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“A Union Passport to Learning”

Review of the Literature

Submitted to:

Labour Education Centre

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a basis for 1) fine tuning the design of the demonstration project for the Union Passport to Learning Project sponsored by the Labour Education Centre and 2) evaluating the entire project.¹

The ultimate aim of the demonstration project is to provide access and opportunity to workers who, through no fault of their own, have not been able to access mainstream forms of post secondary education and credentials. The project seeks to provide access to educational opportunities by addressing the root causes that prevent adult workers from accessing training, most fundamentally, the availability of literacy and basic skills upgrading and the financial and personal supports necessary to make a successful “return to learning.” It purports to demonstrate that unions in Canada can play a significant leadership and support role in improving the employability and labour market mobility of their members by confronting and overcoming the barriers that restrict adult workers from accessing appropriate education and training opportunities.

The objectives of this two-year project are to:

- create a unique “Union Passport to Learning” program accredited by community colleges and aimed at increasing union members’ access to post secondary education, and
- conduct a feasibility study that will inform, evaluate, and assess the demonstration project, including the feasibility for broader provincial and national roll out and long-term sustainability.

There are five major components to the 240-hour certificate Union Passport to Learning program. The first component is Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). Participants will take a 15-hour portfolio course to determine their goals and where they can earn credit towards the program based on prior learning.

¹ The Canadian Labour and Business Centre acknowledges the work of Sue Folinsbee, Tri En Communications, in the preparation of this literature review.

The second component is Academic Learning. The first part of Academic Learning is Return to Learn where people can build their basic skills (reading, writing, study skills, etc.) and confidence as they re-enter the learning process. Return to Learn will provide the foundation for the second part of Academic Learning – the content courses such as:

- practical/vocational courses such as health and safety, ergonomics, employability skills
- community and social inclusion (e.g. union counselling)
- economic/legal such as labour economics and human rights
- work issues such as labour leadership, women and work, challenging racism

The third, optional component is a 60-hour practicum where participants can undertake an approved project in a union, a community-based agency, or an advocacy or environmental organization.

The fourth component is Credentialing which focuses on the certificate that participants will receive after completing the 240 hours of approved courses and activities.

The fifth component – Holistic Union-based Support – focuses on removing many of the obstacles to participation such as lack of financial resources, rigid program scheduling, competing family and work demands, and lack of recognition for prior learning.

1.2 Questions the Literature Review Seeks to Answer

The literature review will attempt to answer the following questions in order to inform the Union Passport to Learning project:

- What do we know about the union members as adult learners who are the targeted for this project? What are their educational levels?
- How can the case be made for a union-led program?
- What does the literature tell us about what motivates adults to return to learning?
- What are the existing models that support adults returning to learn?

- What models demonstrate that union-run programs are successful?
- What models like peer mentoring and tutoring can be added to support successful outcomes for Passport to Learning program participants?

2 Findings

2.1 Union Members as Adult Learners

This section of the literature review focuses on what we know about union members as adult learners. The section starts with a description of three different kinds of learning as a framework for understanding learning as it applies to all adults. Then it outlines the learning that is available to working people. The section also examines what kind of learning unionized members participate in and what the conditions of that learning are. It focuses what union members think about formal schooling and credentials, their participation in non-formal education, their thoughts about basic skills upgrading, and their informal learning. The section ends with the impact of gender, race, and age on working class learning.

2.1.1 Different kinds of learning

Livingstone and Sawchuk (2004) assert that learning takes place anytime and anywhere. They make the distinction between three kinds of intentional learning – formal schooling, adult education, and informal learning. Formal schooling includes any kind of credentialed learning. Adult education is usually voluntary and includes a range of courses, workshops, and programs delivered in a variety of settings. The authors also emphasize the importance of informal learning in addition to adult education and formal schooling. They refer to the widespread use of informal training with mentors and self-directed learning that is done on one's own or with peers.

Taylor (2001) also outlines the various kinds of learning, particularly the kinds of learning that is available to working people. There are education programs offered by unions, labour councils, federations, and congresses. There are also post secondary courses and programs referred to as labour studies. Labour education refers to both union education and labour studies. Taylor goes on to make distinctions among terms like informal, non-formal, and formal learning as it applies to labour. Informal

learning is everyday learning where, for example, a group of workers talk together about workplace issues. Non-formal learning refers to short courses that are non-credited. These include labour courses offered by labour organizations, colleges, and universities. There are also accredited labour studies programs at colleges and universities referred to as formal learning.

Taylor asserts that even though labour-based education is the most important non-vocational education available to working people, little is known about it. The purpose of this adult education is for participants to contribute to both their union and the larger labour movement. This kind of learning, he notes, starts with the experience of participants and is largely interactive. He says little is known or written about it because, for the most part, labour historians have ignored education and educational historians have ignored labour learning. Bratton, Mills, Pynch, and Sawchuk (2004) also note that, while there are policy and practice documents issued by unions on labour education, this form of education has a more practical focus rather than one of academic writing.

2.1.2 Overview of working people and learning

Bratton, et al. stress “training is a tool of political struggle in the workplace” (114). The dominant view of workplace learning states that barriers to achieving a learning organization and knowledge-based economy lie in the deficits of workers themselves rather than the organizations they work in. They also note that many scholars have criticized this notion and suggest that the real problem is *laissez-faire* labour markets and the hierarchical, rather than democratic organization of work and society.

Livingstone and Sawchuk also challenge the ubiquitous policy assumptions and dominant discourse that workers are suffering from a deficit of skill and knowledge that “can be fixed” by training and education. They say that while the mantra tends to be that workers need additional skills and knowledge, empirical evidence shows the reverse is true. They argue that there has only been a gradual net upgrading of the need for additional skills over the last few generations. Rather, increases in educational attainment appear to be outpacing increases in job requirements. They emphasize “dominant discourses or ideologies reflect the interests of the powerful economic groups” (2). While there have been theoretical critiques of these dominant positions, little is actually known about the actual day-to-day work and learning practices of most people. The authors found in their own research that workers

actually face serious barriers to applying their skills and knowledge in their paid workplaces and that working people tend to be underemployed in their jobs rather than under qualified. They state that the least powerful people are the most likely to not be able to apply their knowledge and capabilities in any sphere of life. In addition, they point to a body of literature that confirms that this is a condition existing in many countries.

Livingstone and Sawchuk studied 120 unionized workers in five sites representing diverse Canadian sectors – auto, chemical, college, light manufacturing, and garment industries. The authors conclude little is known about learning practices in today’s workplace from the workers’ point of view. They found that power and context are integral features of the learning process. The research showed that the greater the strength of the union, the greater the development of challenges to power relations and the “most comprehensive lived opportunities and supports for workers’ learning all its forms” (258). This point is also confirmed by other research (Bratton, et al.).

Livingstone and Sawchuk cite the auto industry with its powerful union traditions as an example of where formal training, continuing education, and informal learning are extensive. Training refers to tools courses like steward’s or health and safety training, and production courses such as performance production. Continuing education is described as courses and workshops that focus on general skills such as English as a Second Language (ESL), literacy, computers, and social issues such as anti-racism and anti-sexism, and political economy. The authors acknowledge that different forms of power, both general and site specific, determine workers’ learning practices. These forms of power are based on industrial sector strength, managerial strategies, union strength, and ethnicity and language, gender, and age.

Livingstone and Sawchuk give site-specific examples to illustrate what they mean by influences of power. At both the college and the chemical plant, learning was better supported than at the other sites. However, learning opportunities were privileged to white-collar administrative workers in the college and “high performance” work groups in the chemical plant. Groff’s findings (1993) also illustrate how learning opportunities are privileged. She found that members with the Communication, Energy, and Paperworkers (CEP) union who had the most training were more likely to want to learn through courses and books. In addition, members who had more training and education were more likely to take part in employer-based training.

Unionized workers are more likely to develop their learning practices through their unions and this learning is more likely to be informal rather than formal (Livingstone and Sawchuk). In addition, Spencer (2001) notes that most of organized union education can be classified as non-formal adult education.

Statistics Canada (1996), through the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), found that adult education and training programs are less likely to reach those with low skills. The data showed that those with higher skills were most likely to receive adult education and training. The report expresses concern that this situation creates inequality because adult education and training serves those who are already skilled. Similarly, *A Report on Adult Education and Training in Canada: Learning a Living* (2001) found that education level was a strong predictor of participation in training and education. Adult education and training was defined as organized structured programs for people over 15 not in the school or university systems. Those with a university degree were 7.5 times more likely to participate in a learning activity than those without a high school diploma. These findings support the idea that the learning of working people is less likely to be formal.

Formal schooling

Livingstone (1999) shows that the demand for more formal schooling is on the rise and will likely continue in the future. Between 1979 and the 1990's, the proportion of the public who rated having a post secondary education as "very important" more than doubled from about one third to more than two thirds. In Ontario, actual attainment of a high school diploma and other post secondary certificates and degrees increased between 1978 and 1996. In 1976, almost 50% of the labour force in Ontario had less than high school. In 1996, 24% had less than high school reflecting almost the same percentage (25%) with less than a high school diploma in Livingstone and Sawchuk's 2004 study. In addition, the percentage of the workforce with a college certificate nearly doubled from 12% in 1978 to 21% in 1996.

Livingstone and Sawchuk found a difference in how trades people viewed their credentials and how others perceived learning in school. Trades people saw their credentials as useful, as a bargaining tool, part of their work and themselves. Non-trades people saw learning in school as having minor intrinsic value.

Most workers in their study saw formal schooling as having uneven value. There were four types of value. The first value was a credential useful as a commodity in the labour market. The second value was around providing self-esteem in relation to dominant ideological and cultural meanings. This was expressed as both pride in getting a diploma or a degree or shame in not completing one. The third value included having the basic literacy skills of reading, writing, and math to participate at work, in their union, at home and in their communities. A fourth value identified by workers was the knowledge that they could get through formal schooling that had not been accessible through informal learning. Interestingly, this knowledge was explained as help they could get from another worker who had this formal training rather than getting the formal schooling directly.

Non-formal learning/adult education

Livingstone and Sawchuk found that generally unionized workers are more likely to participate in more employer-paid formal courses and workshops than non-unionized workers are. However, the authors found that there was a great deal of variation across the five sites in their research. For example, the auto and chemical plants offered more courses than the other sites including health and safety, stewards training, production courses, literacy and ESL, and social issues courses such as anti-racism courses. These courses were offered by the union, management or jointly. Conversely, at the college, small part site and garment factory, course offerings were much fewer with no offerings in the social issues area. In sites like the auto and chemical plant that had highly developed union cultures, workers were able to articulate the range of courses offered through their union, and provincial and national labour bodies. The authors found that the highest participation rates of course-taking was at the auto, college, and chemical sites. The chemical and colleges sites had identified themselves as learning organizations. The auto assembly plant had the strongest union culture.

Basic education and literacy

Livingstone and Sawchuk found that basic education programs were the most important training and continuing education issue for unionized workers across sites. Workers, especially custodial and housekeeping workers at the college, and garment and small manufacturing workers, saw learning ESL as key to all aspects of their lives and a “gateway to fuller participation” (264). At the same time, basic education

programs were not perceived to be important by the employers. Groff also found in her research with CEP that many people wanted courses in reading, writing, and/or ESL.

Informal learning

The workers in Livingstone and Sawchuk's study participated in a great deal of informal learning both individually and collectively. However, this learning was constrained by lack of time, space, and energy. The authors note that these are the constraints for working people that mitigate against participation in any kind of learning activities. However, in spite of that, workers still manage to accomplish a considerable amount of informal learning in all aspects of their lives. For example, workers in the study talked about listening to people at work, tapes from the library and television to learn English. Moreover, working class work and home life is grounded in informal, collective learning. This could include community development, car maintenance, forms of worker resistance or learning how to operate a computer. Informal learning accounts for the largest share of production-related learning any workplace. Bratton et al. also emphasize the informal nature of most of the learning that workers do.

The impact of gender, race, and age on working class learning

The Canadian Labour Congress (2002) states that fewer people are getting employer-provided training and that this training is highly concentrated in larger companies and parts of the public sector. In addition, many women and recent immigrants are excluded from this training. The growth of contingent employment has shifted the responsibility of training from employers to individuals.

Livingstone and Sawchuk note the functioning of the female double day where female partners are responsible for both working in one or two low-wage jobs and in household tasks. The authors found that this held true for sites that had a high female/male ratio such as the garment factory, small parts manufacturing and the college. Women have less space, time, and energy for learning than men do. The authors note "men rely on women's greater unpaid work to find more discretionary time for learning" (271). They refer to the work of Luttrell (1997) who found that learning for working class women must focus on community and family rather than themselves individually as they put themselves last.

Livingstone and Sawchuk found that learning was linked to job categories, gendered pathways to new jobs, and the trades/maintenance workers (mostly men) versus general workers (mostly women). Women had limited access to positions that required higher skills, hence less learning opportunities than men. In one site, women well qualified for apprenticeship and other training positions were discouraged from applying. At the same time, a male worker, not as well qualified, got the promotion when he was mentored and vouched for by a male co-worker. With garment workers, male cutters with better wages, and greater job security received opportunities for training as opposed to female home workers who did not. The female home workers made piece rates below minimum wage, worked in isolation, looked after child care, and had no access to learning. Maintenance workers (mostly men) across sites had more discretionary time at work for learning than the mostly female production workers who were in lower paid, less skilled, contingent worker positions. In short, men had more time than women did for informal learning at work.

On the other hand, unions play an important role in facilitating gender equity in joint union management training programs (Bratton, et al.). In fact, in apprenticeship programs where unions were involved, there were higher rates of women graduating than both men and women in employer-only sponsored programs.

Differences in race and ethnicity were apparent across sites. Livingstone and Sawchuk found that white people in the sites they studied had twice as much informal learning time than people of colour. These differences were reflected in ESL policies and practices, assessment and recognition of foreign credentials, racialized segments of the labour market and access to promotion at work. Workers are denied jobs where there is greater discretionary time over learning because of low-level literacy, lack of recognition for foreign credentials, and the segmentation of workers along racial lines. The mostly severely limiting situation for working class learning is illustrated by the situation for female home workers. Furthermore, “racial ghettoization in the workplace appears on the basis of our evidence, to pose a significant challenge to the collective potential for working class learning” (276).

Livingstone and Sawchuk found across sites that the pattern of job related informal learning was consistent with other research. Older workers, aged 45 and older, collectively did slightly less informal learning. The important point is that old workers remain active learners in relation to their employment. The authors noted

that seniority privileges and security of these workers most likely had an influence on the amount of job-related informal learning these older workers were able to do.

2.2 The Case for Union-Led Programs

This section provides an overview of labour's experience in adult education and its goals for adult education as distinct from those of the formal education system and employer training. It examines the ability of unions to address gaps in the formal system, results in relation to goals, influence of unionization on job-related courses and training, and understanding of PLAR.

2.2.1 Unrecognized experience

Unions have an enormous amount of unrecognized experience in adult education (Spencer, 2001; Taylor). Historically speaking, the labour movement has been involved in worker education since the beginning of the early 19th century (Taylor). However, little is known or written about labour education. Taylor states that presently over 100,000 Canadian workers participate annually in union-based programs in order to contribute to their union and the labour movement in general. He says, "It is estimated that union-based education is the most significant non-vocational education available to working people" (1). However, Spencer (2001) adds that this fact is generally not known possibly because of lack of linkages with, and recognition by formal educational institutions such as colleges and universities.

2.2.2 Focus on the collective

The literature shows that the goal of focusing on the collective and labour-based approaches is important in union-led education. The goal of union education is to address the collective rather than the individual and to shape learning and work to meet labour's goals (Bratton et al.; Spencer, 2001; Taylor). Spencer stresses that education is a way that unions address obligations to their members and develop themselves organizationally. Bratton, et al. confirm this point. The authors note that no matter what kind of training is offered, the goal is always to increase the ability of unions to represent workers and influence the form of work and learning from a labour point of view. The fact that union education is taken with the idea of collective rather than individual purposes as a goal is an important distinction

between labour-based learning and traditional forms of adult education or training offered by the employer.

Moreover, labour education is distinct from other forms of adult education in that its techniques and approaches as well as its goals are collective rather than individualistic (Spencer, 2001). It places little value on education for career advancement; rather it is aimed at increasing collectivist thinking and participation in the union by its members. Bratton, et al. note that even apprenticeship training focuses on collective purposes to protect workers' wages and skills and gain the knowledge to practise their craft.

2.2.3 Challenging dominant systems

Union-led programs can foster labour goals in a way that the formal education system and employer-based training cannot. Spencer (2001) notes the importance of union led or labour programs with the primary goal being to empower members to take part in union activities. Labour representatives in his research reflect that the goals of labour education are to challenge dominant systems and approaches manifested in employers, and the formal education system. One of the broad themes in labour education is to "focus on such concepts as 'service', i.e. to the organization, to fellow workers, to the working class, to society, etc. in contrast to the possessive individualism that infuses much of formal education" (185). Moreover, where unions have included skills or trades training in their labour education agenda, it is to strengthen the collective position of union members.

Several authors show how both the goal and the means in labour education are important. Taylor emphasizes that both the collective goal of improving the union and labour movement and the experiential approach used are distinguishing factors of labour led programs. Levine (2001) illustrates how union-led programs help members understand systems better and how they can stand up for themselves better. She shows how unions promote worker-centred learning. This includes building on what people know, focusing on the whole person, and enabling workers to have more control over their lives among other things. She goes on to say that union-led programs make sense. Workers will feel more comfortable talking to their peers and more secure knowing that the union is representing their interests. Dassinger (1997) also asserts that trade unions can promote critical thought and further democratic participation for working people by sharing in the cost and responsibility of educating

employed and unemployed union members. She also states that the transformational approaches used in the impressive array of labour education courses to address oppression and promote strategies for social change can also be used in workplace training and adjustment.

2.2.4 Focus on literacy and basic skills

There has been a great interest in literacy from the labour movement. Bratton et al. note that literacy, language, and numeracy have been important to unions all over the world as a way of increasing equity, in the workplace, the labour market and beyond. Similarly, the Worker Arts and Heritage Centre (2001) reports that unions have been involved in literacy for at least 150 years as a way to protect and empower working people. Over the last three decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in adult literacy on the part of Canadian labour. Every federation of labour in Canada, Quebec's central labour bodies, labour councils and many major unions have undertaken awareness programs or campaigns. Dassinger's findings (1998) from a survey with 65 interviews with individuals from national unions, regional offices, federations of labour and labour councils across Canada also support the importance of literacy and basic skills. The area of basic skills was consistently cited as a critical area for labour. In fact, Dassinger notes that basic skills is an area where labour has the most coherent agenda. Survey participants agreed that literacy was a bridge to both further skills training and labour education for union members. Literacy was cited as important in terms of responding to human needs of members, building their self-esteem, responding to equity groups and building the union. Levine (2001) agrees. She states that literacy is an opportunity for unions to reach out to members who may have had to leave school early, where school did not work out, whose skills are rusty, and who are new immigrants needing to improve their skills in English or French.

2.2.5 Membership and participation in the union

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) (2005) states that union membership is on the rise where unions are promoting training and learning at work. Unions also enjoy a stronger standing where they have reacted to the learning needs of the workforce. UNISON also found that 23% of members attending its Return to Learn program became more active in the union (Munro and Rainbird, 2000). The Worker Education for Skills Training (WEST) is a trade union education program offering

basic skills upgrading run by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL). An evaluation of the program found that a large percentage of union members, both course leaders and learners, increased their participation in the union following their participation in WEST (SFL 1997).

2.2.6 Influence on participation in workplace training

Unions also have a positive influence on their members' participation in workplace training. The CLC (2002) reported that training programs are most effective when developed jointly through collective bargaining. Joint approaches increase access, worker involvement, and training intensity. As well, joint approaches that focus on workplace change and the training to address it, have higher outcomes in terms of worker well being than programs developed by the employer alone. Similarly, a joint approach is more likely to result in broad, portable skills than one developed just by the employer.

Livingstone and Raykov (2005) in their analysis of the data from the 1997 Adult Education and Training Survey, find that when age, education, and job tenure were taken into account, union membership had a significant impact on workers' participation in all courses, job-related courses and employer sponsored training. The authors conclude that these findings provide support for the thesis that "unionized workers' greater negotiating powers contribute to this difference" (61). This was a finding in Livingstone and Sawchuk's study as well.

2.2.7 Focus on gaps and barriers in the formal education system

Unions can address gaps and barriers in the formal education and training system for their members. The most notable example is UNISON, the largest trade union in the United Kingdom, with 1.4 million members in the public services. Many members have suffered in the school system, are women, or are from minority groups (Sutherland, 1998). A significant number are in low paying jobs and are the most in need of high quality learning. Sutherland emphasizes that a thriving democracy based is tied in with lifelong learning.

In response to these barriers, Spencer (1997) notes that UNISON with its "UNISON Open College" established a consortium of education providers to augment its own provision of training and education through a range of options. The College is not a

physical entity, but a way to access a broad range of training and education. It works with colleges, universities, the Workers Education Association (WEA) and residential colleges to offer basic education, study skills, accreditation for prior learning to degree-level programs. Credits can be received for all aspects of this learning if the union member so desires. Significant in this range of options is the union-developed, WEA-offered Return to Learn (R2L). This nine-month program, where students meet through a local study group to work through workbooks, and work with a tutor, has proven to be very successful. Not only has it promoted individual learning but it has also promoted union involvement. The UNISON model illustrates how service unionism with a focus on individuals can be blended with collective goals. It is an example of how unions can develop their own model of adult education provision. This model and its impact will be described in more detail under *Models for Return to Learn*.

Livingstone and Sawchuk's primary recommendation from their research supports the need for a union-led model like UNISON's. The authors indicate that the most common recommendation across their five study sites was the need for an increase in worker control and participation with respect to education and training and learning structures of all kinds. Other recommendations included the need to formalize education and training through collective bargaining, the need to have learning initiatives include home and community-based initiatives, not just work based, and the need to recognize, compensate, and strategize around informal learning.

2.2.8 Prior learning and recognition (PLAR)

The labour movement is also exploring how to obtain recognition and accreditation for this vast amount of labour education that union members receive in a way that will keep labour principles and approaches intact (Spencer, 2001). Although it is not the intent of this education to provide formal recognition, much of it could be recognized formally in the form of college or university credit. The question is how to evaluate this learning. It is easier, Spencer adds, to get credit for labour courses that resemble traditional classroom courses. One of the findings of his research was that the formal education system "depends heavily on the ability to review literature and develop writing skills" (186). The danger is that labour would feel pressure to conform to this traditional structure with the focus on the individual rather than the collective, another feature of the formal education system. He notes that labour education is one of the few adult education practices that does not serve

individualistic, economic goals. Moreover, participants do not write tests afterwards – the true test is their effectiveness on the ground. He suggests that learning contexts rather than individuals should be evaluated for specific programs and courses. He does not support changing existing labour education practices. Bratton, et al. also report on PLAR from a labour perspective. While PLAR serves to recognize workers' skills and provide support for entering into further education opportunities, there are concerns as well. Questions raised are: who will control the information gathered in PLAR; will educational workers be downsized; will apprenticeships be eroded, and will training costs be downloaded to workers?

Livingstone and Sawchuk conclude there is a need to more fully understand workers' learning. Their recommendations include the need to explore more formalized learning through PLAR and Paid Education Leave (PEL). Spencer (2001) concludes his research on PLAR by noting that: "If the purpose of PLAR initiatives is to encourage working people to use the educational system their taxes support, we need to acknowledge that workers may have gained valuable knowledge and be willing to grant them some degree of formal understanding" (190).

The Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress (CSTEC), one of the oldest existing sector councils is a joint venture between the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and Canada's steel producing companies. In 1992, CSTEC negotiated a three-year cost shared agreement with the federal government and province of Ontario to deliver training including foundation skills along with technical and industry skills (CSTEC, n.d.). CSTEC worked with participating colleges/cégeps to implement a training and accreditation program common across the steel industry where participants could receive college accreditation for the training and recognition of prior learning (PLAR) through portfolio development and program review. The noted benefits of the partnership included high quality accredited college course, reduced costs for training, flexible delivery options, increased non-company specific training, and increased transferability.

CSTEC noted that developing partnerships with the college system required a great deal of work. However, there were numerous benefits of the articulation agreement for workers. These benefits included reduced training time because of PLAR, greater employment and income security, the development of portable skills, and greater involvement in training and lifelong learning. The union provided new services for

their membership and played a greatly expanded role in the design and delivery of training courses.

In the United Kingdom, the TUC has an accredited system for its labour education program. The TUC (2005) reports that its fully accredited national education program has been successful. The TUC has worked with the National Open College Network (NOCN) to ensure that all its courses are accredited. The decision to register for assessment and credit rests solely with the learner. In 1998, the TUC commissioned research to understand how certain groups perceived accreditation and how it affected the curriculum and the working culture of the group. The findings show that a large majority of union representatives view accreditation favourably and that there are high rates of participation in other NOCN programs and other types of qualifications. Furthermore, accreditation had been achieved without distorting the primary purpose of the program— to achieve knowledge and skills focused on participants' role as union representatives. This system of accreditation can be used by union representatives to access further learning through admission to university in related areas of study.

2.3 Adults Returning to Learning: Motivational Factors, Barriers and Retention Factors

This section examines what motivates non-traditional participants to return to learning, what barriers prevent them from returning to learn, and what strategies keep participants in programs.

2.3.1 Overview of motivation to return to learn

Hard-to-reach learners can come from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. However, their common intersection is that they are likely to be disadvantaged (Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2003). These learners generally do not identify with the content, delivery style, or location of traditional learning. They have often had negative experiences of school, have left school early, and have few qualifications. This may have turned them off learning and made them reluctant to return to learn. On the other hand, they may have not been able to use their education, for example, immigrants and the long-term unemployed. Practitioners from the UK and Sweden in the FCO and NIACE study find that the most successful learning happens when adult

educators do not make assumptions about what learners need and the learning is an ongoing process. Non-formal learning is very important and can be the first step to more formal programming. Activities that are not at all like what people experienced in school are often people's first hooks into learning. The most successful projects are ones where learners discover and see the relevance of learning to their everyday lives. One of the top ten issues from submissions to Learning Australia focuses on the need to include traditional non-participants in adult learning (Secretariat Australia Pty Ltd., 2004). The framing of the issues reflect the FCO and NIACE study findings in that life experience should be valued more, and prior learning recognized.

Ball's research (2003) confirms these latter findings from the FCO and NIACE study in a trade union context. He conducted research with 68 trade unionists who took paid union courses that would help them be more effective in their workplace trade union roles. Sixty-six of the unionists had ended their formal education at age 15 or 16 (minimum age) and 33% had not received any award or qualification. These unionists could be considered traditional non-participants or hard-to-reach learners. The participants were divided into three groups. For the largest group, it was their first time in a post formal schooling course. The second group had had some post formal schooling, usually employer-based or vocational training that was a day or more. A minority had had experience linked to a craft apprenticeship. None of the 68 participants had attended any formal adult education or training in the six years before they took their first union course. Most had not had a good experience in the formal school system. In spite of that, they enrolled in the union course because it had been recommended from within their trade union network, they wanted help with their role, and it promised to be useful. At the end of the first course participants said they not only found the course useful, but they also found it pleasurable. A large minority registered for a second course. None was looking for adult education or learning pathways. Their motivation for attending a formal union course was that that they needed more than informal learning for their role as a union representative. They wanted to become better trade unionists in their workplace role and felt that the training they got helped them. This experience was in direct contrast to their formal schooling experience.

TUC (2005) also reports a wide range of non-traditional participants in its programs. Every year, 65,000 trade unionists enrol in trade union education courses offered by TUC or affiliated unions. Of these, 36% had not gained qualifications since leaving school. For a fifth of participants with no qualifications, their credits through the

National Open College Network is the first time they have received a nationally recognized certificate. A study done by the Economic and Social Research Council: *The Impact of credit-based systems of learning on learning cultures* supports the TUC findings (TUC, 2005). The major findings of the research indicate that credit based systems which have been designed to overcome barriers are attractive to non-traditional participants. This includes a culture of achievement where each small step is rewarded along with flexible systems where credits can be obtained in different ways for different purposes. They also found that a number of people who had never engaged in this kind of learning was increasingly registering for credit through the London Open College Network. Their observations for the Open College's success include the facts that learners are exposed to incremental change, part time programs and people who are like them. Because people had not had good experiences in the formal school system, things like innovative assessments systems as opposed to exams, and respectful instructors showing equality were very important.

Bamber, Tett, Hosie, and Ducklin (1997) report on the Lothian Apprenticeship Scheme Trust (LAST), a program designed to make it possible for community activists from the working class, disabled, and minority ethnic communities to gain a degree in community education. They note that the research shows that Higher Education (HE) draws from a limited group and excludes those who were the least well served by the school system. This includes ethnic minorities especially black communities, women, and working class adults. Their findings are supported by the literature in that support structures for non-traditional participants are key to their success. They also find that that both collective and individual determination are important as is participant's resistance to the notion that HE is only for the middle classes. Sympathetic instructors, good rapport among participants and suitable course content were all important as well. Academic support through individual tutorials, study and tutorial groups, and a low student/instructor ratio were key. Having child care cost paid for the program was key for some people's participation.

The research shows that motivational factors tend to be intrinsic, extrinsic, and political. Intrinsic factors include personal goals and values. Extrinsic focuses on monetary reward. Political goes beyond the individual to focus on the collective situation. The authors conclude by noting that one of the reasons disadvantaged groups fail in the education system is because they are expected to fit into the system rather than the system being changed to meet the needs of excluded groups. The LAST program tried to meet the needs of excluded group through resisting a focus on

individualism, privileging community activism, and following a process that was collective.

Hard-to-reach learners are often people who have little or no formal schooling and have numeracy and literacy challenges (TUC, 2005; Secretariat Australia PTY Ltd.). There have been a number of studies that show what motivates these learners to return to learning. ABC CANADA (1996) finds that the main motivators for calling a literacy program are reasons related to work and self-esteem. Malicky and Norman (1994) also find that a main motivator is employment-related, as do Middleton and Bancroft Planning and Research Associates (1999). In another study, ABC CANADA (2001) finds that there is a range of motivations that adults have for considering a literacy program. Similar to the research on the LAST program, this research indicates both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Extrinsic factors include economic need and vocational mobility. Intrinsic factors include enhanced ability to participate in community and family life including everyday transactions. Participants in the research tended to have less than a high school education, less than half were employed, and close to half had household annual incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. Millar (1998) finds that motivational factors for adults returning to school include gaining control over their lives, gaining credentials, and developing skills.

2.3.2 Barriers to participation in organized adult education programs

What are the barriers that prevent adults from accessing and participating in adult education programs? In the FCO and NIACE study, the research shows that one barrier is suspicion of formal institutions like colleges based on past, negative experiences, programming that views workers as deficient, as well a delivery system and content that is not seen as relevant. Similar barriers are cited by Bamber, et al. in their research on non-traditional learners working for a degree in community education.

Sutherland outlines a long list of barriers to the current adult education and training system in the UK for working people. He states that the system is too inflexible, too compartmentalized, and is unable to create new patterns of lifelong learning. Learning providers offer standard programming rather than finding out what people

need. Employers focus on short-term needs. He stresses that learning opportunities in the workplace are aimed at the highest occupational levels and the highest educated. He notes that historically it is the part time, manual, low paid worker that has been excluded from educational opportunities. Lack of employer investment in training for workers is also cited as a barrier in the 2002 CLC report on lifelong learning.

Levine (1997) notes that although some school board, community college, and community-based programs are meeting the needs of some workers with literacy needs, most programming is not accessible. She notes, like others, that former negative school experiences are a barrier along with programs that do not accommodate shift work, family responsibilities, and transportation difficulties.

ABC CANADA (2001) finds that there are numerous barriers for adults who try to access literacy programs. Some of the findings echo Levine. Of those who do not enrol in a program, 43% cited program-related barriers. These include not being called back by the program or program contact not helpful, long waiting lists, inconvenient course times, and wrong content or way of teaching. In addition, half cite money problems as a factor in not enrolling. More women than men (40% as opposed to 20%) also cite child care factors as a barrier.

ABC CANADA (2002) conducted another study with Canadians who had never finished high school and had never attempted to enrol in a literacy or upgrading program. Sixty per cent had thought about taking an upgrading program or completing high school but never followed through. The main reasons for not following through included work and family issues and lack of interest. Women cite work related and family reasons while men only cite work related reasons or lack of interest. Other primary concerns across the group about upgrading include cost, conflict with work, and location of program (distance). The next set of concerns are program related around program length, difficulty, pacing, and relevance of course content. Research participants also express a general nervousness about attending a program.

2.3.3 Retention

The FCO and NIACE study on best practices in adult education in the UK and Sweden identify a number of best practices for encouraging learner retention. These practices include ensuring the learning location is pleasant and of good quality, making the learning environment safe, having instructors that are connected with learners, addressing cultural needs, ensuring equal opportunity, and welcoming feedback from students. Other retention factors included building a sense of self or empowerment, achievement of goals and recognizing and celebrating that quickly, and building a sense of community. People who felt they were part of something bigger were less likely to drop out. Frankel (2004) as well as Bamber, et al. also confirm the importance of the collective in supporting people in their learning.

The Ontario College Sector Committee for Adult Upgrading outlines best retention practices for adult literacy learners based on key findings from college-sector projects (MWB Education Consultants Inc. and Goforth Consulting, 2003). The framework stresses the need to focus on retention in all parts of the planning and learning process. At intake, this includes clear communication, a personalized process, arrangements for support services, ensuring the program is the right fit and following up quickly after a first call. In the program, best practice includes clear communication about policies, ensuring students are at the right level, feedback, celebration and recognition of progress, and tailoring program to student goals, interests, cultural needs, and learning styles. In addition, students should have the opportunity to apply learning right away. Other important strategies include following up immediately with students who leave the program and asking people why they left and what might bring them back.

Other studies focus on student responses as to why they leave a program. Roussy and Hart (2002) find that of the 27% of students who leave a literacy program, there is no one overriding factor. Some of the factors cited for leaving include financial difficulties, work conflicts, personal or health issues. Quite similarly, ABC CANADA (2001) finds that 33% of adults who sign up for literacy programs drop out by six to eight months. It seems that most drop out because of socio-economic circumstances such as job related pressures, family responsibilities, and money problems; three quarters say they would get help again.

Kennedy (1995) found that a variety of types of outreach were important for the UNISON R2L program. These included direct mail, magazines, and word-of-mouth from other co-workers who have taken the program. The latter strategy was particularly important for Black workers who were recruited by their Black co-workers for the program.

2.4 Program Supports for Non-Traditional Learners

This section outlines the kind of supports that create access and build success for non-traditional participants returning to learn. These supports will be discussed in terms of financial, outreach, and program supports.

2.4.1 Financial Supports

The need for financial supports for hard-to-reach adults is stressed in the literature (Bamber, et al.; FCO and NIACE; Sutherland). The FCO and NIACE recommend in their best practice report that free courses, free child care, paid travel costs, and free food are the type of incentive needed to get and keep non-traditional adults in learning. They note that free child care is particularly important for women from disenfranchised groups and that without this, many of them would not be able to participate. Bamber, et al., agree with these points noting that some of the participants, mostly women, would not have been able to participate without this support. The need to cover child care costs and provide financial supports is also confirmed in the 2001 ABC CANADA study.

Sutherland reports the UNISON R2L program is free to union members who participate and that members receive Paid Education Leave (PEL) to participate in study groups and weekend schools.

The need for these supports is reinforced in the literature, which cite financial reasons as one of the most important reasons for not accessing or continuing with adult education programs. MWB Education Consultants Inc. and Goforth Consulting, Roussy and Hart, and ABC CANADA, (2001) all report the significance of financial barriers in contributing to adult learners' non participation and non continuation in adult education programs.

2.4.2 Outreach for Learning and Guidance

In the UK, there is a system of learning and guidance where Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) advisors provide locally delivered advice on appropriate learning opportunities that will improve their employability and fulfill personal ambitions (TUC, n.d.). A wide range of adult education providers delivers these services including libraries, colleges, and career centres. The IAG initiative is funded by the Learning and Skills Councils. People with learning disabilities, learning difficulties, outdated skills, basic skills needs are some of the priority client groups served by IAGs. Older people and ethnic minority groups are also a priority focus. Unions are involved in IAGs in that they are associate or full member partners. Some unions have brought IAG to their workplaces. Unions see their involvement in IAG partnerships as a way to help their members make the right decisions, provide better access to learning, improve employability and job security, and offer training opportunities for learning representatives. There is a standard for those organizations delivering the IAG called the matrix. The matrix proves competence in the delivery of information, advice, and guidance. There are various ways that the matrix can support union driven learning. Learning centres associated with the TUC, and affiliated unions could be accredited to deliver IAG. The FCO and NIACE study based on focus groups with learners confirm the need for this guidance not only at the beginning of the learning process but throughout.

The FCO and NIACE study also confirms the importance of outreach using people that reflect the backgrounds and experience of potential participants to get them involved. Often this might be a past learner. They stress the need to work in partnership with local agencies and non-traditional places of learning. The most effective form of outreach to non-traditional learners was word of mouth. On the other hand, ABC CANADA (2001) found that ads about adults going back to school convinced them to call a literacy group.

2.4.3 Program Supports

The FCO and NIACE study confirm the importance of supports like ongoing advice and guidance throughout the learning process as well as a holistic approach to counselling for all aspects of a person's life. Mentoring was also cited as an important source of support for the learner both on a personal and academic level.

The mentor needs to come from a similar background to the learner. In union-led education, the mentor or peer tutor is usually another union member.

The UNION R2L model also stresses the need for ongoing support and advice for learning. In the R2L program this happens through a tutor³ who is available at most times through phone or e-mail as well as study groups that happen in a local area every two or three weeks. Frankel shows the value of the informal group learning with peer tutors in her return to learn project final report. Bamber, et al. also emphasize the importance of group learning and group support in ensuring learner success.

The FCO and NIACE study stresses the importance of recognizing learners' prior achievements that have taken place in non-educational settings. Learners get a sense of value regarding their knowledge and a greater sense of empowerment and motivation. This would be particularly important given that for unionized members informal learning was noted as the most common form of learning (Bratton, et al.; Livingstone and Sawchuk).

2.5 Models for Adults Returning to Learn

Return to Learn or preparatory courses generally help ease people back into learning and help them brush up on and improve their literacy and basic skills including reading, writing, numeracy, analytical skills, problem solving, and study skills in preparation for more formal learning (Bainbridge & Associates (2001); Frankel; WEA (2005)). There is very little in the literature on return to learn programs especially those that are union led.

One of the most notable return to learn programs is the union-led UNISON program developed by the WEA. R2L courses provide the opportunity for employed workers to develop learning skills and confidence in preparation for further learning (WEA). The program focuses on developing writing, investigative and analytical skills, problem solving, and numeracy skills. The R2L program is 180 hours with a mix of supported distance learning, small group work, and weekend school. Times are flexible to accommodate shift work. Surveys show that 70% of learners go on to further education or vocational training, and others are promoted. Sutherland notes

³ A certified adult educator.

that 6000 UNISON members have completed R2L and 2000 workers take the program each year at no cost. Eighty per cent of participants are women, 42% are part time workers, and 90% left school early, with 60% having no qualification. As of 1998, UNISON had agreements with 100 employers to provide R2L and other courses for members. The employer pays the costs of the tutor and 60 hours of paid release time for group sessions and weekend schools. UNISON pays for development costs, materials, tutor training, and quality assurance. The participants contribute 120 hours of their own time. People receive accreditation for these courses through the Open College Network. Union members can then move on to determine what prior learning they can get credit for, take an access course that links R2L to three routes to further learning—an industrial relations/trade union studies strand, a general university strand or vocational training strand.

A new version of the R2L focuses on the specific needs of ambulance service (UNISON, 2005). One of the participants notes it helped him get a qualification and get his head around books and into learning. He adds that his tutor was available at any reasonable time for support. Tutors who understand the needs of working people support the program through phone calls, e-mail, and three face-to-face study days throughout the year that have been negotiated by UNISON as paid leave. Often members have to obtain qualifications that were not essential before, giving everyone a fair chance at work.

The UNISON R2L program is regarded as a significant success by the union because it was reaching low-paid, part time, low skilled manual workers who make up a large part of the union's non-traditional learners (Munro and Rainbird). Reports show that the program is having a dramatic impact on people's lives. Students report that they have gained confidence, gone on to further education and are progressing in their careers. One student says, "The course I attended, a second chance to learn, I consider a second chance to live" (2). Figures quoted on results confirm Sutherland's points. More importantly for the union, 23% of R2L students report being more involved in UNISON (Munro and Rainbird). The union recognizes that its R2L program and membership development can contribute to union activism including non-traditional forms like learning advocates and lifelong learning advisors.

Another example of a return to learn program is one offered by the City of Regina and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) (Frankel). The purpose of the program was to prepare CUPE members for lifelong learning by providing them with

options and information on training programs and post secondary education, and upgrading in workplace essential skills especially skills that help people return to learn. It also intended to build support among members and focus on issues of common concern. The curriculum was mostly emergent and used trained peer tutors (other CUPE members) to provide support. Peer tutors were intended to make the program more accessible, ensure its relevance to participants, and build community among other things. Sixteen participants attended the two-hour-a-week, six-week program. Many of the participants had left formal school before getting a high school diploma or immediately after. Two peer tutors worked with the coordinator, an experienced adult educator, to design and deliver the programs. Participants found learning exciting and joyful. An important theme was the camaraderie that developed within the group. In the final evaluation, participants reported that they liked the small groups, informal setting, peer tutors, and focus on reading, writing, exam preparation, and problem solving. Most agreed that six weeks was too short and that a longer time would have been better.

Another report by Bainbridge & Associates focuses on preparatory programs in the Ontario College system. The objective of the project was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the preparatory programs in preparing and supporting students for post secondary studies. This program is funded through the Literacy and Basic Skills Program of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Universities and Colleges. It is a structured program where adult learners develop the academic and self-management skills needed to enhance their academic and career potential. Preparatory programs were one to three years in length. The findings show that mature students benefit from upgrading before entering post secondary programming. The majority of the 1058 preparatory students tracked in this project enrolled in post secondary studies within a year of finishing the program. Of the students tracked, 60% either graduated or are still enrolled in post-secondary programs, while 23% of students withdrew, citing financial issues. The most vulnerable semester for withdrawal is the first semester.

2.6 Models for Union-led Programs

Previous sections of this literature review describe different union-led programs that focus on labour education, literacy and basic skills, and return to learn. Several models will be described in terms of their relevance to the Union Passport to Learning program, and each may warrant further examination.

2.6.1 Labour education

The TUC has a national accredited system for its labour education program that has been successful (TUC, 2005). The TUC worked with the National Open College Network to ensure that all its courses are accredited and the decision to register for assessment and credit rests solely with the learner. This system of accreditation can be used to access further learning through admission to university in a related area of study.

Other findings show that the relevance and practicality of labour education courses appeal to the non-traditional learner and counter the negative formal schooling experiences that many union members have had (Ball, 2003).

2.6.2 Literacy and basic skills

Dassinger (1998) found that across Canada union-led, successful basic skill and literacy programs used two different models of learning. This included training co-workers to teach co-workers and working with the public system with the union coordinating recruitment, integrating union content into the curriculum, and providing support to the instructor. Some models use a combination of both (Spencer, 2001). Byers (1997) concurs with Dassinger's comments. She also identifies the importance of confidentiality, content that relates to all aspects of a participant's life, programs that value experience, build on participants' knowledge, treat participants with respect, and recognize participants' responsibilities and time constraints. She also notes that participants must be key decision makers in the design of the curriculum and that any assessment should be developmental and build self-esteem and self-confidence. Union representatives need to be trained for any partnerships with management and equal representation with management is necessary. Levine (1997) stresses the need for a worker-centred approach starting with the union member.

2.6.3 UNISON Open College

The UNISON Open College offers a range of courses for which members can get credit with a focus on open and distance learning (Spencer, 2001). Open learning refers to making adult education accessible (Taylor, 2004). There are four phases in this model including basic skills education, Return to Learn, prior learning

assessment and recognition, and degree level study. Students can opt for credit at any time and can carry credits to the next phase of their learning. Employers and educational providers are partners. In the fourth phase, there are three routes: a trade union studies strand, a general education strand, and a vocational qualifications strand (Sutherland).

2.6.4 Canadian Steel Trades Employment Congress

The Canadian Steel Trades Employment Congress (CSTEC), a sector council, trains thousands of workers in more than 30 programs (Worker Arts and Heritage Centre). A network of colleges accredits these programs. CSTEC does not include literacy and basic skills as part of its core program but works with other labour organizations that offer these programs. It also promotes PLAR through credits for learning on the job, in the community and union, and through formal academic learning.

2.6.5 Labour-based distance learning

Most distance labour education is advanced union education and university-based labour studies (Taylor, 2004). The most successful programs like UNISON combine informal study groups, telephone tutors, and weekend schools with the home study, which is the distance component. Although people work on their own through the home study component, all participants in the course finish at the same time. The social interaction component of the course is critical to participants' success.

CUPE uses an Internet based communications system to link members across Canada (Spencer, 2001). There are open and closed conferences on a variety of labour-based topics. Distance education and computer mediated learning has potential. While the potential is the ability to link members across six time zones in an interactive fashion, unfortunately limitations are not discussed.

3 Conclusions

The conclusions will focus on what we know about union members as adult learners, the case for union-led programs, what motivates and discourages return to learning for hard-to-reach learners. The conclusions will also examine what the value of return to learn programs are for hard-to-reach learners, successful models of return to learn and union-led programs and needed program supports.

The literature shows that much of the learning that union members do is either informal or non-formal and is practical, relevant, and immediately useful. Much of that learning is developed through workers' unions. The stronger the union, the more opportunities there are for every kind of learning. In addition, what we know from research is that a significant percentage of union members returning to learning are non-traditional participants who never finished high school or continued formal learning after high school. Many of these learners did not have positive experiences with formal schooling. Union members identify basic skills and second language learning opportunities as especially important for their development. We also know that gender, race, and age are critical factors in whether or not union members get access to learning and that barriers for racialized communities, women and older workers must be addressed in educational programs.

At the same time, the literature shows that more people than ever before are getting their high school diploma and further post secondary education, and that accreditation is welcomed by union members for relevant learning. Unions regard the idea of PLAR for previous learning and experience favourably as long as it respects union principles and goals.

A strong case can be made for union-led programs for union members. First, union goals for education and approaches to learning are different from goals in traditional education systems. Union education focuses on the collective goals of working people and challenges dominant systems. Traditional systems focus on the individual and promote the status quo. Moreover, unions have a long and expansive history of experience in offering successful adult education programs to their members that has largely gone unrecognized. Unions recognize and can address the gaps in the formal adult education system. This includes how the programs are designed and delivered,

their cost, their accessibility, their flexibility, and their ability to create attainable, accredited pathways to other forms of learning. They can and do look out for and protect their members' interests. Not all of this precludes the involvement of the formal education system. Rather it suggests that union-led programs have the option of working with the formal education system to ensure that barriers to learning are addressed, and that their own goals and needs and those of their members are met through these partnerships. The research also shows that union-led programs build support for and greater participation in unions.

Non-traditional learners are motivated to return to learn by factors that include gaining more control over their lives, having more participation in their communities, finding a job or better job, and self-development. They are motivated when they see the relevance of the learning to their lives and they are connected to the instructor and the other participants. In a union education context, this means learning content that is relevant and immediately applicable to their roles as union representatives. Feeling part of a collective is a major element to ensuring success for these learners. Other important factors include finding the experience of returning to learning different from the negative experience they had with formal schooling and a real joy in learning.

Common barriers to returning to learn include being unable to afford the cost of course and child care, courses that are not seen as relevant in their content or delivery, inconvenient times, and an overall apprehension about structured adult education courses. Adults tend to leave programs before finishing when these barriers are not addressed adequately.

A number of retention strategies can help ensure that participants have success and continue in their programs. Retention is an issue that should be addressed throughout the learning process beginning with outreach. Some of the important strategies to consider in ensuring participants' success include making people feel welcome, ensuring equal opportunity, and addressing cultural factors, valuing prior learning and experience, recognizing and celebrating achievement in small increments and building empowerment of the self while ensuring people feel part of something bigger.

Program supports are very important to non-traditional learners. This includes ongoing access to a tutor or mentor as well as learning in small groups through group

tutorials or study groups. Ongoing access to advice and guidance throughout the learning process is key. Other financial supports like free courses, free daycare, money for transportation and free food are also essential.

The literature shows that R2L programs are important for the significant number of unionized workers who could be considered non-traditional learners returning to learn. In the UNISON model, the majority of participants access post secondary education after the R2L program and others receive promotions in their jobs. Several models will be helpful for the Union Passport to Learning program. The UNISON R2L program is the most comprehensive and successful program found in the literature with respect to a unionized context. It would be useful to see what aspects of the UNISON model can be applied successfully to the Union Passport to Learning and if the Passport to Learning program contributes to building the union as well as allowing individuals to achieve their learning goals.

Successful union-led models are documented in the literature especially literacy and basic skills program where union members are peer trainers or the union works with the public system but controls the content and structure of the delivery. The principles and methods for basic skills and literacy, which have proven successful over the last two decades in Canada, should have excellent relevance here. Other models that have relevance are the UNISON R2L which as already been discussed, sectoral bodies such as CSTECC and union education programs where members can get accreditation.

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