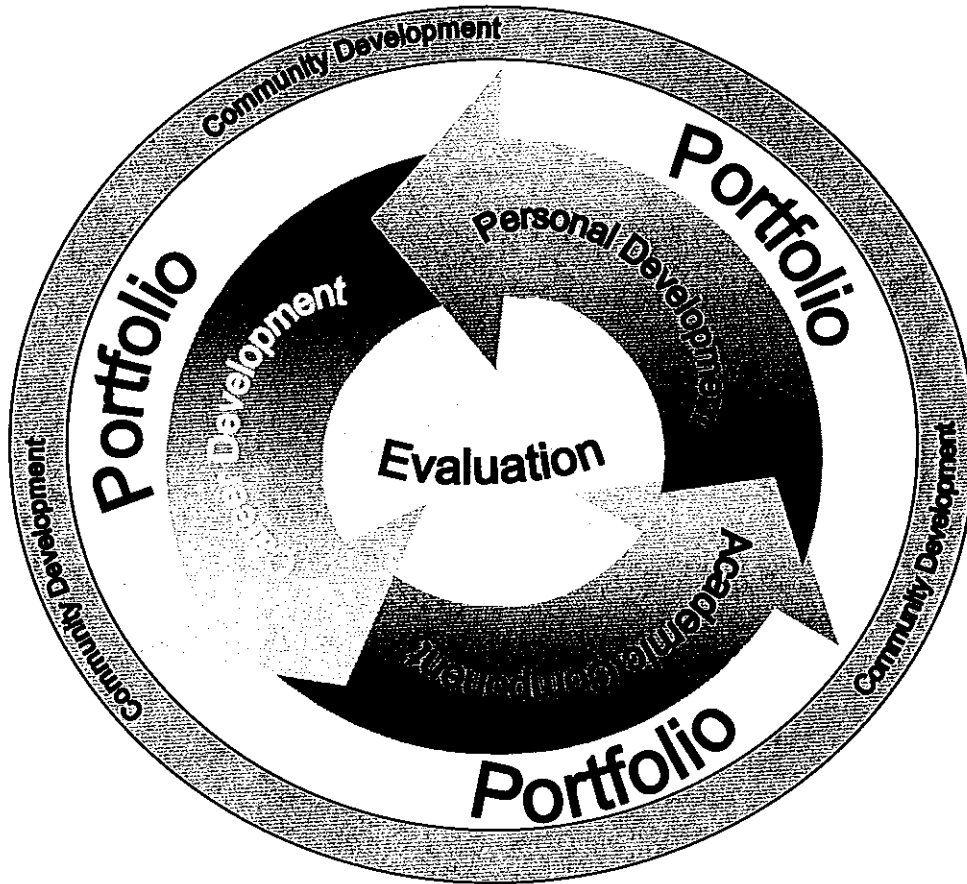


Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Project

October 3, 2005 to May 26, 2006

Final Report

August 2006



Submitted By: North West Regional College
Basic Education-Literacy Dept.



www.nwrc.sk.ca/aallc.pdf

Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Project

Table of Contents

I. Process	
Initial Assessment	page 2
Program Plan	page 2
1. Academic Skills Development.....	page 2
2. Personal Skills Development.....	page 3
3. Career Development	page 3
Portfolio Development	page 3
Community Development.....	page 3
Evaluation	page 4
II. Outcomes	page 5
III. Conclusions	page 5
IV. Administration	
A. Staffing.....	page 6
B. Financial Report	page 7
Appendix A – Adult Aboriginal Literacy Collection Literacy Program Model.....	page 8
Appendix B – Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Literacy Program Model Graphic.....	page 11
Appendix C - Basic Education Level II Programming Entrance Criteria Guideline.....	page 12
Appendix D – Program Participant Survey	page 13
Appendix E – Introduction to Portfolio Development Participant Evaluation	page 14

Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Project

October 3, 2005 to May 26, 2006

Final Report

Through the "Aboriginal Adult Literacy Life Collections" project, North West Regional College (NWRC) in partnership with the Battlefords Tribal Council (BTC) Training and Employment centre:

- a. developed and piloted a program model for Aboriginal adult literacy learners that included a portfolio development component.
- b. assessed the usability of 'benchmarks' outlined in the literacy framework document.
- c. created a broader base awareness among agencies and literacy practitioners within the Battlefords region, relating to developing and accepting literacy portfolios that reflect cultural skill components.

I. Process

Outcome: Program Model

Initial Assessment

Before entering into an academic upgrading program, individuals participate in an assessment process to determine their abilities, strengths and goals. Upon conclusion of this process individuals are referred¹ to the program that best meets their specific needs.



Students on the Literacy waitlist were invited to participate in this project. Twenty-one individuals started the program

Program Plan

The College's initial assessment model has been revised to include "Entrance Requirement Guidelines". The guidelines were developed using two specific sources of information: benchmarks and best practice. The best practice information was attained through a multi-year pilot undertaken by the College in monitoring assessment, placement and success in the basic education credit program. Given that assessment looks at three areas of development it was only natural to include these elements into the Student Program Plan.

1. Academic Skill Development

- Using academic assessment information an individual learning plan was developed for participants. Participants then worked at their own pace. Sessions focusing on Language and Math were scheduled; tutors were available to assist students with their program.
- In order to assess the usability of literacy benchmarks, staff concluded that structured program outlines including identification of mastery skills and a skill evaluation was required. As total time required to complete these outlines was

¹ Placed on appropriate waitlist.

beyond the scope of this project, only a few modules of Language Development benchmarks were evaluated.

- Evaluation tools are being developed as part of the program outline; format suitable for inclusion in a portfolio is recommended.

2. Personal Skills Development

- Participants were invited to participate in various community based personal health and well-being workshops. Impressions from these were to be captured in a format² selected by the student and included in their portfolio.
- Participation of literacy learners in community sponsored sessions facilitated increased awareness of portfolios, components of portfolios and the relevance of cultural awareness in portfolio development.

3. Career Development

- Community agencies and individuals were brought in to share information about employment and career opportunities. Areas such as retail management, marketing, and fitness motivation were included.
- Students were provided access to the College Career Centre. Through the centre individuals have access to career assessment, information and counseling.
- Portfolio development sessions outlined the collection of career related information for inclusion in personal portfolios.
- Activities increased community awareness of portfolio development.

Portfolio Development

Adult Literacy participants created a portfolio collection of experiences and skills that highlighted cumulative skills individuals accomplished. This portion of the project focused on bolstering self-esteem, confidence, capacity building and an awareness of the strengths participants possess. The portfolio is also a resource for accessing future learning opportunities and/or employment.

- A course developed by the Institutions Branch of Sask Learning was used.
- Participants engaged in reflective activities that aid in developing existing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, goal setting activities, interviewing techniques, group and team work skills, resume writing, and self awareness building. They learned how to present 'evidence' in the form of a "Binder Portfolio", which serves the purpose of supporting or backing up their skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- Five (5) participants completed all 48 hours designated for this portion of the project.

Community Development

- A partner advisory committee was established. This committee was comprised of representatives from NWRC, BTC, Battlefords Early Intervention Program, Lakeland Library, Connaught Community School, KidsFirst, Department of

² Story, drawing, etc.

Community Resources (DCR), CanSask, and Living Sky School Division. The committee will continue on as the Battlefords Literacy Interest Group.

- Introduction to Portfolio Development, a three-day workshop highlighting portfolios as an employment resource was delivered. Community partners and agencies were invited; participants were from Battlefords Youth Centre, Sakewew and Manacowin Schools, Battleford Tribal Council, and Department of Community Resources. A total of ten (10) staff and literacy practitioners participated.

Evaluation

- Skill development assessment tools were developed³ as part of academic program outlines. Level II benchmarks were used to guide development work. Format, suitable for the inclusion in portfolios, focuses on validation of acquired skills, tracking and record keeping.
- Student Exit Survey concluded the inclusion of portfolio development in literacy programming provided:
 - a useful resource in job search
 - increased confidence levels
 - as a tool, increased awareness of personal strengths
 - aided in personal skills development specifically how to manage time and the importance of attendance
 - was a catalyst to set career and educational goals.
- Evaluation Summary – Practitioners Portfolio Training Workshops
 - Affirmation that the use of portfolios in literacy programming was important.
 - Portfolios articulate the individual's skills in as holistic strength based manner.
 - A portfolio is a useful employment resource.
 - The portfolios were seen as a collection of evidence as to who the individual was.
 - The portfolio was viewed as a tool that tracks a person's life-long journey of self-discovery and provides evidence of personal growth involving attitudes, skills, and knowledge.

³ A number of modules in Language Arts have been completed; time and resources required to complete total program was not part of this project.

II. Outcomes

1. Recruit 23 learners to pilot the project

Twenty-one individuals accepted the invitation to participate in the literacy program. Participation was voluntary and attendance subject to personal circumstances⁴. The focus of the program was Language Arts, Math and Personal Skills Development through a portfolio project. Five (5) individuals completed all portions of the program; all participants were invited to continue their program in the new term.

2. Professional Development for 10 literacy practitioners

The Introduction to Portfolio Development workshop trained 10 community literacy practitioners.

3. Reach a minimum of 4 community agencies from the Battlefords area to participate in the pilot.

Representatives from nine (9) community agencies formed an advisory group.

4. Training for portfolio development relevant to aboriginal people will be accessible to numerous literacy practitioners and agencies. This training will have a long term positive impact for future literacy learners in that many more learners will be supported in developing life collections portfolios.

Final Report will be available on agency websites.

www.nwrc.sk.ca/AALLC-Project

Model outlined will form the basis for formal literacy programs delivered through the College and partnering agencies. Resource development work will continue.

Youth Centre will implement portfolio development with their clients in the New Year.

Local Can/Sask staff will utilize a form of portfolio development process with their clients.

As the number of learners developing portfolios increases so will the acknowledged value and acceptance of portfolio as a means of identification, documentation and validation of individual's skills and abilities. A holistic approach to the assessment of these skills and abilities supports the need to focus on both cognitive and personal development influences, including the impact of cultural differences.

Ongoing awareness and program opportunities will be supported by the community partnerships developed.

⁴ Students were not sponsored nor did they receive any financial assistance.



III. Conclusions

1. Work resulted in the articulation of a Literacy Program Model⁵ which outlines structure for both the program provider and the learner. This model is holistic and embodies both formal and informal learning activities. The inclusion of the portfolio as a foundation places the learner in 'the driver seat'; the learner plays a key role in the development, direction and realization of their learning plan.
2. The "Benchmarks" provide direction for formal program outlines, markers for evaluation, guidelines for successful program completion and the criteria for assessment or program prerequisites. The validity and/or effectiveness of these markers will require tracking student success.
3. Collaborative practical application facilitates increase awareness and stimulates further activity. Increased understanding and awareness become the catalyst or building blocks for future projects.

IV. Administration

A. Staffing

Program Coordinator

The program coordinator was responsible for:

- project staffing – placement, monitoring and supervision
- participant recruitment
- identification and access to various learning opportunities, workshops, events, etc.
- liaise with community and partnering agencies
- project administration

Project Facilitator

The project facilitator, working through the student resource centre was responsible for:

- development of individual program plans.
- identification and/or development of academic program outlines, resources, tools, etc.
- delivery portfolio development program sessions
- provide participant support services, make referrals as required.
- provide resource and instructional support services to project tutors.

Project Tutors

Responsible for:

- linking students to appropriate information and learning resources as required by their program plan; make referrals as required.
- working one-on-one with participants as required by their program plan.

⁵ See Appendix A



B: Financial Report

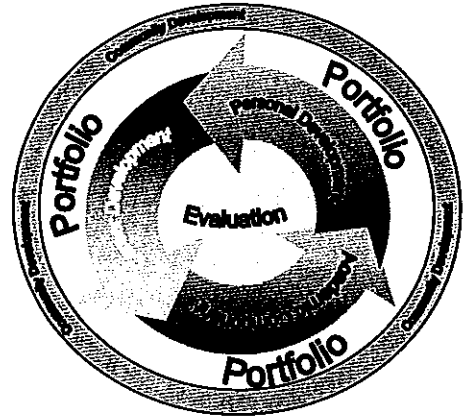
Project Expenditures		Total Amount	Contributions		Amount Requested	Actual Expenditure
			Cash	In-Kind		
Salaries - Project Staff						
Project Coordinator	24 days @ 207.48/day	4,980				
Project Facilitator	34 days @ 161.00/day	5,474		1,729	3,251	3,251.00
Trainer I (NWRC)	21 days @ 152.38/day	3,200			5,474	5,474.00
Trainer II	49 days @ 151.76/day	7,436			3,200	9,766.56
Benefits		2,987			7,436	4,061.03
SUBTOTAL		24,077			2,987	1,493.64
Travel & Accommodations					22,348	
SUBTOTAL		200		200		
Publicity				200		
Pamphlets, media ads, events, brochures		400		150	250	241.77
SUBTOTAL		400		150	250	
Facilities Rental & Utilities						
Facility - NWRC	107 days	3,528		3,528		
Facility - BTC	63 days	2,088		2,088		
Equipment		500		500		
SUBTOTAL		6,116		6,116		
Materials						
Learning activity materials (NWRC)		2,600		1,300	1,300	2,300.00
Learning activity materials (BTC)		2,000		1,000	1,000	
Photocopying		300		300		
Postage		75		75		
Publication of materials		150			150	150.00
SUBTOTAL		5,125		2,675	2,450	
Other						
administration @ 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assessment 23 @ 125.00 ◆ Registration Services 23 @ \$65.5 ◆ Admin Services (Accounting) 23 @ 60.00 	3,457		2,305	1,152	1,152.00
Honoraria - elder, storyteller, community resources	6 @ 200 7 @ 100 5 @ 60	2,200			2,200	510.00
Volunteer time	25 days @ 164/day	4,100		4,100		
professional development activities	9 days @ 200/day	1,800		1,200	600	600.00
SUBTOTAL		11,557		7,605	3,952	
TOTAL		47,475		18,475	29,000	29,000.00

Appendix A
Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Project (AALLC)

Literacy Program Model

I. Initial Assessment⁶

All applicants undergo initial assessment prior to program placement. Assessment is a systematic process for gathering academic, career, and personal information in order to make decisions. The information gathered formulates a formal student profile which is used for program placement and planning.



II. Learning Plan

Information outlined in the 'student profile' and/or other specific assessment tools is used to develop an individualized plan for the learner. Given the particular needs of the learner, a holistic approach to the plan requires consideration in all of the following:

1. Academic Component

The academic portion is based on building academic capacity to meet the criteria for Literacy Benchmarks 1 and 2. Mastery of basic communication and numeracy skills fulfills the criteria for entry into Basic Education Programs. Academic achievements are interwoven into Personal Skills Development and Career Development Activities in order to promote lifelong learning. This component is self-directed and individually paced. Formal outlines, in the form of academic modules, transition participants through the academic process.

Resources:

Peters, T. (2004). *The Circle of Learning*. Regina: Saskatchewan Literacy Network and Saskatchewan Learning.

2. Personal Skills Development Component

Personal skill development promotes self-awareness and social inclusion. This model suggests encouraging participants to access existing personal well-being programs and workshops, increases individual and community awareness of potential workforce representatives. Collaboration with community agencies creates opportunities for participants and the community to transform. Interaction with partnering organizations creates positive social interaction and citizenship rarely experienced by low literacy participants. This component implements culturally

⁶ Based upon the common provincial "Initial Assessment Model"

appropriate opportunities to explore personal values, interests, goals, and dreams by actively participating in meaningful activities such as volunteer placements.

Resources:

Hanna, M. (2000). *A Dream that Walks: A Goal Setting Workbook*. Guelph, ON: Action Read Community Literacy Centre

- *Established Community Opportunities* such as Parenting classes, Community Kitchen programs, Healthy Living programs, Addictions workshops, accessing online and written resources etc.
- *Self Selected Opportunities* such as volunteering, work experience (paid or volunteer), online/written personal development activities, visiting elders, visit the Library, etc.
- *Existing College Opportunities* such as utilizing Student Support Centre, Student Counselor, Student Support Services, accessing tutors, participating on student council, etc.

3. Career Development

A career development component is essential for low literacy participants to formulate, develop, and articulate a career/education plan. The model suggests linking participants with the College Career Centre and community organizations creates opportunities for the participants to explore careers that match personal goals, abilities, and interests. Facilitating interactions within the community also allows local business owners, agency representatives and human resource professionals to explore the potential and abilities of participants.

Resources:

- *Established Community Opportunities* such as Assertiveness workshops, Resume Writing programs, CPR/First Aid Course, WHMIS training, accessing online and written resources etc.
- *Self Selected Opportunities* such as volunteering, work experience (paid or volunteer), online/written personal development activities, job searches, requesting a reference letter, visit the Library, etc.
- *Existing College Opportunities* such as utilizing Career Centre, Student Counselor, Student Support Services, accessing tutors, participating on student council, and Student Support Centre.

III. Portfolio Development

Developing a personal portfolio in tandem with the previous components focuses on bolstering self-esteem, confidence, capacity building, and awareness of the strengths participants possess. The participants assemble a collection of individual professional skills, knowledge and attitudes. The portfolio reflects the accomplishments in the three

areas of this model: academic ability, personal development, and career awareness. Participants establish relationships with community partners to build individual and community capacity to overcome barriers that impede career/education success. This resource tool is used as a reference to review and guide participants and to incorporate goals into everyday learning. The portfolio is also a reference tool for employers to gain awareness of the tangible skills and ability participants possess.

Resources:

Poore, C. A. (2001). *Building Your Career Portfolio*. Markham, ON: International Press Publications.

A Journey of Self-Discovery: A Facilitator's Guide to Reflection and Portfolio Development. Regina, SK: SaskLearning.

Learning as Transformation: An Aboriginal Perspective on Prior Learning Assessment & Portfolio Development. (2003). Deseronto, ON: First Nations Technical Institute.

Satterthwaite, F. & D'Orsi, G. (2003). *The Career Portfolio Workbook*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Books.

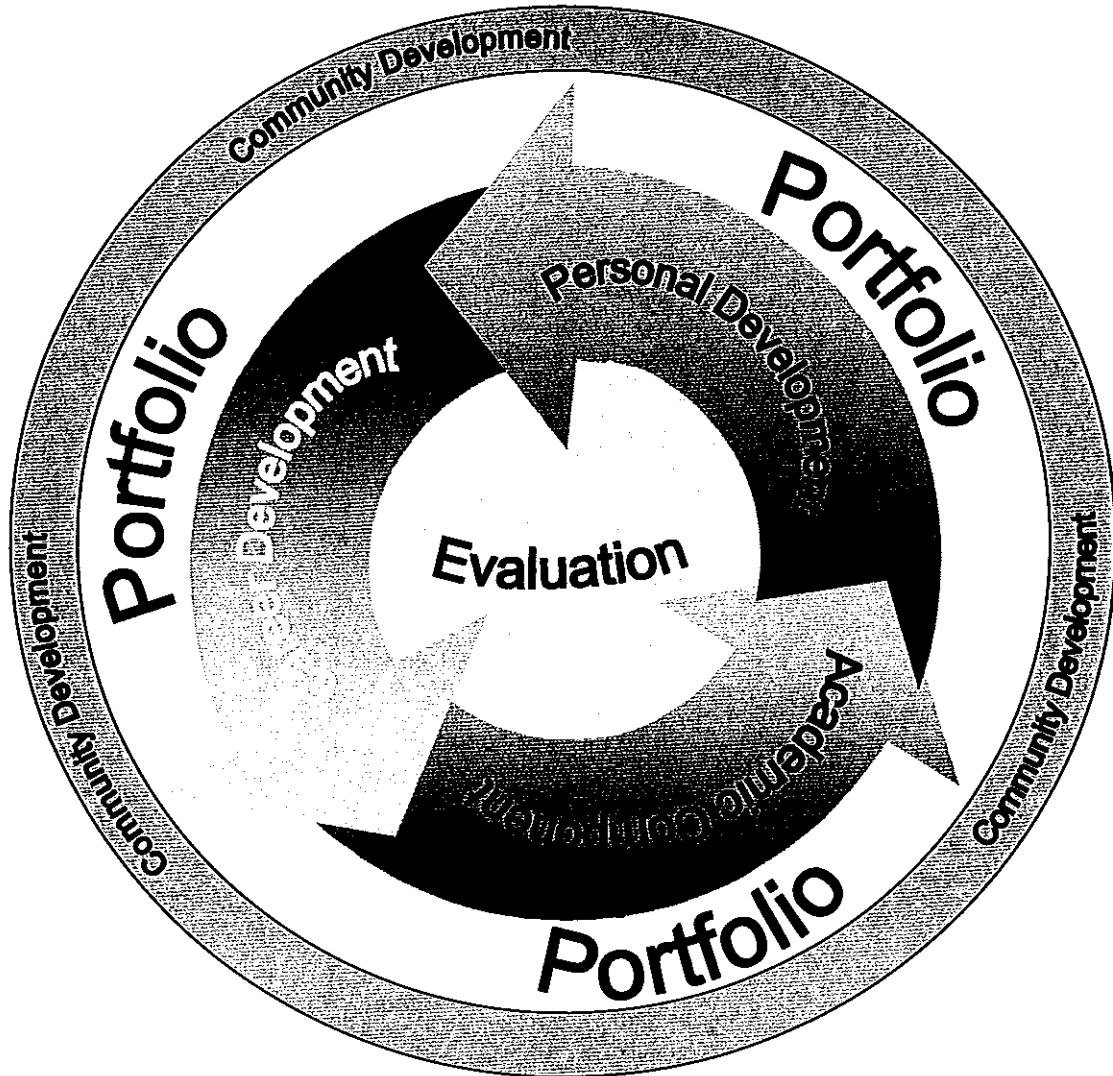
IV. Evaluation

Participants self monitor overall progress by using the portfolio to accumulate evidence of the following:

- *Academic progress* - monitored using formal and informal tools that recognize participant's progression according to the Literacy Benchmarks.
- *Personal development* - associated with a collection of various approaches of articulating prior learning and program acquired skills and abilities. Examples include: drawings and written forms of storytelling, documentation such as workshop completion certificates, volunteer hour logs, etc.
- *Career development* - evaluated based on participant's articulated goals, action plan, and strategy for finding employment. Examples include: a resume, letters of reference, and incorporation of portfolio in job searching

Appendix B
Adult Aboriginal Literacy Life Collection Project (AALLC)

Literacy Program Model
Graphic



Appendix C
Basic Education Level 2 Programming
General Academic Skills Employability/Life Skills

Entrance Criteria – as determined by the following factors

Academic Ability Must meet at least one of the criteria	Readiness to attend Must meet all criteria	Career Awareness Must meet two of the criteria
<p>Tools/documentation used to measure academic ability are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAAT sub-tests used to determine eligibility are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Comprehension - # Operations - Problem Solving • High School Transcript • Documentation of non-credit courses completed • Writing sample <p>Candidates must meet academic skill requirement by achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CAAT B Scores of level 4 or higher in all sub-tests tested. ○ CAAT B scores are level 3 and 4, but has shown academic growth through retesting and/or work in Learner's support group or other academic activities. ○ CAAT B scores are level 3 and 4, but has some high school credits that indicate ability or recent sustained work experience that demonstrates skills acquired. ○ Demonstration of some skills (documented)¹ ○ That correlate with Benchmarks at Level 2. 	<p>Tools used to determine readiness are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Questionnaire • Intake Interview • Autobiography • Communications with the staff completing assessment • Reference letters <p>Candidates must demonstrate the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Display a stable living situation which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place to live • Reliable Transportation • Childcare • No obvious drug abuse, legal problems, etc. • Able to attend appointments on time and complete assessment in timely manner. 2. Demonstrates readiness to attend school and/or work experiences through such activity as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping appointments, interviews, etc. that are part of the placement process • Working successfully for a sustained period of time • Volunteering regularly • Attending Student Support Centre Sessions or other non-credit activities. 3. If discontinued or withdrew from BE program, has demonstrated that the past problems are not occurring. 4. If barrier is identified, strategies are presented that the client must implement to meet the requirements of readiness for the program. 	<p>An interest and readiness in getting a job or entering training</p> <p>Tools used to determine readiness are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Questionnaire • Intake Interview • Autobiography • Communications with the staff completing assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An area of interest in a work field or occupation that reflects some knowledge of the field and/or occupation. • Work or volunteer experience that was positive and will enable the candidate to build on the skills and experience. • An understanding of work as a responsibility of adults and that employment is one of the end goals of education and training.

Appendix D
Program Participant Survey

Low literacy participants were asked to complete a survey after the completion of the portfolio development workshop. The following is a summary of their responses.

1. What was your reason for attending the workshop?

“Learn more about my education to further it”

“I wanted to use this course to go to the Teachers Assistant program”

“To show concrete examples of my learning, talents, gifts, skills, and goals”

“I want to find my goal in life, the portfolio will help me get a job”

“To learn more about how to get a job”

2. Did you benefit from the topics covered in making your portfolio?

“I learned a lot. I gained confidence in my attitudes and ability”

“I learned to talk a lot more and to have a positive outlook of myself. I have learned to become more patient”

“The Knowledge Skills & Attitudes part was my favourite. I learned I am good at certain things and what I would like to work on”

3. How will you use this training?

“I will use my portfolio to further my education and help get a job as a Teacher’s Assistant”

“I will use this to help set goals and explore who I am and what I know”

“I will use this to remind me to get to work on time”

Appendix D
Introduction to Portfolio Development
Participant Evaluation

Facilitated discussions conducted at the conclusion of the Portfolio Development Workshop resulted in cumulative group thoughts and knowledge of the portfolio process. A summary of the overall perceptions of portfolio development concepts is described below.

A portfolio:

- *Is a document that is an eclectic compilation of information about an individual, their life work, and work experiences.*
- *Demonstrates how an individual views their skill set.*
- *Is a collection of documents.*
- *Is a holistic, strength-based collection of life learning, skills, abilities, and knowledge as they would apply to a work setting.*
- *Is a showcase of an individual. It is a collection of evidence of who the person is.*
- *Is a master portfolio – Sections can be removed based on the situation.*
- *Can be edited to be job specific.*
- *Is comprehensive and holistic.*
- *Is a useful structure to organize information for presentation.*

