How Are We Doing?

An Inquiry Guide for Adult Education Programs

By Beth Bingman with Olga Ebert

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Introduction to This Guide

What difference are we making?

How do we know?

How can we show it?

These questions about program performance are asked by adult literacy and ESOL teachers, program administrators, and funders. This guide is designed to be used by local adult education programs to facilitate a systematic inquiry process answering these kinds of questions. In this process, program staff take part in activities that involve them in identifying and clarifying program goals, examining current documentation processes, addressing the challenges of performance accountability and outcomes documentation at the program level. They produce a number of documents that their program can use (a) to make a decision about implementing ongoing improvement work and (b) to conduct this ongoing work.

This inquiry guide was developed as part of a larger project of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) that examined outcomes of adult literacy programs. The project included research on how adult learners identify these outcomes (Bingman and Ebert, 2000; Bingman, Ebert, and Smith, 1999), policy papers addressing performance accountability (Merrifield, 1998) and previous outcomes studies (Beder, 1999), and an action research project in which teams from three adult education programs in Tennessee, Virginia, and Kentucky examined their programs' outcomes documentation processes and developed new processes designed to meet specific program needs (Bingman, 2001).

Practitioners from three Tennessee programs field tested the inquiry process described in this guide and the guide was revised based on their suggestions. All the programs that took part in the field test made plans to continue program improvement work.

The program staff that participate in this inquiry process will have a clearer understanding of:
• their goals, their program's goals, and state and national goals
• how to document the accomplishment of goals
• performance accountability and what it means
• how the various parts of their program fit together to move toward their goals
• possible next steps their program can take to move more effectively toward their goals.

When a program undertakes this inquiry process, one program staff member takes the responsibility of using the guide to facilitate a team of co-workers in six hour-and-a-half sessions. The activities in the sessions include:
• examining current program work—goals, program activities, documentation processes
• reading and discussing articles on performance accountability
• examining state and national plans for the fits (and misfits) with program goals
• beginning to develop possible next steps for program change.

The guide includes:
• an introduction for the facilitator
• a step-by-step guide to facilitating the six sessions
• reproducible materials for participants.

Overview of the Six Sessions

This inquiry process is divided into six sessions. The objectives and activities of each session are summarized below.

Session 1: Examining Our Goals
The objectives of Session 1 are for the group:
• to get to know each other and the process
• to examine and clarify student, staff, program, state and federal goals.

The activities are designed to introduce the process, to get the group organized, to identify and clarify the goals of the staff, students, and program, and to compare local goals with state and national goals for adult education.

Session 2: The Documentation Matrix

The objective of Session 2 is for the group:

• to develop a clearer understanding of their program's current documentation—what is documented and why?

The activities include looking at the various documentation forms used by the program, completing a *Documentation Matrix* to analyze how they are used, and determining if there are program goals that are not documented.

Session 3: Performance Accountability

The objectives of Session 3 are for the group:

• to have a greater understanding of performance accountability in adult education

• to consider how and to whom their program is accountable.

The activities for Session 3 include discussion of Juliet Merrifield's article on performance accountability, assessing the local program on Merrifield's criteria, and completing the *Accountability Grid* to analyze performance accountability in their program.

Session 4: Inputs-to-Impacts

The objectives for Session 4 are for the group:

• to prioritize their program goals

• to analyze how the components of their program address these program goals.

The activities for Session 4 include prioritizing the goals identified in Session 1, reviewing the components of the program using the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*, and identifying any gaps in addressing program goals.

Session 5: Documenting Outcomes, Measuring Performance

The objectives for Session 5 are for the group:

• to better understand outcomes documentation

• to determine the outcomes that might be documented to assess program goals.

The activities for Session 5 include discussing Harold Beder's review of outcomes studies, identifying the outcomes that need to be documented in order to assess performance in meeting program goals, and examining several approaches to outcomes documentation.

Session 6: Considering Next Steps

The objectives for Session 6 are for the group:

- to understand three possible approaches to on-going program improvement
- to determine next steps the program might take regarding program improvement.

The activities for Session 6 include reporting on and discussing readings on approaches to program improvement, identifying gaps in current program processes, and identifying possible next steps the program might take toward continuous improvement.

To Implement an Inquiry Group

An adult education program interested in exploring or beginning a program improvement process using this inquiry process should take the following steps:

1. Decide that the process will be used as a way to begin to examine the results of your work.
2. Choose a team of four to twelve staff members, teachers, and administrators, who are willing to spend a couple of hours a week for six weeks on this process.
3. Identify a facilitator who will take the responsibility of reading the guide and leading the activities. This might be a shared responsibility.*
4. Schedule six sessions.
5. Begin!

*"Getting Started" (pp. 6-7) has suggestions on choosing the team and facilitator.

Introduction for the Facilitator

This section is written for the person chosen by the program to facilitate the inquiry process. You will find an introduction to your role, suggestions on how to organize the process, and steps to take before the first session. Suggestions on facilitation skills are found in Appendix 2.

Introduction to the Process and Your Role

This guide is designed to assist adult education programs in using an inquiry process to develop information about their program in order to plan for program improvement. The team that takes part in the inquiry will spend approximately an hour and a half a week together working, talking, and planning. Each team member will have some reading and other activities to prepare for the sessions. Each team member will complete some documents that will be used throughout the process.

As facilitator, you will serve as a guide to the inquiry process. Your role will include:
• helping the group get organized and stay organized
• leading the group through each session
• keeping the process moving.

In this inquiry process you are the leader of a team of equals. This process is not about giving out information or new policies. It is about a group of people working together to build their understanding and to develop new information and, possibly, new policies. You may be a program administrator or a teacher, but as facilitator of this inquiry process, your primary role is that of guide. A facilitator makes things happen but does not dictate. You are a part of the group in this inquiry process, but you have extra responsibilities for the group's success.

Organizing the Inquiry Process

This section of the Guide describes the initial steps the facilitator should take to organize an inquiry group.

Getting Started

How the decision is made to conduct this inquiry process in a program will vary. Maybe a program administrator has learned about the process and decided to try it. Maybe a group of teachers heard a presentation and think the process will be useful. Maybe the state has suggested that programs use this process to develop an improvement plan. Whatever the reason, once a program decides to conduct an inquiry into program improvement, two other decisions need to be made:

1. Who will facilitate the process?
2. Who will participate in the process?

The facilitator of the inquiry process is both a participant and a leader of the process. In some group processes the facilitator is "outside" the process. In this inquiry process, the facilitator guides the group through the process, but may also make his or her own contributions. The ideal facilitator will have some experience in group facilitation. The facilitator will need to be able to commit the extra time needed to prepare for each session, approximately four hours before the first session and an hour or two for each of the other sessions.

The decision about who will participate in the process may be made by program administration, by the facilitator, or group members may volunteer. However the group membership is determined, it is important to pay attention to:

- **The number of group members.** Four is the minimum and twelve the maximum. The best number for discussion is probably between six and ten.

- **The makeup of the group.** The group that participates in the process should include a diversity of program staff, at a minimum, several teachers and at least one program administrator. If this inquiry process is to lead to program change, the work and the new understandings that the work leads to will be stronger if various viewpoints are represented. For program change to happen, broad-based understanding and commitment is vital. As you think about the group, consider the various viewpoints that are represented in your

program; for example, you may want to include ESOL teachers and ABE teachers if your program offers both, or you may include a volunteer tutor if volunteers are an important part of your program.

- **The commitment of the group.** It is important that group members are committed to the process. They need to make every effort to attend each session and to be prepared. The schedule of sessions should be set with group input. In the first session, ground rules are established to clarify each person's contribution to the process. The program may want to consider some kind of stipend or honorarium for this extra commitment, particularly for part-time staff and volunteers.

In the **Participants Materials** in Appendix 1 is an *Introductory Letter* that may be used or adapted to recruit group members.

Preparation

Once the group members have been identified, the facilitator needs to do several things to prepare for the inquiry group.

First, be sure the schedule of session meetings has been set or that at least the first meeting has been set with plans to set the rest of the schedule with the group. Although each session should take 1.5 hours, ask participants to set aside two hours, so that you will not have to cut short an interesting discussion or activity. A *Schedule/To Do* Form is included in the Participants Materials, and you may want to complete it for the first session.

Second, read through this guide. Get a sense of each session, scan the readings, get an understanding of the overall process.

Third, brush up on your facilitation skills. If you are a novice facilitator, you may want to read all of the materials in Appendix 2. Even if you are a seasoned facilitator, you will probably want to review the materials in the appendix. The Guide is very specific about what to do in each session, but every group is different and the process is interactive. You will want to think ahead about the challenges you might face in the group, and prepare for any particular challenges you have as a facilitator.

Fourth, you will need to decide if you want to include the optional state goals in Activity 4 in Session 1. If you do, you will need to obtain a copy of your state's goals for adult basic education and ESOL. These goals (or mission) are listed in the state plan. See Appendix 3 for information on how to get your state plan and what to excerpt.

Staying Organized

This guide provides a variety of tools to help you and the group stay organized. You may want to keep your materials in a loose-leaf notebook or binder. You should provide each inquiry group participant with a folder for their Participants' Materials.

The Participants' Materials section includes reproducible master copies of:
• the *Introductory Letter*
• the *Overview*
• the *Schedule/To Do* Form
• an optional *Feedback Form* for sessions 1-5
• the handouts and readings for each session.

Participants' materials are italicized when referred to in the text.

Documenting Your Work

At the end of this project, each participant should have a record of your work. You may also want to present your work in a portfolio to your entire program staff at the end of the project. Most work will be done on newsprint. The completed newsprints are often used in more than one session. And the information on the newsprints should be copied onto the corresponding forms. You should decide if you want individual participants to complete their own forms or if you or a volunteer will type up your results and copy and distribute. One of the pilot teams also created a poster that helped document their ongoing work. However you choose to do it, each person should have copies of the completed work, and you should keep "master" copies of all documents produced by the group to be used in any future program planning and improvement work.

Before the First Session

Before the first session:

1. Be certain you are clear about any administrative issues such as payment for group members, etc.

2. Make a *Participants' List* with name, address, phone, email, and position. Make copies for the group members and keep a copy for the master file.

3. Distribute the *Introductory Letter* to group members if this hasn't already been done.

4. Obtain a copy of your state plan or other statement of your state's goals for adult education (optional, see Appendix 3).

5. Decide if you want to give folders of materials to each group member. There are several possible ways to do this:
   —Pass out an empty folder and let people put in materials as they receive them *OR*
   —Put all the handouts in a folder and give out at the first session *OR*
   —Give out all the handouts and readings before the sessions begin and suggest that participants review the agenda and the readings.

6. Think about ways to make the process fun. Do you want to serve snacks either before or after the sessions? If so, is there a way to share the work?

The Sessions

The other six sections of the Guide are the facilitator's directions for each session of the inquiry process. The session directions include the objectives of the session, the preparation needed, and a materials checklist. Then each activity in the session is described in detail, with purpose, estimated time, materials, and numbered steps in the process.

You will probably want to participate in some activities, and this is fine. But remember, your first responsibility is facilitation.

SESSION 1:
Examining Our Goals

The objectives of Session 1 are for the participants:
- to get to know each other and the process
- to examine and clarify student, staff, program, and state and federal goals.

Preparation

This first session lays the groundwork for the rest of the process. The group will come together, begin to experience the process, and examine the goals that guide your program. You will want to be as prepared as possible.

Before the session, gather the materials listed below. Make all the copies you need. In addition to the *Participants' List*, you will need to create one handout, the excerpts from your state plan, if you have decided to include it. You will find instructions for this in Appendix 3. The other handouts are in Appendix 1. In addition to handouts, you also need to create the newsprints as described in the Activities.

After you have all the materials ready, read through the instructions again and highlight words that will remind you at a glance of what you need to do or say. Imagine how the activity will go and how long it should take.

Materials

____ Newsprint pad

____ Markers

____ Masking tape

____ 3'' x 5'' Post-It notes or "stickies" in three colors

____ Folders for each group member with *Participants' Materials List*

Handouts (copies for each group member, hole-punched):

____ *Participants' List* (facilitator creates)

____ *Overview*

____ *Schedule/To Do Form*

____ *Goals Sheet*

____ Reading # 1 - *Workforce Investment Act Introduction*

____ Excerpts from state plan (optional – facilitator creates)

____ *Feedback Forms* OR feedback questions written on newsprint

Newsprints prepared for:

____ *Agenda* (Activity 1)

____ *Student Goals*, *Staff Goals*, *Program Goals* (Activity 3)

____ *"Official" Program Goals* (Activity 3, optional)

____ *Federal Goals* and *State Goals* (Activity 4)

____ Feedback questions (Activity 5, optional)

Activity 1. Introduction

Purpose   To familiarize the group with how the inquiry process will work

Time   15 minutes

Materials   — *Overview* handout
— *Agenda*
— *Agenda* written on newsprint

Process:

1. Welcome the Group
Introduce yourself and state your role as facilitator. Explain that your role includes
• providing needed materials
• leading the group through each session
• keeping the process moving.

2. Ask each person to introduce themselves and tell their position in the program.

3. Hand out *Agenda* and post the agenda for the day on newsprint.
Review briefly and ask if anyone has any questions. Explain that they can use their agenda and the space for reflection to keep a record of their own experiences in this inquiry process.

4. Introduce the process
Explain that for the next few weeks they will be part of an inquiry group that will be looking at how your program determines how well you are meeting your goals. The process will help them to:
• identify or clarify program goals
• examine current documentation processes
• begin to identify possible ways your program can better meet your goals.

At the end of the six sessions, the group may decide to continue to meet and work together,

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Inquiry Group Session One

Agenda

1. Introduction — to people and the process.

2. Getting organized — schedule, ground rules, keeping it together.

3. Review of our goals.

4. Looking at state and national goals.

5. Feedback and getting ready for the next session.

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but their commitment is to participate in the six sessions and present their work to the program. Explain that the work they do in the sessions will result in documents they will give to the program. They do not have to write a report.

5. Overview of the Process
- Pass out the *Overview* (or ask people to find it in their folder if they already have it).
- Ask people to refer to the *Overview* while you review it.
- Explain that the work of the group will include:
  — clarifying your goals
  — examining what your program currently documents and how you use this documentation
  — reading and discussing an article on performance accountability
  — examining how the components of your program interact
  — exploring a variety of ways to document outcomes
  — exploring some possible ways to continue to work on program improvement.

Ask the group to look over the *Overview*. Ask if there are questions about the process; answer based on your understanding of the process. If there are questions that are not about the process, note them and say you will try to get the answer, but do not get involved in answering now.

Activity 2. Getting Organized

Purpose: To set ground rules, schedule, materials

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: — newsprint
   — *Schedule/To Do* Form
   — calendar

Process

1. Set Ground Rules

Ask the group to think a minute about ground rules for their work together. After a moment ask for suggestions and write on newsprint. If people need help, some suggestions might include "Avoid interrupting" or "Share air time." After all the suggestions are posted, ask if everyone can live with these. Tell the group you will post these at subsequent sessions as a reminder and that additional rules can be posted as needed. (Save newsprint.)

2. Clarify Schedule

If the schedule is already set, fill in the schedule form ahead of time and pass out. Ask if anyone has problems with this schedule. If one or two people must miss one or two sessions, this is probably okay, but if several people must miss a session, discuss re-scheduling.

If the schedule is not already set propose the dates you think are most likely. Try to come to consensus as quickly as possible.

Activity 3. Examine Goals for Adult Education

Purpose To clarify the goals of your program

Time 30 minutes

Materials — *Goals Sheet*—a copy for each participant
— Newprints with *Staff Goals*, *Student Goals*, *Program Goals*
— "Stickies" (3"x 5" post-it notes) in three colors
— Newsprint, markers, tape
— If your program has established written "official" program goals, copy these on a sheet of newsprint.

Process

1. Writing Goals

Explain that the purpose of this activity is to clarify the goals that influence your program. These include staff goals, student goals, and program goals. The assumption is that goals should drive the activities of a program.

Post three pieces of newsprint, one labeled *Staff Goals*, one *Student Goals*, and one *Program Goals*. Put a stickie of a different color in the upper right corner of each.

Give each person five stickies of each color, a total of 15. Ask them to think a few moments of their own goals for their work, what they hope they are accomplishing by teaching in or administering an adult education program. Ask them to write their goals, using the stickies of the Staff color. They should put one goal per stickie, up to 5. Allow about 5 minutes.

Then ask them to think about the students in their program and the goals they know or believe are most important to their students. They should write one student goal per stickie on the Student color.

Finally, ask the group to write what they believe are their program's goals, again one per stickie, on the Program color. As they finish, each person should take their stickies and post them on the appropriate newsprint.

2. **Sorting the Goals**
   Ask for two volunteers to come up and cluster the goals on each sheet, i.e. two people for each sheet. They should group goals that are similar. When they are done, ask them to report on their grouping and to write a phrase for each grouping. You should end up with a list of goals for each sheet. (Save these goal lists.)

   Ask for thoughts on what they have done:
   What are the similarities? The differences? Any surprises?

3. **If your program has established "official" goals, put up a newsprint page on which you have written them.** Ask the group if the official goals adequately reflect the lists they have developed. If there are important differences, what are they? Note the difference on the *Program Goals* sheet or the *Official Goals*.

4. **Tell the group that you will come back to these lists in another session.** Depending on time, they can copy the final lists on their *Goals Sheet* or you (or a volunteer from the group) can copy them on the *Goals Sheet* later and make copies for each group member.

Activity 4. Review State and Federal Goals

Purpose   To examine state and national goals for adult education and compare to local goals

Time   20 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint lists of *Staff*, *Student*, and *Program Goals* from Activity 3
— Reading # 1 – *Workforce Investment Act Introduction*
— Handout – Excerpt from your state plan (optional)
— Newsprints labeled *Federal Goals* and *State Goals* (optional)

Process

1. **Examine state and federal goals.** (If you have decided not to include the state plan, just focus on federal goals from WIA.)

   Pass out Reading #1 and state plan excerpt. Tell the group that they may want to read the entire handout later, but for now they should scan to find the goals stated in each.

   Ask someone to read the state goals. Write on newsprint. Repeat for federal WIA goals.

2. **Discuss**

   Facilitate a group discussion asking the following questions:
   • How do these goals compare with local goals?
   • How do your program goals align with state and federal goals?
   • Are there others you would add to the state or federal lists?

   Summarize the group's responses in a few notes on the state and national goals newsprints. Tell them that you will be returning to these goal sheets in another session.

Activity 5. Wrap-Up

Purpose   To get feedback on the day's session and to prepare for next session.

Time   10 minutes

Materials   — Folders (if not already distributed)
— *Feedback Forms* OR feedback questions written on newsprint

Process

1. **Tell the group that in the next meeting they will examine the documentation that your program is now doing and how it is used.** Ask the teachers to bring any form, test, portfolio, etc. that they use regularly. This might include intake forms, goal sheets, tests (standardized and other). Ask administrative staff to bring program forms—the forms they regularly complete and keep or forward to another office. Explain that these forms will be returned at the end of the session.

2. **Pass out folders** (if not already done)**.** Ask the group to look at the *Participants' Materials List*. These are the items they will eventually have in their folders. They should organize them how they like.

3. **Complete a quick feedback process.** Either pass out the *Feedback Forms* and ask people to take about 5 minutes to complete and return to you OR post the newsprint with the Feedback questions and ask for oral responses that you note on the newsprint.

> **What questions do you have from this session?**
>
> I want the facilitator to know
> _____
> _____
>
> I think I can use what I learned today to _____
> _____

SESSION 2:

The Documentation Matrix

The objective of Session 2 is for the group:
• to develop a clearer understanding of their program's current documentation: what is documented and why?

Preparation

This is a working session. You will need table space to sort documents and a large black, white, or green board and the appropriate writing tools. If you do not have access to a board, create a large paper by taping together newsprint. Then on the board or paper recreate the *Documentation Matrix*.

The other preparation for this activity is to encourage group members to bring all the kinds of documentation used in your classes and program.

Materials

____ A "board" and chalk or markers

____ Newsprint pad, markers, tape

____ Newsprint sheets summarizing goals from Session 1, Activities 3 & 4

Handouts (copies for each group member, hole-punched)

____ *Agenda*

____ *Documentation Matrix* (2 copies per person and have extras available)

____ *Feedback Forms*

____ Reading # 2 – *Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? How?*

Activity 1. Check In

Purpose   To reconnect with the inquiry process and review agenda

Time   10 minutes

Materials   *Agenda*

Process
1. **Welcome the group.**

2. **Ask if there are any concerns or questions from the last meeting.** Answer or discuss briefly, asking for input from the group.

3. **Ask if anyone has any thoughts or insights about goals** since the last meeting and if they'd share. Acknowledge these contributions.

4. **Pass out and review the day's agenda,** i.e. that the rest of the session will be spent sorting and analyzing the documents they have brought.

Activity 2. Sorting the Documents

Purpose   To identify and categorize the kinds of documents the group has brought

Time   15 minutes

Materials   — newsprint and markers
— the documents that group members brought

Process
1. **Explain to the group that the activity of the day is to make sense of the documentation that your program uses.** In the last session you identified goals; by the end of the day you should have a sense of how you are keeping track of your work and success in meeting these goals.

2. **Ask the group what kinds of documents they have brought.** You may want to ask each person to name one kind of document, e.g. a standardized test reporting form or a student journal, as a way to get everyone's participation. As people name the type or category write it on newsprint. Keep going around the group until you have elicited all the categories.

   Ask the group to look at the list and note if there are any categories that might be combined. Connect and write title for combined categories on newsprint list.

3. **Ask the group to take the documents they brought and physically sort them** using the categories they have developed. If there are any that don't fit, create a new category, even if it only has one document in it. When all the documents are sorted, ask everyone to sit again taking one or more category piles with them.

Activity 3. Completing the Matrix

Purpose   To analyze your program's documentation processes

Time   45 minutes

Materials   — *Documentation Matrix* handouts
                — An enlarged *Matrix* on a board or paper

Process

1. **Explain that you are now going to work together** to analyze your documentation processes using the questions on the matrix.

   First write the categories you have identified in the first column of the enlarged *Matrix* under Documentation Method, one category per row. (You may want to start with the document that is completed first for a student and list them in order, but this may not work consistently.)

2. **Then go through the list of documentation methods,** item by item and ask the questions at the top of the columns. When the group agrees on an answer, write it in the appropriate place. People may want to refer to the

various piles of documents as they answer. And you may decide to combine additional categories. A sample matrix is shown below, for your information.

Documentation Method	Who does it?	For whom?	How often?	How used?	Key Information
Intake Form	secretary	program	once	for demographic info to set goals	• demographics • goals • previous education
TABE test	teacher	• student • teacher • state	every 90 days	• to assess progress • for NRS report	grade level
Attendance Form	teacher	program	every day	to report to state	attendance

The questions mean:
Who does it? means who actually completes the form.
For whom? means who ultimately uses the information on the form. This may be more than one person.
How often? means how often is this information collected per student. So each student usually has one intake form even though the program may complete many.
How used? means how is the information used. This may be for performance accountability, to plan lessons, or for a variety of purposes.
Key items reported refers to the types of information not to specific information.

3. **After the *Matrix* is completed either give time for people to copy onto their forms** or you or a volunteer copy the matrix onto a form after the meeting and make copies for everyone.

Activity 4. Which Goals Are Documented?

Purpose   To determine which of your program's goals are documented

Time   15 minutes

Materials   — The enlarged completed *Matrix* on a board or paper
— *Goals Lists* from Session 1 (newsprint)

Process

1. **Post the *Goals Lists*** (student, staff, program, state, national) from Session 1. Ask the group to work in pairs to **identify** for which goals your program collects documentation of achievement. For which goals do you collect data that tells you when your goals are met?

2. **Ask pairs to report which goals are documented** and in what document. Go around the group asking each pair to **report** one goal and how it is documented. Then ask if there are others. On the *Goal Lists*, star (★) the goals for which you document achievement. (You may want to number the types of documents in column 1 of the *Matrix* and write the number next to the goal it documents.)

3. **Ask the group for comments, reflections** on what they have done both on the *Matrix* and comparing it with goals.

Activity 5. Wrap-up

Purpose   To give reminders for next session and get feedback from this session.

Time   10 minutes

Materials   — *Feedback Forms*
— Copies of Reading #2 – *Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? How?*

Process

1. **Pass out** *Feedback Forms.* Give time to complete and collect.

2. **Remind people of the date of the next session.** Ask them to read Juliet Merrifield's article, *"Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? How?"* and to write one question the article raised for them.

   Tell them that although this article was written before the passage of the Workforce Investment Act and the implementation of the National Reporting System, it is still useful for understanding the underlying issues in performance accountability.

3. **Tell them that if they want to read the report** on which the article is based it is available on-line at
   http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~ncsall/research/reports.htm

SESSION 3:
Performance Accountability

The objectives of Session 3 are for the group:
- to have a greater understanding of performance accountability in adult education
- to consider how and to whom their program is accountable.

Preparation

To prepare for this session, read Merrifield's article and consider your own answers to the discussion questions in Activity 1. When facilitating a discussion your role is to pose questions and in some cases asking clarifying questions. It is not to get the group to give you a "correct" answer. The purpose of the discussion is to deepen the group's understanding of performance accountability and what it does and could mean for your program. However, considering how you might answer the questions should give you a deeper understanding of the article.

Materials

____ Newsprint

____ Markers, tape

Handouts (copies for each group member, hole-punched)

____ *Agenda*

____ *Accountability Grid*

____ *Feedback Forms*

Newsprints

____ Newsprints labeled:

Accountable For / Accountable To Whom / Accountable For What

(Activity 2)

____ *Quotes* from article (Activity 3)

____ *Next Steps* newsprint (Activity 4)

Activity 1. Check In

Purpose   To reconnect with the inquiry process and review agenda

Time   5 minutes

Materials   *Agenda*

Process
1. **Welcome the group.** Ask if anyone has comments or thoughts to share.

2. **Pass out and review the day's agenda:** completing an *Accountability Grid* to clarify your program's accountability system, discussing the article they have read, and using Merrifield's ideas to consider performance accountability in your program.

Activity 2. The Accountability Grid

Purpose   To consider how accountability happens in your program

Time   30 minutes

Materials   — Newsprints labeled: *Accountable For / Accountable To Whom / Accountable For What*
      — Markers
      — *Accountability Grids* – 2 copies for each person

Process
1. **Pass out the *Accountability Grids*** and explain that they will begin by thinking about how they are accountable in their work.

2. **Ask participants to think a moment, then write a list** of what they are accountable for in their work in the Accountable For column of their grid.

3. **Go around the group and ask each person to tell two things on their list.** Write each on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Accountable For*. After every

person has spoken go around again and ask for any items not already on the list and record those.

4. **Now ask the group to think to whom are they accountable.** Using the same process as above have them create their own lists. Then list the various types of people or organizations named, e.g. students, program director, state ABE, etc. on another sheet of newsprint labeled *Accountable To Whom*.

5. **Ask the group to think a moment about the outcomes they measure and report and how.** Remind them that outcomes are what comes out of the program, usually changes in learners' lives; not what goes in, such as instruction. Ask them to list the ways they measure and report outcomes on the grid column labeled Accountable How. For example, they might use a standardized test to measure how learners' reading has changed.

6. **Using the same process as above, go around the group and ask each person to share two outcomes they measure and how.** List these on a sheet of newsprint labeled *Accountable How*; go around again and ask for any not yet reported and add these to the list. Tell the group that these lists are a beginning picture of performance accountability in their programs.

Activity 3. Merrifield on Performance Accountability

Purpose   To discuss Merrifield's article and deepen the group's understanding of performance accountability

Time   30 minutes

Materials   Quotes written on newsprint

Process

1. Ask for the group's reaction to the article.

2. After everyone has had a chance to comment, post a newsprint with the following quotes:

Quotes:

"[With WIA] The emphasis on results shifts attention from simple delivery of services to the outcomes of learning."

"Definitions of success should be negotiated."

"Two kinds of capacity—to perform and to be accountable—are linked."

"What is counted becomes what counts."

"Inequalities of power and uneven access to information prevent the development of mutual accountability."

Facilitate a discussion of Merrifield's article using the following questions for the quotes. Some possible answers are in brackets in case you need to suggest answers. Your objective is to help the group be clear about:
- agreement on performance
- capacity to be accountable
- tools for measuring accountability
- mutual accountability.

You may not want to ask all the questions if time is short.

Quotes, discussion questions, and possible answers:

"[With WIA] The emphasis on results shifts attention from simple delivery of services to the outcomes of learning."
—What services does our program provide? [instruction, counseling, testing]
—How are services different from outcomes? [Services are what you do. Outcomes are the results you hope for.]

"Definitions of success should be negotiated."
—Who determines what success means in your program?
—Do definitions of success differ?
—How might a program-wide definition be determined? Who should be involved?

"Two kinds of capacity—to perform and to be accountable—are linked."

—How are these two capacities different? [Capacity to perform involves having the resources to meet your goals – time, trained staff, etc. Capacity to be accountable involves the collecting and reporting of data that measures performance, e.g., reliable testing, accurate reporting.]

"What is counted becomes what counts."

—Think about the *Documentation Matrix*. What is counted in your program?

—Do you see ways that what is counted affects how you do your work?

—Do people "teach to the test" and if so, is that a problem?

"Inequalities of power and uneven access to information prevent the development of mutual accountability."

—What does Merrifield mean by "mutual accountability?" [All stakeholders in adult education have access to information and responsibilities to each other.]

—What might get in the way of mutual accountability?

Activity 4. Planning Next Steps

Purpose   To begin planning using Merrifield's "next steps"

Time   20 minutes

Materials   — *Next Steps* newsprint
— 3" x 5" stickies – any color

Process

1. **Tell the group that while some aspects of performance accountability are currently mandated,** as a program, you also have opportunities to use performance accountability for program improvement. This activity focuses on ways you might do that.

2. Post the *Next Steps* newsprint. Leave space to write between each item. While you are writing ask a group member to give everyone at least 5 stickies.

Next Steps:
— Agree on performance.
— Build capacity to perform.
— Build capacity to be accountable.
— Develop and use tools to measure the performance that you value.
— Develop mutual accountability.

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3. Ask the group to think silently of at least one step your program could take toward each of these. They should write one suggestion per step on a stickie and after they are done put their stickies under the appropriate step.

4. Look at the suggestions and group quickly. Read the categories of suggestions for each step and ask if there are others. Tell the group you will reproduce this into a combined list and give them a copy at the next meeting.

Activity 5. Wrap-Up

Purpose   To prepare for next session and get feedback on Session 3.

Time   5 minutes

Materials   — Completed *Goals Sheets* handouts from Session 1
— Completed *Documentation Matrix* handouts from Session 2
— *Feedback Forms*

Process
1. Hand out the complete *Goals Sheets* and *Documentation Matrix* OR refer them to the forms they have completed. Tell the group that at the next session they will be prioritizing program goals. Ask them to review the *Goals Sheets* with students and other program staff.

2. Pass out *Feedback Forms*. Collect.
Ask for any final questions or comments. Close.

SESSION 4:

Inputs-to-Impacts

The objectives for Session 4 are for the group:
• to prioritize program goals
• to analyze how the components of your program address program goals.

Preparation

This session has two main activities, prioritizing program goals and completing an Inputs-to-Impacts model. Most programs have official goals, but these may or may not include everyone's goals. The goal-prioritizing activity returns to the *Goals Sheets* completed in Session 1, and the group prioritizes these goals. Then based on these program goals, the group completes the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* and uses the form to consider how your program is addressing your goals.

To prepare for this session, you will need to create an expanded version of the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* using a white board or several pieces of paper. You may want to create two long forms, one for student factors and one for program factors to use in Activity 3.

Materials

_____ Newsprint and markers

_____ Sticky dots

_____ Newsprint goals sheets from Session 1

_____ Inputs-to-Impacts form on large paper

Handouts (copies for each group member, hole-punched)

____ *Agenda*

____ *Glossary*

_____ *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*

_____ *Sample Inputs-to-Impacts Model*

_____ Reading #3 – *Lessons from NCSALL's Outcomes and Impacts Study*

_____ *Worksheet* for Lessons article

_____ *Feedback Forms*

Activity 1. Check In

Purpose   To reconnect with the inquiry process and review agenda

Time   5 minutes

Materials   *Agenda*

Process
1. **Welcome the group.** Ask if anyone has comments or thoughts to share.

2. **Pass out and review the day's agenda.**

Activity 2. Prioritizing Program Goals

Purpose   To determine which of many possible program goals are priorities
for this group

Time   25 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
— Sticky dots, in three colors
— *Goals Lists* on newsprint from Session 1

Process
1. **Explain that today you are going to prioritize the goals that were
listed in Session 1.** Say that while your program may have set "official"
goals, and that the state and federal systems have established goals, your lists
contain the goals of many stakeholders in your program. Today's priority-
setting process will establish a set of goals for your group.

2. **Give each person seven dots of one color.** Ask them to look over the
goals on the three lists: staff, student, program. Ask them to think about any
conversations they may have had since Session 1 about goals. Then place
their dots on the seven goals they believe are the top priority for your
program.

3. **When the first round of "voting" is completed give each person 3 dots of another color** and ask them to vote for their top three goals from the commonly chosen goals. When everyone has voted, you will have a list of goals that your group holds in common with indication of those that have highest priority for your group. Make a newsprint list of the *Priority Goals* that have more than one vote. Save.

Activity 3. Review Inputs-to-Impacts Model

Purpose   To understand the items on the model

Time   5 minutes

Materials   — *Glossary*
     — *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*

Process

1. **Hand out the *Glossary* and blank *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*.** Explain that the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* is a logic model developed to clarify the various aspects of adult education program processes. Student and program factors are listed in separate columns. This Inputs-to-Impacts framework can be an important tool for analyzing broad program structure and how particular activities support program goals.

2. **Review terms in *Glossary*.**
   In the model, **Input** is defined as what the student or program brings to the processes of the program. **Processes** are the educational and organizational activities that take place in the program. **Outputs** is defined as the immediate results of these processes, while **outcomes** are the changes that occur in students' lives as a result of their participation in the program, or the long-term results of program improvement. **Impacts** are the changes in the community resulting from changes in students and programs.

Activity 4. Complete Model for Program

Purpose   To examine how program components connect

Time   40 minutes

Materials   — *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*
     — *Sample Inputs-to-Impacts Model*
     — Expanded *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* on newsprint

Process

1. **For this activity, divide the group into two teams.** One team will work on the Student column and one will work on the Program column. Ask each team to decide what should go in each box in their column of the grid. For the outcomes and impacts rows, the items will be what they believe are the outcomes and impacts of your program. They should begin by having each person complete his or her own form and then combine. When they have reached agreement, they should fill in the expanded version.

2. **When each team is through, they should read the other team's work and add items as they see the need.**

3. **Pass out sample forms and review.** Ask if there are any changes people want to make on the completed forms. If so, discuss, and add if there is agreement.

Activity 5. Review the Model

Purpose   To review the model in light of goals

Time   15 minutes

Materials   — Completed *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* on newsprint
     — *Prioritized Goals List* (on newsprint) from Activity 2

Process

1. **Ask the group to look again at their priority goals and to look at the** *Inputs-to-Impacts Model.* Discuss the following questions for a few moments:

> • Are the processes needed to meet your goals in place?
> • Do you need additional inputs?

2. **After a brief discussion ask each person to make notes on their blank *Inputs-to-Impacts Model* about changes** they believe might better enable your program to meet the goals you have prioritized. Ask them to save these forms to use in Session 6.

Activity 6. Wrap-Up

Purpose   To prepare for next session and check-in

Time   5 minutes

Materials   — Harold Beder's article – Reading #3
                — *Worksheet* for article
                — *Feedback Form*

Process
1. **Tell the group that in the next session you will discuss outcomes measurement and documentation** and give some examples from ABE and other fields.

2. **Pass out Harold Beder's article and worksheet.** Tell the group that this article examines some national outcomes studies. Because the article is long, some of the article should be divided among the group. Everyone should read the first two pages and from "The Answer?" on page 7 to the end. Divide the four studies (1973 National Evaluation, page 2; California GAIN Study, page 3; National Evenstart Evaluation, page 4; the NEAEP, page 5) among the participants in the group, making sure that at least one person reads each. Tell them they will be asked to report on what that study found in the next session. Suggest they note the study they are going to read on the worksheet next to question 6. The worksheet is designed to connect the article to thinking about your local program. Ask the group to look it over and complete it as they read the article.

3. **Pass out and collect *Feedback Forms*.**

SESSION 5:
Documenting Outcomes, Measuring Performance

The objectives for Session 5 are for the group:
• to examine different approaches to documenting outcomes
• to begin to identify ways to document the outcomes that your program wants.

Preparation

This session begins with a review of work to date and a brief introduction to outcomes measurement. The activities include a review of Beder's article on large-scale studies, an activity to explore quality-of-life measurement, and an activity using a locally developed outcomes documentation tool. In the final activity, the group returns to the *Documentation Matrix* and their *Priority Goals* and, drawing on what they have learned from the other activities in Session 5, begin to identify documentation processes for your program's goals—ways to know "how we are doing."

To prepare for this session, you will need to have the newsprint-size *Priority Goals* list created in Session 4 and the large *Documentation Matrix* from Session 2. Participants should also have these as handouts. They will also need the *Workforce Investment Act* Reading from Session 1. You may want to have a few extra copies available. You will need to make copies of the *Quality-of-Life Measurement*; the *DoSetMet Goals Sheet*; Reading #4 – the article by Cody, Ford, and Hayward; and create newsprints for Activities 2 and 4.

Materials

_____ Newsprint and markers

_____ *Priority Goals List* from Session 4

_____ Large *Documentation Matrix* from Session 2

Handouts

_____ *Agenda*

_____ *Quality-of-Life Measurement*

_____ *DoSetMet Goals Sheet*

_____ Reading #4 – *"A Story of Improvement"*

Newsprints

_____ Newsprint with review of the work done so far – Activity 2

_____ *List of Good Indicators* (on newsprint) – Activity 4

Activity 1. Check In and Agenda Review

Purpose   To reconnect with the inquiry process and review agenda

Time   5 minutes

Materials   *Agenda*

Process
1. **Welcome the group.** Ask if anyone has comments or thoughts to share.

2. **Pass out and review the day's agenda.**

Activity 2. Introduction to Outcomes Measurement

Purpose   To link the concept of outcomes to the work done so far

Time   5 minutes

Materials   Newsprint and markers

Process
1. **Tell the group that in this session you will be focusing on ways to measure the outcomes of adult education.** Ask someone to give Beder's definition of "outcome." ("The changes that occur in learners as a result of their participation in adult literacy education.")

2. **Review the work done so far in this inquiry process using newsprint:**

Inquiry Process:
In the first four sessions of this process we have:
— established and prioritized goals
— reviewed current documentation and determined which goals are and are not documented
— decided what we are accountable for, to whom, and how
— examined the input, processes, outputs of our program and determined how they do or do not address our goals

Explain that now you are going to return again to documentation, this time focusing on ways to document outcomes. You will be looking at various ways people have tried to document the "changes that occur in learners as a result of their participation in adult literacy education."

Activity 3. Review Harold Beder's Article

Purpose   To examine some large-scale studies and compare to your program

Time   20 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
                  — Large *Documentation Matrix* on newsprint

Process

1. **Introduce by saying you will begin by looking at some large-scale outcomes studies.**

   Ask each of the groups to report on the study they focused on. They should briefly tell:
   — what was measured in the study
   — how it was measured
   — the results.

   (FYI: Summary of studies for the facilitator)
   • The 1973 National Evaluation measured learning gains using the TABE. The results showed .5 grade gain in reading after 98 hours and .4 after 66 hours. In math there was a .3 grade gain after 98 and 66 hours. Of the 1108 people who were pretested, only 441 received a post-test.

   • The GAIN study measured learning gains of welfare recipients using the TALS. They tested a control group who were not assigned to a class as well as a group who had an average of 251 hours of instruction. The learning gain was not significant. There were substantial differences between the treatment and control groups from county to county, with the control group doing significantly better than the treatment group in two counties.

• The National Even Start Evaluation used a variety of data including the CASAS for learning gains. The part of the study using an experimental design (a control group) did not show a significant difference. The other component of the study showed a small but significant gain on the CASAS after 70 hours of instruction.

• The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (NEAEP) used CASAS and TABE test results for 614 learners in order to assess learning gains. Statistically significant gains were found after the average of 15 weeks of ABE attendance.

2. **Ask someone to summarize Beder's findings. (**That outcomes studies show little tested learning gains, but that students report important learning gains.) Briefly discuss:
   — What does your program measure? (You may want to refer to the *Documentation Matrix*.)
   — How are learning gains measured? Program-wide testing using what test? In-class assessments?
   — What are the learning gains results for you program? (If the group doesn't know, ask for a volunteer to try to find out. You may not be able to access this information, depending on what is reported and what data comes back from the state.)

Activity 4. Outcomes as Indicators of Success

Purpose   To examine using indicators to measure goal achievement

Time   10 minutes

Materials   — *Workforce Investment Act* reading from Session 1
                  — Newsprint with *Good Indicators* list

Process
1. **Ask the group to look at the chart on the second page of the** *Workforce Investment Act* **handout.** Point out that the first column lists the goals of WIA and the second column lists the indicators by which achievement of the goals will be determined, i.e., these improvements, placements, or receipt of diplomas will be accepted as indicators that the

goals in the first column are achieved. The third column lists the measures that are to be reported and are very similar to the indicators. The outcomes or changes in column two are indicators.

2. **Post the *Good Indicators* list.** Tell the group that this list was created by Maureen Hart, a researcher in the Quebec-Labrador Foundation/Atlantic Center for the Environment in Ipswich, Massachusetts.

Good indicators are:
- Relevant
- Understandable to the community at large
- Developed by and accepted by the community
- Focus on a long-term view
- Based on reliable, easily available information
- Available on a regular basis

Briefly discuss as a group:
- The extent to which the WIA Core Indicators meet these criteria.
- Which goals do not have Core Indicators?
- Why might that be?

Note the difficulty of determining good indicators.

Activity 5. Quality-of-Life Measurement

Purpose   To introduce the concept of quality-of-life measurement

Time   20 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
— *Quality-of-Life Measurements* handouts

Process

1. **Introduce the activity by saying (or paraphrasing):**
"Many people come to adult education because they want to improve their quality of life. Quality of life can be defined as a 'person's sense of well-being that stems from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the areas of life that are

important for him/her.' Among potential outcomes of participation in adult education, 'improved quality of life' is sometimes named, although funders seldom require program to measure and report it. If a program has a goal to make the lives of students better as a result of their participation in ABE, its staff might want to develop, along other outcomes indicators, some indicators helpful in measuring quality of life. The purpose of the following activity is to help participants understand the variety of domains that comprise a person's quality of life. There are many ways to think about quality of life and to measure it."

2. **Pass out the** *Quality of Life Measurement* **forms.** Ask each participant to individually rate these "quality of life indicators." In the middle column of the table, they should rank how IMPORTANT this indicator is for them, for example, "1" for the first indicator would mean, "It does not matter to me whether my place is as clean and comfortable as an average room in our local hospital," while "4" would mean, "It is very important to me that my place is as clean and comfortable as an average room in our local hospital." In the next column, the participant should rank the ACTUAL SITUATION reflecting this indictor in their life, regardless of how important it is to them. For example, "1" in this column for the first indicator would mean, "My place is a lot less clean and comfortable than an average room in our local hospital," while "4" would mean, "My place is more clean and comfortable than as an average room in our local hospital."

3. **After they have finished individual rating, ask everyone to share theirs with a partner.** The pairs should compare their ratings and discuss why certain things were more or less important to them.

4. **After the work in pairs, start a general discussion on which indicators would be important for their students and would reflect their lives.** Which indicators should you add to the list? Which indicators could be affected by participation in an educational program? How might they be measured?

Activity 6. Local Documentation

Purpose   To examine a documentation process developed by a local program

Time   15 minutes

Materials   *DoSetMet* form

Process
1. **Hand out the *DoSetMet* form,** explaining that it is an example of local documentation developed by a program in Virginia as a way to document outcomes in their program. Instead of having indicators of outcomes, the form relies on student self-report (and some teacher observation) that they have met their goals. The achievement of the particular goal is the outcome.

2. **Ask the group members to complete the form for themselves,** first checking off the items they can DO and then checking any items that they might SET as a goal.

3. **Ask group members to look at the goals they have SET and to consider what might be used as evidence that they have MET that goal.** Ask them to try to think of a way they could document achievement of that goal. Go around the group and ask for examples of goals and possible evidence of achievement of that goal.

Activity 7. Documentation for Your Program

Purpose   To begin to identify approaches to document your program outcomes

Time   15 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
— Large *Documentation Matrix*
— *Priority Goals* list
— *Good Indicators* list

Process

1. In this activity the group will try to identify indicators for the goals they have set as priorities. First post the *Priority Goals* list and the *Documentation Matrix* and ask the group to determine for which goals your program is collecting data that could indicate that the goal is being met. List the goals and the indicators that you are using on newsprint.

2. Now list a goal for which you are not documenting any indicators. Ask the group to brainstorm possible indicators (using the *Good Indicators* list as a reference) for that goal. Do as many goals as you have time for.

Save this list for possible use by the program.

Activity 8. Wrap-Up

Purpose   To prepare for the next session

Time   5 minutes

Materials   — Handout of article *"A Story of Improvement"* – Reading #4
                 — *Feedback Form*

Process

1. Tell the group that in your next and final session you will be reviewing the work you have done and considering ways your program might build on your work. You will be examining three approaches to building a quality program: Equipped for the Future which is based on content standards, the TESOL program standards, and the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for educational excellence. The article that you are giving them was written about a program that used Equipped for the Future and the Baldrige criteria. As they read the article they should consider how what the Knox County program did is or is not relevant to your program.

2. Hand out *Feedback Forms* and complete.

SESSION 6:
Considering Next Steps

The objectives of Session 6 are for the group:
• to understand three possible approaches to on-going program improvement
• to determine next steps your program might take regarding program improvement.

Preparation

The three main tasks of this session are:
1. to conduct a needs assessment to identify questions about your program's performance;
2. to explore several possible resources for further inquiry; and
3. to make initial plans about next steps.

These tasks tie in with an overall goal of this Inquiry Guide; to help you examine performance accountability in your program and identify directions for program improvement. In this guide, performance accountability is defined more broadly than just "official" accountability to the agencies to whom your program is required to report. It is accountability to your students, to your program as whole, and to yourselves as teachers committed to improving how you serve your customers. Sometimes there are no external rewards or even acknowledgements for these improvements; it is your own professionalism that is the driving force for seeking ways to advance the quality of your program. The activities included in this session are designed to help you to tie together everything that you have learned in the course of your inquiry and to provide direction for your next efforts.

Materials

____ Newsprint pad, markers, tape

____ *Agenda*

____ Materials used/developed in the course of the previous five sessions

(newsprints and/or copies): Prioritized goals, *Documentation Matrix*,

Accountability Grid, *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*, *Next Steps* list

Handouts (copies for each group member, hole-punched):

____ Reading #5 – *"Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance"*

Newsprint

____ Questions in Activity 3

Activity 1. Introduction to Final Session

Purpose   To give the group an overview of the activities for the day

Time   5 minutes

Materials   *Agenda*

Process
1. **Introduce the work of the session by saying something like:**
   "Today we are going to conclude this inquiry process in which we examined performance accountability in our program and begin to identify directions for program improvement. In this guide, performance accountability is defined more broadly than just 'official' accountability to the agencies to whom our program is required to report. It is accountability to our students, to our program as whole, and to ourselves as teachers committed to improving how we serve your customers. Sometimes there are no external rewards or even acknowledgments for these improvements; it is our own professionalism is the driving force for seeking ways to advance the quality of our program. The activities included in this session are designed to help tie together everything that we have learned in the course of our inquiry and to provide direction for our next efforts."

2. **Briefly review the day's agenda:**
   a. a "needs assessment" to identify our questions about our program
   b. a review of some possible approaches to planning and making program changes
   c. plans for next steps.

Activity 2. Review of "A Story of Improvement"

Purpose   To draw on the experience of the Knox County Literacy Program

Time   10 minutes

Materials   — *"A Story of Improvement"*
                 — Newsprint and markers

— Newsprints labeled *Knox County Program*
— Newsprints with questions for Activity 3

Process

1. Ask the group to take out their copies of "A Story of Improvement."
Tell them that "A Story of Improvement" describes how the Knox County,
Tennessee, Adult Literacy Program attempted to institute a continuous
improvement process. The section of this article called "Forces for Change"
(p. 2), in particular, outlines the factors that prompted the program's
decision to start the performance assessment and continuous improvement
processes. Ask the group to look through the article one more time and
identify those factors. As they identify them, write them on a newsprint
labeled *Knox County Program*.

[FYI: the factors listed in the "Forces for Change" section are: (1) need to
evaluate the partnership with the Friends of Literacy; (2) need to clarify the vision,
mission, and goals; and (3) as a result of involvement with "What Works Literacy
Partnership" and the "Equipped for the Future," focusing on the ways to
document and measure results of improving students' basic skills].

Activity 3. A Quick Needs Assessment

Purpose   To answer questions about program performance and identify the
next steps

Time   30 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
— Newsprints with questions
— *Priority Goals*
— *Documentation Matrix*
— *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*
— *Accountability Grid*

Process

1. **Post all the materials that you have used/developed in the course of the previous sessions,** that have to do with program performance documentation and assessment (*Priority Goals*; *Documentation Matrix*; *Inputs-to-Impacts*; *Accountability Grid*). Ask the group to look over them and identify areas where improvement may be needed.

2. **After you have reviewed these materials, post newsprint with the following questions and answer as a group:**

Questions:

— Do you have consensus as a program/staff about your program goals (other than those that are the basis for the official reporting)? What else do you need to do?

— Do existing curricular, instructional, and assessment activities/processes support these goals? Are there areas where additional work is needed to align the activities/processes with the goals?

— Does existing documentation enable you to know whether you met your goals? What areas would need additional work for the documentation to be more helpful?

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3. **Write answers on the newsprint sheet for use in Activity 5.**

Activity 4. Approaches to Improving Your Program Performance

Purpose   To introduce three possible approaches that your program might use to address the needs identified in Activity 3

Time   30 minutes

Materials   — Newsprint and markers
— Reading #5 – *Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance*

Process

1. Pass out Reading # 5 – *Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance.* Tell group that you will briefly review each approach. Do that, using the first page of the handout (reproduced below) as you present. You may want to ask one person to read a paragraph aloud and then, as a group, look at the appropriate pages of the handout and discuss.

Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance

Improving program performance can be addressed using a variety of approaches—or a combination of approaches as in Knox County. In deciding what approach to take, programs need to consider time available, support available, and how an approach matches their style and values.

The following three approaches are all being used nationally, but level of support for each vary from state to state. Any approach to improving program quality will only work if a program can commit time and focus to the process.

Program Quality Standards. For many years the federal and state adult education systems have promoted the use of program standards. States and other groups have developed Program Quality Indicators that programs can use to evaluate the various components of their program and to plan change. In this handout we have included information on program standards for ESOL programs recently developed by TESOL (Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages). Their Quality Indicators describe what TESOL considers a quality ESOL program. The TESOL Program Standards do not describe the process for improving practice, but do provide a list of indicators of a quality program as developed by the TESOL task force. Even Start has developed a list of program quality attributes for family literacy program, and many states have indicators of program quality. To use these quality indicators a program might make an indicator-by-indicator assessment of "how they are doing" and then plan for the changes that would improve performance on particular indicators.

Content Standards. While TESOL developed program standards, Equipped for the Future (EFF) is based on content standards. Content standards address what is taught and learned. Many states have developed content standards for subjects in the K-12 curriculum. The sixteen EFF content standards are part of a framework developed through a process involving students, practitioners, and thousands of

stakeholders in the adult literacy and lifelong learning system. The framework identifies adults' purposes for literacy and what adults need to know to carry out their responsibilities as workers, family members, and community members. The EFF content standards focus on the application of skills in adults' lives. This handout includes a brief introduction to EFF, the "standards wheel" that identifies the sixteen standards, and an example of one standard. The EFF initiative of the National Institute for Literacy is developing as assessment framework to accompany the standards. The EFF framework and standards do not provide a specific set of indicators in the same way that program standards do. But the framework does provide a variety of tools including a guide to EFF approach to quality that programs can use to examine their practices and to plan and implement changes.

Continuous Improvement. The Malcolm Baldrige Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence are based on total quality management principles originally developed in the business sector. The Baldrige criteria outline an orderly process for examining and improving program operations. They provide the questions to ask but not the answers. Where program and content standards define quality, the Baldrige criteria focus on processes to build quality. This handout includes a graphic presentation of the process and a review of the key items in each category.

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2. **Ask the group to take about 10 minutes to look through the handout** (if you did not do this as you discussed).

Activity 5. Next Steps for Your Program

Purpose   To make plans on how (and if) to follow up on the inquiry
             process in your program

Time   15 minutes

Materials   Newsprint and markers

Process

1. **Tell the group that you are going to answer a set of questions to determine next steps.** The first question is whether or not you have identified areas where you need to improve as a program. Look back at the three newsprints you generated in Activity 3. Ask the group if there are there areas your program could improve? If so, do you see things that your program could take action on?

   If the answer to either of these are "No," then you are done. Thank people for all their participation.

   If they answer "Yes," go on to step 2.

2. **You now need to determine, in a group discussion what should be your next steps.** Begin by making a succinct list of items that need attention, referring to the newsprints from Activity 3 and to your earlier work. This should be a list that you share with the rest of your program.

3. **Determine who from your program should be involved in carrying out these next steps and who from your inquiry group will talk with them.**

4. **Determine if you want to investigate any of the approaches in Activity 4 and who will do it.**

5. **Decide who will meet again and when.**

6. **Thank the group and celebrate!**

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APPENDIX 1.

Participants' Materials

Participants' Materials List

— Introductory letter to Adult Educators concerned about program improvement

— Overview of the Inquiry Process

— Schedule/To Do Form

— Feedback Form

Session One
— Agenda
— Goals Sheet
— Reading # 1 – The Workforce Investment Act: A Brief Introduction

Session Two
— Agenda
— Documentation Matrix
— Reading # 2 – Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? And How?

Session Three
— Agenda
— Accountability Grid

Session Four
— Agenda
— Inputs-to-Impacts Model
— Sample Inputs-to-Impacts Model
— Glossary
— Reading # 3 – Lessons from NCSALL's Outcomes and Impacts Study
— Worksheet for Reading # 3

Session Five
— Agenda
— Quality of Life Measurement
— DoSetMet Form
— Reading # 4 – A Story of Improvement

Session Six
— Agenda
— Reading #5 – Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance

To Adult Educators Concerned About Program Improvement:

What difference are we making? How do we know? How can we show it?

These are questions asked by adult literacy and ESOL teachers, program administrators, and funders. You are invited to take part in a process designed to facilitate a systematic inquiry into these kinds of questions. In an inquiry process, organized into six sessions, you will identify and clarify program goals, examine current documentation processes, and begin to plan changes to better address the challenges of performance accountability and outcomes documentation in your program.

An inquiry process is a systematic investigation of a particular issue. This inquiry process will produce a number of documents that a program can use a) to make a decision about implementing on-going improvement work and b) in conducting this ongoing work.

The staff that participates in this inquiry process will have a clearer understanding of:
  I. Their goals, their program's goals, and state and national goals
 II. How to document the accomplishment of goals
III. Performance accountability and what it means
IV. How the various parts of their program fit together to move toward goals
 V. Possible next steps their program can take to move more effectively toward their goals.

The activities in the sessions include:
• looking at program work—goals, program activities, and documentation processes
• reading and discussing articles on performance accountability
• examining state and national plans for the fits (and misfits) with your program
• beginning to develop possible next steps for program change.

If you decide to participate as a member of this inquiry group, you will be asked to participate in six sessions, each lasting about one and half hours. You will also need to do some work in preparation for Sessions 2 – 6; the preparatory activities and reading should take about an hour a week. For this investment of your time and thinking, you will gain a clearer understanding of how your program works and why. You will also have the opportunity to contribute to process of program improvement that will enable you to better meet your goals and the goals of your students and program.

For more information about how to get involved in this exciting inquiry process, contact:

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_____

_____

An Overview

What difference do we want to make? What difference are we making?
How do we know? How can we show it?

This inquiry process is designed to help groups of adult education staff begin to answer these questions. The process is divided into six sessions described below.

Session 1: Examining Our Goals
The objectives of Session 1 are for the group:
• to get to know each other and the process
• to examine and clarify student, staff, state and federal goals.

The activities for Session 1 are designed to introduce the process, get the group organized, to identify and clarify the goals of the staff, students, and program, and to compare local goals with state and national goals for adult education.

Session 2: The Documentation Matrix
The objective of Session 2 is for the group:
• to develop a clearer understanding of their program's current documentation—what is documented and why?

The activities include looking at the various documentation forms used by the program, using the *Documentation Matrix* to analyze how they are used, and determining if there are program goals that are not documented.

Session 3: Performance Accountability
The objectives of Session 3 are for the group:
• to have a greater understanding of performance accountability in adult education
• to consider how and to whom their program is accountable.

The activities for Session 3 include completing the *Accountability Grid* to analyze performance accountability in your program, discussion of Juliet Merrifield's article on performance accountability, and thinking of next steps toward performance accountability for your program.

Session 4: Inputs-to-Impacts

The objectives for Session 4 are for the group to:
- to prioritize their program goals
- to analyze how the components of their program address program goals.

The activities for Session 4 include prioritizing the goals identified in Session 1, reviewing the components of your program using the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model*, and identifying any gaps in addressing your goals.

Session 5: Documenting Outcomes

The objective for Session 5 are for the group to:
- to better understand outcomes documentation
- to determine the outcomes that might be documented to assess program goals.

The activities for Session 5 include discussing Hal Beder's review of outcomes studies, identifying the outcomes that need to be documented in order to assess performance in meeting program goals, and examining several approaches to outcomes documentation.

Session 6: Planning Next Steps

The objectives for Session 6 are for the group to:
- to understand three possible approaches to on-going program improvement
- to determine next steps your program might take regarding program improvement.

The activities for Session 6 include reporting on and discussing readings on approaches to program improvement, identifying gaps in current program processes, and identifying possible next steps the program might take toward continuous improvement.

Schedule/To Do Form

What to do to get ready

Session	Date	What to do before session
Session One		[If you receive before Session One—review readings and highlight interesting points and questions.]
Session Two		Collect and bring documentation you use in class and program—tests, forms, etc.
Session Three		Read Merrifield article (Reading # 2) and write one question the article has raised for you.
Session Four		Review Goals list with students and other staff.
Session Five		Read Beder article (Reading # 3) and complete worksheet.
Session Six		Read "A Story of Improvement" (Reading # 4).

Feedback Form

Please complete and return to the facilitator.

What questions do you have from this session?

I want the facilitator to know…

I think I can use what I learned today to…

Session 1: Agenda

1. Introduction — to people and the process

2. Getting organized — schedule, ground rules, keeping it together

3. Review of our goals

4. Looking at state and national goals

5. Feedback and getting ready for the next session

Reflections on today's session

Goals Sheet – *Identifying Our Goals*

Staff	Students	Program

Reading #1

The Workforce Investment Act: A Brief Introduction
— *by Mary Beth Bingman*

The purpose of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act, is to provide adult education services in order to:

(1) assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;

(2) assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and

(3) assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education. (P.L. 105-220)

Language about meeting personal goals or developing knowledge, which was included in the 1991 legislation, is absent in WIA.

WIA mandates a performance accountability system in order "to assess the effectiveness of eligible agencies in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities funded under this subtitle, in order to optimize the return on investment of Federal funds in adult education and literacy activities' (P.L. 105-220). States are required to set levels of performance for three core indicators:

(i) Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills.

(ii) Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

(iii) Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.(P.L. 105-220)

The National Reporting System

The National Reporting System for Adult Education has been developed by the American Institutes for Research under contract to the Division of Adult Education and Literacy. This system establishes measures for the core indicators required by the Workforce Investment Act. The development of the NRS began as the National Outcomes Reporting System Project. That project (begun before WIA was enacted) was developed in response to the concerns of state directors of adult education about performance accountability. The original system was to focus on seven categories of outcomes endorsed by state directors: economic impact, credentials, learning gains, family impact, further education and training, community impact, and customer satisfaction (Condelli & Kutner, 1997).

The National Reporting System now being implemented focuses on the three core indicators. The measures to be reported include: educational gains, entering or retaining employment, and placement in postsecondary education or passing the GED test (NRS, 1999). In addition to the

outcome measures, the NRS will collect data on descriptive measures (student demographics, reasons for enrolling, and student status) and participation (contact hours and enrollment in special programs).

As can be seen in the NRS graphic reproduced below, the attainment of the goals of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act is to be measured in large part by the achievement of basic academic skills that are measured in most states by standardized tests. The limited connection between goals and indicators has happened in part because Congress did not establish core indicators for family literacy. And while the purposes of WIA refer to the "knowledge and skills necessary"

for employment and self-sufficiency, these were not defined.

Educational gains are to be measured by movement from one to another of six "educational functioning levels" which include: Beginning ABE Literacy, Beginning Basic Education, Low Intermediate Basic Education, High Intermediate Basic Education, Low Adult Secondary Education, High Adult Secondary Education. The ESL levels are: Beginning ESL Literacy, Beginning ESL, Low Intermediate ESL, High Intermediate ESL, Low Advanced ESL, and High Advanced ESL (NRS, p.6). For each level the NRS has identified descriptors in three areas: Basic Reading and Writing, Numeracy Skills, and

Goals and Core Indicators of WIA
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and NRS Core Outcome Measures

Goals of Adult Education Described in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIA	**Core Indicators** Required by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of WIA	National Reporting System **Core Outcome Measures**
Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency. Assist parents to obtain the skills necessary to be full partners in their children's educational development.	Improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English language acquisition, other literacy skills.	Educational gains (achieve skills to advance educational functioning level)
	Placement in, retention in, or completion of, postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.	Entered employment Retained employment Placement in postsecondary education or training
Assist adults in the completion of secondary school education.	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or pass GED test

(DAEL, 1999, p. 6)

Functional and Workplace Skills for ABE; and Speaking and Listening, Basic Reading and Writing, and Functional Workplace Skills for ESL. For example, the ability to complete medical forms is a functional skill at the Low Intermediate Basic Education Level, and reading text about and explaining the use of a complex piece of machinery is a workplace skill at the High Adult Secondary Level. The ability to participate in a conversation in some social situations is a descriptor for speaking and listening in the High Intermediate ESL level.

Placement of adult learners in these levels is conducted at enrollment and again after pre-determined time periods while the adult is an active student. All programs in a state must use the same assessment procedure. While the NRS states *"Their inclusion in no way is meant to imply that the tests are equivalent or that they should be used as the basis for assessment"* [italics in original] (NRS, p. 19), test benchmarks are provided for each educational functioning level. The NRS assumes that increases in scores on standardized tests like the Test of Adult Basic Education

(TABE) or Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) will indicate increases in skills and, therefore, in functioning levels.

Employment and postsecondary education and training measures and receipt of a secondary credential are follow-up measures to be collected after students leave a program. These measures are collected only for those adults whose goals include employment, further education, or a secondary credential. States may use either survey or data matching (using Social Security numbers) methodologies for the follow-up measures for employment and secondary credentials.

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Session 2: Agenda

1. Check In

2. Sorting documents

3. Completing the *Documentation Matrix*

4. Determining which goals are documented

5. Feedback and getting ready for the next session

Reflections on today's session…

Documentation Matrix

(Developed by the NCSALL Documenting Outcomes project)

Documentation Method	Who Does It?	For Whom?	How Often?	How Used?	Key Items Reported (Themes)

Reading #2

Performance Accountability: For What? To Whom? And How?
— by Juliet Merrifield

In everyday life, accountability means responsibility; it means being answerable to someone else for one's actions. We cannot, however, use the term without specifying accountability to whom and for what. In adult basic education (ABE), how we answer the question "to whom" depends a lot on our position in the system. Teachers may answer that they feel answer accountable to their students. Program directors may that they are accountable to their funders and staff as well as to students. State adult education offices may feel accountable to the governor, the legislature, to other state agencies, to workforce development boards, as well as to taxpayers. In addition, no clear consensus exists about "for what" adult education is accountable. Where does the balance lie between providing services and delivering results? Is the main purpose increased literacy proficiency, or are more diffuse social outcomes the emphasis? Until recently, the focus has been on providing services, with little emphasis on the results or the impact of those services. In the last few years, a number of policy initiatives at state and federal levels have begun to shift the emphasis to delivering results, with services seen as the means to an end. But what the "end" should be is by no means clear.

I would like to suggest that developing performance accountability is not just technically challenging but also challenges our values. The key issues do not have purely technical solutions. They require agreement on what is important to us, on what we want out of adult education. If they are to be resolved, they require involvement by the ABE field as a whole.

Adult basic education is facing serious demands from policy-makers and funders to be accountable for its performance. The 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires that each state report on performance measures. The emphasis on results shifts attention from simple delivery of services to the outcomes of learning: learning gains measured on standardized tests or social and economic outcomes such as getting a job, getting off welfare, and children's school success.

The key issues in the development of performance accountability in adult education are:

- What does good performance mean?
- Do programs have the capacity to be accountable?
- Are the tools commonly used for measuring and documenting performance adequate and useful?
- Are accountability relationships in place to link ABE into a coherent system?

Good Performance

Accountability systems work best if stakeholders —those who have an interest in the outcomes of the system—agree on what success looks like. For adult basic educators, the heart of the matter is

our concept of literacy. That concept has shifted over time from reading and writing text to functioning in society, from a simple dichotomy of illiterate/literate to multiliteracies. Brian Street characterizes two broad conceptual notions of literacy. The autonomous model conceives of literacy as a discrete and fixed set of skills, transferable from one context to another. The ideological model conceives of literacy as practices that are sensitive to social context and inherently associated with issues of power and access (Street, 1984).

Much recent research on multi-literacies suggests that there are multiple purposes for literacy and multiple goals and expectations for literacy education (Heath, 1983; Barton, 1994; Street, 1984,1995; Lankshear, 1997; New London Group, 1996). In such an understanding, notions of success must also be multiple. A single definition of success—gaining the GED, for example, or getting a job—excludes learners who have different purposes.

Definitions of success should be negotiated among all the stakeholders, learners, and practitioners as well as policymakers and funders. Although the legislative goals of the Workforce Investment Act reflect a majority among lawmakers, other stakeholders—including policy makers, program managers, teachers and students—may focus on other purposes for adult education and look to other measures of good performance.

Next Steps: Agree on Performance

Practitioners can play a role in defining performance within their own states. The WIA requires that each state develop a plan of the performance measures it will use to track results, including but not limited to those required by the

Act. Whether explicitly or implicitly, these measures will define what counts for the field. The challenge is to come to an agreement on performance that includes the full diversity of learner and societal purposes. Lessons from the literature and experience in education and other fields suggest states should:

• Invest time and energy in agreeing on what performance means;
• Involve stakeholders and seek consensus;
• Reflect newer understandings of literacy and connect performance with real life; and
• Acknowledge a variety of outcomes as acceptable performance, as a way of including the full diversity of learners and programs.

Capacity to be Accountable

Adult education is trying to develop a national accountability system without having developed the capacity of the service delivery system to document and report results (Moore & Stavrianos, 1995). Plenty of evidence documents the lack of valid, reliable, and useful data about performance (Young et al., 1995; GAO, 1995; Condelli, 1994). These studies suggest some of the most basic data are absent, incomplete, or of low quality.

When asked to report numbers, programs will indeed report numbers. But as the GAO report on adult education says, "the data the Department receives are of questionable value" (GAO, 1995, p. 33). This is not surprising, since staff in programs usually do not use the data, rarely see reports based on them, and see no one else placing any real value on them.

Performance accountability requires investment in the ability of local programs to collect, interpret, and use data to monitor how well they are doing.

A number of states such as Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and Arkansas have already begun to develop their capacity for accountability. (For an overview of Pennsylvania's program, Keenan's article.) They consistently learned from their experiences that the key is to get buy-in from programs and practitioners from the beginning (Merrifield, 1998). They are also acutely aware of the problems of deciding what is counted, as well as how it is counted.

What is counted becomes what counts. Many examples of the hazards of counting the wrong things exist. A healthcare delivery system emphasizes cutting the numbers of people on a waiting list for surgery, thus ensuring that people with minor needs get served quickest because more operations for varicose veins than for heart bypasses can be performed in one day. The original performance standards of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), an education and training program, emphasized the numbers of people placed in jobs within a specific time frame. This ensured that programs recruit clients who were most qualified and therefore easiest to move into jobs quickly and cheaply (GAO, 1989).

Next Steps: Build Capacity

Two kinds of capacity—to perform and to be accountable—are linked (Merrifield, 1998). By instituting a learning organization approach with feedback loops, performance data can help programs improve performance and increase accountability. Building the capacity to perform involves:

- Increasing resources and focusing them on quality rather than quantity;
- Providing staff development and training and technical support;

- Using performance data for continuous improvement. Building the capacity to be accountable involves ensuring that:
- Accountability demands are commensurate with resources and capacity;
- Users of measurement tools are engaged in their development;
- Staff training and support are provided;
- Information is timely;
- Improved performance is rewarded.

A variety of efforts are already underway to build capacity to perform and to be accountable. Teacher inquiry projects have involved individual teachers in examining their practice and identifying ways to change and develop (Smith & Lytle, 1993). Some programs, such as those described elsewhere in this issue, have been working on their capacity to use data for continuous improvement. Some states have begun efforts to build local program capacity for both performance and accountability. The National Accounting and Reporting System (Condelli, 1998), will be providing training and support on how to use newly revised WIA-related performance measures.

Accountability Tools

For accountability purposes, it is crucial that we collect data that are relevant, adequate, and important. To do so, we need tools—indicators and measures—that we believe in and use well. Indicators and measures are approximations of reality, not reality itself. They can be good, bad, and indifferent. An indicator that measures something unrelated to literacy learning—the number of brown-eyed learners, for example—is irrelevant. An indicator that measures something relevant—the prior learning that students bring, for example—but in an inadequate way, is dangerous. An inability to measure something

important—affective changes in learners, for example—can be disastrous.

Some of our current accountability tools are inadequate: what we use to measure literacy gains is one example. Standardized tests are widely used. While such tests have their uses for placement purposes, their validity as measures of performance is questionable (Venezky, 1992). "The research literature raises questions about the validity of standardized tests... and local program staff have questioned the appropriateness of using these assessment to measure program results" (GAO, 1995, p. 24). As yet, however, few alternatives to standardized tests exist. Some programs are using various tools, such as portfolios, that allow learners to demonstrate their learning authentically (Literacy South, 1997), but so far these cannot compare learning between learners and across programs. Without external criteria or standards, authentic assessment will not meet the needs of accountability systems.

How we collect data for accountability is also important. Different approaches to data collection and analysis meet different purposes. A complete performance accountability system would include several approaches: monitoring, evaluation, and research would all have a place.

Monitoring can answer ongoing questions about day- today program operations. What kinds of students are being recruited? How long are they staying? What do they say they want from their learning experiences? How satisfied are they with the program? Monitoring is part of everyday management, providing a routine way for program staff to see how well the program is working. Evaluation can answer particular questions about program operations at particular points of time. How are learners being served? Are they making progress on their learning goals? Is the program meeting quality standards? Evaluation may include a look at program-monitoring data. It may also involve gathering new data to answer specific questions. Surveys or focus groups are useful evaluation techniques.

Research can answer questions about associations, correlations, and meaning, and often takes a broader focus than one program. Research questions might examine: What are the benefits to individuals and society of participation in adult education? Which program designs are associated with different results? What kinds of resources are needed to support specific program designs? Research may be conducted by outside researchers or by practitioners themselves (Quigley & Kuhne, 1997).

Each of these accountability technologies illuminates different aspects of reality. They have different strengths and need to be used appropriately. Carrying them out involves scarce resources, so they should be applied carefully and economically to ensure that the data collected are both useful and used.

Next Steps: Develop New Measurement Tools

New approaches and tools for measurement are needed that are linked to performance. Performance assessment tools enable us to assess literacy practices. For accountability purposes, this more authentic assessment of literacy practices demands that we develop external standards or criteria against which individual student learning can be measured, and through which program performance can be assessed. Initiatives in performance assessment in countries such as Britain and Australia may provide useful models

for measuring and assessing learning. We should use the full potential of research, evaluation, and monitoring technologies to meet the needs of different stakeholders.

Mutual Accountability

Underlying all the other issues in performance accountability for ABE is the question of accountability relationships. Traditional approaches to accountability echo Taylorist manufacturing systems, in which quality control checks at the end of the production line ensure that widgets meet product specifications and accountability runs only one way. Assessing outcomes at the end of the production process has its place in quality control systems, but increasingly businesses are turning to more participatory approaches to managing work processes and using production data for continuous improvement (Stagg, 1992).

High performance workplaces build in processes at each stage of production to monitor and improve performance. They involve workers in this monitoring. The business world is now utilizing concepts such as the learning organization: one that facilitates the learning of its members to transform itself continuously (Pedler et al, 1991). This approach is seen as a way of responding to changing environments and   multiple demands. This kind of learning and transformation has to be shared and internalized: it cannot be imposed from the top (Stein, 1993). Accountability is shared or mutual.

In ABE, mutual accountability would engage members of the organization in creating a common vision, determining goals and customer expectations, and designing effective means of monitoring processes and results. Every member

would be both accountable to others and held accountable by them. Learners would hold teachers, for example, accountable for providing learning opportunities that meet their needs. Teachers, in turn, would hold program directors and funders accountable for providing the resources they need to meet learner needs. These might include materials, space, training, pay for lesson planning and assessment.

Spelling out relationships of mutual accountability reveals some that are overlooked in conventional accountability systems. Congress, for example, holds adult education programs accountable for providing effective and efficient services. But Congress should also be held accountable by programs, by learners, and by voters for identifying a social need, passing appropriate guiding legislation, and providing the resources needed to create a strong adult education system.

Learners should hold their teachers accountable. But programs should also hold learners accountable for taking learning seriously and for making an effort to participate fully.

Businesses who expect adult education to provide them with workers equipped with basic skills might be expected in turn to provide jobs for those workers, or to continue a workplace basic skills program when the grant runs out. Mutual accountability would require all the partners to honor their contracts.

An accountability system based in the concept of mutuality has several characteristics:
• It is negotiated between the stakeholders in a process that engages all the players in clarifying expectations, designing indicators of success, negotiating information flows, and building capacity.

- Each responsibility is matched with an equal, enabling right: the right to a program that meets one's learning needs with the responsibility to take learning seriously, for example.
- Every player knows clearly and agrees to what is expected of them.
- Every player has the capacity to be held and to hold others accountable.
- Efficient and effective information flows enable all players to hold others accountable.

Inequalities of power and uneven access to information prevent the development of mutual accountability. Learners, for example, cannot become real stakeholders in mutual accountability until they have other ways to effect change beyond dropping out. They will only become part of the structure of accountability when they have real power to make choices. Some community-based programs encourage learner participation in management, with learner representatives sitting on boards, and being involved in management decisions about the program. Many state-level adult learner organizations are working to address the inequalities in power and in access to information, and to strengthen the voice of adult learners in the system.

How information flows is also a central issue in mutual accountability. Without adequate access to information, stakeholders cannot hold others accountable. In traditional information flow designs, information is collected at the base and increasingly summarized for the purposes of different levels on the way up: from program to community, state, and national levels. In this simplistic model, information flows only one way: up the system to the state and national levels. Few people have either access to or the ability to use the data.

This model will not fit the needs of an accountability system that takes into account different performances and purposes and has mutuality as an underlying assumption. A more complex information model should allow information to be generated at all levels and to flow around the system, up, down and across it, among and between different players who use it for specific purposes at specific times.

Next Steps: Develop Mutual Accountability

Reforming accountability requires moving from one-way, top-down lines of accountability to a mutual web of accountability relationships. To make this switch, we must:
- Bring the full range of stakeholder groups into the process—including teachers and learners;
- Provide support for stakeholders who have least access to information and power;
- Increase information flows among and between all stakeholders and make the information transparent (accessible to all);
- Develop learning organizations at the program and state levels that would emphasize learning and continuous improvement, shared responsibility, and engagement in monitoring results.

What Next?

To implement performance accountability well requires agreement on good performance, capacity both to perform and be accountable, new tools to measure performance, and a strong system of mutual accountability relationships. In the business world, high performance is associated with extensive changes in organizational practices, including a broadly understood vision and mission, flatter hierarchies with decision-making

pushed as close to the shop floor as feasible, and participation at all levels of the organization in monitoring and improving performance. If ABE is to meet society's need for high performance, it too needs to change. But these changes cannot be implemented from the top alone. They will require federal and state government departments to consult with the field and with stakeholders. They need willingness to learn lessons from the past and from other countries. They demand a commitment of resources to building the capacity of the field. Above all, they call for the contributions of all players, practitioners and learners as well as policymakers and researchers.

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About the Author

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Session 3: Agenda

1. Complete *Accountability Grid* to clarify your program's accountability system.

2. Discuss the Merrifield article.

3. Use Merrifield's ideas to consider performance accountability in your program.

4. Feedback and getting ready for the next session.

Reflections on today's session…

Accountability Grid

Accountable for?	To Whom?	How?

Session 4: Agenda

1. Prioritizing program goals.

2. Examining the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model.*

3. Completing the *Inputs-to-Impacts Model.*

4. Analyzing the Model.

5. Wrap-up.

Reflections on today's session…

Inputs-to-Impacts Model

	Student	Program
Inputs – factors available for performance		
Processes – the educational and organizational processes contributing to performance		
Outputs – the immediate results of services provided		
Outcomes – the longer-term results of education for individuals and programs		
Impacts – changes in community brought about by changes in learner's lives		

Inputs-to-Impacts Model

(Sample – Documenting Outcomes for Learners and Their Communities)

	Student		**Program**
Inputs – factors available for performance	• *previous educational experiences* • *life experiences* • *goals* • *abilities* • *commitment to learning*	• *needs* • *temperament (e.g., shyness)* • *challenges, e.g., L.D., childcare, transportation*	• *building, equipment* • *staff* • *curriculum* • *materials* • *goals* • *volunteers* • *technology*
Processes – the educational and organizational processes contributing to performance	• *intake interview* • *orientation* • *reading, writing, math activities* • *social interactions* • *school governance activities*	• *testing & assessments* • *discussion/ analysis* • *cultural expressions* • *computer use*	• *planning* • *record-keeping* • *assessment* • *scheduling* • *instruction* • *staff development* • *advice, guidance, support* • *connecting to human services, etc.*
Outputs – the immediate results of services provided	• *test scores* • *journals* • *more comfort in class* • *GED* • *resume* • *certificates* • *documentation of improved performances*		• *number of classes offered* • *number of hours of instruction* • *number of students* • *staff development activities*

Outcomes – the longer-term results of education for individuals and programs	• *new reading, writing, math practices*
	• *changed self-concept*
	• *opened a checking/ savings account*
	• *computer skills*
	• *new goals*
		• *changed/new skills*
		• *driver's license/ CDL license*
		• *workforce skills.*
		• *citizenship*
		• *a job; job promotion*
		• *checking/ savings acct.*
			• *aggregation of student outcomes*
			  — *test scores*
			  — *GED*
			  — *student goals met*
			• *teacher changes*
			• *records kept*
			• *improvement in program quality(PQI)*
			• *changes in administration philosophy*

Impacts – changes in community brought about by changes in learner's lives	• *children more involved in school* • *increased use of public resources* • *more activity in civic life* • *pressure for improved neighborhood* • *better educated/developed workforce*		This DRAFT was produced by the staff and action research teams of the CLS NCSALL Documenting Outcomes Project, 1999

Glossary of Terms Used in the Inputs-to-Impacts Model

In the model:

Input is defined as what the student or program brings to the processes of the program. Examples include students background, teacher qualifications, facilities.

Processes are the educational and organizational activities that take place in the program. *Examples* include instruction, assessment.

Outputs are defined as the immediate results of these processes. *Examples* include test scores, student work.

Outcomes are the changes that occur in students' lives as a result of their participation in the program, or the long-term results of program improvement. *Examples* include use of new skills, self-confidence, civic participation.

Impacts are the changes in the community resulting from changes in students and programs. *Examples* include increased membership in community organization, improved children's academic performance in schools.

Reading #3

Lessons from NCSALL's Outcomes and Impacts Study

— by Harold Beder

Researchers occasionally encounter contradictory findings, findings that disagree with each other to the extent that it is hard to imagine both could be true. Although this is frustrating, it is exciting, too, because in resolving contradictions new insights often emerge. In NCSALL's Outcome and Impacts Study, we were faced with such a contradiction. After examining testing data from seven outcome and impact studies, we concluded that the evidence was insufficient to determine whether adult basic education participants gain in basic skills. In contradiction, however, learners in ten studies were asked if they gained in reading, writing, and mathematics, and they overwhelmingly reported large gains. What led to this contradiction, and what is the answer to the gain question? In this article we will examine possible reasons for the contradiction, but before we do, it is important to know something about the study. And as for the question of gain: that remains to be answered.

Critical Issue

We studied the outcomes and impacts of adult literacy education because the subject is critical for adult literacy educators today. Policy makers who control resources have increasingly demanded that accountability be based on program performance as measured by impact on learners. Indeed, under the newly enacted Workforce Investment Act (HR 1385), programs which fail to achieve stipulated outcomes can be severely sanctioned. And, since outcome and impact studies can identify program strengths and weaknesses, their results provide vital information for program planning and policy formation at the national, state, and local levels.

We characterized outcomes as the changes that occur in learners as a result of their participation in adult literacy education. We saw impacts as the changes that occur in the family and society at large. Commonly studied outcome variables include individual gains in employment, job quality, and income; reduction of welfare; learning gains in reading, writing, and mathematics; GED acquisition; and changes in self-confidence. Common impact variables include effects on children's reading readiness, participation in children's school activities, and whether learners vote.

The NCSALL Outcomes and Impacts Study examined outcome and impact studies conducted since the late 1960's, including national studies, state-level studies, and studies of welfare, workplace, and family literacy programs. Its goals were to determine if the publicly-funded adult literacy education program in the United States

was effective; to identify common conceptual, design, and methodological problems inherent in the studies; to raise issues for policy and to make recommendations for research, policy, and practice. In essence, the research was a study of studies. To determine whether the adult literacy program was effective, we prepared case studies on the 23 outcome studies that we judged to be the most credible from a research perspective (see box for the criteria we used). Then, based on the case studies, we conducted a qualitative meta-analysis in which we treated each study's findings as evidence that we weighed to make conclusions about program effectiveness on commonly studied outcome and impact variables. Consensus among these studies has pointed towards positive impact, and in making conclusions, we gave the evidence from more credible studies more weight.

There is no consensus on what adult literacy is, but acquisition of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics is included in almost everyone's definition of what adult literacy education should achieve. Outcome and impact studies have measured reading, writing, and mathematics gains in two ways: via tests or by questionnaires or interviews. Yet as we noted at the outset, the findings using these two methods conflict. While the results from tests are inconclusive on gain, when asked, learners generally report large gains. This calls into question whether tests are correct, whether learners are correct, or whether another explanation exists. To understand the lessons that can be learned from examining this issue, we will first look at studies that used tests and then at studies that measured learners' perception of gain through self-report.

1973 National Evaluation

The 1973 evaluation of the federal adult literacy

Criteria for Selecting Studies
- The study included an outcome/impact component.
- The report was adequately documented in respect to design and methods.
- There were an adequate number of cases.
- The sampling plan was adequate (i.e., could and did result in external validity).
- Data collection procedures were adequate. (i.e., were not tainted by substantial attrition or biased by other factors).
- Objective measures, rather than self-report, were used to measure outcomes.
- Measures, especially tests, were valid and reliable.
- The research design included a control group.
- Inferences logically followed from the design and data.

education program was contracted to the System Development Corporation (Kent, 1973). It began in 1971 and ended two years later. At that time, the Adult Education Act restricted service to adults at the pre-secondary level, so the study was limited to learners with fewer than nine years of schooling. The study also excluded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and learners older than 44. For the sample, states were selected according to a strati ed random sampling design and programs and learners were selected using other methods of random sampling.

After reviewing learning gain tests available in 1972, the System Development Corporation selected two tests from level M of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to use as their instrument. One measured reading comprehension, the other measured arithmetic. The validity and reliability of the TABE components used were not reported. After developing directions and field testing, tests and instructions were sent to local program directors

and teachers in the study sample, who were asked to do the testing. The learning gain test was first administered in May, 1972, and then again the following May. Of the 1,108 initial tests obtained, matching tests from the first and second administration were obtained for only 441 subjects. Strictly speaking, the tests administered were not pre- and post-tests, since at initial testing learners had already received varying degrees of instruction.

When initially tested with components of the TABE, on average, learners scored at grade level 5.4 on reading achievement and 6.4 in mathematics. Raw scores were not reported. After the second administration of the test approximately four months later, in which a different test form was used, 26 percent of the students had gained one grade or more in reading, 41 percent had some gain, but less than one grade, and 33 percent had zero or negative gain. In mathematics, 19 percent gained one or more grades, 46 percent gained some, but less than one grade, and 35 percent showed zero or negative gain.

The proportions of those who gained and those who did not may have been affected by the differing hours of instruction learners had amassed between first and second test administration. While almost a fifth of the learners had 39 or fewer hours of instruction between the first and second testing, another fifth had 80 or more hours of instruction. Average gains for reading were 0.5 grades after 98 hours and 0.4 grades after 66 hours. For mathematics, the comparable figures were 0.3 grades and 0.3 grades respectively.

In the 1973 National Evaluation, we see many problems. Because of high attrition, the test scores are not representative of adult literacy learners in general. Furthermore, what do the gains reported mean? Are they high, medium, or low? In the absence of standards against which to assess learning gain, we do not know.

California GAIN Study

GAIN (Greater Avenues for Independence) was California's JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills) program. The tested learning gain data comes from the larger evaluation of the entire GAIN program conducted by the Manpower Development Research Corporation (Martinson & Friedlander, 1994). The GAIN evaluation included an experimental design, explained in the next paragraph. Between seven and 14 months after a county implemented GAIN, those welfare recipients who had scored below 215 on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System test (CASAS) were randomly assigned either to a treatment group or to a control group. The treatment group was required to attend JOBS-sponsored adult literacy education classes; the control group was not required to attend JOBS-sponsored classes, but could attend non-JOBS sponsored classes if they wished. As its learning gain test, GAIN used the Test of Applied Literacy Skills (TALS) quantitative literacy section, which is similar to the quantitative literacy test used by the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). The test was administered to 1,119 treatment and control group members in their homes two to three years after random assignment. During that period learners had received an average of 251 scheduled hours of instruction.

The experimental design of GAIN is very important for the credibility of the research. In an experimental design, subjects are randomly assigned either to a treatment group, which in this case received instruction, or to a control group,

which does not receive the treatment. Because random assignment insures that the two groups are same in every aspect except the treatment, when the performance of the two groups is compared, any difference between them can be logically attributed to the treatment. In short, an experimental design allows us to infer that adult literacy education caused an outcome to occur. This is critical because many outcomes, increased pay and welfare reduction for example, are susceptible to economic and social forces that have nothing to do with participation in adult literacy education. Thus, in the absence of an experimental design, we cannot be sure that participation caused the gains measured.

The researchers found that, on average, learners gained a statistically non-significant 1.8 points on the TALS test, a gain that was far too small to infer impact. However, despite the very small average learning gains, differences among the six counties were substantial. In fact, while in two counties the control group actually outperformed the treatment group, in one county the treatment group outperformed the control group by a highly statistically significant 33.8 percent.

National Evenstart Evaluation

Evenstart is the national, federally-funded family literacy program. To be eligible for Evenstart funding, a program must have an adult literacy education program, early childhood education, parent education, and home-based services. The National Evaluation was contracted to Abt Associates (St. Pierre et.al, 1993; St Pierre et. al., 1995). As with the GAIN evaluation, the tested learning gain component of the Evenstart program was part of a larger study that assessed all the components of Evenstart.

Learning gain was measured in two components, 1) the National Evaluation Information System (NEIS), a data set of descriptive information collected from local programs, and 2) an in-depth study of ten local programs. For the NEIS, data were collected from families at entry, at the end of each year and at exit. The CASAS was used to test learning gain. For the in-depth study, data were collected from participants in ten programs selected because of geographic location, level of program implementation, and willingness to cooperate. The in-depth study included an experimental design. CASAS tests were administered to 98 control and 101 treatment group members who were adult literacy education participants from five of the ten programs. Although control group members were not participants in adult literacy education at the time of the pre-test, they were not precluded from future participation if they wished. Study subjects were pre-tested in the fall of 1991 and then post-tested twice, nine months later and 18 months later.

For the in-depth study, valid pre- and post-tests were received from 64 participants and 53 control group members. Note two problems: this is a small number of subjects and there was substantial attrition from both groups. At the second post-test (18 months), a statistically non-significant difference of 3.7 points on the CASAS was found between the gains of the two groups leading the evaluators to conclude that Evenstart adult literacy instruction had not produced learning gain, at least in respect to the in-depth study. The NEIS component, which did not use an experimental design, did show small but statistically significant gains of 4.6 points on the CASAS after 70 hours of instruction.

The NEAEP

The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (NEAEP), which was conducted by Developmental Associates Inc., began in 1990, was concluded in 1994, and issued five reports of findings: Development Associates (1992), Development Associates (1993), Development Associates (1994), Young, Fitzgerald and Morgan (1994a), and Young, Fitzgerald and Morgan (1994b). Costing almost three million dollars, the NEAEP was the largest and most comprehensive of three national evaluations of the federal adult literacy education program. Data on learners were collected at several points. Client Intake Record A was completed for each sampled student at the time of intake, and with this instrument, data for 22,548 learners were collected from a sample of 116 local programs. The sample was drawn using a statistical weighting system designed to enable the researchers to generalize findings from the sample to the United Sates as a whole. Client Intake Record B was completed for all learners who supposedly completed Intake Record A and completed at least one class. For this data collection, records were gathered for 13,845 learners in 108 programs. Learner attrition from the study was clearly evident between the administration of the two instruments. Indeed, by the second data collection (Intake B) eight programs and more than 8,000 learners had dropped from the study: many learners who attended intake sessions never attended a class and also, some records were not forwarded to the researchers. After the second data collection, additional data were collected at five to eight week intervals for 18 weeks.

The NEAEP lacked the resources to send trained test administrators into the field to administer tests, so it had to rely on program staff to give the tests and it had to use the tests that programs normally used. Because the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System test (CASAS) and the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) were in sufficiently wide use, they were chosen as the tests for the project. The programs selected for the study were supposed to administer either of these tests near the inception of instruction and again after 70 and 140 hours of instruction. Pre-tests were obtained from 8,581 learners in 88 programs and post-tests were received from 1,919 learners in 65 programs. As one can see, the attrition between pre- and post-tests was substantial due to learner drop out and the failure of programs to either post-test or to submit the test data. Moreover, when Developmental Associates checked the tests, much of the data was so suspect that it was deleted from the study. The NEAEP was left with only 614 usable pre- and post-test scores, less than 20 percent of the intended number of valid cases.

Based on these 614 cases, the NEAEP reported that ABE students received a mean of 84 hours of instruction between pre- and post-tests and attended for an average of 15 weeks. On average, their gain was 15 points on the TABE. Adult secondary students received a mean of 63 hours of instruction and gained seven points on the TABE. All gains were statistically significant at the .001 level (Young et al, 1994a).

The NEAEP found that learners do gain in basic skills, but how credible are the findings? In a reanalysis of the Development Associates data, Cohen, Garet, and Condelli (1996) concluded, "The implementation of the test plan was also poor, and this data should not be used to assess the capabilities of clients at intake. Some of the key evidence supporting this conclusion includes:

Only half the clients were pretested, and sites that pretested differed from sites that did not. At sites that pretested only some of their clients, pretested clients differed from those who were not pretested.

Programs reported perfect exam scores for a substantial proportion of pretested clients. Less than 20 percent of eligible clients received a matched pretest and posttest.

Among clients eligible to be posttested, significant differences exist among those who were and were not posttested.

The available matched pre- and posttests were concentrated in a very few programs.

These facts render the test data unusable. Therefore this reanalysis invalidates all of the findings concerning test results from the original analysis" (Cohen, Garet, and Condelli, 1996. p. xi).

Stated simply, because of the problems noted by Cohen, Garet, and Condelli, the test scores received by the NEAEP, as with those of the 1973 National Evaluation, are most certainly biased and, therefore, not representative of adult literacy learners in general. Perhaps, for example, the learners from whom valid pre- and post-test scores were obtained were more motivated and able and the scores are inflated. Perhaps they were less able. We simply do not know. Again, lacking standards, we do not know whether the gains reported should be considered high, medium or low.

The Answer?

The two national evaluations and the NEIS component of the National Evenstart Evaluation do show tested learning gain, but learner attrition from both national evaluations was so severe that we cannot generalize the results. In addition, these studies did not use an experimental design. In contrast, the two studies which did use an experimental design, the GAIN study and the in-depth component of the Evenstart study, showed no significant tested learning gain. Both studies were limited in other ways that space does not permit us to describe here. The studies included in the Outcomes and Impact Study that are not reported here show a similar pattern of confusion on tested learning gain. As measured by tests, do learners gain basic skills as a consequence of their participation? The jury is still out.

Learners' Perceptions

As noted at the outset of this article, when learners are asked whether they have gained skills in reading, writing, and math as a result of participation in ABE, they tend to respond in the affirmative. The National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (NEAEP) conducted a telephone survey of 5,401 former ABE learners; respondents were asked if they had gained in basic skills. Although many of the former learners who were supposed to be interviewed could not be found, and although many respondents had received very little actual instruction, 50% of the ABE learners and 45% of the adult secondary education (ASE) learners said that participation had helped their reading "a lot." For math, the figures were 51% for ABE and 49% for ASE.

In another national evaluation of the Federal Adult Education Program conducted in 1980 (Young et. al., 1980), data were collected from 110 local programs strati ed according to type of funding agency and program size. Learners were interviewed over the phone. Although the response rate to the interviews was low, 75

percent of those interviewed responded that they had improved in reading, 66 percent said they improved in writing, and 69 percent reported that they had improved in math.

In a study in New Jersey (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1984), a random sample of 294 learners who had been enrolled for seven to eight months was interviewed. Of the respondents, 89 percent said that participation in ABE had helped them become better readers, 63 percent reported that ABE classes had helped their writing, and 85 percent said participation had helped their math. A study in Maryland (Walker, Ewart & Whaples, 1981) interviewed 120 ABE learners who enrolled in Maryland programs and volunteered for the study. Of the respondents, 81 percent reported they could read better because of participating and 90 percent reported their computational skills had improved.

A study in Ohio (Boggs, Buss & Yarnell, 1979) followed up on learners who had terminated the program three years earlier. Data were collected by telephone. Of the 351 valid respondents, 96 percent of those who said improving their reading was a goal reported they had reached the goal. For those who had math as a goal, the figure was 97 percent. Finally, in a study in Wisconsin (Becker, Wesselius, & Fallon, 1976) that assessed the outcomes of the Gateway Technical Institute, a comprehensive adult literacy education program that operated learning centers in a wide range of locations, data were collected from a random sample of former learners who were divided into four categories based on the amount of instruction they had received. A total of 593 learners were contacted and asked if they would participate; 270 usable interviews resulted. That the program helped them with reading was reported by 90

percent, 83 percent reported that the program had helped with writing, and 82 percent reported that they had been helped with math.

The Answer?

The limitations of self-report is the problem that surfaces in these studies. Participation in adult literacy education is hard work and becoming literate is socially acceptable behavior. It could be that self-reported perceptions of basic skills gain are inflated by the normal human tendency to answer with socially acceptable responses and a reluctance to say unfavorable things in a program evaluation. In most of the studies, a large discrepancy existed between the number of learners the evaluation planned to interview and the number who actually completed interviews. It could be that those who were biased in favor of the evaluated programs were more likely to respond to interviews than those who were unfavorably disposed: the "if you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all" syndrome. Indeed, for the Maryland and Wisconsin studies, the respondents had volunteered to be included and may have been favorably biased in comparison to those who did not volunteer.

Then again, perhaps the self-report data is accurate and learners are recognizing important gains in themselves that are too small to be measured by tests. Shirley Brice Heath (1983), for example, chronicles how being able to write for the first time a simple list or a note to one's children is perceived as a significant benefit to those with limited literacy skills. It is doubtful that any of the tests in common usage are sensitive enough to register such gains.

Lessons

Although the studies reviewed here are just a sample of those analyzed in the full report of the Outcomes and Impact Study, they provide many lessons. First, even the best outcome studies are limited in many ways, and these limitations influence findings. The most common limitation is a unacceptably large attrition of subjects between pre- and post-testing. The subjects for whom both pre-and post test data are available almost always differ substantially from those who were only pre-tested because those who are not post-tested include a high proportion of dropouts, then the results are almost certainly biased.

A second common limitation is post-testing before substantial learning gain can be reasonably expected. Although what constitutes a reasonable time is open to debate, surely 30 hours of instruction is suspect and even 60 hours is questionable. Giving inappropriate levels of tests often creates ceiling or floor effects. In any test, there is a chance factor. When a test is too hard, learners score at the bottom, or floor. Since the scores cannot go down any further "by chance," and can only go up, the chance factor artificially inflates the post-score. When the test is too easy, the opposite or ceiling effect occurs. Many of the tests Development Associates had to delete for the study in the NEAEP suffered from ceiling or floor effects.

The most serious problem with testing may lie in the tests themselves. To be valid, tests must reflect the content of instruction, and the extent to which the TABE or CASAS reflect the instruction of the programs they are used to assess is an unanswered question. Similarly, it may be that the tests are not sensitive enough to register learning gains that adult learners consider to be important.

With some exceptions, such as the California GAIN Study, most outcome evaluations have relied on local programs to collect their data, a practice that is common in elementary and secondary education research. However, adult literacy education is not like elementary and secondary education, where the learners arrive in September and the same learners are still participating in June. Many adult literacy programs have open enrollments, most have high attrition rates, and few have personnel on staff who are well-trained in testing or other data collection. These factors confound accurate record keeping and systematic post-testing at reasonable and pre-determined intervals. Moreover, many adults are reluctant to take tests.

Perhaps the most important lesson for policy and practice is that credible outcomes and impacts research is expensive and requires researchers who are not only experts in design and methodology but who also understand the context of adult literacy education. If data are to be collected from programs, staff must have the capacity to test and to keep accurate records. This will require more program resources and staff development. Good outcome studies help demonstrate accountability and enable us to identify practices that work. Bad outcome studies simply waste money.

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Worksheet for Reading #3
Lessons From NCSALL's Outcomes and Impacts Study

As you read this article think about the following questions. Complete this worksheet when you have finished reading.

1. How does Beder define or "characterize" outcomes?

2. How does he define impacts?

3. What outcomes does your program document?

4. What impacts does your program document?

5. This article focuses on learning gains, or "acquisition of skills in reading, writing, and mathematics," as an outcome. How are learning gains measured and reported in your program?

6. When your facilitator passed out this reading she or he assigned a section on a particular study. For the study you read about, what was the learning gains outcome that was found?

Session 5: Agenda

1. Introduction to outcome measurement

2. Review of Harold Beder's article, "Lessons from NCSALL's Outcomes and Impacts Study"

3. Outcomes as indicators of success

4. Quality of life measurement

5. Local documentation

6. Documentation for your program

7. Wrap-up

Reflections on today's session…

Quality of Life Measurement

On a continuum from **1 (the lowest)** to **4 (the highest)**: rank how important these things are in your life, and (2) give an actual situation of these things in your life. "**1**" would always be "worse" than "**4**."

Indicators	Importance to you	Actual situation in your life
Questions on individual quality of life		
Having the place you live in as clean and as comfortable as a local hospital		
Feeling excited or interested in something on a regular basis		
Feeling connected to and understood by other people		
Having a choice of a job with wages and benefits you need and with an opportunity to do what you are interested in		
Not quarreling with the people living with you		
Spending more time at home/with your family		
Learning new things at school or elsewhere		
Getting dental services		
Eating meals together with your family		
Not having to go to school/work if you do not want to		
Having enough energy to do things you have to do		
Having more time and energy to do things you enjoy doing		
Getting satisfactory goods ñ food, appliances, clothes		
Feeling that someone cares about you		
Feeling free from threat and unexpected occurrences		
Questions on community quality of life—apply them to your community		
1. Spills and other environmental accidents promptly reported		
2. Public housing waiting lists are tolerable		
3. New cancer cases/deaths are scarce		
4. Number of violent crimes in the area is small		
5. Non-white people arrested as a certain % of all arrests		
6. A lot of scenic land within 30-mile radius		
7. School pupil/teacher ration in public schools is less than 20/1		
8. High percentage of population walking to work		
9. Numerous social/youth clubs		
11. Female/male earnings ratio is 1		
12. Rate of vacation travelers is high		
13. Many high school graduates go to college		
14. Many persons report interest in politics		
15. There is no trash in the streets		

Do/Set/Met Goal Sheet

Instructor _____ **Class** _____ **Date** _____

Please fill in the total number of students in your class that have checked DO/SET/MET in each of the following categories.

		DO	SET	MET	COMMENTS
I. WORKER	1. Fill out a job application				
	2. Arrive at appointments on time				
	3. Fill out work related forms				
	4. Read and understand work related materials				
	5. Communicate with others in work/social settings				
	6. Have a job				
	7. Obtain job promotion				
	8. Organize, plan and prioritize work				
	9. Use a computer				
II. CITIZEN/COMMUNITY WORKER	10. Use library				
	11. Locate and/or use community agencies or services				
	12. Have a driver's license				
	13. Use public transportation				
	14. Complete U.S. citizenship class				
	15. Apply for legal immigrant status, U.S. citizenship, Emancipation papers				
	16. Register to vote				
	17. Vote in primaries/elections				
	18. Obtain legal advice				
	19. Use maps				
	20. Ask for directions				
	21. Active in volunteer work				
	22. Participate in neighborhood watch/activities				
III. PARENT/FAMILY MEMBER	23. Read to children				
	24. Help children with homework				
	25. Volunteer in child's school				
	26. Talk with teachers/school staff				
	27. Attend school-related meetings (ex. PTA)				
	28. Fill out insurance forms				
	29. Use a recipe				
	30. Assemble a toy/equipment/furniture				
	31. Read product/medicine label, directions and safety warnings				
IV. SELF	32. Read daily (magazines, books, newspaper)				
	33. Have a checking/savings account				
	34. Balance a check book				
	35. Have a personal/family budget				
	36. Pay bills				
	37. Use an ATM card				
	38. Count money				
	39. Compare prices to determine the best buys				
	40. Solve a problem				
	41. Feel good/better about myself				
	42. Feel independent				
	43. Meet a personal goal				

Developed by Rita Roper, Jerry Musick, and Sherri Whitlock, teachers in the Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program in Abingdon, VA

Reading #4

A Story of Improvement
— by Jane Cody, James Ford, and Kathleen Hayward

An honest look told this literacy program they were not as good as they might be. It was time to listen to stakeholders and institute a continuous improvement process.

"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order."
                                    —Alfred North Whitehead

Looking in the mirror, really taking a long, hard look, can be unnerving, even depressing. We see the blemishes that we hide with makeup. We see the bald spots that we cover by creatively combing our hair. We see the ten extra pounds that age has brought. Most of us avoid the problem by not looking, or we take a quick glance to make sure we are properly buttoned and zipped and ready to appear in public. Perhaps we make a silent resolution about dieting or exercising, but that's about it. After all, we're not perfect.

This is pretty normal human behavior and it carries over into our professional lives. After operating an adult literacy program for many years, it is easy to avoid taking a long, hard look in the mirror. Students come, money comes, programs expand, people say "well done," everything seems pretty good: not perfect, but pretty good.

This is the story of an adult literacy program that decided that merely glancing in the mirror was no longer enough. It is a story of shock: of

discovering a lack of clearly defined standards and the tools to measure progress toward them. It is a story of hope, in finding a process to identify program gaps and narrow them. It is also a story of improvement, through the systematic use of stakeholder input, hard data, and detailed analysis. It is a story, not about perfection, but about getting better.

Our Organization
Adult and family literacy programs in Knox County, Tennessee, are provided by a unique public/private partnership. The public member is the Knox County School System and, specifically, its Adult Basic Education Department (ABED). The private member is a nonprofit corporation called Friends of Literacy, Inc. (FOL), which was formed in 1991 to supplement—by way of money and volunteers—the resources that ABED had for literacy programs. Through the balance of this article, "we" refers to this FOL/ABED Partnership, to the program it produces, and to its combined leadership.

Most knowledgeable observers would have described this as a successful partnership with high-caliber programs. Funding grew each year, students provided ample anecdotal evidence that we made a difference in their lives, and we had achieved some national recognition. We considered ourselves anything but static. We had changed our curriculum, improved our volunteer

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training, and added more paid teachers. Our program had grown to approximately 400 students, 15 paid staff, and 40 volunteers. We were doing something right.

Forces for Change

In 1996, FOL had its fifth birthday. Its budget had grown from $5,000 in 1991 to more than $150,000 in fiscal year '96-'97. It had evolved from an organization that provided money and people to an adult literacy program operated by ABED to one that was also the primary management and fiscal agent for its own family literacy program. It was time to take a look at where FOL, the Adult Literacy Program, and the partnership were going. As luck would have it, new members had just been added to the FOL board of directors. These members had not grown up with the organization and, consequently, viewed it from a different perspective. One new member had expertise in strategic planning. A committee composed of FOL board members and program staff reviewed and clarified the vision, mission, and values of FOL.

In addition, the FOL/ABED partnership had been selected to participate in a national project entitled "What Works Literacy Partnership" (WWLP). WWLP sparked our thinking, in a more detailed way, about how we could document the results we thought we were achieving in improving the basic academic skills of our students. We started to concentrate on how could we prove that our program really did what we said it did.

Dovetailing with WWLP was another national initiative entitled "Equipped for the Future" (EFF). The FOL/ABED partnership was selected to be one of several pilot-test sites for EFF. Like

WWLP, one aspect of EFF focused on the question of how we measure results.

Two other critical pieces fell into place during the summer of 1997. First, to help us with the WWLP project, we hired a new staff member who just happened to be a Certified Quality Examiner for the State of Tennessee (more about this below). Second, FOL received a generous gift to purchase new hardware and a software system to manage data about students, volunteers, and donors. With all this going on, we had both the courage to look in the mirror and some ideas about how to take a systematic approach to dealing with what we saw there.

New Approach

Our new staff member introduced us to the Malcolm Baldrige Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence. These criteria take the total quality management principles originally used in the private sector and apply them to educational institutions. They provide an orderly approach to continually improving the operations and results of an educational enterprise. This was the systematic approach we would use.

The starting point was to identify the needs of the customers: in this case, our students. FOL/ABED program leadership instituted monthly "Town Meetings" to ask students what they wanted, needed, and expected from our adult literacy program. Approximately 75 students attended each of the meetings. We got a wide range of responses, from better parking to more computer time and more volunteers for individual tutoring. Next, we asked teachers and volunteers, who are key stakeholders in the program, what they expected and how we could all work together to improve things. Better training and more support

from the leadership were two answers. This group also developed its own vision, mission, and value statements for both adult and family literacy program components. These built on similar work completed earlier by FOL and the Knox County Schools, but were the work of these stakeholders, and were something they could commit to as their own. The FOL board also brainstormed its role and the expectations of and for each board member. Some consistent themes were emerging, one of which was better communication among the stakeholder groups: students, teachers, volunteers, and board members.

We wanted to use this information to develop quality standards for our organization and program. We were fortunate: adult literacy educators in both Tennessee and New York had already adopted "Indicators of Program Quality" that fit nicely into the Baldrige Criteria and our own vision, mission, and values. For example, Quality Indicators One and Two of the New York program stress the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of program philosophy and direction. Quality Indicators Three and Five underscore the importance of measuring student improvements in reading, writing, speaking, and problem solving, and highlight the goal of enabling students to be better workers, parents, and citizens. These Indicators were consistent with our approach in the EFF project. Indicators Seven and Eight set benchmarks for the recruitment, orientation, placement, and retention of students. We felt comfortable with all 13 Quality Indicators and adopted them as standards by which to measure our own work.

Measuring progress towards benchmarks and ultimate program results are critical concepts in the Baldrige Criteria. We realized that we must start "managing by facts," rather than by

assumptions or guesswork. We set about the task of collecting and analyzing data in several ways. First, program management went back into the classroom to see what actually happened there on a daily basis. They resumed the role of teacher to see, firsthand, the problems of taking our curriculum from training manual to actual delivery. They also observed other teachers to determine whether the material covered during in-service training was actually being incorporated. These were eye-opening experiences. What we thought was happening in the classroom was not always occurring. Some of the curriculum was unwieldy or too complex. It was not always well integrated between teachers in different classrooms. In our family literacy program, for example, the curriculum used by those teaching the parents was not well linked with that used to teach the children. Teachers provided input to help redesign curriculum areas that were not working.

We needed better data on actual student performance, so we changed to a more accurate instrument that provides diagnostic information to the student and the teacher. We tested adult learners using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) when they first enrolled in our program, and again after completing 100 hours of classroom instruction. We collected, analyzed, and fed data back to both teachers and students. We use this information to develop specific, individualized action plans for improvement by each adult learner. At last we had reliable, hard data to show us whether our students were making academic progress.

As we were gathering data, a "think tank" of program managers, teachers, and FOL board members began to identify the "vital few" core drivers of our partnership and literacy programs.

Core drivers are what we have to do well to meet the indicators of a quality program. They included student recruitment and retention, volunteer management, financial management (raising and spending money), and bringing our new data system up to speed. The group examined how we operated in each of these areas, set sights on a higher standard for future performance, and developed detailed action plans for improvement. For example, we knew our data system was critical to managing by fact. Without a better system, we could not record and analyze data on student test results. Neither could we keep track of who had given us money, when, how much, and for what purpose. We solicited input from everyone who had to use the data system, asking, "What are the problems with current operations and how could they be improved?" We selected a point person to deal with the software company in redesigning some elements of the system, based upon this input, and we established a timetable for improvement.

Shock, Hope, Improvement

The Baldrige criteria require an organization to slow down and rebuild with a focus towards customer and program results that matter. The criteria link and create an alignment between all internal operations, organization leadership, systems, and processes as well as sound literacy standards. When we first began our critical look, many of us confidently believed that, on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the best, we would be about an eight. Wrong. Systematic feedback, data collection, and analysis, as described above, showed some real gaps in our operations. For example, teachers told us that the continuous enrollment of new students on whatever day they happened to show up was a real barrier to success. It required teachers to interrupt classes to assess

new students and try to bring them up to speed. Students told us that it was intimidating to be assigned to a classroom without any idea of what to expect upon arrival. The solution, devised with input from the stakeholders, was a new class, called Learning Skills, in which each new student is enrolled for a month before assignment to a regular class. Our TABE test results indicate that students who attended the Learning Skills class are progressing more quickly than those who were enrolled in our program prior to development of this class. In addition, since students graduate from Learning Skills at the end of the month, teachers in regular classes enroll new students only once a month and have benchmarks for them before they arrive.

Teacher training was another area that needed to be addressed. We found that teachers were not incorporating in-service material in their classrooms. We asked them for help in revising classroom curriculum, and we changed our training focus from putting on a workshop' to meeting the needs of the staff. In addition, our EFF implementation allowed us to bring together teachers who worked in different parts of our program. Lack of funding for teacher planning time had been a significant barrier to this in the past. Adult literacy teachers linked up with family literacy teachers. Staff began exchanging ideas and method; they brainstormed to solve problems. When asked to evaluate this year upon its completion in June,1998, teachers were significantly more positive about the program, and their role in it, than they had been in the past.

We also saw another significant change during the year. We had tried several times in the past to develop a leadership group from within the student body. Efforts had always failed. This year, they blossomed. Several students volunteered to

serve on a Leadership Council that tackled some successful projects. Why the difference? The projects were those that mattered to the students. Their input drove the leadership group's agenda. The students on the Leadership Council took data from the Town Meetings and also surveyed students about project priorities, using the information to chose items to tackle first. The initial project created a student eating area. Members of the Council used a quality improvement tool to plan and then establish this new space. They also described their process and results at an FOL Board meeting. The next project, still underway, is recycling aluminum cans to raise money to open an on-site store where students can buy paper, pens, and other school supplies. The evidence is anecdotal but, nevertheless, important: Students exhibited a greater sense of community and program ownership than in past years. While student-centered' has always been important to our partnership, we found a new way to put it into practice.

Our testing program produced data showing that our students are improving their reading, writing, spelling, and math skills. Preliminary results indicate that students gained an average of one grade level in each of these areas after 100 hours of classroom instruction. These data have helped us to identify strong teaching techniques and discard the less effective. The information has been heartening to students and teachers, who have objective evidence that their work is paying off. It has also been helpful in fundraising, since we can show prospective donors that investing in our programs will get results. We have more credibility with these data, and are more competitive.

Reflections

There is an old saying: "It's more important to be lucky than good." We knew we had been lucky, and we thought we had been good. But we wanted to be better. We decided that good intentions, luck, and ad hoc methods had taken us as far as we could go. We could no longer excuse our shortcomings by saying that ours was a fluid' or dynamic' environment, or one that was underfunded, implying that somehow our expectations should be lower as a result. It was time for accountability and documented results through systematic program improvement.

This has been a re-education for all of us. The vocabulary, which comes from the business sector, is new to us. The process can also be discouraging, especially at the beginning when scrutiny revealed some things we would rather not have seen. Indeed, when our Think Tank sat down to identify the "vital few" areas to address rst, we came up with a list of "vital many" and had difficulty prioritizing where to start.

Commitment

This process requires the belief that it will work as well as the commitment of time to think, plan, and involve students, staff, board members, and volunteers. All of these groups have been involved and supportive. The Baldrige Framework is a very logical approach, built on common sense. For those of us geared toward instant results, it has sometimes been frustrating to slog through the tedious process of documenting, in detail, the way we do things (our "as is" state) versus the way we should do things (our desired state). It is time consuming and requires discipline. Just recently, three staff and one board member spent an hour discussing and writing down the process we will use to handle receipts and expenditure. Now we have a simple procedure that everyone involved

has agreed upon. It replaces a hit-and-miss method that no one understood. The people involved had to learn process charting and develop this particular chart in addition to their other duties, not in place of them. If the investment of time produces a better process that, in turn, produces better results in this instance, fewer mistakes, less confusion and duplication of effort, more reliable financial data then it will save future time and effort. We do not worry about getting so wrapped up in process charting that we forget the ultimate goal is to achieve results in student performance, because student feedback and student testing helps keep us focused.

Our world is more complex now because we understand how the various parts of our program are interrelated. All our staff and volunteers need to be open to change and to soliciting and receiving feedback. If we have used customer input to design the process, and measured and analyzed both customer satisfaction and results along the way, we should arrive at our goal. If we do not, we have a good idea of what went wrong so that we can improve the next time around. We now understand that orderly is not synonymous with bureaucratic.

We have a long way to go. In the coming year, we will be working hard to bring the ABED and FOL leadership further on board. Although both have been supportive, both groups need a better understanding of the significant organizational implications of this continuous improvement process. We will be implementing more fully our

EFF curriculum. We will continue work on our action plans for the "vital few" and document our progress toward improvement.

Deciding to improve the performance of an organization in an orderly, comprehensive, systematic way is analogous to an individual deciding to lose the ten pounds that a stop in front of the mirror revealed. It entails hard work, discipline, incremental results, motivation through small victories and, most importantly, a change in lifestyle. Just as a fad diet does not produce long-term success in weight reduction, fad quality' is not the answer for improving performance over time. An organization must live and breathe quality and incorporate it as a cultural value in everything that it does. We have only begun that process, but, as the saying goes, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

About the Authors
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Session 6: Agenda

1. Introduction to final session

2. Review of "A Story of Improvement"

3. Identifying questions about program performance

4. Approaches to improving program performance

5. Next steps for your program

Reflections on today's session…

Reading #5
Some Approaches to Improving Program Performance
—by Mary Beth Bingman, written for this guide

Improving program performance can be addressed using a variety of approaches ñ or a combination of approaches as in Knox County. In deciding what approach to take, programs need to consider time available, support available, and how an approach matches their style and values. The following three approaches are all being used nationally, but level of support for each vary from state to state. Any approach to improving program quality will only work if a program can commit time and focus to the process.

Program Quality Standards
For many years the federal and state adult education systems have promoted the use of program standards. States and other groups have developed Program Quality Indicators that programs can use to evaluate the various components of their program and to plan change. In this reading we have included information on program standards for ESOL programs recently developed by TESOL (Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages). Their Quality Indicators describe what TESOL considers a quality ESOL program. The TESOL Program Standards do not describe the process for improving practice, but do provide a list of indicators of a quality program as developed by the TESOL task force. Even Start has developed a list of program quality attributes for family literacy program, and many states have indicators of program quality. To use these quality indicators a program might make an indicator-by-indicator assessment of "how they are doing" and then plan for the changes that would improve performance on particular indicators.

Content Standards
While the TESOL indicators are for program quality, Equipped for the Future (EFF) is based on content standards. Content standards address what is taught and learned. Many states have developed content standards for subjects in the K-12 curriculum. The sixteen EFF content standards are part of a framework developed through a process involving students, practitioners, and thousands of stakeholders in the adult literacy and lifelong learning system. The framework identifies adults' purposes for literacy and what adults need to know to carry out their responsibilities as workers, family members, and community members. The EFF content standards focus on the application of skills in adults' lives. This reading includes a brief introduction to EFF, the "standards wheel" that identifies the sixteen standards, and an example of one standard. The EFF initiative of the National Institute for Literacy is developing as assessment framework to accompany the standards. The EFF framework and standards do not provide a specific set of indicators in the same way that program standards do. But the framework does provide a variety of tools including a guide to EFF approach to quality that programs can use to examine their practices and to plan and implement changes.

Continuous Improvement
The Malcolm Baldrige Educational Criteria for Performance Excellence are based on total quality management principles originally developed in business sector. The Baldrige criteria outline an orderly process for examining and improving program operations. They provide the questions to ask but not the answers. Where program and content standards define quality, the Baldrige criteria focus on processes to build quality. This reading includes a graphic presentation of the process and a review of the key items in each category.

Materials from these three approaches follow.

TESOL Program Standards

The program quality standards developed by The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL Task Force on Adult Education Program Standards, 2000) describe program quality indicators in eight areas:
• program structure, administration, and planning;
• curriculum;
• instruction;
• recruitment, intake, and orientation;
• retention and transition;
• assessment and learner gains:
• staffing, professional development, and staff evaluation;
• support services.

Examples of indicators for the area of structure, administration, and planning include:
1. *The program organizes its instructional offerings to be consistent with the program's mission and goals and with the goals and needs of learners in the community being served* (TESOL Task Force on Adult Education Program Standards, 2000, p. 19).
2. *The program maintains a student teacher ratio conducive to meeting learning needs and goals within the constraints of program guidelines* (p.20).
3. *The program has a plan for outreach, marketing, and public relations activities to foster awareness and understanding of the program* (p. 21).

Examples for curriculum include:
1. *Curriculum and instructional materials are easily accessible, up-to-date, appropriate for adult learners, culturally sensitive, and oriented to the language and literacy needs of the learners* (TESOL Task Force on Adult Education Program Standards, 2000, p. 21).
2. *The program has an ongoing process for curriculum revision in response to the changing needs of the learners, community, and policies* (p. 22).

Examples for instruction include:
1. *Instructional activities engage learners in taking an active role in the learning process* (TESOL Task Force on Adult Education Program Standards, 2000, p. 22).
2. *Instructional activities take into account the needs of multi-level groups of learners, particularly those with minimal literacy skills in their native language and/or English* (p. 23).

For more information about TESOL program quality standards, visit TESOL Web site www.tesol.org.

Equipped for the Future

— Excerpted from the EFF Web site: www.nifl.gov/links/collections/eff/eff.html.

Equipped for the Future (EFF) is the National Institute for Literacy's standards based system reform initiative aimed at improving the quality and outcomes of the adult literacy and lifelong learning delivery system. EFF starts from the recognition that the skills adults need as parents, workers, and citizens go beyond the basic academic skills that have traditionally been targeted by adult education programs.

NIFL undertook EFF in an effort to better understand what we need to do as a nation to meet the challenge posed in the National Goal for adult education and lifelong learning: "Every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

Through a grass roots process, EFF partners have engaged thousands of customers and stakeholders in the adult literacy and lifelong learning system to build consensus on customer needs and goals. From this consensus EFF Partners are developing, refining and validating frameworks for content and performance standards.

The frameworks are a primary vehicle for enabling system reform that lines up instructional practice, program services, and program accountability so that they all focus on learner goals and stated purposes.

Content Framework

The foundations of the framework are the four purposes for literacy identified by adult learners:
• access to information so adults can orient

themselves in the world
• voice—being able to express ideas and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and taken into account
• independent action—being able to solve problems and make decisions on one's own, without having to rely on others
• bridge to the future—learning how to learn, in order to keep up with the world as it changes

The role maps describe what adults need to know and be able to do to carry out responsibilities as citizens/community members, parents/family members, and workers. The three components that complete the framework structure—the activities common to all three roles, the standards, and the core knowledge domains—are all linked to the four purposes, and through the role maps, to the key contexts in which adults live.

Standards

The 16 EFF Content Standards are derived from research that helped us clarify the core knowledge and skills adults need to carry out their roles as family members, workers, and community members. EFF Standards focus on application of skills - what adults need to know to actually use skills effectively in daily life.

For more information about Equipped for the Future framework, visit EFF Web site: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff.html

EFF Content Standards

Circular diagram titled with four outer-ring categories: COMMUNICATION, DECISION-MAKING, INTERPERSONAL, and LIFELONG LEARNING.

- **COMMUNICATION**: Read With Understanding, Convey Ideas in Writing, Speak So Others Can Understand, Listen Actively, Observe Critically
- **DECISION-MAKING**: Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate, Solve Problems and Make Decisions, Plan
- **INTERPERSONAL**: Cooperate With Others, Advocate and Influence, Resolve Conflict and Negotiate, Guide Others
- **LIFELONG LEARNING**: Take Responsibility for Learning, Reflect and Evaluate, Learn Through Research, Use Information and Communications Technology

From Stein, S. (2000). *Equipped for the Future content standards: What adults need to know and be able to do in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy, p. 21.

Sample EFF Standard

DECISION-MAKING SKILL

Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate

In order to fulfill responsibilities as parents/family members, citizens/community members, and workers, adults must be able to:

STANDARD

Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate

- Understand, interpret, and work with pictures, numbers, and symbolic information.

- Apply knowledge of mathematical concepts and procedures to figure out how to answer a question, solve a problem, make a prediction, or carry out a task that has a mathematical dimension.

- Define and select data to be used in solving the problem.

- Determine the degree of precision required by the situation.

- Solve problem using appropriate quantitative procedures and verify that the results are reasonable.

- Communicate results using a variety of mathematical representations, including graphs, chart, tables, and algebraic models.

ACCESS

VOICE

Family

Worker

INDEPENDENT ACTION

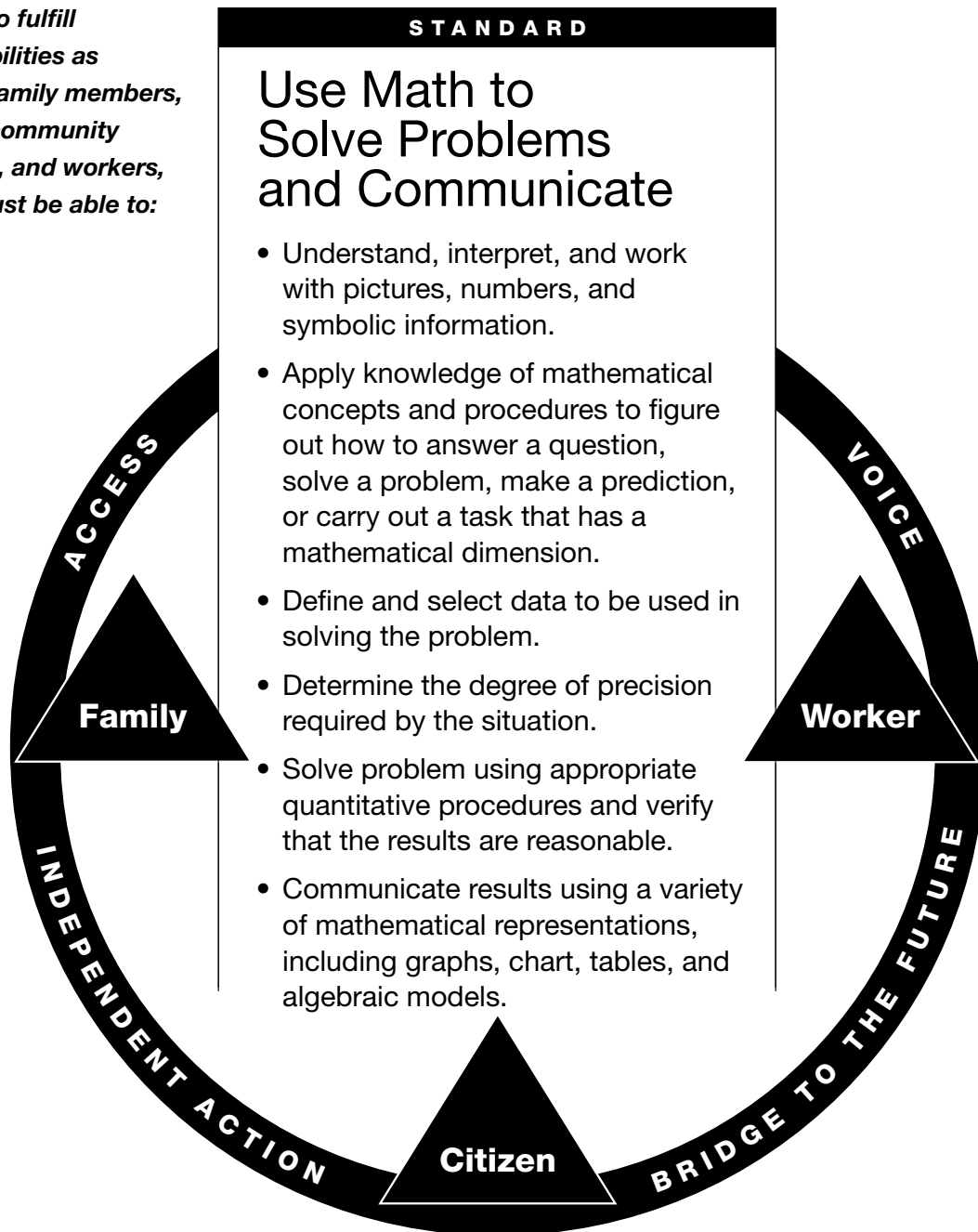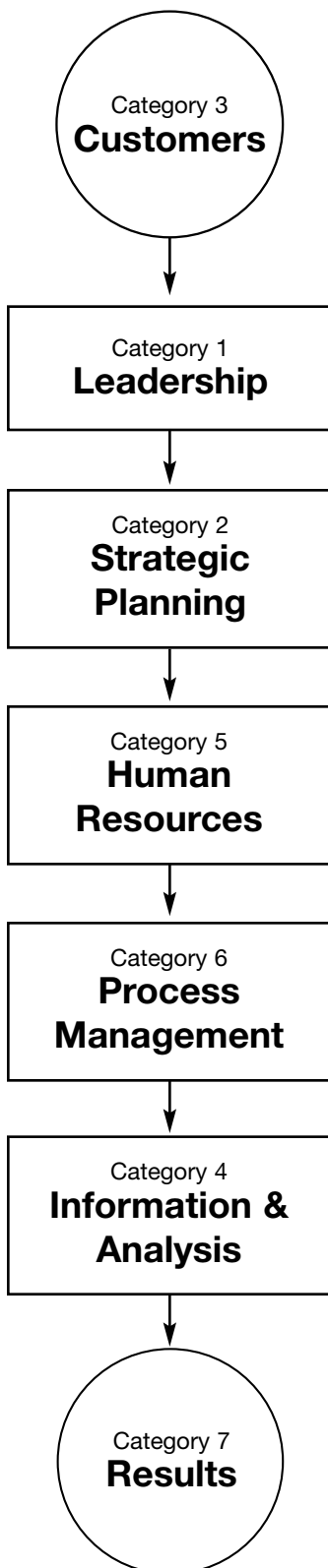BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

Citizen

From Stein, S. (2000). *Equipped for the Future content standards: What adults need to know and be able to do in the 21st century.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy, p. 35.

Using Baldrige Criteria as a Process

Category 3
Customers

Category 1
Leadership

Category 2
Strategic Planning

Category 5
Human Resources

Category 6
Process Management

Category 4
Information & Analysis

Category 7
Results

Customer Requirements

_____
_____
_____
_____

As leader I will

_____
_____
_____
_____

My Action Plan is

_____
_____
_____
_____

The people who will do this are

_____
_____
_____
_____

The Key Process we will use will be

_____
_____
_____
_____

We will measure our performance by

_____
_____
_____
_____

The bottom-line results will be

_____
_____
_____
_____

Credit: Jim Ford

Baldrige Criteria Category Review and Key Items

Category 1: Leadership

Have a clear understanding of how your leadership system works.

1.1 Organizational Leadership:
- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Have a clear understanding of how your leadership system works (Organizational Chart). *Show how the system includes a representative or receives internal and external feedback*

Organizational Performance Review

Have an understanding of how you obtain and receive performance feedback to know and measure how well the program is doing, as well as make adjustments and improvements.
A list or table showing what are the feedback mechanisms, who provides this feedback, and how they are used. Have samples of the documents and possible results if the system is that mature. Use a flowchart to show the feedback system.

1.2 Public Responsibility and Citizenship:
- Explain how you, your staff, and program takes responsibility and contributes to the community *Use a list or table showing what the program has done, by whom, and for what group.*

Category 2: Strategic Planning

2.1 Strategic Development:
- Explain your planning process long and short-term and how it directs your goals and plans for customer satisfaction and program improvement *Use a flowchart to show how the major steps in the strategic planning process.*

2.2 Strategic Deployment:
- How does your program deploy your strategies and action plans to insure performance to reach

results? *Using the organizational chart or another flowchart, show how plans are communicated and applied through the organization.*

Category 3: Customer (Student) and Market Focus

3.1 Customer (Student) and Market Knowledge:
- Who are your primary customers and what are their expectations and requirements? *Use a matrix to show the different customers and their requirements.* *C.O.P.I.S. Worksheet.*

3.2 Customer Satisfaction and Relationship:
- How do you measure customer satisfaction and build relationships? *If you use a survey, show the results in a graphic form.* *Customer Satisfaction Survey*

Category 4: Information and Analysis

4.1 Measurement of Organizational Performance:
- What are the key information and data (performance measures) that you collect on the performance of the organization? *Use an Information Matrix*

4.2 Analysis of Organizational Performance:
- How do you analysis the data and information? *Use an Informational Analysis flowchart.*

Category 5: Human Resources Focus

5.1 Work Systems:
• How do you and your program design jobs and work process so employees can achieve high performance? *Use a basic work/job design flowchart.*

5.2 Employee Education, Training, and Development:
• How does your program provide training and education to build employee knowledge, skills, and capabilities that improve employee performance? *Use a matrix to list the training opportunities for the staff, specific subjects covered, and the projected impact of that training. Use a flowchart to show the basic steps in developing the staff.*

5.3 Employee Well-being and Satisfaction:
• How do you measure or know how your workers feel about their work, program, and their overall satisfaction level? *Staff Satisfaction Survey.*

Category 6: Process Management

6.1 Product and Services Processes:
• How do you manage the design and delivery of your key processes? *Matrix of the key processes. Flowcharts of key processes.*

6.2 Support Processes:
• How do you manage key support processes? *Matrix of the key support processes. Flowcharts of key support processes.*

6.3 Supplier and Partnering Processes:
• How do you manage key supplier and/or partnering interactions and processes?

Matrix of the key supplier processes. Flowcharts of key supplier processes.

Category 7: Business Results

7.1 Customer (Student) Results:
• What are the customer (student) results, including satisfaction? *Use a few key graphs to show results and improvements.*

7.2 Financial and Market Results:
• Do you have any financial or market place performance results? *This could be a place where you show how increases in budgets, etc.*

7.3 Human Resources Results:
• What are the employee satisfaction, well-being, and development results? *Use a few key graphs to show results and improvements.*

7.4 Supplier and Partner Results:
• What are the supplier and partner results? *This could be a place where you show how increases in improved supplier services and key partnerships leading to better service results and performance. Use graphs to show results.*

7.5 Organizational Effectiveness Results:
• What are other important operational performance results that contribute to the program's effectiveness? *In the educational criteria this is the place for scholarship, research, etc. Use graphs to show results.*

Note: Materials in this reading related to the Baldrige Criteria were provided by Jim Ford by the Center for Literacy Studies.

For more information on Baldrige Criteria, visit the Web site: www.quality.nist.gov

Suggestions for Facilitators

Facilitating the Process

—by Mary Beth Bingman, written for this Guide

Facilitating a group requires a variety of skills. While the instructions in this guide are quite specific, you will run into unanticipated situations and you may want to make revisions to the activities. This section draws from the book *Teacher as Learner* (Bingman & Bell, 1995) to describe good facilitation. Appendix Two includes several readings from the Study Circles Resource Center that may also be helpful to you.

Effective facilitation:
• has shared responsibility and accountability among facilitators and participants for the outcomes of the experience
• sets an atmosphere which respects the dignity and diversity of all involved. It breaks isolation and builds a community of learners
• combines structure with freedom and flexibility. The role of the facilitator is to encourage and guide, not control, the process.

Good facilitators are adept in:
• understanding group process
• listening
• asking questions
• giving and receiving feedback
• getting everyone's ideas
• summarizing

Understanding Group Process

It is generally accepted that groups that come together for a particular task move through recognizable stages of "togetherness." Several models of group developments describe five phases: *politeness, clarification and purpose, power, working together, and proficiency*. Being familiar with these phases can help facilitators choose appropriate activities and topics and be comfortable with changes in group behavior. A simple way to remember the five stages of this group development process is through the jingle: *Form, Conform, Storm, Norm, Perform*.

Listening

Listening is often described as a passive skill, but those who have tried to be effective listeners know that it takes total concentration and involvement. The term "active listening" is more than just a catch phrase for good human communications; it really does mean active involvement on the part of the listener. Some suggestions for active listening include:
• Maintain eye contact with the speaker.
• Nod your head or say "yes," or "uh-huh" to indicate that you're listening.
• Use open-ended questions to encourage the speaker to talk more.
• Show by your body language that you're interested; lean toward the speaker, don't fidget.

- Summarize the speaker's comments, or say them back in a way that lets the speaker know you've understood.
- Let there be silence. Don't try to fill every pause.
- Keep the focus of the conversation on the speaker; don't disagree or talk about yourself.

Asking Questions

A question, especially a well-timed open-ended question can often move a group to a new level of understanding or help the group see where it needs to go next. Open-ended questions, unlike closed questions that usually have an exact answer, don't have one right answer. Questions such as "What's going on?" "Are there any surprises?" "What does this suggest to you?" stimulate thinking and build the knowledge of the group.

Giving and Receiving Feedback

Facilitators of groups need to be able to recognize feedback, know when giving feedback is appropriate, and be able to distinguish helpful and unhelpful ways of giving feedback. Some tips on giving and getting feedback include:
- Talk in the first person
- Be specific or probe reasons
- Acknowledge how you connect to a problem
- Wherever possible, make suggestions for alternative approaches
- Don't assume that the difference is political

Getting Everyone's Ideas

An inquiry group is dependent on full participation from everyone. Facilitators set an expectation for everyone to be "fully present" and active in the learning process. You also need to take care to monitor your own "talk time." When the facilitator is talking, the participants aren't. Often a few participants have a great deal to offer, and while you want their contributions, you also need to be sure that you don't put other participants in the position of having to interrupt in order to speak.

Summarizing

Summarizing pulls the group back into focus. It keeps the discussion moving forward when participants are beginning to ramble or get off track. It helps move discussion from one phase to another, for example from sharing to interpreting to generalizing to applying. It helps participants see and clarify their own knowledge and ideas. Summarizing can be done both verbally and graphically. The facilitator at key moments can say something like: "I hear you saying..." or "So far we have discussed..." or "This is what I have been hearing...". Then you might follow with a question, "What else?" or "Have I understood this?" or "Do you agree on this?"

Much of the work of the inquiry sessions described in this guide will not require intense facilitation, but in activities such as discussing readings or pulling together what has been learned from the activities, you will need the skills described here.

◇ Key facilitation skills

- **Reflecting** – feeding back the content and feeling of the message

  "Let me see if I'm hearing you correctly"

- **Clarifying** – restating an idea or thought to make it more clear

  "What I believe you are saying is"

- **Summarizing** – stating concisely the main thoughts.

  It sounds to me as if we have been talking about a few
  major themes

- **Shifting focus** – moving from one speaker or topic to another

  "Thank you, John. Do you have anything to add, Jane?"

  "We've been focusing on views 1 and 2. Does anyone have
  strong feelings about the other views?"

- **Using silence** – allowing time and space for reflection by pausing
  between comments

- **Using non-verbal and verbal signals** – combining body
  language and speech to communicate – for example, using eye
  contact to encourage or discourage behaviors in the group. Be
  aware of cultural differences

  Neutrality is important here, so that we don't encourage some
  people more than others

◈ Suggestions for dealing with typical challenges

Most study circles go smoothly because participants are there voluntarily and have a stake in the program. But there are challenges in any group process. What follows are some of the most common difficulties that study circle leaders encounter, along with some possible ways to deal with those difficulties.

Problem:
Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.

Possible responses: Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot. Make eye contact – it reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for nonverbal cues that indicate participants are ready to speak. Frequently, people will feel more comfortable in later sessions of a study circle program and will begin to participate. When someone comes forward with a brief comment after staying in the background for most of the study circle, you can encourage him or her by conveying genuine interest and asking for more information. And it's always helpful to talk with people informally before and after the session.

Problem:
An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion.

Possible responses: As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to handle domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you *must* intervene and set limits. Start by limiting your eye contact with the speaker. Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate: "Let's hear from some folks who haven't had a chance to speak yet." If necessary, you can speak to the person by name. "Charlie, we've heard from you; now let's hear what Barbara has to say." Be careful to manage your comments and tone of voice – you are trying to make a point without offending the speaker.

Problem:
Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.

Possible responses: Responding to this takes judgment and intuition. It is the facilitator's role to help move the discussion along. But it is not always clear which way it is going. Keep an eye on the participants to see how engaged they are, and if you are in doubt, check it out with the group. "We're a little off the topic right now. Would you like to stay with this, or move on to the next question?" If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to say: "We are wandering off the subject, and I'd like to give others a chance to speak."

◈ Suggestions for dealing with typical challenges (continued)

Problem:
Someone puts forth information which you know to be false. Or, participants get hung up in a dispute about facts but no one present knows the answer.

Possible responses: Ask, "Has anyone heard of conflicting information?" If no one offers a correction, offer one yourself. And if no one knows the facts, and the point is not essential, put it aside and move on. If the point is central to the discussion, encourage members to look up the information before the next meeting. Remind the group that experts often disagree.

Problem:
Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.

Possible responses: This rarely happens in study circles, but it may occur if the facilitator talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond to questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the circle until everyone has a chance to respond. Occasionally, you might have a lack of excitement in the discussion because the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case, the leader's job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. "Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation?"

Problem:
Tension or open conflict in the group. Perhaps two participants lock horns and argue. Or, one participant gets angry and confronts another.

Possible responses: If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that disagreement and conflict of ideas is what a study circle is all about. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue: it is acceptable to challenge someone's ideas, but personal attacks are not acceptable. You must interrupt personal attacks, name-calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur. You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviors and that encourage tolerance for all views. Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members bought into the ground rules, they will support you. As a last resort, consider taking a break to change the energy in the room. You can take the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the participants in question.

⟨⟩ Good study circle facilitators

- are neutral, the facilitator's opinions are not part of the discussion.

- help the group set its ground rules, and keep to them

- help group members grapple with the content by asking probing questions

- help group members identify areas of agreement and disagreement

- bring in points of view that haven't been talked about

- create opportunities for everyone to participate.

- focus and help to clarify the discussion.

- summarize key points in the discussion, or ask others to do so.

And

- are self-aware. good facilitators know their own strengths, weaknesses, "hooks," biases, and values

- are able to put the group first

- have a passion for group process with its never-ending variety

- appreciate all kinds of people

- are committed to democratic principles

◇ Tips for effective discussion facilitation

Be prepared.

The facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the subject, being familiar with the discussion materials, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing questions to help further the discussion.

Set a relaxed and open tone.

- Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
- Well-placed humor is always welcome, and helps to build the group's connections.

Establish clear ground rules.

At the beginning of the study circle, help the group establish its own ground rules by asking the participants to suggest ways for the group to behave. Here are some ground rules that are tried and true:

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- One person speaks at a time.
- Share "air time."
- Conflict is not personalized. Don't label, stereotype, or call people names.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- What is said in this group stays here, unless everyone agrees to change that

Monitor and assist the group process.

- Keep track of how the group members are participating – who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't been heard.
- Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- When deciding whether to intervene, lean toward non-intervention.
- Don't talk after each comment or answer every question; allow participants to respond directly to each other.
- Allow time for pauses and silence. People need time to reflect and respond.
- Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.
- Remember: a study circle is not a debate, but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the ground rules.

◈ Tips for effective discussion facilitation (continued)

Help the group grapple with the content.

- Make sure the group considers a wide range of views. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.
- Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs and the opinions of others.
- Help the discussion along by clarifying, paraphrasing, and summarizing the discussion.
- Help participants to identify "common ground," but don't try to force consensus.

Use probing comments and open-ended questions which don't lead to yes or no answers. This will result in a more productive discussion. Some useful questions include:

- What seems to be the key point here?
- What is the crux of your disagreement?
- What would you say to support (or challenge) that point?
- Please give an example or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point.
- Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- What experiences or beliefs might lead a person to support that point of view?
- What do you think people who hold that opinion care deeply about?
- What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- What have we missed that we need to talk about?
- What information supports that point of view?

Reserve adequate time for closing the discussion.

- Ask the group for last comments and thoughts about the subject.
- Thank everyone for their contributions.
- Provide some time for the group to evaluate the study circle process.

APPENDIX 3.

Accessing State Plans

Accessing State Plans

Below is listed contact information to help you access your state's Adult Education plan. Some states have their state plans available online; in others, you would have to contact the office of the State Director. The directions under each state tells you whether the state plan is available online or how to contact the office of the State Director. The goals are usually listed either in a separate section (or Appendix) of the Plan or in introductory sections having to do with Mission/Vision. If no goals are evident in the state plan, contact your State Director for more information. The homepage of the Office of Vocational and Adult Education in the U.S. Department of Education http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE can provide additional resources.

For Session 1 you will need to copy (or excerpt) the pages that have the goals or mission and make a copy for each participant.

1. Alabama:
Contact the office of the State Director for Alabama:
Alabama Adult and Community Education Program
P.O. Box 302101
5343 Gordon Persons Building
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101
(334) 242-8185
(800) 392-8086
Toll Free Restrictions: AL residents only
FAX: (334) 242-2236
URL: http://www.alsde.edu/

2. Alaska:
Contact the office of the State Director for Alaska:
Adult Basic Education (Alaska)
Department of Labor and Workforce Development
P.O. Box 25509
Juneau, AK 99802-5509
(907) 465-8714
FAX: (908) 465-4537
URL: http://www.labor.state.ak.us/

3. Arizona:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

4. Arkansas:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

5. California:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

6. Colorado:
State plan available online at:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/adultaeflastateplan.htm

7. Connecticut:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

8. Delaware:
Contact the office of the State Director for Delaware:
Adult Community Education (Delaware)
P. O. Box 1402
J. G. Townsend Building
Dover, DE 19903
(302) 739-3743
FAX: (302) 739-3744

9. Florida:
Contact the office of the State Director for Florida:
Adult and Vocational Education (Florida)
Bureau Chief, Program Implementation and
Accountability
State Department of Education
Division of Workforce Development
714 FEC Building
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
(850) 487-3140
FAX: (850) 487-1735
URL: http://www.firn.edu/doe/bin00051/adult_ed.htm

10. Georgia:
Contact the office of the State Director for Georgia:
Department of Technical and Adult Education
(Georgia)
Office of Adult Literacy
Suite 400
1800 Century Place, NE
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
(404) 679-1635
FAX: (404) 679-1630
URL: http://www.dtae.org

11. Hawaii:
Contact the office of the State Director for Hawaii:
Adult Education Office (Hawaii)
Department of Education
Community Education Section
634 Pensacola Street, #222
Honolulu, HI 96814
(808) 594-0170
FAX: (808) 594-0181

12. Idaho:
Contact the office of the State Director for Idaho:
ABE Director/GED Administrator
Department of Education
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 87320-0027
(208) 332-6931
FAX: (208) 334-4664
URL: http://www.sde.state.id.us

13. Illinois:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

14. Indiana:
Contact the office of the State Director for Indiana:
Division of Adult Education (Indiana)
Room 229, Statehouse
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
(317) 232-0522
FAX: (317) 233-0859

15. Iowa:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

16. Kansas:
Contact the office of the State Director for Kansas:
Adult Education (Kansas)
Kansas Board of Regents
Suite 1410
700 SW Harrison
Topeka, KS 66603
(785) 296-7159
FAX: (785) 296-0983
URL: http://www.ksbe.state.ks.us

17. Kentucky:
State plan available online at:
http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/wforce/
dael%20state%20plan/kentucky_state_plan.htm

18. Louisiana:
Contact the office of the State Director for Louisiana:
Division of Adult Education and Training (Louisiana)
State Department of Education
P. O. Box 94064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
(225) 342-3336
FAX: (225) 219-4439
URL: http://www.doe.state.la.us/

19. Maine:
Contact the office of the State Director for Maine:
Bureau of Applied Technology and Adult Learning
(Maine)
23 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 287-5854
FAX: (207) 287-5894

20. Maryland:
Contact the office of the State Director for Maryland:
Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning
(Maryland)
State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 767-0168
FAX: (410) 333-2099
URL: http://www.research.umbc.edu/~ira/

21. Massachusetts:
Contact the office of the State Director for
Massachusetts:
State Department of Adult Education
(Massachusetts)
Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148-5023
(781) 338-3850
TTY: (800) 439-2370
FAX: (781) 338-3394
URL: http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/

22. Michigan:
State plan available online at: http://www.mdcd.org
(select Adult Education Program topic)

23. Minnesota:
Contact the office of the State Director for
Minnesota:
Adult Basic Education (Minnesota)
Department of Children, Families & Learning
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113
(651) 582-8442
FAX: (651) 582-8496

24. Mississippi:
Contact the office of the State Director for
Mississippi:
Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior
Colleges
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211
(601) 432-6481
FAX: (601) 432-6365

25. Missouri:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

26. Montana:
Contact the office of the State Director for Montana:
Office of Adult Education (Montana)
Office of the State Superintendent
PO Box 2022501
Helena, MT 59602-2501
(406) 444-4396
TTY: (406) 444-1812
FAX: (406) 444-3924
URL: http://www.metnet.state.mt.us

27. Nebraska:
Contact the office of the State Director for Nebraska:
Adult Education (Nebraska)
State Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
P. O. Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
(402) 471-4807
FAX: (402) 471-8127

28. Nevada:
Contact the office of the State Director for Nevada:
Adult Education Office (Nevada)
Nevada Department of Education
Workforce Education Team
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701
(775) 687-9104
FAX: (775) 687-9114

29. New Hampshire:
Contact the office of the State Director for New
Hampshire:
Bureau of Adult Education (New Hampshire)
State Department of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-6698
TTY: (800) 735-2964
FAX: (603) 271-1953

30. New Jersey:
Contact the office of the State Director for New Jersey:
Adult Education Office (New Jersey)
Department of Education—Office of School-to-Career
River View Executive Plaza Building 100
Route 29, P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500
(609) 341-3395
FAX: (609) 984-0573

31. New Mexico:
Contact the office of the State Director for New Mexico:
Adult Basic Education (New Mexico)
Department of Education
Education Building
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 827-6672
FAX: (505) 827-4041
URL: http://www.nmabe.org

32. New York:
Contact the office of the State Director for New York:
Adult Education Program (New York)
State Education Department
Room 307 Education Building
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-8920
FAX: (518) 474-2801
URL:
http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/workforce/work.html

33. North Carolina:
Contact the office of the State Director for North Carolina:
Basic Skills Program (North Carolina)
North Carolina Community College System
Caswell Building
5024 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-5024
(919) 733-7051
FAX: (919) 733-0680

34. North Dakota:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

35. Ohio:
Contact the office of the State Director for Ohio:
Adult Basic and Literacy Education (Ohio)
Ohio Department of Education
Suite 210
933 High Street
Worthington, OH 43085-4046
(614) 466-5015
FAX: (614) 752-1640
URL: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/ctae/able/

36. Oklahoma:
Contact the office of the State Director for Oklahoma:
Lifelong Learning Section (Oklahoma)
State Department of Education
Oliver Hodge Memorial Education Building, Room 115
2500 North Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
(405) 521-3321
(800) 405-0355
FAX: (405) 521-6205

37. Oregon:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

38. Pennsylvania:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

39. Rhode Island:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

40. South Carolina;
Contact the office of the State Director for South Carolina:
Office of Adult and Community Education (South Carolina)
Department of Education
Rutledge Building, Room 902
1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 734-8071
FAX: (803) 734-5685

41. South Dakota:
Contact the office of the State Director for South Dakota:
Adult Education Office (South Dakota)
Department of Education and Cultural Affairs
700 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501-2291
(605) 773-4716
FAX: (605) 773-4236

42. Tennessee
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

43. Texas:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

44. Utah:
Contact the office of the State Director for Utah:
Office of Adult Education (Utah)
State Department of Education
Room 234
1234 South Main Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-3117
(801) 538-7824
(800) 451-9500
Toll Free Restrictions: UT residents only
FAX: (801) 578-8198
URL: http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/adulted/home.htm

45. Vermont:
Contact the office of the State Director for Vermont:
Adult Basic Education (Vermont)
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501
(802) 828-3134
FAX: (802) 828-3146
URL: http://www.cit.state.vt.us/educ/abe/

46. Virginia:
State plan available online at:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/stateplans.html

47. Washington:
Contact the office of the State Director for Washington:
Office of Adult Literacy (Washington)
State Board for Community and Technical College
319 Seventh Avenue
P. O. Box 42495
Olympia, WA 98504-2495
(360) 753-3662
FAX: (360) 664-8808

48. West Virginia:
Contact the office of the State Director for West Virginia:
Adult Basic Education (West Virginia)
State Department of Education
Building 6, Room 230
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-6318
FAX: (304) 558-3946
URL: http://www.neumedia.net/~lcabe1/index.html

49. Wisconsin:
Contact the office of the State Director for Wisconsin:
Wisconsin Technical College System
310 Price Place
P. O. Box 7874
Madison, WI 53707-7874
(608) 267-9684
FAX: (608) 266-1690
URL: http://www.board.tec.wi.us/

50. Wyoming:
Contact the office of the State Director for Wyoming:
Adult Basic Education Office (Wyoming)
Wyoming Community College Commission
Eighth Floor
2020 Carey Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82002
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NCSALL

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