

Adult Learning Centres

Jurisdiction: Manitoba

Contact: Anna Beauchamp

Level: Adult Learning

Theme: Government or board policies

Description of Practice:

Adult Learning Centres are important sites of learning for Manitoba's Aboriginal population and play an important role in meeting the objectives of the Manitoba Government's Aboriginal Education Action Plan 2004-2007.

Manitoba Advanced Education and Training works with a variety of partners, including Aboriginal communities and organizations, to deliver adult appropriate high school and upgrading programming through Manitoba's adult learning centres (ALCs). Adult learning centres provide high school credit courses as well as dual credit courses where learners receive credit for both high school and post-secondary programs. Pathways are created to workplace training, post-secondary education and adult trades and apprenticeship options.

The community-based, learner-centred model of programming allows Aboriginal leaders to take a major role in the operation of local programs. Strong community involvement assures that programs are designed to suit the learners and community needs.

Background:

The Adult Learning Centres Act and General Regulation (July 2003) establishes a legislated registration and governance process for adult learning centres, and provides a framework for educational and fiscal accountability. The ALC Act enables not-for-profit organizations and First Nations to apply to register and operate an ALC. ALCs are registered under the Act to provide tuition-free high school credit and upgrading courses using recognized principles of adult education. Upon meeting specific criteria under the ALCs Act, First Nations and not-for-profit corporations may apply to operate an ALC without an educational partner. The principles of self governance exemplified in 'stand-alone' registration enables greater autonomy in establishing programs and policies to more effectively meet the needs of the Aboriginal community.

The Mature Student Graduation Requirements (MSGR) 2004 provides the policy guidelines and procedures for mature students (adults) to obtain a high school diploma by an alternative route to the regular 28 regular provincial diploma requirement. The MSGR provides for an 8 credit diploma, including the same S4 (Grade 12) compulsory English and Mathematics credits as the regular diploma.

Development:

As of fall 2001, the restructuring of adult high school programming in Manitoba required adult learning centres to be registered on a program basis. In addition to educational institutions, not-for-profit organizations and First Nations in partnership with an educational institution are permitted to apply to operate a registered ALC. Provincial-wide consultations resulted in a community-based philosophical approach to adult

secondary programming that values the prior knowledge and experience, and inclusive, respectful, age-appropriate environment, in addressing the educational and employment goals of adult learners. The *Adult Learning Centres Act* (July 2003), *General Regulations* (June 2003) and *Stand-alone ALC Registration Policy Guide* (December 2003) provide the framework to implement this approach.

Evidence:

Two Aboriginal organizations have been registered to operate their ALCs as independent or 'stand-alone' entities, and several other Aboriginal organizations and First Nations are registered to operate their ALCs in partnership with an educational institution, such as a college.

The response of students to participation has been positive. Aboriginal adults are enrolled in 98% of the adult learning centres, with approximately 55% of ALC learners self-identified as Aboriginal, a 20% increase in two years.

Adaptability:

The ALCs provide a programming model that begins with the knowledge, skills and goals of the learner. The main factors contributing to learner success include the holistic and learner-centred approach to instruction, the strong emotional and practical supports provided to learners, and highly personalized and non-hierarchical atmosphere. The ALCs Act provides the flexibility for Centre to adapt program delivery to suit their community of learners and thus, facilitates the incorporation of appropriate Aboriginal cultural knowledge values, beliefs and practices that strengthen cultural identity.

Further information:

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