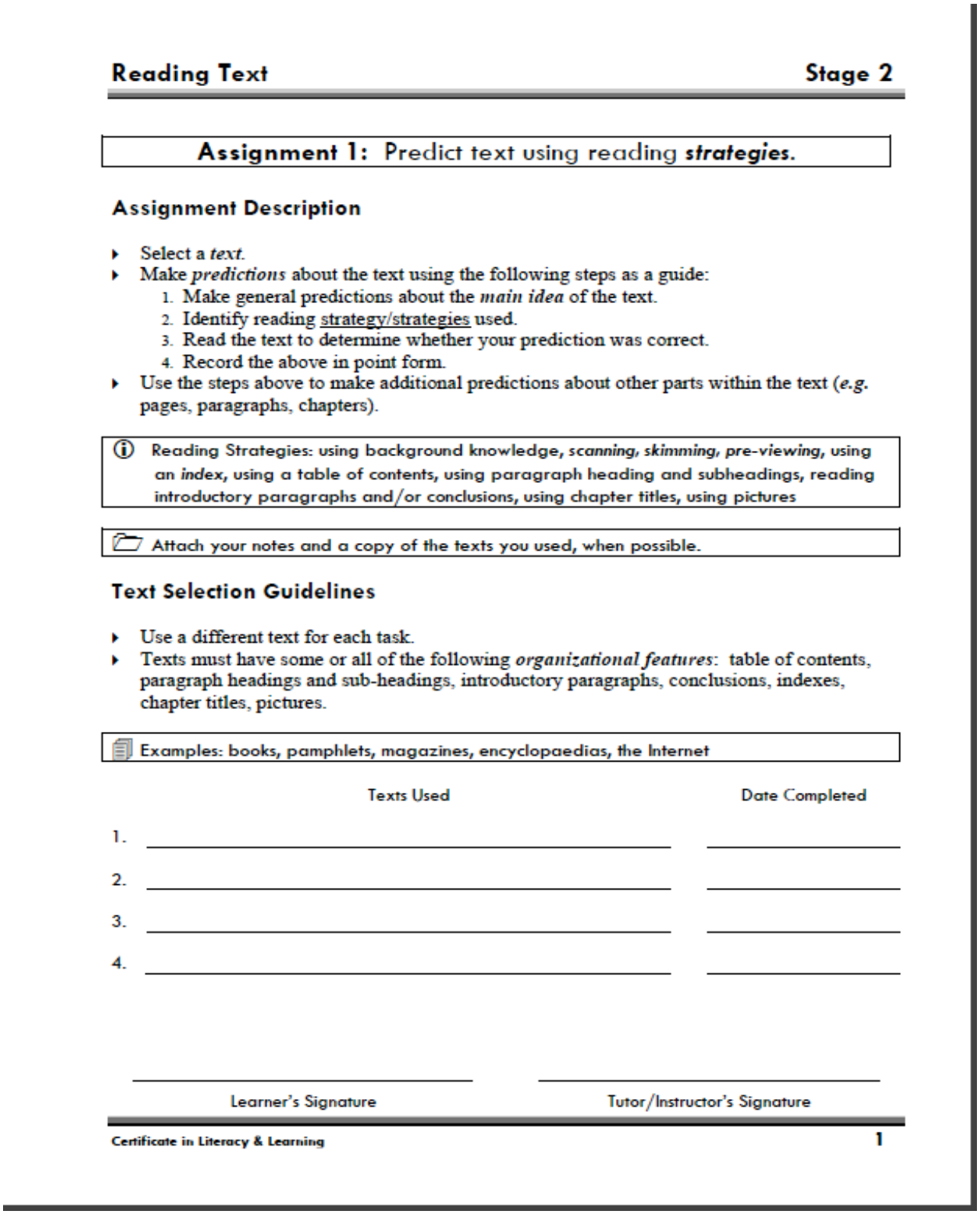
Each assignment provides suggestions about how to complete it (e.g., how to find detail in text) and how to demonstrate and document learning. Examples of texts to use are provided and learners are encouraged to identify and bring in materials from home or work to use for the assignments. They are also expected to repeat the assignment with a number of different texts. Table 3.2 includes an example of a complete assignment (see p. 27).

Strengths

- Provides a flexible, adaptable structure for working with students with different levels and interests
- Learners take ownership and bring in own materials
- Encourages use of authentic materials and transfer to everyday life
- Emphasis on metacognition
- Portfolios can be used to demonstrate independent application of skills in different situations/ contexts.

Challenges

- Learners at stages one and two need a lot of support; they may not understand what is written in the manual. They may not be familiar with using "guidelines" rather than workbooks.
- Although programs offer a minimum of six hours of week of instruction for learners, some learners are not able attend regularly. This affects progress.



Reading Text **Stage 2**

Assignment 1: Predict text using reading ***strategies.***

Assignment Description

- Select a *text.*
- Make *predictions* about the text using the following steps as a guide:
  1. Make general predictions about the *main idea* of the text.
  2. Identify reading strategy/strategies used.
  3. Read the text to determine whether your prediction was correct.
  4. Record the above in point form.
- Use the steps above to make additional predictions about other parts within the text (*e.g.* pages, paragraphs, chapters).

ⓘ Reading Strategies: using background knowledge, *scanning, skimming, pre-viewing,* using an *index,* using a table of contents, using paragraph heading and subheadings, reading introductory paragraphs and/or conclusions, using chapter titles, using pictures

Attach your notes and a copy of the texts you used, when possible.

Text Selection Guidelines

- Use a different text for each task.
- Texts must have some or all of the following *organizational features*: table of contents, paragraph headings and sub-headings, introductory paragraphs, conclusions, indexes, chapter titles, pictures.

Examples: books, pamphlets, magazines, encyclopaedias, the Internet

	Texts Used	Date Completed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Learner's Signature Tutor/Instructor's Signature

Certificate in Literacy & Learning 1

Table 3.2 Example of an assignment. *Record of achievement manual. Certificate in literacy and learning.* Stage 2. (2009). p. 1.

Appendix 4. Ontario benchmarks frameworks

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programming is offered through colleges, school boards and community-based programs. There are four interweaving program streams: Anglophone, Francophone, Native and Deaf. At present there are 5 LBS levels (grades 1 to 9 or pre-credit). Community-based organizations generally offer levels 1 to 3; colleges generally offer levels 3 to 5. Colleges also offer Academic and Career Education (ACE).

The *LBS learning outcomes* matrix was developed in 1998 by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET), in partnership with the literacy field, as the first phase of a Recognition of Adult Learning Strategy (RALS). The *LBS learning outcomes* matrix and a related *Level descriptions manual* have been used by LBS funded agencies since their implementation.

In 2008 the development of the Ontario adult literacy curriculum (OALC) was initiated with support from three ministries: Training, College and Universities; Education; and Citizenship and Immigration. The curriculum includes a Competency Framework and Guidelines. The Framework reflects a shift from a skills based to a task-based approach. It is related to IALSS and the HRDSC Essential Skills.

Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) learning outcomes[30]

Relationship to IALSS and Essential Skills

The *LBS learning outcomes* matrix include 5 Levels that were linked to the skills and knowledge that were included in the 1997 Ontario grades 1 to 9 school curriculum. The *LBS learning outcomes* levels related to IALSS as follows:

IALSS	LBS Learning Outcomes
Prose and Document Literacy Level 1	Communications (Reading) 1-3
Prose and Document Literacy Level 2	Communications (Reading) 4-5

Table 4.1 Relationship between IALSS levels and LBS learning outcomes

Transferability/Recognition

There is an understanding of LBS levels within LBS programs, however, they are not widely understood by employers or providers of further training.

Definitions

Learning outcomes focus on learner achievement and address the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners can demonstrate at a certain level of proficiency.

[30] *Working with learning outcomes. Validation draft.* (1998). Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section Workplace Preparation Branch. Ministry of Education and Training.

Intentions

The *LBS learning outcomes* were intended to provide:

- a common language to describe learner achievements
- ways to measure and document learner progress towards their goals
- ways to ease learner transition
- a way to enhance agency accountability

Guiding principles

The *LBS learning outcomes* reflected guiding principles of the LBS program. These include:

- a results-based focus
- program accountability
- learner-centred services
- adult education principles
- linkages to the broader education and training system

Use

Agencies are required to report on learner levels.

Description

The *LBS learning outcomes* matrix includes three domains: Communications, Numeracy and Self-management. Each domain includes Component Outcomes, which are made up of skill sets. The skill sets include success markers and transition markers for each of 5 levels. For example:

- Domain: communications
- Component outcome: Read with understanding for various purposes
- Skill set: Decoding skills (one of seven skill sets).
- Success markers (see Table 4.2)
- Transition markers (see Table 4.2)

Level	1	2	3	4	5
Success markers (Examples)	Know the alphabet	Uses a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g…)	Uses a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g…)	Uses a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words (e.g…)	Decodes new vocabulary independently…; Applies a full range of efficient reading techniques
Transition markers (Examples)	n/a	Identifies root words	Recognizes patterns of word structure (e.g….)	Uses knowledge of word origins	n/a

Table 4. 2. Example from *LBS learning outcomes* matrix

Level descriptions manual[31]

Following the development of the *LBS learning outcomes,* Literacy Ontario led the development of *The level descriptions manual* (LDM). While still linked to the Ontario school curriculum, the levels descriptions were intended to be more adult oriented and reflect principles and practices of adult learning. It was intended that delivery agencies would use both the *LBS learning outcomes* matrix and *The level descriptions manual* for assessment and program delivery purposes.

The LDM includes the five levels of the *LBS learning outcomes.* For each level there is a:

- Summary statement about the Component Learning Outcome (e.g., Read with Understanding). This is meant to describe an overall level of achievement for that level.
- Features (e.g. Reading Strategies). These identify the important aspects of a reading skill.
- Performance Indicators (e.g., Use knowledge of the alphabet and basic phonics to decode words). These provide a guide for assessment of performance,

Examples are included in Table 4.3.

Features	**Performance Indicator** (Excerpts)
Reading strategies	• Use knowledge of the alphabet and basic phonics to decode common words • Use knowledge of basic grammar, predictable word patterns and basic sentence structure in speech to understand phrases and sentences
Forms and conventions	
Comprehension	
Interpretation	

Table 4.3. Features and performance indicators: Read with Understanding for Various Purposes Level 1[32]

Strengths and challenges

- School board delivery agencies liked the learning outcomes matrix as it related to transfer to academic and career development programs.
- Included the domain of self-management, which related to Essential Skills.
- Are helpful regarding the reading process but are at too "granular" a level.
- Seemed to suggest a curriculum. It was not meant to be a prescription but some people approached it that way.
- Didn't necessarily help agencies help learners prepare for transition.

31 *The levels descriptions manual*. (n.d.) Toronto, ON: Ontario Literacy Coalition. http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/levels/levels.pdf

32 *The levels descriptions manual*. p. 16

The Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum (OALC)

The *Ontario adult literacy curriculum* development was initiated in 2008. The curriculum includes a Competency Framework and Guidelines. As the curriculum is not yet available, the information in this appendix is based on an overview document and on conversations with people who have been involved in the curriculum development. [33]

Relationship to IALSS and Essential Skills (ES)

The OALC Competency Framework reflects a shift from the skills based approach of the *LBS learning outcomes* matrix to the HRDSC Essential Skills approach. The intention of the new curriculum is to align with IALSS and Essential Skills levels 1 to 3. This would include LBS programs (currently levels 1 to 5) and Academic and Career Education (ACE) programs. Although the curriculum relates to HRSD Essential Skills, the OALC is *not* an Essential Skills curriculum. It builds on the ES approach and includes tasks that apply life-wide.

Transferability/Recognition

One intention of the Competency Framework is to contribute to easier learner transitions to employment, further education, training and/or enhanced personal independence. It is anticipated that the OALC can contribute to enhancing learner pathways among programs of the three supporting ministries. Learning pathways, based on learners' reasons for enrolling in programs, include:

- Independence (enhanced personal, social and civic participation)
- Employment
- Credit study toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- College postsecondary study
- Apprenticeship

Development

The curriculum was developed by a team of consultants from organizations that support the Anglophone, Francophone, Native and Deaf streams and from the community-based, school board and college sectors. Background research included a review of related developments nationally and internationally. The team met for 2 days about twice a month and worked on development between meetings. Some consultants worked full time, while others were part time.

Curriculum for three competencies (including “Communicate ideas and information”) were piloted in the winter, 2009. The pilot included thirty participants from four geographic regions, from all delivery streams and sectors, from agencies of various size and maturity and from a representation of LBS levels.

Training about the OALC will be introduced in the fall, 2010, and implementation will begin in 2011. The curriculum will be web-based.

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[33] Refer to Appendix 6 for citations of documents that were reviewed.

Guiding principles

It is intended that the OALC reflect the following principles:

- **Competency based**: six competencies form an overarching conceptual framework
- **Balanced**: sets high expectations for learning, while accommodating formal assessment for accountability (balances what matters to learners with what matters to governments)
- **Robust:** aligned to scale of national scope which has greater recognition currency
- **Goal-directed**: empowers all students to achieve their goals, regardless of their individual circumstances
- **Transition-oriented**: provides for coherent transitions, and opens up new pathways for further learning
- **Comprehensive**: applicable to all pathways and streams as it is content and context free
- **Responsive:** reflects Ontario's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all adults
- **Inclusive**: ensures that learners' abilities and languages are recognized and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed

Use

The Competency Framework is meant to be used with a non-prescriptive, holistic approach to learning, and to help practitioners develop tasks. Instructors will be able to use the Guidelines to develop learning activities, based on learners' short-term goals and related learning outcomes.

Definitions

*Competencie*s are broad areas of learning related to what helps learners make a successful transition to their next steps. They include what adults need to know, do and be (knowledge, skills attitudes).

Description

The Competency Framework is organized on six competencies, including:

- Find and use information
- Communicate information and ideas
- Use numbers and think in quantitative terms
- Use technology
- Be self directed/act autonomously
- Engage/work with others

Each competency includes a number of task groups and performance indicators. Tasks may be broad or narrow in scope. Tasks may incorporate a single task group, 2 or more tasks groups from the same competency, or two more tasks groups from different competencies.

The performance indicators include the task statement, qualities of the task, and qualities of performance. The performance indicators are related to the IALSS levels and describe task performance at the *end* of a level. Following is an example.

Competency:	Communicate information and ideas
Task Group:	Engage in interactions
Task Statement at IALS Level 2:	Engage in interactions, such as sharing ideas and information, exchanging opinions, explaining and discussing concepts that: [missing text]
Qualities of task:	Involve one or more people. Can vary in length. Address a familiar or unfamiliar audience. May contain unfamiliar content.
Qualities of performance:	The learner shows an awareness of factors that affect an interaction such as social and cultural differences, or differences of opinions and ideas
Task examples:	Make a suggestion and provide a rationale. Brainstorm to generate solutions to a problem. Discuss various approaches to a project and express opinions.

Table 4.4 Example of competency, task and performance indicator

Performance indicators were developed with information adapted from the HRDSC Essential Skills complexity rating scales; the *Level descriptions manual*, the Manitoba stages model and the *Canadian language benchmarks*.

The OALC Guidelines will include explanations, examples and directions for developing a task-based curriculum. The Guidelines will provide examples of short-term goals and show how they are related to the Framework competencies; provide examples of tasks and how to analyze them; and list possible resources. The task-based approach assumes that practitioners have knowledge of reading and other skills that learners may need to develop in order to complete the tasks.

Strengths identified in the consultation

- The OALC is learner-centred, goal directed and encourages use of authentic materials. This validates what practitioners have been doing.
- The objectives of the OALC held up in the pilot.
- It is adult appropriate. Adults are able to move towards their goals in a more direct way but they won't have opportunities for a broad general education.
- It applies to all "pathways" (e.g., employment, further training, enhanced independence).
- It is transition oriented – more about people moving to where they want to go rather than from level to level.
- It is more transparent for stakeholders outside of programs. It gives learners/adults ways to talk about their abilities.
- Designed to accommodate cultural diversity.

Potential challenges

- The OALC does not include discrete details of reading skills. Skill teaching is still important but is not the focus of the curriculum. Time will be needed for practitioners to make the shift to this new level of guidance.

Appendix 5: Australia (Core Skills Framework[34])

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) developed the *Australian core skills framework* (ACSF) to describe and monitor individual performance, and plan core skills training.

Relationship to IALSS

Some have suggested that there is a broad alignment between ACSF and the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), however Level 5 of the ACSF is considered the end of high school in Australia.

Relationship to the National Reporting System

The ACSF is related to the National Reporting System (NRS), which has been used since 2005 to report outcomes of adult English language, literacy and numeracy provision. DEEWR requires providers to maintain NRS records for each participant and to provide that information to DEEWR on a regular basis. The aggregated data helps identify training gaps and informs funding provision.

Description

The framework identifies five *core skills* considered essential for people to participate in society. They are Reading; Writing; Learning; Oral Communication; and Numeracy. At each level within a core skill there are *indicators* that describe learner outcomes. *Performance features* provide more specific information about the indicators. They provide detailed descriptions of what a person who is fully competent in an ACSF level is able to do.

Sample activities represent the different contexts in which an individual might use the core skills. For example, activities are attached to six *aspects of communication* to illustrate how communication varies according to purpose, audience and context. These communication aspects include, for example, personal communication for expressing identity, procedural communication for performing tasks, and systems communications for interacting in organizations.

Individual performance across the five core skills can be benchmarked, and *"spiky" profiles* can be plotted to reveal strengths and learning needs. Though a learner can be competent in many core skills, they may have a specific weakness that could benefit from training. *Factors* that influence individual performance, such as the complexity of the task and the text, familiarity with the context, and the support available, are also taken into account. These factors are outlined in Table 5.1 (on p. 35).

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[34] Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. (2008). *Australian core skills framework. A summary.* Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/LitandNum/WorkplaceEnglishLanguageandLiteracy/Documents/ACSFsummaryfinaltoprint2.pdf

Level	Factors influencing performance			
	Support	Context	Text	Task complexity
1	• Full support • Works alongside mentor/expert • Prompting and modeling provided	• Highly familiar contexts • Concrete and immediate • Very restricted range of contexts	• Short and simple • Highly explicit purpose • Limited, highly familiar vocabulary	• Concrete tasks of 1 or 2 processes, e.g. locating, recognizing
2	• High level support • May work with mentor/expert • Modelling available and accessible if requested	• Familiar and predictable contexts • Limited range of contexts	• Simple • familiar texts with clear purpose • Familiar vocabulary	• Explicit tasks involving a limited number of familiar processes, e.g. identifying, interpreting
3	• Moderate support • Advice and modeling available	• Range of familiar contexts • Some less routine/familiar contexts • Some specialization in routine contexts	• Routine texts • May include some unfamiliar elements and embedded information • -Includes some specialized vocabulary	• Tasks include a number of steps within the one task, e.g. sequencing, basic inferencing, extrapolation and • integration
4	• Minimal support, as requested • -Establishing own support resources	• Range of contexts including some that are unfamiliar and /or unpredictable • Some specialization in non-routine contexts	• Complex texts • Embedded information • Includes specialized vocabulary • Includes abstraction and symbolism	• Complex task analysis involving application of a number of processes, e.g. extracting, comparing and interpreting information
5	• Little or no support • Initiates support from own established resources	• Broad range of contexts • Adaptability within and across contexts • Specialization on one or more contexts	• Highly complex texts • Highly embedded information • Includes highly specialized language	• Sophisticated task analysis including interpretation, analysis, reflection, synthesis, evaluation and recommendation

Table 5. 1. Factors influencing performance by competency level[35]

[35] DEEWR. (2008). p. 8.

Reading indicators

The program includes two indicators that are considered across the five levels of reading. The first indicator addresses audience, purpose and meaning making strategies. The second focuses on text structure and features, grammatical expression of ideas, word identification strategies and vocabulary. Table 5.2 identifies the reading indicators by program level.

Level	Indicator
1	1.03 Identifies personally relevant information and ideas within familiar contexts
	1.04 Uses a limited range of decoding strategies to identify specific information in explicit and highly familiar texts
2	2.03 Identifies and interprets relevant information and ideas within familiar contexts
	2.04 Uses a number of reading strategies to identify and interpret relevant information within familiar text types
3	3.03 Evaluates and integrates facts and ideas to construct meaning from a range of text types
	3.04 Selects and applies a range of reading strategies as appropriate to purpose and text type
4	4.03 Interprets and critically analyzes structurally complex texts containing some ambiguity
	4.04 Applies appropriate strategies to support understanding of a range of complex texts
5	5.03 Critically organizes, evaluates and applies content from a range of structurally complex texts
	5.04 Draws on a repertoire of strategies to maintain understanding throughout complex texts

Table 5.2. Reading indicator overview by level[36]

Each indicator is further described by performance features that identify the skill and knowledge in use. Table 5.3 lists the performance features for Level 3, indicator 3.03: evaluates and integrates facts and ideas to construct meaning from a range of text types.

• Purpose and audience	• Identifies purpose and audience of texts across a range of familiar and some unfamiliar text types and Aspects of Communication
• Complexity	• Comprehends longer texts with limited complexity which require integration of a number of ideas and pieces of information
• Prediction and prior knowledge	• Draws on prior knowledge together with knowledge of textual cues and text structures to predict content and meaning
• Text structure	• Uses knowledge of familiar text structures to predict content/meaning
• Textual Analysis	• Separates fact from opinion • Compares several pieces of information from one or more texts • Interprets and extrapolates from texts where information is presented in graphic, diagrammatic, formatted or visual formats • Uses knowledge of text to make inferences, e.g. uses cartoon to infer author's stand on subject
• Critical literacy	• Identifies explicit and implicit meaning in a text, e.g. opinion piece • Recognizes that an author uses text to serve a particular purpose, e.g. to appeal or exclude a group • Recognizes that the author selects the structure of a text to serve a particular purpose • Recognizes that words and grammatical choices may carry particular shades of meaning in different contexts

Table 5.3. Performance features for Level 3, Indicator 3.03[37]

[36] DEEWR. (2008). p. 41.

Aspects of communication represent various contexts, purposes and audiences. Table 5.4 presents three aspects for reading level 3, and some sample activities.

Aspects of communication	**Sample activities**
Cooperative (interacting in groups)	• Reads agendas/notes relevant to a workplace or other community meetings and ask questions to clarify meaning and information and to promote discussion • Reads information of relevance to work team and suggest how information may apply to group activities or represent group interests, e.g. annual profit and loss over a period of time • Reads and responds to notices posted on chat rooms.
Technical (using tools and technology)	• Uses the author, title, key-word and other search indexes of a library computer • Reads and follows information presented in technical drawings, manuals and work instructions, e.g. specifications for job, construction plans • Uses 'help' facility on software programme to find out how to format a text, e.g. brief report, contribution to workplace or community newsletter,
Public (interacting with the wider community)	• Identifies key messages in a longer text, e.g. reads a newspaper feature article and identifies the main issues • Uses program guides, reviews and promotions to make choices about personal viewing • Interprets information from a bar graph in an article then extrapolates information to form an opinion, predict a trend or make recommendations • Reads a diagrammatic text and comments on how information supports or refutes a particular point of view, e.g. how statistics on road facilities presented in graphic form might be used to justify stricter road rules

Table 5.4. Some aspects of communication and sample activities for Level 3 reading[38]

[37] DEEWR. (2008). p. 41.

[38] DEEWR. (2008). p. 52

Appendix 6. Documents and sources by provinces and countries

British Columbia

Adult literacy fundamental skill levels. In *Adult basic education: A guide to upgrading in British Columbia's public post-secondary institutions. An articulation handbook.* 2009-2010 Edition (pp. 59-64). Victoria, BC: Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. Retrieved April 14, 2010 from http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/handbook.pdf

CALP year end reporting. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/CALP_2009-10_YearEnd-DataReport.pdf

Monitoring and assessment in community-based adult literacy programs in British Columbia. A report to the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. Phase 1: Definition and selection of benchmarks. Literacy BC. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/MandA_Report_Final.pdf

Monitoring and assessment in community-based adult literacy programs in British Columbia. A report to the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. Phase 2: Summary of findings from the field testing process. (January to May, 2008). Literacy BC. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from Literacy BC website: http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/benchmarks.php

Monitoring and assessment resources. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/MandA_Resource_List.pdf

Quick guide to the community literacy benchmarks. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from Literacy BC website: http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/benchmarks.php

Reading benchmarks. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/Benchmarks_and_checklists.pdf

Saskatchewan

Adult basic education level three: Communications curriculum guide. Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/adx/aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=477,185,173,169,94,88,Documents&MediaID=247&Filename=abe_communications_curriculum.pdf&l=English

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The circle of learning. Benchmarks levels 1 and 2. (2006). Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from: http://www.sk.literacy.ca/pdf_links/benchCircle.pdf

Manitoba

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Record of Achievement Manual, Certificate in Literacy and Learning: Stage 2. (2009). Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, Adult Learning and Literacy. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/stages/pdf/stage2_0809.pdf

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The Adult Literacy Act, 2007. Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/a006e.php

Ontario

Barber, J. (2009). *Clearing the pathway. Effecting seamless transition from LBS to adult credit*. The Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Administrators.

Goforth Consulting. (2008). *Learner skill attainment framework.* Validation draft. College Sector for Adult Upgrading. Retrieved April 30, 2010 from: http://www.collegeupgradingon.ca/projrprt/lsa/cover.htm

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Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum. *Presentation to Adult Literacy Subcommittee, LEAG.* (2009). Unpublished PowerPoint presentation. Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Working with learning outcomes. Validation draft. (1998). Toronto, ON: Literacy and Basic Skills Section Workplace Preparation Branch. Ministry of Education and Training.

Australia

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations *Australian core skills framework. A summary.* (2008). Retrieved April 30, 2010 from http://www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/LitandNum/WorkplaceEnglishLanguageandLiteracy/Documents/ACSFsummaryfinaltoprint2.pdf