

Background

Kelsey Adult Learning Centre

Before 1993

Prior to 1993, high schools in Manitoba could offer a diploma in the Mature Student Program, a modified diploma with a few specific credit criteria at the Grade 12/Senior 4 level. In the Kelsey School Division this option was rarely used as the student in such a program had to be at least 18 years of age and few candidates felt comfortable in a high school setting. Only one or two candidates were accepted per year at Margaret Barbour Collegiate Institute and, in some years, none at all.

With the conclusion of the Manitoba Education high school review, and the development of the recommendations of the implementation study that followed, the use of a Mature Student Program as a way to engage adults who had dropped out of high school began to gain credibility. And as high school enrolment started to decline in some areas, the enrolment of “adults” gained popularity. MBCI began to promote this option.

1993-94

Mature Student Program

In the Fall of 1993, MBCI had received 20 applications from persons trying to return to school under the provisions of the Mature Student Program. These older former students who had been out of school for some time, and now wished to return. The courses required to graduate under the provisions of this program were limited, and with large MBCI class sizes in some of the required courses, choice was restricted. After screening the applicants and reviewing the class size MBCI admitted 14 Mature Students in the first semester. Another intake opportunity would occur in Semester II which began February 1, 1994 but interested applicants were encouraged to apply by December, 1993 to maximize their chances of entry.

1995-96

Adult Education

Having operated the Mature Student Program for many years, in the summer of 1995 MBCI with the cooperation of the Kelsey School Division, undertook a different approach for the educational upgrading of adults. Through the support and cooperation of Hélène Rovere and Sandra Mercer of the local Human Resources Canada office, two summer session classes were initiated under the authority of MBCI. Selected adult students seeking to upgrade their English and mathematics were enrolled in two Senior High courses which blended teaching and computer assisted sessions. The teachers were a couple of regular professional staff from MBCI who signed a short term contract to instruct. The summer session principal (who granted the mathematics and English course credits) was the principal of MBCI.

Upon completion, the successful students were granted Senior 4 general course credits in the required subjects. These 40G credits were often the entrance requirements for

some post-secondary training programs. The program operators were pleased with the efforts of the 19 adults who enrolled, some of whom had been away from school for many years. The success rate was very remarkable with 16 adults completing the course, and it was decided to establish a similar set of courses for adults for evenings during the winter. Keewatin Community College had been the preferred site for conducting the summer classes, so an arrangement was made to continue this location.

For the first graduation ceremony in adult education, permission was obtained to have it added on to the K.C.C. graduation ceremony. This did not go well and thereafter graduation ceremonies were held at MBCI on a day close to the MBCI regular graduation in order to benefit from decorations, grad photos, grad gown rentals, etc.

1996-97

Kelsey Adult Learning Centre

A new alternative for adults wishing to complete high school courses for credit, the Kelsey Adult Learning Centre, was planned to be operational early in September, 1996. Under the principal of MBCI (Vaughn Wadelius), a vice-principal in local charge of this operation was established with the secondment of a Keewatin Community College staff member (and former MBCI teacher), Alfred McDonald. In addition, teachers Heather Marlow and Joseph Prokopow were instructors. Successful completion of the selected courses at this K.C.C. site resulted in the provincial credits being granted by the MBCI principal. Several dozens of students were attracted to this option, some being dropouts from years ago, but more and more redirected by counsellors and the administration of MBCI when the social fit and need for flexible instruction options was apparent.

1997-98

Adult Learning Centre

Through advertising and word-of-mouth, there continued to be an excellent response to the opportunity to attend the Kelsey Adult Learning Centre, with more than 270 individuals accessing this educational opportunity in 1997-98. Courses were taught to 199 students in the mornings and afternoons, and another 73 students were enrolled in evening courses. Courses were tailored to the learning needs of the individual adult in a flexible manner. In addition, the setting up of utilization of a computer lab with software dedicated to the learning needs of adults in the program was initiated. The computers were received and the specialized tutorial software purchased. A lab at K.C.C. was eventually provided.

1998-1999

Kelsey Adult Learning Centre

The adult learning centre underwent a brisk registration startup at Keewatin Community College in the Fall of 1998. Enrolments passed 175 students and continued to climb. The programs last chance opportunity for those 19 years of age or older, and who were no longer eligible for attendance at the MBCI site, to return to attempt to meet the requirements for the Manitoba Education mature student diploma worked well. In the midst of success with this approach, Manitoba Education proposed to make entry to this

alternative even more difficult by raising the allowed age to 21 years, and increasing the rigor of the course requirements. MBCI administration and counselors argued for retention of a program that had met the needs of northern residents while not compromising on the exit standards for graduation. The province also became concerned about the level of provincial funding that was required to operate adult learning centres that were springing up across the province.

In January, 1999 there were 86 regular students expecting to graduate from MBCI in June, and 68 adult students who had applied to graduate from the Kelsey Adult Learning Centre. This would be the largest graduating group in the history of MBCI, if all were successful.

1999-2000

Kelsey Adult Learning Centre

Al Brackman

Merrilee Hamilton

P-Doug Long

AP-Heather Marlow

Joseph Prokopow

Compiled by
Vaughn Wadelius

October 23, 2007