

Common Core Basic Education Program



Secteur de la formation professionnelle et technique et de la formation continue

CCBE

Common Core Basic Education

Direction de l'éducation des adultes et de l'action communautaire

Québec 

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Foreword

The Common Core Basic Education Program is the result of decisions taken by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport with respect to the education reform in Québec. It consists of 13 programs of study in the first phase of adult general education, known as Common Core Basic Education. These programs of study are made up of courses spanning three levels: Literacy, Presecondary and Secondary Cycle One.

The Common Core Basic Education Program is at the heart of the curriculum. It targets the development of competencies and is based on the needs of adult learners, who are considered to have primary responsibility for their learning. The program identifies the resources needed for the development of competencies that help adult learners deal effectively with their various real-life situations. It provides new perspectives on essential learning related to these situations.

In addition to presenting the new programs of study, this document provides essential information for situating and understanding the reform of Common Core Basic Education. Chapter 1 gives a summary of the government and ministry orientations for the curriculum reform in adult general education and of the educational orientations specific to Common Core Basic Education. The chapters that follow present the components of the Common Core Basic Education Program: the broad areas of learning, the operational competencies and the programs of study, classified by subject area.

It should be noted that the Sociovocational Integration (semiskilled and unskilled occupations), Francization and Social Integration programs are not part of Common Core Basic Education, although they may, depending on the learning needs of the adults concerned, constitute a steppingstone to it.

Chapter 1

A Renewed Curriculum for Adult Learners



Meeting the Challenges

International stakes

In many countries throughout the world, the globalization of markets, the transformation of the workplace, demographic change and the proliferation of information and communications technologies are requiring people to acquire new competencies and to constantly update their existing ones. The emergence of the knowledge society has created a context in which everyone has to find a place and continue to grow. Knowledge has an unparalleled importance in the organization of today's society, and access to it is a determining factor for every person's future socioeconomic status.

One of the major concerns addressed by the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning*, signed by Canada in 1997, is to raise the social, economic and cultural conditions of adults. Faced with the necessity of upgrading adults' competencies in order to meet new needs of the 21st century, the participating countries made a commitment to ensure ongoing access to knowledge for all individuals within a context of personal development, social integration and adaptation. In order to meet this challenge, a number of member countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reexamined their program offerings in adult education and took concrete steps to adapt their basic education curricula to the current context and the new demands it entails. The signatory countries recognized that basic education is an essential means of promoting justice and reducing social inequality.

In Québec, as in many of the member countries of the OECD, the general context described above was the incentive for the renewal of the adult education curriculum. In addition, the statistics on

literacy published in 1994-1995 confirmed the need for such wide-scale change.¹

A Québec-wide reform

The renewal of the adult education system was initiated over 20 years ago. Several elements contributed to the current reform, in particular, the Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes (1980-1982),² the Estates General on Education (1995-1996), the report of the task force on curriculum reform entitled *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools* (1997), the *Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System* (1997) and the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (2002).

While the new curriculum in basic general education for adults addresses specific concerns that distinguish it from that of the youth sector curriculum, the two share certain fundamental approaches. The adult curriculum, in fact, adheres to the *Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System* (1997)³ and is based

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1. *The International Survey on Adult Literacy (IALS)* conducted by the OECD in 1994-1995 in 12 countries, including Canada, uncovered significant needs in Québec. In this survey, the concept of literacy refers to the capacity of adults to make use of written information in order to function in contemporary society. With more than a million adults between the ages of 16 and 65, that is, one adult in five, who have very limited reading proficiency, Québec is situated well below the Canadian average.
 2. Commission chaired by Michèle Jean (Jean Commission).
 3. Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation, *A New Direction for Success: Ministerial Plan of Action for the Reform of the Education System* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1997).

on the orientations adopted in *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools* (1997).

The aims of the adult education curriculum reflect the threefold mission of the school as follows:

- The school's mission to provide qualifications is reflected in the concern to promote the transfer and adaptation of learning to situations that are relevant to adult learners and to recognize their prior learning. Services are thus based on the learning needs specific to adults.
- The schools' mission to socialize students is reflected in the emphasis on the development of citizenship and the cultural dimension of adult learners' social and personal lives and their autonomy.
- The school's mission to provide instruction is reflected in the emphasis placed on the development of adult learners' competencies, the integration of essential knowledge and the use of information and communications technologies.

With regard to the programs themselves and their understanding by teachers, *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools* and *Québec Schools on Course* (1997) provide a frame of reference that emphasizes essential knowledge, cultural content and intellectual development while encouraging teachers to exercise professional judgment.

The Ministère de l'Éducation thus undertook a reform and began developing a new curriculum for adult general education. Its three principal objectives were to foster success for the greatest number of students, to increase the graduation rate of the population and to promote the principle of lifelong learning.

In the *Action Plan for Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (2002), the government expressed its intention to ensure better access to continuing education for all adults and to eliminate obstacles to student retention. The measures included in the plan of action address the following challenges:

- to stimulate a demand for training
- to inform, advise and support the adult learner
- to offer services adapted to the adult's particular situation
- to promote collaboration with partners

Continuing education is understood as lifelong learning based on the provision of diversified and enhanced educational services and adequate support services responsive to the needs of adult learners. The Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training, adopted in 2002, thus extended the reform already initiated (A New Direction for Success) to Québec's adult population.

Underlying principles of the reform in adult general education

In its policy statement on adult education, the Québec government adopted a number of guiding principles based on the study of the values and expectations of Québec society and an in-depth analysis of international experiences.⁴ These principles are related to the many roles adults play in their various real-life situations and guide the reform of the adult general education curriculum in all its dimensions.

Some of these principles are the following:

- to raise the level of basic education
- to promote lifelong learning
- to prepare adult learners to exercise their role as citizens in a democratic society
- to develop autonomy and a sense of responsibility in individuals and communities
- to encourage the expression of the demand for learning
- to adapt adult general education to the needs and characteristics of adult learners

The government policy considers that adult basic education is an essential tool for the renewal of educational services and that it must therefore include not only labour force training and literacy training, but also the many aspects of education that are associated with the roles of adults in contemporary society. According to the

policy, the new general education curriculum for adults should not be limited to preparation for employment, retraining or educational upgrading, but must give added value through the development of competencies associated with citizenship and culture.

4. These guiding principles are in line with the declaration of the UNESCO Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg Declaration).

Structure of Adult General Education

The results of various international surveys⁵ indicate that educational activities tend to reach adults who already have some schooling, a job, a high level of competency and a decent income. Educational services thus address only part of the adult population and have difficulty attracting and retaining people with little schooling.

As a result, the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* pays special attention to groups with particular problems gaining access to education and training: men and women under the age of 30 with no diploma; people with disabilities; immigrants who have not mastered the language of instruction; native people; and people aged 45 or over who are in the job market or looking for a job.

Adult general education has been divided into two distinct stages. The first stage, Common Core Basic Education, corresponds to the first eight years of schooling.⁶ It aims to equip adults with the essential learning required to meet their needs. The second stage, diversified education, offers adults diverse paths leading to vocational training and a Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) or preparation for postsecondary studies, depending on their aspirations, interests and aptitudes.

5. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Basic Education: International Trends 2002-2003* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003).

6. In terms of its correlation with the youth sector, Common Core Basic Education corresponds to the three cycles of elementary school and Secondary Cycle One. With respect to the existing adult education system, these eight years cover levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 of literacy training, presecondary education and the first two years of secondary education.

Structure of Common Core Basic Education

Common Core Basic Education covers the first eight years of schooling. It is organized in programs of study, which are divided into courses. A first group of courses, called Literacy, covers the first two stages of the current literacy training courses; a second group, known as Presecondary, covers the third and fourth stages of the current literacy training courses as well as the current presecondary courses; a third set, Secondary Cycle One, corresponds to the first two years of secondary school.

Structure of Common Core Basic Education

Literacy = stages one and two of the current literacy training courses

Presecondary = stages three and four of the current literacy training courses plus presecondary education

Secondary Cycle One = first and second years of secondary education

Literacy courses in Common Core Basic Education focus on consolidating the basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic and the use of information and communications technologies. Their aim is to help adult learners develop greater autonomy in their everyday communications and they are based on the integration of learning in English as the language of instruction, mathematics and computer science.

Presecondary courses in Common Core Basic Education focus on learning in such basic subjects as the language of instruction and

mathematics, some science knowledge and the second language. Adult learners are also introduced to some current challenges associated with exercising their social roles.

Secondary Cycle One courses address current challenges associated with social roles and promotes the consolidation of learning in the basic subjects. The essential knowledge associated with the first cycle of secondary education is a prerequisite for admission into diversified basic education.

Target population of Common Core Basic Education

The target population of Common Core Basic Education comprises adults with fewer than eight years of schooling.⁷ It is far from a homogeneous group, with differences in factors such as income level, gender, ethnic origin and age. The educational needs of these individuals are equally diverse. At present, most of the population targeted by the policy does not frequent adult education centres.⁸ While ideally it is hoped that all these groups will pursue studies in Diversified Basic Education and obtain a Secondary School Diploma

7. In the 2001 census, Statistics Canada determined that the number of Quebecers between 15 and 64 years of age with fewer than nine years of formal schooling was 468 435. Of these, young adults between 15 and 24 represented 22.8 per cent, adults between 22 and 44 represented 4.8 per cent and adults between 45 and 64 represented 16.9 per cent (Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *État de la formation de base au Québec* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005]. See also the Ministry's complementary document, *Profile of Basic Education in Québec* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005], for pertinent statistics on the English-speaking adult population.).

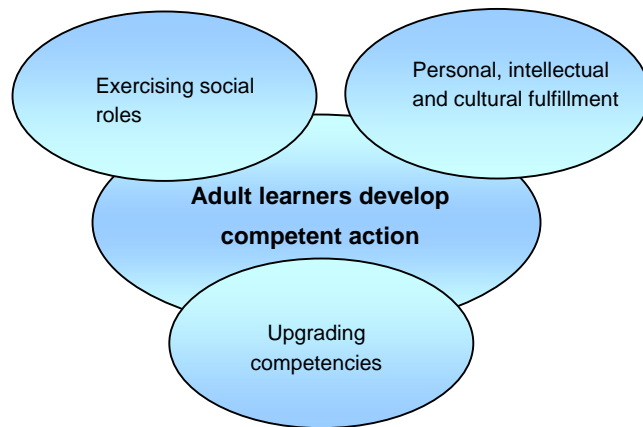
8. This population is made up of men and women under the age of 30 with no diploma, people with disabilities, immigrants who have not mastered the language of instruction, native people, and people aged 45 or over who are in the job market or looking for a job.

or a Diploma of Vocational Studies, Common Core Basic Education is not simply a prerequisite for Diversified Education. It offers educational services of a wider scope “that include, but go beyond literacy learning” (Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training, 8). The programs of study in Common Core Basic Education are intended to provide adult learners with the opportunity to relate their learning to their everyday life.⁹ For this reason, in addition to constituting a prerequisite to further study, Common Core Basic Education also deals with the main social roles of adults, in conformity with the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training.

9. “The organization of services should, as far as possible, meet the needs expressed by individuals who, out of personal interest or need, would like to acquire or develop knowledge or competencies in fields of their choice. This underscores the multidimensional nature of adult education and continuing education and training, which addresses individuals in all their dimensions” (Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002], 3).

Goals of Common Core Basic Education

The programs of study in Common Core Basic Education target the development of competent action by adults in a wide variety of real-life situations. Their essential goals are to upgrade adult learners' competencies, to promote the development of autonomy in exercising their social roles and to favour their personal, intellectual and cultural fulfillment.



- Upgrading adult learners' competencies

In keeping with the more comprehensive definition of the concept of literacy provided in the government policy,¹⁰ such upgrading involves the development of language proficiency, which allows learners to gain access to a wide variety of messages and to interpret them in the light of their own personal experience. It provides learners with the means for communicating effectively with their peers and the wider community and understanding and using

written information in their daily activities at home, at work or in their community.

The use of information and communications technologies, whether for education, leisure or other purposes, also helps to upgrade adult learners' competencies.

- Promoting the development of adult learners' autonomy in exercising their social roles

Adults who are autonomous are able to adapt to the changes inherent in a wide variety of situations, in which they must fulfill their roles as citizens, producers or consumers, or the many roles associated with family and interpersonal relations.

- Favouring adult learners' personal, intellectual and cultural fulfillment

As stated in the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, educational needs in this area are defined in terms of adult learners' personal growth and their contribution to economic and cultural life, social cohesion and democratic life. The programs of study in Common Core Basic Education must therefore provide learners with access to a wider range of knowledge, facts and realities and an opportunity to engage in personal exploration of cultural artifacts.

Finally, Common Core Basic Education offers learning content corresponding to the prerequisites for admission to diversified basic education.

10. Ibid., 9.

Essential Characteristics of Common Core Basic Education

The essential characteristics of Common Core Basic Education have been determined by applying the principles of the education reform to the needs of the adult population. These five principles are discussed below.

Respect for the demand for adult education and the democratic values of Québec society

An examination of adult education in Québec as well as of international trends indicates that adults undertake an educational process in order to develop the competencies required to exercise their socioeconomic, political and cultural roles in specific real-life situations. One of the principal orientations of Common Core Basic Education is to respect this demand for learning. The right to education is the principle upon which this orientation is based.

To affirm the right of individuals to an education is to acknowledge their capacity and possibilities for self-fulfillment in all aspects of their lives. The need for education cannot be restricted to the economic aspects of work. All education, basic or otherwise, should address the cultural, social, political, aesthetic and spiritual aspirations of adult learners.

The Québec population comprises diverse cultural groups with a rich heritage of historical and cultural traditions. This pluralism must be recognized, accepted and respected to counteract any threat of marginalization or exclusion. As highlighted in the policy statement *A School for the Future*, “The curriculum and school life should familiarize students with Québec’s heritage and the shared values

that underlie it, while reflecting openness to ethnocultural and religious diversity.”¹¹

Pluralistic societies such as that of Québec must ensure that the individual and collective practices of its members are guided by principles that favour social cohesion. Shared values are a determining factor for such cohesion. Our society is characterized by democratic principles that seek to ensure a harmonious balance between individual liberties and the collective good. The fundamental values underlying a democratic society are respect, solidarity and responsibility. These shared values are part of the foundation of adult general education. The development of competencies that promote effective action in real-life situations should be understood from a twofold perspective: encouragement both to adopt shared norms, values and codes and to transcend differences through a more liberating vision of the person.¹²

Education focused on the development of competencies

The Common Core Basic Education Program complies with the Ministry’s action plan, *A New Direction for Success*, adopted in 1997. It is part of the same new approach and paradigm shift underlying the Québec Education Program in the youth sector. In both cases, an objectives-based approach, which focuses on

11. Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *A School for the Future: Educational Integration and Intercultural Education*, (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 1998), 25.

12. Ibid., 9.

teaching, has been replaced by a competency-based approach, which focuses on learning.¹³

The competency-based approach aims to develop the capacity of citizens to act throughout the course of their life. This perspective is more responsive to the learning challenges confronting adults, since the concept of competency is not limited to work-related situations but encompasses all of the social roles that adults are expected to exercise. In terms of education, the new paradigm shifts the emphasis from qualifications to the development of competencies.

In Common Core Basic Education, competency is defined as the capacity to act, to succeed, and to progress, based on the mobilization and effective use of an integrated set of resources to handle a class of real-life situations.

This definition suggests that competency is always related to one or more real-life situations and resources to be mobilized. According to this approach, competency is defined on the basis of the situation or situations dealt with; it refers to the quality of the actions undertaken and the resources used to deal with the situations.

Learning needs are identified by analysis of the real-life situations of adults and the challenges they encounter therein. In order to adapt to these situations, people must have certain competencies as well as the resources required to exercise them. Adult learners are thus

13. In the objectives-based approach, the mission of the school is understood to be the transmission of subject-specific knowledge that learners can appeal to in the future to solve problems they may encounter in life and work situations. From this perspective, one learns first and applies later. The objectives-based approach is predicated on a teaching paradigm in which the quality of learning depends upon the quality of teaching. The learning process is thus assumed to be the sole responsibility of the teacher.

encouraged to develop the competencies and construct the knowledge that they need to deal effectively with a variety of situations. These competencies and this knowledge are the content of the new programs of study in Common Core Basic Education.

In the Common Core Basic Education programs, competency does not have an instrumental function nor is it associated with specific school subjects; rather, it is closely linked to the situation in which it is manifested. Programs of study and their learning content are defined in terms of the real-life situations to be dealt with. In other words, the *situations are the point of entry*. In Common Core Basic Education, the term *competency* means *dealing with situations*. From a functional perspective, dealing with a set of situations is a *competency*.

Emphasis on learning and the integration of knowledge

In compliance with the orientations of the report *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools* (1997), the curriculum reform in adult education is based on a new paradigm that emphasizes the active role of learners in their own learning. Cognitivism, constructivism and social constructivism provide conceptions of learning that are consistent with this orientation. In general, these three approaches provide a better definition and understanding of how knowledge is constructed and integrated through the cognitive and metacognitive activities of the learner.

Cognitivism postulates that adults learn and develop by processing and organizing information provided by their physical, social and educational environment. Learning is thus conceived as an active and constructive process that involves both making connections

with prior knowledge and making explicit connections between different pieces of information.

The constructivist perspective holds that people develop intelligence and construct knowledge in action in situations, by reflecting on their action and its results. They apprehend new situations in terms of what they already know and modify their knowledge in order to better adapt to them. Each adaptation to a situation helps them to enhance and widen their knowledge network and deal with situations of increasing complexity. Adults do not simply acquire knowledge: they also learn to adapt their knowledge to situations in which they find themselves. The word *adaptation* highlights the new features of situation rather than the similarities between different situations. The relationship of the teacher to the learners involves guiding them in their construction of knowledge, rather than simply transmitting knowledge to them. A competency is exercised and develops in a situation, that is, it emerges in the process of dealing with situations effectively. Hence, the more situations learners deal with effectively, the more they raise their level of competency, and vice versa. In this process, knowledge is considered a resource that is mobilized in the exercise of a competency. The development of a competency is based on the construction of knowledge, and the competency becomes increasingly refined as new knowledge is constructed and mobilized appropriately in situations.

Social constructivism is an offshoot of constructivism and emphasizes social interaction in learning. According to this approach, learners construct their knowledge in social situations and contexts, which have an impact on their personal constructions; all personal knowledge reflects the social aspects of situations and their contexts. Thus, social constructivism highlights the social nature of adults' interactions with their environment; even though

these interactions may appear to be particular to the individual, they are social in origin and bear the imprint of social conventions.

Evaluation and supervision to promote adult learners' success

The different methods of evaluating learning adhere to the orientations of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (2002) and the *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning* (2003). Evaluation in all its forms must respect the fundamental values of justice, fairness and equality. It is carried out throughout the learning process: at the very beginning (for diagnostic purposes or for recognition of prior learning), during learning, that is, throughout the course of the adult's education, and at the end of the learning process, for certification purposes.

Evaluation during learning (formative evaluation) aims to maximize the interaction between the teaching and learning processes. The competencies to be developed during the educational process are defined in terms of the outcomes expected at the completion of the different courses in Common Core Basic Education. It is possible to verify how learners mobilize the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with a competency and adapt them to new and varied situations. Formative evaluation is a means of monitoring learners' progress toward the goal of a course. Since this goal is defined in terms of how situations are dealt with through the exercise of competencies and the use of knowledge, formative evaluation must take these into consideration. While adult learners are encouraged to participate actively in formative evaluation, it is the teacher's responsibility to evaluate the adult's competency in dealing with the situations at the end of a course, within the time allotted. The information collected during the learning process allows learners

and teachers to regulate the process through actions explicitly aimed to achieve success. These actions concern all of the learning content of the course and its progressive integration by the learner. This quest for success undertaken by learners with the teacher increases the learners' sense of responsibility for their own learning, supports their commitment to the learning process and reinforces their perseverance in their studies.

Education focused on the integration of information and communications technologies

Computer literacy is a priority in education, social integration and certification. In Common Core Basic Education, this new form of literacy targets the capacity to use computers effectively, taking advantage of their most common resources. The computer and technical skills to be acquired involve knowledge of how computers function, familiarity with common computer-related vocabulary, recognition of an operating system, organization of files and the use of current computer software. In addition, the ability to use the Internet enables adults to do research, process information, verify the validity of different sources of information and communicate results. Finally, from an ethical standpoint, the skills targeted involve respect for intellectual property and the exercise of good citizenship in using information technologies.

Renewing Andragogical Practices

The development of the programs in Common Core Basic Education is based on andragogical principles that place adult learners at the heart of the learning process and affect the quality of teacher-learner interaction. The social constructivist orientation calls for a renewal of andragogical practices at all levels: planning, evaluation and teaching.

Teachers and learners in interaction

From a social constructivist perspective, to teach means *to help someone construct or appropriate* content. Adult learners are the main actors in their own learning and in this process they interact with their environment.

If the role of teachers is to facilitate learning, then it is their responsibility to create the conditions that promote the construction of knowledge and the development of competencies that are related to their field of expertise and that adult learners need in their real-life situations. The roles of the teacher and the learner are thus complementary.

Teachers play a crucial role in adult learners' construction of resources by creating contextualized learning situations. These learning situations allow learners to use resources and competencies they already possess in dealing with the complex elements of the situation and to adapt these resources and competencies to the situation. To put adults in learning situations is to involve them in a “dynamic and evolving process of construction,

adaptation, exploration and reflection on the progress of their own learning.”¹⁴

Développement of competencies and construction of knowledge

Adult learners develop their competencies by using their resources in learning situations designed by the teacher. The elements of the situation require them to act in order to construct new knowledge or refine their existing knowledge and thereby raise their level of competency.

In learning situations, the actions that learners undertake can be classified in three types:

- Involvement in a situation requires adult learners to use the resources and competencies already at their disposal. By doing so, they give meaning to the situation and begin the process of constructing new knowledge. Otherwise, the situation would be meaningless to them. It is through action and reflection on their action that the adult learners define themselves as persons in situations and realize their potential. This type of behaviour corresponds to the assimilative function described by Piaget: to become involved in a situation and to give meaning to it, people must activate their existing cognitive network. Assimilating the

14. Jonnaert and Vander Borght, *Créer des conditions d'apprentissage. Un cadre de référence socioconstructiviste pour une formation didactique des enseignants* (Paris, Brussels: De Boeck Université, 1999, 2003), 33 (translation).

new situation to this network involves interpreting it in their own terms, and thereby transforming it.

- Acting in a situation also involves adapting one's existing resources and competencies to the new situation. Adult learners modify their own resources and competencies to accommodate to the new situation. By making these adjustments, which may be more or less significant, adult learners transform and improve their resources. This type of action and reflection on action corresponds to the function of accommodation in Piagetian theory. Accommodation and reflection on action entail a transformation of the person.
- Acting in a situation also involves the construction of new resources or competencies that help learners better adapt to the situation. The dialectical relationship between assimilation and accommodation facilitates this construction. The process evolves as a result of interaction between a person's internal resources and the external features of the situation.

Motivation and differentiation

It is important for adult learners to persevere in their educational endeavours and motivation plays a crucial role in this regard.

Learners' motivation is enhanced when they are engaged in tasks that meet their needs and that are stimulating and reasonably broad in scope; hence the importance in adult education of focusing on authentic real-life situations, not only in the programs of study but also in the courses and learning activities. The competency-based approach adopted in the Common Core Basic Education Program and the real-life situational problems are fundamental factors in sustaining this motivation.

The use of differentiated instruction allows the teacher to meet the needs of highly diverse groups of learners and adapt the learning activities to individual styles and rates of learning. Pedagogical intervention with relatively heterogeneous groups of learners requires an extensive repertoire of teaching-learning methods to address the different needs of the adults in the classroom.

The Common Core Basic Education Program: An Integrated Structure

The Common Core Basic Education Program is organized in programs of study that address the learning needs of adults in their real-life situations and in the basic subjects. The three main components of its structure are broad areas of learning, operational competencies and subject areas.

The broad areas of learning are an inventory of the learning needs addressed by Common Core Basic Education.¹⁵ They cover the real-life situations of the learners and the challenges associated with them. Each broad area of learning groups together a number of related situations involving learning needs adults must address by developing and exercising competencies. The selection of the broad areas of learning was determined on the basis of two factors: adult learners' need to deal effectively with certain real-life situations and society's desire to educate individuals who are competent to do so.

The real-life situations are grouped in classes of situations that serve as the organizing principle of the course offerings, which are designed to meet the learning needs associated with both the social roles of adult learners and the basic subjects concerned. The function of the broad areas of learning is to circumscribe the real-life situations addressed in the different programs of study.

15. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed description of the broad areas of learning.

The operational competencies contribute to learners' capacity to deal effectively with the situations presented in the different programs.¹⁶

Each subject area groups together a number of programs of study that address the learning needs identified.¹⁷ A program consists of a number of courses targeting one or more classes of situations. The subject areas are defined on the basis of the resources associated with different areas of essential knowledge; these are deemed pertinent insofar as they concern knowledge required to deal with the real-life situations identified in the needs analysis. The essential knowledge is organized in terms of disciplines, and hence the subject areas in Common Core Basic Education include knowledge that is either specific to a single discipline or multidisciplinary.

Integration of learning

A multidisciplinary approach facilitates adult learners' capacity to deal with real-life situations and problems. The entire Common Core Basic Education Program and the content of the specific programs of study require the adult learners and teachers to make connections between situations, to consider the same knowledge from different perspectives, to understand how the same operational competency can help in dealing with a variety of situations and to

16. The operational competencies involve know-how that applies to a wide variety of classes of situations. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the operational competencies in Common Core Basic Education.

17. See Chapter 4 for a detailed description of the subject areas and programs of study.

construct resources associated with different disciplines in order to mobilize them in relevant situations. This integration of knowledge also encourages cooperation among teachers and teams of teachers.



Chapter 2

Broad Areas of Learning



The broad areas of learning group together real-life situations that entail problems or challenges confronting adults on a regular basis.¹⁸ These situations are grouped in classes of situations related to different dimensions of contemporary life—family, work, economic, social, community, political or cultural life—related to learning needs. The problems have shared or related aspects, and their solution involves learning.

Analysis of Learning Needs and Real-Life Situations as the Point of Entry

The real-life situations confront adult learners with problems and challenges, and the capacity to deal with them effectively is the cornerstone of their learning. This perspective follows from the mission of Common Core Basic Education as described in the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. Even though the actual and potential clientele in Common Core Basic Education is extremely diverse, all these

18. In the youth sector, the broad areas of learning “deal with aspects of contemporary life, and in particular, problems young people face” (Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Québec Education Program: Preschool Education and Elementary Education* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec], 6). They address important issues that confront individuals and groups. The selection of these broad areas of learning is determined on the basis of the interest they hold for society as well as their pertinence to students' learning. Their inclusion in the Québec Education Program is intended to encourage students to make connections between what they learn at school, their everyday lives and contemporary social phenomena. The broad areas of learning provide students with opportunities to develop and enhance their understanding of various life contexts and to envisage possible actions in specific situations. They also enable students “to make connections between different areas of learning and to look critically at their personal, social and cultural environment” (ibid., 7).

learners need to be competent in dealing with situations of everyday life. The quality of their actions in this regard is determined as much by norms as by personal and social expectations.

Real-life situations are both the starting point and the destination of the Common Core Basic Education Program. Before their formal learning begins, adults may be unable to adequately handle these situations because they lack the competencies and resources that formal learning will enable them to develop.

An analysis of adults' real-life situations was undertaken in order to determine the major challenges they posed. This analysis provided information on the broad areas of learning to be covered and the competencies and resources needed to deal with these situations.¹⁹ These competencies and resources were then assigned to the various programs of study.

The situations have been grouped in classes that are deemed most important for adults. These classes are the organizing principle of the programs of study; each program of study provides a response to the learning needs associated with one or several classes of situations.

19. The teams in charge of the reform of Common Core Basic Education undertook a survey of the target population in order to build a bank of real-life situations. This bank provides a general framework for learning that promotes the development of the desired competencies. The survey ensures a coherent link between the expectations of the target population and the situations presented in the programs of study (Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation générale des adultes, formation professionnelle et technique et formation continue, *Les situations de vie des adultes visés par la formation générale commune* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2003]).

The classes of situations determine the essential knowledge to be constructed and the nature of the competencies to be developed. They cover a wide range of challenges in daily life, and the essential knowledge required to deal with them thus comes from a variety of disciplines.

The development of competencies, the handling of situations and the construction of knowledge are the three cornerstones of the curriculum on the basis of which the programs in Common Core Basic Education were developed.

Scope of the Broad Areas of Learning

In their daily lives, adults must exercise a variety of social roles, as consumers and producers of goods and services, as family members and as citizens, all of which engender a number of problems they need to be able to anticipate and solve. The goal of the broad areas of learning is therefore to help adult learners use their personal resources and those in their environment to exercise their social roles, rights and responsibilities autonomously and thereby raise their level of social and cultural integration.

Each broad area of learning circumscribes a particular dimension of daily life. The situations associated with it include specific problems involving learning needs and can be grouped in a coherent whole. Each broad area of learning comprises several classes of situations that include related problems. The programs constitute a response to the learning needs. Each broad area of learning also has an educational aim related to personal or social expectations and to issues associated with the classes of situations concerned.

Programs of study related to the basic subjects, such as English, mathematics, computer science, French as a second language or science,²⁰ are also organized around situations, whether they are at the Literacy, Presecondary or Secondary Cycle One level. The situations addressed by these programs present similar or related challenges. Generally speaking, the classes of situations in these programs are associated with more than one broad area of learning.

20. The technology program, for example.

Four Broad Areas of Learning

Common Core Basic Education is organized in four broad areas of learning that comprise situations associated with the social roles adults generally exercise: family member, producer or consumer of goods and services, and member of a community. The broad areas of learning in Common Core Basic Education are the following:

- Health and Well-Being
- Environmental and Consumer Awareness
- World of Work
- Citizenship

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Educational Aim

To raise adult learners' awareness of their health, well-being and relationships with others.

Presentation of the Broad Area of Learning

In adult education, the individual is considered as a whole person who interacts with others and with his or her environment. In their everyday family, work, economic, political, social, community and cultural life, adults exercise social roles in a variety of situations, according to their own values and those of society.

The broad area of learning Health and Well-Being helps adult learners to enhance their self-knowledge through a process of exploration and discovery of their lifestyles, their needs and their values. This process involves self-questioning and self-affirmation in order to be better prepared for change and to achieve a balanced

lifestyle. In their interpersonal relationships, adult learners develop their capacity to communicate and to interact harmoniously with others. In the area of health, they attend to their needs and those of their loved ones, and adopt a healthy lifestyle and habits of safety and prevention. They learn to be at ease in their surroundings by paying attention to physical and psychological factors and personal and social constraints that can complicate their everyday life.

The challenges that confront them are significant: adaptation to changes, respect for values, conflict management, healthy diet, sensible use of the resources in their surroundings, etc. The broad area of learning Health and Well-Being comprises classes of situations that address two important themes: **personal life and relationships** and **health**.

Personal life and relationships

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: This class of situations focuses on **life changes**. The situations addressed help adults to organize their lives and interact with others in accordance with their values, their interpersonal needs and the need to cope with the changes that confront them, such as returning to school, the birth of a child, the loss of a loved one, changes in love life, a blended family and the loss of physical autonomy.

Class of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: This class of situations is concerned with **maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships**. Learners are asked to observe how they interact with others and to adopt or reinforce attitudes and behaviour that allow them to initiate and maintain healthy relationships and manage

conflict situations. The class of situations encourages adult learners to take personal responsibility in their relationships with others.

Health

The situations related to the theme of health help adult learners to organize their lives and interact with others in order to satisfy their physical and psychological needs; the situations involve both awareness and prevention.

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: This class covers common real-life situations that involve **adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits**; it helps learners take everyday steps to improve their health. The challenges addressed *concern healthy diet, physical fitness, rest and relaxation. The situations in this class encourage adult learners to take responsibility for their own and their families' physical and psychological health.

Classes of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The situations in this class concern **seeking balance in life**. Situations such as lack of time for leisure activities, a crisis, self-questioning or burnout provide opportunities for adult learners to experience the benefits of creative self-expression or the simple pleasures of life. These situations encourage learners to explore one or more forms of self-expression and to think about how to introduce creativity into their everyday life.

Situations related to **maintaining sexual health**, such as acquiring a new sexual partner or, in the case of a stable couple, planning to have a child or facing an unplanned pregnancy, highlight the importance of making informed choices to ensure a satisfying, harmonious and safe sex life. Preventing sex-related health problems and making choices in family planning require information

that is accurate and appropriate to the specific questions posed by each learner.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

Educational Aim

To help adult learners understand their relationship with the environment and make responsible consumer choices.

Presentation of the Broad Area of Learning

The broad area of learning Environmental and Consumer Awareness focuses on the close connection between the ecological and social dimensions of human activity in society. It helps adult learners to more clearly recognize that they are an integral part of the environment, to appreciate it and to take measures to protect it. They develop a view of environmental issues that leads them to act responsibly in this regard. As consumers, they learn to assess their priorities, consider their capacity to pay for things, question the values of a consumer-based society, evaluate the possible impact of certain of their consumer practices, exercise their rights and assume their responsibilities.

The challenges addressed pertain to everyday situations: interaction with different aspects of the environment, reaction to solicitation, the use of credit and the risk of debt, the rapid growth of technology, etc. The broad area of learning Environmental and Consumer Awareness comprises classes of situations associated with **the environment** and **consumer life**.

The environment

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: The situations in this class concern **resource waste management**. Adult learners recognize that they are an integral part of the environment and address different aspects of a specific environmental issue, namely,

the accumulation of postconsumer waste. In everyday life, they increasingly take meaningful action that is consistent with their world-view and their sense of environmental harmony.

Class of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The class of situations concerns **ethical environmental choices**. It consists of situations that address environmental problems such as imbalances affecting water, air and soil quality or biodiversity. Situations related to organizing or using a space are useful for solving environmental problems such as the depletion of natural resources and pollution. They encourage adults to act in solidarity and to undertake individual and collective actions. These situations extend the process undertaken at the Presecondary level to a wider and richer context and help to further develop learners' sense of responsibility in these matters.

Consumer life

The situations related to consumer life help adult learners to fully exercise their roles as consumers of goods, services and the media.

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: The class of situations **basic consumer habits** consists of real-life situations that call for planning concerning the purchase or rental of goods or the use of services. These situations require adult learners to assess their needs and resources and their security. They are thus better equipped to manage their personal finances, establish their priorities, plan their purchases wisely and act prudently when conducting commercial transactions or signing contracts in different areas of consumer life.

Class of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The class of situations **solicitation** includes a variety of real-life situations that require adult learners to look critically at the values of society and to

become more vigilant with respect to the incentives to consume. They realize that they have easier access to credit and can acquire more and more goods and services, but at the same time they are able to stand back and make choices based on their needs, their resources and their values. They use pertinent information and strategies to protect themselves from unwanted, risky or abusive solicitation and to react more effectively as they become increasingly aware of the dynamics and stakes involved in consumer life.

WORLD OF WORK

Educational Aim

To help adult learners carry out a career plan.

Presentation of the Broad Area of Learning

The real-life situations associated with the social role of producer of goods and services encompass various realities of working life, including education and career planning, integrating into the work force, maintaining employment, and retirement planning. In adult education, there are a variety of services that address education and training needs expressed. Sociovocational Integration Services aim for the immediate integration of adults into the work force. Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services (SARCA: Services d'accueil, de référence, de conseil et d'accompagnement), and Pedagogical Support Services (PS) provide support to learners throughout their learning program.

In Common Core Basic Education, the broad area of learning World of Work focuses on two problems that are relatively widespread among the adult population. The first concerns developing a career plan related to their role as workers and the second involves understanding how the world of work functions, including its legal and cultural dimensions.

The broad area of learning World of Work targets these two problems for the following reasons:

- A large proportion of adults who enroll in Common Core Basic Education have no career plan or are unsure of their choice. Such indecision is often related to school dropout. Moreover, it is recognized that having a career plan makes school learning

more meaningful and is an important source of motivation to pursue studies. Lack of a career plan may be due to a number of factors, such as lack of information about options, poor research methods, misguided perceptions of the world of work or of themselves, unrealistic expectations or repeated failure at school.

- As a result of their low level of formal education, learners in Common Core Basic Education often find themselves in situations of unstable employment and changing work contexts, which can engender difficulties in adapting and disputes. Furthermore, representatives from the employment sector agree that many adults need to update their learning in order to be able to assume their responsibilities and exercise their rights at work and to constantly adapt to the changing demands of the job market. In this context, it is imperative for adults to develop a clear idea of the conditions for their future integration into the work force.

Career choice

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: The class of situations **becoming familiar with training and career plans** comprises real-life situations in which adult learners become familiar with the elements that guide training and career choices. Examples of such situations include needing academic and career information, returning to studies, loss of certain capacities, reduced opportunities for employment.

Class of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The class of situations **training and career plan** comprises real-life situations in which adult learners choose a realistic and meaningful training and career plan. The situations addressed at the Presecondary level may be taken up again in Secondary Cycle One. However, the way

they are handled will differ, since the aim here is for learners to formulate their own plan rather than merely explore various possibilities. Additional situations that are more complex and more difficult to handle are also included: a saturated job market in a person's field, job loss, volunteer work, dissatisfaction with a job situation, promotion and continuing training, self-employment, change in educational and career orientation.

Functioning of the world of work

Class of situations addressed Presecondary: The class of situations **disputes in the workplace** includes real-life situations in which adult learners need to become familiar with the basic regulations governing working conditions in order to be prepared to assume their responsibilities and to deal with disputes that may arise at work. This class comprises situations such as failure to respect financial standards, leaves of absence for various holidays, job loss, discrimination, harassment, pregnancy, working illegally, high-risk jobs, work-related accidents or illnesses, etc.

Class of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The class of situations **exploring the work culture of Québec** concerns real-life situations in which adults are confronted with unfamiliar aspects of the workplace and must be prepared to meet basic requirements of the world of work. These situations may include immigration, moving to a new region, new technologies, continuing education, or integrating into the work force.

CITIZENSHIP

Educational Aim

To help adult learners assume their responsibilities as citizens who respect shared values and cultural differences.

Presentation of the Broad Area of Learning

Adult learners construct their identity as citizens by recognizing their roles as members of a community and progressively engaging in action. Active, responsible participation helps prevent social exclusion. Furthermore, the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* explicitly highlights the importance of citizenship as a factor in personal development, social integration and participation in the democratic life of a society based on the rule of law such as Québec.

The broad area of learning Citizenship makes collective life the focus of action. All citizens share responsibility for the present and future condition of Québec society and must respect the shared values that are part of its history. They should pursue education in order to play their role in social and political life and preserve the cultural diversity of Québec society. They learn to be open to difference and to participate in the ongoing process of defining Québec's cultural identity.

The basic challenges involve joint action, democratic practices, belonging to a group, exercising civic rights and responsibilities, adherence to the shared values of society, openness to ways of expressing diversity, etc. In order to address them, the broad area of learning Citizenship is made up of classes of situations pertaining

to two main themes: **social and political life** and **community and culture**.

Social and political life

The situations addressed in this area involve the development of civic-mindedness, cooperation and participation in social and political life.

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: The situations in this class focus on cooperation and civic-mindedness and address **civic issues** related to the use of public goods and services and maintaining or enhancing the quality of life in the community.

Classes of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: These classes of situations focus on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. They cover exercising the right to vote in a **popular consultation** and taking responsibility with regard to **socioeconomic issues** involving social rights.

Community and culture

The real-life situations pertaining to community and culture help adults develop a sense of collective identity, respect for shared values and openness to ways of expressing diversity. They encourage adult learners to become actively involved in the life of their community.

Class of situations addressed in Presecondary: The class of situations **discovering the cultural traits of Québec society** includes real-life situations in which adult learners interact with their sociocultural environment. Situations that involve participation in social activities, cultural visits or regional events expose adult learners to different cultural traits of society.

Classes of situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One: The class of situations **ways of expressing diversity** consists of situations adults encounter in everyday life and that require them to reflect on factors of social cohesion. Learners become aware of what it means to live together in a democratic, pluralistic society. Other situations focus on active citizenship and **joint action**, and encourage learners to act cooperatively in their education centre, their neighbourhood or their municipality.

The following table presents the classes of situations addressed in Common Core Basic Education.

Broad Areas of Learning	Classes of Situations in Presecondary	Classes of Situations in Secondary Cycle One
Health and Well-Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits ▪ Life changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seeking balance in life ▪ Maintaining sexual health ▪ Maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships
Environmental and Consumer Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resource waste management ▪ Basic consumer habits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical environmental choices ▪ Solicitation
World of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Becoming familiar with training and career plans ▪ Disputes in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training and career plan ▪ Exploring the work culture of Québec
Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civic issues ▪ Discovering the cultural traits of Québec society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint action ▪ Popular consultation ▪ Socioeconomic issues ▪ Ways of expressing diversity

Programs of Study With Classes of Situations Related to Several Broad Areas of Learning

Program of Study	Classes of Situations in Literacy	Classes of Situations in Presecondary	Classes of Situations in Secondary Cycle One
English, Language of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Becoming acquainted with written language in the immediate environment ▪ Using language in the immediate environment to decode and encode meaning ▪ Using oral and written language to satisfy basic needs ▪ Using language to access public services ▪ Using language for enjoyment and personal interests ▪ Using language to become involved in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using language for the essentials of daily life ▪ Using language in everyday home life ▪ Using language to keep informed about daily news ▪ Using language to attend to basic health needs ▪ Using language to deal with common emergency situations ▪ Using language to discover Québec and Canada and their multicultural character ▪ Using language to explore employment and educational options ▪ Using language for a healthy lifestyle ▪ Using language for consumer transactions ▪ Using language to fulfill civic and social duties in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using language to explore current issues in the media ▪ Using language to explore Québec and Canadian cultural expression ▪ Exploring and appreciating the creative potential of language ▪ Using language to exercise rights and responsibilities
Français, langue seconde		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interaction lors d'un premier contact en français ▪ Interaction par rapport au mieux-être ▪ Interaction en matière de loisirs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interaction en rapport avec la consommation ▪ Interaction par rapport à un environnement ▪ Interaction par rapport au monde du travail
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representing a quantity and using numbers ▪ Orienting oneself in time ▪ Dealing with money in everyday situations ▪ Representing one's immediate physical environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing personal finances ▪ Orienting oneself in space and time ▪ Classifying data ▪ Representing the physical environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing finances ▪ Predicting random events ▪ Establishing relationships between quantities ▪ Representing the physical environment and its transformations

Programs of Study With Classes of Situations Related to Several Broad Areas of Learning

Program of Study	Classes of Situations in Literacy	Classes of Situations in Presecondary	Classes of Situations in Secondary Cycle One
Computer Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exposure to a computer environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Becoming more familiar with the computer environment ▪ Producing a computer document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assembling a document for distribution ▪ Conducting computer searches ▪ Communicating by means of a computer ▪ Completing an individual or group project by means of a computer
Technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using everyday technologies at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Household safety and personal comfort



Chapter 3

Operational Competencies



Selection and Characteristics of the Operational Competencies

In order to respect the commitment of the member countries of the OECD to increase opportunities for people in different spheres of life, to improve living conditions in society and to promote the development of competencies as the means to achieve these goals, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport has decided to give top priority to key competencies, that is, competencies that contribute to general success in life and to the functioning of society.²¹

Dealing with situations and the operational competencies

The development of adults' competency to deal with situations autonomously is one of the aims of the Common Core Basic Education Program.²² Dealing with situations autonomously involves taking certain actions that are general in nature, in the sense that they may be used to deal with a wide variety of classes of situations.²³ In Common Core Basic Education, this general know-how is designated by the operational competencies.

21. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo): Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations (OECD, 2002).

22. When we talk about dealing with situations, it should be noted that this means real-life situations that have been grouped in classes of situations in the programs of study. Adult learners deal with specific situations that belong to certain classes of situations.

23. In the youth sector, these groups of actions are called cross-curricular competencies. The cross-curricular competencies may be intellectual,

In the Common Core Education Program, several operational competencies have been selected by virtue of their central role in dealing with the real-life situations addressed in Common Core Basic Education. An operational competency is a kind of know-how that plays a part in dealing with a wide range of situations. Dealing with any particular situation involves most, if not all, of the operational competencies, and each of the operational competencies is part of dealing with the situations belonging to a class. In a course, however, only those competencies that are most significant for the class or classes of situations concerned are included. It is the general competency to deal with a situation that coordinates the systematic application of the operational competencies. This stipulation is important, because it is the global handling of the situations in a particular class that is targeted by a course, and dealing successfully with each situation allows learners to progress in developing their overall competency to handle situations.

The definition of competency adopted in Common Core Basic Education, namely the effective handling of situations, implies that the operational competencies are considered resources. No single operational competency is sufficient to deal fully with a real-life situation. The role of an operational competency varies from one course to another. The focus of each competency is formulated

methodological, personal and social, or communication-related. They are generic in nature and their description is standardized across all subject areas.

differently in each course on the basis of the characteristics of the real-life situations addressed in the course.

These operational competencies are explicitly prescribed in the programs of study. Their particular contribution is described in each course. The definitions of the focus of the same operational competency in all the courses provide a comprehensive picture of its general meaning. The concomitant development of these six operational competencies helps adult learners to become increasingly autonomous in the exercise of their social roles as citizens, family members, producers of goods and services and consumers of goods, services and the media. The operational competencies call upon a variety of cognitive, social and affective resources. They are complementary and interdependent, since every complex situation calls on several of them. Their development is a dynamic and evolving process, that is, they are developed gradually through their use in increasingly complex situations. Each of them is addressed in several courses.

The following six operational competencies have been adopted for Common Core Basic Education: Communicates, Cooperates, Acts methodically, Uses creativity, Exercises critical and ethical judgment and Thinks logically.

Description of the Operational Competencies

Communicates

This competency is defined as the capacity to understand others and to make oneself understood when dealing with a given situation. The competency *Communicates* is not limited to sending and receiving oral or written messages; it also includes communicating through gestures, images and symbols. In dealing with certain situations, whether through communications technologies or otherwise, it is important for adults to be able to express themselves clearly and decode the linguistic and emotional meaning of the messages they receive. They need to perceive, recognize and comprehend the feelings expressed by others, while at the same time maintaining an appropriate emotional distance from them. The competency *Communicates* plays a significant role in dealing competently with many real-life situations, particularly those that concern personal and cultural identity and self-expression. It requires attention to rules, codes and the communicative context.

Cooperates

This competency refers to the capacity to collaborate with others in dealing with situations. Some situations require participants to work towards a common goal, either in the same or in different roles. Each person's work must therefore contribute to the group's work. Adult learners are expected to interact cooperatively with their peers in many situations in which tasks, expertise or responsibilities must be shared. This competency plays a crucial role in managing conflicts in personal life and solving problems in groups.

Collaborative and supportive attitudes are developed in learning situations and may also be used in other contexts.

Acts methodically

This competency involves the systematic construction, selection and use of techniques and methods appropriate for dealing with situations.

The competency *Acts methodically* may be used in most situations that require adult learners to construct, select or plan methods for dealing more effectively with situations. By analyzing the task to be accomplished, they determine a series of actions to attain their goal; they adapt their strategies before, during and after their action, and regulate the process by choosing better methods. The exercise of this competency is crucial for all activities requiring management (e.g. time management). The competency *Acts methodically* plays a significant role in dealing with real-life situations and is not restricted to an academic context.

Thinks logically

Thinks logically refers to the capacity to establish a rationale for thought and action in dealing with situations. This competency is essential for clarifying a problem by rigorously analyzing the facts and dimensions of a situation; finding solutions based on the understanding of principles and cause-effect relationships; determining short-, medium- and long-term consequences; planning pertinent and coherent action based on sound reasoning; and using material resources rationally. The competency *Thinks logically* is

helpful in dealing with situations that require adult learners to justify their choices.

Uses creativity

This competency refers to the capacity to deviate from habits and routines when dealing with everyday real-life situations. In dealing with situations, people need to find innovative solutions to problems, using the resources at their disposal, approach problems from a new angle and use imagination to explore new dimensions of issues. The educational purpose goes beyond simply dealing with certain situations effectively. Rather, adult learners should take risks, learn to function more flexibly and use a trial-and-error approach. The competency *Uses creativity* plays a significant role in handling many situations.

Exercises critical and ethical judgment

This competency involves the capacity to question and assess personal and social problems according to rules and principles of sound judgment. Adult learners have to take positions based on the exercise of judgment, putting aside stereotypes, prejudices, subjective beliefs and intuition. A critical examination of the validity, coherence and values underlying their own and others' attitudes and ways of thinking and acting, whether individual or collective, is crucial for functioning in a multicultural context. Critical and ethical judgment is used in complex situations that require adult learners to justify their choices and take actions that have a social impact.

Presentation of the competencies in the courses

In the courses, the operational competencies are introduced by a statement of the competency, followed by a description of how it contributes to dealing with the real-life situations addressed in the course.

The statement articulates the competency, and the meaning of the competency is provided through a description of what the competency enables adult learners to do and its effects in dealing with situations belonging to the class or classes of situations concerned. The development of each competency depends on the construction of knowledge pertinent to dealing with the situations in the course. Thus the meaning of any operational competency varies from one course to another and the competency can only be fully developed through all the courses.

Evaluation of the Operational Competencies

Since the contribution of each operational competency is described in the different programs and courses that target its development, the evaluation of the competencies is included in the end-of-course outcomes.

Chapter 4

Subject Areas



The subject areas cover essential knowledge deemed fundamental or elementary, although they are not limited to this. “Such elementary knowledge, which constitutes the most enduring education dispensed by schools, must be instilled in all students” (*Reaffirming the Mission of our Schools*, 45).²⁴

In Common Core Basic Education, the disciplinary or multidisciplinary knowledge deemed essential for adult learning is derived from the problems and challenges in adult learners’ real-life situations. An analysis of what is required to deal effectively with these situations is the basis for determining what knowledge and what subject areas are pertinent for the Common Core Basic Education Program. Each of these subject areas is made up of several programs of study. Some of these programs focus on the challenges associated with a single social role or a single broad area of learning, while others address situations associated with several broad areas of learning. Programs are included in a subject area on the basis of their connection with certain areas of essential knowledge. Each program is divided into courses.

In the programs of study, the resources that are potentially useful for dealing with a class of situations are presented in a table entitled “Essential Knowledge.” This knowledge serves as a point of

reference for learners’ construction of personal knowledge and their development of competency to deal with their real-life situations.

The essential knowledge included in the programs of study has been identified through the analysis of the classes of situations addressed.

24. “The subjects considered essential for the students’ education are drawn from these subject areas. The grouping of the subjects into five broad subject areas represents a step towards the integration of all school subjects, in the sense that it makes it possible to relate the subjects to the subject areas, which serve as reference points, and thus encourages teachers to see their subject as an integral part of a major component of students’ education” ((Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, *Québec Education Program: Secondary School Education, Cycle One* [Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004], 15).

Presentation of the Subject Areas and Programs of Study in Common Core Basic Education

The following table presents the subject areas and programs of study in Common Core Basic Education.

Subject areas	Programs of study
Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Français, langue d'enseignement ▪ English, Language of Instruction ▪ English as a Second Language ▪ Français, langue seconde
Mathematics, Science and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mathematics ▪ Computer Science ▪ Relationship With the Environment ▪ Technology
Social Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social and Political Life ▪ Community and Culture ▪ Consumer Habits
Personal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal Life and Relationships ▪ Health
Working Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to the World of Work ▪ Career Choice

Structure of a Program of Study

A program of study consists of courses in Literacy,²⁵ Presecondary and Secondary Cycle One.

Each program of study is connected to its subject area and to the broad areas of learning. It includes a section describing the general orientation of the program and its contribution to the orientations of the reform with respect to cultural content, quality of language, citizenship and the integration of information and communications technologies. The following sections present the courses in the program, which cover the essential elements of the learning situations and activities. These situations and activities have been developed in a social constructivist perspective and are designed to help adult learners develop their competency to deal with the wide variety of situations they encounter in everyday life.

25. This is the case for English, Language of Instruction; Mathematics; and Computer Science.

Structure of a Course

A course is an organized whole that describes and links various resources that contribute to dealing competently with one or more classes of situations. It provides indications on how to design appropriate learning activities that target the development of competency to deal effectively with real-life situations.

A course:

- specifies the class(es) of situations addressed
- provides examples of real-life situations in the classes concerned
- provides categories of actions and examples of actions that indicate how the situations in the class are competently handled
- presents the prescriptive elements and end-of-course outcomes in terms of how learners are expected to deal with the situations in the class by the end of the course
- specifies the focus of the operational competencies the course helps to develop
- presents the essential knowledge required to deal effectively with the situations in the class of situations concerned
- indicates the attitudes that are useful in dealing effectively with these situations
- suggests pertinent additional (social and material) resources

A course is thus a frame of reference for the organization of learning situations with which adults will learn to deal competently by constructing the necessary knowledge.

A course provides teachers or teams of teachers with the information they need to plan learning situations related to learners'

real-life situations and the challenges they pose. This information also provides general guidelines for evaluation, independently of the setting (e.g. school, prison, distance education) in which the course is implemented.

- **Presentation of the course:** This section specifies the goal of the course in terms of how the situations are to be dealt with.

- **Class or classes of situations:** This section specifies the scope of the class or classes of situations in the course. A class of situations groups together real-life situations pertinent to the course on the basis of shared challenges or characteristics. The situations included in a class do not constitute an exhaustive list and are presented simply as examples. They are provided to help teachers create learning situations that are meaningful to adult learners.

- **Categories of actions:** The categories of actions group together actions that are appropriate for dealing with a variety of situations in the same class. The examples of actions illustrate their pertinence in a variety of contexts. They are not learning activities, although teachers may draw on them. They are provided to help teachers contextualize knowledge in learning activities related to the real-life situations. The examples of actions alone are not sufficient for pedagogical purposes in the classroom; they must always be associated with a real-life situation and how that situation is dealt with.

- **Compulsory elements:** The compulsory elements of a course are those the teacher must take into consideration when designing learning situations. They are presented in the form of a diagram and

are included in the end-of-course outcomes. These prescriptive elements are:

- the classes of situations
- the categories of actions
- the operational competencies
- the essential knowledge

The end-of-course evaluation covers how adult learners deal with real-life situations in terms of these four elements.

All other resources (documentation, computer software, material or social resources) are listed as suggestions only.

- **End-of-course outcomes:** The end-of-course outcomes describe how, by the end of the course, adult learners should deal with the real-life situations, using the prescribed elements. They concern how the situations are to be dealt with, the contribution of the operational competencies, and the nature and scope of the resources required to deal competently with these situations. In the case of a course with several classes of situations, the same outcomes apply to each of them.

- **Operational competencies:** This section describes the specific contribution of this type of competency to the classes of situations addressed in the course. Each of these competencies develops as a result of being used across a wide variety of situations and courses.

- **Essential knowledge:** The essential knowledge is presented in a table and is associated with one or more classes of situations.

There are three types of essential knowledge: concepts, techniques and methods. The essential knowledge is organized in categories that are significant for teaching purposes as well as for dealing with the situations concerned.

- **Contribution of subject areas:** This section indicates how elements pertaining to other subject areas or other programs in the same subject area may play a role in dealing with the situations in the course. It provides the teacher with information on how these elements contribute to the handling of the situations concerned but these elements are not compulsory for the course.

- **Attitudes:** These are provided as suggestions only and are included because they help adults become more competent in dealing with the situations in the course.

- **Other resources:** These are also provided as suggestions only. They consist of material and social resources that may be consulted during learning situations.

General Andragogical Context

The implementation of the new programs of study depends on a number of principles associated with the education reform, as outlined in Chapter 1.

Qualities of a learning situation

In a competency-based approach, learning situations are the framework for dealing with real-life situations and for constructing the knowledge required to do so. Learning situations can also be used in ongoing and end-of-course evaluation.

A learning situation is necessarily contextualized. The context can be either authentic or simulated. An authentic situation is one that pertains to the learners' daily life outside or within the school. Simulated learning situations should be as meaningful as possible.

A learning situation is open-ended insofar as it allows learners to explore various solutions to problems and construct new knowledge. It allows learners to integrate what they have learned. To promote appropriate learning, the situation should include a number of tasks, at least one of which involves a problem to be solved. It thus engages learners in an active process of research, analysis, questioning and production in which they must use pertinent material or social resources and adopt appropriate attitudes.

Links between the different elements of the Common Core Basic Education Program and a learning situation²⁶

Creating a learning situation requires teachers to consider the elements of the course, the program of study and the education plan (broad areas of learning, subject areas, class of situations, ways of dealing competently with situations, operational competencies, resources, etc.) associated with the various aspects of the situation.

A learning situation must be consistent with the class of situations in the course. The class itself is related to one of the broad areas of learning. Furthermore, the learning situation must refer to essential knowledge that is pertinent to the situation, within the limits of the course concerned.

A learning situation must be sufficiently open-ended and comprehensive for learners to explore important aspects of dealing effectively with situations, especially the categories of actions addressed in the course and the operational competencies that are considered essential to dealing with the situations.

The course provides examples of actions that adults may take when dealing with a real-life situation. An analysis of these actions identifies the essential knowledge required in the situation. The activities in a learning situation are designed to help learners construct knowledge required to deal with their real-life situation. In

26. An example of a learning situation is provided at the end of each course.

this way, adults construct their knowledge in action, using a variety of material and social resources.

The end-of-course outcomes describe how learners are expected to deal with the situations by the end of the course. The various learning situations must therefore aim to meet these expectations through the teacher's instructional approaches and the learning context.

LANGUAGES

Language is an essential tool for communication in all areas of human activity. It is also an essential tool for learning and plays an important role in any educational endeavour. Literacy and oral communication enable adult learners to develop basic competencies. As a vehicle of thought, language provides access to the knowledge intrinsic to culture and society. By constructing and using their knowledge of language, adults actively contribute to their own development and that of their society. Language is the origin of thought, reflection and reason and thus plays a crucial role in all sectors of activity. It gives adult learners access to information and allows them to express their thoughts in a coherent and well-organized fashion and to be open to the cultural diversity of contemporary Québec society.

Because of Québec's historical and geographical circumstances, the language of instruction and the second language are closely linked.

Contribution of the subject area of Languages to adult learners' education

The programs in this subject area focus on the construction of language resources, which help learners to develop competency to

deal with situations in all spheres of life. The goal of these programs is to equip adults with the tools they need to satisfy their basic needs. By engaging them in various activities that develop their abilities in reading, writing and oral communication, the programs help learners to become increasingly autonomous and open up new prospects for them. They engage learners in constructing the resources required to understand how a language works and use it appropriately in different situations. They contribute to the adult learners' education, give them access to other areas of knowledge and develop their competency to deal with any situation that requires language use.

Whether the context is personal, social or cultural, proficiency in language allows a person to embrace the world in its totality. It promotes personal growth, self-confidence and open-mindedness.

Programs and courses in the subject area of Languages

In this subject area of Common Core Basic Education, the Ministère provides two programs for school boards in the English sector: English, Language of Instruction, and French as a Second Language. Because the language of instruction is used across the curriculum, this program of study is accorded the most time in Common Core Basic Education, a total of 1600 hours in Literacy, Presecondary and Secondary Cycle One. The French as a Second Language Program consists of 300 hours divided between Presecondary and Secondary Cycle One.

Programs of study and courses in Languages

Program of Study	Literacy	Presecondary	Secondary Cycle One
English, Language of Instruction (1600 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discovering the World of Print ▪ Building Foundations ▪ Satisfying Basic Needs ▪ Accessing Services ▪ Leisure and Personal Interests ▪ Community Life (600 hrs – 100 hrs/course) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Doors ▪ Everyday Living ▪ Taking Charge ▪ Discovery and Challenges ▪ Stepping Out ▪ Lifestyle Options ▪ Engagement and Involvement (700 hrs – 100 hrs/course) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informed Choices (100 hrs) ▪ Enjoyment and Entertainment I (50 hrs) ▪ Enjoyment and Entertainment II (50 hrs) ▪ Rights and Responsibilities (100 hrs)
Français, langue seconde (400 h)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Des mots pour se dire et se situer (50 h) ▪ Des mots pour une vie saine (75 h) ▪ Des mots pour se divertir (50 h) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Propos liés à la consommation (75 h) ▪ Propos liés à l'environnement physique et social (75 h) ▪ Propos liés au monde du travail (75 h)

ENGLISH, LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

The approach to language adopted in the English, Language of Instruction program emphasizes the close connection between language and thought. As a tool for thought, language use is understood to shape experience rather than simply to reflect it. This orientation also emphasizes the essentially social and interpersonal nature of language as a tool for communication. It is a fundamental tenet of the English, Language of Instruction, programs that language is constructed and develops over time by being used in varied and increasingly complex situations that are relevant and meaningful to adults' real-life experiences, needs and interests. Conversely, the ongoing construction and use of language resources contribute significantly to learners' evolving capacity to function competently and autonomously in their real-life situations. The 17 English, Language of Instruction, courses address a variety of situations pertaining to different broad areas of learning. The classes of situations have been circumscribed and distributed throughout the courses to reflect increasing levels of complexity, which is determined by the language actions, knowledge and skills that are required in order to deal competently with the class in question.

FRANÇAIS, LANGUE SECONDE

The mastery of a second language enhances and raises adult learners' cultural awareness. In an era of globalization, when economic barriers are decreasing, when knowledge of a second language is often a criterion of employability and when electronic commerce is rapidly expanding, the mastery of French as a second language is an important priority. Furthermore, since Québec is a French-speaking province, learning its language and culture is indispensable for all citizens. In Common Core Basic Education, the

courses at the Presecondary level address situations related to making first contacts in French, communicating about one's health, particularly with respect to diet and clothing, and engaging in social, cultural and athletic activities. The situations addressed in Secondary Cycle One concern current consumer practices, discussions about the physical and social environment, and finally, the world of work.

Other components of Common Core Basic Education related to the subject area of Languages

Broad areas of learning

The language resources of this subject area are essential to realizing the educational aims established by the Ministère for all four broad areas of learning. Exercising responsibilities as a citizen, being informed about health, well-being and interpersonal relationships, formulating and carrying out a career plan, understanding relations with the environment and making responsible consumer choices all require mobilizing language resources.

Operational competencies

The operational competencies play a determining role in language learning and are crucial for the development of adult learners' competency to deal with situations throughout the course of their lives. The operational competencies are thus both used and developed in the process of learning a language.

The operational competencies are often used concurrently and may be blended together in dealing with situations. For example, in a particular situation, the competency *Communicates* may also

involve the competency *Cooperates* or *Thinks logically*. While all the operational competencies may be engaged in situations related to language, some of them are more significant for learning purposes. In the language programs, these include *Communicates*, *Acts methodically*, *Thinks logically*, and *Uses creativity*.

Other subject areas

There is a reciprocal and complementary relationship between Languages and the other subject areas of Common Core Basic Education. While language provides access to the other subject areas, these areas contribute to the development of language-related competencies and knowledge. Each subject area provides an opportunity to explore a different semantic universe, leading to the development of many types of discourse, language varieties, lexical fields and representations of the world. By exploring and using language in a variety of contexts, adult learners develop their competency to communicate clearly, coherently and confidently.

Common elements of the Language programs

Both programs in this subject area target learning that goes beyond the mere instrumental use of language. They provide a cultural dimension that promotes the ongoing development of learners' tools for communication and expression.

The resources of these two programs are at times common and at times specific to each of them. For example, both programs include concepts such as language functions and parts of speech. Thus learning the language of instruction and learning the second language are mutually supportive: development in one promotes development in the other.

Furthermore, learning and dealing with situations, whether in the language of instruction or the second language, allow learners to construct, enhance and share their world-view. Language makes it possible to articulate thought, opens the door to the world of knowledge and forms the basis of comprehension and expression.

MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology comprises the following programs of study: Mathematics, Computer Science, Relationship With the Environment and Technology. The real-life situations addressed in these four programs are complementary and together they contribute to the construction of disciplinary and interdisciplinary resources and cultural awareness.

The links between the different subjects in this subject area have become stronger over time. Today most technical objects, even the most common ones, require the application of mathematical principles and reasoning and are based on considerable scientific research. Furthermore, adult learners are encouraged to consider the effects of human actions, and the choice of certain technologies, on the environment. They become increasingly aware that they are part of the environment and that their choices have an impact on it. Finally, computers have become the primary means of accessing knowledge and have revolutionized our ways of working and communicating. The various spheres of daily life, including the education of children, require adults to continuously upgrade their knowledge in mathematics, science and technology.

Contribution of the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology to adult learners' education

The subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology is consistent with the aim of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, which is to help adult learners construct the knowledge required to deal with their

real-life situations and thereby improve and update their understanding of the world.

The construction of knowledge in mathematics and computer science introduces adult learners to the knowledge society. They discover different sources of information, learn to adopt a critical perspective with regard to these sources and can participate more fully in community life. For example, by demystifying statistics, the study of mathematics can help adult learners to better understand information provided by the media and thereby become more open to the world.

For several decades, computer science has occupied an increasingly important place in personal, occupational and social life. It is now common to talk about computer literacy. Adults must be able to use computers to communicate, to research information or simply for entertainment purposes. By acquiring scientific knowledge related to the environment, adults develop a more responsible attitude to it. Finally, by exploring different technologies and the principles upon which they are based, adults can act more effectively and more safely in their environment and can anticipate the consequences of their choices.

The programs of study belonging to the area of Mathematics, Science and Technology also draw on other subjects that are equally essential to different aspects of personal, family and social life and the exercise of social roles and responsibilities. Thus, understanding the natural environment and the impact of people's actions on it and the effective use of technologies depends on the capacity to use the knowledge and languages from a variety of different subjects individually or together.

Programs of study and courses in Mathematics, Science and Technology

Program of Study	Literacy	Presecondary	Secondary Cycle One
Mathematics (925 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numeracy (75 hrs) ▪ Orientation in Time (50 hrs) ▪ Arithmetic and Money (100 hrs) ▪ Basic Geometric Representations (75 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arithmetic and Personal Finances (100 hrs) ▪ Sense of Space and Time (75 hrs) ▪ Sets and Statistics (50 hrs) ▪ Geometric Representations (100 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance and Arithmetic (75 hrs) ▪ Statistics and Probability (75 hrs) ▪ Algebraic Modelling (75 hrs) ▪ Geometric Representations and Transformations (75 hrs)
Computer Science (250 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Basic Computer Science (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer Environment Awareness (25 hrs) ▪ Computer Document Production (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Computer Integration (50 hrs) ▪ Computer Search (25 hrs) ▪ Computer Network Communications (25 hrs) ▪ Creative Computer Use (25 hrs)
Relationship With the Environment (100 hrs)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecological Issues: Resource Waste (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental Ethics (50 hrs)
Technology (125 hrs)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everyday Technologies (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective Use of Technologies and Personal Comfort (75 hrs)

MATHEMATICS

Knowledge of mathematical language helps adult learners to construct certain abstract concepts from their everyday experience. As a symbolic system of rigorous codes and rules, mathematical language is a major universal tool of communication. To conceptualize the quantitative aspects of reality and represent the spatial organization of the material world, adult learners need to construct essential mathematical knowledge. They also depend on

mathematical knowledge to represent and understand the world by formulating generalizations about its properties and characteristics.

An understanding of postulates, laws and properties enables adult learners to predict and explain phenomena around them. The situations addressed in the Mathematics program enable them to construct the rigorous language of mathematics and rational thought and thus to deal more autonomously with a wide variety of situations. Arithmetic, statistics and probability, sets, measurement and geometry, algebra and proportional relationships are essential

knowledge in this program of study. The Mathematics program also integrates the knowledge in these different areas, particularly with respect to arithmetic and measurement.

The program includes courses in Literacy, Presecondary and Secondary Cycle One.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computers are widely used in all sectors of human activity. A clear understanding of how they operate and are used is indispensable in today's society. The skills needed to find, use and manipulate different kinds of information are essential in order for adult learners to integrate into the work force or function effectively in their sociocultural environment. This program of study equips them to function in the computer environment, produce a variety of electronic documents, research information, explore communication through a computer network and design innovative projects.

TECHNOLOGY

In the Technology program, adult learners gradually transform their relationship with various technologies, broaden their understanding of their use and become familiar with scientific and technical language. Scientific knowledge is crucial for describing and understanding the characteristics, principles, laws and theories underlying the use of tools and technical equipment. The program of study helps adult learners develop intellectual curiosity and autonomy as well as positive attitudes and confidence with respect to technologies and technical systems in their everyday lives.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

The program of study Relationship With the Environment helps adult learners to gain a better understanding of their relationship with the environment of which they are an integral part. The relationships involved in the use of natural resources and consumer products, which are associated with sociocultural factors and technologies, have an impact on the decisions and interventions adopted. This program aims to foster adult learners' concern for environmental balance and protection. Problems related to water, air and soil pollution and environmental degradation present challenges for all adults concerned with the quality of their environment. The power to control the environment does not lie solely in the hands of human beings: all the elements of the environment are interdependent and are connected through complex relationships of cause and effect. The awareness of this helps adult learners understand the impact of their actions on the quality of their environment.

Other components of Common Core Basic Education related to the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology

Broad areas of learning

The subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology helps adult learners deal with real-life situations related to all the broad areas of learning. The contribution of each of the programs of study in this subject area is outlined below:

Mathematics is used in the majority of adults' real-life situations.

Computer Science facilitates access to mathematical, scientific and technological knowledge and contributes in various degrees to dealing with real-life situations in all broad areas of learning. It is an

important source of information, and computer programs offer many possibilities for accomplishing personal, family and work-related tasks.

Scientific knowledge in this subject area allows adult learners to see themselves as having a stake in their environment and enables them to better understand the relationships between the elements that compose it. It also helps them understand the technical aspect of many real-life situations and enables them to use, maintain and store technical equipment safely.

This subject area plays a significant role in furthering the educational aim of the broad area of learning Environmental and Consumer Awareness, since it promotes a sense of responsibility for personal and collective choices regarding consumer and environmental practices. Society requires people to make difficult but necessary choices. The programs of study in the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology provide opportunities for learners to understand and analyze different situations, search for information they need and make sensible choices that respect the environment within the constraints of their budgets.

The adult learners are expected to interact with others and adopt an attitude of openness to the diversity of values and cultural characteristics, while at the same time increasing their awareness of international concerns. The disciplines in this subject area are thus also linked to the broad area of learning Citizenship, since they foster a better understanding of the environment and how it is affected by scientific and technical discoveries and how they are used.

The subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology is also useful in the real-life situations associated with the broad area of

learning World of Work, since it helps adult learners develop skills they need to exercise their roles as workers: nowadays, workers are increasingly expected to use computers and learn to use new technologies. Generally speaking, their employability depends on regularly updating of their knowledge. If they are able to master the technological innovations in a particular sector of the job market, their interest in pursuing employment in that sector is likely to increase.

Finally, when programs in this subject area target real-life situations in the broad area of learning Health and Well-Being, they equip learners to meet their own and their families' needs, make informed decisions about health, organize their physical environment, manage their budget and plan family activities.

Operational competencies

The programs in the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology promote the development of all the operational competencies in Common Core Basic Education.

The competency *Thinks logically* plays a significant role in this subject area, since its development is targeted in all the programs of study. Because it involves structured thinking, it is useful for all kinds of learning. The Mathematics program also focuses on the competency *Communicates*, which is important if learners are to make sense of and produce simple everyday messages using mathematical terms and symbols. The Technology program draws on the competency *Acts methodically*, while the competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* is essential for dealing with many real-life situations in the Relationship with the Environment program. Finally, the courses in the Computer Science program

promote the development of all six operational competencies in Common Core Basic Education.

Other subject areas

Essential knowledge in the subject area of Social Sciences allows adult learners to better understand the flood of mathematical, scientific and technological information that they encounter and that affects their judgments and actions. It provides access to information they need to guide their decision making, understand major environmental issues, take positions on economic, political and social trends and thereby improve the quality of their actions and choices.

The subject area Working Life provides adult learners with concrete conceptual tools for understanding social issues and social development, adapting to constant change in working conditions, making effective use of many technologies and accommodating to rapid progress.

The links between the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology and that of Languages should be stressed. Through reading and writing, adult learners become familiar with concepts and vocabulary specific to mathematics, computer science, environmental studies and technology. The skills they have acquired in languages allow them to communicate their ideas and opinions and argue effectively. Reading comprehension plays a particularly important role.

Furthermore, knowledge of English opens up a whole world of knowledge that would otherwise be inaccessible. Much work in research and development, as well as in the world of computer science and technology, is done mainly in English.

Knowledge in Mathematics, Science and Technology is also useful in the subject area of Personal Development, especially with respect to the management of personal and family health. A number of computer applications are useful for research and communication.

Common elements of the Mathematics, Science and Technology programs

Taken together, the programs in this subject area promote the development of adult learners' capacity to think systematically in order to deal with real-life situations, understand information and use mathematics, computer science, technology and their knowledge of the environment more effectively.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

The subject area of Social Sciences focuses on essential knowledge related to citizenship, rights and responsibilities, democratic values and characteristics of a collectivity. It focuses on various socioeconomic phenomena and consumer practices. Situations related to the social, political, cultural or economic context are the organizing principle and basis of learning in this subject area; they draw on knowledge related to several disciplines. The contribution of this subject area is as rich and varied as the general or immediate issues of any democratic society. It enriches the curriculum by addressing current challenges facing Québec society. The essential knowledge targeted in the programs of study in this area comes from disciplines such as history, geography, sociology, political science, economics, etc.

Contribution of the subject area of Social Sciences to adult learners' education

Adults assume responsibilities and assert their rights within the limits of the social context. The area of Social Sciences provides them with the basic education required for active and informed citizenship. Adult learners develop their competencies and become more responsible as citizens and consumers by addressing, according to their level of studies, various issues related to political, social or cultural aspects of human activity. They better recognize the importance of democratic values and the need to exercise their rights and responsibilities, both for their own well-being and that of the community. The subject area of Social Sciences meets social needs of adult learners in Common Core Basic Education. The programs of study in it promote the development of adult learners' autonomy, empowerment and participation in Québec society.

Programs of study and courses in Social Sciences

Programs of Study	Presecondary	Secondary Cycle One
Social and Political Life (125 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation and Civic-Mindedness (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democracy and the Right to Vote (25 hrs) Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities (50 hrs)
Community and Culture (100 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Traits of Québec Society (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Values and Cultural Diversity (25 hrs) Community Involvement (25 hrs)
Consumer Habits (100 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer Protection (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer Vigilance (50 hrs)

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The program of study Social and Political Life encourages adult learners to exercise their role as citizens in order to become more actively involved in community life. It is made up of three courses: Cooperation and Civic-Mindedness, at the Presecondary level, and Democracy and the Right to Vote and Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities, in Secondary Cycle One. The Presecondary course introduces adult learners to their role as citizens and helps them to develop a sense of belonging to the community. In the two Secondary Cycle One courses, learners enhance their understanding of their role as citizens by analyzing social and political problems that demand the recognition and exercise of rights and responsibilities.

COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

The program Community and Culture prepares adult learners to assume their responsibilities as members of Québec society, while showing open-mindedness and respect for common values and cultural diversity. It is made up of three courses. At the Presecondary level, Cultural Traits of Québec society enables learners to explore, observe and become more familiar with the culture of the society in which they live. The courses in Secondary Cycle One, Shared Values and Cultural Diversity and Community Involvement, focus on the sociocultural diversity of Québec society, in which shared values are an important means of ensuring democracy and social integration.

CONSUMER HABITS

The program of study Consumer Habits provides adult learners with an opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of their role as

consumers and take a stand with respect to the values prevalent in today's society. In the Presecondary course Consumer Protection, they become more aware of their own consumer habits and how they manage their budgets and learn to adopt cautious attitudes and strategies in tune with their needs and resources. In the Secondary Cycle One course Consumer Vigilance, adult learners take a critical look at the pervasive solicitation to consume and at their power as consumers and citizens.

Other components of Common Core Basic Education related to the subject area of Social Sciences

Broad areas of learning

The programs in Social Sciences are directly related to two broad areas of learning: Citizenship and Environmental and Consumer Awareness. They are consistent with the educational aims in both areas, since they prepare adult learners to solve problems related to their roles as citizens and consumers of goods and services.

The programs provide adult learners with an opportunity to explore important common aspects of citizenship in order to become aware of the importance of democratic values and principles, recognize contexts for democratic participation and participate in social life in a democratic and informed fashion. They become open to cultural diversity and define more precisely the specific cultural traits of Québec society.

The programs in Social Sciences also prepare adult learners to make responsible consumer choices, question some of their own consumer practices and consider their needs and priorities when planning a budget. They learn to evaluate the impact of

consumption on the environment and examine the values underlying such practices from a critical and ethical perspective.

Operational competencies

Certain operational competencies are especially important for dealing with problems in the subject area of Social Sciences. The competency *Exercises critical and ethical judgment* is needed to identify, examine and interpret issues intelligently in order to take positions based actions on principles, rules and values. The competency *Cooperates* allows adult learners to integrate into the community and develop a sense of belonging and solidarity. The competency *Communicates* provides access to different forms of expression: it is essential for grasping reality, understanding and sharing information, expressing and discussing ideas and participating actively in social life. Finally, the competency *Acts methodically* allows learners to make more effective use of information and adopt techniques and methods appropriate to their research goals.

Other subject areas

The subject area of Social Sciences has a lot in common with that of Languages. Communicating orally, using concepts, reading texts on different topics and in different styles, and writing all facilitate comprehension and the capacity to conceptualize. All these factors consolidate and enhance learning in the language of instruction.

Resources from the subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology are used to solve consumer-related problems and to grasp certain social realities. The Computer Science program facilitates communication and access to documents adult learners may need to examine. The program Relationship With the Environment helps them to identify connections between human

activities and land use. It also encourages them to consider the limits and effects of a consumer-based society.

Living with others, negotiating, deliberating and exercising rights and responsibilities all depend on consistency in actions and attitudes and respect for democratic values and principles. Thus the subject area of Social Sciences also benefits from that of Personal Development, through its reflection on and attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships and personal values. Similarly, the subject area of Working Life provides adult learners with information on laws and regulations protecting workers and how to defend their rights and exercise their responsibilities.

Common elements of the Social Sciences programs

The programs in Social Sciences aim to help adult learners develop the autonomy required to assume their roles as citizens and consumers. They develop competency in dealing with situations associated with community life. Whether these involve consumer practices or participation in civic issues, adult learners become aware of the importance not only of exercising their rights but also of assuming their responsibilities. These programs foster learners' integration into society.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The inclusion of the subject area of Personal Development in Common Core Basic Education highlights the importance for adult learners of acquire the tools needed to exercise their social roles and develop autonomy and a sense of responsibility in various aspects of physical, psychological, interpersonal and social life. Essential knowledge in this subject area concerns reflecting on certain questions, communicating their perceptions, creating resources to adapt to change and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships and psychological and sexual health.

The programs in the subject area of Personal Development are intended to enable adults to:

- acquire tools for better adapting to change
- question, reflect and take action with respect to their interpersonal relationships
- pay attention to their habits with regard to eating, physical activity, rest and relaxation
- recognize psychological problems and explore ways of preventing or treating them
- adopt safe sex practices

Essential knowledge targeted in the programs in this subject area comes from psychology, philosophy, ethics, nutrition, physical education, sexology and the health sciences.

Contribution of the subject area of Personal Development to adult learners' education

Common Core Basic Education considers adult learners multidimensional individuals in search of well-being. They confront a complex world in which they must participate and to which they must adapt, while maintaining their balance. As learners, they have to deal with the difficulties of returning to studies and the personal problems, self-doubt and fear of failure associated with it.

The programs in the subject area of Personal Development provide resources geared to adult learners' objectives: they help them realize their potential by making them aware of their physical and psychological vulnerability and giving them the means to deal effectively with it. They also raise their self-esteem, improve their capacity to communicate and increase their sense of responsibility. They address common challenges that all adults are likely to confront at some point in their lives.

Programs of study and courses in Personal Development

Programs of Study	Presecondary	Secondary Cycle One
Personal Life and Relationships (100 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes, Transitions and Challenges (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpersonal Relationships (50 hrs)
Health (100 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Lifestyle Habits (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological Health (25 hrs) Health and Sexuality (25 hrs)

In Common Core Basic Education, the subject area of Personal Development contains two programs: Personal Life and Relationships and Health. These programs address situations that allow adult learners to gain greater understanding of issues related to interpersonal relationships, health management and adaptation to change and thereby develop and enhance their capacity to take effective action.

PERSONAL LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The program of study Personal Life and Relationships helps adult learners develop personal resources for dealing with change, maintaining interpersonal relationships and communicating. It comprises two courses, Change: Transitions and Challenges and Interpersonal Relationships. The first, which is at the Presecondary level, addresses situations such as returning to studies, the birth of a child, moving, the loss of a loved one, changes in love life, blended families and loss of physical autonomy. It emphasizes self-knowledge and the process of change management.

The Secondary Cycle One course Interpersonal Relationships prepares adult learners to negotiate more effectively in their

interpersonal relationships. For example, it places them in situations involving interaction with peers and friends, children and adolescents, a partner and a parent. Learners are expected to participate in a team project and to gain perspective on their communication skills and their contributions to team efforts.

HEALTH

This program encourages adult learners to take responsibility for their health, with a focus on prevention. It highlights the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle habits and taking preventive measures against risks to psychological or sexual health. It comprises three courses: Healthy Lifestyle Habits, Psychological Health and Health and Sexuality. Familiarization with community resources is especially important in these courses.

The course Healthy Lifestyle Habits is at the Presecondary level. It addresses situations in which adult learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their health, particularly with regard to diet, physical activity, rest and relaxation. Taking responsibility includes developing an action plan adapted to their own situation.

At the Secondary Cycle One level, the course Psychological Health concerns adult learners' need for balance in their personal lives; it gives them support in trying out different means of creative and stimulating self-expression and fulfillment. It focuses on maintaining psychological balance and identifying simple and appropriate preventive measures.

The course Health and Sexuality encourages adult learners to consider the importance of making informed and responsible choices in matters related to sexual health. They explore the appropriate use of methods of birth control and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.

Other components of Common Core Basic Education related to the subject area of Personal Development

Broad areas of learning

When adults learn to know themselves better, improve their interpersonal relationships and take responsibility for their health, they can more readily engage in the educational process. Many obstacles in their personal lives can prevent them from persevering in their studies. The programs of study in Personal Development aim to reinforce their capacity to act and react appropriately.

Other subject areas

Dealing with the situations in these programs requires adult learners to mobilize resources they constructed in the subject areas of Mathematics, Science and Technology and Languages. Similarly, resources constructed in the subject area of Personal Development can be mobilized in other subject areas.

The subject area of Personal Development, like that of Social Sciences, places special importance on critical judgment and the capacity to make choices and to interact effectively with others. Both subject areas encourage adult learners to reflect on their values and help them attain a level of autonomy and responsibility that enables them to participate in the community.

Personal Development is also related to Working Life, since both subject areas promote a better understanding of topics such as change, self-knowledge, interpersonal relationships and health. These aspects of personal development are especially pertinent for learners who are seeking to find or hold on to a job.

The Health program links the subject area of Personal Development with that of Mathematics, Science and Technology, since they both require learners to construct knowledge related to statistics, measurement, proportions, etc. The subject area of Mathematics, Science and Technology contains essential resources for dealing with many situations in the Health program, such as becoming familiar with statistical data on a health problem or measuring proportions when planning a menu. Resources related to Computer Science and the media are also useful in dealing with most of the classes of situations addressed in the two programs in Personal Development.

The programs in Personal Development depend significantly on resources from the subject area of Languages. These resources help learners express their identity, needs and emotions, articulate their thoughts clearly, develop reliable judgment and sound reasoning and understand documentation on health and daily activities.

Operational competencies

The resources adults need to construct in this subject area are sometimes specific to one of the programs and sometimes common to both. In either case, adult learners' competency in dealing with situations in their personal life depends on their development of operational competencies common to several programs. Thus the competency *Communicates* is particularly important in both the Health program, in which adult learners express their needs and describe their experiences, and in the program Personal Life and Relationships, in which they cultivate interpersonal relationships. The competency *Thinks logically* also plays a role in dealing with many situations in learners' personal lives. In all instances, this competency allows them to gain an objective understanding of their needs and of certain phenomena, which they relate to their perceptions of reality.

Common elements of the Personal Development programs

While each of the two programs of study in the area of Personal Development contains elements specific to it, both contribute in a general way to the development of adult learners' autonomy and sense of responsibility as well as to their fulfillment and their well-being in their various real-life situations.

WORKING LIFE

The inclusion of the subject area Working Life in Common Core Basic Education conforms to the orientations of the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training. Since Common Core Basic Education addresses adults who are generally old enough to work and who usually have some work experience, program offerings are necessarily distinct from those in the youth sector. Integrating into the work force is a necessity for a large number of adults. Working or contributing actively to the social economy is also an important source of self-esteem and fulfillment.

The programs in this subject area prepare adult learners to play an active and fulfilling role in the world of work. They focus on adults' social role as producers of goods and services and target essential knowledge related to working life.

The essential knowledge in these programs of study comes from the following disciplines and fields: career studies, economics, education, demography, counselling, psychology and sociology. The subject area Working Life prepares adult learners to consolidate various aspects of human activity by focusing on challenges that confront all adults at some time in their working lives. It provides a context in which learners can explore questions concerning their training and career plans, as well as the regulations and requirements governing the world of work. It allows adult learners to reinforce or develop an appropriate conception of work and appropriate behaviour for the workplace.

Essential knowledge at the Presecondary level is structured to provide a method for exploring career options and related areas of training and give students a perspective on various education and career paths. In Secondary Cycle One, adult learners clarify their

goals, formulate a specific plan and reflect more deeply on their personal and occupational characteristics.

In addition, in order to provide the conditions and tools necessary to achieve training and career goals, learners are made aware of the kinds of disputes that may arise in the workplace and discover the work culture of Québec. At the Presecondary level, they are introduced to rights and responsibilities in the workplace, while in Secondary Cycle One, they construct their own conception of work, adapted to the cultural aspects of the world of work in contemporary Québec.

The subject area of Working Life directly concerns adult learners' occupational activity and fulfillment. It also promotes their active participation in the community and society at large by familiarizing them with a role that can influence their daily lives.

Contribution of the subject area of Working Life to adult learners' education

The programs in this subject area provide adult learners with an opportunity to explore their career choices in relation to their personal and occupational characteristics, the options available through further training and the possibilities of the job market. They also help learners construct a conception of the world of work based on the cultural and historical context of contemporary Québec.

The programs of study in this subject area enable adult learners to:

- develop a systematic method of exploration and an effective process for researching information about training and occupations
- formulate a realistic and integrated training and career plan that takes into account their areas of interest and personal

- characteristics as well as the realities of the world of work and the training options available
- acquire a better understanding of their preferences, interests and potential in order to define their needs and plans in terms of lifelong learning
- exercise their rights and obligations at work responsibly and more effectively
- show more concern for the rules of conduct pertaining to occupational health and safety
- reconcile their attitudes, behaviour and personal values with the basic requirements of the workplace
- refine and adapt their conception of the world of work with reference to its cultural context
- develop a conception of the functioning of the world of work that is suited to their cultural reality
- become autonomous by developing the following transferable operational competencies: Communicates, Acts methodically, Thinks logically, Uses creativity and Exercises critical and ethical judgment

Programs of study and courses in Working Life

Programs of Study	Presecondary	Secondary Cycle One
Introduction to the World of Work (75 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rights and Responsibilities at Work (25 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work Culture (50 hrs)
Career Choice (100 hrs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exploring Training and Career Options (50 hrs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing a Training and Career Plan (50 hrs)

CAREER CHOICE

The program of study Career Choice is intended to provide adult learners with the opportunity, from the start and throughout their schooling, to develop a training and career plan. They begin by exploring different possibilities until eventually they are in a position to formulate a concrete plan. The program consists of two courses: Exploring Training and Career Options and Developing a Training and Career Plan.

In the Presecondary course, Exploring Training and Career Options, adult learners examine their own personal and occupational profile in relation to the characteristics and requirements of various trades and occupations and the training programs associated with them. This allows them to select a limited number of criteria to apply when deciding on training and career options.

In the Secondary Cycle One course, Developing a Training and Career Plan, adult learners formulate a specific training and career plan based on informed and documented reflection.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF WORK

The program Introduction to the World of Work is designed to enable adult learners, throughout the course of their studies, to construct knowledge and develop attitudes and behaviours consistent with the functioning of the world of work. They become familiar with current legislation governing the workplace and develop a conception of work that reflects the work culture of Québec. Understanding how the world of work functions and complying with its rules and requirements are key factors in developing a realistic and motivating training and career plan. This program contains two courses: Rights and Responsibilities at Work and Work Culture.

The Presecondary course Rights and Responsibilities at Work prepares adult learners to file a claim or exercise recourse to ensure fair and equitable working conditions. In addition, it encourages learners to assume responsibility by taking preventive measures in situations related to their daily activities at work or those leading to workplace disputes, such as discrimination, harassment or working illegally, which has an impact on the person concerned and society as a whole.

The Secondary Cycle One course Work Culture addresses historical and contemporary cultural realities and the principles that underpin the world of work in Québec society. It helps adult learners understand the effect of different current events on fluctuations in the job market and anticipate the new demands that are likely to result. It also prepares them to evaluate the impact of work on their personal lives and to compare their personal profile with the requirements of the job market. Finally, the course provides learners with an opportunity to construct a conception of work adapted to the cultural realities of the working world.

Other components of Common Core Basic Education related to the subject area of Working Life

Broad areas of learning

The situations addressed in the programs in Working Life are directly linked to the broad area of learning World of Work, but are also related to the other broad areas of learning. Each broad area of learning embodies possibilities for exploring various trades and occupations associated with it, since each of the adult's social roles can potentially be exercised in work-related situations.

Operational competencies

The programs of study in Working Life contribute to the development of five of the six operational competencies in the Common Core Basic Education Program. Each course highlights the development of one or two of these competencies. However, the more opportunities learners have to develop the other operational competencies, the better equipped they will be to formulate a training and career plan suited to their personal identity, and at the same time, to consolidate their occupational identity. The programs also engage adult learners in a dynamic cyclical process of action and reflection.

Other subject areas

Dealing competently with situations in the subject area of Working Life involves mobilizing resources from the subject areas of Languages and Mathematics, Science and Technology. For example, the method of exploring training and career options requires the use of traditional and electronic media to gather and exchange information, which is directly related to knowledge constructed in the Computer Science and English, Language of Instruction, programs. This method also helps adult learners understand the world in which they live and exercise their social roles as members of a family, consumers and citizens in an informed fashion. In the context of the globalization of markets and employment, the English, Language of Instruction, program is an important source of cultural knowledge for adult learners preparing to become producers of goods and services.

The subject area of Working Life is especially related to the programs of study in Personal Development and Social Sciences. As producers of goods and services, members of a family and

consumers, adult learners must deal with the consequences of returning to studies to qualify for a trade or an occupation. The quality of their communication skills is a crucial factor in gaining their family's moral and financial support. Finally, exercising their rights and responsibilities at work and adopting behaviours appropriate to the workplace help them realize their potential in their personal, social and working lives. The subject area of Working Life also helps them exercise their role as citizens, since it promotes their personal and social involvement in the community.

Common elements of the Working Life programs

Knowledge related to adult learners' personal characteristics, employment sectors and prospects, requirements of the workplace, courteous relationships and the use of social and material resources are common to both programs in Working Life. In both programs, adult learners construct knowledge that has a direct impact on their working life. When learning is accompanied by informed reflection, it can be transferred to any sphere of adult learners' lives.

Since both programs of study in Working Life directly or indirectly concern career planning, they may be considered complementary. The skills acquired are useful in both programs and serve to reinforce the learning process.

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