

**URBAN CIRCLE TRAINING CENTRE :
AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAM**

BY

Carol Hawkins

**A Practicum
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in the Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement
for the Degree of**

MASTER OF EDUCATION

**Department of Educational Administration and Foundations
University of Manitoba**

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ABSTRACT

This practicum experience is a study of an English language program developed at Urban Circle Training Centre, a program designed to employ Aboriginal women in banking, business and retail sectors. A problem arose when the materials to teach a 12 week English language program to this group of women was inappropriate and ineffective. The 14 women studied between the ages of 18-55 years were all on social assistance living in Winnipeg. The students were attending Urban Circle Training Centre to improve their skills and find employment.

The major objective of the English language program was to develop both written and oral language skills in a program which integrated Aboriginal perspectives so that the students were better prepared for employment in the retail, business, and banking sectors of our community. Needs assessment questionnaires, evaluations and a review of literature were the primary sources of data collection.

The results indicated (a) the topics were relevant, (b) Students oral and written communication skills improved, (c) Workplace employers found the students were prepared to meet the demands of the workplace, and (d) Students found the format was interesting.

From this practicum, I learned (a) the importance of relevancy in program planning, (b) the importance of critical reflection in learning, (c) the need for effective oral and written communication skills in the workplace, (d) that a meaningful experience can be created by developing an interesting program, (e) students move towards a greater degree of self direction in learning, (f) the artistry of education, (g) how to design, implement, and evaluate an English language program, (h) more about Aboriginal culture, and (i) to be prepared to change the direction of the course to meet the changing needs of the learners.

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My friend, Patricia Ilagan was always only a phone call away. Patricia and I were both completing a practicum in adult education. Together, we overcame each new hurdle.

I want to acknowledge Stella Blackbird, our elder at Urban Circle Training Centre, for her wisdom and unconditional love. I also want to thank the students of Urban Circle Training Centre for participating in this practicum and the staff-- Ruth Murdock, Rapheala Johnson-Diesbourg, Debbie Cielen and Irvin LeClaire for listening, caring and supporting my education. Wes Charter, the former co-chair of our board, I want to thank for helping me to realize my potential. As a white woman in an Aboriginal organization, I am honored to be a part of their circle.

Deo Poonwassie was my faculty advisor. I appreciate his hours of repetitious readings and perseverance to keep me on track. Laara Fitznor, I want to acknowledge for her kind words of encouragement and her willingness to participate as a practicum committee member. My friend and mentor, Eleanor Thompson was the workplace supervisor. I am honored to be following the journey at Urban Circle with her and appreciate her guidance over the course of the practicum. Also, I want to acknowledge Leon Simard and Darlene Beauchamp from the Winnipeg School Division #1 for their willingness to assist me in collecting suitable resource materials for the program. Their enthusiasm was appreciated.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my parents, Dorothy and Gordon Sinclair, who instilled in me the value of education and the importance of finishing what I started. I could always count on them to help with the kids, pick up library books or drop off written drafts at the university. Thanks for always being there when I needed you.

There are many others who played an important role in the completion of this practicum study. I want to say meegwetch, thank you, for helping me reach my goals.

PART I

Introduction

I am a facilitator and work place coordinator at an Aboriginal women's training centre in Winnipeg. My role at the centre has changed and grown as the needs of the participants and the program changed. I began the Masters Program in Adult Education at the University of Manitoba to build my theoretical knowledge of adult education. This practicum provided an opportunity to apply my university training to the workplace. I found this experience enriched the program and created an exciting and challenging learning environment for the students.

In this practicum, I referred to the term Aboriginal or Native to describe those people who were the original inhabitants of the land. These include First Nations, Status, Non-status, Metis, and Inuit people of Canada. In the Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, the legal definition in Canada of the term Aboriginal is defined.

In this report, we have accepted the terms as found in the Constitution Act of 1982. The Aboriginal people of Canada include the Indians, Metis and Inuit people. That does however lead us inevitably to a consideration of who are Indians, Metis or Inuit. For our purposes we will be talking about Aboriginal people who are entitled to be registered as Indian pursuant to the Indian Act of Canada (SC 1985 C. 1-6). Metis people are those Aboriginal people of mixed blood, Aboriginal-white ancestry who are and who consider themselves as being neither Indian nor Inuit, or who regard themselves as Metis. Inuit people are those Aboriginal people who were known formally as Eskimos.

Status Indians are those people recognized as Indians in the Indian Act and are entitled to be registered as such in the Indian registry maintained by the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. That is why they are referred to sometimes as "registered" Indians.

Non-status Indians is a term which has been applied to people of Indian ancestry who are not for one reason or another registered in the Indian Act. (Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba, 1991, p.7)

It is important we are aware of the limitations of a legal definition. The definition obscures the fact that there are different cultural linguistic groups who vary depending on their geographical context. The customs and cultural ways of Aboriginal people grew out of their particular history. Each has a unique and distinctive history which established their identity. In Manitoba, the primary cultural linguistic groups include Cree, Ojibway (Saulteaux), Dene, Dakota/ Lakota Sioux, Chippewyan, and Metis people (personal communication, Shirley Malcolm, 1994). In Southern Manitoba the primary cultural linguistic group is Ojibway, while in Northern Manitoba the Aboriginal people are predominantly Cree (personal communication, Laara Fitznor, 1997).

The practicum took place at Urban Circle Training Centre at 367 Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg. Urban Circle was a nineteen week program designed to prepare Aboriginal women for employment in the banking, business and retail sectors. The women who qualified for the program had to be of Aboriginal ancestry and on, or eligible for social assistance. The candidates who wanted employment in the retail stream had to have completed a grade ten education, while those in the banking and business sectors required a grade twelve education. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 55 years.

The program offered academic and vocational training as well as a life skills and a cultural component. Over the last four years of operation, 98% of the students completed the program and 85% of the participants found full or part-time employment.

The women entering the program often lacked self esteem and had little or no work experience. Many were single parents who had never had the support and the encouragement to succeed. The majority had experienced some traumatic experiences in their lives. As well, many were unfamiliar with Aboriginal cultures, history, and contemporary issues.

I have been involved in the program as the academic and vocational facilitator and work place coordinator since the program began in 1991. It was only this year that the funding from the program was transferred from the Human Resources Development Department of the federal government to the Winnipeg Aboriginal Management Board, an all Aboriginal board who were responsible for the federal funding of Aboriginal education and training programs in Winnipeg. This funding provided an excellent opportunity to

develop a new language arts program that reflected Aboriginal perspectives and delivered a meaningful and enjoyable experience for the participants.

The Present Program

Urban Circle Training Centre offers two intakes per year for candidates pursuing a career in retail, banking or business sectors. The students attend the program Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for nineteen weeks with the first twelve weeks of training in the classroom. The last seven weeks of training is in a work place selected by the student.

Staff

The centre has four staff members. Three of the four staff are Aboriginal; I am the only non-Aboriginal employee. The coordinator/ life skills coach, counsellor, administrator, and the academic/ vocational facilitator work together as a team, contributing equally to the decision making process. Staff meetings include a sharing circle where personal and professional experiences are shared. The staff is very dedicated to the program. For example, the participants are given unconditional 24 hour support during and long after program completion.

Selection Process

The selection process for the program is extensive. Over 60 organizations are notified of the upcoming programs and are asked for referrals. In addition, advertisements are placed in local newspapers. Over 150 applications are received from which 45 applicants are chosen for a group orientation. At the orientation, the potential participants are required to participate in group activities to determine their suitability to the program. As well, each applicant is interviewed for 45 minutes by a team of three individuals consisting of Urban Circle staff, employers, and Red River Community College personnel. Red River Community College is a recognized academic institution in Winnipeg. We value the input from the college and our employers in the selection process. The final selection consists of 14 participants.

Advisory Committee

Our advisory committee offers credibility, valuable advice and support to the program. Members include representatives from the business, the banking, and the retail sectors. The committee meets four times per year with the students and staff.

Content of the Program

The Urban Circle Training Program strives to develop a balance between the personal and professional development of the participant. Using the teachings of the medicine wheel, the program examines emotional and spiritual growth in the life skills and cultural component. Intellectual and physical growth are developed in the academic, vocational and work experience components.

Life skills component

The goal of the life skills program is to have students become increasingly skilled to handle life's challenges. For example, students practice assertive behavior and conflict resolution skills in the classroom and are encouraged to apply these skills to their personal and professional lives. The life skills program examines emotions and spirituality.

Cultural component

Students are exposed to a variety of traditional teachings and ceremonies of Aboriginal cultures. Several elders from different cultural linguistic groups come to the Centre as spiritual guides. Students participate in a sweat lodge ceremony, a wolf teaching, and a naming ceremony. As well, students are taught how to make Aboriginal crafts such as dream catchers and medicine wheels.

Academic component

Students are given upgrading on basic math skills including word problems, fractions, decimals, and percents. The language arts program teaches both oral and written communication skills to prepare the students for the work place.

Vocational component

Career planning gives the students an opportunity to explore the possibilities for employment. Students look at their values, their skills, and their attitude. They describe their ideal job, complete a reality check, determine future career goals, and how they will overcome any obstacles.

The job skills unit allows students to prepare for employment. Students are required to fill out applications, create a cover letter and resume, complete employer aptitude and skills tests, and prepare for an interview. Computer training on Windows 3.1 and more advanced computer training at Great West Life Training Centre are also part of the program. Cash terminal training is given on OMRON RS16 at Urban Circle and on IBM terminals at Canada Safeway Training Centre. Also, a ten module professional selling program teaches students how to meet effectively the needs of their internal and external customers. Financial management and time management workshops are incorporated into the program as well.

Work placements

Work placements are selected by the students. We have over 100 placements to choose from although students may select a new location for us to contact. Due to the success rate of the program, employers often phone the centre when there are openings in their company. In the last four programs, we have had more prospects for employment than we have had students to fill the positions.

The Objectives of Urban Circle Training Program

Urban Circle has developed a unique, holistic approach to education. The training is geared to meet the needs of the individuals. The objectives of the program are:

1. to develop balanced self determined behavior through the life skills program.
2. to prepare students academically for the retail, business and banking sectors.
3. to teach vocational skills needed for the work place (career planning, resume writing, interview skills, professional selling, computer skills etc.).
4. to expose students to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and teachings.

5. to provide work experience in banking, business or retail sectors.
6. to provide employment opportunities which meet the needs of the individual.

The Problem

A problem arose when it became clear that the materials to teach language arts to this group of students was inappropriate and ineffective. The following observations were made of the program:

1. The General Educational Development (GED) textual material recommended by our funder was irrelevant to the students' experiences. The material in the text was based on the values and interests of the dominant white society. The material was developed in the United States and was based on American Literature.
2. The format was boring and did not foster any interest in learning.
3. The independent study format of the (GED) allowed students to work at their own pace but did not teach oral or written communication skills.
4. GED was not a goal for all students in the class.
5. Students were not adequately prepared to communicate effectively with customers in the retail and banking sectors.

Intent

In this practicum experience, I intended to address the problem of inappropriate and ineffective language arts materials by targeting the following objectives:

1. to design a culturally appropriate English language program that addressed written and oral communication skills
2. to implement a culturally appropriate English language program at an Aboriginal women's centre.
3. to focus the language skills program on topics of Aboriginal cultures, history, and contemporary issues as a way of bringing relevance and interest to the curriculum.

PART II

Review of the Literature

In the review of literature, I looked at some adult education principles and how they applied to the program offered at Urban Circle. I described traditional Aboriginal teachings that were incorporated into the program. As well, I examined some of the curriculum models for adult education in both mainstream and in Aboriginal cultures as a way of understanding my perspective in planning the English language program. Finally, I looked at some of the other education and training programs available in Winnipeg designed for Aboriginal students.

First, I would like to describe the purpose of education, according to the National Indian Brotherhood (1972). I hoped to incorporate this understanding of education into my model. The purpose is to:

make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education: as a preparation for total living as a means of free choice of where to live and work as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement (quoted in Kirkness, 1992, p.2).

Adult Education Principles

According to the research, there are certain principles of adult education that are specific to the adult learner. As an adult educator, it was important that I was aware of these principles so I could effectively facilitate and give direction.

Adult education is a means of empowering individuals so they can better understand themselves and influence their environment (Brookfield 1986, Darkenwald and Merriam 1982, Knowles, 1970). At Urban Circle, we believe education is a means of empowering individuals to make choices that will positively affect their personal and professional lives.

Knowles identifies several assumptions about the adult learner. According to his research, the adult learner moves towards self direction in learning. Self direction in

learning is "a process in which individuals take the initiative in designing learning experiences, diagnosing needs, locating resources and evaluating learning" (Knowles, 1985, p.14). Self direction is not synonymous with adult learning. At first, some adults feel safer when a class is teacher directed. Therefore, teaching style needs to match the learners degree of self direction and move the learner towards a greater degree of self direction. The learners need encouragement, self respect, and confidence in their ability to complete the given tasks. The facilitators at Urban Circle begin the program more teacher directed and move towards greater self direction as the program progresses.

As well, the adult learners are problem centered or task oriented. Learners have a reason for learning and accomplishments to meet. Knowles' research has found that the adult learner's motivation is internal and is based on personal or professional goals. The learners are voluntary participants, and it is assumed that learning can occur at any age (Knowles, 1975). Students at Urban Circle have enrolled in the program to learn personal and professional skills, gain experience and find employment so they can become independent of social assistance. The students come to us with initiative and a desire to achieve. The facilitators of the program give students direction and a means to reach their goals.

Adult learning needs to be experiential in nature (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1991; Sawyer and Green, 1991). Each participant brings unique gifts to the classroom and each has valuable experiences to share. Information which seems unimportant to one may be valued by others in the group. Learning is built on the student's past experience when the student is ready to accept the new information. Experiential learning can foster sensitivity between group members. The morning sharing circle at Urban Circle allows students to share feelings and experiences with group members. In the circle, we learn from each other. Each student has equal voice and each brings a gift to the classroom. Urban Circle strives to bring out the gifts of the individual and uses past experience as a foundation for developing future goals.

The role of the facilitator, according to Knowles, "is redefined as that of procedural technician, resource person . . . more a catalyst than an instructor, more a guide than a wizard" (Knowles, 1980, p. 48). The educator is only able to teach what he/ she has

experienced. Therefore, educators must rely on the expertise of others to guide learning and accept that they are not experts in all fields. The role of the facilitator is to empower and encourage the self respect of each participant. The students need to be valued and challenged in their efforts (Bredemier and Bredemier, 1978, p.59). As a white woman in an Aboriginal program, I rely on the knowledge of others to bring in information to the classroom. My role at the Centre is to determine the needs of the group and to develop a program that meets these needs. I bring in guest speakers who are experts in their field and resource materials that are culturally appropriate.

The role of the facilitator and learner are reciprocal in nature. Ideas are shared and are not in competition with each other. There is a need for trust and reciprocal sharing of information between the learner and the educator (Brookfield, 1986). Learners must be actively involved in the learning process which must evoke some emotion to be a meaningful learning experience (Patterson, 1973). The staff at Urban Circle involve the students in the planning process. The students give direction to the content of the program based on the needs of the group. The students are encouraged to move towards independence in a atmosphere which encourages respect, trust, and unconditional support.

Aboriginal Cultures

At Urban Circle, we believe that training and education for Aboriginal adults needs to be meaningful and related to their cultural perspectives. Students need to be exposed to a variety of teachings that reflect their cultural linguistic backgrounds. Although many of the students have been raised in mainstream society, students have identified an interest in learning more about their traditional cultures and their roots. As mentioned earlier, there are many diverse traditions within Aboriginal cultures. An exposure to some of the local traditions will bring meaning and purpose to the learning experience. At Urban Circle, we follow teachings of the medicine wheel, participate in a sharing circle, and honor the seven traditional teachings. In the following section, I will describe the teachings in greater detail and explain how we use them in the training program.

Medicine wheel teachings are the accumulation of knowledge passed on from Aboriginal ancestors. The teachings vary between different linguistic groups. The

medicine wheel is a holistic approach that teaches interconnectedness. We need to look within ourself as a way of understanding our relationship to existence. The east direction of the medicine wheel is the direction for new beginnings and represents our spiritual being. The south represents our emotional being. This direction looks at our feelings and our psychological self. In the west, we look at our physical well being and our connection to mother earth. In the north, the mental or intellectual being represents our thoughts. This direction teaches cognitive, intellectual or rational thought (Pepper & Henry, 1991).

These four directions are not in isolation of each other. In every phase of self development, we move around the medicine wheel. The medicine wheel acts as a pathway to self discovery (Willie Ermine in Battiste & Barman, 1995).

Aboriginal cultures teach harmony with nature and the commonalities between humans, animals, and the cycle of life. At Urban Circle Training Centre we value the connection and harmony between group members. Medicine wheel teachings from our elders give direction to program planning. The students begin the program in the east direction, learning about their culture and spirituality. In the south direction, students are able to share their emotions within the sharing circle. Life skills training helps the individual to express these emotions in a healthy way. In the west direction, students learn to care for themselves physically. In the north, students are taught intellectual or mental skills, that is, the academic and vocational training required for the work placement. Individuals continually move around the medicine wheel and examine the connection and harmony between each direction. Education needs to reflect this balance and connectedness (personal communication, Stella Blackbird, 1994).

The traditional sharing circle is a place where thoughts, feelings and emotions are shared. A rock is passed in a clockwise direction around the circle. The person holding the rock has an opportunity to speak. The sharing circle "is a powerful tool for healing because, as Indigenous people we have many common experiences that have caused much pain in our lives, the circle presents an opportunity to release this pain and to support each other through it" (Clarkson, Morrisette, and Regallet, 1992, p.51). At Urban Circle, staff and students participate in a morning sharing circle. We learn to be empathetic and understanding, and we can often relate the experiences of others to our own.

We are all part of the cycle of life and dependent on each other for survival.

Traditional Aboriginal cultures honors the seven teachings. These are honesty, humility, wisdom, truth, love, courage, and respect. These seven teachings, prominently displayed at Urban Circle, give us a foundation on which we build the trust and the respect of the students.

Curriculum Models

There are four perspectives of thought, or curriculum models, that guide educators in the program planning process. The educator's perspective will determine the direction of learning, the program objectives, the content of the program and relationship he/ she has with the learners. The first of these models is the Academic Model. In this model, the purpose of education is the development of a rational mind (Hirst, 1974). Knowledge is fixed. The model is concerned with the preservation and transmission of a cultural heritage and the accumulation of knowledge (Gay, 1980). Education is the process of changing the behavior patterns of people. The instructor controls both the learning experiences and the learning environment. Scientific methods are relied upon for the design and development of the program.

The second model, the Technical Model, draws from the academic model as both are concerned with systematic, logical and rational approaches. However, the technical approach is behavior centered. Performance is measured to determine if learning has occurred. This approach is not just a transmission of knowledge but a way to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency in educational programs, methods and materials. Both approaches are content centered to achieve predetermined observable ends (McNeil, 1981; Gay, 1980).

The third approach is the experiential model. The learner is the center of the planning process. The learning is meaningful. Knowledge starts with problems not with the content (Dewey, 1938). This model meets the demands of the changing society as learners continually identify and evaluate the content. Education is seen as a revolutionary process with the aim of education as social reform. There is a need for a supportive learning environment which fosters mutual respect and trust. The teacher acts as a resource

for learning. Learning is a collaborative effort between the teacher and the learner, a horizontal not a vertical relationship. The structure is loose and informal with planning based on a relationship of both theory and practice.

The final approach is the social reconstruction/ adaptation model. The aim of education is the liberation of the individual. Education has the potential to shape and transform our reality (Freire, 1970). Planning is an instrument to foster critical analysis and to provide learners with the skills necessary to create new goals and effect social change (McNeil, 1981). Individuals are in control of the content and the process of knowledge. Knowledge is not pure but is dependent on the social group to which it applies.

Freire sees education as a problem posing process where learners and educators are co-investigators. Education allows for the freedom from oppression and the creation of a new system in the process. Education is not to accommodate or adjust learners to the social system but to change the social, political, historical, and economic realities.

Our theoretical assumptions influence program planning. If we believe knowledge is constant and unchanging our program planning will reflect an academic or technical model. If we see education as learner centered and knowledge as an evolutionary process, then our structure will resemble an experiential model. If our aim of education is social reform or a transformation of our reality, then our planning is based on the social reconstruction/ adaptation model.

The social reconstruction/ adaptation model, supported by Freire (1970) and McNeil (1981), is the most appropriate model to describe Urban Circle Training Centre. The program strives to free Aboriginal women from oppression created by the welfare system. A change will be created in our existing social system as more Aboriginal women gain employment and influence their environment (Brookfield, 1986; Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Knowles, 1970).

It is not enough to promote multiethnic awareness and tolerance in program planning. In order to challenge the privilege existing in our society and curb racism, we need to work towards balanced, harmonious, and unconditionally respectful relations (Battiste & Barman, 1995). The dominant western culture has a fragmented view of

knowledge; knowledge is seen as a means of gaining power and control. Because the western culture views the world objectively, it denies the individual a holistic world view and prevents the practice of inward reflection (Willie Ermine from Battiste & Barman, 1995). A social reconstruction/ adaptation model of program planning is a means of shaping and changing this reality.

Celia Haig-Brown is a white woman who has developed a science curriculum for First Nations students in a British Columbia Aboriginal Centre. Her curriculum assumes a social reconstruction of knowledge. In her book, Taking Control- Power and Contradiction in First Nations Adult Education, Haig-Brown (1995) recognizes the lack of attention paid to ethnicity in much of the mainstream educational writings (p.17). The school system has promoted mainstream economic inequalities and has eliminated original languages. Aboriginal people need to hold on to their traditional values while working within western civilization (Battiste & Barman, (Eds.), 1995). There is a need to learn the history, culture, and customs of different cultures as a way of appreciating the differences between people. Culture shapes the way we view the world so we need to use our own culture as a starting place to study others. "Transformation occurs as people work together across differences" (Celia Haig-Brown, 1995, p.20).

Other Aboriginal Programs

As part of my research, I contacted other Aboriginal education and training programs in Winnipeg to determine if they were incorporating an Aboriginal perspective or a culturally appropriate approach to their curriculum planning. I was interested in learning more about their English language program. I also asked for recommendations and resources for the development of my own program.

Children of the Earth High School offers a unique language arts program for their grade nine to twelve students. The program follows the curriculum guide but focuses on Aboriginal cultures in the content material. The teachers find the students enjoy reading materials coming from their own culture. The students can identify with many of the issues in the literature. (personal communication, Rebecca Decter, 1995).

At the grade nine and ten level, the focus is on local issues in the Aboriginal

community. Students study native literature, poetry and prose of local artists. Students are required to evaluate their own progress before submitting assignments to the teacher. At the grade eleven and twelve level, students look more globally at Aboriginal issues by studying novels written by Aboriginals abroad. Students are able to draw parallels between North American Native issues and those in other countries.

The Gordon Foundation sponsored curriculum development at the school. A committee, including teachers from the school and the language consultant for the division, developed an inclusive language arts, social studies, and Aboriginal language program for grade nine level. In the future, additional funding will be requested to design materials for the older grades. Many of the materials have been adapted for use in the older grades.

At Red River Community College, the college preparation program follows the Adult Basic Education requirements. The content is not specific to the Aboriginal people although many of the students are Aboriginal. There are two English communications instructors who teach a holistic approach to education. Journal writing has recently been introduced to the program. Workshops, debates and newspaper articles deal with some Aboriginal specific topics (personal communication, Giselle Simmons, 1995).

Kikinamawin, or the Administrative Clerk II program, is a federally funded nine month program for women who are seeking employment in a business environment. The program teaches a basic grade ten level English. Using the Red River Community College Adult Basic Education material, students develop a better understanding of English sentence structure and grammar. Later in the program students learn dictation, letter writing, report writing and essay writing using the college workbooks. Students are required to research and present a project in class. There are no formal evaluation procedures completed. The intention of the language arts program is to give students an overall review of the language skills needed in the work place (personal communication, Lois Ironquill, 1995).

The review of literature has created a foundation for my practicum experience. The adult education principles and Aboriginal cultural perspectives outlined are specific strategies to be considered in the planning process. As well, I have discovered that the social reconstruction/ adaptation curriculum model described by Freire (1970) and McNeil

(1981) seems to be the most conducive model to our program at Urban Circle. My review also recognized the existence of Aboriginal perspectives in other educational organizations in Winnipeg who design and deliver English language programs for Aboriginal adults. The background information from the other Aboriginal organizations supported the direction of my practicum study.

PART III

Methodology

The methodology for this practicum involved planning, implementation and evaluation. In this section I considered:

1. The role of the facilitator was as a resource person who was willing to ask for the assistance of experts in the field.
2. Adults brought a varied wealth of experience to class. Learning built on past experience of the students and was relevant to their world.
3. The adult learner moved towards self direction.
4. Adults had purpose and direction for learning.
5. Learning was a collaborative effort between the facilitator and the students. The evaluation process was ongoing.
6. The classroom was a supportive learning environment fostering trust and mutual respect.

In a letter to the coordinator, I outlined the goals of the practicum and the expectations of the students involved. Student participation was voluntary and all information was kept confidential. The names of the subjects were not used. Upon completion of the practicum, I assured the coordinator that all questionnaires and evaluations would be destroyed. Students had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I also offered a copy of the final report to remain at the Centre for both staff and students to view. I received permission for this practicum from the coordinator of the program (see appendix I, J). I also asked and received permission from the banking/ retail/ business students to participate in the practicum (see appendix K).

Planning

The planning of the program evolved as the needs of the participants and the demands of the workplace changed. Both students and employers were involved in the planning process. The direction of the language program was determined by the following criteria:

1. Students were asked, during the interviewing process and the needs assessment questionnaire, how familiar they were with Aboriginal cultures (see appendix A).
2. Workplace Employers and Advisory Committee members were asked what type of skills were required for the workplace.
3. Students were asked to complete a written autobiography, and their ability to participate in oral discussions was noted. Four of the selected participants had not completed their high school education. Ten students had completed a grade twelve equivalency (GED) or a grade twelve at an academic/ vocational high school.
4. Students were asked if they had an interest in improving their language skills (see appendix A).
5. The use of GED has not been an effective means of learning language skills. Students were answering questions in the text but were not developing written or oral communication skills in the process.
6. The twelve week program at Urban Circle was insufficient time to complete the GED requirements. Students were forced to start over when they went to other academic facilities to upgrade.

Implementation

The language arts program was designed to develop the student's independence and responsibility for learning. The language program was created to improve the students' language skills, while making them more aware of Aboriginal issues which affect them. The language program included activities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students' response to the literature allowed them to reflect and to respond to the world around them.

Due to the length of the program, more emphasis was given to shorter readings, newspaper articles, stories, journals etc. The time allotment of language skills was as follows:

listening	20%	speaking	30%
reading	25%	writing	25%

The major objective of the English language program was to develop both written and oral language skills in a program which integrated Aboriginal perspectives so that the students were better prepared for employment in the retail, business, and banking sectors of our community.

Although the main focus was to develop language skills, the language program also:

1. created a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment
2. built self confidence and self respect
3. developed an awareness of Aboriginal history, cultures, and contemporary issues.

In the twelve week training program, I designed and implemented a language program to learn and practice the following English language skills:

Oral communication skills

Students were required to participate in class discussions, role plays and oral presentations. The students were trying to develop the following skills in the program:

1. participation in group discussions
2. showing a willingness to have ideas questioned by others
3. questioning ideas of others
4. ability to modify views when faced with new or conflicting evidence
5. ability to speak clearly
6. ability to use eye contact
7. willingness to listen to others without interrupting.

Written communication skills

Students handed in several short written assignments and a final written research project. The skills the students tried to develop in the program were:

1. informed, specific, and perceptive use of content in writing
2. the ability to express a clear and consistent point of view
3. the ability to organize the essay in a logical and orderly format.
4. the effective organization of paragraph structures

5. the ability to express oneself with flair and imagination
6. the skillful use of sentence structure
7. the use of vocabulary and tone appropriate for the topic
8. the use of correct punctuation, spelling, grammar, and avoidance of awkward, disjointed, fragmented, and run on sentences.

During the twelve week classroom experience, a variety of teaching techniques were used. The weekly topics covered are listed below. The level of instruction was at a grade 11 level to accommodate students at both ends of the grade scale.

The English language topics included:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Aboriginal Cultures | 2. Residential Schools |
| 3. Metis Tradition | 4. Aboriginal Languages |
| 5. Racism and Discrimination | 6. Aboriginal Stories |
| 7. Self Government | 8. Role Models |
| 9. Pow Wows | 10. Workforce Diversity |
| 11. Education | 12. Research Projects |

The following was an example of a module in the English language program.

Program Title: Urban Circle Training Centre - Banking/ Business/ Retail Program-
Course Title: Language Arts
Module Number: 1
Module Title: Aboriginal Cultures

Statement of Rationale

Every individual has a culture: a set of values, customs and beliefs that influence the way he/ she lives. We need to recognize and appreciate individual differences, the changing nature of cultures, and the need to look at culture as a way of understanding ourselves.

This language arts module encouraged students to read as a way of learning more about a topic of interest. Students started with something familiar, something they had personally experienced. This module allowed students to do a presentation on a culture that was familiar to them and then encouraged reflection of the learning process.

Objectives

1. Read about local traditional Aboriginal practices and ceremonies.
2. Defined Aboriginal and culture.
3. Described what we understood and experienced in Aboriginal cultures.
4. Described our own culture.
5. Identified variations in cultures.
6. Described the changing nature of cultures.
7. Identified the importance of knowing our past as a means of understanding our future.

Learning Activities

Selected readings (see references at end of the module)
 Class discussion
 Collage Creation and Presentation
 Written Reflection

Supplies Needed

15 copies of selected readings
 Assorted magazines- some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal issues
 Scissors
 Glue
 Large Flip chart Paper
 Marker(s)

Evaluation

Students were evaluated on their oral presentation skills when they presented their collage (see appendix G). Students were evaluated on their written reflection (see appendix H).

Module Outline

Lesson 1

1. Students read a selection of articles prior to class (see resources).
2. Students defined the terms Aboriginal and culture.

Aboriginal- I referred to the term Aboriginal or Native to describe those people who were the original inhabitants of the land. Those included First Nations, Status, Non-status, Metis and Inuit people of Canada. In the Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba (1991), the legal definition in Canada of Aboriginal was defined.—

In this report, we have accepted the terms as found in the Constitution Act of 1982. The Aboriginal people of Canada include the Indian, Metis and Inuit people. That does however lead us inevitably to a consideration of what or who are Indians, Metis or Inuit. For our purposes we will be talking about Aboriginal people who are entitled to be registered as Indian pursuant to the Indian Act of Canada (SC 1985 C. 1-6). Metis people are those Aboriginal people of mixed blood , Aboriginal-white ancestry who are and who consider themselves as being neither Indian nor Inuit, or who regard themselves as Metis. Inuit people are those Aboriginal people who were known formally as Eskimos.

Status Indians are those people recognized as Indians in the Indian Act and are entitled to be registered as such in the Indian registry maintained by the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. That is why they are referred to sometimes as "registered" Indians.

Non-status Indians is a term which has been applied to people of Indian ancestry who are not for one reason or another registered in the Indian Act. (p.7)

The students were advised of the different cultural linguistic groups of Aboriginal people. This definition obscures the fact that there are differences.

I brainstormed with the group to determine a working definition of culture. I listed all the answers on a flip chart paper for future reference. According to the dictionary, culture was "customs, achievement of a particular civilization or group" (Thompson, 1992).

3. The students discussed what they know about Aboriginal cultures based on past experience and the prior readings.

Aboriginal Cultures

There are varied traditions and customs within Aboriginal cultures. When we looked at Aboriginal languages, we looked more closely at the different linguistic groups who inhabited Manitoba. Some of the traditional ceremonies and traditions included opening and closing ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies, a sharing circle, medicine wheel teachings, fasting, feasting, pow wows, and sacred bundles. I referred to resources for further explanation of these traditions.

4. Students created a collage of their own culture using magazine cut outs. These collages were presented to the group. (resource: The NESA Activities Handbook)

Lesson 2

1. Students discussed the variation of cultures within the group.

What did we find out about our cultural beliefs?

How has our culture been developed?

What has influenced our culture?

What did we learn from this experience?

2. Students discussed the evolution of cultures. Culture is constantly changing and is not fixed in time. We take some of the traditions, values and beliefs and pass them onto our children, some are forgotten and new traditions are added.

3. As a class, we discussed the need for learning about our past as a means of understanding the present and moving ahead to the future. Refer to the article by Verna Kirkness, Giving Voice to our Ancestors.

4. Written reflection- Students wrote a written reflection based on the required readings and class discussion. This reflection included: a definition of the term Aboriginal and culture.

-- a description of what we know about Aboriginal cultures

-- a description of what we know about our culture.

-- a look at variations in cultures, the changing nature of culture, and the reasons for looking at past traditions.

The reflection needed to be a minimum of two pages in length. The paper was evaluated on the following criteria:

--accuracy or information, organization of information, style, clarity and effectiveness, grammar and spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, and essay format.

Students were walked through the process of organizing their paper. Students were shown what to include in an introduction, how the body of the paper is organized and what to include in a conclusion. Students created an outline for their paper in class.

Summary

In this module, students had an opportunity to draw on past experience to present their cultural collage to the group. The written reflection gave students a chance to practice writing in proper essay format while learning more about cultures. We each have a culture that is influenced by our past experiences. Culture is constantly changing. By having a better understanding of our culture, we came to a better understanding of ourselves.

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Kirkness, Verna. (1992). Giving Voice to Our Ancestors. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 2. Edmonton, Alberta: Inter Cultural Education Program, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta.

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Sawyer, Don., Napoleon, Art. (1995). The NESA Activities Handbook for Native and Multicultural Classrooms. Vancouver: Tillacum Library.

Szekely, Marianne. (n.d.). Park Circle's Native Awareness. Unpublished manuscript. Winnipeg Manitoba: Transcona/ Springfield School Division #12.

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Related Activities

Sweat Lodge Ceremony- Location: Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, Beausejour, Manitoba.

Opening and Closing Ceremony- Stella Blackbird, Elphinstone, Manitoba.

Wolf Teaching- Myra Laramee, principal of Nijimahkwa Elementary School

Pow Wow Ceremony- The Forks, Winnipeg, MB.- National Aboriginal Day on June 21st.

Sharing Circles

Students attended class Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. for a twelve week period.

The schedule for the classroom training was as follows:

Urban Circle Timetable

Monday	a.m.- Sharing circle p.m.- Life skills
Tuesday	a.m.- Language program p.m.- Math/ Vocational
Wednesday	a.m.- Life skills p.m.- Computer
Thursday	a.m.- Language Arts p.m.- Math/ Vocational
Friday	a.m.- Sharing Circle p.m.- Cultural Worker

Resources

The work place supervisor was Eleanor Thompson. Curriculum development resources were received from Leon Simard the former Coordinator of Curriculum Development for Aboriginal Programs, Winnipeg School Division #1 and Darlene Beauchamp, formerly the resource teacher for Children of the Earth High School. I also drew on the expertise of the resource people at Children of the Earth High School, Red River Community College, Adult Education Centre, The Association for Native Languages and the Metis Cultural Resource Centre. As well, employers in the banking and business sectors, former students and members of the Aboriginal community shared their expertise.

The program used resources from Children of the Earth High School, Dafoe Library at University of Manitoba, Winnipeg School Division #1 curriculum materials, the

Association of Native Languages, the Department of Education Library, Red River Community College and the Metis Cultural and Activity Resource Centre. Audio-visual and reference materials were available on request from all library sources and work place hosts for the program.

Funding for additional resource materials was supplied on a limited basis from:

1. Mohawk Nation Book and Magazine Store

Mohawk Territory
Kahawake, Quebec
JOL IBO
(514) 638-4016

2. Prairie Sky Books
871 Westminster
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3G 1B3
(204) 774-6152

Evaluation

Student evaluation

Students were required to complete all readings and written assignments beyond class time. A minimum of six hours per week of the regular program were set aside for the English language program. Pre-course readings were the basis for discussion, activities and guest presentations. It was expected students would reach a grade 11 level in language arts by the end of the program.

Students were to complete successfully all course work and attend all classes. If students were absent for good cause, it was their responsibility to complete all assignments and readings by the requested dates. Students who failed to complete all assignments received an incomplete mark on the final report. Prolonged absenteeism, three lates or three absents/ month, or ongoing late assignments were reviewed by the staff and students.

The staff met with the student to review expectations, helped the students organize assignments and set extended deadlines if necessary. If this meeting did not improve the student's progress, the staff considered delaying her entry into the work placement.

Students were expected to maintain an acceptable standard in all course work. All participants were evaluated on weekly assignments as well as on the final research project and presentation. Grades were a pass/ fail, and unacceptable work was rewritten and re-graded.

Skill development was assessed throughout the program. The following skills were examined:

Oral Communication Skills

Students were observed and evaluated on their ability to participate in group discussions and oral presentations at the beginning, middle and end of the program (see appendix G).

Written Communication Skills

Students were evaluated on their written autobiography, short written assignments and the final research project (see appendix H). After the twelve week classroom experience, employers in the workplace were asked to comment on the student's effective use of oral and written communication skills. (see appendix E)

Program Evaluation

The program was evaluated on an ongoing basis. A daily journal recorded my reflections and the effectiveness of each lesson (see appendix B). As well, students were requested to complete feedback forms every four weeks. A final overall evaluation of the program was submitted by the students upon completion of the program (see appendix C, D). I submitted a final evaluation report to the coordinator of the program that included my observations, the employers comments, and the students' feedback. The report answered the following questions:

Were the goals worthwhile?

Were the goals attained?

Is the program sufficient in reaching these goals?

Did the students meet the course objectives?

To what extent did the students retain the skills and apply them to their workplace?

Facilitator Evaluation

My role in the classroom was evaluated by the students throughout the program. Students were required to submit formal evaluations every four weeks (see appendix C, D). These evaluations determined if my goals for the lesson were realistic and if I was able to provide a challenging and varied learning experience. Informally, students were asked individually and in group discussions if I was meeting their expectations. The students' final formal evaluation commented on my ability to meet the needs of the group (see appendix F) As well, my daily journal reflected on each lesson and indicated my ability to meet the needs of the group effectively (see appendix B).

Limitations of the Study

The following is a list of some of the recognized limitations of this practicum study.

1. The study involved only fourteen participants at one location.
2. I am a white woman who was raised in the mainstream society.
3. There were only twelve weeks to develop the oral and written communication skills of the students.

PART IV

Analysis of the Data

In this chapter, I will discuss the data collected from three sources. The sources of information for this practicum include the questionnaires, evaluations, and a review of the literature. The data for this chapter will be organized according to the problems outlined in the beginning (see page 8). Topics include the relevance of the material, oral and written communication skills, General Educational Development (GED), communication in the workplace and the students' interest in the format. I will refer to the three sources of information gathered to discuss each of the problems.

Relevance of the Material

This English language program was designed to be relevant to the students' interests and experiences. I will outline the findings according to the three sources of information collected.

Needs assessment questionnaire

The needs assessment questionnaire provided me with information about students' experiences and interests (see appendix A). The questionnaire asked students what skills they were bringing with them that would help them in the program. The students commented that they brought with them "good organization skills", "an interest to succeed in the job that I want" and "my own personality". Two students indicated that they were "people persons." When students were asked what they needed to know to work in the retail/ banking or business sectors they commented, "how to communicate effectively", "interaction with other people," and "academic upgrading."

Students were also asked if they were familiar with Aboriginal cultures and whether they were interested in learning more. The questionnaires indicated students knew little about Aboriginal cultures. One student commented, "No, I am not familiar with my culture, yes I would like to learn". Another student said she knew "a little bit but would be interested in learning more." All the students in this group were interested in learning more about culture. One student commented, "I have a limited knowledge about the culture and

eager to learn on a healing and curious basis." When students were applying to the program, I was told on several occasions that one of the reasons students wanted to participate in the program was because of the focus on culture.

Mid-point and Final Student Evaluations

The mid-point and final evaluations asked students what they gained from the experience and whether the skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in the language program could be applied to the workplace (see appendix C, D). One student said she learned "to be more aware of things that have to be done today and not tomorrow. The importance of communication." Another student said she gained "a lot. I can speak more openly in public and can express my feelings better on paper." One student commented, "The experience I've gained is more self confidence from presentations. My written work is handed in on time so far." Another student said, "I have gained confidence, self-esteem, better communication skills and a job."

When the students were asked what skills, knowledge, and attitudes developed in the language program were relevant to the workplace, all the students mentioned their improved oral and written communication skills. One student said she would take with her to the workplace, "the communication skills, listening skills, organization and public speaking skills. I feel I improved on all these areas. It's made me a more confident person." Another student said she would take with her the "ability to follow direction, ability to work effectively in a group, listening skills, problem solving skills, ability to ask questions and ability to complete tasks." A third student suggested she "may be asked to represent the company using these skills."

Students found the focus on Aboriginal cultures to be relevant to their experiences and interests. One student said, "I learned a lot about my native culture while strengthening my writing." One student commented, "Because the language program is revolved around Native issues and culture, I find that the material can be applied to me personally and it helps with the awareness of who I am and to understand and practice my opinion." The students enjoyed sharing experiences and hearing other points of view. "I feel I am learning a lot of interesting things about my culture and people which makes me

feel proud about my background. Thank you."

One student remarked that until this program, she was not aware that her father attended a residential school. She was able to learn more about herself, her family, and her culture. "I have learned more about my background, and I have learned about Residential Schools and I didn't even know my dad went to a residential school. I enjoyed reading about the different languages." Another student interviewed her father on his residential school experience for the research paper. She learned first hand how the residential school had long-term effects on her family. She was able to share this experience with the group in an oral presentation.

A third student was able to recognize her Metis language, Michif as a second language. Mary Richard from the Manitoba Association for Native Languages, spoke with the group about the importance of language. The student had not valued her Michif language. Michif language is a combination of French, English and Ojibway that varies according to the geographic context. Mary Richard helped her recognize that language evolves and there is no such thing as a pure language. She explained Michif was a recognized dialect and the advantage the student had in being able to understand both Cree and French. This understanding had a lasting impact on the student. She later became employed in a large corporation requiring a bilingual staff person.

Review of the Literature

According to the literature, adult learning needs to be experiential in nature (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1991; Sawyer & Green, 1991). As educators, we need to build on the students' past experiences as the foundation for future learning. The sharing of information and experiences is a learning opportunity for each participant and one that fosters sensitivity between group members. This English language program was relevant to the students' experiences. For example, the first lesson examined the student's culture and their personal experiences presented in the form of a collage. Students shared their experiences with each other. This lesson was followed by readings and discussion about Aboriginal cultures. By beginning with something familiar, topics relevant to the students' experiences, a comfortable learning environment was created in the classroom.

In this practicum, the English language program was relevant to the needs of the learners. The students wanted to develop better oral and written communication skills to prepare them for the workplace. They also wanted to learn more about Aboriginal cultures. These findings were consistent with the literature (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1991; Sawyer and Green, 1991).

Oral and Written Communication Skills

The primary goal of the English language program was to improve the students' oral and written communication skills to prepare the women adequately for employment in the banking, business and retail sectors. I will discuss the data collected from the needs assessment questionnaires, the evaluations, and the review of the literature.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

On the needs assessment questionnaire, the students described their ability to use oral and written communication skills (see appendix A). Students rated their ability as excellent, satisfactory, or needing improvement in several areas. The majority of students recognized public speaking and the ability to speak clearly as an area of weakness. Several students felt uncomfortable working in a group, asking questions when they were uncertain, and maintaining eye contact during a presentation. Most felt their writing skills were inadequate, while a few identified a need to develop better organizational skills, time management, and problem solving skills.

On the same questionnaire, students were asked what they hoped to learn from this language program. One student commented, "I hope to learn how to use words more effectively and how to express myself more. I want to overcome shyness when talking in front of others." The majority of students identified a need to improve their oral communication skills. By improving their oral communication skills, students thought they would be more professional while dealing with customers in the workplace. As well, students wanted to learn how to speak up so they would be more prepared for an interview.

The majority of students also identified a need to improve their written

communication skills. They wanted the program to teach them how to write in a clear essay format. The students wanted to learn how to phrase sentences and paragraphs using proper grammar to prepare them for writing a cover letter for their resume. Students also wanted to learn a wider vocabulary.

To measure the students' ability to use effective oral and written communication skills, I evaluated them on a presentation about a familiar topic followed by a group discussion. Students were also evaluated on a written autobiography (see appendix G, H). I found all of the students needed improvement. On the oral presentation, only one-third of the students were able to volunteer information or ideas. One half of the students were unable to speak clearly in class and use eye contact. Another common problem was the students' general inability to listen to others without interrupting. Side talking to peers was common. Only one student in the group was able to question the ideas of others.

The autobiography indicated their writing skills lacked organization and a clear sequence. Students were not using proper essay format. Most papers did not include an introduction, body, and conclusion. The sentence structure was often incomplete, awkward, or used run-on sentences. For example, one student wrote, "When my mother sister and I moved to the city, my family and life style became better and hopeful for us." The papers needed expression and flair with a further development of ideas. A few students needed basic grammar skills. For example, "and i have some experience I was in business education for four years at R.B. Russell Vocational High School". Several students were not using any paragraph structure to organize their thoughts.

The needs assessment completed by the students and myself demonstrated a need for an English language program. Students needed improvement in both oral and written communication skills to prepare them adequately for future employment.

Midpoint and Final Evaluations

Students evaluated their progress in week four, eight and a final evaluation in week twelve (see appendix C, D). I evaluated the students' progress as they completed every oral and written assignment (see appendix G, H).

Students self-evaluations indicated an improvement in both oral and written

communication skills. Those students who had rated themselves as needing improvement in public speaking at the beginning of the program, said they were satisfied with their skills by the end of the program. Students felt they spoke more clearly, and most felt they developed the use of eye contact during presentations. Students commented, "Oral presentations gave me more confidence in myself to speak, look, and listen." "The oral presentations were a challenge. It felt better after you got past the nervousness"... "I enjoyed doing oral presentations. I feel I benefited because I was always scared to speak in front of a group. Now I know I can." Two students who initially were satisfied with their public speaking skills, rated themselves as excellent in the final evaluation. As well, students saw improvement in their ability to work as part of a group and they felt more comfortable asking questions.

The majority of the students felt their writing skills improved. Those who rated themselves as needing improvement initially, rated themselves as satisfactory to excellent by the end of the program. Four students felt the first paper was very difficult, but with more practice, the written work became easier. One student commented, "I've learned a bit more about sentence structure, what I'm doing right or wrong." One student mentioned she learned "more about punctuation, paragraph styling, and run on sentences." As well, many felt their problem solving skills improved as a result of the program. One student commented that it made her "dig deep" to come up with an answer.

Three students felt overwhelmed with the written work. I met individually with the students. Two students needed additional guidance in how to organize a paper. One student commented, "The hard part for me was how to start it. Was it the right way? The wrong way? The material was there it was just how do I start it. It relates to the fact of me being out of school for 21 years and not using the skills I was taught at all times. Just practice I guess." One student needed assistance in managing her time more effectively. She remarked, "I had enough time. I didn't hand in one assignment but if I had managed my own time I could have had it done." After this time, I checked with these students weekly, one on one, to see if the assignments were manageable and to answer any of their questions. I also began to coordinate assignments with the other facilitator to ensure we were not overloading students. The students were comfortable with the work load when

extra support was provided.

Two exceptions to these findings were students who faced personal difficulties. One student who, in the beginning rated herself as satisfactory in her ability to complete tasks and use eye contact, felt she needed improvement in the end. This student was involved in a very controlling and abusive relationship. Further counselling was recommended.

The other exception was a student whose son had been released to her from a juvenile detention home halfway through the program. She was struggling with his behavior. In the beginning of the program, she rated her ability to organize, manage time, complete tasks, and solve problems as excellent. By the end of the program, she felt she needed improvement in all areas. Based on these findings, it appears that the ability of these students to control their environment affected how they saw themselves.

The majority of students were able to see a noticeable improvement in both their oral and written communication skills. One student commented, "I can speak more openly in public and can express my feelings better on paper."

My evaluation of student progress indicated an overall improvement in the students' English language skills. Oral communication skills showed a marked improvement. Students were volunteering information and ideas in class and willingly participating when called upon to contribute ideas. The majority of students were willing to have their ideas questioned by others in the group and all students demonstrated an understanding of the material.

Students learned to respect the ideas of others, listened without interrupting and avoided side talking to peers. During presentations students spoke with more confidence, projected their voice and used eye contact. Most students were willing to modify their views when faced with new or conflicting information. Generally, students were well prepared and took the initiative to find out the answers to their questions prior to the presentation.

In the written work, the most significant improvement was seen in the students' ability to organize their paper in a proper essay format and to write in a clear and concise sequence. The majority of the group was able to write with greater flair, not only

demonstrating an understanding of the material, but effectively expressing their own point of view. Generally, students wrote in greater depth on the topics and wrote with confidence.

Early in the program, I found some students were unable to manage their time effectively so I invited an expert to come in to teach time management. Students learned how to use their daily planner to prioritize their tasks. As well, two students who were struggling with their grammar skills were given specific exercises to help them with difficulties on possessives and run-on sentences. More time on basic grammar skills would have been beneficial for those who lacked these skills.

Sentence structure improved as did their ability to manage their time more effectively. By the end of the program students were handing in assignments on time with fewer extensions. Two students demonstrated a better understanding of grammar and punctuation. As the program progressed, I found that students required less assistance from me. They took responsibility for their own learning and became more self-directed and more confident.

Accuracy of written work was an area I stressed throughout the program. I related the need for this skill to the workplace where employees in the banks needed to balance at the end of each day and numbers needed to match in business. Similarly, students needed to ensure their work was accurate and free from any spelling and grammatical errors. A dictionary and thesaurus were available in class. Spell check was also an option for those who were typing their written work. All students improved in the accuracy of their written work. On two occasions, I asked students to rewrite a paper. I felt the students hadn't taken the time to follow the directions given and proper editing was not demonstrated.

I observed that the students began to see issues from a different perspective, challenging their old way of thinking. For example, students initially identified self-government as a political issue that did not affect their lives. After the readings, discussions, and the speaker, students were able to identify how self-government affected every aspect of their lives.

Students were asked what type of information they required to work in the retail, banking, and business sectors. They indicated they needed good organization skills,

communication skills and the ability to interact well with other people. The evaluation indicated these goals were met.

Students reflected on their learning experience through discussions, readings and written papers. However, more time was required to debrief after each lesson. I hope to bring more meaning to the learning experience in the future by reflecting more after each lesson.

Review of the Literature

In the review of literature, the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) sees the purpose of education as a preparation for total living and a means of enabling the individual to participate fully in social, economic, political, and educational advancement (Kirkness, 1992). According to Knowles, the adult learner is problem centered or task oriented with a reason for learning and accomplishments to meet (Knowles, 1975). The students at Urban Circle came to the training program to improve their oral and written communication skills to prepare them for employment. The literature supports the findings of this practicum.

The Urban Circle students came to the Centre voluntarily to improve their skills, prepare for, and find employment. Each student had a reason for being in the classroom and completing the program. The students were preparing for their total living in a task-oriented environment. The literature on adult education (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Kirkness, 1992; and Knowles, 1975).

General Educational Development (GED)

The GED is widely recognized as the equivalent program to a high school diploma. It allows individuals to complete their grade twelve without returning to high school. Students work through five subject areas independently and at their own pace. All questions are organized on a multiple choice format except for a 200 word essay. The program is recognized by most employers, vocational institutions, colleges and universities. However, the GED has not been a goal of many students at Urban Circle. Also, the program length at Urban Circle was insufficient to complete the requirements to write the GED test. Many of the students who had begun to study for the GED in previous

programs were required to begin the process again when attending another educational facility.

The three sources of data used to determine the relevancy of the GED for this group of students was the needs assessments, the evaluation and the review of literature.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

In this group, ten of the fourteen students had completed high school education. One student required only math to complete her grade twelve, two had a grade eleven education and one had a grade ten standing. GED did not meet their needs.

Students were asked in the needs assessment questionnaire what their goals were for the end of the classroom experience (12 weeks), the end of the work placement (18 weeks), in one year, and in five years (see appendix A). Twelve of the fourteen students identified their primary goal was to improve their skills to find employment and provide for their families. Further education or a completion of grade twelve was a long term goal. Many of the students had young families to care for and were looking at pursuing further education after one to five years of employment. One student identified her short term goal was "to get a job". Another wanted to "be able to talk in front of the group without being nervous." A third wanted to "learn about interaction between people as individuals, and apply the knowledge and education " she receives to the job. After a year, one student wanted to be "working still." In five years she wanted "to go back to school to further (her) education." A GED would not improve oral communication skills. Students wanted their education to relate to the requirements of the workplace.

Final Evaluations

At the end of the program, the students evaluated the program's effectiveness. Were their personal and career goals met? Of the fourteen students graduating, ten students secured full or part-time employment, two returned to further education and two required further counselling due to personal difficulties. The GED was not a goal nor would it have provided the identified skills.

Review of Literature

The literature reviewed in this practicum study recommended that the learners be actively involved in the learning process (Patterson, 1973). The students in the program need to have input into the content of program material in order for them to have a meaningful learning experience.

The literature (Patterson, 1973) supports the findings from this practicum. The learners were actively involved in determining the direction of the program and were for the most part able to fulfil their goals of finding employment.

Communication in the Work Place

Effective communication in the workplace is necessary in the business, banking, and retail sectors. The employee needs to determine the customer's wants and needs, act as a team player with co-workers, and be able to complete tasks with efficiency and accuracy. The needs assessment questionnaire, the evaluations, and the review of the literature are the three sources of data used to determine the importance and the practice of good communication skills in these work placements.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

The employers were asked how important effective oral and written communication skills were in the workplace (see appendix E). The employers felt these skills were extremely important...particularly in dealing with customer service. One employer to whom I spoke gave me some insight into the importance of good communication. She said she would far rather hire an individual who was a good communicator, a team player who was able to ask questions when uncertain, than someone with strong computer or business skills. Technical skills can be taught on the job. Good communication was a prerequisite to hiring an individual.

Final Evaluation

At the completion of the English language program, students were required to participate in a six week work experience. The employers rated students' ability to use

effective oral and written communication skills (see appendix F). There were some retail and business jobs, however, that did not require much writing at the entry level positions. The employers felt they could not rate the student on their writing skills when there was little evidence. The students who were required to write messages on electronic mail systems, letters, and memos were rated as excellent by the employers.

As well, all students in the work place were considered effective listeners who were able to follow directions, organize information, and manage time effectively. The students worked well in a group, were able to complete tasks on time, ask questions when uncertain and solve problems in different situations. Students often took the initiative to try something new before asking for advice. The ability to direct their own learning was evident. All students were rated high for their accuracy of work. The strong oral and written communication skills demonstrated in the workplace was one factor which led ten of the fourteen students to permanent employment in their chosen field. Of the remaining four students, one returned to further education, two required additional counselling and one chose to stay home to care for her sick husband. The student who chose to remain at home was employable and planned to seek employment when her husband was better.

Review of Literature

The literature states that adult education is a means of empowering individuals so they can better understand themselves and influence their environment (Brookfield, 1986; Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982; Knowles, 1970). If the students are more confident in their communication skills, they will be better prepared to deal with customers, co-workers, and influence the environment in which they are working.

The literature support the results. Students became more confident in their oral and written communication skills and were able to carry these skills to their place of employment.

Students' Interest in the Format

My goal in this practicum was to create a culturally appropriate English language program that developed student's oral and written communication skills on topics that were

interesting and challenging to meet the varied needs of the group. The three sources of data used to determine if I met my goal were the needs assessment questionnaire, the evaluations, and the review of literature.

Needs Assessment Questionnaire

The needs assessment questionnaire asked students if they were interested in learning more about Aboriginal cultures (see appendix A). The students said they were eager to learn more about their cultures, specifically, they wanted to know more about the sweat lodge ceremony, languages, and pow wows. One student commented, "Although I am an Aboriginal woman, I do not know much about the culture and I'm interested in learning." Based on this information, I planned lessons on Native spirituality, languages, and pow wows. Students participated in a sweat, attended a pow wow, and met Mary Richard from Manitoba Association for Native Languages. Students learned about the importance of language and were invited to participate in evening language classes.

Mid-point and Final Evaluation

The evaluation asked students if they found the topics interesting (see appendix D, E). The students said they found the topics stimulating, challenging, and varied in format. One student remarked, "I enjoyed learning about my culture and at the same time strengthening my writing abilities...the program you offer is very unique and effective." Students mentioned that they most enjoyed native spirituality, the book *Halfbreed* by Maria Campbell, the stories heard and shared in class, the lesson on languages, role models, and residential schools. A student commented, "Most of the students' role models were very interesting and caught our attention. Their topics were on native actors, parents, grandparents and friends." Students also commented that the program made them think about issues. Students commented, "I learned a lot. Made me think harder"..." I liked reading *Halfbreed* and doing the essay part and the critical way.

On the final evaluation one student suggested I cover more on treaties and status. Another suggested I use fewer topics so there would be a more in-depth study of each. She felt there was too little time to absorb all the topics and issues. I agreed with this

observation.

What stood out in my mind the most about the interest level of the group was an oral presentation by one student. She was sharing the story she had written for the module on Aboriginal Stories. The story was based on a dream she had of the slaughtering of her family. The dream depicted a piece of history similar to what I had read about the Battle of Batoche. As she read her story, she began to cry. The emotion from this experience had a lasting impact on all of us. Not only did her ability to write and express her feelings touch our hearts but the experience caused us to look at the historical injustices to Aboriginal people. The literature supports this example that says if a learning experience is to be meaningful, it must evoke some emotion (Patterson, 1973).

Another example is a student who did an oral presentation about her sister, a birch bark biter who lived in British Columbia. The student was required to interview and gather information on a role model. Her presentation was fascinating. She brought in examples of her sister's work, gave us some insight into her sister's struggles, and told others how they could learn about this dying art. In the evaluation, the student commented, "It really made me think about my sister- how busy and exciting her life was." This student struggled with personal problems during the program and by connecting with her sister she seemed to gain some strength and guidance for her own journey. The student is currently employed with a credit union in Winnipeg.

Review of Literature

The literature suggests that we create a meaningful learning experience by covering topics relating to the personal experiences of the individual (Pfeiffer and Jones, 1991; Sawyer and Green, 1991). As well, students need to be valued and challenged in their efforts (Bredemier and Bredemier, 1978).

By covering topics related to personal interests, I hoped the students would be more involved, feel challenged, and would enjoy the program. The English language program was interesting for the students. It allowed them to become involved actively in the learning process. One student commented, "I found the language arts program very unique. Learning about the Native culture made the assignments more interesting to do." The

variety of topics gave students an overview of Aboriginal history and issues. I hope this learning experience would lead to continued study of the ancestry, cultures, and issues of Aboriginal people.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the problems outlined in the beginning of the practicum study according to the needs assessment questionnaires, evaluations, and the literature as the primary sources of data. The findings are representative of what individuals said about the program in terms of the relevance of the material, communication skills, General Educational Development, communication in the business world, and the students' interest in the format. The following chapter will draw conclusions based on these findings. As well, I will outline what I have learned from the experience and make recommendations for future language arts programs.

PART V

Evaluation of the Experience

In this chapter, I will draw conclusions about this English language program in terms of the relevance of the material, oral and written communication skills, GED, communication in the workplace, and students' interest in the format. I will describe what I have learned from this practicum experience and make some recommendations for future planning.

Conclusion

Relevancy

This practicum experience demonstrated the importance of relevancy in program planning. Students identified in the needs assessment a need to improve oral and written communication skills to prepare them for employment in the banking, business, and retail sectors. The students also expressed an interest in learning more about Aboriginal cultures. The program covered a wide variety of topics, starting with familiar experiences. Students were able to improve their oral and written communication skills in the program while learning more about Aboriginal cultures. There were two students facing personal difficulties, whose skills did not improve. For these students, the oral and written communication skills were not relevant to their immediate needs.

The majority of the students found the topics initiated interesting group discussions, presentations and written papers that were relevant to their needs. These findings support the literature on adult learning.

Oral and Written Communication Skills

The students identified a need to improve their oral and written communication skills to prepare them for employment. The evaluations indicated that the students met their goals. All but two of the students made measurable progress in their English language skills. There were variations in learning but all improved their skills and moved towards a greater degree of self-direction as the program progressed.

I found that the program challenged the students' way of thinking as they were presented with new information in readings, discussions, and by guest speakers. Mezirow (1990) describes this "organized effort to help the learners challenge presuppositions, explore alternative perspectives, transform old ways of understanding, and act on new perspectives" as emancipatory learning (p.18).

As well, I discovered the importance of critical reflection in learning. According to the literature, educators cannot ensure critical reflection in learning but we can seek to promote it. (Mezirow, 1990) I realized that more time is needed to discuss and reflect on each lesson.

Overall, the program was effective in improving English language skills. Students spoke with confidence in front of the group, listened to others without interrupting, and were able to write a well organized paper. The literature supports the findings of this practicum.

General Educational Development

This English language program was a unique and effective way of teaching English language skills. The GED material was boring and did not meet these students needs. However, there are specific skills in grammar in the GED that would have benefited many of the students who lacked usage, sentence structure and the mechanics of the English language.

Communication in the Workplace

In the workplace, employers expressed the importance of effective oral and written communication skills. The employers found the students were effective problem solvers with excellent organization skills and the ability to express their own point of view. Students were found to be self-directed in their approach to learning, always trying a new task on their own before asking for guidance from a supervisor or co-worker.

Students' Interest in the Format

The students found the topics to be interesting and were, for the most part, active in

the discussions. We built trust and respect for one another and learned the value of sharing our knowledge and experience. The facilitator and the students were co-learners.

The English language program successfully addressed the problems outlined in the beginning of the program (page 8). The material was relevant to the student's experiences as it covered history, cultures, and current issues of Aboriginals. The students improved both oral and written communication skills and moved towards a greater degree of self-direction in learning. The format was interesting and employers felt they were adequately prepared for employment in the business, banking, and retail sectors of our community.

What I have Learned from the Experience

In this section, I will outline what I have learned in light of program planning, implementation, and evaluation based on the experiences of this practicum. I will look at the importance of relevancy, skill development, the need to meet individual needs, application of skills to the workplace and the development of an interesting format.

Relevancy

In this practicum experience, I discovered the importance of creating a program relevant to the students' needs, one that would prepare them for the workplace and be applicable to everyday living. The English language program was not relevant to the two students who were facing personal and family difficulties in the program. Their oral and written communication skills did not improve because it was not important or relevant to their needs. Counselling and life skills training were more critical at that time to assist them in making choices that would affect their lives.

Skill Development

In terms of skill development, I recognized the importance of reflection as a way of bringing meaning to our learning experience. According to Mezirow (1990) our primary goal in the learning process is to increase learners' awareness and raise their level of consciousness beyond the systemic and scientific accumulation of facts. For the students in the language program and myself in this practicum experience, the highest level of learning

occurred when there was critical reflection of the learning process. When the students were given an opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, and observations, they began to draw conclusions which could be applied to their daily living. Similarly, after each lesson I reflected on the design and implementation of the program. I was able to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future programs.

According to Mezirow (1990), "the readiness to trust the credibility of one's own experiences is crucial to fostering self-reflection" (p. 239). We began with familiar experiences and were able to learn from each other. The presentation of new information, our discussions, and reflections began to change our understanding and perception of different issues.

As well, I became more aware of the artistry of education. I was able to see myself as a resource person who could draw on the expertise of others to create a meaningful learning experience. I became a co-learner in the process and enjoyed the challenge of creating an exciting and informative topic. I learned how to design, implement, and evaluate an English language program while learning more about Aboriginal cultures. I was also able to recognize my own personal limitations as a white woman who was raised in mainstream society.

Meeting Individual Needs

I feel I was able to meet the needs of this group of women successfully, but I recognize that the oral and written communication skills program may not be appropriate to other learners. I must be prepared to change the direction of the course to meet the changing needs of the learners. In future programs, GED may be more important.

Application of Skills to the Workplace

I understood the importance of relating the learning experience to everyday living and the workplace. Students were in the program to improve their skills so they would be adequately prepared to meet the demands of the workplace. Similarly, I was in the Masters Program at the University of Manitoba so I would be able to transfer some of what I learned about adult learning to the workplace. "Bridges must be built between insights

gained through the program and problems faced on the job" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 41).

Research and the content of program material are often too far removed from the bigger picture. We need to be able to apply theory to practice as a way of linking the two worlds (Rein & White, 1980). This English language program successfully linked the skills acquired in the classroom to the requirements of the workplace and my practicum experience successfully linked theory to practical application in the classroom.

Students' Interest in the Format

I discovered the importance of creating an interesting format. "To give meaning to one's reality requires, among other things, to be aware of one's true interests and intentions" (Mezirow, 1990, p.52). This learning experience was an opportunity for both the facilitator and the students to learn more about Aboriginal cultures and each other. The topics were interesting, meaningful, and allowed us to see things from a different perspective.

This practicum study taught me the importance of relevancy in terms of program planning and implementation. I recognized the need to begin with familiar experiences and critically reflect on the learning process. I discovered that planning and implementation is an art in which both the learner and facilitator are co-investigators. As well, I discovered the importance of linking the experience in the classroom to every day living to create an interesting and rich learning experience. But most important, I learned how to design, implement, and evaluate effectively a culturally appropriate English language program for Aboriginal adult learners.

Recommendations

The following will outline some recommendations for future English language programs. This information is based on the findings of this practicum study and may not be suitable to English language programs beyond Urban Circle Training Centre. These are the recommendations to consider for future English language programs.

1. Personal assessments, counselling, and referrals need to be implemented sooner for those who are struggling with personal difficulties in the program. If we can resolve

the student's personal problems quickly, they will be ready to focus on skill development to prepare for employment.

2. In the needs assessment questionnaire, I recommend that a question be added to ask students about what aspect of Aboriginal cultures would they be interested in learning more? With this information, the topics could be specifically designed to meet the needs of the group.

3. More time needs to be spent on critical reflection. Debriefing questions at the end of each lesson would stimulate further discussion. For example, questions could include, What have you learned from this experience? How did you come to this conclusion? Why is this relevant? What makes this experience positive or negative?

4. Written reflections need to be written in greater detail. For example, the page could be divided in half. On one half the student would record observations and on the other half they would expand on their thoughts, feelings, related experiences, or images. Grammar should not be corrected on these reflections. Comments need to challenge the individual's thinking and not be judgmental in nature. At the end of the program, an examination of patterns and themes in the content could identify any changes in opinions, thinking and feelings of the learner.

5. The program needs to be longer to be able to cover each topic in greater detail and reflect on our learning. Formal instruction in grammar and vocabulary development needs to be incorporated. Provision for a time management and study skills workshop at the beginning of each program would prepare students for the workload.

6. The employers need to be more involved in the implementation of the program. The employers, as advisory committee members, provide up-to-date information regarding to the expectations in the workplace. As guests in the classroom, the employers link the work environment to the classroom. The students need to be informed by the employers about the importance of effective oral and written communication skills in the workplace.

7. Drama and a variety of poetry by Aboriginal artists needs to be added to the resources. As well, playing a selection of music by Aboriginal artists while students work in groups or on written assignments may create a more relaxed and comforting learning environment and at the same time expose them to different Aboriginal musicians.

8. I recommend an increase in the time allowed for each class and the program length. As well, critical reflection needs to be encouraged through the use of debriefing questions at the end of each lesson and a written reflection outlining learners observations, thoughts and feelings should be required.

9. Employers need to be more involved in a guest speaking role to offer their perspective on communication and create an important link between the two worlds.

The recommendations are based on the conclusions drawn at the beginning of the chapter.

Conclusion

I have seen many parallels in what the students have learned in their English language program and what I have learned as a graduate student in my practicum study. I have discovered the importance of relevancy in creating a meaningful learning experience. I was fortunate to be able to focus my research for my practicum study on an English language program in my work place. It was an exciting opportunity and one that allowed me to connect my understanding of adult learning in theory to practical use in the classroom. As well, I learned the value of critical reflection in bringing meaning to learning. I discovered how valuable my reflection of the learning process was in creating a meaningful experience for the students and myself.

I recognized the importance of linking education to everyday living. This practicum experience allowed me to bring these two worlds together into a meaningful learning experience and one that would be of value to my workplace. Rein and White (1980) "have recently observed that research not only is separate from professional practice, but has been increasingly captured by its own agenda divergent from the needs and interests of professional practitioners" (p. 10). A practicum experience is a means of seeing the whole picture of theory, planning and practice not just each individual part in isolation.

This experience was a valuable opportunity to learn more about cultures different from my own. I successfully designed and implemented a culturally appropriate English language program for a group of Aboriginal adult learners. I began to look at things from a different perspective and challenge my views and beliefs about the world as I understood it.

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Appendix A

Planning Questionnaire

1. What do you hope to learn from this language program?
2. What type of information do you need to work in the retail/ banking/ business sector?
3. What skills are you bringing with you that will help you in this program?
4. What skills do you require to reach your goals?
5. How do you prefer to learn? Check the preferred choices.

individual assignments	lectures
research projects	group work
role plays	discussions
guest speakers	tests
field trips	Other: _____
6. Are you familiar with the Aboriginal culture? Are you interested in learning more?
7. How would you assess your skills in the following areas. Please circle the number which best describes your ability

	excellent	satisfactory	needs improvement
listening skills	1	2	3
public speaking skills	1	2	3
ability to speak clearly	1	2	3
ability to organize information	1	2	3
time management skills	1	2	3

	excellent	satisfactory	needs improvement
ability to work effectively in a group	1	2	3
ability to follow directions	1	2	3
ability to complete tasks	1	2	3
accuracy of work	1	2	3
ability to ask questions if uncertain	1	2	3
ability to summarize	1	2	3
information	1	2	3
comprehension skills	1	2	3
use of eye contact	1	2	3
problem solving skills	1	2	3
writing skills	1	2	3

8. What are your goals/ objectives for the next 12 weeks? (end of classroom experience)

18 weeks? (end of program)

one year?

five years?

Appendix B**Observations/ Reflections**

The following is a guideline for my observations/ reflections following each lesson.

Lesson Title: _____

1. Were students actively involved in discussions? Most __ Some __ None__

What were they doing?

2. Did students appear to be interested in the topic area? Most__ Some__ None__

3. Have I found the assignments challenging and varied in format?

4. Were expectations realistic for the time allowed? Did the students have sufficient time to complete the task?

5. Were there any expectations beyond the student's ability?

6. Were the guest speakers/ site visits effective?

7. Comments/ Recommendations

Appendix C**Student Feedback Form - Language Program (week 4, 8)**

1. Were the topic areas interesting? Please comment. Most__ Some__ None__

2. Were there any readings/ assignments beyond your ability? Please specify.

3. Did you find the group discussions effective? Explain.

4. Were the oral presentations/ written assignments challenging and varied in format? Comment.

5. Did you enjoy the site visits/ guest speakers? Please comment.

6. Were the expectations realistic for the time allowed? Did you have adequate time to complete each task? Please comment.

7. What have you gained from this experience?

8. Comments /Recommendations

Appendix D

Final Student Feedback Form - Language Program (Week 12)

1. What was your overall impression of the language program?

2. Did you feel you developed any new language skills during the program? Please specify.

3. Please assess your language skills in the following areas:

	excellent	satisfactory	needs improvement
listening skills	1	2	3
public speaking skills	1	2	3
ability to speak clearly	1	2	3
ability to organize	1	2	3
information	1	2	3
time management skills	1	2	3
ability to work effectively	1	2	3
in a group	1	2	3
ability to follow directions	1	2	3
ability to complete tasks	1	2	3
accuracy of work	1	2	3
ability to ask questions if uncertain	1	2	3
ability to summarize information	1	2	3
comprehension skills	1	2	3
use of eye contact	1	2	3
problem solving skills	1	2	3
writing skills	1	2	3

4. Were the topics interesting and challenging? What could be added or omitted?

5. Did you enjoy the written report and presentation? Please Explain.

Enjoyable __ Somewhat __ Not at all __

6. What skills, knowledge and attitudes developed in the language program could you take with you to the work place?

7. Are you more familiar with the Aboriginal culture?

Definitely__ Somewhat __ Not at all__.

Please explain.

8. What are your short term goals? long term goals?

9. Comments/ Suggestions

Appendix E

Employer Questionnaire

1. How important are effective oral and written communication skills in the workplace? Please explain.

2. Please assess the student's skills in the following areas. Please circle the number which best describes their ability.

	excellent	satisfactory	needs improvement
listening skills	1	2	3
public speaking skills	1	2	3
ability to speak clearly	1	2	3
ability to organize information	1	2	3
time management skills	1	2	3
ability to work effectively in a group	1	2	3
ability to follow directions	1	2	3
ability to complete tasks	1	2	3
accuracy of work	1	2	3
ability to ask questions if uncertain	1	2	3
ability to summarize	1	2	3
information	1	2	3
comprehension skills	1	2	3
use of eye contact	1	2	3
problem solving skills	1	2	3
writing skills	1	2	3

3. Comments/ Suggestions:

Appendix F

Facilitator Evaluation**A COURSE EVALUATION FORM FOR ADULTS****Instructions:** Answer *each* question using the following scoring guide:

5 - yes, clearly true in most cases

3 - sometimes true, sometimes false

1 - no, hardly ever true or not applicable

**PART A
"LEARNER INVOLVEMENT"**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Was the learning climate relaxed, trusting and supportive?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Was planning for the session done by learners and instructors together?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Did anyone ask what your learning needs were before the instruction started?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Did you and the instructor work together in setting the learning objectives?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Did the learning activity consist of more than lectures to the student?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**PART B
"DESIGN AND CONDUCT"**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Was the learning program designed to accommodate a diversity of backgrounds and capabilities?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Did you, as the learner, have a personal interest in this experience?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Was information presented in an organized fashion?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Were learning experiences spread over time?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Was the program clearly related to your job?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Was the environment conducive to learning?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Was information presented through a variety of techniques (e.g. lectures, videos, group discussion)?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**PART C
"TRANSMISSION TECHNIQUES"**

	5	4	3	2	1
1. Were different instructors and / or resources used for different topics?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Were the needs and competencies of each learner considered?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Was feedback on your learning provided either formally or informally?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Did the instructor work with learners outside the classroom as stimulators or sounding boards?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Were learners encouraged to develop an attitude and approach that fosters independence?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Were discussions, questions and small group activities used?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Did the instructor discuss your progress and concerns throughout the course?	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

[illegible]

Appendix H

Essay Assessment/ Evaluation

Student's Name _____		Title of Essay _____		Date _____	
Criteria			Comments		
Content: convincing, pertinent, imaginative, specific, perceptive, informed					
Point of View: clear, consistent, appropriate in mood and emphasis to purpose and approach					
Essay Organization: logical, coherent, unified, suitable to purpose, developed in an orderly way building to an effect or conclusion					
Paragraph Organization: precise statement of topic, effective development, varied paragraph structures					
Style: flavor, interest, flair, imagination, freshness; expression suited to content, flow, dominant effect					
Sentence Structure: skillful use of a variety of sentence patterns such as parallelism, contrast, balance, repetition and exclamation					
Diction: vocabulary and tone appropriate for topic and projected personality of the writer; specific, imaginative, vivid, precise					
Use of Language Conventions: correctness in punctuation, spelling, and grammar; avoidance of awkward, disjointed, fragmented, run-on sentences					
Completed on time					
Additional Comments: (Use reverse side of this page)					

Appendix I

Ruth Murdock / Coordinator
Urban Circle Training Centre
367 Selkirk Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2W 2M3

Ms. Murdock,

I am currently attending the University of Manitoba, in the Department of Education, Administration and Foundation. I am a student in the Master's of Education degree program. My faculty advisor is Deo Poonwassie who may be contacted at 474-9019. I am writing to request permission to complete a practicum study at the Urban Circle Training Centre.

In this practicum experience, I intend to design and implement an English language program. I have found the GED (grade twelve equivalency) materials to be irrelevant to the students' interest. The format of the materials is boring and does little to initiate oral and written communication skills. The topics I plan to cover will focus on Aboriginal culture, history and contemporary issues. The goal is to improve the students' oral and written communication skills. I hope the topics will be of interest to the students and relate directly to their needs.

The students involved in the study will be required to complete a needs assessment questionnaire. Students will evaluate the lessons every four weeks, for a total of three evaluations. These questionnaires are a means of determining the effectiveness of the program. Completion of the questionnaires is voluntary. The total time commitment to complete these questionnaires is two hours.

All information collected will be kept confidential. The names of the subjects will be replaced to protect their identity. Upon completion of the practicum, the needs assessment, questionnaires and evaluations will be destroyed.

Subjects have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. At the completion of the practicum, a copy of the final report will be provided to Urban Circle. For more information about this research, you may contact the researcher, Carol Hawkins or the faculty advisor, Deo Poonwassie, Ph.D. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Reply from Coordinator



URBAN CIRCLE TRAINING PROGRAM

Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, 367 Selkirk Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2W 2M3

Phone (204) 589-4433 Fax (204) 582-6439

Monday, March 11, 1996

Carol Hawkins

Carol,

I am responding to your request to complete a practicum work experience at Urban Circle Training Centre. I will accept your participation in this practicum experience at our centre. I understand that the students names will remain confidential and participation in the study will be strictly voluntary.

Please forward a copy of the practicum proposal when approved. If there are any further changes to the design, please let me know. Good luck with your program! I look forward to reading your final report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Ruth Murdock".

Ruth Murdock

Program Coordinator

Appendix K

Consent Form**Practicum Consent Form**

Sponsorship of the Practicum: I am currently attending the University of Manitoba, in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations. I am a student in the Masters Program of Education Degree in Adult Education. As part of my program requirements, I am planning on completing a practicum experience at Urban Circle. My faculty advisor is Deo Poonwassie who may be contacted at 474-9019.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to assess the effectiveness/quality of an English language program which has been developed from the data provided by a needs assessment.

Research Question: How can I design and implement an effective language arts program for this group of women?

Tasks Required by Participants: You will be asked to complete a needs assessment questionnaire. You will be asked to evaluate the English language lessons every four weeks, for a total of three evaluations, to determine the effectiveness of the program. Completion of the questionnaires is voluntary.

Time Required: The time required to complete each questionnaire will be approximately 30 minutes. The needs assessment will be completed once at the beginning of the program. The evaluation questionnaire will be given three times over the course of the twelve week training session. The total time required to complete these questionnaires is two hours. Participation is voluntary and all information will be anonymous.

Confidentiality: All information will be kept confidential. Your name will be replaced to protect your identity. Upon completion of the practicum, the needs assessment, questionnaires and evaluations will be destroyed.

Right to Withdraw: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You will not be graded for the questionnaires or penalized if you choose not to participate in the research. Your participation in the research is strictly voluntary. Course assignments and participation in class discussions are required by the program. If you choose not to participate in the study, the evaluation of your progress will not be used in the research findings.

Summary of Results: At the completion of the study, a copy of the practicum report will be offered to Urban Circle Training Centre for easy access for staff and students while you are still attending the program. I will notify you when the final report is completed.

Contact Person: For more information about this research, you may contact the researcher, Carol Hawkins,
B.Ed., 367 Selkirk Ave. Winnipeg, M.B. R3R 3R4 (589-4433) or the faculty advisor, Deo Poonwassie, Ph.D. at (474-9019)

At the conclusion of the practicum experience, all research questionnaires, assessments etc. used for the purpose of the study will be destroyed.

Signature of Researcher: _____

Signature of the participant _____