



Movement for Canadian Literacy

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Something to Think About

Hot off the Press!

PROJECT DIRECTOR JOYCE WHITE AND RESEARCHER SUSAN HODDINOTT have just released the final report on their national study on access to Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs and services. *Something to Think About* provides an in-depth look at the challenge of adult literacy and basic education — a picture that literacy learners and teachers will certainly recognize. The study is also a 'reality check' on social policy. The research process combined input from students and teachers with systematic documentation of literacy and ABE policies across the country.

The study was initiated in January 1996 by the Ottawa Board of Education. The first phase ended in December 1996 with the report *To Meet a Significant Need: A Discussion Document on Adult Basic Literacy in Canada*, which found that access to literacy services across the country fails to match need, and that provincial literacy policy reforms are limiting it even further. Phase II delved deeper into access issues defined by the people 'living' them, and analyzed current

social policy in relation to these experiences.

The Process

Special classes of Literacy/ABE students were set up in four sites in different provinces.

- In Site A, at an urban college, all the students were social assistance recipients referred to the college under the 'welfare to work' initiative. All but one were parents, and their program involved spending some time with their children in a specially developed parent/child program.
- Site B was an 'adult high school' operated by a large urban school board. In this province funding cuts and restructuring have drastically reduced school board literacy programs over the past two to three years. Like other classes, the class which participated in the research was under threat of closure throughout the research period. The group included both immigrant and native-born Canadians.

A second class at the same site was tailored to relatively well-functioning adults with developmental disabilities. The program is mainly focused on developing literacy skills, but includes practical life skills training as well. All of the participants were on social assistance.

- Site C was a 'community-based' school under contract with another large urban school board. In this province, most literacy provision is through

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literacy.ca

literacy.ca is an "information space" for the literacy community in Canada. Its purpose is to pre-digest the vast quantities of literacy information being generated across Canada and internationally.

Literacy workers are busy teaching, keeping their programs afloat and trouble-shooting. They don't have time to wade through long research and project reports, yet they need to keep up-to-date on what is available to them as literacy professionals. **literacy.ca** aims to keep them posted on the most important and useful resources for literacy work.

literacy.ca will appear in both newsletter and web formats. The newsletter will be published four times a year, twice between September and December and twice between February and May. The on-line version will be developed over the fall at MCL's website, www.literacy.ca. The two formats will be linked, with more extensive information and links on the website alongside an electronic copy of the newsletter.

We welcome your feedback! Please send us your suggestions and submissions for both the newsletter and the website. — Editor

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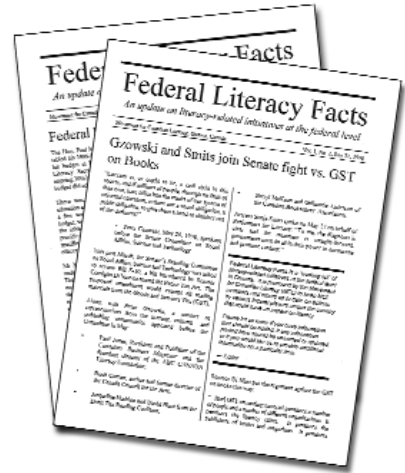
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News from MCL

MCL publications

Federal Literacy Facts is a policy newsletter that monitors the literacy-related initiatives of a wide range of federal departments and agencies. The first issue came out in April; the second in July. We expect that *Federal Literacy Facts* will play a key role in preparations for Literacy Action Day 99.



Learners in ACTION, the newsletter of the MCL's Learners Advisory Network, is our way of connecting with adult literacy learners across Canada. Two issues have been produced (February and August).

These publications can be viewed on MCL's website at www.literacy.ca



CAETO

MCL is a member of the Canadian Alliance of Education and Training Organizations (CAETO), formed this summer to facilitate joint initiatives between a diverse range of education and training providers.

Something... *continued from page 1*

school boards, often in partnership with community agencies. Most of the participants at this site were immigrants or refugees.

- Site D was at a provincial community college that serves a mainly rural population. The college is the main deliverer of ABE in this province. Unlike other students at the college, the project students did not pay tuition or student fees. All were native-born Canadians.

The heart of the 'local component' of the research was the experience of the students and teachers, incorporated into a 'student journal' and a 'teacher journal.' In each site, about 5 hours of class time each week were devoted to research activities, including writing, group discussion, and electronic conferencing with participants at other sites. Every effort was made to ensure that students understood their role and responsibilities as research participants, and to engage them fully in the project.

The students' experience

The students' struggles were heroic, but their aspirations were threatened by barriers ranging from imposed time limitations, to the threat of programs closing, to lack of access to further levels of upgrading, to financial and other worries.

"Can we continue to go to school here? There seems to be no straight answer. We do not know if we are able to be funded for our daycare and school next semester. We all hope, but there is no guarantee. ...we are all unsettled, all of us are confused and we have ... little idea of what our future ... will be."

"I am under such pressure that I sometimes feel I cannot continue ... and I wish to find the first available job, even if it's not suitable. ...I asked many times for full-time childcare so that I would be able to study in the college ... [but] I was not to receive this help. ...These problems may make me choose the shortest academic route possible and not the right one that is longer but more suitable."

"The only reason why I have changed my mind is there is no funding for me to go on so I am going to have to find a minimum wage job. I have to change my mind about employment goals because I only have my level 2. It really makes it hard because I really did have a lot of dreams."

"It makes me feel like just giving up on trying to get my education. I feel like I am no better off than when I started. ...Why even bother if [there is not] another level for you to go to after you finish a level in school?"

In most case participation was voluntary, but some had been forced to choose between going to school and looking for work, by the threat of being cut off social assistance. Most could have used better support from welfare and other agencies. One woman, with a grade 9 education, was approved only for 8 months in the ABE program. Another was diagnosed as needing bifocals to do the schoolwork, but her caseworker denied her request. A student's worker told her, "If you can go to school, you can go to work!" and not only refused her an educational supplement, but threatened to cut her off welfare completely.

As one of the teachers said, "If all of the energy that is spent on surviving were invested in their education, imagine the result in our literacy classes!"

The teachers' reality

Literacy and ABE workers often express a feeling that our field is marginalized, and this is illustrated in the section on "Adult Basic Education As Work". While this issue has traditionally been submerged in concerns for the needs of students and the survival of programs, it is another important factor in the literacy challenge.

These teachers and their working conditions are fairly typical of the profession generally. They had 5 to 8 years of experience, usually two or more university degrees, and specialized training in literacy, ABE, special needs education, etc. None had held a secure, permanent position in ABE, yet all described it as their "vocation". Some were

paid as little as \$10 an hour. Their contracts were for one term at a time, and could be terminated at 48 hours' notice. They were paid only for hours of instruction, not for preparation or assessment.

The teachers felt a pervasive sense of insecurity. In some jurisdictions, a few days' absence could get a student taken off the register and possibly jeopardize the program, and the teachers' journals recount daily struggles to ensure that their students were not prevented from attending class. They carry the burden of trying to keep their programs afloat both for the students and for themselves.

"I know I came to this profession late in life, as many upgrading teachers do, but it really makes it hard to look positively at the future when you are 45 years old and drawing unemployment. Oh well, another bond between teachers and students."

"I have 20 years schooling but no guarantee of employment for the next semester. But when I am in class, I know what my students are going through because ... I have lived it."

Perhaps the greatest wear and tear comes from the nature of the work itself. Literacy and ABE students generally have greater needs than those in other areas of education. As well as the learning or social problems they had as children and may still have, many bring a daily struggle with low self-esteem and poverty to school with them. In the absence of counseling and special

supports, teachers are obliged to try to fill the gap, often on their own time.

Literacy Policy

Seven social policy researchers tried to collect comparable information for each province and territory — around policy, funding, organizational structure, delivery, regulation and monitoring, student supports, and social policy reforms — but this turned out to be impossible. This component of the research reinforces the picture drawn by the students and teachers, of "a somewhat chaotic and distinctly unstable service characterized by wide variation in access and in conditions of provision." Nowhere in the country is there universal access to basic education, and most jurisdictions are moving even further from this ideal. Policy-makers increasingly view literacy and basic education programs mainly as a means of quickly getting people off social assistance or filling entry-level jobs. And too often, programs are not given adequate funding to produce the results expected, then judged to be a poor 'investment'.

The "last word" in the report is given to a composition by one of the student participants, written at a time when it looked as if her program would be forced to close its doors at the end of the term. (see box at right). ►

For more information about this study or for a copy of the report, contact Joyce White at jwhite@hawk.igs.net or 613-679-4198.

Literacy Community News

"What I did on my summer holidays"

Dan Haley reports on the **Literacy and Technology Conference** in Montreal

"All in all, it was a great conference and I really enjoyed it. It didn't meet some of the expectations I had, though. I have a different idea of what "literacy and technology" means than practitioners do. Practitioners think of using technology to teach reading and writing. What I

think of is using technology to get around reading and writing problems. I was hoping to learn more about high tech equipment and software for people with learning disabilities.

Aside from that, the conference was really positive for me. I met people from across Canada, the States, and England. Some of them had learning disabilities too, and it was encouraging to see them so successful in spite of it. There were university professors there who are very aware of

Something to Think About - Please Think About This

For whatever reason (be it poverty or ignorance) people were held back from going to, continuing in, or finishing school. Here are a few examples and/or reasons:

A parent dies or becomes very sick; the child has to go to work or stay home to look after or support the family. It's not their fault; it still happens.

Negative messages from mother or father or anyone — thinks work is better for the child, don't need an education, won't get far anyway. Still happens.

Get and/or got married young. Husband and/or family keeps wife/girlfriend down, out of school, stuck. Still happens.

Drugs, alcohol, bad decisions. Still happens.

Violence in the home, isolation, being denied information about people, places, things. Still happens.

My point is, sometimes there are circumstances beyond our control, and opportunities that haven't always been there, and being an adolescent and having a generational history like any or all of the above, it only makes sense that bad decisions are made.

Even today many teenagers leave home, get kicked out, or have to go to work, leaving schooling behind. And sometimes they just think they don't need to finish school to get a job only to find out that that's not true.

learning disabilities within their institutions. I found it gratifying to learn that they really care and are trying to help. Also, I take my hat off to literacy practitioners. They are working so hard so people will have an easier go of it.

I felt accepted by people at the conference — not labeled as a learner. Sometimes at literacy conferences, learners seem to be off in a kind of ghetto. I've never liked that. Learners are just like anyone else. We all have a gift — it just takes awhile to find it.

For me, the next step in "literacy and technology" is spreading the word about what technology can do for people who don't read well and may never be able to. One presenter talked about how when the tractor just came out, some people weren't open to it. We forget that wheelchairs, eyeglasses and tractors were high technology at one time. Technology helps people do things they might otherwise never be able to do.

11 years ago, I had no confidence and I wanted to die. Literacy programs taught me to read and write better, but what's more important, they

helped me build my self-esteem. Technology and hard work did the rest. I still have problems with reading and writing — probably always will. I'm wired differently, but I've learned to get around it. While I was in Montreal I met a learner who has been stuck in Level Three for 3 or 4 years. She is really smart and capable, but she is being held back because she still can't read at the right level. She's just like I was, and it breaks my heart. We're trying to make people do something they can't, and penalizing them for their disabilities. If people can become more successful in their community by using aids to get around their disabilities, why hold them back? It is like telling a disabled person "Get up and walk, you have legs like everyone else," instead of getting them a wheelchair.

I would like to see the people who organize literacy conferences bring in technology companies from the community to show practitioners and learners what technology can do for people who don't read well.

We're on the right track. Lots of good things are happening — we just need to keep it up. As Peter Calamai* said at MCL's AGM, isn't it time we turned up the heat?"

These words are from an interview with Dan Haley. Over the past 11 years, Dan has gone from literacy learner to university student, social worker and prison chaplain. Dan speaks publicly on literacy issues, and his talks have inspired learners, practitioners, and community members. Dan is Vice-President of MCL and Vice-Chair of MCL's Learners Advisory Network.

The Learners Advisory Network has done research and produced a report on voice-activated software. See MCL's website or contact the Network at MCL for a copy. The Network's e-mail address is network@literacy.ca

* You can read Peter Calamai's talk on MCL's website at www.literacy.ca under "Publications."

News from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS)

Lynne Lalonde has taken on the responsibilities of acting Executive Secretary following Jim Page's departure in June. Terri Tomchyshyn will be facilitating the activities of the national Working Groups. Marla Waltman Daschko is still responsible for managing activities relating to electronic infrastructure development.

Mapping the electronic infrastructure

The mapping process originally planned to involve NALD, AlphaCom and Alpha Ontario has evolved into a more comprehensive, province-by-province look at electronic services across the country. NLS will soon release a "map" of the electronic services and programs developed and/or used by the Canadian literacy community, first to the Working Group in September, then to the wider literacy community.

NLS also plans an Electronic Infrastructure Forum in November, to develop strategies for technology services and use that can enhance literacy in Canada. Participants will include members of the existing Working Group, the Literacy Resource Sharing Working Group, all coalitions and provincial government partners not already part of these working groups, and representatives of Human Resources Development Canada and other government departments.

Going... Going... Gone!

(Contributed by NALD staff)

Would you like to visit a visual library full of books and manuscripts, each one personally inscribed and donated by a celebrity? Would you like a chance to bid on these books in an on-line auction? You'll be able to do just that by visiting the **First Annual Virtual Celebrity Book Auction**, via the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) homepage. Partners in this unique venture are NALD, the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women

(CLOW) and Literacy Link Niagara. Funds raised will benefit adult learners across Canada through educational bursaries and literacy programs.

More than 2,000 letters requesting the donation of a favourite book were sent to celebrities from the arts, entertainment, and sports worlds, as well as authors, activists and politicians. "We asked them to think of a special book that has helped them, influenced them or inspired them — fiction, non-fiction, drama, mystery, poetry, romance, autobiography, perhaps a children's story they loved," explains Gay Douglas, Executive Director of Literacy Link Niagara, the organization managing the project.

Visitors will be able to search the library by celebrity or by classification (music, movies, etc.). With a click of a mouse, you can see the book's cover, read the personal inscription and see the accompanying photograph. The bidding portion of the site will work like a silent auction. Visitors can leave a secret bid in the guest book, and the highest registered bid on each book will be automatically posted. For security purposes, no on-line financial transactions will take place. Winning bidders will be contacted after the auction is over to make arrangements for payment.

"Each partner has contributed vital resources to the project", explains Ms Douglas. "CLOW is providing the celebrity mailing list from their 1996 celebrity book auction. NALD is contributing the technical expertise to construct and maintain the website. Our organization is coordinating the project."

It is hoped that the website will be officially launched and open for bidding early 1999 at <http://www.nald.ca/bookauction/>

For more information on the Virtual Celebrity Auction, contact:

Literacy Link Niagara, Room 202,
Niagara College, St. Catharines Campus
59 Wellandvale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2R 6V6
Tel: 905-641-2252 ext. 2222
Fax: 905-682-2298 • E-mail: literacy@mergetel.com

AlphaPlus Centre

This new organization combines the resource expertise and collections of Alpha Ontario with AlphaCom's electronic communications network to serve the literacy community in Ontario and beyond. AlphaPlus Centre plans to strengthen its capacity to provide services to French, Native and Deaf literacy communities as well as English.

On-line, AlphaPlus offers:

► the "AlphaCat" library catalogue at <http://www.alphaont.ca>

► AlphaCom discussions and more at <http://www.alphaplus.ca>

Open discussions include "Literacy Forum", "Resources", "Learners Clubhouse," "Native Literacy Resources", "Literacy and Homelessness," and many more.

Certified Literate Community

by David Sherwood

An Ontario group is taking an exciting new approach to economic development. The new Literacy and Economic Development Project (A+B=\$) wants to improve conditions in the five easternmost counties of the province by putting literacy on the public agenda. The aim is to bring the private and public sectors together to counter the well-documented economic and social impacts of low literacy levels.

The project, which is still in its early stages, has set three goals:

- 1) Conduct "social marketing" in local weekly newspapers, community radio and cable TV; and to the extent possible the daily press and commercial TV and radio. The goals are to raise awareness, remove the social stigma attached to illiteracy by using positive messages, and to encourage people who want to improve their skills to call the literacy centres.
- 2) Conduct an "outreach" campaign to local decision making bodies: government agencies, community organizations and the private sector. The communications goals are the same, but the A+B=\$ group also asks these

bodies to join the coalition and donate resources such as meeting rooms, access to their mailing lists, volunteer time, etc.

- 3) Encourage or carry out practical actions to assist existing Literacy services to reach their clients and to make linkages with other networks, for example making sure the libraries have their brochures, asking social services to distribute their information, making sure local information centres are aware of literacy programs, etc.

The project is based on a model that has been very successful in Georgia, USA. Communities can apply to be approved by the state as "Certified Literate Communities." To qualify, local projects must demonstrate that broad-based commitment from all sectors of the community, effective literacy recruitment and programming, and methods for measuring and evaluating outcomes are in place. Once approved, the "certification" becomes a promotional tool to attract business. The Georgia initiative began 10 years ago, and now has 34 local county projects. The state government does not provide direct funding, but the local projects get publicity from the high-profile personal involvement of the state Governor. The State also provides a central information / networking / support function.

Here in Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training and the National Literacy Secretariat have provided \$60,000 for the fiscal year 1998-99 to conduct a pilot project in the five counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry and Prescott-Russell. These counties are located east of Ottawa. They have a mostly rural population of 200,000 including the City of Cornwall (50,000). Although it is not a very "multicultural" area, the population is almost evenly split between English and French speakers, so the project operates bilingually with publicity messages adapted to each cultural context.

The project has already succeeded in bringing to the table over 20 representatives of industries, unions, and municipal government along with economic development, health, literacy and training organizations. So far, the response from the community has been very encouraging and MPs and MPPs are lending their moral support. Weekly newspapers have been cooperative in carrying articles about literacy with the new "economic" spin. The organizers plan to set up a website soon to share information about the project.

For more information about the Certified Literate Community Project, contact the Project Coordinator: David Sherwood at tel/fax 613-674-2042 or E-mail: sherwood@hawk.igs.net

Turning Policy-Makers into Literacy Advocates

In an article in *The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) Newsletter*, Fall 97, board member Paul Simon (Director of the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, and US Senator) shares his thoughts on "How to Talk to Policy-Makers about Literacy".

He begins by saying that the person who taught him most about the value of literacy was Gloria, an adult learner who spoke at a town hall meeting he attended. He goes on to say that he arranged for her to come to Washington DC and speak to more Senators, and that every Senator who heard her testimony voted for the National Literacy Act, which became law in 1991. He

argues that the most effective literacy advocates are adult learners whose lives have been changed, and that "if policymakers are truly to understand literacy and why they should support it, they must hear learners' stories."

Here are Paul Simon's suggestions for gaining the support of policy-makers for the literacy cause (*slightly adapted for Canadian readers*):

- "Invite policymakers to visit your literacy program. It is important for senators, MPs, MPPs, and mayors to understand the value of literacy — and to see firsthand that programs are working. If you are having an event, such as

a graduation, consider inviting local policymakers to speak. Not only will they learn more about literacy by preparing their remarks, but they will also learn from hearing what the learners and other participants have to say.

- Stay informed about social policy issues — and let your voice be heard. Keep track of how your representatives vote on literacy issues, such as adult education appropriations, and be sure to thank them in writing and, if possible, in person when they support literacy. Most people don't bother to write to their legislators; so those who do have a particularly great impact.
- Write letters-to-the-editor about literacy. I have yet to meet a legislator who doesn't read his or her local newspaper regularly. Letters to the editor are an effective way to generate awareness about literacy in your community, and to remind legislators that it is an issue that matters to the voters.
- Instead of talking about "illiteracy" as a "problem", help spread the word that "literacy" is part of the "solution" to other social issues. Literacy can have a direct impact on reducing welfare dependency, unemployment, and crime. Unfortunately, when some people hear about problems associated with "illiteracy," they mistakenly trace the problem back to "the illiterates." Portraying the issue in a more positive light by focusing on solutions avoids this sort of blame and encourages action.

- Invite policymakers — and their staff members — to get involved with your program. Consider inviting local leaders to volunteer as tutors; lead one-time workshops for your students on policy issues, the legislative process, or current events; or serve on your Board of Directors. Nothing substitutes for the impact of firsthand experience that can turn "the statistics" into real people. If more policymakers had themselves gone through literacy programs — or had family members or friends who learned to read as adults — we would see more support.
- Put policymakers on your mailing list. Even if policymakers don't read every article of your newsletter word-for-word, it will still serve as a regular and important reminder that literacy programs are hard at work in their home district. But don't be surprised when some do read every word — and when this makes a difference in how they think, talk, and vote on literacy.

In my experience, committed advocates can and do make a tremendous difference in policy. If literacy programs across the country take the steps outlined above and if more people like Gloria get out their message, we can, collectively, create a new national momentum to address our nation's literacy needs. In so doing, we will all benefit."

The NIFL Newsletter can be found on the NIFL website at <http://www.nifl.gov>

Resources by and for Learners



Good Stuff

by Jeanette Paul

"This book is meant for the adult who is a new or rusty reader. It's good stuff, not kid stuff. It is a mixture of stories that are fresh. Some of them are true. A hint of self-help is in here too. You will find poems with pizzazz. Word puzzles to play with. Letters that touch the heart."

Good Stuff began with a creative writing contest, and has stories by people from across Canada. You can order it for \$12 from: Brenda Lee, South Shore Adult Education, 880 Hudson Street, Suite E100, Greenfield Park, QC, J4V 1H1. Tel: 450-676-1843, Fax: 450-676-1350. The library catalogue number is ISBN 0-9682090-0-9.

***Funny You Should Ask:
Living with a Disability***

by Rawnie Dunn

Rawnie is a single mother who uses a wheelchair. In this collection of stories, she shares her experiences looking for a job, raising her children, travelling, and trying to have some fun. She makes a case for developing a barrier-free society where everyone can participate.

To order this publication (for \$14), contact: Council of Canadians with Disabilities, 926-294 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 0B9. Tel: 204-947-0303, Fax: 204-942-4625. The library catalogue number is ISBN 0-9680869-0-X.

***Help Yourself:
How to take advantage
of your learning styles***

This easy-to-read book can help you understand and work with your learning styles. It talks about six styles: reading, writing, listening, speaking, visualizing and manipulating. There is an inventory to help you identify your learning strengths and understand why some things are easier for you than others. Another inventory helps you identify what you need to help you learn and work at your best. Once you know what your problem area is, you can find the chapters to help yourself.

For example, the book answers questions like: "What can I do if I rearrange or reverse letters when I write them?", "What are some quick ways to correct my spelling while writing?", and "How can I get down on paper what I really want to say?"

One learner said "My preference would be speaking... what better way could I improve on it than through practising with the help of this book, which can do wonders for my self-confidence and my desire to improve."

The book can be ordered for \$18.50 plus GST and mailing from Laubach Literacy of Canada, 70 Crown Street, Suite 225, Saint John, NB, E2I 2X6. Tel: 506-634-1980, Fax: 506-634-0944.

Adapted from a review by Iris Strong in The Literacy Materials Bulletin, Spring 1998.

Websites



Dave's ESL Café On the Web <http://eslcafe.com>

This Internet site was designed for adults who are learning English, but has lots to offer to other new readers. On the menu are discussion groups, a question page, "hint of the day", and much more.



Interactive Driver's Handbook
<http://alphacom.magma.ca/wclc.html>

This site lets you preview the Driver's Handbook developed for new readers by Wellington County Literacy Council.



Animated Greeting Card Page
<http://bluemountain.com/>

This site lets you create and send a free e-mail greeting card, with pictures, poetry, music, and your own message.



How to Feel Good: Learning to Relax and Exercise
<http://www2.wgbh.org./MBCWEIS/LTC/ALRI/feelgood.html>

On this site, learners tell how they got through bad times and how they relax doing things they enjoy like exercising, crocheting, reading and fishing.

Literacy and Public Dialogue

Some of the resources mentioned in this issue, and many of the resources and links unearthed while preparing it, are geared to engaging literacy students in talking about, questioning and speaking out on the issues of the times. The following initiatives may help in that process.

The Change Agent

The Change Agent — *Adult Education for Social Justice: News, Issues and Ideas* aims to provide teaching resources that inspire and enable adult educators and learners to make civic participation and social justice concerns part of their learning and teaching. *The Change Agent* is published by the New England Resource Center, and is now available on the web. This newsletter has great articles and activities for literacy groups. For example, the most recent issue on line has clearly written short articles on — among other themes — “The Hundredth Monkey”; “Seeing All Sides of the Issue of Crime;” and “Taking Action Against Violence,” a story written by an adult literacy class about how they responded to a local incident of youth violence.

“Taking Action Against Violence” concludes: “Remember that you can make a difference. We made a difference in that family’s life. The family was happy when they saw that people were helping them and trying to support them. It can help when others see that people care, and maybe it will change them or change their life. We hope other classes will take action and make

a difference in their communities. Give it a try. You will learn a lot about taking action and working together as a team.”

To order *The Change Agent* in hard copy, contact New England Literacy Resource Center / World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA, 02210. Tel: 617-482-9485, Fax: 617-482-0517. The magazine is online at http://hub1.worlded.org/teachers/ChangeAgent/change_2.htm

National Issues Forum

National Issues Forums (NIF) is a voluntary, non-partisan network of forums and study circles rooted in the belief that citizens need to come together to deliberate about common problems in order to act on them. In National Issues Forums, people ‘work through’ an issue with the help of a trained facilitator.

Each year, NIF identifies 3 major issues of public concern and develops clearly written, non-partisan materials for each. The materials are developed at two levels: a regular edition for the general public and high school students, and an abridged parallel edition at a grade 5-6 reading level. NIF issues for 1997-98 are “At Death’s Door: What Are the Choices”, “Illegal Drugs: What Should We Do Now?”, and “Our Nation’s Kids: Is Something Wrong?” Other issues materials available include: “How Can We Be Fair: The Future of Affirmative Action”, “Kids Who Commit Crimes: What Should Be Done

About Juvenile Justice?", and "The Boundaries of Free Speech: How Free Is Too Free?"

An article by Ashley Hager in *The Change Agent*, "Seeing All Sides of the Crime Issue," illustrates the use of the NIF approach in an ABE class:

"Students review the problems underlying an issue and look at 3 or 4 public policy alternatives. ...After reading about the choices, students examine the consequences of each alternative. ...They then try to come to a consensus as to which of the three choices or what combination of the three they believe would be the best solution. At this point, it is interesting to ask students to reflect on how their initial perceptions have changed after looking at the issue more closely.

...What I find attractive about the NIF booklets is that by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of possible public policy solutions, students learn to consider different points of view, and to examine the consequences of different actions. These skills can also help students resolve conflict and make decisions in their own lives. One of my students recently came to the conclusion that, rather than 'wimping out' or 'backing down,' changing his opinion after being exposed to new information was a mature and intelligent approach to problem solving."

Teachers can order NIF information booklets in regular or abridged editions, Teacher's Guides, and videos on each of the NIF public policy issues. Parts of these materials can be used as is — for example, the policy choices in the forum just described are as relevant here as in the US. However, presumably a group might need to do some research to get "the facts" (e.g., statistics) for Canada.

For more information about moderating forums, issue books, and other resources, write to Ed Arnone, National Issues Forums Research, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777 or call him at 1-800-433-7834. To order copies of the issue books (\$3.60 US each), call Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co. at 1-800-228-0810. NIF's website is at <http://www.nifi.org>

The Society We Want

The Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) is a non-profit research organization whose mission is to "create knowledge and lead public debate on social and economic issues vital to all Canadians [in order] to help build a more just, prosperous and caring society."

CPRN has developed a nation-wide public dialogue process, similar to that of the American National Issues Forums, called "The Society We Want." Partners in this project have included Community Foundations of Canada, Democracy Education Canada, Family Service Canada, Frontier College, National Association of Friendship Centres, United Way of Canada, and YWCA of Canada, and others.

A tool kit was designed to help groups examine any of five key issues — Our Children, Work, Health, The Role of Government, and The Social Safety Net. Each year, CPRN will produce one new issue guide dealing with an issue of central importance to all Canadians.

To date, the process has engaged more than 3,000 participants from across Canada in 187 dialogue groups. CPRN's August 1998 newsletter summarizes the discussion reports:

"...some views are shared by participants. Compassion and social responsibility are fundamental common values. The disadvantaged are not blamed or held responsible for their situation. There is widespread concern about poverty, unemployment and the social safety net. Canadians believe in the value of social programs and in universal access to health care and social services. They endorse the view that government should play a strong role in providing services and leadership. There is concern for fiscal responsibility, and sometimes a tension with social responsibility; but, for most groups fiscal responsibility means refining government programs, not ending them."

A detailed report is available on the website. CPRN has been able to bring the findings to the House of Commons and to officials involved in the National Children's Agenda, as well as

sharing them through CPRN communications across Canada.

The materials seem a little too difficult to be used as is in most literacy programs. In fact, CPRN plans to revise the materials and reach out to organizations working with “diverse and hard-to-reach citizens.” Stay tuned!

For more information, contact The Society We Want, Family Network, CPRN Inc., 2 Carlton St., Suite 1009, Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3. Tel: 416-343-1110, Fax: 416-260-1505, Website: <http://www.cprn.com>



Resources for Literacy Work

The Literacy Materials Bulletin

This great resource profiles literacy materials, providing a review by a learner or teacher, a sample page, and ordering information for each. The *Bulletin* is distributed free to literacy programs in British Columbia, or for an annual fee of \$15 to subscribers outside the province. To subscribe, contact Literacy BC, Suite 622, 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1L8. Tel: 604-684-0624, Fax: 604-684-8520, E-mail: literacy_bc@douglas.bc.ca

Materials from Employment Projects for Women

Both of the following handbooks are available from Employment Projects for Women Inc., 990 – 167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MN, R3B 0V3. Tel: 204-949-5300, Fax: 204-944-9918. EPW has a website, www.nald.ca/index~1.htm

Job Seeker's Handbook: A Guide for Literacy and ESL Learners

This learner-centred handbook was designed to help basic level literacy and ESL learners in Winnipeg “begin an independent job search with drive, direction, and dignity.” The book was pilot-tested by a group of basic-level learners in a job preparation program. Their suggestions on content, usefulness, format, language, and interest level of activities were taken into consideration in the final draft.

The handbook’s seven units cover identifying skills, interests and job goals; staying positive during the job search; filling out job applications; the résumé and covering letter; accessing the visible and hidden job markets; and developing interviewing skills. Each unit has a checklist to help learners assess their knowledge before and after working through the unit, an activity record to help them keep track of their progress, and a vocabulary list with definitions of key words in the unit.

The Job Seeker's Handbook: A Supporting Guide for Literacy Practitioners

This handbook provides additional instructor’s notes and classroom suggestions to go with the learner’s guide. It is written in the same order and cross-referenced with the appropriate units.

Many examples used (and resources listed) in the handbooks are Manitoba-based — readers from elsewhere could research their own local information.

**Linking Literacy
Practitioners with
Technology**

The Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition (NSPLC), in partnership with the Department of Education and Culture, developed a project to provide literacy practitioners with information about computer technology and hands-on experience with e-mail, the Internet, and literacy-related websites.

Workshops were held in 10 regions of the province, and over 100 people participated. Workshop 1 introduced literacy workers to computer-based terminology, the Internet, and websites useful for enhancing their work in literacy and ABE. Workshop 2 introduced them to using e-mail. Materials created for the workshops included booklets on Internet basics, literacy bookmarks, special needs websites, and e-mail basics. Participants found the workshops and materials easy enough to follow that they would consider using them for their students.

In the next phase of the project NSPLC will adapt the course and materials for learners and pilot these in 5 locations.

Copies of the project report (12 pages) and the materials developed are available free of cost from Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition, PO Box 1516, Truro, NS, B2V 5V2. Tel: 902-897-2444, Fax: 902-897-4020, E-mail: nsplc@fox.nstn.ca, Website: www.nald.ca/nsplc.html

**Play-Making:
A Step-by-Step Guide
for Beginners**

This booklet tells step-by-step how a drama therapist helped three learners from Project Literacy Victoria write, rehearse and perform the play "Just Plain Nuts - No Offense". It gives the full script of the play, and explains common theatre terms and the process of "playbuilding."

One of the learners explains why she was willing to turn her own life story into a play: "I was always afraid at school, afraid of violent teachers and violent kids. I always felt confused. Just as I started to catch on to one idea the class moved on, and I was lost again. I quit after grade seven. I want to do this play to show other learners that if I can do it so can they. They are stronger and more capable than they realize. I'm a good example of that."

For more information, contact Project Literacy Victoria, 930-A Yates Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 4Z3, Tel: 250-381-3755, Fax: 250-381-4911.

**Health Materials from
Women's Network PEI**

To order any of the next five health materials, contact: Women's Network PEI, P.O. Box 233, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 4K7. Tel: 902-368-5040, Fax: 902-368-5039, E-mail: wnpei@isn.net

**Partnerships for Health:
First Aid Kit**

This easy-to-use handbook is for groups that want to work toward health partnerships with clients and other agencies. It talks about leadership and support structures for creating partnerships that work. Cost: \$22.95.

Stories about Partnerships for Health

This collection of 11 real-life experiences of partnerships analyses each story in terms of what worked, what didn't work and what could have improved the situation. You can use these stories in groups as learning examples in connection with the First Aid Kit. Cost: \$19.95.

Helping Each Other

This workbook offers several examples of partnerships and includes worksheets for group and individual work. It is described as "ideal for self-help groups and adult learners." Cost: \$13.95.

Is It Hot in Here? Handbook about Menopause for Women and Their Families

A handbook of accurate and easy to understand information about menopause. Cost: \$11.95.

Curriculum Guidebook for Plain Language Health Resources

This easy to use guidebook for adult educators and leaders of self-help groups provides instructions and ideas for integrating the Women's Network's plain language health resources into your programs and services. Cost: \$19.95.

Literacy Workbook Series

Over the past several years the John Howard Society of Manitoba has developed fourteen Literacy Workbooks tackling everyday issues identified by staff members and provincial inmates. Titles include: *Hurting People: A Victim Awareness Manual; Addictions & Employment; Understanding Anger: An Anger Management Manual; Health & the Environment; and Relationships & Personal Development.*

The workbooks are especially suited for low-level readers, but the information they contain can benefit anyone. The readings and exercises are designed to build both literacy skills and understanding. The cost is \$10 /copy plus shipping and handling. To order, contact The John Howard Society of Manitoba, Inc., 583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7, Tel: 204-775-1514, Fax: 204-775-1670, E-mail: greddoch@cc.umanitoba.ca, Website: <http://www.nald.ca/jhsman/main.htm>

Multilingual Health Education Materials

A Minnesota partnership of health organizations is developing a series of Multilingual Health Education booklets. So far, "Safety for Babies and Children" and "Feeding Babies" are available with translations in Russian, Spanish and Nuer (an African language). Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, Arabic, Bosnian (Serbo-Croatian), and Somali translations are on the way. The County Public Health nurses have had great success in using these booklets to educate newcomers to the community.

These first two booklets are available on their website. The next booklets available on line will be "Accessing Health Care," and

**Multilingual Health
Education Materials**

(continued)

"Taking Oral Medication." To see the booklets for yourself, visit the Anoka County Health and Environmental Services website at:
<http://www.pro-ns.net/~larue>

*From the National Institute For Literacy Health Literacy Discussion,
May 3, 1998*

Family Literacy Video

The video of Dr. Fraser Mustard's presentation at the June 1998 Family Literacy Symposium is available for \$20 (includes postage and handling) from Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 206-220 3rd Ave. S., Saskatoon, SK, S7K 1M1. Tel: 306-653-7368, Fax: 306-653-1704, E-mail: sklit@sk.sympatico.ca, Website:

www.nald.ca/sklitnet.htm

**Transition: For Families,
About Families**

*Journal of Vanier Institute
of the Family*

The theme of the March 1998 issue of Transition is "Literacy: The Family's Role in a Learning Culture." It includes articles on quality of schools; approaches to family literacy; IALS; enhancing school readiness; storytelling as a "pillar of literacy;" math readiness; writing by learners; tips for nurturing your family's literacy; a short bibliography; and more.

The cost of membership in VIF ranges from free (for those who can't afford to pay) to \$65 for a voting organizational membership. Contact Vanier Institute of the Family, 94 Centrepointe Drive, Nepean, ON, K2G 6B1. Tel: 613-228-8500, Fax: 613-228-8007, E-mail: vif@compuserve.com

**Family Literacy Directory
and Case Studies**

These two new resources have been produced with NLS support, to help improve communication about family literacy practice in Canada.

**Family Connections: 1998
Directory of Family Literacy
Projects Across Canada**

This publication contains project summaries listed by province, with contact information to facilitate practitioner networking. National Organizations that have developed family literacy initiatives are listed separately. Also included is an index of materials, workshop information, and other resources.

**Family Literacy in Canada:
Profiles of Effective Practice**

This work is a set of case studies of twelve family literacy programs, includes sample materials and an overview of perspectives on family literacy research and practice.

All organizations listed in the Directory will receive a copy of both documents. Remaining copies are available from Brock University Booksore, 500 Glenridge Ave., St. Catharines, ON, L2S 3A1. Tel: 905-688-5550 X4402. In the case of Family Literacy in Canada, specify English and French. The two documents will also be available through the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) website. For more information, contact Adele Thomas at 905-688-5550 X3937.

Adventures in Assessment Volume 10

*Learner-centered approaches to
assessment & evaluation in adult
literacy*

The editor says in the introduction to this field-based journal for literacy practitioners, "Although I hear about a lot of great ideas, tools and questions, it is hard to convince people that they have a lot to offer and can write about a process, an idea, or a question without having the ultimate answer. For those who do not know already, there is *not* a clear bright light at the end of the assessment tunnel that will resolve all the many dimensions of assessment... What each teacher / practitioner can offer is their take on assessment and the ways in which they come to terms with the many challenges assessment poses... *Adventures in Assessment* seems more relevant now as we enter a time of content standards and outcomes from our field, as well as other fields that define what our students should know and be able to do."

Topics covered in Volume 10 include:

- authentic assessment and cooperative learning
- a peer evaluation tool for interviewing that focuses on less-tangible skill areas
- adjusting a standard tool based on knowledge of learning disabilities and multiple intelligences
- "What we had to think about before we could do portfolio assessment"
- "Students Connecting with Students: Lessons in Health Care"
- tools for placement, progress and program evaluation in a computer class, and involving students in developing and understanding the evaluation process.

Earlier *Adventures in Assessment* volumes addressed startup and intake activities, tools for ongoing assessment and for ending a cycle, tools for alternative assessment, participatory assessment, educational reform, involving learners in assessment, and evaluation website in various types of programs. The table of contents for each volume can be viewed on the SABES (System for Adult Basic Education) website, along with two full-text articles from Volume 10.

Adventures in Assessment is available for "a nominal fee" from World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA, 02210-1211. Tel: 617-482-9485. Web address for World Education: <http://hub1.worlded.org> Web address for SABES: <http://www.sabes.org> Both sites are worth checking out (more information below).

Literacy and Human Rights Resources

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has several resources that may be useful in literacy programs, or to individual learners.

- The booklet *Human Rights and the Canadian Human Rights Commission: Equality... We All Have A Hand In It* "tells in simple language how human rights are protected in Canada." Chapters include "The Human Rights Act" (The Right to be Different, Who is Protected by the Act?, Grounds for Action); "Discrimination" (What is Discrimination?, Dealing with Discrimination); "The Work of the Commission" (Restoring Your Rights, An Ounce of Prevention); "How the Commission Operates"; "What Happens to Your Complaint" (Protection from Retaliation; "You Have a Case" (Real Examples of How Rights Were Restored); and "Want More Information?". The last chapter lists a number of publications, such as *Canadian Human Rights Act: A Guide* ("a simple guide..."); *Filing a Complaint, Know Your Rights* ("an illustrated guide ... in easy-to-understand language"), *Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination Chart*, and *Harassment: What is it and what to do about it*; and posters and bookmarks on the themes of equality, people with disabilities, pay equity, women's rights, and racial discrimination.
- The Commission's website at www.chra.ca features an interactive game called "Erasing the Hydra of Hate." This game grew out of a poster called "Stop the Hatred," which was developed in cooperation with educators, students and community anti-racism groups in Manitoba.

Both the game and the poster are designed to help young Canadians "understand how the seeds of hatred and racism are sown, and learn what each person can do to stop them from growing."

The Canadian Human Rights Commission national office phone number is 613-995-1151, E-mail: info@chrc.ca. There are also regional offices in Halifax (1-800-565-1752), Montreal (514-283-5084), Toronto (416-973-5527), Winnipeg (204-983-2189), Edmonton (403-495-4040) and Vancouver (604-666-2251).

Speaking of Human Rights, Canadian Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Falardeau-Ramsay notes in her 1997 annual report that "The impact of fiscal restraint on health, social and educational services — particularly those affecting the most disadvantaged — is beginning to bring home to many Canadians the inescapable link between social and economic security and human rights." Libby Davies, Member of Parliament for Vancouver-East and New Democratic Party Critic for Social Policy, Post-Secondary Education, Children and Youth, has introduced a motion in the House of Commons that would amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include social condition as a prohibited ground of discrimination. For more information, contact Ms Davies's office at 613-992-6030, Fax: 613-995-7412, E-mail: daviel@parl.gc.ca, or write (postage free) to her at Room 483, West Block, House of Commons, Ottawa ON, K1A 0A6.

Web Adventures

One of the goals of the overall *literacy.ca* project is to comb the web for useful information and tools to share with the literacy community. We want to find, index, and digest useful material that most literacy workers don't have time to track down and read. Well, we may not have time

either! There is an unbelievable quantity of information on the 'information highway'. We've stumbled on dozens of amazing resources and will tell you about them in this newsletter and on our website over the next year. For now, here are just a few:

National Institute for Literacy

The (American) National Institute for Literacy website is a great place for literacy workers to surf. It's at <http://www.nifl.gov>. Check out some of the following:

Their current "Top Ten" Literacy Sites include "Teaching and Learning with Internet-Based Resources (lesson plans for integrating Internet use into adult education classrooms); "Giving Birth to Ourselves: Teaching Literacy Through Creative Writing" (a manual that includes class formats, tips, exercises and evaluation methods); "Meaningful Math Activities that Help," and more. Last year's top ten are archived.

Also featured on the NIFL site are Literacy Fact Sheets on Correctional Education, Family Literacy, Libraries and Literacy, Literacy and Health, Literacy and Learning Disabilities, Literacy and Welfare, Workplace Literacy, and more.

NIFL has electronic forums and listservs on Family Literacy, Workplace Literacy, Learning Disabilities, Health Literacy, Homelessness, Technology Literacy, Numeracy and more.

NIFL sponsors a Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) which will lead you to an unbelievable wealth of resources. There are four regional LINCS websites. Here's one:

Eastern LINCS

This awesome website has, among other things, links to resources for Teachers, Learners and Programs.

"Learner Resources" has links to Key Pals, Student Projects, and Student Projects to Join. The student projects look like they could be fun. For example, the information on *Archie Willard's Learning Disability Home Page* was personally gathered by Archie, who learned to read at age 54. Home Remedies features student research and on-line presentation of remedies from around the world. Other student projects include *How to Feel Good: Learning to Relax and Exercise* (listed in the

Resources for Learners, above), *HIV/AIDS: a Collection of Stories and Skits*, and *Housing and How to Deal with Landlords*.

"Teacher Resources" leads to websites and curriculum materials addressing job-hunting skills, civic participation and literacy, online resources for teaching about computers and the Internet, health and literacy sites (including lesson plans and student projects), and more. "Lesson Plans" links include "World Wide Web Institute Lesson Plan Gallery", created by literacy practitioners at a two-day technology institute); "Introducing the Internet and the World Wide Web to Basic ABE Students ("designed for basic students who will need a lot of support and guidance throughout the into to the Internet so that they will not get frustrated by materials that they cannot read"); Real Life Situations Using Basic Math Skills; and Pick Your Candidate ("a many faceted lesson plan that helps students to understand campaign advertising and candidates so they can make educated decisions at the polls").

The "Program Resources" page has resources about grants and proposal writing, technology resources and planning, and web publishing resources.

Eastern LINCS is at <http://hub1.worlded.org>

SABES

The SABES (System for Adult Basic Education Support) website is intended to "provide adult literacy practitioners with genuinely useful information (aka, content)." Click on "What's New" for the latest. Under the "Resources" link, scroll down to SABES Newsletter, Journal & Hotline, which will take you to "The Best of Bright Ideas," and the Adventures in Assessment series described above. Full-text articles on line from The Best of Bright Ideas include "How Participatory Learning Empowers Students" and "Inviting the Community into Your ABE Program." SABES is at <http://www.sabes.org>

Adult Literacy Resource Institute

This rich site is at

<http://www2.wgbh.org/MBCWEIS/LTC/ALRI>

Click on "A.L.R.I. Publications". Scroll down to "Literacy 'Webliography'" for reviews of websites for ABE and ESL by Boston-area adult education teachers, and "Web-based Lesson Plans" for lesson plans built on ABE/ESL sites. The following review was adapted from the 'Webliography'.

Inquiry Maps

"This site explains what an inquiry map is and how it functions. It is based completely on participatory learning.

First, the group chooses a topic. The participants generate questions which are both real and important. Then they identify and choose the methods of inquiry they will use in the project.

Methods might include interviewing in person and by telephone; documenting personal experience; conducting surveys; observing and recording information in a systematic manner; experimentation; library research, including the use of reference books; doing research with databases on the Web; and posting questions to Net user groups or listservs. After planning and carrying out their research, participants present their findings in writing, a chart, graph, photos, or other media. Other participants read and critique their findings. The process can be repeated based on emerging questions.

This site can be quite helpful to educators who want to use participatory learning in their classes. The explanations are clear and explicit. It seems to be the type of project which needs very little teacher motivation, since it requires so much student involvement. The students should love it." — Joyce A. Barney, Boston, MA.

Research

Adult Learners in Canada

This new four-page fact sheet from the Office of Learning Technologies provides "a quick statistical profile" of Canadian adults who are registered part-time in a structured education or training activity, or full-time in employer-sponsored training. Here are a few highlights:

- More than a quarter of Canadian adults (28%) are participating in learning activities in schools, at work, in their homes and communities; and the number is growing every year.
- People between 25 and 44 years of age are more likely to participate (37% do).
- People with at least some college or university are more likely to participate (67%) than people who have not graduated from high school (12%).
- 66% of adult learners work full time, 12% work part time, and 21% are unemployed.

- 59% of Canadians making \$60K or more participate in learning activities, compared with 21% of those with incomes of less than \$15K.
- The proportion of adult learners is even higher in some industrialized countries — for example Finland (41%), France (40%), Australia (38%), and the US (33%).

The fact sheet is based on information from *Adult Education and Training in Canada: Report on the 1994 Adult Education and Training Survey*. The full report (Cat. No. SC-124-3-97E) is available from Public Enquiries Centre, Communications Branch, Human Resources Development Canada, Hull, Québec, K1A 0J9. Fax: 819-953-7260.

This fact sheet is the first of a series called *Canada's Adult Learners and Learning Technologies Series*. Paper copies are available from HRDC at the address above; electronic versions are on the web (address below). Information from OLT is also available in multiple formats: audio cassette, braille, computer diskette and large print. Call 1-800-788-8282 (same number for TTY).

For more information contact the Office Of Learning Technologies, Human Resources Development Canada, 15 Eddy Street, Hull, QC, K1A 0M5. Faxback (toll-free): 1-888-724-7344, Fax: 819-997-6777, Hearing impaired: use 711 service to call 819-953-0300, E-mail: olthrdc@ibm.net, Website: <http://olt-bta.hrhc.gc.ca>

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth

In 1994, the NLSCY began to follow almost 23,000 Canadian children — from birth to 11 years old at the time — into adulthood, collecting data at two-year intervals. In the planning stages of the project, MCL and the Canadian Teachers' Federation succeeded in having a literacy dimension built in to the survey.

The survey aims to develop an integrated picture of all major aspects of well-being including health, family, community, education and work. The research is being done by Statistics Canada, in partnership originally with Health and Welfare and now with HRDC's Applied Research Branch.

Findings have been used by various national organizations in their work. For example, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) analyzed some of the data to produce *The Progress of Canada's Children 1996 and 1997*. The National Children's Agenda now being developed jointly by the federal, provincial and territorial governments is using NLSCY in work on school readiness.

A national conference planned for October 1998 in Ottawa will share NLSCY "Cycle 1" findings on vulnerable children, family, community and school.

While the content of the first 3 cycles was fairly consistent, new content areas may be added to Cycle 4. The measurement of areas such as child care, learning readiness, fathering, and community will be reconsidered, along with allowing for life changes as the oldest cohort reaches the age of 16-17.

Volume 1 of the findings, *Growing Up In Canada*, is available for \$25 from Statistics Canada, or can be found in libraries.

Research based on IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey)

The National Literacy Secretariat (Human Resources Development Canada) and Statistics Canada have planned a number of specialized monographs, based on the IALS data and geared toward researchers, policy-makers and program developers. Each monograph will have a summary "Highlights" document intended for the wider literacy community and the public. The most recent monographs are *The Value of Words and Literacy Utilization in Canadian Workplaces*.

The Value of Words: Literacy and Economic Security in Canada (1998)

This monograph was written by Vivian Shalla and Grant Schellenberg of the Centre for International Statistics, Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) in Ottawa.

Using Canadian IALS data, the study examines the relationship between literacy and economic security or well-being; the link between economic security and literacy practices; and the connection between economic security and the transfer of literacy skills from parent to child.

The findings of this study will come as no surprise to literacy workers and learners. People with weaker literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed and poor. Poor people receive less training and education and have fewer opportunities to develop their literacy skills. Low-income families engage less in "literacy-enhancing activities" than do better-off families. One twist is the finding that literacy skills have less economic benefit for women (women with strong literacy skills sometimes fare no better than men with weaker skills), and men tend to have more work-related training opportunities.

The report points out that in spite of all the talk about lifelong learning, disadvantaged people have trouble getting access to job-related education and training programs that would lead

to decent positions in the labour market. Also, there is a shortage of "good jobs" that allow people to use and develop their literacy skills.

"It is clear that policy development around literacy concerns must occur within a broader social and economic context. The problem of poor literacy skills is not simply an issue of education, nor is it only a private, individual matter. It is also an indicator of deeper social and economic inequalities that characterize contemporary society. Because the improvement of literacy skills alone will not solve systemic inequalities, policies designed to address literacy concerns will have limited effect unless they also include a serious attack on economic insecurity and other inequities."

Literacy Utilization in Canadian Workplaces

This latest IALS monograph, written by Harvey Krahn and Graham Lowe of the University of Alberta, examines the "fit" (or mis-fit) between job requirements and the skills of Canadian workers. It also examines the "use it or lose it" theory about literacy skills. It introduces the idea of a "literacy surplus."

"The report finds a reasonable fit between workers' skills and their job requirements for

about three quarters of the Canadian labour force. Yet the Canadian labour force also contains several million workers who appear to be employed in jobs that do not take full advantage of their literacy skills. Previous policy discussions of the literacy gap or the job-skills gap have focussed mainly on the opposite problem, that of workers with literacy deficits. This report takes a broader human resource development approach. The authors find that significant numbers of Canadian workers are seldom required to use their literacy skills in their jobs is evidence of underuse of Canada's human resources. Of even greater concern is the potential loss of some of these skills.... The authors believe that the costs of ignoring a situation of literacy surplus is severe, for workers, their employers and the larger economy."

Source: *IALS (International Adult Literacy Survey) Newsletter* from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS). For more information about this newsletter, the monographs, or IALS, contact the IALS Team, Tel: 819-953-5280, Fax: 819-953-8076, E-mail: nls@fox.nstn.ca

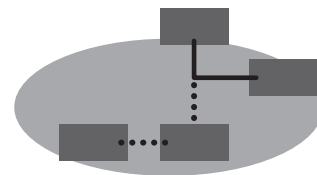
The monographs can also be found on the NLS website at www.nald.ca/nls/ials/introduc.htm

Organizational Resources

Volunteer Management Resources On-line

Community Literacy of Ontario is celebrating International Literacy Day by launching its volunteer management website for literacy agencies. The website will offer tools such as volunteer management policies, sample literacy job descriptions, quality standards on volunteer relations, volunteer management links and resources, and CLO's paper on "The Economic Value of Volunteers". The web address is www.nald.ca/volman.htm

As well, an on-line workshop on Staff and Board Relationships and Responsibilities will be delivered via AlphaCom between October 15 and December 12. The workshop will consist of short, clear workshop postings twice a week. Course facilitators will answer questions and moderate discussion electronically. Participants will learn about roles and responsibilities of directors of non-profit



organizations, "policy vs. management," models of board governance and board-staff relations, and tools for problem-solving. An introductory posting on AlphaCom (www.alphaplus.ca) on October 15 will show how to join up and how to get the most out of the training.

For more information about Community Literacy of Ontario's projects, contact CLO, 80 Bradford Street, Suite 508, Barrie, ON, L4N 6S7. Tel: 705-733-2312, Fax: 705-733-6197, E-mail: kaattari@bconnex.net.

Literacy Promotion & Fundraising: Your Guide to Planning a Special Event

Regina Public Library has had great success with its annual "Corporate Definition Derby for Literacy", a high-profile gala evening targeting the local business community. This resource can help your organization plan and carry out a special event to raise money and/or awareness for literacy. Included are four booklets, a promotional video, sample communications products and more. The materials cover the planning process, administration guidelines, sponsorship and marketing, event coordination, publicity and communication. The cost is \$75 plus GST.

Still available from Regina Public Library is *The Literacy Tool Kit: A Resource for Libraries* (1996). 16 booklets cover all aspects of starting and enhancing literacy services. The cost is \$100 plus GST and handling.

As a special offer, both publications can be purchased for \$125 plus GST and handling. Contact The Business Literacy Unit, Regina Public Library, PO Box 2311, Regina, SK, S4P 3Z5. Fax: 306-352-5550.

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy offers resources for charitable non-profit organizations. A tour of their online Information Centre will lead you to a wide variety of resource materials. Information categories include Resource Development (including Fundraising Methods, Foundation Fundraising, Corporate Support and Earned Income); Boards of Directors (governance, etc.); Management (including Planning, Financial Management, Ethics, Volunteers, Marketing/Communications, and Collaboration); Research (on the voluntary sector); and more. Clicking on one of the links takes you to an annotated list of books, articles, videos and software.

The Centre's comprehensive Canadian Directory to Foundations and Grants is available online, with a tutorial that shows you how to zero in on the foundations most likely to be interested in your project. Subscriptions to the Directory in hard copy or on line cost about \$325-\$425.

The Centre's web address is <http://www.ccp.ca/>

**Foundation Center
Online**

On a Florida-based website at <http://House-of-Hope.org/grants-central-station.htm> you'll find a link to "The Foundation Center's sensational on-line course on proposal writing," along with other links such as "outstanding resource by a banker on Internet-mediated fundraising for non-profits." The proposal writing course (it's really more of a short guide, and it does look good) is at <http://fndcenter.org/onlib/prop.html>

Coming Events

***Widening the Circle:
Canadian Lifelong Learning Lyceum '98***

* October 15-18, 1998, Victoria, BC *

Keynote speakers, plenary sessions, workshops and showcases focused on lifelong learning in individuals, families, communities, and organizations. For more information, contact Canadian Link to Lifelong Learning, 1-800-596-5392.

***Alberta Provincial Literacy Conference
— Literacy: The Community Link***

* November 5-7, 1998, Calgary, Alberta *

Joint conference presented by the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta and the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL). The conference "will provide teachers, tutors, students, administrators, researchers and community workers with proven methods, new ideas and thought-provoking tools and techniques to increase effectiveness." For more information, contact AAAL, Tel: 403-297-4994, Fax: 403-297-6037, E-mail: office@aal.ab.ca.

***International Conference on
Women and Literacy***

* January 24-26, 1999, Atlanta, Georgia *

Sponsored by the Center for the Study of Adult Literacy at Georgia State University, in collaboration with Georgia Tech's Lifelong Learning Network, Laubach Literacy Action and the Centre for Literacy of Quebec. Women and literacy will be explored in the contexts of related issues such as welfare reform, domestic violence, health, and ethnicity.

This announcement was posted on AlphaCom by Jenny Horsman, who wrote "I know it may cost a bit to get to Georgia — but there are cheap flights and think of being in sunny Georgia in January! Last time it was a fascinating conference."

For further information, call Sandy Vaughn, Center for the Study of Adult Literacy, Georgia State University, University Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303-3083, Tel: 404-651-1400, Fax: 404-651-1415, E-mail: alcsvv@langate.gsu.edu

Remember to visit our website at:

www.literacy.ca