Strategic Conversations:

Adult Literacy Assessment and Measuring Progress

"Every adventure requires a first step"

***Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll, 1865**

Facilitator Manual

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Adult Literacy Assessment and Measuring Progress

Facilitator Manual

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Note: This facilitator manual uses icons to guide your understanding of the material. They are as follows:

NOTE

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Introduction

There have been many assessment tools developed for adult literacy learners, and there are many well-researched resources available on the subject.

In fact, for practitioners who need to assess an adult learner's literacy abilities, the issue is not a lack of resources. It is more one of abundance: How do you choose the appropriate tool from the large selection available? This workshop will help narrow the field.

Although some assessment tools, such as the Canadian Language Benchmark assessment, are designed specifically for adult learners whose first language *is not* English, in this workshop we will be looking exclusively at assessment tools designed for those adults whose first language *is* English.

Of the many literacy assessment tools available, this workshop will focus on read*forward*. This tool was developed in Alberta, and was piloted with literacy programs in many different contexts, including community-based literacy programs.

read*forward* is designed to be used with the Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB). The Benchmarks are a set of standards that describe what readers know and can do at successive levels as they develop and expand their reading capacity. They are "a way for practitioners to think about the component skills that readers need to navigate and comprehend text" (ARB Guide, p. 1).

read*forward* is intended to be used both diagnostically and formatively. That is, it can help the practitioner both "diagnose" what needs to be taught next, and understand how learning is progressing or "forming" over time. The read*forward* assessment tool reveals valuable information to the practitioner and learner alike, and provides concrete suggestions about how best to move forward together. This makes read*forward* invaluable in the crucial task of developing effective learning plans.

The intent of this workshop is:

- To provide participants with a broad understanding of the purposes of assessment.
- To develop a more in-depth understanding of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and the read*forward* assessment tool.
- To provide significant time to practice using both the Benchmarks and the assessment tool in the context of a community-based program.

Preparing for the Workshop

Focus of this workshop

This workshop will answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of assessment?
- What are the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and what resources do they offer?
- How do I administer, score and follow up with the results of the read*forward* assessment tool?

Be sure you are familiar with each activity you will be facilitating, and that you have prepared for each one in advance. See the section below on activities that require advance preparation.

Pre-Learning

It is recommended that both you and your participants complete the "Assessment for Learning" e-learning module found on the CALP Portal before facilitating or participating in this workshop.

The e-learning module introduces the concept of assessment and provides information on different assessment methods and tools. The concepts are explained using written material, videos featuring CALP staff, and a helpful "Tips and Tricks" section.

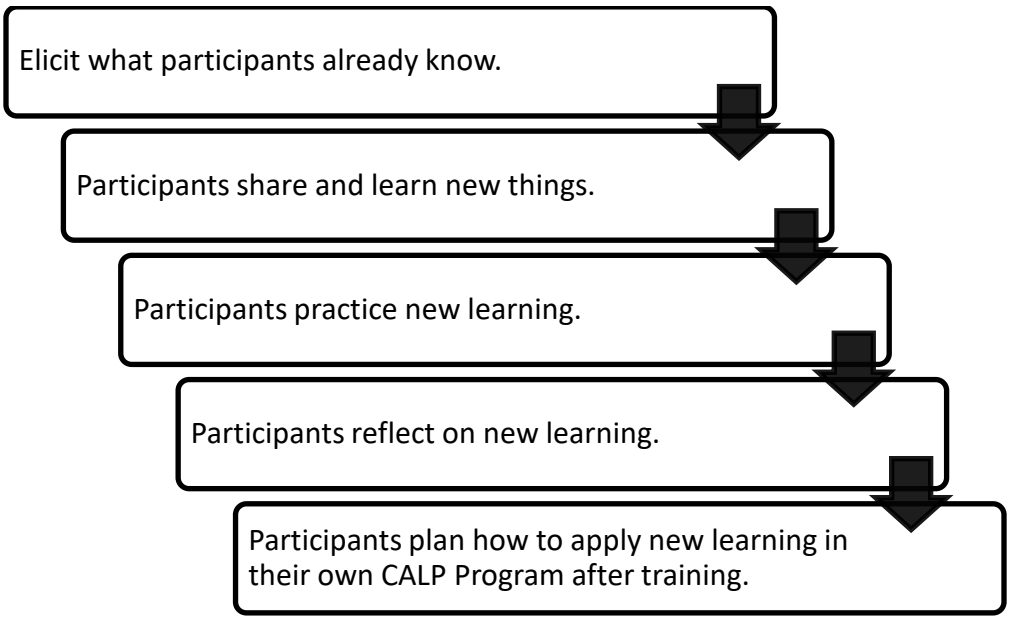
For the facilitation process and to help you answer questions, you will need to have some knowledge of and familiarity with the resources that we used to create this workshop.

See Appendix 1 for a complete list.

General strategy for facilitating this learning

As a facilitator, you need to be clear about the overall strategy you will use, and we outline our suggestion in the diagram below.

We also suggest you see Appendix 2: Notes about Facilitation, which provides you with some guiding principles for excellent facilitation.



Materials required

To facilitate this workshop, you will need the following supplies and handouts.

General supplies

Flip charts	2 flip charts You will need to share the participants' work by hanging the flip charts on the wall. We suggest you either use sticky flip charts, or green or blue painter's tape that won't harm the walls
A computer with access to the Internet	
A screen, or a wall that will serve as a screen	
100 or more markers in assorted colours for facilitators and participants to use	
Whiteboard markers if there are whiteboards in the room	
Sticky notes	Blocks of small, 3x3 sticky notes – 3 for each table Blocks of large 4x6 (or larger) sticky notes – 1 for each table
Thick coloured paper for making name cards – 1 sheet for each participant	
2 packs of lined paper	
20 or more ballpoint pens	
Soft rubber or foam ball	

Ask participants to bring a laptop or electronic device that will connect to the internet.

PowerPoint slides from the CALP portal for specific activities

Slide 1	Welcome
Slides 2-3	Activity 1: KWL and paired listening
Slides 4-7	Activity 2: What is assessment and why do we do it?
Slides 8-10	Activity 3: Clearing up possible confusion – benchmarks, assessment and ESL
Slide 11	Activity 4: An introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks
Slides 12-15	Activity 5: Using the ARB
Slide 16	Activity 6: An introduction to read*forward*
Slides 17-19	Activity 7: Using read*forward*
Slide 22	Activity 8: Using the read*forward* Test

Handouts for participants

To be used with:	**Handout**
All activities	The Participant Workbook for this workshop, one for each participant
Activity 7	The read*forward* sample Locator Test or Tests, one for each participant
	The read*forward* sample Locator Test Answer Key, one for each participant
	The read*forward* Locator Score Sheet
Activity 8	The read*forward* sample Test, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant
	The read*forward* sample Test Answer Key, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant
Closing	The evaluation form for the workshop

For your own use and reference during the workshop

Your copy of, or access to, the Alberta Reading Benchmarks User Guide
Your copy of, or access to, the read*forward* User Guide
Your copy of the Participant Workbook
The documents reproduced at the end of this *Facilitator Manual*
The read*forward* sample Locator Test or Tests
The read*forward* sample Locator Test Answer Key
The read*forward* sample Test
The read*forward* sample Test Answer Key

Optional supplies

You may also want to have some manipulatives on each table. Participants can use them to keep their hands busy and their creative juices flowing.

Here are some suggestions:

- Pipe cleaners
- Stickers
- Lego blocks
- Popsicle sticks
- Play-Doh

Activities that require advance preparation

To be fully ready for the workshop, and confident in your facilitation, you need to do some advance preparation. Activities 2 and 3 do not require **specific** advance preparation.

Agenda

Prepare an agenda. Include times for lunch, breaks and when you plan to finish.

As a model, see the agenda in the section below, but make it work for you.

PowerPoint slides

Be sure you have access to the slides you will be using.

Preparing for the Introduction

If you choose to use the "Who's Done That?" icebreaker, you may want to offer a small prize for the winner.

If you'd like to learn more about the benefits of using icebreakers, see Appendix 3: About Icebreakers and energizers.

Photocopies

Download the following documents from the CALP portal and make one copy for each participant:

- The read*forward* sample Locator Test
- The read*forward* Locator Test Answer Key
- The read*forward* Locator Score Sheet
- The read*forward* sample Test, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant
- The read*forward* sample Test Answer Key, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant
- The read*forward* Results Feedback Form
- The read*forward* sample Test, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant
- The read*forward* sample Test Answer Key, Level 2 Diamond, one for each participant

Learning more about assessment before you begin

We have outlined some important points about assessment in Appendix 4, below. You might find it useful to read them as you begin to plan for the workshop.

Preparing for Activity 1: KWL and Paired Listening

Prepare three sheets of flip chart paper with the following questions, one on each piece of paper, or use a white board to write these questions:

- What do you KNOW about literacy learner assessment?
- What do you WANT to know about the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward*?
- What have you LEARNED about the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward*?

Review the following explanation of the process of paired listening from www.seedsforchange.org.uk, and prepare to use whatever part of it you think would be useful to explain the Paired Listening process to your group.

Paired Listening

- The Paired Listening process creates a space where everyone is heard, enabling participants to explore and formulate their own thoughts or feelings on an issue without interruption.
- It can help in uncovering and resolving conflict, as well as allowing people to gather and consolidate their thoughts before a group discussion.
- Listening in pairs is also a good way of developing skills in active listening.
- Split the group into pairs. In each pair, one person is the listener, the other the speaker.
- The speaker talks about their thoughts or feelings on the issue that you've chosen. Encourage the speaker to speak first thoughts – that is, to speak as thoughts enter their mind without analyzing or holding back. This may seem difficult at first – think of it as holding an internal monologue, but out loud.
- The role of the listener is to give full attention to the speaker without interrupting, questioning or commenting. The listener can provide an attentive and supportive atmosphere through eye contact, body language, encouraging noises, smiles and nods.
- If the speaker gets stuck, the listener may ask neutral questions such as "How does that make you feel? Why do you think that?"
- After a set time (one to four minutes is usually plenty) speaker and listener swap roles.
- This exercise can be followed by a go-round in the full group, with every participant summarizing the thoughts of their partner.

Preparing for Activity 4: An introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks

Become familiar with the ARB website: http://www.arbforadults.ca/.

Watch the video found on the Home page, under "Learn how to Use the ARB." The video is called "Introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks."

You will be showing this video to participants, and then referring to the sections of the ARB website mentioned in the video. It will be helpful for you to know where to find what you need to show them.

Preparing for Activity 5: Using the ARB

Become familiar with the document ARB Step-by-Step, found in the Participant Workbook and in Appendix 5 of this manual.

Become familiar with the following two documents on the ARB website:

- The "Sample Diagnostic Reading Assessment" under the Resource tab, which you will need to know in its entirety to facilitate the discussion at the end of the activity. This sample assessment is included in this manual's Appendix 6, and is also on PowerPoint slide #15.
- The "Alberta Reading Benchmarks Levels Chart," also under the Resource tab on the website.

In the section of the Participant Workbook for Activity 5, there will only be David's story and the instructor's observation of reading skills. Participants will not have the entire page, which you have in Appendix 6, because it includes the conclusion that you want them to reach on their own.

Preparing for Activity 6: An introduction to the read*forward* assessment tool

Read and become familiar with Corrie Rhyasen Erdman's CALP Portal blog post dated February 10, 2016, as presented in Appendix 7 of this Facilitator Manual and in the section on Activity 6 in the Participant Workbook.

Become familiar with the read*forward* website: www.read*forward*.ca

Find and review these pages under the Resource tab on the read*forward* website:

- User Guide
- Reading Skills, Table
- Locators, including Tests, Answer Keys and Score Sheets
- Tests, especially the Test, Answer Key and Results Feedback Form for Level 2A – Diamond
- Learning Activities

Ensure you have one copy of the sample Locator Test, Locator Test Answer Key and Score Sheet for each participant. Three sample Locator Tests are available, all at the same level. Decide if you would like to use the same sample Locator Test for all participants, or if you would like to hand out the different versions.

Ensure you have one copy of the sample read*forward* Test, Answer Key and Results Feedback Form for each participant.

These samples are available on the CALP portal.

Review the following explanation of the Jigsaw activity. Make sure you understand the process and can explain it to participants.

Jigsaw activity

For a larger group, divide participants into five groups, one for each topic. If possible, have the same number of people in each group.

For a smaller group, divide the topics among the participants.

Each group or individual will become "experts" on one topic. In this case, the topics will be the following parts of the read*forward* User Guide in the section on Activity 6:

- Topic 1: How to select and use a Locator Test
- Topic 2: Preparing for the read*forward* Test
- Topic 3: How to administer the Test
- Topic 4: How to mark the Test and interpret the results
- Topic 5: Providing feedback to learners

Ensure that all the topics are covered by a group or individual. If the overall group is small, you might consider assigning more than one topic per group or individual.

For a large group:

- In their group, participants review their section(s) of the User Guide, and discuss what they learn.
- Once you have given them time to become "experts," have each person in the group number off up to however many people there are in the group.
- Then the participants form new groups according to their numbers. Each new group will have one or more people from each previous group. The members of the new groups then teach each other what they know about their topics.

For a small group:

- Each person becomes an "expert" on one or more topics, then shares that knowledge with the group.

Preparing for Activity 7: read*forward* overview and using the Locator Test

Become familiar with the read*forward* Step-by-Step Guide, which you'll find in Appendix 8 of this Manual and in the section on Activity 7 of Participant Workbook.

For the overview, know the read*forward* website at http://www.read*forward*.ca, and where to find:

- The read*forward* Locator Tests, Answer Keys and Score Sheet
- The read*forward* Tests for each level, Answer Keys and Results Feedback Form

Decide if you will use the same sample Locator Test for each participant, or if you will use and distribute the three different sample Locator Tests that are all at the same level.

Be familiar with the sample Locator Test or Tests that participants will be scoring.

Preparing for Activity 8: Using read*forward*

Become familiar with the sample read*forward* Test, Level 2A Diamond.

Preparing for the Closing activity

Have the props needed for the closing activity you have chosen.

Have a copy of the evaluation for each participant.

Philosophy of Adult Learning

These quotations sum up our philosophy of adult learning, and we attempt to model this philosophy in the workshop manual. We encourage you to think through the facilitations you plan, and to incorporate this perspective of adult learning.

"People learn best when learning starts with what they already know, builds on their strengths, engages them in the learning process and enables them to accomplish something they want to accomplish."

Elsa Roberts Auerbach, *Creating Learning Partners, Unit 2, page 13*

"It is when you open the door and ask students to share their knowledge or help others achieve some task that true learning takes place for everyone, and trust emerges from this sharing. "

Sharing the Journey with Indigenous Learners, page 8

On the day of the workshop

Collect the items listed above in *Materials Required* (page # 10) in advance of the workshop, and be sure you have everything readily to hand on the day.

On each table put the following items from the list of materials:

- The Participant Workbooks, one for each person attending
- Coloured paper for name cards
- Coloured markers
- 3 blocks of 3x3 sticky notes
- 1 block of 4x6 sticky notes
- Lined paper and a few pens
- Any manipulatives you have chosen to use: pipe cleaners, Play-Doh etc.

This leaves you with the following at hand to use:

- Your copy of the Participant Workbook
- Your copy of read*forward*, both the tool itself and associated materials
- The sample read*forward* Locator Tests
- The sample read*forward* Test
- The photocopies you have made as handouts:
    - The form for the icebreaker "Who's Done That?" if you have chosen to use it
    - Copies of the sample read*forward* Locator Tests and answer key
    - Copies of the sample read*forward* Test and Answer Key
    - The evaluation form
- The flip charts for yourself and for the participants
- Green or blue painter's tape if you aren't using sticky flip charts
- All the materials and flip charts you have prepared in advance

Tape two sheets of flip chart paper on the wall for the following purposes:

- A parking lot:
    - Use this sheet to record important items, issues and ideas that it would not be useful to discuss during the workshop.
    - The principle is to return to them later.
    - They are “parked” for now.
- The day’s agenda that you have prepared in advance.

Check your computer:

- Be sure it is connected to the Internet.
- Be sure the PowerPoint presentation is working.

Training agenda

The workshop activities will take around six hours. If the group is large, some activities may take a bit more time.

You will need added time for lunch – we suggest 45 minutes – and two breaks of 15 minutes each.

One suggestion for timing is to break for lunch after Activity 4, which is when you introduced the ARB. This will give participants all morning to become familiar with assessment in general, before plunging into a closer examination of the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward* in the afternoon.

After lunch, allow time for a review and questions about the morning's work, and for a check-in from the morning's activities. We also suggest you expect to use at least one energizer, and allow time for that activity.

You'll see that we have not added in a specific length of time for energizers or reflection because the need for them will differ from group to group. The times estimated for each activity are flexible, so that you can fit in an energizer or time for review as needed.

Time: 6 hours, plus 45 minutes for lunch and two breaks of 15 minutes each

Activity	**Minutes**
Welcome	10
Introductions	15
Logistics • Ground rules for the workshop • Parking Lot • Housekeeping • Agenda • Introduction to Participant Workbooks	15
Activity 1: KWL and Paired Listening	25
Activity 2: What is assessment and why do we use it?	20
Activity 3: Clearing up possible confusion: Benchmarks, assessment & ESL	20
Activity 4: An introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB)	15
Activity 5: Using the ARB	15
Activity 6: An introduction to the read*forward* assessment tool	40
Activity 7: read*forward* Overview and using the read*forward* : Locator Test	45
Activity 8: Using the read*forward* sample Test	40
Activity 9: Using assessment results	20
Activity 10: A brief review of ARB and read*forward*	30
Activity 11: Reflections and intentions	15
Activity 12: Review KWL – what have you learned?	15
Closing activity and workshop evaluation	20
Total time	**360**

Workshop Activities

As participants get settled at their tables, ask them to write their names on the name cards using the coloured markers.

Welcome

1. Acknowledge the Indigenous Treaty and Metis peoples on whose land the workshop is hosted.
2. Introduce yourself as facilitator(s).
3. Tell participants this workshop was developed with CALP staff in mind.
    - It focuses on assessing reading with literacy learners using the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and the read*forward* assessment tool.
    - Be very clear that this workshop focuses on assessing learners whose first language is English. Many people assume that all assessment tools are applicable for ESL learners, but that is not the case. Both the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward* have been developed specifically for English First Language speakers.
4. Show PowerPoint slide #1.
    - This slide introduces the workshop.

Introductions and icebreakers

Choose one of the following icebreakers.

The second option requires preparation in advance, as described above in *Activities that require advance preparation.*

"Who Are You?"

- Ask participants to get into pairs.
- Have them collect some basic information about each other: their names, what community they're from, what they hope to learn from this workshop.
- Each person then introduces their partner to the larger group.

"Who's Done That?"

- Refer each person to the Who's Done That activity found in the Participant Workbook.
- Have them each find someone else in the group who has done one of the things on the activity's "bingo card," and have that person sign below the relevant item. You can have more than one name next to an item.
- Expect this to take 15 to 20 minutes.
- Give prizes for the first one with all items signed, or for the most names next to one item, or for the last one completed. Make it fun.
- Point out that this activity has not only introduced participants to each other, but given each of them a list of CALP staff who can serve as resources for various skills.

Briefly explain the value of icebreakers:

- They build a sense of comfort and connection.
- They help people relax by starting the workshop with something familiar and non-threatening.
- They allow people to use their voices, so that they may speak more comfortably later.
- Point out that the icebreaker they participated in is actually a very basic form of informal assessment.

Logistics

1. Ground rules

Tell participants you would like their suggestions for ground rules for the workshop. Be prepared to record their suggestions on a flip chart.

Choose a process depending on the size of your group.

- If you are working with a small group, this activity works with the whole group participating.
- For larger groups, you might want to use "think-pair-share," a process adapted from www.teachervision.com. If you choose to use this optional process, ask each pair for only one ground rule when you go around the room.

Think-Pair-Share Process

The think-pair-share process is a cooperative learning technique that encourages individual participation.

It is applicable across all knowledge levels and workshop sizes.

Participants think through questions using three distinct steps:

Think:	Participants think independently about the question that has been posed, forming ideas of their own.
Pair:	Participants are grouped in pairs to discuss their thoughts. This step allows participants to articulate their ideas and to consider those of others.
Share:	Participant pairs share their ideas with a larger group. Often, participants are more comfortable presenting ideas to a group with the support of a partner. In addition, participant's ideas have become more refined through this three-step process.

2. Parking lot

Point out the Parking Lot flip chart. Explain that you will use it to store participant questions, or to identify things that weren't clear. You will respond to the list at the end of the workshop.

Tell participants that they can use sticky notes to add to the parking lot.

3. Housekeeping

Tell participants:

- The location of washrooms
- The workshop timing, including breaks, lunch and finishing time
- Any particular points about the facility you are in

4. Agenda

Briefly review the workshop agenda using the flip chart you've made.

Ask if there are any questions about the agenda. Either answer the questions or, if they are not relevant to the agenda, note them on the Parking Lot and return to them when appropriate.

5. Participant Workbooks

Tell the participants that the Workbooks are theirs to keep.

They can be a place to take notes and to work through each activity.

There is also a place to write contact information for other CALP staff whom they may meet in the section called Networking Notes.

Activity 1: KWL and Paired Listening

Listening is a big part of assessment, which is why the Paired Listening activity is included.

1. Review the preparations required for this activity, as listed in *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
2. Post the three flip chart pages you prepared with the KWL questions on them.
3. PowerPoint slides #2, 3 and 4 can be used with this activity.
   - Use slide #2 as the introduction.
4. Show participants the KWL questions, on PowerPoint slide #3.
   - What do you KNOW about literacy learner assessment?
   - What do you WANT to know about literacy learner assessment?
   - Explain that at the end of the workshop you will complete this exercise by asking: What have you LEARNED about literacy learner assessment?
5. Explain the value of KWL.
   - It allows people to acknowledge what they already know.
   - It is a technique that can be adapted to almost any topic.
   - Tutors can it use with their learners, as a good starting point for setting learner goals.
6. Paired listening.
   - Refer to the instructions for the paired listening process in the section on activities that required advance preparation.
   - Explain the Paired Listening process:
     - Ask participants to work with one other person.
     - Each person takes a turn answering the first two KWL questions.
     - Each listener summarizes what they heard from their partner on the small sticky notes.
     - When both people have had a turn as speaker and listener, ask that they post their sticky notes on the relevant flip chart papers.

7. Review the results of the KWL activity with the group.
    - This allows participants to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge about assessment.
    - It will also show people's expectations of what the workshop will offer them.
    - Ask the group: are there any surprises from what was written on the sticky notes?
8. Let the group know which issues will be directly addressed in the workshop, and which issues might be parking lot issues.
    - Transfer the appropriate sticky notes to the Parking Lot.

Activity 2: What is assessment and why do we use it?

1. Show slide #4, "What is assessment?" Tell participants they will be offered the opportunity to examine their perspectives on assessment in this activity.
2. Show slide #5. Ask participants to reflect on these questions, and to write their answers in their Workbooks.
   - What is assessment?
   - Why do we use it?
3. Have participants share their answers with the people at their table.
4. Ask for several of the responses participants came up with during their reflection. Note them on a flip chart.
5. Show slide #6 and go into more detail about why we use assessment. Tell participants that this information is in the CALP e-learning module.
   - Staff may use assessment as an **initial** conversation, to help determine the best way to support a learner.
   - Staff may use assessment as an **ongoing** process, to help the learner review their progress.
   - Staff may use assessment as an **exit** conversation, to help learners reflect on what they have learned and recognize what they have accomplished.
6. Close by showing PowerPoint slide #7, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there".

> "Funded organizations have a responsibility to understand why a learner might go to them for learning and support, and how they might approach setting goals and creating a learning plan with that learner." *CALP Guidelines*, Page 6

There are two basic principles that guide the assessment process in the CALP Program: assessment is learner-centered and strengths-based.

For more information, visit the CALP e-learning module.

Be aware that perspectives on assessment differ.

Participants may have different perspectives that will cause them to disagree with your definitions of assessment.

For example, depending on what type of “final report” people use, they may describe it as being a formal or informal assessment.

The point of the activity is not to decide on definite right and wrong answers.

The point is to generate thought and discussion, and to see if different understandings lead to different answers to the questions you will ask.

Activity 3: Clearing up possible confusion – benchmarks, assessment and ESL

In this activity, you will discuss two areas where it's important to be clear:

- The first is about the differences and connections between benchmarks and assessment.
- The second is about the difference between assessments for literacy learners who speak English, and literacy learners who are learning English.

1. First, focus on explaining benchmarks using the following discussion points:
    - Ask participants what a benchmark is, and why benchmarks are important.
    - Then ask: "What is the difference between benchmarks and assessment tools?"
    - Be sure they include something along these lines:
        - A benchmark is a marker in the sand: "Here's where I am today and now we can measure from here."
        - Benchmarks are pre-defined. As a staff person, you are finding where your learner fits.
        - Benchmarks name the skills a person is able do at different levels of proficiency – think of the "Can Do" statements from the CLB.
        - Benchmarks are a starting place: This is what I can do, this is what I want to do.
        - Benchmarks are not an assessment tool, but benchmarks can provide information about what skills might need to be assessed.

2. Discuss two well-known benchmarks, CLB and ARB:

   The two common benchmarks in CALP programs are: The Canadian Language Benchmarks and the Alberta Reading Benchmarks.

   - The Canadian Language Benchmarks:
     - Are a set of descriptive statements about successive levels on the continuum of language.
     - Focus on four skill areas: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
     - Describe communicative competencies and performance tasks through which learners demonstrate 1) the application of language knowledge, which is competence, and 2) skill, which is ability.
     - Provide a national standard for planning curricula for language instruction in a variety of contexts.
     - Offer a frame of reference for learning, teaching, programming and assessing adult ESL in Canada.
   - The Alberta Reading Benchmarks:
     - Are a province-wide standard for measuring reading in literacy and essential skills programs.
     - Focus on reading.
     - Describe what adults know and can do at different levels.
     - Are not a curriculum, an assessment, or a set of teaching activities.
     - Are instead a way for practitioners to think about the component skills that readers need to navigate and comprehend text.
     - Are linked to the read*forward* assessment tool; we will be looking at the ARB closely later in the workshop.

3. Reinforce that it's important to understand the difference and the connection between benchmarks and assessment tools.
   - Show Slide #8 to introduce this section.
   - Show slide #9 and 10 to explain the difference between benchmarks and assessment tools. Let participants know these definitions are also in their Workbooks in the section on Activity 3.

- Reiterate that you cannot use benchmarks to assess a learner's skills. They can provide information about what skills might need to be assessed, and can help to inform the design of an assessment tool.
- It is important to know that the read*forward* assessment tool is aligned with the Alberta Reading Benchmarks. Tell participants that page 99 of the read*forward* User Guide shows how read*forward* aligns with ARB.

4. Next, look at assessment tools for English speakers as opposed to English language learners.
   - Ask participants:
     - What would happen if they used a tool designed to assess ESL learners with their English-speaking learners?
     - How well would that tool assess the abilities of the English speakers?
     - What if the situation were reversed?
   - Reinforce the idea that using a tool with the audience it was designed for will give you the most accurate assessment results.
   - As an example, there is a question in the read*forward* assessment tool involving milk cartons with best-before dates. An ESL learner, who is highly educated, couldn't answer the question correctly. The learner had never before heard the term "best-before date". This skewed the test results, not because of the learner's reading skills, but because the vocabulary used was not in her experience.
   - One reason that using the right tool is so important is that the needs of ESL learners and literacy learners are quite different.
     - ESL learners are looking to improve their fluency in the English language through speaking and listening.
     - Literacy learners already have fluency in the English language. They may be looking to improve their skills in reading, writing, or numeracy.
   - Reiterate that the tools you're looking at in this workshop are for learners who already speak English fluently.

Adults who are learning something new are generally purpose-driven rather than pleasure-driven and that applies to this workshop's participants as much as to literacy learners.

Activity 4: An introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks (ARB)

1. Review the preparations required for this activity, as listed in *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
2. Explain why you are going to focus on the Alberta Reading Benchmarks.
   - The ARB were established specifically for Alberta Community Adult Learning Programs.
   - The ARB provides resources for learner assessment and follow-up.
   - The ARB provides resources to help learners and practitioners create learning goals and develop learning plans.
3. Tell participants they'll be watching a video that will introduce the ARB.
   - Before starting the video, point out the cart with guiding questions in the Participant Workbook's section on Activity 4. The guiding questions direct the attention of participants to the main points of the video.
   - Assign one or two questions per participant or, in a larger group, assign one or two questions per table.
   - Ask participants to review the questions to help them absorb the information from the video.
   - Suggest that everyone use their Workbooks to make notes.
4. Show the video, Introduction to the Alberta Reading Benchmarks, found on the ARB Home page, under "Learn How to Use the ARB."
   - The video lasts just over eight minutes.

What are the Alberta Reading Benchmarks?	A set of standards to measure reading in adults. A guidepost or reference point to measure learner progress.
Why were the ARB developed?	To guide educators, learners and policy-makers working towards improved literacy in Alberta.
What is the purpose of the ARB for learners?	Provides them with a common language to talk about their learning with instructors and each other. Eases transitions between literacy programs because skills can be recognized using a common measure.
What is the purpose of the ARB for practitioners?	Provides a common measure to assess learners. Can be used to select suitable materials for learners.
What is the purpose of the ARB for government?	Provides information for policy development.
How many levels are in the ARB?	There are 7 levels.
Each level has 4 categories. What are they?	Text characteristics. Vocabulary. Decoding. Reading tasks.
Where on the website can you find suggestions that will support learning?	The “content to be taught” section in the resource “Alberta Reading Benchmarks for Adults.”
According to the video, what is the “key” to working with the ARB?	Be clear about which task you are working on Select resources that support learning for that particular task.

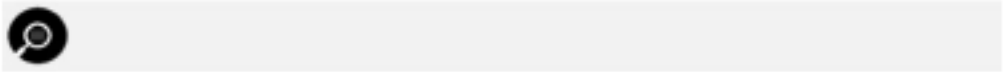
5. After watching the video:
    - Ask participants to answer the question in the table if they hadn't done so during the video.
    - Ask participants what stood out for them.
    - Review the video questions and answers as a group. Ask those who were assigned individual questions to respond. Allow a reasonable amount of time for participants to talk about the answers and process the information.
    - Following the discussion, reinforce with participants that the ARB are a common measure that can be used as the basis for designing an assessment tool or process, but they are not an assessment tool in themselves.

6. Introduce the rest of the ARB website.

   Show PowerPoint Slide #11 with the ARB website address. Participants may bring their own laptop or electronic device. Invite them to locate the website and follow along as you review these points.

   - Information that can be found on the first three tabs:
     - **Home:** Download and Read, Learn How to Use the ARB, Use our Resources.
     - **Learn:** the three Benchmark levels in detail, Assessment, Creating a Learning Plan, Tutor Training.
     - **Resources:** read*forward*, Teaching Strategies, Benchmarking materials.
   - Be sure to highlight the resources and content described in the video:
     - The list of resources for each level, including a Training Video and Teaching Strategies.
     - The instructional video to teach practitioners how to align resources with the ARB skill levels.
     - *Sharing the Journey with Adult Indigenous Learners* by Patricia Pryce.
     - Each level also includes a section on habits to be encouraged.

Each level includes a section on content to be taught. This section is very important. Staff are often looking for curriculum, and this section is included to support instruction.



Don't assume that all staff understand the terms used in assessment resources.

Always check for staff understanding.

The information in the video about policy and funders can also be helpful for Executive Directors.

The ED is removed somewhat from the practicality of walking someone through this, but they have the responsibility of writing the grant. Therefore, knowing the language of ARB and understanding the benchmarks gives an ED the ability to know what grants to target and the language to use to go after them. Bottom line? It's not just the practitioners' understanding that is important; EDs should also have access to this knowledge.

Under the "Resources" tab on the ARB website is a document titled "A Starter List of Materials for ARB Levels 1A to 2B".

Not all of the links are active. It sometimes helps to shorten a link to reach the site you are looking for.

Some of the resources listed were developed for ESL literacy learners.

Caution that, while it may be effective to have literacy learners' use materials developed for ESL, it isn't recommended that ESL learners use materials developed for English speaking literacy learners.

Activity 5: Using the ARB

1. Review the preparations required for this activity, as listed in *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
2. Introduce and review Alberta Reading Benchmarks Step-by-Step.
   - Refer participants to the Step-by-Step diagram in their Workbooks, and show them slide #12 with the same diagram.
   - Lead them through the Step-by-Step diagram and answer any questions they have.
3. Participants will now use the ARB to determine the reading level of a learner.
   - Direct them to David's profile and the instructor's observations in their Workbooks, where it's called the "Sample Diagnostic Reading Assessment" in the section on Activity 5.
   - Direct them to the ARB Levels Chart, in the same section of their Workbooks.
   - Show PowerPoint slide #13 with the question they will be answering, which is also in their Workbooks:
     - Using the ARB Levels Chart as a guide, at what ARB level would you assess David's skill based on the observations of David's reading performance?
   - Working alone, with a partner or in a small group depending on what works best in your situation, have participants use the profile and the levels chart to answer the question.
4. Ask participants to share their conclusions.
   - Once they have discussed their reasoning, show the whole Learner Profile as seen on the website.
     - This page is on PowerPoint slide #14 and 15.
   - Point out that David is at ARB Level 1C.
   - Be prepared to explain how this conclusion was reached if there is any question about it.

In discussing the Learner Profile, consider making these points:

The information from the Learner Profile is important for both CALP staff and David. This affirms to David that he has brought background knowledge and strategies to reading tasks.

Knowing the ARB gives staff a place to start when beginning with an adult learner.

There will be times when a learner doesn't fit neatly into the categories listed.

- When estimating a learner's level, be aware that if you start at too high a level, you may skip over some important pieces that the learner needs in order to progress.

As CALP staff become experienced in working with learners and the ARB, they may find that they can rely on observation to get the information they need to inform instruction.

- Until then, they should use the ARB and read*forward*. Both tools can help staff decide on teaching strategies.

The ARB and read*forward* are designed to complement each other.

CALP staff can use the ARB to get a general idea of the learner's level, then use the read*forward* assessment tool for a more accurate result.

- Or, conversely, staff could first use the read*forward* tool and then visit the ARB website for additional resources.

It is important for CALP staff to understand ARB and read*forward* and how they work together.

- The ARB provides staff with many learning tools and resources that were developed with CALP programs specifically in mind. These may not be part of read*forward*.

The ARB provides additional resources and information that CALP staff may find helpful.

Activity 6: An introduction to the read*forward* assessment tool

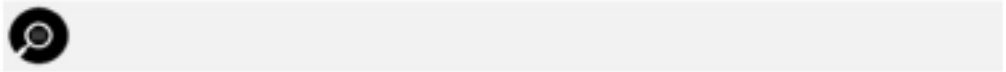
The results are intended to have more influence on a learning <u>plan</u> than learner <u>placement</u>

1. Review the preparations required for this activity, as listed in *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
2. Briefly mention the three types of assessment, which are discussed in the CALP e-learning module:
   - Formal assessments: These assessments are standardized and scored, and the results are compared to other learners.
   - Informal assessments: These assessments are neither standardized nor scores. They can be based on observations or interviews.
   - Formative assessments: These are used to check learner progress, and to inform teaching practice.
3. Allow time for participants to read the read*forward* blog post by Corrie Rhyasen Erdman that is in the Activity 6 section of their Participant Workbooks.
   - Ask for a few responses from participants: What stood out for them in this blog post?
4. Tell participants that they will now have a chance to learn about and use the read*forward* assessment tool. They have an understanding now of the ARB, which form the foundations of read*forward*. It is now time to introduce read*forward* itself, and to give participants the opportunity to practice scoring a sample reading assessment.
5. Briefly go over some key concepts about read*forward*:
   - read*forward* is an informal reading assessment.
   - It differs from other assessment tools such as CARA.
     - It prompts the learner by asking questions about the reading passage before they actually read the passage.
   - It is low-stakes. This means that assessment results won't be used to determine whether or not a learner will be placed in a certain class or program.
   - It uses reading tasks that learners encounter in their daily lives.
   - Learners work through the reading tasks in the tests, and demonstrate what they know about reading . . . and what they don't.

- The tasks they perform successfully reveal what the learners know and can do with their reading skills.
- The tasks that they cannot complete give us a glimpse at the gaps in the learners' reading knowledge
- Introduce participants to the read*forward* website: www.read*forward*.ca.

- Show PowerPoint slide #16 with the read*forward* website address. Invite participants to follow along on their electronic devices.
- Review how the website is organized:
  - On the Home Page
    - User Guide, Reading Skills Table
    - Locators, including Tests, Answer Keys and Score Sheets
    - Tests, including the Answer Keys and results feedback forms
    - Supplemental Learning Activities
  - How it Works, which is a brief overview of how to use the tool
  - The Resource, including the components of read*forward*
- Point out that this site is a good resource, available to them as they work with their learners.

6. Help participants become more familiar with the read*forward* website's User Guide by using the Jigsaw activity.
   - Refer to the instructions for the Jigsaw activity in the section on *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
   - Explain the process to participants, and let them know the instructions are also in their Workbooks.
   - Allow sufficient time for participants to become familiar with their "piece" of the jigsaw puzzle, as well as time for each participant to explain what they know to their group.



About read*forward* in general

read*forward* does not include tests for any levels below 1B.

- Learners at that level are working on alphabet and basic word recognition, which are pre-reading strategies.
- An assessment tool that is tailored to that level is DALA (Diagnostic Adult Learning Assessment).

read*forward* was designed to have the learner read the questions first, and then read the text to find the answer.

- Staff will need to explain this process to learners.
- Adults who are learning something new are generally purpose-driven rather than pleasure-driven—and that applies to this workshop's participants as much as to literacy learners.

About what could be learned from read*forward* about learning disabilities

read*forward* will not diagnose a reading disability.

It is a good idea to ask the learner:

- What they know about how they learn.
- Whether they have had any learning supports or accommodations in the past.

About whether to pay attention to writing errors when learners answer the questions in read*forward*

Staff should not assess how learners write their answers; this could lead staff to making assumptions that might not be correct.

read*forward* has been developed to assess reading levels only.

If the question arises, let participants know that the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills do not align with each other.

About accommodating learners with high test anxiety when using read*forward*, for example, by allowing oral responses to questions

Allowing oral responses will build their confidence in handling assessments.

It is nevertheless a good idea to encourage learners to try and write at least some of their answers.

About the alignment between other benchmarks and tools.

read*forward* aligns with IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey).

- Refer participants to the very helpful diagram in the read*forward* User Guide, page 11.

IALS is aligned with the Government of Canada's Essential Skills Framework.

- IALS and Essential Skills levels are quite broad.
- read*forward* has broken these broad skill levels down into smaller pieces.

read*forward* does not align with Essential Skills or PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies).

- Refer participants to the document PIAAC & CLB, located in the Participant Workbook and also on the CALP portal, for their future reference.
- For your own reference, see Appendix 9 in this manual to learn more about the connection between the CLB and PIAAC.

The Government of Canada Job Profiles provide information about what level of reading skill is needed for that occupation.

- These are the IALS and Essential Skills broader levels. (Refer to read*forward* User Guide page 10).
- So, for example, if the Job Profile indicates that a Level 2 reading skill is needed for a particular occupation, CALP staff can then go to read*forward* and find information on the skills within level 2.

Activity 7: read*forward* overview and using the read*forward* Locator Test

1. Review the preparations required for this activity, as listed in *Activities that require advance preparation*, above.
2. Explain that the read*forward* Step-by-Step Guide is an overview for using the tool.
    - Point out that participants can find it in their Workbooks in the section on Activity 7.
    - Show slides #17, 18 and 19 as you review the Step-by-Step Guide and answer any questions.
3. Show participants Slide #20 read*forward* Locator Test, Levels 1B-1C-2A
4. Introduce and hand out copies of:
    - The read*forward* sample Locator Test (if each participant is using the same sample test) or Tests (if you hand out the three different Sample Locator tests).
    - The read*forward* sample Locator Test Answer Key
    - The read*forward* Locator Test Score Sheet
5. Show Slide #21, Locator Test Answer Key and Slide #22 the first page of the Answer Key.
    - Explain that the Answer Key shows the kinds of questions asked at each level
    - Review with participants the section in the read*forward* Step-by-Step Guide titled “Score the Locator Test.” Reinforce the key points to remember when marking the Locator Test.
6. Participants now practice scoring a Locator Test that’s been completed by an adult learner.
    - Refer participants to the copies of the sample Locator Tests that you handed out.
    - Explain that the assessments were completed by adult literacy learners, but that you’ve ensured the learners cannot be identified.

7. Participants choose if they would like to work in pairs or on their own to score the sample Locator Test.
    - Give everyone time to work through scoring the sample Locator Test.
    - Go around the room to find out what score participants gave. Compare it with the result of the scored sample Locator tests that you have.
8. Once participants have scored the sample Locator Test, instruct them to insert the number of correct responses in the appropriate sections on the Locator Test Score Sheet. Show slide #23, the Locator Test Score Sheet.
9. The total score will determine the appropriate read*forward* level for the learner.

Activity 8: Using the read*forward* sample Test:

For tips on marking, refer to the **read*forward*** *Step-by-Step Guide, Appendix 8 "Mark the* **read*forward*** *Test.")*

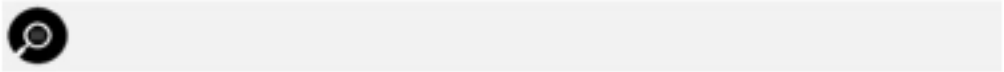
1. Distribute copies of the read*forward* sample Test and read*forward* sample Test Answer Key for Level 2A Diamond.
2. Explain that the questions in each of the five tests in any level follow the same trajectory in determining reading skills. This means that question #1 in all five of the tests within a level is testing the same reading skill.
3. Ask participants to look at the Level 2A Diamond Answer Key.
    - Explain that the answer key shows the kinds of questions asked at each level, as well as the reading skills needed to answer the questions correctly.
4. Participants now practice scoring sample Level 2A Diamond Test, which has been completed by an adult learner.
    - Explain that the assessment was completed by an adult literacy learner, but that you've ensured the learner cannot be identified.
5. Working on their own, participants score the sample Test.
    - Each correct answer is one point.
    - Convert the total points to a percentage.
6. Go around the room and check the score that a few participants have assigned.
    - Compare it with the result of the scored read*forward* sample Test that you have.

Introduce participants to the Results Feedback Form.

- Point out that they have the Level 2A Results Feedback Form in the section on Activity 8 of their Participant Workbooks.
- Show slide #24, the Level 2A Results Feedback Form and explain that each read*forward* level has its own designated Results Feedback Form. All of these forms are available to download from the read*forward* website.
- Explain that the forms serve as a guide for providing feedback and generating discussion with the learner.
    - The forms identify the level the learner is at, as well as the things the learner needs to work on.
    - Staff can use this information to have a conversation with the learner without having to generate the ideas for the learning activities.
- Briefly explain how to fill out the Results Feedback Form.

Activity 9: Using assessment results

1. Now participants will create a learning plan.
    - They will use the information from:
        - The Results Feedback Form, which will indicate strengths and gaps
        - The Answer Key, which shows the specific reading skills needed for each question
        - The ARB At-a-Glance Teaching Strategies, found in the section on Activity 9 of their Participant Workbooks
        - The sample learning plan in the section on Activity 9 of their Participant Workbooks
    - Participants may choose to use the learning plan templates in their Workbooks, or may choose to develop their own learning plan template.
    - Participants are invited to work alone, in pairs or in small groups to develop a learning plan for the learner whose Test they scored.
        - You can suggest to participants that a starting point for the learning plan might be where the learner started getting questions wrong.
        - The learning plan should include resources and teaching strategies.
        - There is space for this planning process in their Workbooks.
    - Ask a few of the participants to share their learning plans, and discuss them as a whole group.
2. Be sure to point out that staff can build a learning plan with the learner, and that they should make sure the learner receives a copy of the plan.
3. Remind participants that there is a list and description of assessment tools in the Assessment e-learning module on the CALP Portal called “Starter Kit Assessment Tools.”



You can anticipate lots of questions about the process of using read*forward* because the workshop participants want to get it right and build their own confidence with the tool.

There may be confusion about moving from the Locator Test to the Tests.

Participants may assume that the Locator Test will give staff a reading level. Participants may assume that the Locator Test will indicate the learner's reading level, however, the Locator Test directs staff to the read*forward* test that is most appropriate.

The Locator Test does not provide information about a learner's reading skills. It provides information about the reading level.

The read*forward* Tests identify a specific skill that the learner can or cannot do. This is important information to know when deciding where to start and what to teach.

To help with preparing a learning plan, you will find Learning Activities on the read*forward* website, www.read*forward*.ca, under *The Resource* tab.

This is a key point for CALP staff to understand:

Pay attention to the shapes associated with each Test and Answer Key: semi-circle, square, triangle, circle and diamond.

- There are five Tests at each level, differentiated by these different shapes. The five tests in each level are all at the same level of difficulty.
- That means that if a learner wants to rewrite a Test at the same level as a previous Test, there are other Tests available.
- Staff must ensure that they match up the Answer Keys with the Tests, diamond with diamond, and so on. Otherwise, the answers won't match up with the questions.

Activity 10: Review - Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward*

1. Review the following assessment concepts, found in the section on Activity 10 in the Participant Workbook:

   We can use assessments in various ways.

   - To set a baseline at the beginning of a program so that we can measure learning at the end—this is part of summative assessment.
   - To inform instruction during the program—this is formative assessment.
   - To measure progress at the end of a program—this is the completion of summative assessment.

   Assessments are necessary to respond to funder requirements, and doing assessments will make not only program design but also the reporting process easier to do and much more responsive.

   - Assessment helps staff understand where the learner needs to focus, which in turn helps with goal-setting. It's therefore a necessary step in the process of meeting the CALP requirement to name learners' goals.
   - Also, assessment results can help staff actually measure learner confidence rather than recalling what a learner might have said about their confidence or asking them about it directly.

   It's important to create an assessment process that includes learners.

   - The assessment tools are just one part of the process.
   - The job of CALP staff is encourage learners to be part of the assessment process, so that learners become active rather than passive recipients of learning.
   - Learners are then empowered to monitor their own learning.
   - CALP staff may consider asking learners, "Have you done assessments before? How do you feel about assessments?" And telling them, "We're going to do this together."
   - CALP staff need to define their terms about assessment, or co-define the terms with learners, so learners can own the language. (This ties to persistence for learners, as described by Stephen Reder in the IAFL course).

2. Review the key concepts about the Alberta Reading Benchmarks, including:
    - The ARB was established specifically for Alberta Community Adult Learning Programs.
    - The ARB provides resources for learner assessment and follow-up.
    - The ARB provides resources to help learners and practitioners create learning goals and develop learning plan.
    - Benchmarks are like a ruler:
        - The ruler by itself doesn't tell you much; you have to have a process for lining things up and measuring things over time. You can't assess just by looking at the ruler itself.
        - Similarly, the ARB provides tools and guidance for creating your own process for determining learner skills at a point in time, or you can choose a ready-made tool like read*forward*.
3. Review the key concepts about read*forward*, including:
    - read*forward* is an informal reading assessment.
    - It differs from other assessment tools such as CARA.
    - It prompts the learner by asking questions about the reading passage before they actually read the passage.
    - It is low-stakes and uses reading tasks that learners encounter in their daily lives.
    - Learners work through the reading tasks in the Tests, and demonstrate what they know about reading . . . and what they don't:
        - The tasks they perform successfully reveal what learners know and can do with their reading skills.
        - The tasks that they cannot complete give us a glimpse at the gaps in their reading knowledge.

Activity 11: Reflections and Intentions

1. Give participants a few minutes to reflect on what they have learned and how they might use this information.
2. Ask them to name two actions they intend to take to help them improve their learner assessment practice when they return to their program. Have them write their intentions in the section on Activity 11 in their Workbooks.
3. Ask them to consider what supports or preparation they need to carry out these intentions.
4. Invite them to share with one other person about their intentions and the support they will need.

Activity 12: Review KWL – What have you learned?

1. As a group, review the sticky notes from the beginning of the day where you answered the first two KWL questions:
   - This is what participants know about learner assessment
   - This is what they want to know.
2. Explain that now you'll be answering the final question:
   - What have you learned?
3. If you have a small group, you may choose to use the ball toss activity, taken from https://sixth.ucsd.edu.
   - Participants stand in a circle.
   - Facilitator tosses a soft rubber or foam ball to a participant.
   - When the participant catches the ball, they tell what they thought was the most important learning concept about Learner Assessment.
   - The speaker then tosses the ball to another participant.
   - Continue tossing the ball until everyone has caught the ball at least once.
4. If you have a larger group, you may choose to use the snowball activity, taken from www.edutopia.org
   - On a piece of scratch paper, each participant writes down one thing they have learned about Learner Assessment.
   - Then, they wad up the piece of paper.
   - Given a signal, they throw their paper snowballs in the air.
   - Then each participant picks up a nearby response and reads it aloud.

Closing: Q&A and evaluation

1. Question and answer
    - Answer questions from participants, or review parking lot questions, or both.
2. Evaluations
    - Distribute the evaluation forms and give participants time to complete the form.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Reference materials

The following resources are the ones we used to create this workshop.

For the facilitation process and to help you answer questions, you will need to have some knowledge of and familiarity with these resources.

In particular, we gratefully acknowledge the work of Terri Peters, author of the Revised Facilitators Guide from the Introduction to Adult Foundational Learning (IAFL). This workshop is modeled on that Guide.

References:

"Assessment for Learning" on the CALP Portal. www.calp.ca

read*forward*, including the read*forward* User Guide. www.read*forward*.ca

The CALP guidelines on the CALP Portal. www.calp.ca

Creating Learning Partners, especially Unit 6: Reading—Sections 5A and 5B: Reading Assessment, plus associated handouts, on the CALP Portal. www.calp.ca

Alberta Reading Benchmarks, including the website. www.arbforadults.ca

Certain modules from Alberta Reading Benchmarks that can be used for several purposes: to determine the specific reading tasks that need to be taught; to monitor progress in learning; to select level-appropriate reading materials; and to find helpful teaching strategies.

Module #1: Introduction to the purpose and content of the ARB

Module #2: Getting familiar with the ARB, Assessing Reading Skills

Module #3: Learning Plans, Teaching Strategies

Module #4: How to benchmark materials to the ARB

You can download modules at www.arbforadults.ca/tutor-training/.

Move the Body, Stretch the Mind, Judy Murphy, Windsound Learning, 2008. This resource is available online through the CALP Portal.

Appendix 2: Notes About Facilitation

Facilitation techniques and principles guiding facilitation

As you train the CALP staff in how best to use the Alberta Reading Benchmarks and read*forward*, they will learn as much from how you facilitate their learning as they will from the content you're presenting.

We have therefore added this section on the techniques and principles that guide a good facilitation. The recommendations below are adapted from the facilitation tips found in the Introduction of the *Adult Foundational Learning (IAFL) Facilitator's Guide*, as well as those on pages 6 and 7 of the *Creating Learning Partners* Introduction.

As facilitators, we begin with these assumptions

We only ask people to do things we feel comfortable doing ourselves. The intent is to strike a balance between stretching participants beyond the familiar and avoiding embarrassing them.

Participatory activities are purposeful rather than simply games for entertainment.

We are mindful of our attitudes. The way we facilitate reflects how we see ourselves in relation to other people. If we see ourselves as the experts, for example, that attitude has an impact on how we treat others, and could lead us to demonstrate, however unintentionally, that we do not value their knowledge.

Learning is an evolving process of discovery rather than a process of filling an empty vessel. We are creating knowledge together. We don't necessarily know where we will end up.

Our role as facilitators is one of "power with" rather than "power over" participants

We are not using power to control but, rather, sharing power with the participants in a process of shared learning.

Remember this equation: learner voice + learner experience = learner engagement.

If we trust the process and have faith in the wisdom of the people taking part, we accept that they hold many of the answers to their questions. Our role is to support their process of figuring out solutions.

Whenever possible, try to elicit participants' personal examples rather than using your own. You will be pulling meaningful and relevant information from the learners, and building their confidence. Their experiences and perceptions are their starting point for engaging with this content.

Try not to get hung up on "right" and "wrong." Try not to focus on details of content. Instead, build the learners' understanding up from wherever they begin.

Some people share very simple ideas, while others are extremely complex. Some people will have obvious experience or knowledge to share. Others, with seemingly limited background and experience, will at times promote deep discussion, and reveal surprising knowledge or insight.

Participants will learn both from each other and from the facilitator. As facilitators, we legitimately add new information. Our most crucial role is to create the conditions for discovery and new understanding as partners in learning.

When we educate for change, we take learning beyond the superficial and connect it with people's day-to-day lived experience. This kind of learning is based on a continuous learning spiral that asks *What?, So What?,* and *Now What?* Or to put it differently, *What is our experience?, What does it mean?,* and *What can we do about it?*

As facilitators, we need to plan ahead

To be effective, our role starts long before we walk through the door.

We can speak with key players in advance and learn about the history, dynamics and expectations of the participants.

We can ask participants about their hopes and "hope-nots" for the learning experience. We can pick up clues from the participants' feedback about a format that will fit for a particular group.

We blend the insights gained from the participants with our knowledge of the content of the training workshop.

As facilitators, there are ways we can help each person to feel heard

Many people have been discouraged from letting their voices be heard, particularly women, people of colour, and people from minority cultures.

As facilitators we must be committed to ensuring every voice is heard.

We need an array of approaches that break down barriers to participation in an atmosphere of mutual respect. For example, as you see in Appendix 3, we recommend using icebreakers.

We bring all parts of ourselves into the room – feelings, beliefs, past experiences, knowledge, skills, bodies and spirit.

People have a variety of ways of acquiring new knowledge and expressing themselves. We can open doors to learning by using a variety of approaches for learning. For example, we recommend providing opportunities for writing and reflection, as well as opportunities for group discussion. We recommend activities that involve getting up and moving, activities that involve listening, others that involve reading or watching. We urge you to become aware of your own preferred learning style, and to very consciously integrate other styles as well when you plan a workshop.

If we pay close attention to cues such as tone of voice, body language, eye contact and gut instinct, we can move with the energy of the people in the room.

If we feel tension, we can name it and ask for guidance from the participants. The chances are that they know what is going on. Together we can create a solution to the problem.

Appendix 3: About icebreakers and energizers

About icebreakers

We use icebreakers for many reasons. Their key characteristic is that they are meant to build a sense of comfort and connection at a point when people are uncertain and perhaps nervous. Even when working one-to-one, we create comfort or discomfort by the way we begin.

Some activities may be difficult for some people. Always consider the physical abilities of your group before choosing an energizer.

If people start by saying or doing something that is familiar and non-threatening, they are more likely to relax. If they use their voice to say something that comes easily, they are all the more likely to speak up during the session. Icebreakers help us accomplish this.

About energizers

Energizers are a variation on icebreakers. They usually involve some kind of body movement that is fun and non-threatening. You can use them to stimulate energy at the beginning of a program. You can also use them during a program when energy slides and people need a break from thinking, when they want to get up and move around.

Move the Body, Stretch the Mind, Judy Murphy, Windsound Learning, 2008. (This resource is available on the CALP Portal.) The author wrote this book with adult learners in mind. The book focuses on ways to use stretches, breathing and relaxation exercises to strengthen the learning mind. The materials are built on research that links brain and mind learning with action, and recognize that we cannot separate the body from the mind, despite how our institutes of learning are organized. The state of our body has a great impact on how we learn. If we are anxious and stressed, or if we are holding tension in our body, we are not open and ready to learn.

Murphy says (on page 11 of her book) that four things need to happen to help us learn:

- We need to feel relaxed and alert, also safe and supported, to take the risks needed for learning.
- We need to be engaged in the learning experience. We learn through our senses, which includes movement. We learn when our brain connects our experiences with new information we have taken in, and what the experiences and new information mean to us.
- We need to use our learning, by putting it into practice, by writing or drawing about what we have learned.
- We need to trust what our bodies know, and to trust the wisdom that is within us.

Good times to use energizers in this workshop could include:

Right after lunch.

At any time in the workshop when you get a sense that the energy level of the participants has started to drop.

Here are some examples of energizers that will allow people to move around and recharge.

Lead the group through some stretches, including some or all of the following.

- Neck stretches
- Shoulder lifts
- Shoulder rolls
- Reach for the moon
- Folding forward
- Star watching
- Sideways bend
- Shake it!

These stretches are all found in *Move the Body, Stretch the Mind*, pages 28 -30.

This idea, "Get Connected," was taken from www.bsc.coop/docs/FacilitationGames.pdf

- You need a hula hoop.
- The group forms a circle. Be sure they introduce themselves to the people on their right and left if they have not already done so.
- Have one person put the hula hoop over one arm.
- Then ask everyone in the group to join hands, including the person holding the hula hoop.
- Attempt to pass the hula hoop around the whole circle without breaking hands.
- Some variations
    - Add a decreasing time limit and do it four or five times
    - Do it without talking and everyone blindfolded
    - Do with the people touching the hula hoop blind, and everyone else telling them what to do.

The following two energizers were taken from the Introduction in Creating Learning Partners, page 9. Even if they've been working together, this will have people introducing themselves in new ways within the group.

1. Gather participants in groups according to where they were born, the number of children in the household where they grew up, their birth order or the length of time they have lived in their community. Even if they've been working together, this will have people introducing themselves in new ways within the group.

   Ask participants to form a line according to how far they are right now from the place they were born, or according to the length of time they have lived in their community. This exercise necessitates people speaking with one another, and the group can make observations about the results.

2. This idea, **"Tell a Story,"** comes from www.reprolineplus.org.

- The participants should stand in a circle.
- They are to build a story with each participant contributing one sentence.
- Each sentence must:
    - Make sense and at the same time add some fun to the activity.
    - Build on to the last sentence.
    - Be grammatically correct.
- For example, Person #1: "I was walking to breakfast this morning." #2: "A dog came up to me." #3: "I said good morning to the dog." #4: "The dog asked me what I was going to have for breakfast."
- The activity continues until all of the participants have contributed or until the facilitator feels that the group has been energized.

Appendix 4: About assessment

You may have to deal with unease about assessment

There can be considerable unease or discomfort around assessment, both on the part of staff and on the part of learners.

On the part of CALP staff:

- CALP staff are generally very caring people who want to be effective and efficient, and not create a barrier by doing an assessment "wrong."
- If CALP staff don't have a background in assessment, they may lack confidence that they're doing the assessment correctly and may intimidated by the assessment tools.

On the part of learners:

- Learners bring a lot of information to the assessment, but they don't always have the language to describe it.

To ease that discomfort, the assessment process can be centered on creating a shared knowledge space.

- It gives staff and the learner a shared language about what they're doing and what they need to address.
- People will appreciate having language for how to talk about assessment and gaps in knowledge.

The very word "assessment" can be a problem for some people, learners and CALP staff alike. Explain to participants that there are other ways to describe the assessment process.

- CALP staff could say "This is a booklet that helps us understand and know what to do."
- If a learner describes their reading level as: "I'm a Grade 3," staff could ask about that. If the learner goes on to say, "That's when I left school," staff could respond with, "That's when you quit going to school, but that's not when you quit learning. Let's find out what else you've learned over time." This can help change the way a learner describes himself.

Encourage CALP staff to approach assessment from a place of respect for what learners know and bring

From the moment the learner walks in the door, staff are learning about them and that's actually the start of the assessment.

"Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder. Help someone's soul heal. Walk out of your house like a shepherd." This quote by Rumi applies here.

Every learner is going to require something of a CALP staff person:

- Some learners come to the program, and all they need is a staff person to shine a light on the best opportunity for them to achieve their goal, and they are on their way.
- Some learners are floundering; they need a lifeboat. They have no idea where to begin. It may be a crisis on many fronts, and require staff to assess and problem-solve and advocate and support.
- Other learners come to the program, and they need a staff person to put up a ladder, to or walk with and support them to take the next steps.

If staff have only one response to every learner who has a need:

- Then they may be offering a lifeboat to someone who only needs a light.
- If staff are only comfortable shining a light, it may be much too little for the learner who needs a ladder or a lifeboat.

Having a variety of tools, especially assessment tools, gives staff a consistent way to assess skills and gaps:

- It gives learners more information about what they know and what they need to know.

With the right assessment, staff can decide if it is a lamp, a ladder or a lifeboat that will be needed.

You can use assessments in various ways

Assessment is not just for seeing what someone else has learned, or to compare someone's progress with that of others.

- It is very important to facilitators in their ongoing planning.
- It can have an impact on adjustments both to program content and delivery.
- Assessment is used to track learner progress:
- To set a baseline at the beginning of a program so that we can measure learning at the end—making this part of summative assessment.
- To inform instruction during the program—this is formative assessment.
- To measure progress at the end of a program—this is summative assessment.

Assessments are also necessary to respond to funder requirements, and doing assessments will make not only program design but also the reporting process easier to do and much more responsive:

- Assessment helps staff understand where the learner needs to focus, which in turn helps with goal-setting. It's therefore a necessary step in the process of meeting this CALP requirement.
- Also, assessment results can help staff actually measure learner confidence rather than recalling what a learner said or asking the question blatantly.

It is crucial to include learners in the assessment process

- The assessment tools are just one part of the process.
- The job of CALP staff is to hand over the assessment process to learners so they aren't just coming to staff for an "inoculation".
- Instead, learners are empowered to monitor their own learning.
- CALP staff may consider asking learners - Have you done assessments before? How do you feel about assessments? We're going to do this together.
- CALP staff need to define their terms about assessment, or co-define the terms with learners, so learners can own the language. (This ties to persistence for learners, as described by Stephen Reder in the IAFL course).

To help your learners, you need to understand that...

Overall, the focus of assessment is the learner's experience.

Staff may be cautious about possibly shaming the learners, but staff might actually be empowering learners through the assessment process.

- Having a "marker" on the path can be discouraging OR it can show how far they've come.

Staff can give themselves permission to acknowledge to the learner that they may not know an assessment tool really well.

- They can say, "We're going to figure this out together."
- This removes the pressure from staff of feeling like they must be "the expert."
- This also demonstrates that we are all learners, and models the importance of practice, practice, practice.

Staff should consider why they are conducting an assessment and the impact of assessment, i.e. is it helping a learner?

- In the case of long-term staff, the action of conducting an assessment may become so reflexive, staff may forget that what they are doing is assessment.

It is important that the person conducting assessment have the appropriate training.

Conducting an assessment is not an administrative task.

Assessment must be conducted with future learning in mind.

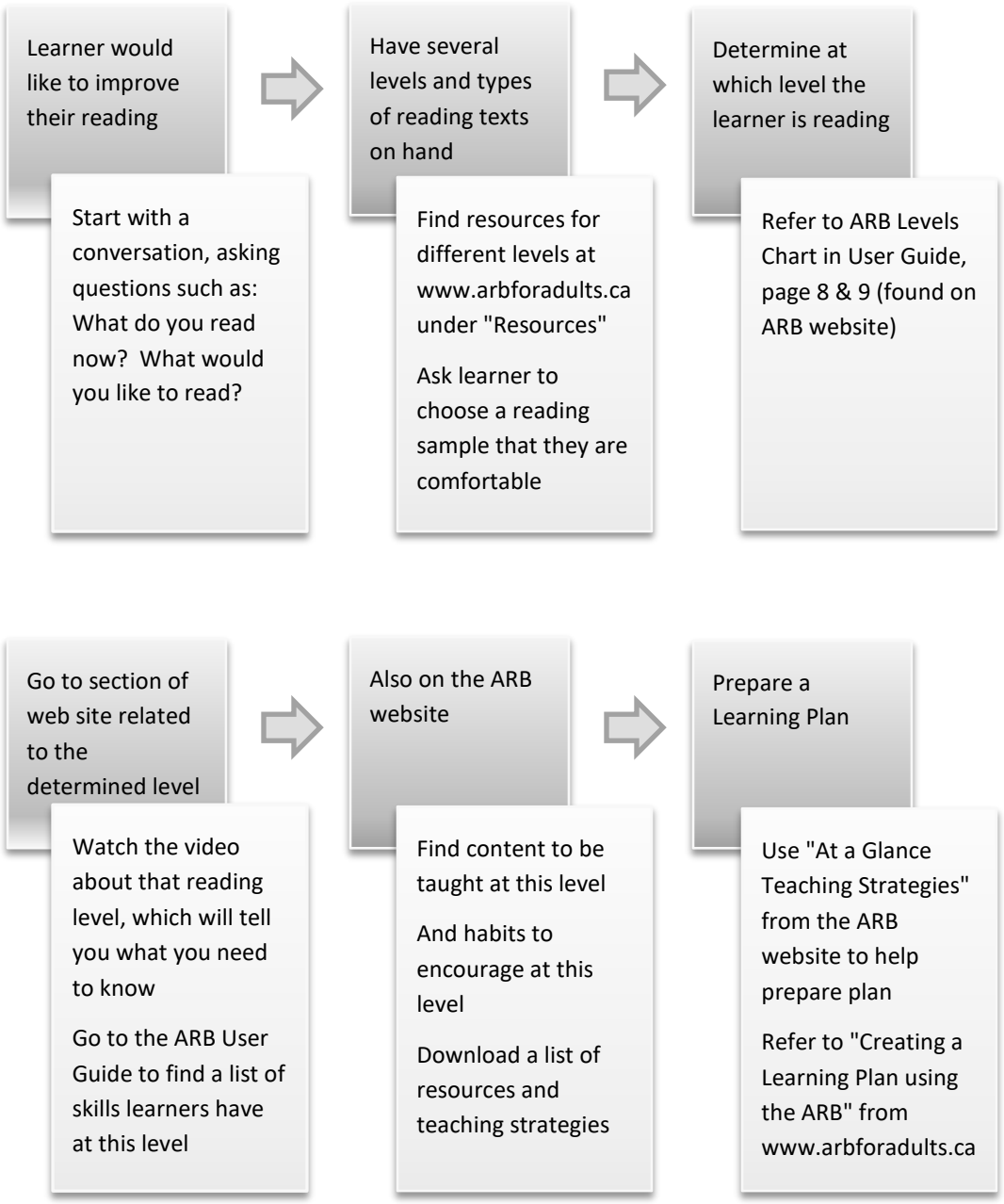
This requires knowledge and skill on the part of the assessor.

If a staff person asks a tutor to work with the learning plan the staff person has developed based on an assessment. It is important that the tutor has all of the information from the assessment necessary to work with the learning plan.

Keep in mind the background knowledge and capability of a tutor.

- Some tutors may have the knowledge and experience needed to conduct assessments.
- Tutors with a background in teaching in the school system may not have the level of knowledge about adult learning needed to conduct assessments, and will require additional training about adult learning.

Appendix 5: Alberta Reading Benchmarks Step-by-Step



Appendix 6: Sample Diagnostic Reading Assessment

Read David's Learner Profile.

Learner Profile: David went to school until he was 12 years old but had to stop when his dad died. There were 4 kids in the family and David was the oldest so he went to work with his mother to support the family. When he was 17 he moved to the Northwest Territories and got a job working in a mine where he stayed until he retired.

Gardening is his favourite past-time but he would also like to have a part-time job to keep him busy because his wife intends to continue working for another few years. His first part-time job, as a car wash attendant, was frustrating for him because he had difficulty reading the instructions for the maintenance and repair of the pay stations which needed regular attention.

For someone who led a successful and profitable career as a miner it was demoralizing to have so much difficulty with a job he felt should have been easy.

The chart below demonstrates how to use instructor observations of reading skills and align them to the ARB descriptors. (Refer the ARB At-A-Glance p. 8-9)

Referencing David's Skills to the ARB

Instructor's Observations of Reading Skills:	ARB Reading Task (ARB level)	Performing Level
Good decoding skills but struggles with words with unpredictable spelling	Can sound out words that follow the most common sound/spelling relationships (1C)	1C
Is able to pull out basic facts from the readings such as things, people, places, times and amounts	Can find information that uses simple and common words (1C) *Information is concrete such as an action, person, thing, group, animal, descriptor, time, location, or amount*	1C
Has trouble following an idea if it is explained over more than 1 sentence	Can relate information to other information further away in the text (2A)	
Enjoyed reading a short article about container gardening. Is able to decipher most words including some difficult words like *zucchini* and *fertilize*.	Can decode some familiar three syllable words (1C)	1C
Had a more difficult time with a short biography on a Canadian Olympic medalist and needed help with words like *skiing* and *physical*	Can decode some longer and more complex words in a familiar context (2A)	

David is able to perform tasks at **ARB level 1C**. He has difficulty with level 2A tasks such as relating information that is not side by side in the text and managing vocabulary with more difficult spelling patterns.

Appendix 7: Blog Post by Corrie Rhyasen Erdman

Read Forward by Corrie Rhyasen Erdman

CALP Portal Blog, February 10, 2016

read*forward* is an informal reading assessment designed with learners in mind. It is low-stakes and uses reading tasks learners encounter in their daily lives. By working through the reading tasks in the tests, learners demonstrate what they know about reading... and what they don't. The tasks they perform successfully reveal what the learner knows and can do with their reading skills. The tasks that they cannot complete give us a glimpse at the gaps in the learner's reading knowledge.

Included with the read*forward* materials is an answer key that not only provides the test answers but also includes the reading skill being tested in each question. Knowing the reading skills for each question means that the test results identify the specific skills the learner needs to work on.

This information supports learning and instruction by:

- Providing a baseline. The test results mark the starting point to compare and measure learning progress.
- Informing the learning plan. The skills identified by the assessment articulate what specific skills to teach. These can be used as part of the learning plan.
- Monitoring learning progress. Having a baseline and knowing the skills to teach enables practitioners and learners to keep track of the development of reading skills.

When to use read*forward*

Before using read*forward* it is important to clarify if this assessment is the right assessment for the learner and the purpose. read*forward* is designed for learners who

- Are fluent in English
- Struggle with reading tasks in their work, home or community
- Want to improve their reading skills

Note: This assessment is not designed for learners with learning disabilities and will not provide accurate assessment results. However, the test materials can also be used as learning activities and are useful for developing reading skills for all learners.

Read Forward by Corrie Rhyasen Erdman

CALP Portal Blog, February 10, 2016

Be clear about your intent and purpose for using the read*forward* assessment. If you are using the assessment to

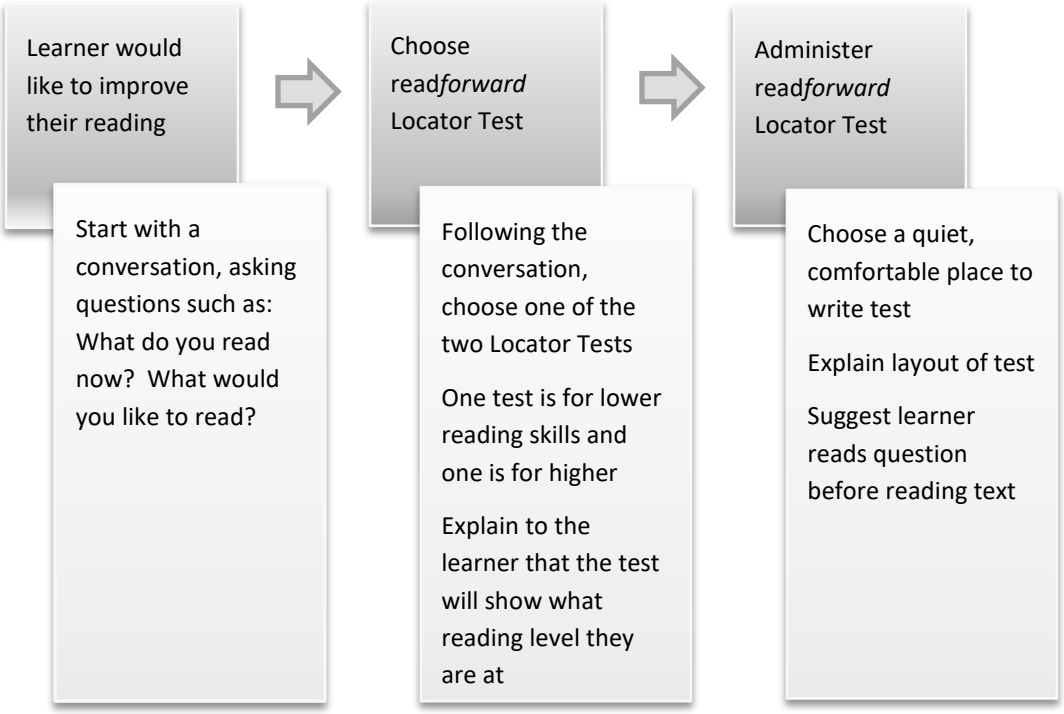
- Identify skill gaps so you know where to focus the learning, then it is best to administer the test early on in the learning process, i.e. once the learner has indicated reading as a learning goal
- Check learning progress, then you can re-administer the test at a midway point in the learning process (there are 5 tests for each level so no need to reuse a test!).
- Confirm that the learner has completed their goal or mastered the skills in a read*forward* level, then a final test will allow you to compare the learner's current reading skills to the initial and/or midpoint assessments. The results will also inform the next stage of learning should the learner choose to continue.

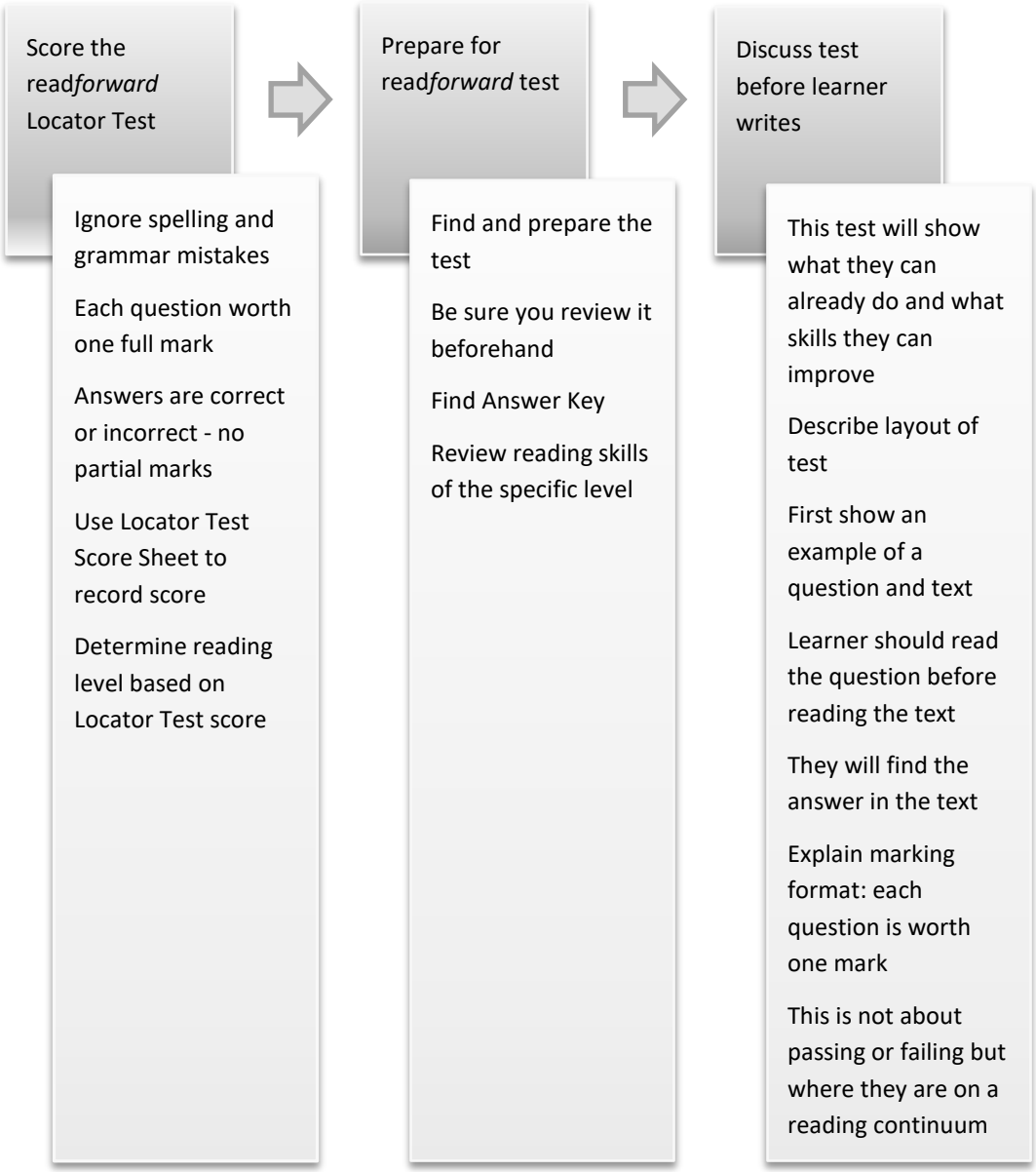
Note: read*forward* is intended to be used to inform the learner as well as the practitioner. Regardless of the purpose of the assessment, take the time to share the results with the learner in such a way that it affirms their existing skills and strengths and gives clear direction for further learning

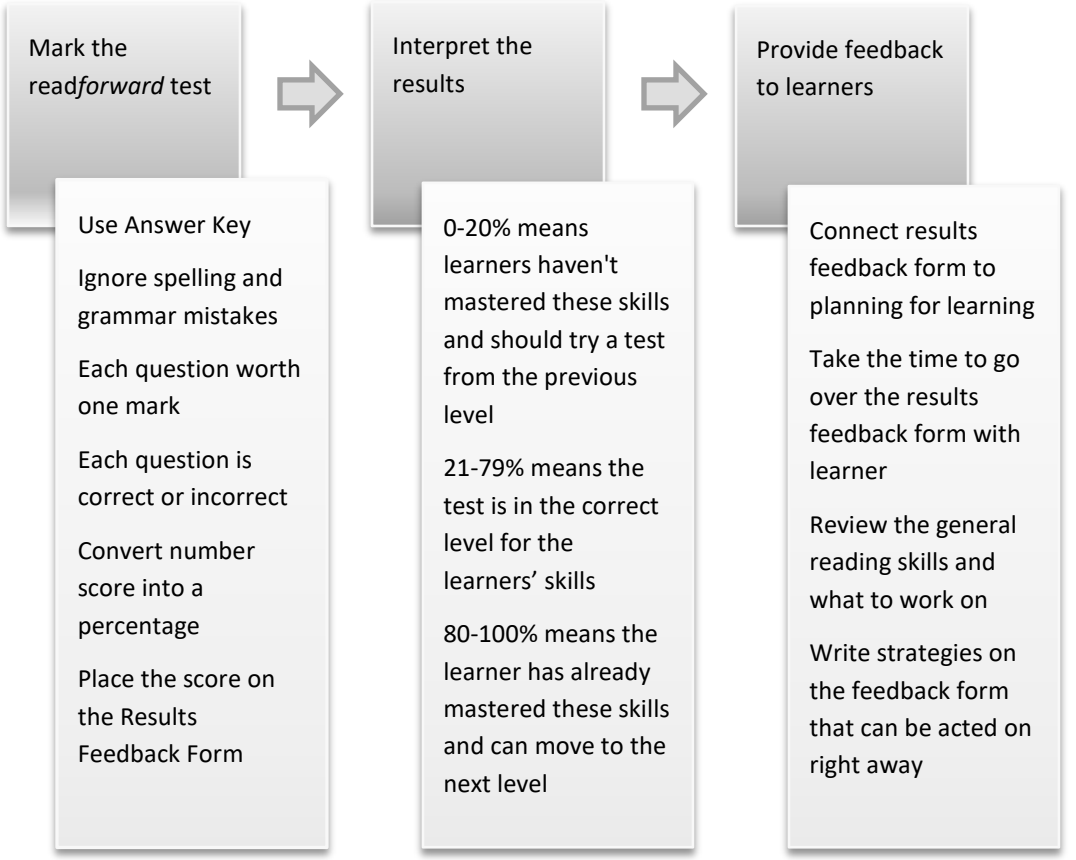
read*forward* is available as a free download from www.read*forward.*ca

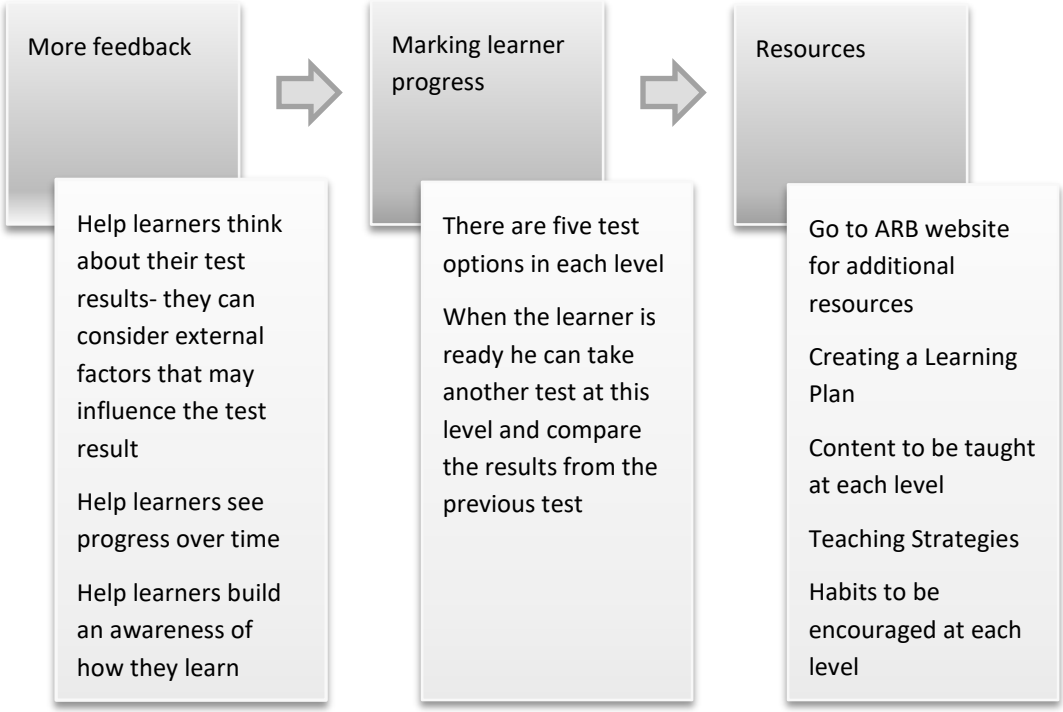
Take the time to review the guide before using the materials. And once you have used read*forward* check out the companion resources (leveled reading materials, teaching strategies, tips for assessment and planning for learning) on the Alberta Reading Benchmarks website. www.arbforadults.ca

Appendix 8: read*forward* Step-by-Step




Score the read*forward* Locator Test
Ignore spelling and grammar mistakes
Each question worth one full mark
Answers are correct or incorrect - no partial marks
Use Locator Test Score Sheet to record score
Determine reading level based on Locator Test score
Prepare for read*forward* test
Find and prepare the test
Be sure you review it beforehand
Find Answer Key
Review reading skills of the specific level
Discuss test before learner writes
This test will show what they can already do and what skills they can improve
Describe layout of test
First show an example of a question and text
Learner should read the question before reading the text
They will find the answer in the text
Explain marking format: each question is worth one mark
This is not about passing or failing but where they are on a reading continuum


Mark the read*forward* test
Use Answer Key
Ignore spelling and grammar mistakes
Each question worth one mark
Each question is correct or incorrect
Convert number score into a percentage
Place the score on the Results Feedback Form
Interpret the results
0-20% means learners haven't mastered these skills and should try a test from the previous level
21-79% means the test is in the correct level for the learners' skills
80-100% means the learner has already mastered these skills and can move to the next level
Provide feedback to learners
Connect results feedback form to planning for learning
Take the time to go over the results feedback form with learner
Review the general reading skills and what to work on
Write strategies on the feedback form that can be acted on right away


More feedback
Help learners think about their test results- they can consider external factors that may influence the test result
Help learners see progress over time
Help learners build an awareness of how they learn
Marking learner progress
There are five test options in each level
When the learner is ready he can take another test at this level and compare the results from the previous test
Resources
Go to ARB website for additional resources
Creating a Learning Plan
Content to be taught at each level
Teaching Strategies
Habits to be encouraged at each level

Appendix 9: PIAAC & CLB

PIAAC tests reading, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments.

CLB assesses reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

The two frameworks only have reading skills in common. Since English Language Learners need all of the language skills to function well in life, PIAAC has limited use for English language learning.

There is no comparative framework between PIAAC and the CLBs. There is a comparative framework between the CLBs and the Essential Skills framework in Canada (see link below). But there is no assessment tool or framework which correlates CLBs to any other international survey such as PIAAC, IALS or IALSS.

http://www.language.ca/index.cfm?Voir=sections&id=17367&M=4038&Sequence_No=17367&Parent=0&niveau=1&repertoire_no=2137991327

Below is some additional information about both PIAAC and CLB which may provide more context about this.

PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

Description quoted from the Canadian PIAAC website:

PIAAC is the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, an international assessment of the foundational information-processing skills required to participate in the social and economic life of advanced economies in the 21st century.

An initiative of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), PIAAC provides a highly detailed survey of skills in literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in technology-rich environments (PS-TRE) among adults between the ages of 16 and 65 in over 40 countries and sub-national regions, along with all of Canada's provinces and territories. These core skills form the basis for cultivating the other, higher-level skills necessary to function at home, school, work, and in the community.

Source: http://www.piaac.ca/590/FAQ.html

Organizations can purchase access codes to the Education & Skills Assessment Online. This assessment does align with PIAAC and individual learners in programs may be assessed in this way. Note that assessment is available in English, but access codes can only be purchased in American dollars or Euros.

Education & Skills Assessment Online

Description quoted from the website:

Education & Skills Online is an assessment tool designed to provide individual-level results that are linked to the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) measures of literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. All results are comparable to the measures used in PIAAC and can be benchmarked against the national and international results available for the participating countries. In addition, the assessment contains non-cognitive measures of skill use, career interest, health and well-being, and soon also behavioral competencies.

Source: /http://www.oecd.org/skills/ESonline-assessment/

CLB – Canadian Language Benchmarks

Description quoted from the website:

The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks is the centre of expertise in support of the national standards in English and French for describing, measuring and recognizing second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada.

The Centre promotes their recognition and use as practical, fair and reliable national standards of second language proficiency throughout Canada in educational, training, community and workplace settings. http://www.language.ca/index.cfm?Repertoire_No=2137991327