



Summary Report:

**Feasibility of Developing a National
Framework/Model
to Assess Immigrant Learning**

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For the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment
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Introduction

On April 13, 2007 the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA), with funding support from the Foreign Credential Recognition program at Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), sponsored a one-day session designed to explore the feasibility of developing a national framework or model to assess immigrant learning. Thirty-nine participants attended and contributed to the session which was facilitated by Susan Simosko. (Appendix A contains a list of all attendees as well as those who sent regrets.)

Prior to the session, participants received a number of resource documents to review. The one prepared specifically for the session is provided in Appendix B.

Bonnie Kennedy, Executive Director of CAPLA welcomed people to the meeting and provided a brief overview of how the project began. She explained how a Campus Canada meeting in 2005 had provided the impetus. At the event entitled “*Moving towards the Development of a Common Framework for Foreign Credential Assessment*”¹ participants were given opportunity to sign up to action certain recommendations about which they felt strongly. One such recommendation

“Develop an overall framework of national standards and guidelines for credentials, competencies, and communication assessment, including all stakeholders. This framework should provide broad based solutions for non-regulated occupations.” (p.21)

was of interest to four organizations: the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB), the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC), University of Manitoba (UofM) and the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA). CAPLA contacted each of the other three representatives to see if they were still interested in moving the recommendation forward and all said 'yes'. CAPLA offered to take the lead in securing funding and wrote a proposal, with input from the three partners. The April 13 Stakeholder Meeting resulted.

Next, participants helped to describe the context for the Stakeholder Meeting by articulating some of the challenges and limitations within their own organizations regarding the assessment of immigrant learning. These are described below:

- Lack of acceptance of language benchmarks
- Turf protection
- Myopia (lack of long-term vision within organizations)
- No notion of “substantive equality”
- Institutional inertia and ignorance
- Inability to demonstrate “return on investment”

¹ http://campuscanada.ca/new/foreign/FCR_Final_Report.htm

- Lack of clear communication about who is doing what—within institutions and government, at all levels
- Duplication of effort
- Focus on ESL support but limited support in other key areas of immigrants’ skills and knowledge
- Conflict between federal and provincial policies and mandates
- Lack of awareness of services, particularly among employers
- Lack of engagement among employers to address key labour-force issues, one of which is how to integrate immigrants into the workplace
- Limited ability to help employers and institutions understand assessment outcomes
- Lack of standardized competency frameworks
- Lack of recognition of skilled trades in the immigration process
- Inability to relate qualifications from other cultures/nations to Canadian workforce needs
- Lack of a common approach to self-assessment (for immigrants)
- Lack of understanding about recognition of prior learning (RPL)/prior learning assessment (PLA)
- No coordinated national approach that could help to shape a national RPL approach to service
- Limitations of existing immigrant services to reach those who might benefit from their services
- Lack of collaboration among service providers
- Lack of recognition of the value of learning in general

While it was generally agreed that a single national framework/model could not address all of these limitations or challenges, the development of such a framework could indeed provide a common approach to tackling many of these issues.

For the remainder to the session, participants worked in small groups, following the Agenda and using a set of five Worksheets. These are contained in Appendix C. Through the session, participants were regularly asked to move into new groups in order to maximize the diversity of thinking in each working group.

Summary of Outcomes

What follows is a summary of the responses to each of the questions posed during the session and a brief commentary, when appropriate.

Defining the purpose

1. Why do we need a framework/model to assess immigrants’ learning?

Participants reported that we need such a framework to:²

- Increase Canada’s competitiveness by integrating immigrants and others into the workforce more quickly and efficiently
- Enable us to better manage short- and long-term labour market needs and resources
- Reduce the current trend of “seducing and abandoning” immigrants³

² One working group suggested that this framework be developed for all learners/candidates/applicants, not just for “immigrants.” This group felt that the current system did not serve other groups well, in particular minorities, Aboriginals, career changers or others.

- Work towards a standardized and more coherent approach that would connect language, credentials, competencies and essential skills in a more rationalized way
- Increase mobility for immigrants
- Provide more transparency in the system for immigrants
- Develop a statement of “rights” for applicants
- Help to improve fairness, equity, portability and accessibility to assessment opportunities across Canada
- Improve communication within existing employer and education/training systems
- Show how different stakeholders “fit in” and how they can all work together to achieve the same vision
- Build on existing “silo” components

2. What are the limitations of current tools and systems?

In addition to the organizational limitations cited above, participants highlighted the following limitations in current tools and systems:

- Lack of a national vision of how to actually integrate immigrants into the workplace
- Lack of focused and sustained funding to address the range of relevant issues
- Lack of community awareness of plight of immigrants *and* Canada’s true need
- Lack of transparency within the existing system of who is doing what
- Lack of consistent competency standards
- Lack of portability of existing credentials—both within Canada and from abroad
- Not building on or learning from successful projects and initiatives
- Policies that are under-funded or under-resourced making implementation difficult
- Immigrants not sure where to go for what information—either before they leave their home countries or when they first arrive in Canada
- Lack of evaluation criteria for success
- Current services fragmented and inaccessible
- Some standardized tools may be discriminatory and culturally inappropriate
- Lack of “teeth” in current reciprocal agreements relating to credentials
- Inadequate communication about what services are available for immigrants?
- Lack of understanding of the meaning of most internationally-earned credentials (No one has authority to say what a given credential really means.)

3. Who will benefit from the development and application of the Framework?

Participants were almost unanimous in identifying who would benefit from the development of a national framework:

- Applicants or potential immigrants to Canada
- Employers, especially SMEs who need a system of credible information they can rely on to recruit and hire immigrants
- Educational institutions
- Regulatory bodies
- Apprenticeship boards
- Sector Councils
- Individual communities

³ Participants agreed that Canada’s current immigration policies often conflict with the reality of actually living and working in Canada. For example, many highly educated immigrants arrive in Canada assuming that because they earned so many “points” for their education they will be quickly assimilated into the workplace. On arrival, however, they are dismayed to learn about all the additional credentials, experiences, assessments or education and training they will need to undergo before even being considered for work.

- General public who need to learn more and have greater confidence in contributions immigrants make at the local level
- Canadian economy (“*We need more skilled workers!*”)
- Federal and provincial governments
- Researchers

Picturing the Framework/Model

For this segment of the meeting, participants were asked to draw a picture of the Framework/Model. They were asked to determine if it was a thing, a process, a concept and/or some combination of these. The actual drawings produced by the working groups are contained in Appendix D.

As will be noted, the drawings contain a number of comparable images:

- Almost all are “organic”, represented by a tree or flower. The groups felt the Framework/Model should be a living thing that is both sustained and used by multiple stakeholders
- Almost all reflect a “process” rather than a specific tool or set of tools
- Each drawing seeks to depict a coherent whole rather than a “silo” system in which each component operates independently. In the pictures, the system is very much interdependent and intra-dependent on each stakeholder doing his/her part to contribute to the whole
- Each of these drawings—regardless of a somewhat rudimentary illustration—sets out to suggest what might be developed into a national vision

Using the Framework/Model

During this portion of the session, participants were asked to consider three questions:

1. Who will use the framework/model?
2. *How* will they use it?
3. What will be the desired/expected outcome of using the Framework/Model and for whom?

They were asked to develop their responses holistically and present the outcomes of their discussions in the form of a table. What follows in the Table 1 below is a combined summary of all responses:

Table 1		
Who will use the framework?	How will they use it?	What will be the desired outcome and for whom?
Individuals in Canada and overseas	It will provide information that will help them to make better decisions regarding employment, education, training and assessment	Employment, education, training and assessment commensurate with their knowledge, skills and abilities

Employers	It will help them to do a better job of recruiting, hiring and training new employees; will enable them to better manage risks and demographic changes	Improved hiring and retention practices and more qualified workers
Regulatory bodies Professional associations Sector councils	More <i>consistent</i> policies and practices regarding assessments, training and licensure; greater likelihood of improved portability of qualifications and licenses	Improved infrastructure which is standards-based and consistent; more qualified applicant pool
Education providers	Will be able to audit existing services, identify gaps and develop new services and learning and assessment options	Stronger and more consistent programs for learners/immigrants who will be better able to gain employment
Assessors (whether in employment or education context)	Will use it to guide assessments and improve assessment processes and assessment decisions	More valid and reliable assessments; more skilled and knowledgeable assessors
National community of practice organizations such as CCLB, CAPLA, ACES	Will enable them to plan and implement projects based on best practices, common tools, and shared information	More informed constituencies and better QR and PLA tools for immigrants and others
PLAR advisors, career counselors and immigrant serving organizations	Will enable them to provide more transparent information to immigrants, help them to develop more systematic plans, support immigrants to carry out plans, and make better referrals	Better informed clients who are more employable and have a greater likelihood of successfully integrating into Canadian life more quickly
Government	Will be able to use framework as a catalyst for change and to better inform legislation, develop performance measures, fund various implementation strategies and improve communication with all stakeholders across the nation	Better accountability of service providers and stakeholders; more immigrants efficiently entering the workforce with more portable credentials/qualifications; increased opportunities for fostering social and cultural understanding and acceptance
Language trainers	Will be better able to develop targeted programs and identify other resources to support immigrants	More satisfied and successful clients

Researchers	Will be better able to understand changes in the workforce and how to measure outcomes	More informed providers, educators, employers, etc.
Voluntary organizations	Will be able to provide a better “Canadian experience”	More knowledgeable and more productive volunteers; access to tools; opportunity to work with other stakeholders

Clearly, as these responses indicate, the development of a national Framework or Model could make a significant contribution to creating a coherent and rational system for attracting and supporting internationally trained individuals into the Canadian workforce. Such a Framework could also serve as a significant catalyst for change both within the overall system and in individual agencies and organizations. It is important to add, however, that the development of a national Framework *alone* will not lead to the desired outcomes identified by participants. Stable funding, careful and visionary management, and broad-based collaboration will also be essential.

Linking the Framework/Model

The group agreed that it would be important to build on existing models or processes whenever possible. Participants offered a number of different ideas in response to the questions that were posed during this segment of the meeting.

1. How will this framework/model complement or build on existing resources and/or strategies?

The following suggestions were offered. The national Framework/Model could:

- Expand on existing models, e.g., Manitoba model, CICIC (Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials), ACCC (Association of Canadian Community Colleges), CMEC (Council of Ministers of Education of Canada), FCR (Foreign Credential Recognition), CISSA (Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance), TASC (The Alliance of Sector Councils), CAPLA (Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment).
- Expand on existing language assessment
- Publicize and promote existing resources
- Fill in the gaps in existing services and create a more coherent, overall picture
- Invite existing resources/service providers to work collaboratively to use and/or fit in with the national framework

2. What issues or challenges may emerge in the development of the Framework/Model?

Issues or challenges may include:

- “Disconnect” between federal and provincial policies and jurisdictional approaches
- Lack of funding to actually implement the Framework
- Lack of a truly national vision
- Lack of capacity to train enough people to “fill in the gaps” in existing services

- Slowness of overall immigration process—currently two to four years
- Identifying the appropriate coordinating body to actually implement the Framework
- Turf issues
- Lack of flexibility among many educational/training/and immigrant serving organizations
- Inability to use IT fully

3. How can these issues or challenges be addressed?

- Use existing models to expand applications and service providers
- Review Australian and European models and adapt to reflect Canadian needs and available resources
- Establish provincial associations of regulatory bodies
- Publish and publicize existing resources on CAPLA website
- Use the Fairness Act on Universities, the Temporary Workers Program and existing PLAR programs more extensively
- Draw on expertise of CAPLA, CCLB and other organizations
- Hold consultations with interested stakeholders across the country to develop buy-in

Moving ahead

Based on responses to the second of the two questions posed during this segment of the session, almost all participants recommended the idea of developing a national Framework or Model should be taken forward. Almost all also indicated a willingness to serve on a national committee to develop the proposed Framework or Model. Other key ideas related to the development of the Framework are listed below under the first question. Clearly, the results of this consultation show there is both a need for a national Framework/Model and willingness among key stakeholders to actually develop, implement and evaluate it.

1. What recommendations do you have for the development and potential application of the Framework/Model?

- Establish a national Steering Committee
- Make sure the whole approach is team based, working across particular sector lines
- Look for common ground in the existing system and promote it!
- Access funding—public and private
- Promote existing services and options for recognition
- Keep it simple!
- Oversee the setting of standards by appropriate stakeholders
- Make sure HRSDC and CIC are on side with the vision, process, and next steps
- Avoid over-regulation and over-assessment
- Draft, validate, implement and evaluate Framework
- Make sure employers are actively involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Framework
- Identify national champion(s) to promote this initiative
- Get started! (“The research and consultation are complete; we need to act!”)
- Make sure provincial and federal governments work together to reflect regional differences but with a common goal
- Identify the specific roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders and establish clear timelines
- Establish a coordinating body, e.g., CAPLA, CISSA, etc.

- Ensure that the Framework is action-oriented and moves the agenda forward to actually create effective pathways to jobs for immigrants

2. Would you be willing to serve on a national committee to develop and/or oversee the development of the Framework/Model? (Almost all said yes.)

If yes, please provide your contact information:

Name:

Address:

Daytime phone number:

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Appendix B: Background Resource

Background Information For CAPLA Stakeholder Meeting on Feasibility of Developing a National Framework to Assess Immigrant Learning

**Prepared by Susan Simosko Associates, Inc.
April 2, 2007**

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Background Information For CAPLA Stakeholder Meeting on Feasibility of Developing a National Framework to Assess Immigrant Learning

Note to Participants:

This information has been compiled and annotated to provide us with a set of common resources related to the assessment of immigrant learning and credentials. These examples represent a variety of jurisdictions, occupations and approaches. We know there are many other examples, but hope you find these particular illustrations both stimulating and helpful as you prepare for the Stakeholder meeting on April 13.

As you will note, many of these citations are Web-based resources that refer to particular models or processes. The notion of a “Framework” *per se* that reflects the four areas of our concern, qualifications recognition, language competence, workplace competencies, and essential skills, remains elusive. If you know of or are using such a Framework—or related process or model—please bring a short (half-page) description with you and any additional reference materials you think will be helpful to the group.

To make best use of the limited time we will have when we are together, please look at as many of the citations in this annotated list as you can. Thanks very much. I look forward to meeting and working with you in April. Susan Simosko

Europe:

The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom
www.naric.org.uk

The National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, the UK NARIC, is the national agency under contract to the UK Government Department for Education and Skills.

The UK NARIC is a member of the European network of NARICs throughout the European Union since the early 1980s. It is also the UK representative in a wider operation of European Network of Information Centres (ENIC) across Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and USA. The work and the information on international qualifications also falls within the framework of UNESCO which links the UK NARIC/ENIC to other regional offices worldwide.

NARIC Recognition and Evaluation Service

The NARIC Recognition and Evaluation Service is the essential first step recommended to individuals with international qualifications, and employers/organisations in the UK who receive individuals with skills and qualifications attained from outside the UK.

The service is the starting point for individuals considering progressing towards further studies or employment in the UK. The Evaluation Service recognises individuals' overseas awards and provides a clear indication of the comparable level of their qualifications earned in another country. The recognition of the level of education and training individuals receive from other nations them to better identify the best options when planning to:

- ❑ Apply for a study programme at a UK university to gain a further qualification
- ❑ Consider employment opportunities in the UK in your chosen occupation
- ❑ Apply for a professional status to be able to work as a fully qualified professional such as a fully qualified professional such as a teacher or a doctor (etc.)
- ❑ Apply to the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme as part of Work Permits application process

Several options in the Recognition and Evaluation Services are offered:

- ❑ Standard Evaluation Service (approx. 10-15 days)
- ❑ Fast Track Service (approx. 42-48 hours)
- ❑ Translation Waiver Scheme (see footnote below)
- ❑ Career Path Report (approx. 15 days)

The website also offers an on-line tracking service so that applicants can view the status of their applications.

Standard Evaluation Service

The Standard Evaluation Service provides a letter of comparability for individuals with Overseas' awards. Once the Service receives the correct documentation, individuals are sent a letter of comparability. This letter provides a statement of comparison for each qualification gained overseas. This letter is suitable for those who wish to go on to further study or employment in the UK. The cost for this service is £42.30 (less if an individual applies on-line).

As an independent enquirer, an applicant would forward the following:

- ❑ A photocopy of earned certificate(s)⁴ together with transcript(s)
- ❑ A covering letter from stating the purpose of the enquiry
- ❑ A copy of a certified translation in English if necessary⁵

Career Path Report

The Career Path Report service provides overseas qualified individuals with a detailed report on one of their overseas awards. This report provides an in depth description of their awards as well as advice on the comparative UK level, recommendation for future study / professional development in the UK. The cost is £103.40. Included in the report is a:

- ❑ Brief overview of the education system from which the award originates.
- ❑ A description of the award which includes details regarding the entrance level, content, examination methods, type of training, grading systems
- ❑ Professional rights in country of origin.
- ❑ Recommendation for further study / employment in the UK. This section may include details of subsequent qualifications in the given field of study or of the relevant professional body
- ❑ Comparability statement giving a comparative UK level.
- ❑ Description of UK level

The assessment is only made for one qualification. Other awards sent in only receive a comparative level. The report does not include comparison of degree classifications.

Services for Organizations

The UK NARIC also offers a wide range of products and services to help different organisations who admit, employ or advise individuals with international qualifications and skills to compare overseas qualifications with the equivalent levels in the UK. A few examples of the products and services offered are:

- ❑ International Comparisons: Essential tool for education providers and authorities dealing with international student applications.
- ❑ Grading Transfer System: The essential tool for assessing the true value of grades achieved in international qualifications.

⁴ Certificate Guidelines

- UK NRP is only able to assess overseas awards which constitute national standards in the country of origin.
- We are only able to evaluate courses of at least 200 hours duration. Any certificates for courses of less than 200 hours will not be mentioned in the evaluation.
- Only those certificates strictly relating to education or apprenticeships can be evaluated. References and logbooks should be presented directly to prospective employers.
- If you wish to work in a specific trade or occupation in the UK send only certificates that are relevant to that trade i.e. Technical certificates, apprenticeship certificates, trade or registration cards.
- We are not able to assess Certificates of Attendance. Only certificates of awards should be presented.

⁵ UK NRP also operates a translation waiver scheme for holders of French, Bulgarian, German, Spanish, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Russian language awards. This scheme is run utilising existing language expertise, removing the additional time and expense of acquiring a translation. The cost for this service is £77.55.

- ❑ Documentary Requirements: An essential guide to identifying genuine and fraudulent educational documents.
- ❑ English Language Tests: A comprehensive report on tests of English as a second language comparable to NQF level 2 and above.
- ❑ Degree equivalence of international awards in comparison with UK degree classifications, and grade conversion between given qualifications

UK National Europass Centre <http://www.uknec.org.uk/> and <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/htm/index.htm>

(Note: documents are available for download in 25 different languages.)

Europass is the European initiative designed to help people to make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood and to move around Europe (European Union, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries).

Europass records individuals skills and competences in a clear and easy to understand way. It enable individuals to find a job, get experience abroad, or enrol in an education or training programme.

Europass includes five documents:

- ❑ The Europass Curriculum Vitae which contains personal information and details of any work-experience, education and training, personal skills and competences
- ❑ The Europass Language Passport gives individuals the opportunity to present their language skills at a standard European level.
- ❑ The Europass Mobility document records individuals' periods of learning in countries other than their own.
- ❑ The Europass Certificate Supplement records competences and qualifications gained through vocational training.
- ❑ The Europass Diploma Supplement records educational achievements at higher education levels.

Purple Passport <http://www.purplepassport.com/>

The Purple Passport has been developed by a private limited UK company that has developed a "Skills Passport." This Passport provides a verified record of all of an individual's skills, qualifications and achievements. It is hosted online and automatically transfers on to the individual's CV. The company maintains that the Skills Passport is more beneficial to both the individual and the employer than just a CV because it is more secure, easier to maintain, easier to share, impossible to lose and altogether more versatile.

Each individual owns and controls access to his/her skills Passport as well as what is displayed on it. However, providing the individual has granted access, it can be accessed

and used by any organisations such as employers, training providers and recruiters for the purpose of viewing, updating and maintaining skills records. The employer benefits from being able to rely on a more secure, verified skills and qualifications record and being able to manage the ongoing training and skills of their work force more easily.

A person can obtain his/her skills passport either by going online to the skills passport web site or it can be issued to individuals by their employer, training provider, college, recruitment agent or any other organisation that is a registered verifier.

The European Gateway to Recognition (of academic and professional qualifications) <http://www.enic-naric.net/>

Website provides several “Recognition Tools”, as follows:

The Diploma Supplement (DS)

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education qualification aiming at improving transparency and at facilitating recognition. It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original qualification to which the supplement is appended. This flexible tool was initiated by UNESCO and revised jointly by UNESCO, the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

A credit system is a systematic way of describing an education programme by attaching credits to its components. ECTS was introduced in 1989 within the framework of the Erasmus programme of the European Union as a system for credit transfer based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, objectives preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired. It facilitated the recognition of periods of study abroad and thus enhanced the quality and volume of student mobility in Europe. ECTS is developing a credit accumulation system to be implemented at institutional, regional, national and European level. This is one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process.

Australia:

Credential Recognition for Skilled Migrants in Australia

http://www.ceg.ul.pt/metropolis2006/WorkshopPresentations/HotelContinent/LesleyanneHawthorne_metropolis2006.pdf

Background information from a presentation at 11th Metropolis Conference, Lisboa, October 2006

Australian Education International (AEI), through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR)

<http://aei.dest.gov.au/AEI/QualificationsRecognition/default.htm>

<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/services/noosr.htm>

Australian Education International (AEI), through the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (AEI-NOOSR), provides official information and advice on the comparability of overseas qualifications with Australian qualifications. This aims to help overseas-qualified individuals work and study in Australia.

Australian Skills Recognition Information (ASRI) through the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) provides information on how to get an assessment of occupational qualifications, skills or experience that individuals have gained overseas. The Country Education Profiles (CEP) Online is a publication series that describes the educational systems of over 100 countries. It provides well-researched guidelines for comparability of overseas qualifications to Australian qualifications.

The National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) helps individuals who are professionally trained outside Australia and have permanent residence in Australia. NOOSR helps individuals to have their qualifications recognised in Australia by helping them meet, or prepare to meet, specific academic or professional requirements for registration.

The two components of NOOSR are:

- ❑ Providing bridging opportunities for individuals to meet, or prepare to meet, formal recognition requirements to enter professions in Australia
- ❑ Paying certain professional examination fees for those who are financially disadvantaged under the Assessment Fee Subsidy for Disadvantaged Overseas Trained Australian Residents (ASDOT)

Since July 2005, AEI-NOOSR can receive online applications for the assessment of educational qualifications gained overseas.

USA:

Society for Human Resource Management

<http://www.shrm.org/assessment/products/TestAgency/pci.asp>

The Society for Human Resource Management offers a Personal Competencies Inventory that helps individuals understand their strengths and weaknesses as well as to identify where they need to focus their career development efforts. The Area of Essential Skills or Personal Competencies is the fourth potential area of the Framework. This is only one of many models in this area.

Canada:

Immigrant Toolbox ***<http://www.immigranttoolbox.ca/index.php?pid=1>***

The goal of this project is to help those who are helping immigrants access the tools they need to work in their chosen field. Most of this information is already online. The primary goal is to bring together all of these resources into one central location:

- ☐ English language training
- ☐ Qualifications recognition
- ☐ Immigrant serving agencies
- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Working in Manitoba
- ☐ Employment services
- ☐ Newcomer services
- ☐ Labour market information
- ☐ Employer information

Bredin Institute - Centre for Learning

<http://www.bredin.ab.ca/ImmigrantServices/Default.aspx>

The Bredin Institute Centre for Learning provides a range of information and a number of self-assessment tools related to applicants' prior learning:

- ☐ Language Proficiency Self-assessments
- ☐ What do You Know About Canada
- ☐ Stress Self-Assessments
- ☐ Employability Self-Assessments
- ☐ Career Self-Assessments

It also provides other helpful information:

- ☐ Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals
- ☐ International Engineer Bridging Program
- ☐ International Pharmacy Bridging Program

- ❑ IPG Preceptor Manual
- ❑ Preparing to Work in Alberta
- ❑ Labour Market Information
- ❑ Employment Preparation
- ❑ Presentations & Study Groups
- ❑ Social Supports & Services
- ❑ English as a Second Language
- ❑ Ask an Expert a Question

The Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals is a work search program that helps internationally trained professionals navigate the obstacles to licensure recognition and secure meaningful employment in their fields of expertise.

Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) www.triec.ca

The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) was created to address an urgent need of the Toronto Region – effective and appropriate inclusion of immigrants in the labour market. Established in September 2003, TRIEC is a multi-stakeholder collaboration comprised of members representing employers, occupational regulatory bodies, post-secondary institutions, assessment service providers, community organizations, and all three levels of government.

Programs affiliated with TRIEC include:

1. The Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.thementoringpartnership.com/index.asp>

A recently completed evaluation found that over 60 per cent of those who have completed the four-month mentoring relationship have found employment and the average salary of those who had completed the four-month relationship was 250 per cent higher than those who had not been through the program.

2. Career Bridge <http://www.careerbridge.ca/>

The program creates paid internship opportunities – from four- to 12-months long – at a wide range of employers that are committed to providing relevant work experience to professional-level newcomers.

3. hireimmigrants.ca

The hireimmigrants project provides employers with interactive tools and resources to accelerate the integration of skilled immigrants into their organizations..

4. Immigrant Employment Loan Program

<http://www.triec.ca/index.asp?pageid=27>

The Maytree Foundation - Alterna Savings Immigrant Employment Loan Program provides access to credit for newcomers to pay for short-term training (up to 1 year) in order to find employment in their occupation. The majority of borrowers who have completed their training have been able to find jobs in their fields

The Government of Ontario handbook “How to Become a Doctor in Ontario: Information for International Medical Graduates” found at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/project/img/img_brochure.pdf

This provides a good overview of what an International Medical Graduate (IMG) should consider before embarking on the process to become a doctor in Ontario, as well as the steps involved. A few elements of the handbook include:

- ❑ A simple flow-chart diagram of the process
- ❑ Important caveats and issues to consider including information on immigration and settlement and preparing for the reality of what an IMG will face in Canada, e.g., language issues, finances, studying etc.

The flow-chart diagram of the process reflects the five stages in the process:

- Getting ready
- IMG-Ontario Application
- Post-Graduate Training/Assessment
- Registration for Practice in Ontario
- Finding Your Practice in the Community

The flow-chart offers clear, concise instructions which may be an important element in a generic “Framework.”

The Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment “Recognizing the Prior learning (RPL) of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence” <http://www.capla.ca>

This report provides a comprehensive overview of current practices regarding the accessibility, credibility and effectiveness of RPL systems, focused particularly on the needs of internationally trained individuals. It also provides a range of helpful recommendations (pp. 93 – 95).

Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) <http://www.celban.org>

The Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) is the only English-language assessment designed specifically for the nursing profession. It provides a fair and reliable assessment of an internationally-educated nurse’s English language proficiency in four skills: listening, speaking, writing and reading. It also offers a “readiness” self-assessment tool.

Canadian Language Benchmarks’ Essential Skills Website <http://itsessential.ca>

The Canadian Language Benchmark’s Essential Skills Website helps internationally-educated newcomers and immigrants understand the language requirements for particular jobs to inform their future decisions. It also assists job analysts, employers, trainers, and government representatives to

understand the second-language requirements underlying specific job competencies described in Essential Skills Profiles. In addition, it supports Canadian Language Benchmarks specialists to develop occupation-specific language training curriculum, course materials and/or assessment tools. This site also supports sectors councils, industry organizations, and workplaces to define occupational language requirements and to provide language training or development opportunities. Finally, the site provides ESL/FLS and Essential Skills teaching aids for those working with adult immigrants and newcomers. The bridging materials support the use of the Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills.

Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council

http://www.cthrc.ca/eng/page.aspx?_id=fcr.htm

The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council was selected by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to conduct research throughout 2005 to investigate the development of a Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) system for non-regulated professions. The main focus was on understanding existing immigration programs and service providers and identifying examples of current models and pilot projects. Consultation with the education community and employers was undertaken in order to help identify their needs as well as possible implications of FCR. Selected foreign systems were examined to explore requirements to recognize foreign credentials as equivalent to CTHRC's credential system. The liability involved in establishing a foreign credential recognition system for non-regulated professions was also considered. Since the completion of this project, there is evidence of much more "engagement" with the issues and a greater willingness to move to the next stage of developing actual tools and strategies. It is anticipated that these will be developed during the next stage of the project.

Skilled Worker Self-Assessment

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/skilled/assess/index.html>

The Self-Assessment tool helps individuals to determine if they qualify to immigrate to Canada as a Skilled Worker. The scores on this self-assessment show individuals how their skills and experience could be assessed on their applications.

This assessment is designed to give individuals a rough idea of whether or not they will qualify under the current definition of “skilled worker.” A Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) officer decides the outcome of each application based on the information and evidence provided by applicants.

Additional citations:

The three illustrations below represent potential areas or approaches that might be reflected in a generic Framework.

College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) http://www.cno.org/for/intl_apps.htm

The website takes an applicant step-by-step through the seven requirements and for each section there may be several alternatives, each of which provides the applicant with further information or, if they have fulfilled the requirements of a particular section, they are moved on to the next one. Three of requirements focus on French or English proficiency, proof of eligibility to practice in home jurisdiction, and demonstration of ability of “practice safely.”

The application package, which candidates need to request, has two sets of forms; one set is to be completed by the applicant and returned to the College and the second set is to be sent to their official sources (nursing school, registration board and employers) for completion.

The site lists a few examinations that are accepted as equivalent. Applicants are required to prove good character. The CNO provides a glossary of terms.

The CNO also provides a comprehensive list of countries that qualify for the language fluency requirement if an English or French language nursing program was taken. To view the list, go to: http://www.cno.org/international_en/reqs/req4_lang/index.htm .

Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) and From Consideration to Integration website (FC21)

<http://www.ccpe.ca/fc2i/e/index.cfm>

The goal of FC21 is to develop new processes and/or improve current processes by which international engineering graduates (IEGs) are able to obtain an engineering licence without compromising public safety or lowering professional standards, and to find meaningful engineering employment. Doing this successfully means that the initiative is

also looking at activities that take place prior to immigration. The project is fully funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

The project is in the final stages of Phase II: the goal of this stage was to develop recommendations addressing the issues of employment, licensing, language, culture and information.

International Pharmacy Graduate (IPG) Program in Canada

Information is cited from the journal article in “Teaching in Higher Education” [11(1), p. 19-32] by Austin and Rocchi.

The International Pharmacy Graduate Program in Ontario (Canada) has developed a model that has been recognized by the provincial government as a ‘best practice’ for bridging education. **This model consists of four elements.** (Note: the authors state that there are 4 elements; however, in their report, they note that a 5th element was added during the program.) The IPG Program model consists of the following pillars:

- 1. Competency-based prior learning assessment;**
- 2. Skills-enhancement education benchmarked to University of Toronto standards;**
- 3. Mentorship; and**
- 4. Asynchronous (distance) learning opportunities.**
- 5. Peer learning:** Despite the obstacles associated with attending regularly scheduled classes during prime working times, and the relative ease and accessibility of asynchronous learning opportunities within the program, foreign-trained pharmacists expressed a strong preference for a traditional classroom setting, one in which they could meet others like themselves, form peer networks and benefit from the support of their professional friends and future colleagues. While asynchronous learning opportunities are still available and are still used to complement the existing face-to-face program, it appears as though such opportunities are only valuable and availed once peer networks are more fully established. As a result of this finding, the IPG program model has now evolved a fifth pillar: peer networking.

The IPG Program model presented has been in effect since 2000, and more than 300 IPGs have accessed some or all parts of the program. Results to date have been encouraging; of those successfully completing all program components, 96% have been successfully licensed. Of those who have accessed, but not necessarily completed, all program components, 80% have become licensed. Of those who have accessed, but not necessarily successfully completed, only some of the program, 65% have become licensed.

The authors conducted needs assessment research including “surveys of foreign-trained pharmacists and employers, focus groups and interviews. In addition, ten years of disciplinary and complaints records from OCP were reviewed, as were five years of quality assurance/peer review data.”

Several unique learning needs were identified:

- a) **Pharmacy-specific language skills training**
- b) **Clinical skills training**
- c) **Interpersonal and teamwork skills**
- d) **An epistemology of practice** (i.e. the conceptualization of the role of the pharmacist vis-à-vis patients and physicians within the healthcare system) e.g. Pharmacists educated in North America generally recognize their primary responsibility is protection of the patient to optimize health outcomes.

“Needs assessment research indicated a variety of educational needs. In designing a program to address these needs, it was necessary to account for the previous learning and experience of individuals, and to develop an objective, standardized assessment that would allow for an accurate diagnosis of each individual’s unique and specific learning needs so as to customize educational interventions (rather than prescribe a uniform set of educational requirements that would not necessarily address individual needs and result in significant redundancy). In addition, the need for a vehicle to facilitate professional enculturation and connectedness with the professional community of pharmacists was identified as a singularly important issue.”

Appendix C: Agenda and Worksheets

Agenda

CAPLA Stakeholder Meeting on the
Feasibility of Developing a National Framework/Model to Assess Immigrant Learning
Westin Bristol Place Hotel
950 Dixon Road
Toronto
8:30 – 4:00
April 13, 2007

- 8:30 Coffee
- 9:00 Welcome, introductions and overview of purpose
- 9:15 Setting the context
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Defining the purpose
- 11:15 Picturing the Framework/Model
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Using the Framework/Model
- 2:00 Linking the Framework/Model
- 3:00 Moving ahead
- 4:00 Wrap up and close

Worksheet 1: Defining the purpose

4. Why do we need a framework/model to assess immigrants' learning?
5. What are the limitations of current tools and systems?
6. Who will benefit from the development and application of the Framework?

Worksheet 2: Picturing the Framework/Model

Instructions will be provided during the session.

Worksheet 3: Using the Framework/Model

4. Who will use the framework/model?
5. *How* will they use it?
6. What will be the desired/expected outcome of using the Framework/Model and for whom?

Worksheet 4: Linking the Framework/Model

1. How will this framework/model complement or build on existing resources and/or strategies?
2. What issues or challenges may emerge in the development of the Framework/Model?
3. How can these issues or challenges be addressed? (Please use the reverse side, as necessary.)

Worksheet 5: Moving ahead

2. What recommendations do you have for the development and potential application of the Framework/Model?
2. Would you be willing to serve on a national committee to develop and/or oversee the development of the Framework/Model?

If yes, please provide your contact information:

Name:

Address:

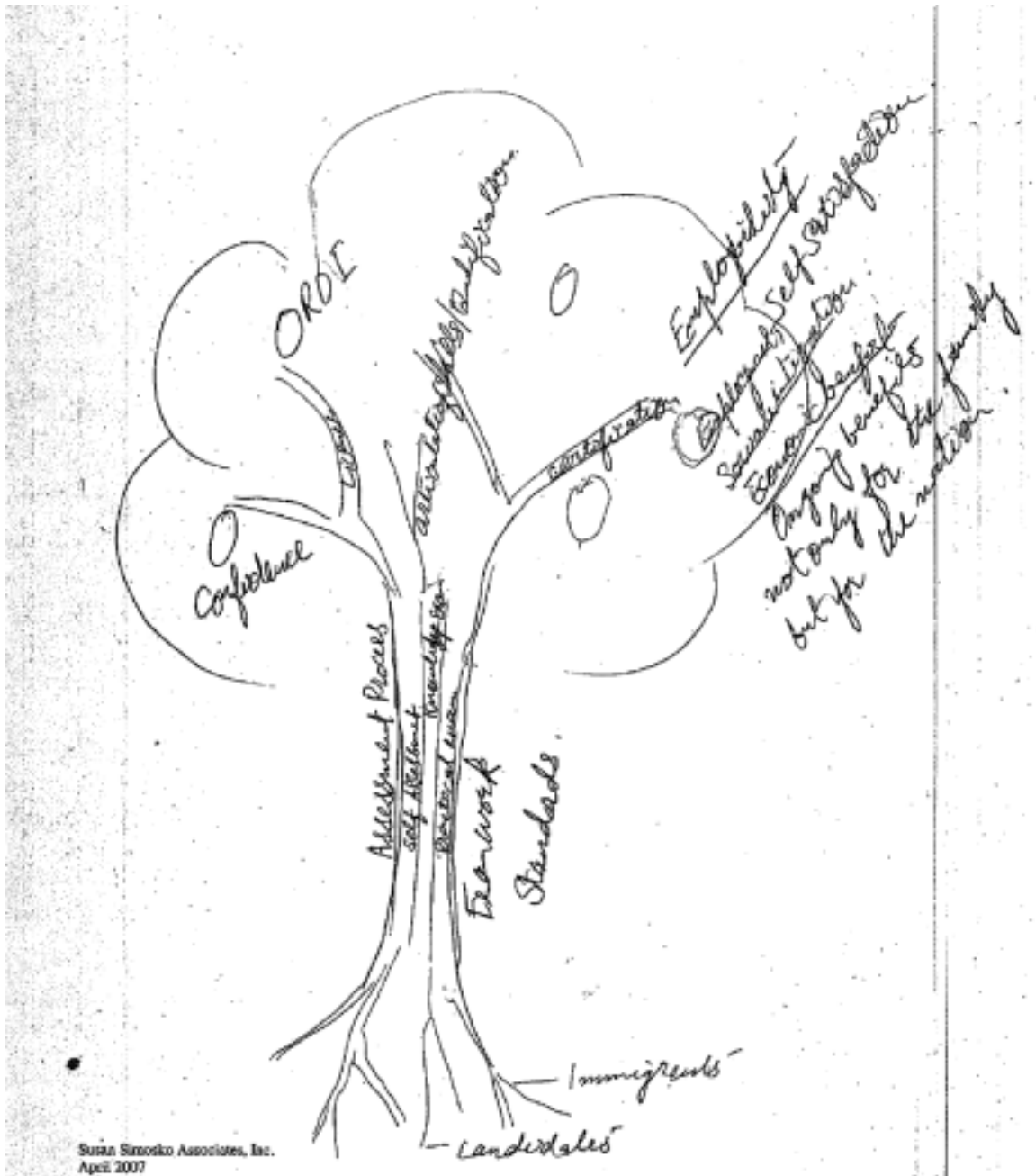
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E-mail address:

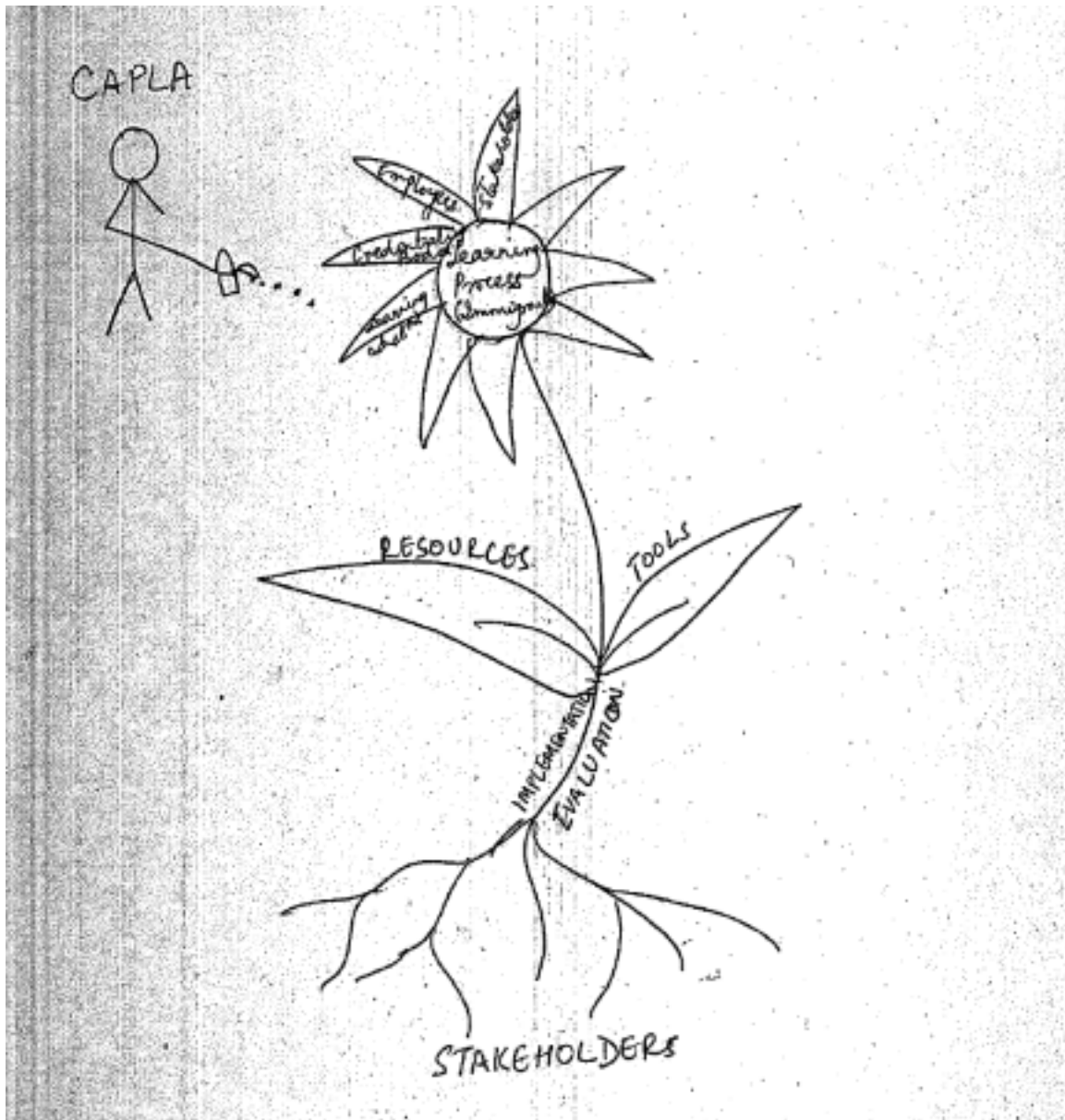
Appendix D (see attached PDF document)

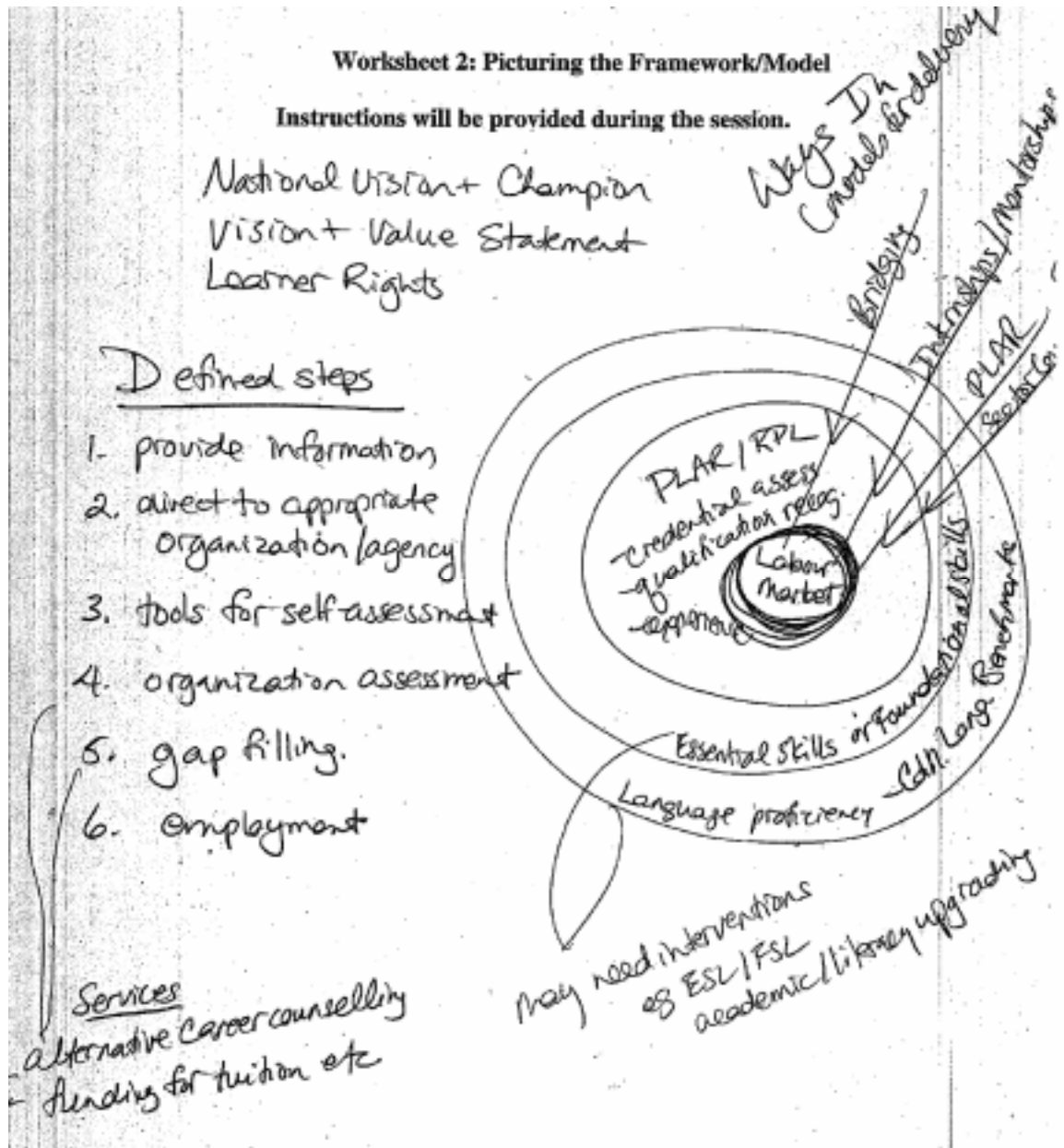
Appendix X: Picturing the Framework/Model

Group 1:

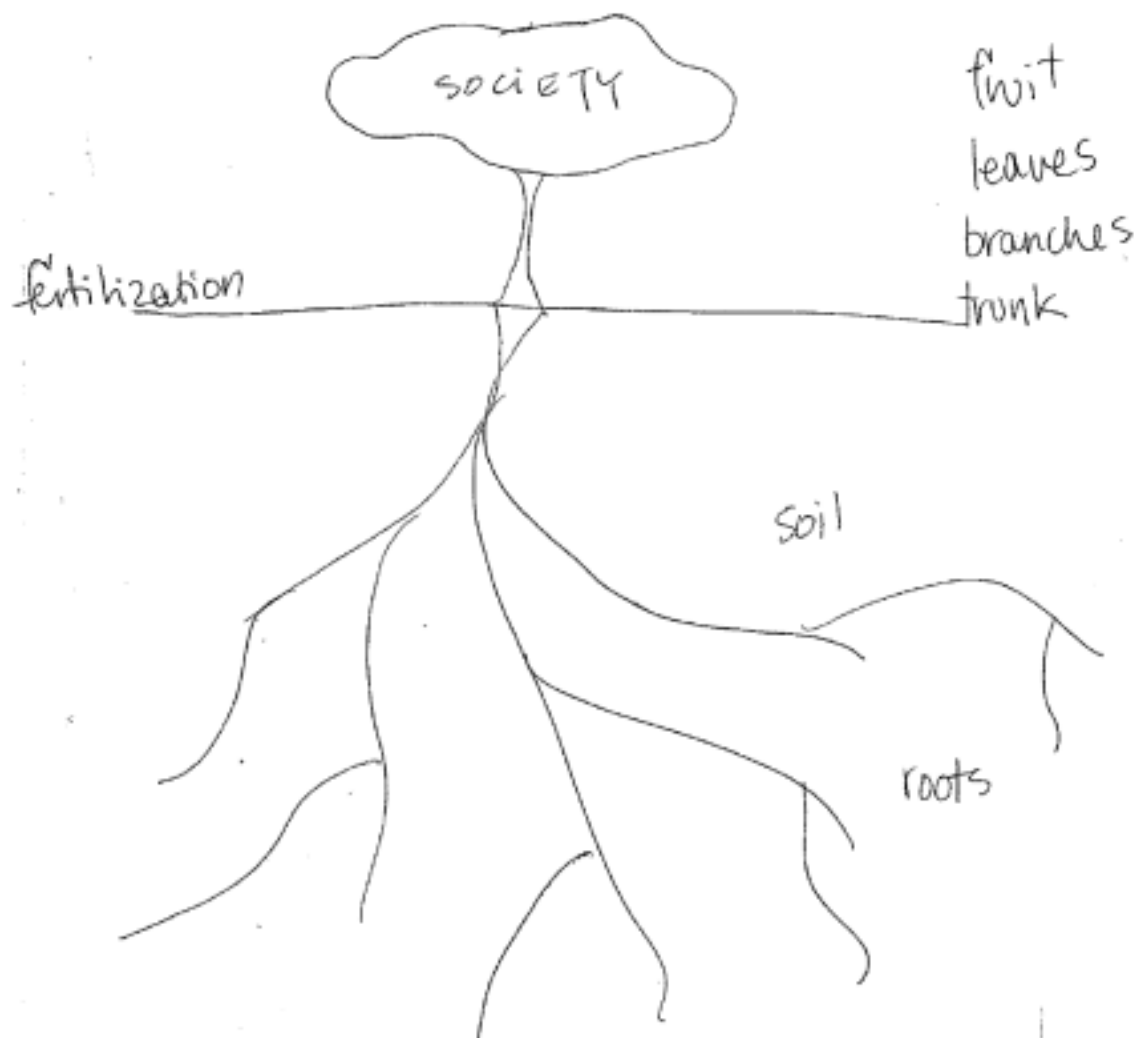


Group 2

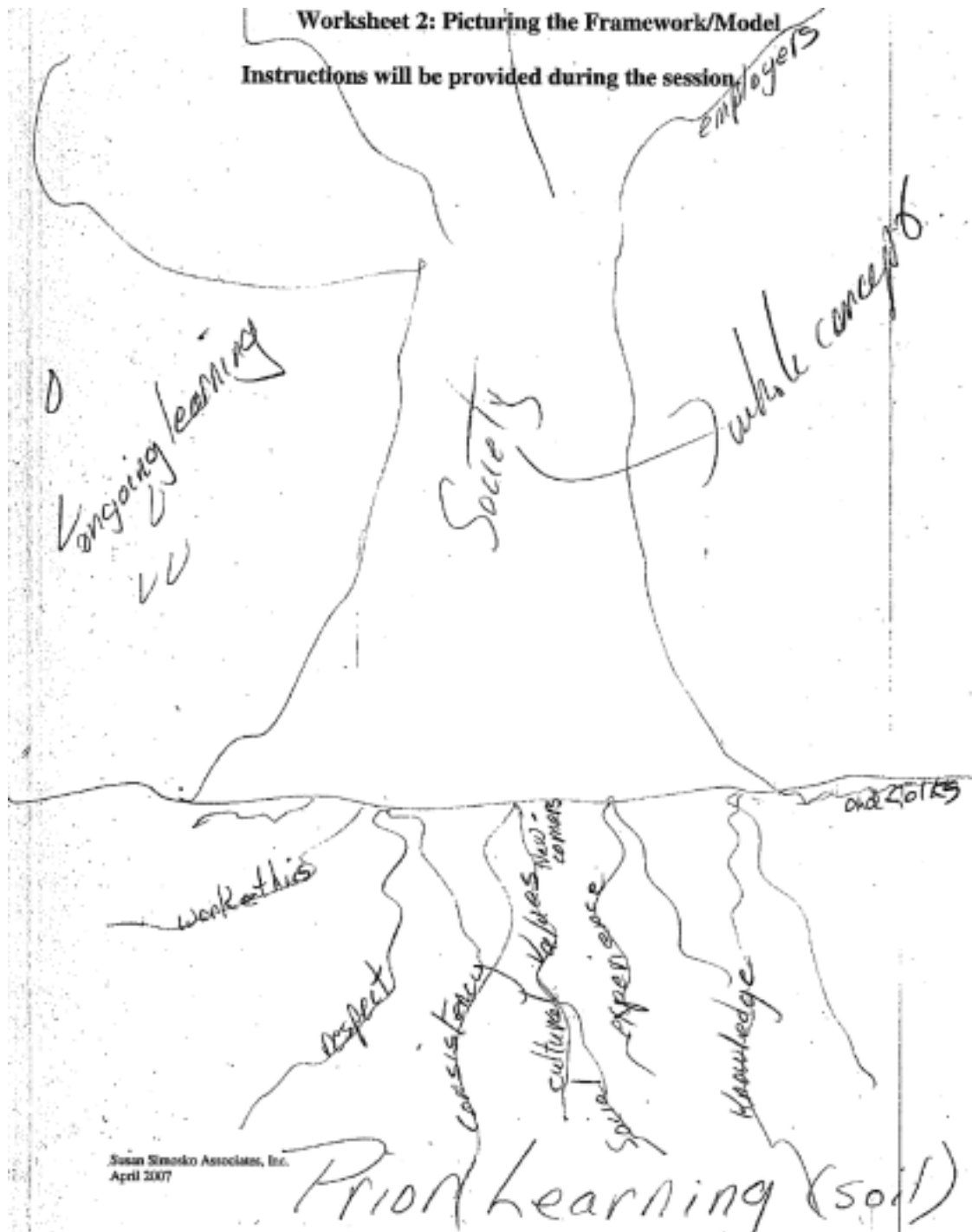




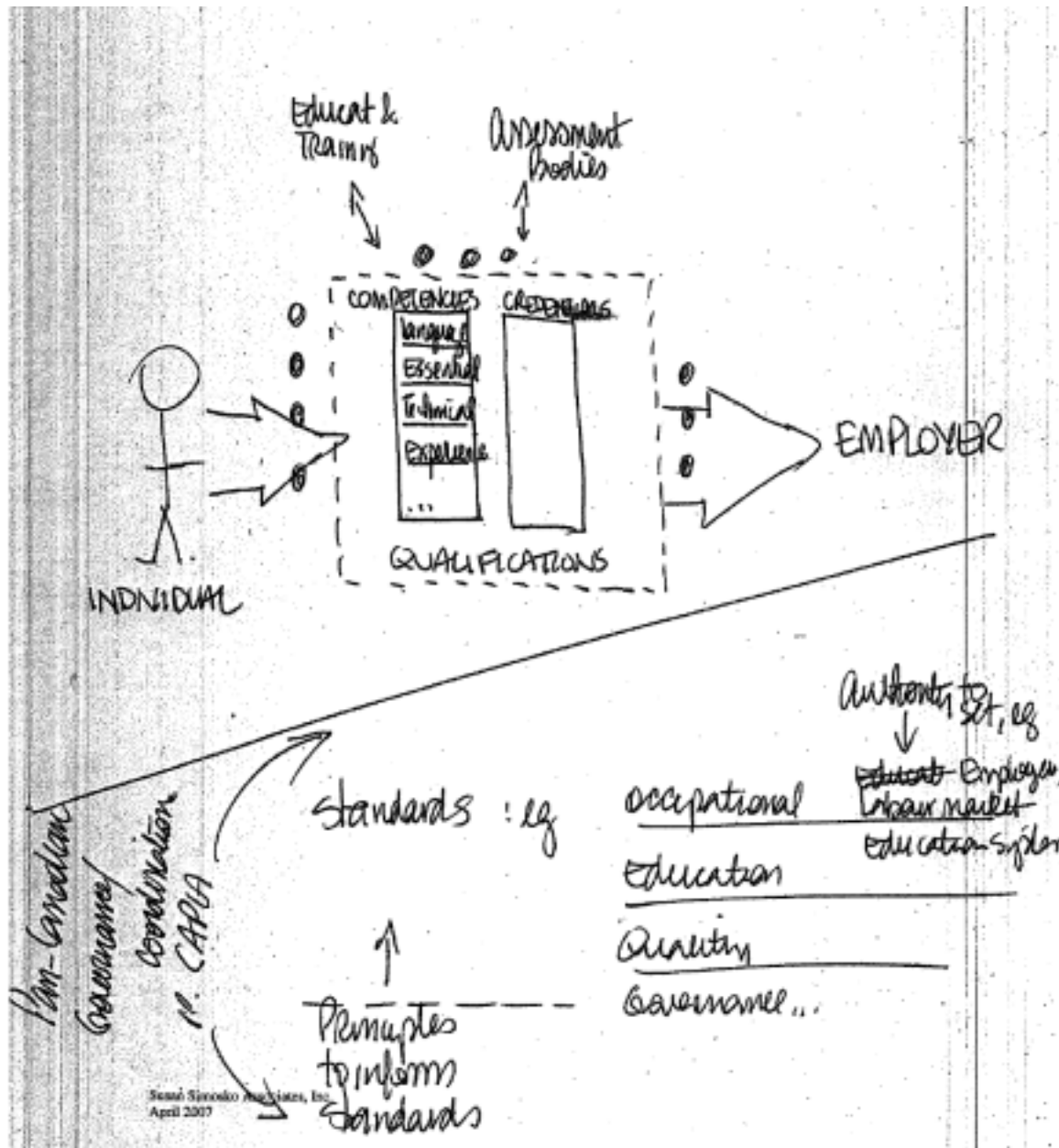
Group 4:



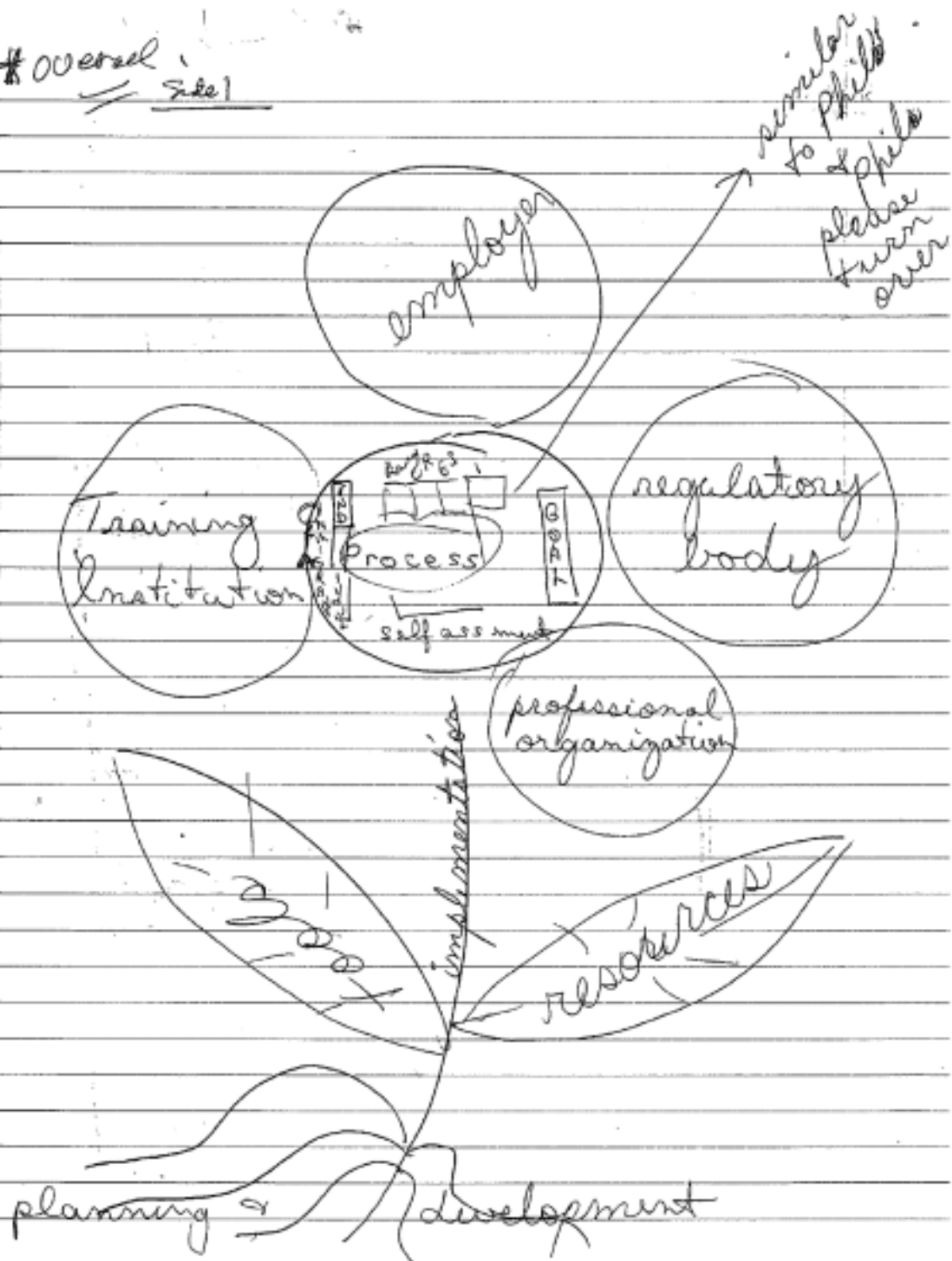
Group 5:



Group 6:



overall
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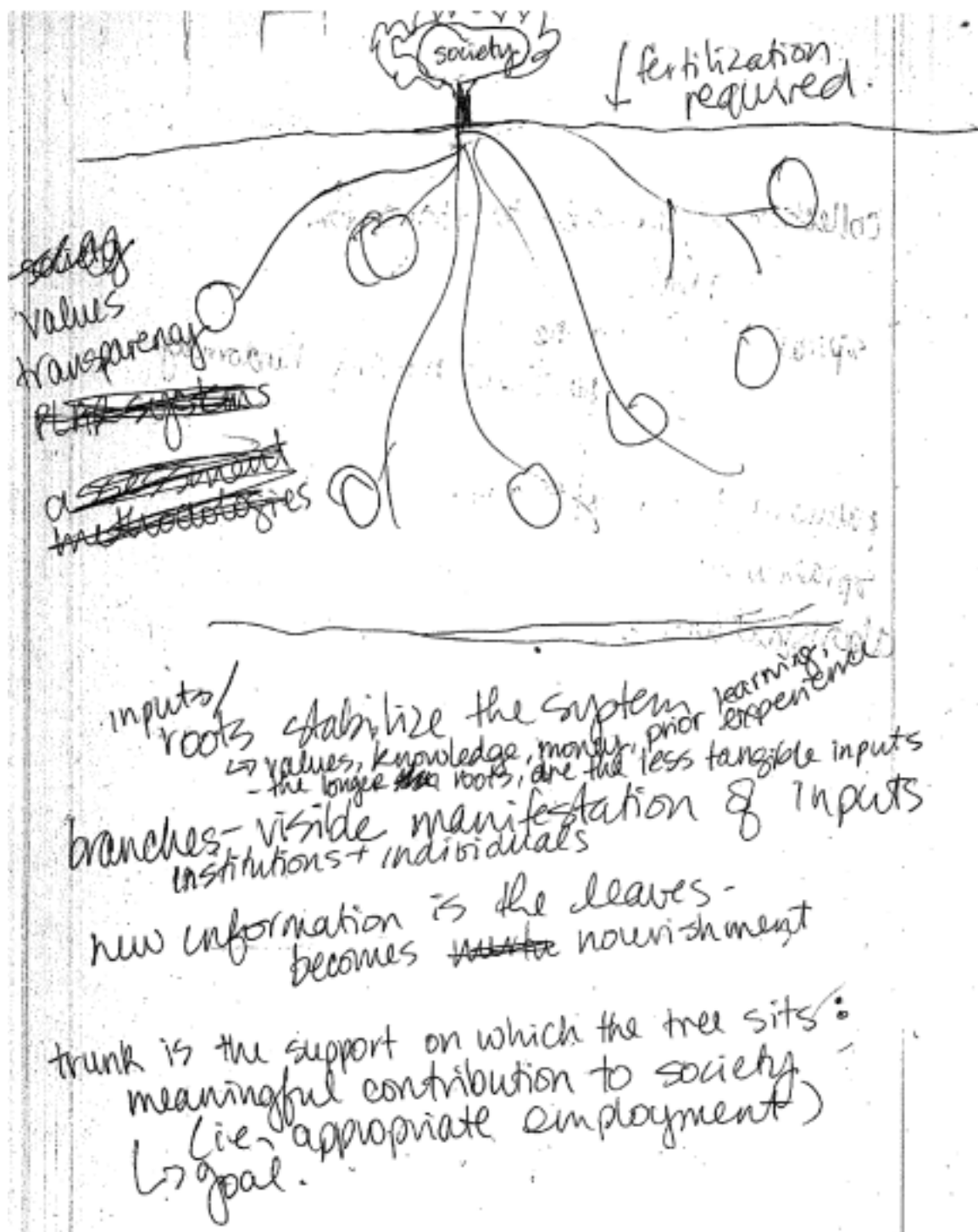
VOA 2

A hand-drawn diagram of a cell with four organelles labeled in circles: nucleus, mitochondrion, chloroplast, and vacuole.

Process

Individual ~~member~~

$\xrightarrow{C}$
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Group 7

