

ABC Skills Hub Evaluation Report

Results from March 2021 to March 2022



Evaluated with support from
Constellation Consulting Group

This report was produced as part of a project funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), with financial support from the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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Executive Summary

ABC Life Literacy Canada (ABC) is a non-profit organization that aims to strengthen organizations that promote adult learning. Through a partnership with the Future Skills Centre (FSC) in 2021, ABC adapted and worked to migrate **23** proven ABC workshops to a new online platform called the *ABC Skills Hub* for use for free at home, in classrooms, and in workplaces. Learning modules added to the *ABC Skills Hub* since March 2021 with support from FSC have included:

- *ABC UP Skills for Work* learning modules in English and French.
- An *ABC Health Matters* learning module in English and French.
- *ABC Money Matters* learning modules in English and French.
- *ABC Learning at the Museum* learning modules in English and French.

Since the launch of the *ABC Skills Hub* in 2021, ABC has encouraged employers, learning centres, educators, and learners to access the site to improve learner confidence and literacy skills. With learning, reflection, and growth as central values at ABC, independent third-party evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group were engaged to support the embedding of evaluation methods into the *ABC Skills Hub* platform and the evaluation of *ABC Skills Hub* outputs and outcomes. The evaluation revealed:



1,310 unique individuals created an *ABC Skills Hub* account to begin their online learning journey. *ABC Skills Hub* users started **2,255** learning modules and completed **1,041** modules from March 2021 to March 2022. In total, **564** users started multiple learning modules through the *ABC Skills Hub* while **746** users had only started one learning module at the time of the evaluation.



Learners reported residing in all Canadian Provinces and two Canadian territories, with learners most commonly living in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, or Newfoundland and Labrador.



While individuals identifying as female were most represented within the *ABC Skills Hub* learner group, a broad spectrum of gender identities engaged with materials through the platform. This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* is welcoming to all genders of people, but possibly most appealing to female learners.



Like all individuals, learners using the *ABC Skills Hub* engaged with materials with a diverse array of intersectional identities and experiences. Of those comfortable disclosing some of their diverse experiences in the world:

- **94** learners indicated that they identify as Indigenous (including First Nations (on reserve, off reserve, urban/non-affiliated), Inuit, and Métis).
- **55** learners indicated that they are a person who experiences disability.
- **64** learners indicated that they are part of a visible minority group in Canada.
- **37** learners indicated that they are a newcomer to Canada.
- **11** learners indicated that they are a refugee.

Multiple learners indicated that they are part of more than one of the above-listed groups. In total, **227** learners indicated that they are part of at least one of the above-listed groups.



In total, **61%** of learners indicated that they were not currently employed when they engaged with materials through the ABC Skills Hub.¹ Of those who were not employed, **84%** indicated that they were looking for work, while **16%** indicated that they were not looking for work.² Overall, these results suggest that the ABC Skills Hub has reached a demographic of learners who can benefit from building employment-related skills through their engagement with learning modules available through the platform.

Overall, across all *ABC Skills Hub* modules, learners experienced positive outcomes as a result of their engagement with materials available through the platform. Specifically:



Reflecting on their learning experience, **84%** of learners indicated that the *ABC Skills Hub* module(s) they completed had increased their confidence in the skill(s) and competencies they were learning.³ These increases in confidence are important as they can ultimately support success for learners in different domains of their lives (including employment/employability, money management, personal health, etc.).

¹ N=378 learners disclosing their employment status.

² N=229 learners who indicated that they were not employed.

³ N=771



85% of learners said that after the *ABC Skills Hub* module(s) they completed they knew more about where they could continue their skill building and learning moving forward.⁴ This suggests that the learning module(s) available through the *ABC Skills Hub* are teaching learners practical strategies and planning skills to encourage skill advancement and ongoing learning after module completion



85% of learners who engaged in learning through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that the module(s) they had completed taught them that people shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed if some employability or life skills (including different types of literacy) are difficult for them.⁵ This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* has the potential to contribute to decreases in stigma surrounding low literacy among learners.

Overall, evaluation of the *ABC Skills Hub* revealed that a diverse group of learners with intersectional identities have engaged with the platform. As a result, learners have experienced increased confidence in their skills, the development of new skills, and decreased stigma towards low literacy. Moving forward from their *ABC Skills Hub* experience, learners indicated that they felt equipped to continue advancing their skills and learning.

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue migrating proven ABC programs to the *ABC Skills Hub* platform.
2. Seek opportunities to add more audio/video content to *ABC Skills Hub* modules.
3. Seek opportunities to continually improve the usability of the *ABC Skills Hub* platform for both learners and practitioners.

⁴ N=746

⁵ N=764

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1.0 Background & Introduction

ABC Life Literacy Canada (ABC) is a non-profit organization that aims to strengthen organizations that promote adult learning. ABC develops and supports the use of high-quality introductory learning materials and resources written in clear language, with a vision of a Canada where everyone has the tools and opportunities to improve their literacy and essential skills.

In Canada, a significant number of adults aged 25 to 65 are in the lower range of proficiency in literacy and/or numeracy, with research showing that an estimated 49% of Canadian adults struggle with literacy, 55% struggle with numeracy, and 43% struggle with both.⁶ Since 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the offering of online learning opportunities for adults with barriers to literacy and essential skills. At the same time, many learners with lower literacy skills struggle with traditional online learning platforms that have typically been designed for learners with high digital literacy skills.

In response to this situation, in 2021 ABC partnered with the Future Skills Centre (FSC) to advance the development and implementation of an accessible online learning platform for learners to engage with ABC literacy-advancing materials. FSC is a pan-Canadian initiative, connecting ideas and innovations generated across Canada so that employees and employers can succeed in the labour market, and to ensure that local, regional, and national economies thrive. FSC's aim is to help all Canadians benefit from effective skills development, and to ensure an inclusive approach to supporting underserved groups such as women, youth, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, racialized peoples, LGBTQ2S+ peoples, persons with disabilities, veterans, and Canadians living in rural, remote, and Northern communities.

The result has been the launch of the *ABC Skills Hub* – an online learning platform geared towards supporting lower literacy learners in engaging with key ABC literacy-advancing workshops. The *ABC Skills Hub* platform was designed with an intuitive, accessible architecture paired with clean design and language based on Clear Language and Design (CLAD) principles. Partnering with FSC has enabled ABC to adapt and work towards migrating **23** proven ABC workshops in English and French to the online *ABC Skills Hub* platform for use for free at home, in classrooms, and in workplaces. Learning modules added to the *ABC Skills Hub* since March 2021 with support from FSC have included:

- *ABC UP Skills for Work* learning modules in English and French, including modules focusing on workplace Accountability, Attitude, Communication, Confidence, Motivation, Presentation, and Time Management.

⁶ Hango. (2014)

- An *ABC Health Matters* learning module in English and French.
- *ABC Money Matters* learning modules including one module in English and French that is part of the Core *Money Matters* program (Smart Shopping), and three modules in English which are part of the *Money Matters* for People with Diverse Abilities program (Money Safety, Facing Money Challenges, Needs Wants and Spending Plans).

Learning modules that ABC has partnered with FSC to adapt and migrate to the *ABC Skills Hub*, which are still in the process of being added to the platform include:

- A *Learning at the Museum* learning module in English and French.
- A *Money Matters* for People with Diverse Abilities learning module exploring Needs, Wants and Spending Plans in English.

Since the launch of the *ABC Skills Hub* in 2021, ABC has encouraged employers, learning centres, educators, and learners to access the site to improve learner confidence and literacy skills. With learning, reflection, and growth as central values at ABC, independent third-party evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group were engaged to support the embedding of evaluation methods into the *ABC Skills Hub* platform and the evaluation of *ABC Skills Hub* outputs and outcomes. The current report presents results and recommendations from the evaluation of FSC's support for the *ABC Skills Hub* from March 2021 to March 2022.

2.0 Evaluation Methods

FSC's support for the *ABC Skills Hub* from March 2021 to March 2022 has been evaluated using *ABC Skills Hub* user data and statistics, pre- to post-module learner surveys, and teacher feedback surveys.

ABC Skills Hub user data and statistics include information on which courses learners have taken and the degree to which they have completed different learning modules. It also includes information on organizational use of the *ABC Skills Hub* platform.

Learner surveys are embedded into the *ABC Skills Hub* learning experience such that learners provide brief initial self-assessment of their skills/confidence as well as post-module self-assessment of learnings. The post-module survey is provided to learners as part of their completion of each module and, beyond capturing information about learnings/outcomes, also captures key learner demographic information.

Teacher feedback surveys are completed by teachers only once, even if they facilitate more than one module. These surveys solicit feedback on observed learner outcomes, learner experiences with the platform, and teacher experiences with the platform.

Ultimately, the evaluation of the *ABC Skills Hub* from March 2021 to March 2022 included:

- Analysis of **2,332** student records across all learning modules.
- Analysis of **78** organization/teacher records across all learning modules.
- Analysis of **1,002** student survey responses across all learning modules.
- Analysis of **3** teacher feedback surveys.

3.0 ABC Skills Hub Outputs & Demographics

3.1 ABC Skills Hub Outputs

Analysis of *ABC Skills Hub* student user data revealed that, March 2021 to March 2022:



1,310 unique individuals created an *ABC Skills Hub* account to begin their online learning journey.



ABC Skills Hub users started **2,255** learning modules and completed **1,041** modules, for a completion rate of **46%**. While the completion rate of *ABC Skills Hub* modules was less than 50%, facilitators of online learning opportunities typically report a completion rate of between 5 and 15 percent. This indicates that the materials available for online learning through the *ABC Skills Hub* are resulting in a significantly higher than average completion rate and suggests that the materials are engaging for targeted learners. It should also be noted that at the time of the evaluation, some learners may have still been working through their learning modules.



The *ABC Skills Hub* provides learners with an opportunity to engage with multiple learning modules to build an array of literacy and essential skills. In total, **564** users started multiple learning modules through the *ABC Skills Hub* while **746** users had only started one learning module at the time of the evaluation. While all learning modules are available in French, from March 2021 to March 2022 no learners chose to engage with the French version of the materials.



1,090 individuals engaged with *ABC UP Skills for Work* learning modules available through the *ABC Skills Hub*. *UP Skills for Work* modules support learners in advancing key employability soft skills and essential skills such as communication, time management, and presentation. In total, **514** *UP Skills for Work* learning modules were completed, representing a **47%** completion rate.



26 individuals engaged with the *ABC Health Matters* learning module available through the *ABC Skills Hub*. The *Health Matters* module supports learners in advancing their health literacy and ability to advocate for their own health and the health of those they care for. In total, **8** individuals completed the *Health Matters* learning module, representing a **31%** completion rate.



943 individuals engaged with *ABC Money Matters* learning modules available through the *ABC Skills Hub*, including **849** individuals who engaged with the *Core Money Matters* modules, **70** individuals who engaged with *Money Matters* for Indigenous Peoples modules, and **24** individuals who engaged with *Money Matters* for People with Diverse Abilities modules. *Money Matters* modules support learning in advancing key financial literacy skills, such as budgeting, banking, and saving. In total, **409** *Money Matters* learning modules were completed, representing a **43%** completion rate.

Analysis of *ABC Skills Hub* organizational user data revealed that, March 2021 to March 2022:



76 unique organizations from across Canada created *ABC Skills Hub* accounts. Organizations reported offering **144** learning opportunities using *ABC Skills Hub* materials. No organizations reported offering materials in French.



Organizations that used the *ABC Skills Hub* to support students in their learning journey were located across Canada, including **27** organizations located in Ontario (36%), **13** organizations located in Alberta (17%), **12** organizations located in British Columbia (16%), 6 organizations located in Newfoundland and Labrador (8%), **6** organizations located in Nova Scotia (8%), 4 organizations located in Manitoba (5%), **3** organizations located in Quebec (4%), 3 organizations located in New Brunswick (4%), **2** organizations located in Saskatchewan (2%). Organizations located in Canada's Northern Territories have yet to sign up for organizational user accounts through the *ABC Skills Hub*.



Organizations most commonly found out about the *ABC Skills Hub* via:

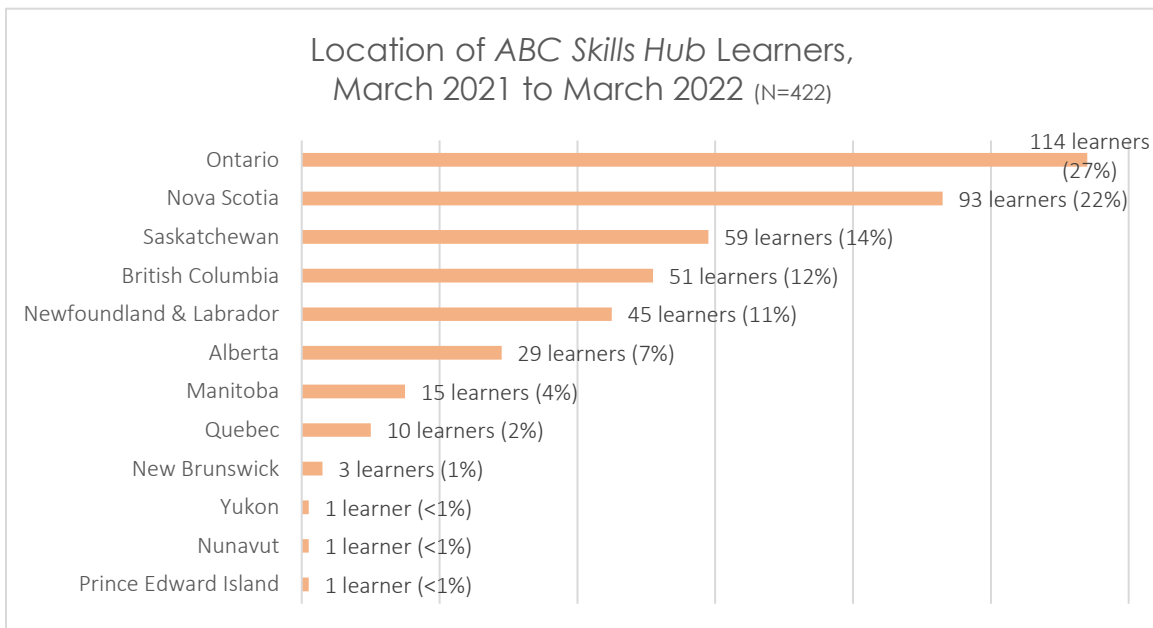
1. The ABC Newsletter
2. An online search engine
3. Word of mouth (including through ABC staff)
4. Social Media
5. The ABC website

3.2 ABC Skills Hub Learner Demographics

After completing *ABC Skills Hub* modules, learners are invited to complete a post-workshop survey that includes questions about key demographic information. Learners can opt not to complete the survey or the demographics portion of the survey if they so choose. The evaluation of the *ABC Skills Hub* has examined unique learner demographics, meaning learner demographic information has only been counted once per user, even if the user took multiple *ABC Skills Hub* courses and provided demographic information multiple times via post-program surveys.

Location of Learners

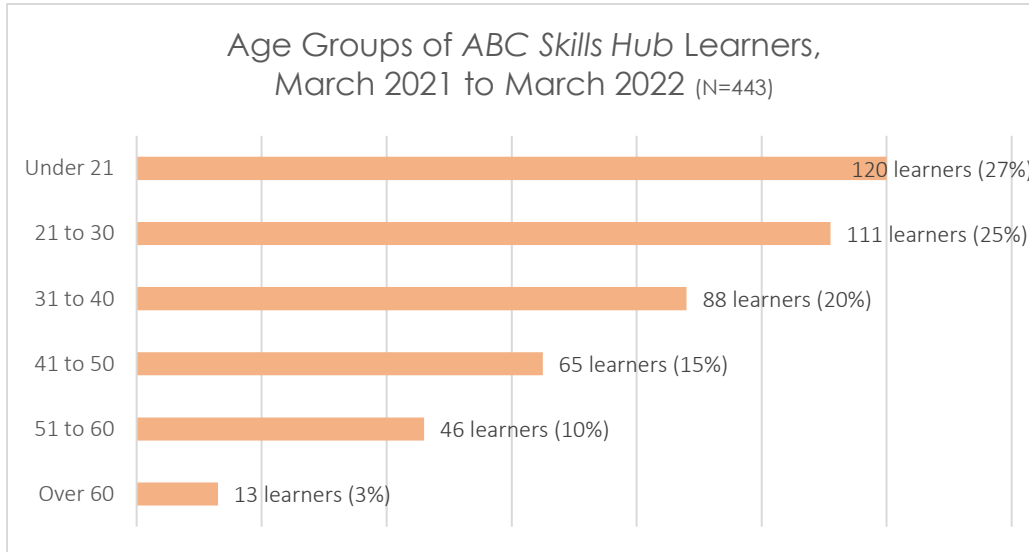
Learners reported residing in all Canadian Provinces and two Canadian territories, with learners most commonly living in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, or Newfoundland and Labrador. This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* is appealing to learners from across the country and has the potential to create a nation-wide impact. At the same time, the low number of learners from Quebec and Canada’s Northern territories may indicate a need for further promotion of the *ABC Skills Hub* in these regions.



Age of Learners

From March 2021 to March 2022, 70% of *ABC Skills Hub* learners were in their prime working years (ages 21 to 60), suggesting that the platform has reached an appropriate demographic of learners likely to benefit from the employment-related materials that have been made

available. Another 27% of learners were under the age of 21, indicating that the *ABC Skills Hub* is also impacting individuals currently building skills as they enter their prime working years.



Gender Identification of Learners

While individuals identifying as female were most represented within the *ABC Skills Hub* learner group, a broad spectrum of gender identities engaged with materials through the platform.⁷ This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* is welcoming to all genders of people, but possibly most appealing to female learners. Additional outreach to male and diverse gendered individuals may thus be warranted.



64% of learners self-identified as women.



33% of learners self-identified as men.



3% of learners self-identified as transgender, non-binary, two-spirit, or 'femboy'.

Learner First Languages

In total, **94%** of learners indicated that English was their first language. Another **3%** indicated that French was their first language, while **1%** said English and French were their first language. **1%** of learners also indicated that their first language was Arabic.⁸ Other languages reported by 1-2 learners as their first language included:

- Berber
- Chinese
- Mandarin
- Portuguese
- Tagalog
- Tamil

⁷ N=426 learners choosing to disclose their gender identity.

⁸ N=425 learners.

- Filipino
- Hindi
- Kabyle
- Korean
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Slovakian
- Spanish
- Tigrinya
- Urdu
- Vietnamese

Intersectional Learner Identities and Experiences

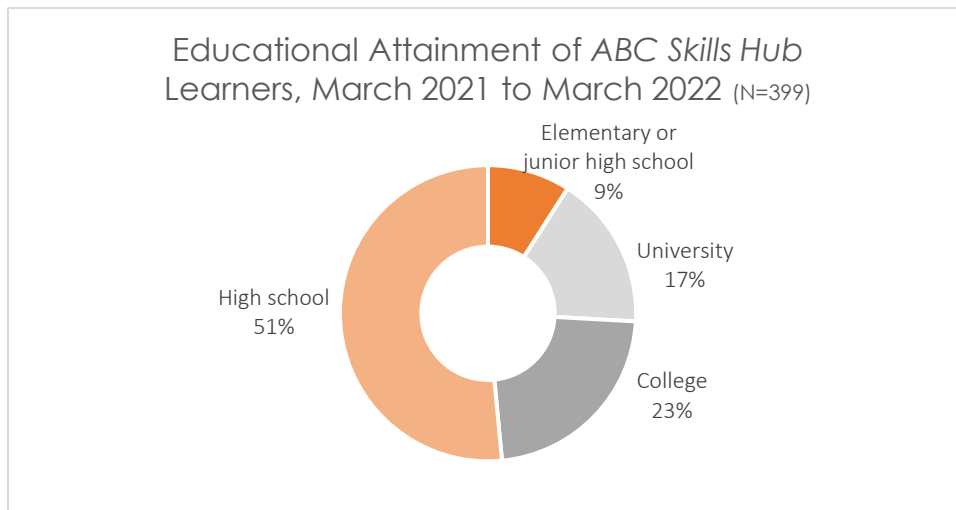
Like all individuals, learners using the *ABC Skills Hub* engaged with materials with a diverse array of intersectional identities and experiences. Of those comfortable disclosing some of their diverse experiences in the world:

- **94** learners indicated that they identify as Indigenous (including First Nations (on reserve, off reserve, urban/non-affiliated), Inuit, and Métis).
- **55** learners indicated that they are a person who experiences disability.
- **64** learners indicated that they are part of a visible minority group in Canada.
- **37** learners indicated that they are newcomers to Canada.
- **11** learners indicated that they are refugees.

Multiple learners indicated that they are part of more than one of the above-listed groups. In total, **227** learners indicated that they are part of at least one of the above-listed groups.

Learner Educational Attainment

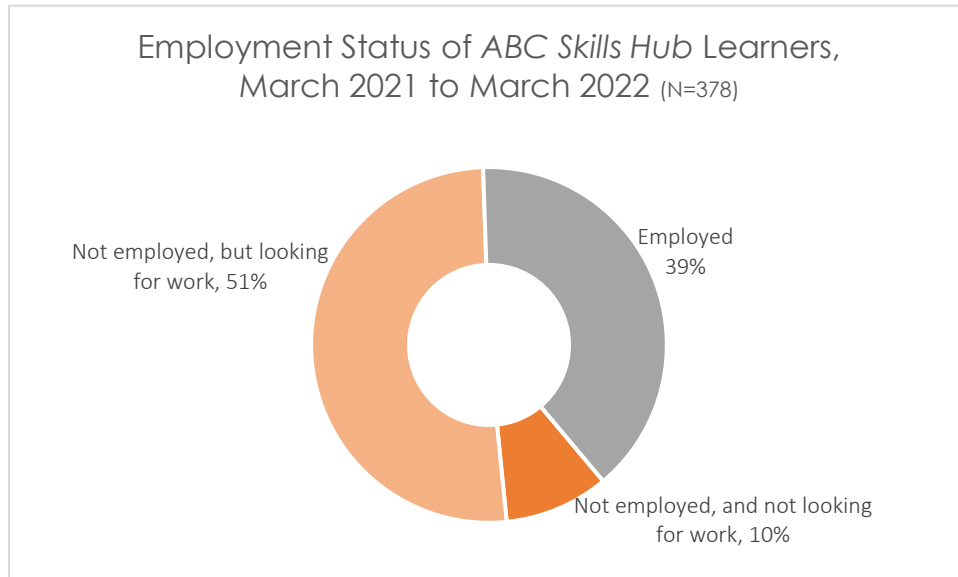
In total, **60%** of *ABC Skills Hub* learners indicated that they had high school education or less. This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* is reaching an appropriate group of learners who may have lower literacy abilities associated with their lower levels of educational attainment. The remaining **40%** of learners indicated that they had completed university or college, suggesting that the *ABC Skills Hub* is also appealing to individuals with higher levels of educational attainment.⁹



⁹ N=399 learners disclosing their level of educational attainment.

Learner Employment Status

In total, **61%** of learners indicated that they were not currently employed when they engaged with materials through the ABC Skills Hub.¹⁰ Of those who were not employed, **84%** indicated that they were looking for work, while **16%** indicated that they were not looking for work.¹¹ Overall, these results suggest that the ABC Skills Hub has reached a demographic of learners who can benefit from building employment-related skills through their engagement with learning modules available through the platform.



¹⁰ N=378 learners disclosing their employment status.

¹¹ N=229 learners who indicated that they were not employed.

4.0 ABC Skills Hub Learner Outcomes

Overall, across all *ABC Skills Hub* modules, learners experienced positive outcomes as a result of their engagement with materials available through the platform. Specifically:



Reflecting on their learning experience, **84%** of learners indicated that the *ABC Skills Hub* module(s) they completed had increased their confidence in the skill(s) and competencies they were learning.¹² These increases in confidence are important as they can ultimately support success for learners in different domains of their lives (including employment/employability, money management, personal health, etc.).



85% of learners said that after the *ABC Skills Hub* module(s) they completed they knew more about where they could continue their skill building and learning moving forward.¹³ This suggests that the learning module(s) available through the *ABC Skills Hub* are teaching learners practical strategies and planning skills to encourage skill advancement and ongoing learning after module completion



85% of learners who engaged in learning through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that the module(s) they had completed taught them that people shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed if some employability or life skills (including different types of literacy) are difficult for them.¹⁴ This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* has the potential to contribute to decreases in stigma surrounding low literacy among learners.

Broken down by program stream outcomes included:

4.1 Outcomes from *UP Skills for Work* Modules

UP Skills for Work seeks to enhance and advance soft skills and essential skills that are used in nearly every job and daily life. Overall, the *UP Skills for Work* modules on the *ABC Skills Hub* aim to build foundational skills and confidence in skills that enable learners to thrive in the workplace. The evaluation of learner outcomes from *UP Skills for Work* modules on the *ABC Skills Hub* revealed that:

¹² N=771

¹³ N=746

¹⁴ N=764



When starting their *UP Skills for Work* module(s) **61%** of learners reported that they felt confident in the employability and life skills taught through the *ABC Skills Hub*. Upon completion of their learning module(s) **81%** indicated that they were confident in these same skills, with a total of **60%** of learners who did not feel confident in their skills when they started increasing their confidence by the end of their engagement with *UP Skills for Work* module(s). Further, reflecting on their learning experience, **85%** of learners indicated that the *UP Skills for Work* module(s) they completed had increased their confidence in the skill(s) they were learning. These increases in confidence are important as they can ultimately support success at work and in employment searches for learners.¹⁵



When starting their learning through *UP Skills for Work* **56%** of learners indicated that they knew how to effectively use their employability and life skills, while **85%** felt this way after finishing their learning module(s). Overall, **80%** of learners who were unsure of how to effectively use their skills when they started an *UP Skills for Work* module increased their understanding of how to best use their skills by the time they had completed their learning. These results suggest that *UP Skills for Work* modules available through the *ABC Skills Hub* are effectively inspiring learners to think about ways to use their skills, which can ultimately promote employability and success in the workplace.¹⁶



When starting their *UP Skills for Work* module(s) only **66%** of learners indicated they had a plan for improving their employability and soft skills compared with **85%** who indicated they had a plan upon module completion. Overall, **89%** of learners reported that the *UP Skills for Work* module(s) they completed taught them strategies to improve implementation of their skills and avoid setbacks in skill implementation at work. Further, **87%** of learners said that after completing the module(s) they knew more about where they could continue their skill building and learning moving forward.¹⁷

¹⁵ N=428; N=418; N=125 learners rating their confidence 3 or lower on the pre survey; N=443

¹⁶ N=356; N=420; N=148 learners rating their knowledge of how to use skills 3 or lower on the pre survey

¹⁷ N=452; N=443; N=323; N=420



Overall, **88%** of learners who completed an *UP Skills for Work* module through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that the module(s) they had completed taught them that people shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed if some employability or life skills are difficult for them.¹⁸

In total, **88%** of learners completing *UP Skills for Life* modules through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that they believed they would use what they had learned in the module(s) they completed.¹⁹

Accountability Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Accountability module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what accountability means to them and why it is important in the workplace. Learners consider the challenges that may exist to being accountable at work as well as strategies for improving accountability. Reflecting on what they learned in the workshop:

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. What it means to be accountable.
2. Strategies for staying accountable.
3. The importance of accountability (to oneself and others).

Reflecting on their learning, in their own words participants said:

"[I learned that] your accountability influences how others see you and how much they trust you."

"[I learned] how to address accountability setbacks."

Attitude Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Attitude module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what attitude means to them and why it is important in the workplace. Learners

¹⁸ N=438

¹⁹ N=435

consider the ways in which actions, tone, and body language convey attitude and learn strategies to promote and maintain a good attitude at work.

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. The importance of having a good attitude.
2. Strategies for maintaining a good attitude.
3. How personal attitude affects others at work and in life.

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned that] you're not alone! If you're struggling, you can ask for help.”

“[I learned] to have a positive attitude at the workplace.”

Communication Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Communication module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners consider all the different modes of communication that can be used in the workplace.

Participants reflect on the benefits of strong communication and build their own communication skills.

Key learnings identified by participants included:

1. Strategies for effective communication.
2. How to address issues related to miscommunication.
3. How to be an active listener.

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned] how to improve communication techniques.”

“[I learned] what to do if I encounter miscommunication with someone.”

Confidence Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Confidence module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what confidence means to them and why it is important in the workplace. Learners consider how low confidence could hold them back and how they can build their self-confidence to take on new challenges.

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. The importance of confidence.
2. Strategies for building personal confidence.
3. How to take small steps towards greater confidence.

In their own words, learners said:

"[I learned] ways to be confident."

"I learned that you don't have to be afraid to take a risk."

Motivation Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Motivation module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what motivation means to them, why it is important, and key strategies to become and stay motivated. Learners discuss how motivation relates to employment, as well as their own values and goals.

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. Strategies for gaining and maintaining motivation (e.g. goal setting).
2. The importance of personal motivation.
3. How to manage motivation setbacks.

In their own words, learners said:

"[I learned] new strategies that I can use to help with my motivation."

"I learned what to do to stay motivated."

Presentation Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Presentation module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what presentation means to them and why it is important in the workplace. Learners consider the ways in which language, manners, dress, hygiene, scent, and tone affect how they present themselves and they learn strategies to promote and maintain professional presentation at work and when searching for work (e.g. In job interviews).

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. How to best present themselves in the workplace.
2. How different things (e.g. language, eye contact) affect how a person is perceived.

3. The importance of personal presentation (incl. how a person dresses, their language, their personal hygiene, etc.).

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned] learn new skills and habits in order to succeed at work.”

“[I learned] you can always overcome barriers when it comes to how you present yourself.”

Time Management Module Learnings

Through the *UP Skills for Work* Time-Management module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners explore what time management means to them and why it is important in the workplace. Users engaging with the module learn about prioritizing tasks, planning time, and avoiding procrastination, with opportunities in the workshop to practice ideas and techniques that are learned.

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. The importance of good time management at work and in life.
2. Strategies for good time management (e.g. prioritizing tasks, making lists).
3. Strategies for avoiding procrastination and distractions.

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned that] planning ahead is more efficient.”

“[I learned] how to really focus on what tasks are more important and what should be done first.”

4.2 Outcomes from the *Health Matters* Module

The *Health Matters* module on the *ABC Skills Hub* supports learners in increasing their knowledge, awareness, and communications skills around health management. The program also seeks to empower individuals to become active and informed healthcare decision-makers. The evaluation of learner outcomes from *Health Matters* module on the *ABC Skills Hub* revealed that:



Reflecting on their learning experience, **80%** of learners felt that they had more confidence to speak up for my own health and getting what I need to be healthy after completing the *Health Matters* module. **80%** of learners also reported that they felt more confident speaking up for the health of people I care for after completing the module. These increases in confidence are important as they can ultimately support the health and wellbeing of learners and the people they care for.²⁰



80% of learners said that after completing the *Health Matters* module through the *ABC Skills Hub* they knew more about where they could go to learn more about health matters. This suggests that the *Health Matters* module available through the *ABC Skills Hub* is equipping learners to continue their health literacy learning after completing the module.²¹



Overall, **80%** of learners who completed the *Health Matters* module through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that it taught them that people shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed when asking for help with their health. This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* has the potential to contribute to decreases in stigma surrounding low health literacy and personal advocacy among learners.²²

Overall, **80%** of learners indicated that they intend to do more to manage their health because of their participation in *Health Matters* through the *ABC Skills Hub*.²³

Top learnings identified by participants included:

1. The importance of health and maintaining personal health.
2. Key strategies for maintaining personal health.
3. Where to get more information on healthcare and options related to health.

²⁰ N=10; N=10

²¹ N=10

²² N=10

²³ N=10

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned] how medical care works.”

“[I learned] that it is ok to reach out and ask for help.”

“[I learned] how to take better care of my health.”

4.3 Outcomes from *Money Matters* Modules

Money Matters seeks to enhance and advance money management skills and personal financial literacy. Recognizing the different financial literacy needs of different types of learners, *ABC Money Matters* materials have been tailored into three specialized programming streams:²⁴

- The *Core Money Matters Stream*, which is open to all learners wishing to learn about spending plans and budgeting, banking, borrowing money, and saving money.
- The *Indigenous Peoples Money Matters Stream*, which explores the same topics as the Core Program, but integrates Indigenous imagery, examples, and topic focus to specifically support Indigenous learners in engaging with the materials.
- The *People with Diverse Abilities Money Matters Stream*, which provides specialized topics for people with diverse abilities to explore, including using an ATM, money challenges, money safety, using a bank, and understanding a paycheque.

Prior to starting their *Money Matters* module(s) through the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners were asked about specific banking options that they were engaging with to better understand the extent to which learners may be facing barriers to money management through banking. In total:²⁵

- **71%** of learners reported having a chequing account.
- **46%** of learners reported having a savings account.
- **12%** of learners reported having a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

These results suggest that the *Money Matters* modules available through the *ABC Skills Hub* could be well-positioned to support unbanked and underbanked learners in engaging with financial institutions and products that can support good money management.

Overall, evaluation of learner outcomes from all *Money Matters* modules available through the *ABC Skills Hub* revealed that:

When starting their *Money Matters* module(s) **59%** of learners reported that they felt confident in their money management skills. Upon completion of their learning module(s) **83%** indicated that they were confident in their money management skills, with a total of **76%** of learners who did not feel confident in their money management skills when they started increasing their confidence by the end of their engagement with *Money Matters* module(s). Further, reflecting on their learning experience, **82%** of learners indicated that the *Money Matters* module(s) they completed had increased their confidence in the money management skill(s) they



²⁴ Note: Only one *Money Matters* Core Program module and three *Money Matters* for People with Diverse Abilities Program modules were adapted and migrated to the *ABC Skills Hub* in partnership with FSC.

²⁵ N=362

were learning. These increases in confidence are important as they can ultimately support strong financial literacy that can contribute to learners avoiding financial hardship and finding ways to maximize the potential within their financial situations.²⁶



Overall, **81%** of learners reported that the *Money Matters* module(s) they completed taught them new skills and strategies to help them manage their money. Further, after completing the module(s), **83%** of learners said that they knew more about where they could continue advancing their financial literacy moving forward. This suggests that the *Money Matters* module(s) available through the *ABC Skills Hub* are teaching learners important skills as well as knowledge that can encourage ongoing skills development and learning after module completion.²⁷



Overall, **82%** of learners who completed a *Money Matters* module through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that the module(s) they had completed taught them that people shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed if they struggle to manage their money. This suggests that the *ABC Skills Hub* has the potential to contribute to decreases in stigma surrounding low financial literacy among learners.²⁸

In total, **75%** of learners completing *Money Matters* modules through the *ABC Skills Hub* indicated that they believed they would use what they had learned in the module(s) they completed.²⁹

Core and Indigenous Peoples Program Spending Plans Module Learnings

Through the *Money Matters* Spending Plans module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, learners consider their spending habits and learn important skills for budgeting income and expenses and managing spending.

Key learnings identified by Spending Plans module participants included:

1. Understanding needs versus wants.

²⁶ N=362; N=313; N=119 learners rating their confidence 3 or lower on the pre survey; N=318

²⁷ N=314; N=316

²⁸ N=316

²⁹ N=328

2. How to build good money management skills (e.g. creating a budget, developing a spending plan).
3. Ways to build savings and the benefits of doing so.

In their own words, learners said:

“I learned how to be more confident with managing money.”

“[I learned] what to do if I encounter miscommunication with someone.”

Core and Indigenous Peoples Program Banking Basics Module Learnings

Through the *Money Matters* Banking Basics module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, participants learn about different banking options, including basic bank and credit union products like chequing accounts and saving accounts. The module aims to support learners in gaining comfort with banks and banking options so they can engage with more tools to manage their money.

Key learnings identified by Banking Basics module participants included:

1. Information on bank accounts (e.g. types of accounts available, how to use an account, how to open an account).
2. Money management techniques and strategies.
3. How to ask questions at the bank.

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned about] opening up a bank account and getting help with choosing the bank to use.”

“[I learned] it's never too late to start managing your money whether your poor or wealthy.”

Core and Indigenous Peoples Program Borrowing Money Module Learnings

Through the *Money Matters* Borrowing Money module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, participants learn about credit and borrowing. The module aims to support learners making wise borrowing decisions, avoiding predatory lenders, and addressing existing debt.

Key learnings identified by Borrowing Money module participants included:

1. Information on credit (e.g. types of credit, ways to build credit).
2. Information on interest rates and borrowing money (e.g. borrowing options, interest).
3. How to reduce existing debt.

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned] where to get help about managing debt.”

“[I learned] what interest rates work best/are cheapest.”

Core and Indigenous Peoples Program Ways to Save Module Learnings

Through the *Money Matters* Ways to Save module available on the *ABC Skills Hub*, participants learn about saving options, strategies for saving, planning for saving, and other money management strategies that can enable saving behaviours.

Key learnings identified by Ways to Save module participants included:

1. The importance and benefits of saving and making plans to save.
2. Strategies for saving.
3. Benefits of different savings options and how to use them (e.g. RESPs)

In their own words, learners said:

“[I learned] why is it important to have a savings account.”

“[I learned] I can save no matter how much money I make.”

People with Diverse Abilities Program Module Learnings

The *Money Matters* for People with Diverse Abilities Program stream was designed for learners with various intellectual, verbal, physical and nonphysical capabilities. This version of *Money Matters* includes seven topics to encourage confidence and financial independence among individuals with diverse abilities. Currently, two modules are available through the *ABC Skills Hub*: Money Safety and Facing Money Challenges. To date, 5 learners have completed the Money Safety module and 4 learners have completed the Facing Money Challenges module. Unfortunately, with such a small sample of learners participating, meaningful evaluation of learner outcomes from these modules is not yet possible.

5.0 Teacher Perspectives on the ABC Skills Hub

Beyond self-directed learning by individuals using the *ABC Skills Hub*, the platform has been set up to enable organizations and facilitators to access high quality ABC materials to use in classrooms or in guided individual sessions with learners. All practitioners facilitating *ABC Skills Hub* materials were invited to complete a survey as part of the *ABC Skills Hub* evaluation. In total, 3 teachers provided responses. While this is a very small sample, results from the teacher survey can nevertheless help guide *ABC Skills Hub* program improvement.

All survey respondents indicated that they had used the *ABC Skills Hub* to work individually with learners and/or encourage learners to use the *ABC Skills Hub* to supplement group learning that they were leading. Practitioners indicated that they had chosen to engage learners using the *ABC Skills Hub* for numerous reasons, including the *ABC Skills Hub* being a free online resource, because the platform is easy to use, and because they find the materials to be high quality and engaging. Survey respondents also indicated that they felt ABC provides excellent support for practitioners.

On average, practitioner survey respondents gave the *ABC Skills Hub* a 4 star rating, suggesting there may be some room for improvement of the platform. Overall, while practitioners rated the materials very highly, some felt that the platform could be easier to use. In total:³⁰

- **100%** of practitioner survey respondents were satisfied with the *ABC Skills Hub* content.
- **100%** of practitioner survey respondents felt that the materials available through the *ABC Skills Hub* were at an appropriate level for learners.
- **100%** of practitioner survey respondents felt that the *ABC Skills Hub* made it easier for them to support learners virtually.
- **100%** of practitioner survey respondents felt that the things that learners learn through the *ABC Skills Hub* can help them in their day-to-day lives.

All teacher survey respondents indicated that they were using or had used ABC materials in-person in classrooms with learners. Reflecting on the difference between the *ABC Skills Hub* learning experience and in-person learning experiences with ABC materials, **67%** of practitioners felt that both learning experiences were equal, while **33%** felt that in-person learning was more effective. Further explaining their perspectives, practitioners caveated that they felt online learning was most effective when supported by a practitioner and that many learners still prefer in-person learning opportunities. At the same time, practitioners indicated that they recognized the value of a resource like the *ABC Skills Hub*, particularly in situations (like the COVID-19 pandemic) when in-person learning is not possible.

³⁰ N=3 for all bulleted findings.

Overall, based on their initial experiences with the *ABC Skills Hub*, **100%** of practitioner survey respondents indicated that they planned on facilitating learning opportunities using the *ABC Skills Hub* again.

6.0 Opportunities for Program Improvement

While feedback about the *ABC Skills Hub* was positive overall and the evaluation results suggest that the platform is contributing to important positive outcomes for learners, there are nevertheless opportunities for improvement.

6.1 Learner Suggestions for Improvement

While most learners indicated that they felt nothing needed to be improved about the program, others provided thoughtful suggestions for improvement.

The most common suggestion for improvement across all modules was to include more video/audio learning content. Learners felt that this would help make the modules more interesting and engaging.

Other suggestions for improvement included:

- Having more exercises/stories
- Having less to read within the modules
- Offering more opportunities for practicing skills
- Having a test at the end of each module
- Having a summary at the end of each module
- Having larger text boxes for learner responses
- Having clearer questions for learners

6.2 Practitioner Suggestions for Improvement

Two practitioners provided suggestions for improvement of the *ABC Skills Hub*, with both suggesting that when registering students for *ABC Skills Hub* modules or tutoring through the *ABC Skills Hub*, it would be easier if students could register for multiple modules at once instead of one at a time.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

ABC Life Literacy Canada (ABC) is a non-profit organization that aims to strengthen organizations that promote adult learning. ABC develops and supports the use of high-quality introductory learning materials and resources written in clear language, with a vision of a Canada where everyone has the tools and opportunities to improve their literacy and essential skills. Through a partnership with the Future Skills Centre (FSC) in 2021, ABC adapted and worked to migrate **23** proven ABC workshops to a new online platform called the *ABC Skills Hub* for use for free at home, in classrooms, and in workplaces.

The *ABC Skills Hub* provides opportunities for online engagement with high quality ABC materials that have been offered through in-person learning opportunities for many years. With an increased need for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, the *ABC Skills Hub* is well-positioned to advance learner skills and literacy, including key employability and life skills. Evaluation of the *ABC Skills Hub* revealed that a diverse group of learners with intersectional identities have engaged with the platform. As a result, learners have experienced increased confidence in their skills, the development of new skills, and decreased stigma towards low literacy. Moving forward from their *ABC Skills Hub* experience, learners indicated that they felt equipped to continue advancing their skills and learning.

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue migrating proven ABC programs to the *ABC Skills Hub* platform. Preliminary evidence from evaluating the ABC Skills Hub in 2021-2022 suggests that it is an effective way to reach learners in an online setting. Learners rated their learning experience very highly and a diverse group of equity-seeking learners were able to engage with the content. It is recommended that ABC continue to expand the ABC Skills Hub offering to further increase learning opportunities for users.
2. Seek opportunities to add more audio/video content to *ABC Skills Hub* modules. The most common suggestion for improvement from *ABC Skills Hub* learners across all modules was to add more audio/video content to the learning modules. This could further increase the accessibility of materials available through the *ABC Skills Hub* and could deepen the engagement of learners using the platform.
3. Seek opportunities to continually improve the usability of the *ABC Skills Hub* platform for both learners and practitioners. While most learners and practitioners were relatively happy with the current ABC Skills Hub platform, learners made some suggestions for platform improvements that could further increase usability (see Section 6.1 for details). Further engagement with

practitioners may be needed to gain additional insights into the ways in which the platform's usability could be improved for those facilitating learning opportunities through the *ABC Skills Hub*.