



Facilitator's Guide

The Taking Charge Program is designed for foundational adult learners to develop self-determination attitudes, knowledge and skills while using and building their basic literacy skills.

Self-determination means believing that you can have an impact on life's events rather than life's events having control over your life.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
Section 1: Overview	6
Introduction	6
Program Description	7
What is self-determination?	8
Why self-determination?	8
Skill and Will – The Importance of Basic Literacy Skills.....	9
Expected Outcomes	10
Core Elements of Participatory Approach in the Taking Charge Program.....	10
Content	11
Authentic Materials and Activities.....	11
Instructional Delivery.....	11
Delivery Method	11
Instructor	11
Instructor Role	12
Instructor Training	12
Number of Sessions	12
Length of Sessions.....	12
Learning Activities	12
Evaluation	12
Section 1: Building Blocks	12
What Are We Referring To?	12
Literacy.....	12
Essential Skills	13
Foundational Learning	13
Learning Theories.....	15
Five Foundational Learning Theories at a Glance	15
Self-Directed Learning.....	20
The Freirean Approach to Adult Literacy Education	20
Section 2: Curriculum Development Process.....	22
What Learners Said	23

Highlights	23
Learner Advisory Committee Meeting, October 2014.....	23
Highlights	24
Learner Advisory Committee Meeting, April, 2015	24
Reflecting on What Learners Said	24
Section 3: If the Members of the Learner Advisory Committee Were To Enroll In the Program.....	25
Week 1: I Have a Dream.....	25
Code	25
Week 2: My Goals	27
Code	27
WEEK 3: I Think, Therefore I Am... ..	29
Code	29
The Fox and the Grapes	30
Week 4 I Believe in Myself	31
Code	31
WEEK 5: Dear Stress, Let's Break Up.....	35
Code	35
WEEK 6: Isn't Life Hard Enough?.....	38
Code	38
WEEK 7: Living Costs	40
Code	40
WEEK 8: Eating Well.....	43
Code	43
WEEK 9: The Healthy Mind Platter	46
Code	46
Week 10: Looking Ahead	48
Code	48
SECTION 4: GOOD FACILITATION PRACTICES.....	50
SECTION 5: EVALUATION.....	53
Intake Interview Discussion Tool	54
Post Program Learner Survey	57
Your Learning	57

Please Write Your Answers to the Following Questions.....	59
Questions and Prompts for Post Program Learner Interview of Focus Group	60
Post Program Instructor Questionnaire.....	61
Section 6: Resources for Professional Development	62
Books.....	62
Digital Resources.....	62
References	63

Section 1: Overview

Introduction

The recent PIAAC results (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013) clearly demonstrate that we need a “Learning Canada” where everyone can and wants to participate in adult learning. Despite the fact that Albertans have the highest PIAAC scores in Canada, 1 in 5 adults in our province faces daily literacy and numeracy challenges. One of the key PIAAC findings shows that participation in adult education in all participating countries remains unequal. Those who already have higher skills are more likely to access adult learning opportunities and therefore benefit more. On the other hand, those who are already disadvantaged, are less likely to participate in adult learning and therefore to improve their skills. Because of that they are at a greater risk of getting trapped in a situation in which they rarely benefit from adult learning, and their skills remain weak or deteriorate over time – which makes it even harder for these individuals to participate in learning activities and has negative impact on their overall well-being.

In Canadian context, this is reflected in the fact that, on one end of the spectrum, the proportion of our working-age population with post-secondary qualifications now exceeds 60% while, on the other end only 5 to 10 percent of eligible adults have ever enrolled in literacy or upgrading program (Nonparticipation in Literacy and Adult Upgrading Programs, ABC Canada Literacy Foundation, 2002).

The questions to be answered are why adult learners aren’t banging down the doors of literacy organizations and what can be done to ensure that:

- Hard-to-reach adult learners are encouraged to participate in foundational learning activities (formal, non-formal or informal)
- We have the appropriate supports that makes it possible hard-to-reach learners to participate in foundational learning activities (e.g. participation incentives)

Some caution should be used when describing learners as hard-to-reach. Some researchers criticize the term as being too vague and sometimes connected with negative statements about the target populations. Some suggest that the reason people are hard to reach is because little effort has been put into recruiting them (Brakertz, 2007). We have embraced a broad definition: hard-to-reach learners are those who do not self-refer or readily seek to engage in adult learning programs or courses (Pittham, 2009).

The Taking Charge Project aims to tackle the issue of reaching and engaging hard-to-reach learners through:

- Removing or at least minimizing barriers to learning (both situational and dispositional)
- Providing opportunities for developing self-determination skills in combination with opportunities to use and practice their basic literacy skills.

We have all heard it before: “It’s all in the mind.” “You have to believe you can do it.” There is a good reason self-help books and motivational speakers have pushed these foundational constructs of the self-determination theory of motivation – they work!

Learning is a process. It is not just about acquiring information, knowledge and skills but also about developing the right frame of mind.

Learning is an incremental process. There is only one way to climb a mountain, and that is to take it one step at a time. There are no easy answers to the issue of hard-to-reach learners.

Program Description

This program is aimed at adult with limited literacy and essential skills and experiencing chronic poverty and social exclusion. The program runs for ten weeks (20 hours in total) and is based on the **Five Step Model of Self-Determination (Hoffman and Field, 2006)***

1. Know Yourself and Your Environment

- Dream
- Know your strengths, weaknesses, goals and preferences
- Know options, supports and expectations
- Decide what is important to you

2. Value Yourself

- Accept and value yourself
- Use weaknesses to find strengths
- Take care of yourself
- Develop and nurture positive relationships

3. Plan

- Set goals
- Plan small steps to meet goals
- Anticipate results
- Be creative

4. Act

- Be focused and persistent
- Communicate
- Take reasonable risks
- Negotiate
- Deal with conflict and criticism
- Access resources and support

5. Experience Outcomes and Learn

- Compare outcome to expected outcome
- Realize success
- Make adjustments

Hoffman, A., & Field, S. (2006). *Steps to self-determination* (2nd ed.). Austin, TX:PRO-ED

**The progress is not linear. Learners progress from stage to stage, but they also keep returning to a previous stage when necessary. The process doesn't end once learners complete the program; instead, it is a lifelong process.*

The Taking Charge Program aims to help adult foundational learners take control of their lives by improving their self-determination attitudes, knowledge and skills while using and building their literacy and essential skills in the process.

What is *unique* and exceptional about the Taking Charge Program is that it provides learners with an opportunity to participate in a once-per-week one-to-one reading program focused on learners whose skills range from adults learning sound-letter relationships for the first time to adults reading at a junior high school level.

What is self-determination?

Self-determination is defined as a combination of attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and skills that enables a person to engage in goal-directed self-regulated behaviours (Field, et al., 1998). Self-determined people know what they want and use their skills to get it. From awareness of personal needs, self-determined individuals choose goals and then doggedly pursue them.

Self-determination can be an inhibitor or facilitator of learning. In order to fully understand the significance of self-determination, it is necessary to have some understanding of the relationship between self-determination and locus of control. The two concepts are highly correlated. Locus of control is defined as a belief that you have the opportunity to choose, make decisions and act on your environment. People who develop internal locus of control also have self-determination. People who have many opportunities to experience success on many levels have enhanced internal locus of control and self-determination.

Self-determination is about knowing and valuing oneself and being able to take charge of one's life.

Self-determination is a complex process but can be broken down into teachable skills.

Why self-determination?

Why is self-determination important for adult foundational learners? It is often the case that adults with literacy and essential skills challenges may have not developed self-determination attitudes, beliefs, and skills.

In 1955, the well-known book *Why Johnny Can't Read* written by Rudolf Flesch was published. In it the author explained why so many children were having a difficult time learning to read. It is very likely that Johnny is still struggling with reading as an adult. Why? Here are a few things we don't know about Johnny. He might have spent his entire childhood being shamed and belittled by his teachers and classmates because he was not smart enough. He might have spent his entire adulthood feeling embarrassed about the fact that he couldn't read and trying to hide it. He might come from an abusive or otherwise dysfunctional home. His family might have been unable to afford basic needs including food and he was lacking the necessary fuel to fire his brain's higher-level synapses. He might have avoided school altogether because he was bullied one too many times. He might have spent most of his third grade getting hooked on phonics and his fourth grade immersed in a whole language classroom. Perhaps it took him many years to take the first step through the door to go back to school as an adult. Perhaps it was too hard for him to juggle many challenges and responsibilities in his daily life to stick with the program. Perhaps he did not have a lot of support from friends and family. Johnny might be dyslexic, have undiagnosed ADHD or some other type of a learning disability. Whatever the reason is, Johnny has never learned the strategies that proficient readers and writers use to understand print materials and communicate their ideas. He has never understood the basic mathematical concepts and is not able to apply math to real life. As his confidence has been eroding from a very early age, he has lost the conceptual foundation to engage in adult learning. Consequently, the need to address Johnny's self-determination is critical. Before he can engage in a foundational adult learning program with traditional content-driven curriculum, he needs time dedicated to developing learning dispositions, thinking, problem-solving and decision making skills.

Skill and Will – The Importance of Basic Literacy Skills

Skill AND will are both necessary for success in learning throughout life. Self-determination and basic reading and writing skills are both important for achieving positive learning outcomes.

According to the PIAAC results (2013), 4% of adults in Canada are below Level 1 in reading. This means that their reading skills are comparable with children's reading competencies in grades 3 or 4. They could benefit from individualized basic skills instruction that helps them learn a sequence of individual skills and then progress to apply those skills to meet life demands. However, the progress in acquiring basic skills is often slow, therefore, the learner loses motivation easily. The Taking Charge Program aims to address this issue providing an extension to the Taking Charge program in the form of individualized one-one basic skills instruction and practice.

We also have 13% of adults (PIAAC, 2013) at Level 1 in reading. They do not necessarily need to learn alphabet or letter sound relationships. What works best for them is reading strategy instruction to help them address common challenges, such as what to do when they come to an unknown word, how to ensure that they understand and remember information as they read, how to integrate visual and text information, etc. Once again, the best way to address this is through individualized one-on-one support from knowledgeable and well trained practitioners or volunteers.

Expected Outcomes

As a result of the Taking Charge Program, the learners better understand themselves, their skills and their goals and they have self-determination skills needed to cope with challenges of everyday life and/or pursue further learning opportunities or work.

Upon the completion of the group component of the program, learners will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

- Develop positive attitudes and beliefs about themselves as learners that increase their learning perseverance
- Strengthen their ability to make informed decisions
- Apply problem-solving strategies in their daily life
- Appreciate their unique qualities including strengths and challenges
- Skills to take care of oneself emotionally and physically
- Identify a personal and/or learning goal based on their needs
- Articulate and write a measurable goal
- Create a plan for goal attainment
- Share current progress towards their goals
- Evaluate and make meaningful adjustments to goal/plan
- Communicate strengths and needs in an assertive way through speaking and writing
- Identify and access community supports and services necessary to meet their future plans
- Continue looking for new ways to address their learning needs or solve complex problems
- Develop a sense of belonging within a community of learners
- See themselves as successful learners and expect to succeed in their learning pursuits
- Feel motivated to put in the time and effort needed to build foundational literacy and essential skills needed to take charge of their lives

Learners who access individual one-one-one tutoring component of the program will demonstrate enhanced reading skills and competencies.

Core Elements of Participatory Approach in the Taking Charge Program

The CanLearn's vision, "unlocking potential, so all can learn" reflects our belief that all adults, youth, and children can be strong and capable learners. We look to each individual to guide us in their learning. We value and respect all learners and believe that their needs and ideas are an important source of curriculum.

Because of these beliefs, the Taking Charge Program has adopted a participatory, **learner-centered curriculum** based on the Freirean approach to adult literacy education. We believe that this approach is most consistent with our understanding of how adults learn. It shifts the focus of instruction from the instructor to the learners. In a learner-centered program, learners choose what they will learn, how they will learn, and how they will assess their own learning. This approach emphasizes each learner's

interests, abilities, and learning styles, placing the instructor as a “guide on the side” (facilitator of learning) rather than “sage on the stage” (teacher).

While participating in the program, learners have access to appropriate and timely support services to decrease the barriers that might prevent them from engaging and continuing their learning.

Determining the needs and desires of learners and being able to meet these will encourage them to be lifelong learners, not just to learn for a specific end.

Content

The Taking Charge curriculum is theme-based because it involves framing material around topics related to learners’ immediate needs and wants. However, essential and literacy skills are typically integrated into the overarching “theme” and used as they would be in real life or in context. Putting skills into context rather than teaching them in isolation adds meaning to learning. This makes the material more interesting and motivating. Consequently, it enhances learner’s ability to take in, process and retrieve information from memory, frame and solve problems; and comprehend, communicate and apply knowledge, skills. This is crucial in that our definition of what it means to be “literate” has stretched well beyond one’s ability to read or write and has embraced the framework of the nine essential skills necessary to function in all the various aspects of our everyday lives. The topic selection process is explained on page XXX.

Authentic Materials and Activities

Authentic materials are oral language, print and digital materials used in ways that they would be used in learners’ lives outside of the program.

An example would be the learner who is having problems with a landlord and will soon be forced to move. The issue would be discussed by the entire group first. The discussion would be followed by generating a list of vocabulary terms and used as a foundation for identifying relevant issues of concern, relating what they already know about the topic to new things they learn, and determining what they want to know more about regarding the topic.

Instructional Delivery

- Small group: maximum 10 learners

Delivery Method

- Discovery/ experiential: participants select and complete activities related to program objectives
- Group process: participants interact with group members in activities related to objectives

Instructor

- One

Instructor Role

- Facilitator: facilitates group interaction
- Co-participant, co-learners: participates with the group

Instructor Training

- Introduction to Adult Learning
- Taking Charge Program Model Training

Number of Sessions

- Ten

Length of Sessions

- Two hours

Learning Activities

- Speaking, listening, reading, writing, group discussion, journaling, role play, question/answer, on-line search, videos, frequent review of skills, guest speakers
- Extension: individualized one-on-one basic reading/writing instruction

Evaluation

- Starting Points Assessment (Intake Interview)
- Learner's self-evaluation of learning progress and outcomes (Post Program Learner Questionnaire and Interview)
- Instructor's assessment of learner's performance (Post Program Instructor Questionnaire)

Section 1: Building Blocks

Like most fields, the field of adult learning has numerous concepts, theories and research findings designed to explain what we do and why we do it.

In this section, the essential concepts upon which the Taking Charge Program has been built are introduced.

What Are We Referring To?

What are we referring to when we use the terms literacy, essential skills and adult foundational learning? Every field has its own unique jargon, and adult education is no exception. There is sometimes a lack of clarity in adult learning-related terminology, which is tackled in the section to follow.

Literacy

The term literacy is a vastly contested term; it can mean different things from one person to the next. At one end of the spectrum, literacy is viewed as a "set of skills" that enable people to read and write. On the other end of the spectrum is the view of literacy as a situated social practice which puts emphasis on how people use reading and writing in their everyday lives.

The Alberta government report *Living Literacy: A Framework for Alberta's Next Generation Economy* gives the following definition of literacy, “Literacy is not just about reading and writing. 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.” This definition clearly reflects the view of literacy as a situated social practice.

Thinking about literacy in a broad way is important but it is equally important to know that for an adult learning program to “qualify” as a literacy program there must be reading and writing involved.

Essential Skills

The Government of Canada defines Essential Skills as the skills needed for work, learning and life. Through extensive research, the federal government, along with other national and international agencies, has developed the framework of Essential Skills.

The nine Essential Skills that have been identified are:

- Reading
- Document Use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning
- Thinking Skills (divided into six types of cognitive functions: problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, job task planning and organizing, significant use of memory and finding information)
- Computer Use

Initially, the focus was on the workforce. Hundreds of jobs have been analyzed for the essential skills that are needed to effectively perform tasks required in the position. With more and more employers using the Essential Skills framework, the term has become a part of common language.

It is important to remember that, in addition to the workplace, all nine Essential Skills are used throughout daily life in different ways and at varying levels of complexity.

Foundational Learning

In Alberta Government Community Adult Learning Program Guidelines, foundational learning is described as “learning opportunities to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills, proficiency in English language learning, basic computer skills, and workplace readiness and essential

skills that enable individuals to pursue further learning, have satisfying and meaningful employment, and fully participate in society.”

Calgary Learns describes foundational learning as follows:

“The term foundational learning refers to the nine essential skills at their lower of foundational levels of complexity. Just as the word foundational suggests, this is where the building of skills begins (2).”

The terms literacy, essential skills and foundational learning are often used interchangeably; they are not the same thing but they all make it possible to:

- Navigate your way around the city because you understand all of the posted signs, warnings and notifications
- Make informed decisions about the products we purchase because we can accurately read their labels and price tags
- Safely use medications without having to remember the doctor’s or pharmacist’s instructions because we can accurately read their labels
- When visiting hospitals, government agencies, banks or legal offices, we don’t have to invent excuses to bring paperwork home so that someone else can read it
- Independently make informed medical, legal and financial decisions because we can read important documents
- Make sure that our paycheques and bills are accurate because we can read them and check for errors
- Have a driver’s license because we are able to complete the written test for a learner’s permit
- Be informed about important news and events in our community, province and nation because we can read the local and national newspapers
- Make our voice heard on important topics in our community by writing a letter to the editor of our local newspaper
- Influence policy decisions that affect us by writing letters and e-mails to our elected officials
- Read with our children
- Help our children with homework; read letters and flyers sent home by our children’s teachers and administrators
- Attend parent-teacher interview without fearing that our literacy level will be exposed to teachers or other parents
- Have freedom to explore career options that interest us
- Not have to turn down an offer or job promotion because we are afraid the literacy demands would be too high
- Work safely and effectively at our job because we understand all of the posted signs, warnings and notifications

- Enhance our employability and socioeconomic standing by enrolling in certification courses or post-secondary education that require strong literacy skills
- Explore ideas we are interested in by reading articles and books about them
- Keep personal records or ideas, dreams, thoughts and important events in our life
- Stay in contact with loved ones who live far away through e-mails and letters.

Learning Theories

As adult learning practitioners, we all try to keep up with the latest research, read what we can, evaluate emerging bandwagons, attend conferences and workshops, discuss issues and concerns with colleagues and so on in order to construct a well-informed theoretical framework within which to conduct our day to day practice.

Take a moment to think about the questions such as:

- What is the relationship between the PIAAC findings and the activities we use in our programs to help adults develop their reading, numeracy and problem-solving skills in technology rich environment?
- How do we use the suggestions of the acknowledged experts in the field to needs of our learners?

The fact that theory informs practice is more important than generally acknowledged. In the section to follow, we attempt to highlight the principles of major relevant adult learning theories in an attempt to illuminate insights which we believe are important for the Taking Charge Program facilitators/instructors.

While it is not essential to memorize every single construct of each theory, it is important to know where to look for answers.

Five Foundational Learning Theories at a Glance

A. Learning is a Change in Behaviour

Burrhus Frederic Skinner is regarded as the father of **behaviorism**. Behaviourists believe that behavior which is reinforced tends to be repeated (strengthened); behavior which is not reinforced tends to die out-or be extinguished (disappears)

The key components of behaviourist theory of learning are part of our everyday life. For example, we “reinforce” children for good behaviour or “reward” with a glass of wine at the end of a hard-working day.

We can observe behaviours constructs if adult learning programs – we often use behavioural objectives to specify intended learning outcomes. The requirements for results- based, quantifiable, observable outcomes are also behaviourist in nature.

B. Learning is the Development of the Person

Humanism is a paradigm that emerged in 1960's and believes that the main motivation for learning is a personal need to fulfil one's potential. A primary purpose of humanism could be described as the development of self-actualized, autonomous people. In humanism, learning is learner-centred and personalized and the educator's role is that of a facilitator.

One way to think about humanistic approach to learning is to picture yourself attending a course that your boss has mandated that you need. You are not interested in the topic or you don't think you will ever need to know the content. What makes it even harder, the course is delivered through lectures by the instructor and there is a test at the end. Now picture yourself visiting Japan and discovering that you really enjoyed Japanese cuisine. You decide you would like to learn more about it and you plan how you would like to learn about it. You might take a class, read a book or experiment on your own. You would also be the one who decides when you have learned what you want to know.

Key proponents of humanism are Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and Malcolm Knowles. The goal of learning for Maslow is self-actualization, whereas for Rodgers it is to become a fully functional person.

Malcolm Knowles is regarded as the founder of modern adult education and known for the use of the term **andragogy** as the art and science of adult learning. The word andragogy was used for the first time in Germany in the early 1800s. It literally means teaching (*agog*) of man (*aner*) or people. It was popularized by Knowles in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Knowles was interested in finding a way to identify some of the unique aspects of adult learning and show differences between best practices to working with adults as opposed to working with children. He used andragogy as a way of contrasting with the term pedagogy which he defines as the art and science of teaching children. Basically, andragogy involves six assumptions about how to help adult learners as they mature in their knowledge and experience in a topic and gain most from a learning activity. Here are the six assumptions of andragogy:

1. Need to Know

Adult learners need to be shown why something is important to learn.

2. Self-concept

As learners begin to develop confidence, they are likely to become less dependent on the instructor and more self-directed. They begin to ask questions and apply the new knowledge in their lives which often makes them want to learn even more. It is like a bird spreading its wings for the first time and flying.

3. Learners' Experience

In pedagogy, learners are often thought of as an "empty vessel" waiting to be filled with knowledge. In andragogy, experience is an important resource that helps learners make connections to their own lives and helps show them that they may know much more about the

topic than they may have initially thought. The instructor is not the only one who knows something about the topic. When instructors are able to tap into the experiences of their learners, they find that they have a wonderful resource that will help them connect with the learners and increase their belief that they can learn.

4. Readiness to Learn

Whereas children are required to attend compulsory schooling, most adults decide to undertake a learning activity when they have decided they *need* or *want* to learn something. It is something they have chosen and they make this choice when they are ready to do so. A caveat here – this principle can sometimes be tricky since there are times when adults have to engage in learning in order to meet a requirement such as professional certification for example.

5. Orientation to learning

Learners in formal school settings most often study “subjects” like math, science or language arts. However, the problems and challenges that adult learners face often cut across the boundaries of single field of study. Consequently, adults most often undertake learning in order to solve immediate problems and concerns.

6. Motivation to learn

Adult motivation to learn is intrinsic rather than extrinsic – it comes from within the person rather than from rewards and punishments. There are times when adults are motivated by outside factors such as career advancement, receiving a raise or managing a chronic health condition, but for the most part, the motivation to learn comes from something inside the person such as curiosity, satisfaction, the desire to achieve a goal or the confidence that one can learn.

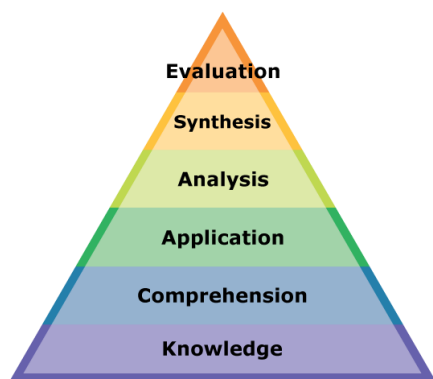
C. Learning is a Mental Process

This is the theory of **cognitive** learning. One way to think about this theory is to think about the computer with its input and output functions. The Cognitive Learning Theory explains why the brain is the most incredible network of information processing as we learn things. Broadly, the cognitive theory of learning is interested in memory, learning styles, aptitude and capacity to learn. From a cognitive learning perspective, learning involves the transformation in the environment into knowledge that is stored in the mind. Learning occurs when new knowledge is acquired or existing knowledge is modified by experience.

Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive outcomes (Bloom, 1956) is a well-regarded cognitive learning theory used for curriculum planning and developing learning objectives. He is also credited with identifying three types of learning outcomes – cognitive, affective and psychomotor. His taxonomy is used for curriculum planning and developing learning objectives. In simple terms, the Blooms model suggests that learning can be divided into 3 different types:

- Learning that is transferring knowledge
- Learning that is developing attitudes
- Learning that is generating a skill

These 3 areas are called 'domains'. Taxonomy means the classification. It is the list of things that make up each of the 3 learning domains. For each learning domain (knowledge, attitude, skills) there are a series of levels that should be considered when designing, delivering, and evaluating learning. When considered collectively, the full list of those levels (and the information provided with each level) create the 'taxonomy' for that particular learning domain. Key to the model is the principle that there is a hierarchy to the levels. Therefore, when designing learning you should construct the program so that the relevant knowledge for your particular situation is developed, tested, and achieved at level 1, before you progress to achieving the more complex aims of learning at level 2 and 3 and so on. This model can help program designers frame their thought process in determining how to design learning and subsequently demonstrate that it is meeting its intended objectives.



D. Learning Is Social and Context Bound

Albert Bandura is considered one of the major theorists of the **social cognitive theory**. This theory draws from both behaviourism and cognitive theory. One of the basic assumptions is that people acquire new behaviors and knowledge by simply observing a model. For example learning to be a parent of a newborn often involves observing how friends have managed. Social-cognitive theorists propose that people set goals for themselves and direct their behavior accordingly. In everyday life, we are motivated to save money by the goals such as buying a home, buying a new care, going on a vacation. Eventually, behavior becomes self-regulated. Last but not the least; social-cognitivists believe reinforcement and punishment have indirect (rather than direct) effects on learning and behavior.

The concept of **self-efficacy**, one of the core theoretical underpinnings for the Taking Charge Program is central to the social cognitive theory.

E. Learning is Creating Meaning from Experience

Constructivism is less a single theory of learning than a collection of perspectives all of which share the common assumption that learning is the construction of meaning through experience. People construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know. Jean Piaget, one of the key exponents of the constructivism, uses the terms *assimilation* and *accommodation* to describe this process.

Constructivist practitioners encourage learners to constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, they become “expert learners”. They learn *how to learn* which gives them endless tools to keep learning. Learners are motivated to program instructors *facilitate* learning by guiding and stimulating learners.

Self-Determination Theory that lends its framework model to the Taking Charge Program is a constructivist theory. It was developed by researchers Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan. This theory concerns with human motivation, personality, and optimal functioning. Rather than just the amount of motivation, self-determination theory focuses on different types of motivation. According to this theory, people have three innate psychological needs:

1. Competence – need to be effective in dealing with environment
2. Relatedness – need to have close, affectionate relationships with others, need to belong
3. Autonomy - need to control the course of their lives

Deci and Ryan stated that there are two types of motivation:

1. **Autonomous**

Autonomous motivation deals with intrinsic motivation and types of extrinsic motivation in which people integrated a value of an activity into their sense of self. When people are autonomously motivated, they gain self-support and self-advocacy through their own actions.

2. **Controlled**

Controlled motivation is encouraged by various external factors such as rewards, incentives, approval

Research shows that people are indeed motivated by external factors such as praise and rewards. However, they are often motivated by internal factors as well, such as interest in the subject or task, personal values or curiosity. Self-determination theory aims to determine the optimal balance between these external and internal factors.

Self-Directed Learning

More than 40 years ago, Allen Tough, a Canadian professor from the University of Toronto, published his research *The Adult's Learning Projects*. He described that adults participate in an average of eight different learning projects in a given year. He also described adult learning as an iceberg, where the vast majority of learning activity remains beneath the surface, not readily visible. The study found that almost 70% of all learning activities were planned, implemented, and evaluated primarily by the learners themselves. For adult learning educators, the research on self-directed learning has profound implications. If we know that a vast majority of adult learning is self-directed, and then it only makes sense that, if we want to connect more effectively with our learners, we must draw from what we know about it when planning adult learning program activities.

The Freirean Approach to Adult Literacy Education

The work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire provided the core foundation for the Taking Charge Program. His approach, developed in the 1950's during a literacy campaign among peasants and slum-dwellers in Brazil, involved engaging learners in dialogue about key words representing problematic issues in their lives in order to foster critical analysis of the issues. These dialogues became the basis for literacy development of learners and action for change.

What was significant about Freire's work was his insistence on linking literacy to social change. As he says, "reading the word" and "reading the world" go hand in hand.

Freire argues that when literacy is taught as a set of decontextualized skills divorced from any significance in learners' lives, they cannot use their thinking or bring anything to the learning process and therefore become objects of instruction. Freire call this "**the banking model**" of education. Learners are seen as empty vessels devoid of any knowledge and the educator's job is to fill the empty "accounts" by making deposits of knowledge. The learners become passive recipients of predetermined curriculum content. As Freire says, this kind of curriculum "tames" people into uncritical acceptance of things as they are discouraging them from actively challenging the forces that keep them marginalized. In contrast to this, the participatory model aims to enable learners to become active participants in shaping their own realities. Both the content and the process of this model invite learners to become the subjects of their own learning. Freirean approach has also been referred to as the **problem-posing approach**, the **learner-centred approach**, the **liberatory approach**, and the **participatory approach**. Content centres on relevant issues from learners' lives, so literacy is immediately relevant and engaging. Learners engage in a process of reflection and dialogue developing both an understanding of the root causes of their challenges and generating their own alternatives for addressing them. Literacy becomes a context for thinking critically in a process that Freire calls "**conscientization**".

This transforms the learners' relation to learning – because literacy becomes a tool for addressing real life problems and concerns, it transforms their relation to the world making it possible for them to take charge of their lives.

Freire's process for putting this model into practice can be described as follows:

1. The Listening Phase

During this time, the educator immerses him or herself in the community of learners becoming familiar with their daily reality. Through this investigation process, the educator identifies critical issues and concerns from learners' lives and selects a core group of shared issues that become the backbone of the adult learning curriculum. Topics are selected on the basis of their evocative power – the extent to which they trigger strong emotional responses. The educator then distills these topics into **codes or codifications** – abstracted representations in the form of a photograph, a drawing, a quote, an article, a video clip, a drawing, a cartoon, housing lease, etc. The codes are depersonalized and objective but immediately recognizable. For each topic/code a generative (key) word or phrase is selected that reflects the issue.

2. The Dialogue Phase

In this phase, the instructor asks a series of inductive questions that guide learners to name the problem/issue, understand how it applies to them, determine the causes of the problem, generalize to others, and finally suggest alternatives or solutions to the problem. This is a conscientization process through which learners deepen their understanding of the conditions shaping their lives. The collaborative (working together) nature of this process is critical – learners each contribute to their interpretations and collectively arrive at an analysis of the situation as they share experiences and ideas in order to generate their own alternatives for action.

3. The Decoding and Recoding Phase

Once the learners have “read” the world, they move on to reading the “word”. In this phase, they engage in activities that involve “hard” skills of reading, writing, numeracy, and computer use.

4. The Action Phase

This final phase entails doing something in the real world as a result of the reflection and dialogue. It could be either a collective action (for example, writing a letter to a local MLA to address a community concern) or individual action (for example, implementing new strategies to manage monthly budget).

It is important to keep in mind that Freire's work grew out of specific conditions. His approach cannot be transposed into a different context in a literal way. Rather, the intention should be to reinvent it for our own context taking from his work the underlying outlook but developing tools to implement it according to our own reality.

Section 2: Curriculum Development Process

The roots of the project go back to a number of conversations regarding foundational learning and basic literacy needs of adults that took place during the Calgary Learns Needs Assessment Project. The project gathered data on the needs of adult foundational learners in Calgary from over 145 participants from 59 organizations. The following four key recommendations emerged (Needs Assessment Report, January 2014):

- Learned-Centered Programs including starting the program where the learners are, identifying and addressing the individuals' need, having learners participate in setting learning goals and evaluating success, and being culturally sensitive. Programs need the flexibility to adapt programming to meet learner needs.
- Competent, well trained staff with the knowledge and capability to take a learner centred approach.
- Holistic approaches with wrap-around services that provide various learner support systems like building the emotional and mental health, peer support and mentors.
- Establish rapport with learners, with a focus on building trust. This may involve having an inviting environment, being approachable and providing learner.

Thinking about these themes has provided the foundational “food for thought” for the project.

The core guiding vision for the project was established through the process of consultation with the staff and clients of the Sunrise Community Link, a community development agency and resource centre engaged in poverty reduction and community capacity building in east Calgary. Their insights and thoughts enhanced all aspects of the project but were particularly relevant and valuable in the context of identifying barriers to learning.

We used a qualitative exploratory approach, facilitating 3 consultation sessions. The first session was for the Sunrise staff. It revealed a high degree of common understanding around definitions of literacy, essential skills, and adult foundational learning and what it means to have limited adult foundational skills. The insights and suggestions added to and refined our initial thinking, for instance by confirming some of our hunches and adding to or proposing suggestions.

The second group was comprised of 9 potential learners drawn from the Sunrise Community Link clientele. We used a semi-structured group interview approach to elicit answers to several questions:

- How do you like to learn?
- Are you currently involved in any adult learning courses?
- What are the barriers to participation in adult learning?
- What can be done to remove or at least minimize these barriers?

The nine participants expressed interest in continuing to be involved in the process of curriculum development by taking part in the third session. Consequently, they have formed our Learner Advisory Committee.

The third meeting was focused on the Listening Phase. The facilitator/instructor guided an informal conversation eliciting insights and thoughts with regards to the issues and concerns relevant to participants' lives.

To acknowledge their valuable and insightful contribution, each learner was provided with a \$100 grocery gift card.

What Learners Said

The learners described a range of constraints related to pursuing adult learning opportunities, including situational and emotional constraints. Situational barriers to learning included factors such as financial difficulties, lack of child care, lack of time, transportation challenges and health issues. Feelings and emotions shaped people's experiences of learning and for some this made engagement, particularly in more formal, structured learning very difficult.

Highlights

Learner Advisory Committee Meeting, October 2014

- All learners made it clear that precarious financial situation is not their only issue but it remains an important and prevailing one.
- Some learners were experiencing “generational poverty” while others have “fallen into” because of a significant life event such as losing their job, losing a family member or serious health issue.
- Several learners expressed their feeling of being overwhelmed when it comes to navigating their way through the maze of programs and agencies in order to access support.
- Several learners spoke about the negative previous experiences of education; a few described their negative previous experiences with authority.
- Several learners shared histories of violence and trauma which affected their learning but which were not always open and visible.
- One learner shared her view that she found the content of some adult programs she had accessed in the past misleading and irrelevant which led her to drop out; several others shared similar experiences.
- One learner shared how she attempted to pursue post-secondary education but once she enrolled in the program found it difficult to read and understand course textbooks and complete assignments.

Highlights

Learner Advisory Committee Meeting, April, 2015

- Interestingly, several learners felt motivated to extend their participation beyond the two scheduled sessions. This means that during the period between the 2nd (October, 2014) and 3rd consultation meeting (April 2015), they stayed in touch and continued providing additional feedback over the phone.
- It was very encouraging that all learners returned to participate in the second meeting
- The learners gave overwhelmingly positive feedback about the proposed approach to content development and indicated that they themselves would enroll in the program; that they knew other people among their friends and neighbours who would benefit and whom they would like to invite to enroll.

Reflecting on What Learners Said

Promising practices needed to support the target population engagement in the Taking Charge Program include:

- Providing inviting and supportive environment that helps learners feel comfortable
- Develop the program collaboratively with learners
- Build soft and hard skills of learners to encourage self-determination and essential skills development
- Access to appropriate support services that help to reduce the barriers to learning
- Individualized one-on-one support in the form of tutoring for learners with complex needs
- Support learners by identifying their learning needs and respond to these in the program
- Flexible course design and delivery (e.g. time, location)
- Partnerships/links with other organizations that can support learners
- Well-trained practitioners
- Participation incentives such as grocery gift certificate cards, light meal/snacks and refreshments, childcare, transit tickets

Section 3: If the Members of the Learner Advisory Committee Were To Enroll In the Program

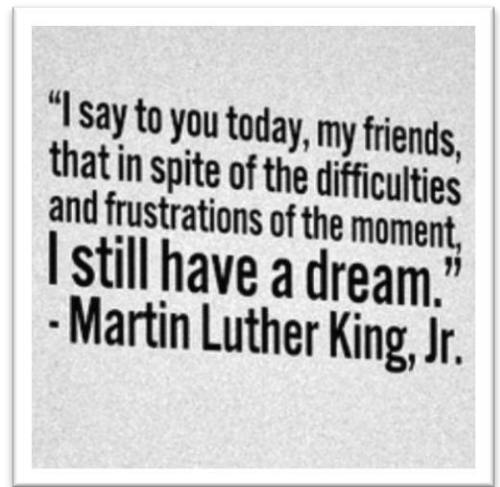
NOTE: These are pre-written sample activities aimed at illustrating a way to develop the content and get things going. Preferably, they are supplemented and overridden rapidly by activities brought in by learners, suggested by them and, in this day and age, found by them on the Internet.

Week 1: I Have a Dream

Code

The Listening Phase

- Helping learners set and achieve goals is an essential component of an adult learning program. However, very early in the conversation with potential learners, it became obvious that at times, many of them have a hard time identifying their goals. Faced with numerous unrelenting challenges in their everyday life, some learners seemed to lack self-efficacy beliefs that change was possible. Others simply had not thought about their dreams in a long time.
- A good way to learn about identifying and setting goals is to start thinking about deepest wishes and dreams.



The Dialogue Phase

- Who is the man in the picture?
- What was his dream about? (People whose achievements are extraordinarily, often started with dreams that may have seemed out of their reach)
- What do you dream about (when you sleep)?
- Do you ever think about your dreams? Are they ever related to what you want to do or have in your real life?
- If you were granted three wishes, what would they be?
- If you were guaranteed success in anything you choose to do, what would you do?

The Decoding/Recoding Phase

Activity: Dream Board

Materials: cardstock paper or cardboard, magazines, scissors, glue, markers, oil pastels, crayons

Optional: Computer, Internet access, printer

Instructions:

- Explain to the learners that their dream board can be about anything that makes them happy. It can even have words, pictures, quotes, even the pictures of famous people that inspire them.
- Hand out scissors, magazines, photos, glue, cork/card board, or whatever you want the learners to use as a surface. You can also encourage the learners to use the internet to find pictures to print and use.
- The learners look for words, pictures, sayings, and quotes that reflect their dreams and glue them on their board.

The Action Phase

- Suggest to learners to place their dream board in a place that they will be able to see it every day.
- Give the learners a choice to bring their dream board back to the next session to share their dreams.
- Suggest to learners to start a dream journal to keep track of their literal dreams.

Week 2: My Goals

Code

The Listening Phase

- When it comes to identifying and achieving goals, people sometimes struggle with:
 - Ability to break down goals into small manageable steps

The Dialogue Phase

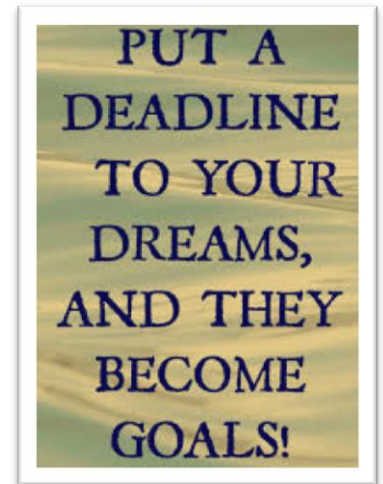
- Learners who feel comfortable share the dreams they illustrated on their dream board. Make sure that learners know it is okay to pass.

The Decoding / Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: Wendy's Story**
 - Pass out the copies of the story and read it to the group.
 - Ask the learners to brainstorm what Wendy's goals are. Explain that one way to learn more about goals is to divide them into three categories: **Doing, Being, and Having** goals.
 - Encourage the learners to think about Wendy's goals in terms of what she wants to do, to be and to have? Write the responses on the flip chart. (If necessary, ask the basic comprehension questions related to the story first).
 - Explain that goals can be thought of as personal goals (those related to your family or private life), educational goals (those related to your effort to learn more and improve your educational credentials and professional goals (objectives of your work life).
 - Explain that goals could also be classified as short-term goals and long-term goals. Short term goals are those that can be achieved in a relatively short period of time- a year or less. Long-term goals can be achieved in one to five years. Long-term goals can be thought of as a series of short term goals.
 - Go back to the list of Wendy's goals and ask learners to classify each goal according to its type.
- **Activity No. 2: My goals**
 - Ask the learners to look at their dream board again and identify two or three goals they have from each category; encourage them to think of personal, educational and work goals.
 - Encourage the learners to share their goals if they feel comfortable.

The Action Phase

- Learners put a deadline on their short term goals and monitor progress.



Wendy dropped out from high school in grade 11. She had struggled with learning for most of her school years. As early as kindergarten, she had difficulties staying still or paying attention for an extended period of time. This behavior prompted her kindergarten teacher to recommend delaying first grade by a year. She did OK in elementary school, but in junior high, things started to slip, she was having a lot of trouble both with learning and socially, and she felt more and more discouraged. She began to spend a lot of time away from home – she would go hang out with her friends. It was then that she started to make a lot of bad decisions, choosing to experiment and self-medicate with marijuana and alcohol. The stress was too much for her. She was failing in school and things got harder each year.

When she was little, Wendy had been in the hospital for several weeks. While she was there she met many nurses. She dreamed of someday becoming a nurse. However, she was failing in junior high and things continued to get harder and harder each year. Finally, she dropped out. Soon after that she met Joe. Joe was a construction worker with similar life experiences. They had two kids. Then a problem came up. Joe lost his job.

Wendy and Joe wanted their kids to a better life than they did. They wanted them to do well in school and they wanted to help them grow up right. But to get those things, Wendy and Joe had to work long hours and overcome many challenges. Finally, Wendy decided that even if it was hard, she was going to do something for herself and her family. She was going to go back to school. She made a phone call. Six months later, she started at Bow Valley College.

WEEK 3: I Think, Therefore I Am...

Code

The Listening Phase

- Learners' stories confirmed the main premise of the self-efficacy theory that people who have a low sense of efficacy or belief in their own competence avoid tasks which they perceive as difficult or threatening and have weak hope and commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. They tend to give up quickly and are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following a failure or setback.



The Dialogue Phase

- What is this quote telling us?
- Do you agree with it?
- Can you think of an example when people act without thinking?
- Can you think of an example when people think without acting?

The Decoding / Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: The Fox and the Grape**
 - Pass out the copies of the story and read it with the group
 - Discuss the following questions:
 - What was the fox doing one afternoon?
 - How did he feel?
 - What did he see in the orchard?
 - What did he decide to do?
 - How did the fox try to pick the grapes?
 - Where were the grapes?
 - How many times did he try to reach the fruit?
 - What did the fox say to himself?
 - How did the fox feel in the end?
 - What is the moral of the story?
 - Does the fox have any proof that the grapes are sour?
 - Why does he say they are?
 - What else might he have done once he realized he could not reach the grapes?
 - Would a real fox act like the fox in the fable? Can you imagine a person acting as the fox did? Explain your answers.

The Fox and the Grapes

One afternoon a fox was walking through the forest and spotted a bunch of grapes hanging from over a lofty branch.

“Just the thing to quench my thirst,” he thought. Taking a few steps back, the fox jumped and just missed the hanging grapes. Again the fox took a few paces back and tried to reach them but still failed.

Finally, giving up, the fox turned up his nose and said, “They’re probably sour anyway,” and proceeded to walk away.

The moral of the story is: When you can’t have something, it’s easy to say it’s not worth having.

- **Activity No. 2: Reactions**

Materials: Scenarios

- You are asked to drive a friend to a doctor. The doctor is an hour away, it is rush hour and the weather is not good.
- You are wearing new white pants. The neighbour’s dog jumps on you with muddy paws and gets your pants dirty.
- You are in a restaurant and the service is terrible. Do you say something? Do you leave a tip?
- You are at the grocery store. Someone cuts in line without asking you.
- You are having a coffee with a friend who constantly talks about his problems and nothing else.

Instructions:

- After each scenario, ask learners:
 - How would you react?
 - What would you do?

The Action Phase

- Catch yourself thinking without acting or acting without thinking in your everyday life.
- Pay attention to your emotions. Write down the situations in which emotions uplift you and those with emotions that hold you back.

Week 4 I Believe in Myself

Code

The Listening Phase

Many learners seem to be overwhelmed by negative self-beliefs. The understanding of the power that beliefs have on one's life was lacking. The need to help the learners drop negative beliefs and adopt beliefs that will enable them to take charge of their lives was evident. Negative beliefs influence our behavior. The person who believes he can't find a job doesn't find a job. A belief that comes true because it is believed is called self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, positive self-beliefs are enabling – they motivate you to take action and make progress.



The Dialogue Phase

- What is this quote telling us?
- Can you think about a time when another person's opinion or actions influenced your thoughts or actions?
- Can you think about a time when your opinion of someone changed that person's thoughts or actions?

The Decoding / Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: Positive Power**

Use the handout titled **Unhelpful Thinking**.

- Ask the learners to think back to their last job interview.
- Ask them to jot down as fast as they can two negative things about their performance on the job interview. Give them approximately 1-2 minutes to do this. Do not ask them to disclose their responses
- Once this is completed, ask learners to write down two positive things about how they approached the job interview. Again, provide 1-2 minutes to do this.
- The next part of this activity involves discussion. Ask your group the following questions:
 - You have just written something positive about yourself and something negative. Which was easier to do?
 - Which did you find you were able to write down faster?
- To conclude the discussion, explain that generally most people find it easier to think negative than positive things about themselves. Our brains tend to reach automatic conclusions about events and situations. It is easier to think negatively, than to look at the situation critically. This impulsive side of our thinking has its uses. There are situations when we need to make quick decisions, such as emergencies. If there is fire, for example, automatic thoughts are essential for

our safety. However, in day to day life, automatic thoughts are not always the best response to a particular situation, especially if we have developed a negative thinking pattern. Negative thinking can become a habit and this could lead to stress and anxiety. The good news is that we can change our thinking! The first step is to be aware of common thought distortions so that we are better able to challenge our negative thoughts or reframe them in a positive way.

- Pass the Common Thought Distortions handout. Read through this list together and generate examples for each distortion from the learners' own experiences.

Unhelpful Thinking

Thought distortions are ways that our mind convinces us of something that isn't really true. These inaccurate thoughts are usually used to reinforce negative thinking or emotions — telling ourselves things that sound rational and accurate, but really only serve to keep us feeling bad about ourselves.

- Black or white thinking – Everybody hates me.
- Over- generalizations – I can never do anything right.
- Globalization – you invited some friends for dinner and received a lot of praise for your cooking. However, one person criticized the food you made. Globalization is when you focus on one negative comment and conclude that your performance was “dreadful”.
- Rejecting the positive – you discount the positive experiences by insisting that they “don’t count”; for example – “It was nothing – anyone can do that!
- Jumping to conclusion – You interpret things negatively but there is no evidence to support your conclusion.
- Catastrophizing - You predict that things will turn badly regardless of past experience or evidence.
- Magnification – You exaggerate the magnitude of your problems and shortcomings or you understate the importance of your desirable qualities. For, example, ‘I was lucky I got that job. ‘
- Emotional reasoning- you assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are. For example, ‘I can’t seem to do anything right, that is shy I am feeling anxious. ‘
- Personalization – you hold yourself personally responsible for an event that isn’t entirely under your control.

- **Activity No. 2: Helpful Thinking Ball**

Use a beach ball.

Using the felt-tip pen, divide the ball into sections so that there is room to write some of the following questions/statements:

- Share with the group one thing you are good at.
 - What is your favourite food?
 - What is the funniest movie you have ever seen?
 - Tell the group one thing you like about yourself.
- The list of questions and statements is not prescriptive and may be modified to suit the needs and interests of the group members.
 - Ask the group to form a circle and throw a ball to each other in a random order. When learners catch the ball, they must read out the statement or questions closest to the thumb on their right hand and answer it before passing it to another learner.

The Action Phase

- **STOP** and listen to your self-talk. Have awareness of your self-talk. A good way to do this is to write down:
 - What happened
 - What your thoughts were
 - How you felt
- **EVALUATE** your self-talk. Make a list of why your self-talk may be true and why you're self-talk may be false.
- **REFRAME** your self-talk so it is more positive

WEEK 5: Dear Stress, Let's Break Up

Code

The Listening Phase

Multiple negative impacts of stress are well-researched and documented. The importance of using strategies and providing social supports to help learners relieve from their unrelenting everyday life stressors is evident.

The Dialogue Phase:

- A Rose and a Thorn – learners are asked to state one “rose” or good thing in their life, and one “thorn” or challenge that is making them feel stressed.
- What are the signs for you that you are becoming stressed out/ depleted/off balance/over-loaded...?
- How do you take care of yourself physically / emotionally?
- Who do you talk with when you need to share thoughts and feelings?
- What do you do when you feel anxious or overwhelmed?

The Decoding/Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: Sawing a Tree**
 - Pass out the copies of the story and read it as a group.
 - Discuss the following questions:
 - What was the man doing in the woods?
 - How long was he sawing the tree?
 - How did he feel?
 - What did Jim suggest?
 - Why did Jim suggest a break?
 - Why did the man say no to Jim's suggestion?
 - What is the story about?
 - Can you relate this story to your own experience?

Jim comes upon a man in the woods working feverishly to saw down a tree. “What are you doing?” he asks.

“Can't you see?” comes the impatient reply. “I'm sawing down this tree.”

“You look exhausted!” Jim exclaims. “How long have you been at it?”

“Over five hours,” he returns, “and I'm beat! This is hard work.”



“Well, why don’t you take a break for a few minutes and sharpen that saw?” Jim inquires. “I’m sure it would go a lot faster.”

“I don’t have time to sharpen the saw,” the man says emphatically. “I’m too busy sawing!”

- **Activity No. 2: Coping Brainstorm**

- Let the learners know that the function of this exercise is to explore how people cope with stressful situations generally.
- Remind them that they will not be individually called upon to disclose personal information.
- Using the flip chart and markers, ask the learners to brainstorm as many words as possible to describe how one might cope with a stressful event.
- Explain to the learners that there are three categories of coping: productive, non-productive and reference to others. While reference to others strategies are generally productive and thus a subset of the productive group, they are important in their own right as much successful adaptation is reliant on helpful relationships and working with others.
- Circle the productive coping strategies in green and circle the non-productive coping strategies in red
- Provide the learners with 5 minutes to discuss with a partner which coping strategies they use *a lot*. Once this has been completed, provide the learners with additional 5 minutes to discuss which coping strategies they use *very little*.
- To finish this activity, it is recommended that learners be provided with access to external resources (for example contact details for the Distress Centre) should they have significant worries or concerns.
- You can also provide a Coping Strategies handout to learners.

Coping Strategies

Productive coping strategies

- Focus on solving the problem
- Focus on the positive
- Seek relaxing diversions
- Physical recreation
- Try your best; accept you best efforts
- Seek social support

Non-productive coping strategies

- Worry
- Wishful thinking
- Not coping
- Ignore the problem
- Tension reduction
- Self-blame
- Keep to self
- Give up
- Act up

Reference to others coping strategies

- Invest in close friends
- Seek social support
- Seek professional help
- Try to be funny
- Seek spiritual support
- Social action

The Action Phase

- Make a commitment to incorporate three new self-care strategies in your everyday life.

WEEK 6: Isn't Life Hard Enough?

Code

The Listening Phase

While all people face problems in everyday life, marginalized adults are more likely to feel overwhelmed with their challenges; the chances are that no one has ever showed them how to solve them.

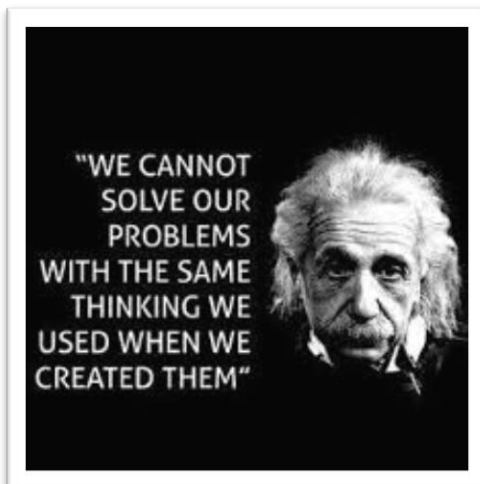
The Dialogue Phase

- Let's make a list of all problems you have already solved today ; give examples such as had to decide what to wear, what to have for breakfast...
- These are the problems that are easy to solve.
- We also have challenges in our everyday lives that are not easy to solve. Let's think of some examples.
- What are some reasons why these problems are difficult to solve?
- What do you do when you have a difficult problem to solve?

The Decoding / Recoding Phase

- **Activity No.1: Let's solve a problem**
 - Introduce the basic problem solving steps – DO IT! Strategy
 - Step 1: Visualize the problem as an “elephant your living room”. It is big and can do some real damage. However, when you think about it you can definitely see some ways to get it out of your living room.
 - **DO IT!**
 - Define your problem (What is the problem?)
 - Outline your options (Think, think, think – what are some possible solutions?)
 - Identify the outcome of each option (Ask What if ...? Would it be fair? Would it be safe?)
 - Take action (Give it a try!)
 - ! Get excited
- Read Jenna's problem. Solve the problem following the basic problem solving steps.

Jenna has a problem. She volunteered to provide snacks for her daughter's soccer team. The snacks will cost about \$40. Jenna doesn't have \$40 to spare for snacks. What should Jenna do?



- **Activity # 2 Solving problems together**

- Ask learners to write a problem they are experiencing on a sheet of paper.
- Have them crumple their paper and place it in the centre of the table.
- Mix the papers up and ask learners to choose one of the crumpled papers.
- Each learner gets a chance to read from the paper they choose.
- Group members try to solve the problem using DO IT! Strategy

The Action Phase

- Each learner implements the solutions to his/her problem suggested by the group.

WEEK 7: Living Costs

Code

The Listening Phase

A lot of every day challenges that learners talked about were related to coping on a small income.

The Dialogue Phase

- What do you see in the picture?
- What do you think is happening?
- Have you ever had an experience/feeling like this?
- Describe it to us.
- How do you make ends meet? Where do you shop to make money go as far as you can?
- Why does this problem exist?
- What happens because of it?
- What resources in the community are helpful?
- What else could be done about the problem?



The Decoding /Recoding Phase

- [Activity No. 1: Life Pie](#)

Let's say you earn \$8 an hour and work 35 hours a week. Assuming that you take two weeks for holiday, you'll earn \$14,000 a year gross. After tax you'd take home about \$1,108 a month.

We are going to assume for this exercise that you have no debt and that you are saving 5% of your income.

Calculate your budget based on the Life Pie:

- Housing @ 35%
- Transportation @ 15%
- Life @ 25%
- Savings @ 5%
- Debt @ 0%
- Cash Remaining

Now use your real life numbers to calculate the budget based on the Life Pie.

- Activity No. 2: Fair Fares' Call to Action

Read the Following Letter:

Fair Fares 'Call to Action

RE: The City of Calgary's Low Income Transit Pass

Poverty starts at 100% of LICO and so should the Low Income Transit Pass

Presently adults with an income between 75% - 100% of before tax LICO (Statistics Canada Annual **Low Income Cut Off**) do not qualify for the Low Income Transit Pass. This meant that people with an income between \$14,565.00 and 1,941.50 per month pay \$94.00 per month for a transit pass.

Presently youth 7-17 years of age do not qualify for a Low Income Transit Pass.

Fare Fares recommends:

- The eligibility for the Low Income Transit Pass be raised from 75% to 100% of before tax LICO in January 2013.
- The City implements a sliding scale for the Low Income Transit Pass in 2013.
- The sliding fee scale start at 50% of the regular adult transit pass and be reduced further according to an individual's income
- The sliding scale be applied to single fares
- All members of low-income households be eligible for subsidies
- Low-income youth between the ages 7-17 should be eligible for Low Income Transit Pass effective January 2013.

Comprehension/Discussion Questions:

- Who is this letter addressed to?
- What is the issue?
- How much was the monthly transit pass in 2012?
- What were the requirements for the Low Income Transit Pass?
- Did youth 7-17 years of age qualify for the Low Income Transit Pass?
- What are Fare Fares recommendations to address this issue?
- How do you feel about the recommendation?
- The letter is from 2012. It is now 2015. Have things changed? Access Calgary Transit Website <http://www.calgarytransit.com/fares-passes/passes/low-income-monthly-pass> to find out.

The Action Phase

- Apply for the Low Income Transit Pass if you are eligible.

The Life Pie is a tool that helps us manage our budget:

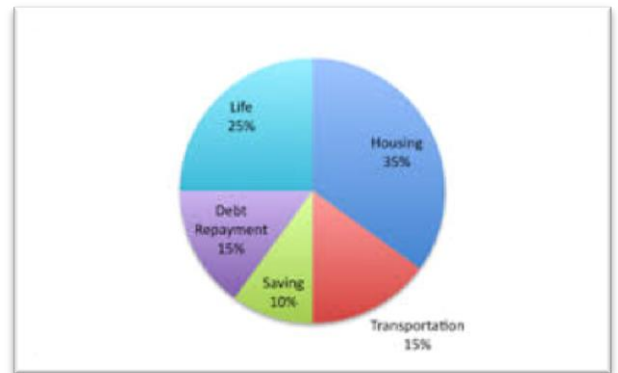
35% - for housing - rent/mortgage, utilities, maintenance, and insurance

15% - for transportation-transit, car payments, repairs, insurance, and parking

10% - for saving – long term saving

15% - for debt repayment

25% - for life - everything from groceries to entertainment, childcare; and everything that is not in the other four categories.



WEEK 8: Eating Well

Code

Weekly Cost of Nutritious Food Basket

Gender	Age (years)	Cost per week
Boys	2 – 3	\$24.40
Girls	2 – 3	\$23.90
Boys	4 – 8	\$31.51
Girls	4 – 8	\$30.50
Males	9 – 13	\$41.84
	14 – 18	\$59.58
	19 – 30	\$57.82
	31 – 50	\$52.29
	51 – 70	\$50.38
Females	9 – 13	\$35.88
	14 – 18	\$42.95
	19 – 30	\$44.77
	31 – 50	\$ 44.21
	51 – 70	\$38.91
Pregnancy	Younger than 18	\$48.95
	19 – 30	\$48.66
	31 – 50	\$47.49
Lactation	Younger than 18	\$49.92
	19 – 30	\$51.70
	31-50	\$50.53
Family of Four	Man & Woman – 25 - 49 years	\$186.59
	Girl 7 – 9 years	
	Boy 13 – 15 years	

Your local Health Services calculated the cost of healthy eating using the Nutritious Food Basket Survey based on current nutrition recommendations and the average food purchasing patterns of Canadians.

The Listening Phase

Low income individuals often sacrifice food dollars for fixed expenses such as rent and utilities. They are resentful about the common myth “If people would just budget their money better, and not buy stuff they don’t need, they would have enough money.

The Dialogue Phase

- What is the chart about?
- Is healthy food affordable in Canada?
- What counts as nutritious and/or healthy food?
- What are the solutions for individuals who are not able to afford healthy food?

The Decoding / Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: Estimate the weekly cost of a Nutritious Basket for your household:**
 - Write down the age and gender of all the people in the household
 - Using the chart, jot down weekly food cost per person as per his or her age and gender
 - Total all these costs.
 - Adjust the total amount according to group or family size.
 - For example:
 - Increase costs by 15% (x1.15) for 1 person
 - Increase costs by 10% (x 1.1) for 2 people
 - Increase costs by 5 % (x 1.05) for 3 people
 - Decrease costs by 5% (x0.95) for 5 people
 - Decrease costs by 10 %(x0.90) for 6 people
- **Activity No. 2**
 - Go on the Internet and search for Canada’s Food Guide or click on this link:
 - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
 - Find the section/ link called Food Guide basics and click on it.
 - Now click on the link, “How much food you need every day?” and find your female/male range.
 - How many fruits and vegetables should you eat each day?
 - How many grain products?
 - How much milk or milk alternatives?
 - How much meat or meat alternatives?
 - Do you think you eat a healthy diet?
 - Why or why not?

- Activity No. 3

Recipe Search

- Search for a recipe online or in a cookbook that uses foods from at least two food groups in the Food Guide.
 - Recipe Title
 - Where did you find your recipe?
- Search for a recipe that calls for eggs, milk or milk alternatives and vegetables.
 - Recipe Title
 - Where did you find your recipe?
- Print and share learners' recipes.

The Action Phase

- Have a healthy food potluck

WEEK 9: The Healthy Mind Platter

Code

The Listening Phase:

People in poverty experience high levels of physiological and psychological stress. Stressful experiences arise from coping with conditions of poor quality housing, food insecurity, insecure employment, etc. The lack of supportive relationships and social isolation further increases stress. At the psychological level, stressful and poor living conditions can cause feelings of shame, insecurity, and worthlessness.

Uncertainty raises anxiety and hopelessness. People who experience high levels of stress often attempt to cope by adopting unhealthy behaviours such as the excessive use of alcohol or smoking. It is often extremely hard to take up a physical leisure activity or practice healthy eating habits because most of one's energy is directed towards coping with day-day-to day life.



The Dialogue Phase:

We have all heard about the Food Pyramid. It provides us with the information regarding the type and amount of food we should eat to stay physically healthy. The Healthy Mind Platter is based on the same idea – it gives us information regarding the type of activities that we should engage in to stay mentally and physically healthy.

- What is included in The Healthy Mind Platter?
- What is meant by “focus time”? Can you give an example?
- What is meant by “play time”? Can you give an example? Why is play time important for adults?
- What is connecting time? Why is it important? Can we brainstorm some examples?
- What is meant by physical time?
- What do you think is a difference between “time in” and “down time” – can you make any conclusions based on the icons that represent these two skills?
- Sleep time is self-explanatory. Why do our brains need sleep?

The Decoding /Recoding Phase

- [Activity No. 1: The Healthy Mind Platter video: watch and discuss](#)

- Activity No. 2

List at least one activity for each category:

Focus:

Play:

Connecting:

Physical:

Time In:

Down Time:

Sleep Time:

The Action Phase

Fill in three days, one day on the weekend and two during the week, of time spent in each category. This is a rough estimate. Below, write down three to four observations at the end of the three days.

Activity	Date:	Date:	Date:
Focus			
Play			
Connecting			
Physical			
Time In			
Down Time			
Sleep Time			

Comments/Observations:

Week 10: Looking Ahead

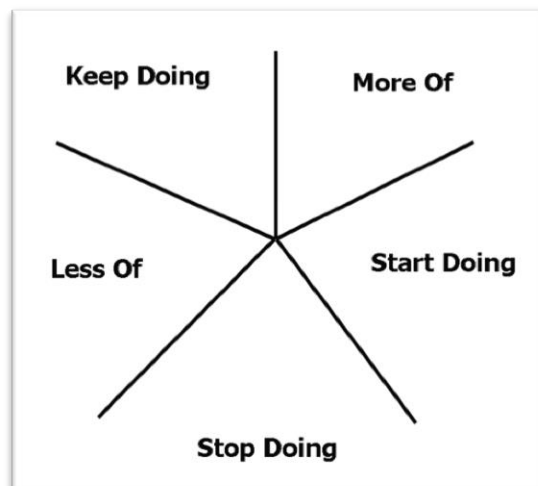
Code

The Listening Phase

- Starfish is a great activity to foster thinking around the value the learners get from the program.

The Dialogue Phase

- **Keep Doing:** Brainstorm things that are going well in learners' lives and recognize the value of them.
- **More of:** Discuss things that learners are already doing and they believe will bring more benefits to their lives if done even more.
- **Start Doing:** Discuss new things that learners have already started doing or are considering doing in the future.
- **Stop Doing:** Brainstorm things that are not beneficial, or even worse, they are getting in the way.
- **Less of:** Discuss things that they have already done; there are some benefits, but they would rather reduce a little bit.



Starfish is a great data gathering activity to foster the thinking around practices and the value the team get from it. It helps team members to understand each other perceived value on such practices.

The starfish divides the board into 5 areas:

- **Keep Doing** – something the team is doing well and you recognize the value on it.
- **Less Of** – something already being done; you see some value, but you rather reduce a little bit.
- **More Of** – something already being done; and you believe will bring more value if done even more.
- **Stop Doing** – something that is not bringing value, or even worse, it is getting on the way.
- **Start Doing** – a new idea, or something you have seen working before that you would like to bring to the table.

The Decoding/Recoding Phase

- **Activity No. 1: Write a Letter to Future Self**
 - It can also be an e-mail - <https://www.futureme.org/>
 - If learners are writing an e-mail, print it and suggest that they keep it for the future
 - The letter should have a date in the future. It should be brief. Learners should be encouraged to say whatever they want in their letter

- Activity No. 2

- Bring a chocolate box to the class
- Ask the learners to form a circle.
- You can start as a facilitator by saying: *"I would like to give a chocolate to Tina in recognition of that time when she helped me learn/do..."*
- Then you give the chocolate box to *Tina* and ask her to repeat the gesture.



The Action Phase

- Encourage the learners to keep using their Reflect journal
- Encourage the learners who accessed one-on-one support to continue developing their reading and writing skills

SECTION 4: GOOD FACILITATION PRACTICES

It has already been articulated that this guide is for the practitioners who are interested in implementing the Taking Charge Program as well as those looking for additional ideas. It can be adapted and used in a variety of contexts as resource for working with adults who come to the learning setting with very limited literacy and essential skills and who experience poverty and unrelenting challenges in their everyday life.

In other words, this guide aims to enable you to adapt the Taking Charge program to your own situation.

Some of you may have experience of adult foundational programs that traditional curriculum approach. If this is the case, you may find yourself in need of “un-learning” some past practices. Others may have no previous experience of facilitating adult learning. This should not be a problem. It is our hope that this guide will provide you with a solid introduction to facilitating a learner-driven program, encourage you to find out more and continue learning.

It is not easy to model a participatory, learner-centered approach to teaching and learning in a handbook format. Because there is no dialogue, information flows only one way. Nevertheless, what we have attempted is to encourage and enable you to explore a few of the many avenues possible in developing a supportive learning environment for adult foundational learners as they explore the construct of lifelong learning in order to better understand themselves, their skills, their goals and their community and gain confidence needed to take charge of their lives.

This section highlights the good program facilitation practices necessary for successful implementation of the Taking Charge Program.

- Participatory approach used in the Taking Charge Program does not eliminate the role of program facilitator. In fact, just the opposite holds true. It is a myth that, when using participatory approach to program planning and implementation, the instructor just sits back and lets the learners “have at it.” Instead the facilitator of a participatory curriculum is an active part of the process. Facilitating the Taking Charge Program involves negotiating goals and learning strategies, serving as a knowledgeable resource, guiding the process and helping learners determine when they have met their goals. The importance of the instructor is not lost in the Taking Charge Program – what is different is the *role* of the instructor – from content expert and main provider of information to facilitator of the learning process.
- Implementing the Taking Charge Program requires a certain amount of “up-front” time to help the learners understand the process and “try out” new approach to learning. The program facilitator must keep in mind that this doesn’t just happen by itself. If you are working with learners who are used to a traditional approach where they take a passive role, you need to take some time to build trust, develop confidence, and show learners the value of embracing the participatory approach to learning.
- Remember that your learners will often come from diverse backgrounds, and you must make serious effort to get to know them.

- Use a variety of facilitation techniques. Don't always rely on the same approach, even though it may be tempting to stick with what is familiar to you. The important factor in selecting the facilitation technique is determining what you are trying to help participants learn. Is the focus on content, skills, or values and attitudes? Certain techniques will work best for each of these domains of learning. In techniques that are focused on presenting content, learners are going to be less active than in skill-based or values-oriented activities. Techniques for presenting new content can include brief discussion lecture and panel discussions. Experiential activities such as demonstration (show and tell) and simulation (creating a life like situation so that the participant can learn by experiencing something close to real-life experience) are essential skill-building sessions. Activities such as discussions and role playing help learners look inward to better understand their personal beliefs, attitudes, and values.
- Continue learning new facilitation techniques. With technology changing at a rapid pace, this is essential. Staying on top of new developments in the field of adult learning is an essential part of effective practice.
- Create a positive learning environment. The kind of environment you set from the very beginning of the program will determine the tone of the program. It is important to remember that many adult foundational learners are likely to be nervous and even fearful. It has taken these learners a great deal of courage just walk through the door. Both psychological and physical learning environments are important.
- The elements of a positive psychological learning environment include but are not limited to building the climate of trust, showing an empathic understanding of the learners and their circumstances, being genuine in how you relate to the learners, demonstrating and modeling confidence but balancing it with a degree of humility or modesty, demonstrating respect for the learners and showing enthusiasm for the topics they have chosen and for simply being there for them.
- The elements of physical environment conducive to learning include but are not limited to providing adequate lighting, room temperature, seating as well as inviting the learners to feel free to stand up and move about the room at any time.
- Technology is obviously a game-changer in the world of education including adult foundational learning. A program which does not make use of technology runs the risk of being seen as obsolete. This does not mean that you need to be a technology expert or that you need to use some form of technology in every program activity. Rather, it means that you need to know enough to know what technologies can help you better reach your learners and under what circumstances. Keep in mind that computer use has a prominent place in the Essential Skills Framework.
- Remember that many foundational adult learners come to you with a history of negative past experiences; they bring memories of failure, fear and frustration from their school experiences. Your big responsibility is to help the learners have a very different experience that will allow them to overcome their pasts.

- The most useful strategy to show learners that what they are learning is important and valuable is to draw from the learners' experience. Ask the learners about their previous experiences and use activities that will allow them to share their experiences. Another way to do so is to let the learners know what they will be able to "take away" immediately and use in their everyday life. Still another strategy is to give learners the chance to make choices whenever possible.
- To increase the learners' self-determination that they can succeed your job is to find ways to help build confidence. One aspect of confidence building is the question of how difficult you should make your program. This is not an easy question – the content should be difficult enough to be challenging and motivating but not so difficult that learners cannot succeed. An important strategy for building learners' confidence is to provide opportunities for learners to be successful. Last but not the least, it is important to provide opportunities for learners to exercise control – the more the learners is able to engage in problem-solving activities that involve making choices, the greater the opportunities for building confidence.
- At the core of the participatory approach to foundational adult learning is the belief that program facilitators are learners themselves. Keeping up with topics of interest and need to learners means continuing to learn about them. The content of the Taking Charge Program is an active learning project in which the program facilitator is deliberately and continuously trying to gain new knowledge, skills, and perspectives.
- Encourage learners to keep track of their progress. Motivation increases when learners are taught to keep track of their accomplishments, make decisions about what to learn next and when to learn new information, and recognize when they need to review material or seek assistance. Keeping track of their progress on a graph or chart helps them to measure their progress visually.
- Model problem solving. "When you sense something is wrong, ask yourself "What should do?" Analyze your work and think through the problem, providing yourself with alternative solutions. "Okay, if I do this, then. Yes, I think I'll try."
- Last but not at least – remember that it is all about the learners. As program facilitators, we are there to provide information, facilitate learning and change, help people develop new skills or generate solutions to the problems they have identified, but we are only a means to help people learn.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION

Although covered in the last section of the guide, evaluation should take place throughout the entire program implementation process. We need to distinguish between two types of evaluation: formative and summative. Both are very important. Formative evaluation aims to evaluate the process. It is ongoing and used to give feedback in order to *improve* the program. Formative evaluation can be as simple as asking learners for anonymous written comments about what they liked best and least during a program session. These comments can be used as way of making sure that you and the learners are on the same page and to make modifications when needed.

Summative evaluation is what most often comes to mind when we think of evaluation. The focus of summative evaluation is on *outcomes* or *results*. In the Taking Charge Program summative evaluation involves the following aspects:

- Starting Points Assessment (Intake Interview)
- Learner's self-evaluation of learning progress and outcomes (Post Program Learner Questionnaire and Interview)
- Instructor's assessment of learner's performance (Post Program Instructor Questionnaire)

Intake Interview Discussion Tool

A. First let's get some background information about you.

Question	Yes	No	Things to consider
Is English your first language?			
Have you been to any literacy or adult learning programs before?			
Did you feel good about learning during your school years?			
What was the last grade you completed?			

- B. Next, let's find out how confident you are doing everyday tasks that involve having conversations, reading, and writing.

Question	Yes	No	Things to consider
Do you need help to fill in forms?			
Do you need help to write letters or e-mails?			
Do you need help to read letters, brochures, or on-line information?			
Do you need help with computer use?			
Do you need help to find things you need in shops?			
Is your handwriting easy to read?			
Do you have trouble remembering long lists or instructions?			
Can you remember the important points from conversations?			
Can you put your ideas into words easily when you speak or write?			

- C. Finally, let's think about what might work for you in this program.
- Would you like to do the Taking Charge Program?
 - What would make it easier for you to participate?
 - I want to improve my skills because...
 - I would like to learn...
 - I hope the program to be (fun, difficult, exciting...)
 - By the end of the program, I expect to be able to...
- D. How would you feel about having some one-on-one support to help you practice reading and writing?

Post Program Learner Survey

Please read the statements below and tick the box that you feel is most appropriate.

Did You Enjoy the Program?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	The program was helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
3	I learned some new information.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
4	I found out how to do some new things	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
6	The staff were helpful	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Your Learning

Please circle the one number that best describes the above learner's knowledge and skill level related to each of the statements below.

1= Never

2= Almost Never

3= Sometimes

4= Almost Always

5= Always

Statement	Rating
I know what I need, what I like, and what I'm good at.	1 2 3 4 5
I can identify and discuss the amount and type of education or training I may need to reach your long-term goals.	1 2 3 4 5
I know how to take care of myself physically and emotionally.	1 2 3 4 5
I believe that I can set goals to get what I want.	1 2 3 4 5
I set goals to get what I want or need. I think about what I am good at when I do this.	1 2 3 4 5
I figure out how to meet my goals. I make plans and decide what I should do.	1 2 3 4 5
I begin working on my plans to meet my goals as soon as possible.	1 2 3 4 5
I check how I'm doing when I'm working on my plan. If I need to, I ask others what they think of how I'm doing.	1 2 3 4 5
If my plan doesn't work, I try another one to meet my goals.	1 2 3 4 5
I feel positive about what I have learned in this program.	1 2 3 4 5
I use DO-IT! Problem solving strategies to tackle the everyday challenges in my life.	1 2 3 4 5
I feel I can cope with my life at the moment.	1 2 3 4 5

Please Write Your Answers to the Following Questions...

What was your favourite part of the program?

Which part of the program did you not find enjoyable?

How can this program be improved?

THANK YOU 😊

Questions and Prompts for Post Program Learner Interview of Focus Group

1. What did you want to learn when you first came?
 - How did you want to change your life?
2. Have you learned some of what you wanted to learn? How can you tell?
 - Can you share an example of how you know you have moved forward?
3. Do you see a difference in your everyday life as a result of your learning?
4. What are your plans for the future? Pursuing other adult learning opportunities? Seeking employment?

Post Program Instructor Questionnaire

Below is the list of characteristics and behaviors that indicate the degree to which your learner demonstrates traits of self-determination. For each item, select the appropriate rating code based on what you have observed about your learner. Provide as many examples as possible.

1= Never

2= Almost Never

3= Sometimes

4= Almost Always

5= Always

Self-determination/Behaviour	Rating					Example
Learner knows own strengths and challenges.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learner knows how to set goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learner knows how to make choices, informed decisions and plans to meet own goals and expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learner knows how to take actions to complete his own plans successfully.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learner uses DO-IT problem solving strategies successfully.	1	2	3	4	5	
Learner knows how to change actions or plans to meet goals and satisfy needs and wants.	1	2	3	4	5	

Section 6: Resources for Professional Development

Books

- Caffarella, R.S., & Daffron, S.R. (2013). Planning programs for adult learners (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Knowles, M. (1980). The modern practice of adult education (rev.ed.). New York: Cambridge.
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- Merriam, S.B., & Bierema L.L. (2014). Adult learning: linking theory and practice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S.D., & Preskill, S. (1999). Discussion as a way of teaching. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
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- Palmer, P.J. (2007). The courage to teach. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Wlodkowski, R.J. (2008). Enhancing adult motivation to learn (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Pink, D.H. (2011). Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us. New York: Penguin.
- Brockett, R.G., & Hlemstra, R. (1991). Self-direction in adult learning: Perspectives on theory, research, and practice. London and New York: Routledge.
- Illeris, K. (2007). How we learn. London and New York: Routledge.

Digital Resources

- <http://www.lindenwood.edu/education/andragogy/>
- http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pink_on_motivation?language=en
- https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_robbins_asks_why_we_do_what_we_do?language=en
- <http://goodlifezen.com/the-mystery-of-consciousness-neuroscience-offers-new-insights/>
- https://www.ted.com/talks/aleph_molinari_let_s_bridge_the_digital_divide
- https://www.ted.com/talks/aleph_molinari_let_s_bridge_the_digital_divide
- http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/healthy_mind_platter/
- <http://www.andragogy.net/>

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Bandura A. (1986). Social Foundations of thought and action: A Social Cognitive theory. Englewood Cliffs. NJ: Prentice Hall.

PIAAC – OECD (2013): <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/>

Baumeister. F.F. & Vohs, K. (2004). Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory and applications. New York: Guilford Press.

Hoffman. A., & Field. S. (2006). Steps to self-determination (2nd Ed.). Austin, TX: PRO-Ed.

Izzo, M.V., Pritz, S.G. & Ott. P. (1990). Teaching problem-solving skills: A ticket to a brighter future. Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, 13, 23-26

Latham, G.P/ & Locke, E.A. (1991), Self-regulation through goal setting. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50 (2), 212-247.

