

THE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ABEABC)

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The Adult Basic Education Association of British Columbia was formed In 1979. The first meeting was held at the Richmond campus of Douglas College with Barbara Bowmar chairing. This initial gathering of people committed to the provision of academic upgrading opportunities for undereducated adults was the result of recognition by Barbara Bowmar and others of the need for networking in this emerging field . Instrumental in the arranging of this gathering were Bob Irvine, Ron Fussell, Donna Stainsby, Nora Minogue, Ron Bowcott, and Dan Henslowe. Ron Faris assisted and supported these practitioners of adult basic education in their early efforts to form an association. Over the last seven years, the ABEABC has grown through the leadership of presidents Barbara Bowmar, Donna Stainsby, Steve Hilbert, Don Sawyer, and Norma Kidd.

The purposes of the association are to maintain and improve the quality of adult basic education throughout the province of British Columbia and to foster communication among those engaged in the practice of adult basic education. In addition to table officers the executive of the association consists of regional representatives from Vancouver Island, Metro Vancouver, The Fraser Valley, the North, Okanagan-Mainline, and the Kootenays, as well as the editor of Groundwork. In an attempt to meet the needs of all members in the province, conferences and annual general meetings have alternated between rural and urban locations. Since 1979 conferences have been hosted by the College of New Caledonia, Douglas College, East Kootenay Community College, Burnaby School District, the University of British Columbia (as part of Newthink '84) , and Okanagan College. The 1986 conference will be held at the new campus of Vancouver Community College. These conferences provide the opportunity for members to get together to share curriculum Ideas and to discuss emerging issues in the field. Emphasis continues to be placed on the provision of high quality learning opportunities for undereducated adults.

Membership in the ABEABC is open to all persons engaged in, or interested in the practice of adult basic education. Most of the members are instructors working in programs provided by school districts and colleges throughout the province. ABE learners, administrators, and others are also members of the association. Membership fees are \$30.00 per year, and there are currently 120 members.

One of the most valuable services the ABEABC provides for its members is the periodical Groundwork. Over the years, the hardworking members who have been editors of Groundwork are David Thomas, Ace Hollibaugh, Geoff Dean, Evelyn Batten, and Margaret Nelson. Published three times a year, this journal provides program updates, committee reports, critical articles, descriptions of innovative programs, and annotated bibliographies of new materials.

Another service provided to members is the circulation of ABELOPE, an envelope full of ABE teaching suggestions. Instructors submit learning activities they have successfully used to be duplicated and circulated to other members. ABELOPE and Groundwork help keep the ABE network alive between conferences.

In the last three years the association has successfully undertaken two projects funded by federal grants. ABELOPE originated as part of the literacy Resource Centre project which provided practitioners with fully annotated bibliographies of ABE teaching materials and provided a mechanism for the province-wide distribution of instructor-developed materials. The second project undertaken was the Okanagan literacy project in which a coordinator trained a team of volunteers to be tutors for adult non-readers in the Okanagan area. Hopefully the Projects Committee of the association can continue to help members secure funding for additional innovative projects. This new direction for the association came through the leadership of Evelyn Battel and Judy Rose.

In the future the ABEABC will continue to promote the provision of quality basic education for adults. to act as an advocate for the undereducated and to link with other adult education associations which support the notion that a basic education is a fundamental right for all Canadians.

Note: *Handwritten notes at the end of the document:*

ABEABC Projects after 1985....

- 1. Directory of ABE Programs in BC*
- 2. Adult Literacy Consultation*
- 3. Adult Literacy Contact Centre*
- 4. Walk for Literacy 1987*

Nov 5, 1994 – ALCC & Literacy BC merge and leave the ABEABC