

Enhanced Community-Based Access

Jurisdiction: Alberta

Contact: Robert Rock

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Community-Based Practices

Description of Practice:

In partnership with post-secondary institutions, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology has created learning opportunities available directly in the learners' home communities by leveraging existing infrastructures with new models and approaches (e.g. distance learning, brokering, etc.).

Background:

The following are examples of activities supported by the Ministry aimed at improving Aboriginal community-based access:

Alberta North

Support to Alberta-North, a partnership of institutions that shares goals of increasing and improving access to educational opportunities and services and improving the success rate of adult learners in northern Alberta. Founded in 1994, Alberta-North maintains a network of 49 Community Access Points (CAPS) in northern Alberta, in partnership with Aurora College, Northwest Territories, which hosts 26 CAP sites. These CAP sites allow over 1,700 registrants per year in small and isolated communities across northern Alberta to receive courses, programs, and educational services by providing access to a facility, educational technology, and a telecommunications network. A significant number of students are Aboriginal.

Learning Clicks - Aboriginal Component

Learning Clicks is an interactive, dynamic and informative multimedia tool to assist grades 9 to 12 learners with planning for post-secondary studies. The Learning Clicks web site - <http://www.learningclicks.ca/> and corresponding CD-ROM are designed to inform learners about the importance and long-term benefits of post-secondary education and to serve as a portal to provide learners with the necessary information to assist in planning for post-secondary studies.

A component has been added to the Learning Clicks web site that provides Aboriginal learners with information on financial assistance, Aboriginal student services available at post-secondary institutions, a planning checklist, testimonials from Aboriginal post-secondary students, and links to resources and services. Printed materials have been created for communities restricted in technology/internet access, including a planning checklist, financial aid and student services information.

For the 2006/2007 year, the program has 16 Youth Ambassadors, four of whom are Aboriginal. This will enable the Learning Clicks program to reach a wider Aboriginal audience.

eCampusAlberta

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology continues to support eCampusAlberta. eCampusAlberta is a consortium of fifteen colleges and technical institutes established to facilitate increased access to high quality online learning opportunities. The consortium is developing a collaborative online learning initiative that currently spans across the province of Alberta. Each member institution develops, contributes, and offers its respective online courseware, but also offers other member institutions' courseware. Thus, learners are able to access online courseware in a timely and cost-effective manner. The majority of courses are asynchronous in nature. Learners and faculty can access live 24/7/365 technical support.

Current online programs available include an Aboriginal Addictions Services certificate, an Aboriginal Child and Family Services certificate and an Aboriginal Addictions Services diploma. More information about eCampusAlberta can be accessed at <http://www.ecampusalberta.ca/>.

Development:

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology continues to explore ways to improve local access to post-secondary learning opportunities. The department has established a Vibrant Learning Communities Committee to examine the recommendations from *A Learning Alberta: Final Report of the Steering Committee* and to advance the dialogue by proposing and discussing specific actions. The project will examine and redefine the role of community-based program providers to ensure strong community programs. The project will focus on access to adult learning opportunities outside of Alberta's seven major urban centres.

Evidence:

Statistics Canada reports that the Aboriginal university and college level participation rate in Western Canada increased significantly between 2001 and 2005.

Adaptability:

All activities described could be adapted for use in other jurisdictions.

Further information:

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