



## Framing Workforce Literacy: An Overview

by Wendy DesBrisay, Executive Director,  
Movement for Canadian Literacy

**A**lthough adults seek out literacy training for many reasons, most of them boil down to wanting to be better equipped for their roles as family members, citizens, and workers. Each of these roles is the theme in our current series of MCL newsletters. The last issue covered family literacy. This one focuses on the workforce and the next issue will look at literacy in relation to citizenship.

While we consider these three roles equally important and valuable, a focus on workforce literacy is especially timely because Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) is currently working on a long-term plan to increase the labour market skills of Canadians. The federal government sees this as a national issue that is crucial for Canada's future: in 10 years, there

*We use the term **workforce**, as opposed to **workplace literacy** in order to include both employed and unemployed; both **actual** and **potential** workers.*

will be no net growth in the labour force. By then, all labour market growth will come from immigration. The government wants to ensure that all Canadians have "opportunities and incentives to acquire new skills and knowledge."

The government says skills and learning are an area where the economic agenda and the social agenda come together. We share with governments at all levels the goal of making sure everyone has the skills to participate in the knowledge economy. At the same time we believe in the value of learning for ANY reason, and we can use this time of increased government commitment to promote this perspective. ... →

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*In fond memory of Peter Gzowski (1934-2002)*

*a passionate literacy advocate. Since 1986 he raised more than \$6 million for literacy through the Peter Gzowski Invitational (PGI) Golf Tournaments. He will be missed by all Canadians.*

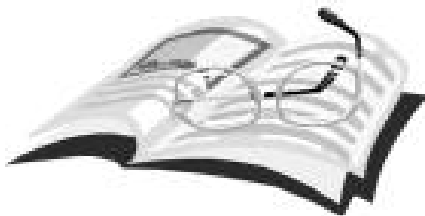


In MCL's meetings with politicians and officials, we have asserted that literacy is an investment not only in our economic future (through a skilled workforce) but also in the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities and our country.

All that said, it is encouraging that the federal government is taking some leadership in developing a national learning agenda that includes a literacy component. If there ever was a time when we in the literacy community

need to "get our ducks in a row" in terms of a well-researched, effective, solid voice, it's now.

This issue of *literacy.ca* presents some issues, resources, and expertise from the workforce literacy community in Canada. It touches on some provocative questions – who is workforce literacy for: the state? The employer? The employee? Who should set the agenda? What about the unemployed? Can training work if it's not voluntary (for example, as in "learnfare" programs)?



## ***Literacy and the Canadian Workforce***

### **Summary of MCL's Briefing Paper: Literacy and the Canadian Work Force, 2001**

Following the October 2000 National Summit on Literacy and Productivity, MCL commissioned Sue Folinsbee to summarize the major issues and trends around literacy and the Canadian workforce, and to provide recommendations for government decision makers. Ms. Folinsbee augmented the findings and recommendations of the Summit with an extensive literature review and in-depth telephone interviews with key stakeholders. The paper examines literacy in relation to both employed and unemployed adults.

The changing nature of the workplace over the past decade has brought increased attention to the issue of workforce literacy. However, there is serious debate about why adults need to improve their literacy skills. While business and government focus on literacy for labour force development and economic prosperity, learners and participants are interested in enhancing their personal well-being and confidence, as well as their ability to deal with everyday practical considerations. Labour sees literacy as a tool for

political and social change as it empowers and enables workers to reflect on their experience.

The various perspectives have led to the development of many different types of workforce literacy programs in different settings across Canada. They include employment preparation, workplace education programs, community-based literacy programs, union-run training programs and programs in the public education system. Research shows the benefits and impacts of workforce literacy development have been significant.

As interest and programming have increased, so too has the debate. Literacy and workforce development are both complex issues and so it is argued that current strategies are too simplistic. There is too much emphasis on literacy as an individual problem. It is seen too much as an economic issue and not enough as an issue of social and personal empowerment. The strategies must also address systemic barriers. ... →

## Literacy and the Canadian Work Force, 2001:

**Recommended Actions**

- ① **The National Literacy Secretariat should take the lead in encouraging a process for dialogue to develop a vision and framework for an overall adult learning strategy.** There is a need for an integrated and flexible adult learning strategy tailored to the diversity of regional and local needs across the country. Literacy development must be provided for the unemployed as well as the employed. Programs should focus on broad-based portable skills and encourage self-directedness. Systemic barriers must be addressed. Free access to grade twelve should be enshrined as a right for all Canadians, regardless of age.
- ② **The National Literacy Secretariat should take the lead on facilitating a conversation about principles and good practice as part of the development of an adult learning strategy or system.** Learners must have a voice in this along with other stakeholders. Stable funding and adequate resources are needed for inclusive, accessible, equitable, participatory, quality programming.
- ③ **A vision and guidelines for public awareness need to be developed based on common principles and values as well as previous successes.** Public awareness should focus on positive, respectful, success-based stories and results rather than an over-simplistic deficit approach. Literacy, learning and workforce development is an issue for everyone. An asset-based approach that acknowledges that less literate Canadians do have other valuable skills, abilities and knowledge, must challenge the current labelling and stereotyping of people with low literacy. We will all need to upgrade our skills.
- ④ **Many collaborative and open-ended partnerships should be encouraged.** A complete and inclusive range of partners from all levels and all stakeholders groups must be involved. Joint decision-making is necessary as the stakeholders have different interests in workforce education. Strategies must meet the needs and interests of both workers and employers. Employers need to commit more resources to workforce literacy.
- ⑤ **The determination of financial and resource commitments should be a part of the dialogue facilitated by the National Literacy Secretariat.** There must be a consistent and long-term source of increased funding from all levels of government.

To obtain a copy of this paper, contact MCL at tel: 613-563-2464 or read it online at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca)

## A Labour View of Literacy

The following two articles are excerpts reprinted with kind permission of *Our Times* magazine (August/September 2001, Vol. 20, No. 4) and the author Jean Connon Unda. *Our Times* is an independent labour magazine dedicated to publishing stories about workers' rights and social justice. For more information or to obtain copies of their special issue on literacy, call 416-531-6877 or toll-free 1-800-648-6131 or check the website at [www.ourtimes.ca](http://www.ourtimes.ca) ... →



## Reading the World



While literacy may be about “basics,” it is anything but a simple issue. In fact, how you define literacy cuts right to the core of the conflict between

corporate and labour visions, values, and aspirations. When unions and employers sit down to negotiate workplace literacy programs, what comes to the fore – besides money – is a struggle over what is to be learned, how it is to be learned, and how the learning is to be evaluated. These are not technical questions that can be left to supposedly neutral literacy experts. They are political issues. Education is not neutral, and there is conflict between employers and unions over whose interests are to be served.

As far as corporations are concerned, worker literacy is defined in the context of the corporate goals of productivity and profits. Where the production process (and more recently, the participatory management process), requires workers to use literacy skills – to follow instructions, say, or fill out reports – then corporations may be interested in their employees’ levels of literacy. This corporate conception of literacy is a narrow one. It is based on a limited understanding of workers: their need for literacy is only seen in terms of their role as cogs in a work process defined and controlled by management.

The labour movement on the other hand, sees workers as complete human beings, with lives beyond their workplaces. They have roles in their unions as well, and their families and communities. They need literacy for these parts of their lives too. Labour may legitimately be concerned with supporting workers’ individual aspirations to improve their skills, so they can participate in the system as it is. But, as trade unionists committed to action on behalf of human wholeness and social justice, we must go beyond this limited definition of literacy.

A worker-centred, union-based literacy program provides space where workers can get together to discuss, and reflect on, their lives as workers. This process of reflection focuses on “reading the world,” which as popular educator Paulo Freire said, precedes “reading the word.” Reading the world means trying to understand our lives from the perspective of our own experiences of workers, not from a ready-made corporate perspective. It is only in this larger context of meaning that we can begin to make sense of particular reading and writing tasks. Any given literacy task cannot be dealt with in isolation. It can only be “read,” and critically understood, in the context of the larger system of which it is a part.

*Our vision of literacy is not about “workers and their plight.” It’s about “workers and their fight.”*

Knowing something about the larger system – and critically reflecting on how it affects us as workers – helps us realize that merely filling out a form correctly may not be enough to ensure that we win our rights or attain justice. Indeed we may need to develop individual and collective strategies to both deal with the system and to change it. Predictably, it is this critique of the system that is left out of mainstream literacy stories. We are just supposed to fit in to what is.

As trade unionists we know we cannot afford to ignore unjust social structures. Being a worker colours our experiences in particular ways. We know how working conditions – such as pay, hours of work, health and safety, benefits (or lack of them) – affect all aspects of our lives. They affect where we live, the shape and texture of our family life, how we spend our leisure time, the quality of our communities and natural environment, and the services to which we have access. Being a worker has implications for how we engage as citizens, and underlies the concerns and hopes we bring to our participation in public life. We know that the literacy ... →

skills required to be an active and engaged citizen and union member, far surpass in complexity the literacy skills currently needed on many jobs. Thus, our definition of literacy includes the development of skills for democratic participation in its fullest sense.

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Labour literacy moves beyond the corporate focus on deficiencies – the need to bring workers' skills "up to standard" so they can compete on a level playing field. Our vision of literacy is not about "workers and their plight." It's about "workers and their fight." Literacy as the practice of critical reflection and action is a key element in a strategy for developing a powerful, critically-thinking, socially-engaged movement of workers.

This does not mean we are not concerned with what are commonly considered to be the building blocks of literacy: the ability to carry out tasks like reading instructions and filling out forms; to be able to recognize words, and be able to write, and spell correctly. Our definition of literacy includes these kinds of tasks and skills. We just go further.

Labour literacy programs acknowledge and build on the experiences and skills of workers. They employ participatory and democratic methods. They promote solidarity and respect among workers, and they link education with action in the world. Worker-centred, union-based literacy programs provide an opportunity for workers to come together in a shared process of action and reflection. Here, they can develop a sense of possibility. A sense of citizenship. Here, workers can transform their understanding of themselves and their world, in a union culture of hope.

### *Literacy For Workers By Workers*

Until recently, a lot of literacy umbrella organizations in Canada have been focused on bringing together all the "stakeholders" to facilitate a collaborative process of defining and promoting literacy. Not surprisingly, these efforts have often resulted in a homogenization of the varied perspectives into a common idea of literacy. It is one that fits, and does not challenge, the dominant corporate story we are all urged to live within.

In the past, unions sometimes spent so much time communing with the other "stakeholders" that there was very little time and energy left to talk among ourselves and develop a labour perspective on literacy. This is changing. As with other issues that affect workers, such as health and safety, more and more activists in Canada's labour movement now recognize that unions need to discuss literacy in forums convened for, and by, labour.

This process began to gather momentum in the mid- and late '90s and continues into the present. A significant impetus comes from the Canadian Labour Congress Workplace Literacy Project (see profile later in this newsletter), and its literacy working group, which was convened more than two years ago. In these forums, and in others across the country, labour is developing an independent, alternative way of looking at literacy, and what it can mean to workers and their unions. At the same time, practical resources are being developed, including program implementation, curriculum, and so on. This development of resources based on labour's vision is essential to freeing ourselves from reliance on technical resources that support a corporate perspective.



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## Research

### *The Job Skills Gap: Challenging Literacy Perceptions*

It is commonly suggested that Canada will lose its competitive position in the global economy if nothing is done to increase the literacy skills of the nation's workforce. Yet, some estimates indicate that nearly one in four Canadians are in jobs that underutilize their literacy skills. This is an alarming statistic given that IALS research suggests that literacy skills decline when not used (the "use it or lose it" theory of literacy). These findings suggest the need to investigate the nature of the alleged job skills gap in Canada, as well as the notion of human capital loss.

Researchers Harvey Krahn and Graham Lowe, from the University of Alberta, have written several papers on Canadians whose literacy skills are being underused in the workplace. They conclude that human capital is not being used to its maximum. Their major findings with respect to literacy surplus in the workplace included the following:

- 20% of Canadians are employed in jobs that do not take advantage of their literacy skills.
- A greater proportion of Canadian workers fall under the literacy surplus category than fall under the literacy deficit category.
- Women are twice as likely as men to be in jobs that do not require their prose literacy skills.
- There is data to support the idea that time spent in a job with limited literacy requirements might lead to some literacy loss.

The researchers' findings on the literacy surplus that exists in some parts of the Canadian labour force suggest the need for programs that will encourage employers, workers, unions, professional associations and policy-makers to look for ways to upgrade the literacy and other skill requirements of jobs. This does not preclude

the need for literacy programs, a legitimate issue in itself. However, ignoring the literacy surplus very likely will lead to serious human resource and productivity costs.

Look up these studies by Krahn and Lowe: *Literacy in the Workplace*, (Perspectives, Summer 1999), *On the Permanence of Human Capital: Use it or Lose it*, (Policy options, August 1997), or *Literacy Utilization in Canadian Workplaces*, (Statistics, 1998) through the Canadian Directory of Research online at [www.nald.ca/crd/start.htm](http://www.nald.ca/crd/start.htm)

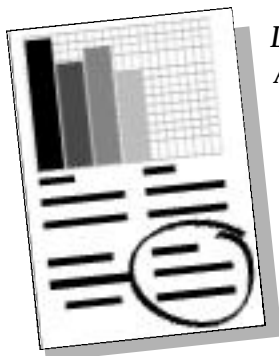
### *Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace* by Sue Folinsbee



**In-Sites** is the first large-scale Canadian ethnographic study in workplace literacy. This study is supported by a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada and is housed at Ryerson Polytechnic University. The name is a pun, of course, because ethnographic research seeks insights into social practices. This project, then, is different from research work that understands workplace literacy as a skill issue or aims to map individual skills. Instead, workplace literacy is considered as a complex social practice. Ethnographic research casts light on aspects of culture, especially those that are taken for granted, or are just part of how things work.

We conducted research in four sites: manufacturing, grocery production, hospitality and textile industries. Our five-member team of three workplace educators and two academics has been working on this project for the last three years. The five researchers are Mary Ellen Belfiore, Tracy Defoe, Sue Folinsbee, Judy Hunter and Nancy Jackson. We are presently preparing a manuscript for publication. For more information please visit the In-Sites website <http://www.nald.ca/insites/>

### New IALS Data



*Literacy Skills, Occupational Assignment and the Returns to Over- and Under- Education* is a new monograph available from Statistics Canada. The study uses Canadian data from the International Adult Literacy Survey to explore relationships between wages earned by

workers whose education is higher or lower, than that presumed to be required by their occupation. Contact 1-800-307-3382 or 613-951-7608 or online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)

### The Welfare-Work-Literacy Connection

Under the welfare reforms taking place in several provinces, there is a growing trend toward welfare recipients being required to participate in “workfare” or “learnfare” programs. The welfare-to-work approach raises questions about the need for collaboration in developing coordinated learning, work and social assistance policies.

The 3-year Manitoba study, *Literacy, Welfare and Work: Longitudinal Research Project* looked at the complex relationships between education and employment, within the new context of “welfare reform.” Researcher-writer Janet Smith explored some of the key issues, such as personal and structural barriers that prevent students from finding and keeping a job and accessing educational opportunities. The 1999 report also offers recommendations on the policies, programs and supports that best enable participants to move from welfare to work. You can find this full-text document on NALD’s website at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca) or you can order it from Grassroots Press at 1-888-303-3213 or online: [www.literacyservices.com](http://www.literacyservices.com)

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) also gathered information on welfare-to-work programs across the country in their 1999 documents: *Welfare-to-Work: A National Inventory*

and *Welfare-to-Work: A Discussion Paper*. They were concerned that such programs may increase poverty by lowering benefits and forcing people into uncertain employment. They also noted that most programs do not pay enough attention to the needs of recipients and their children for supports such as training and childcare. They found that the evaluation of welfare-to-work programs was usually based on cost savings rather than outcomes for recipients. You can find these excellent background materials at [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca) (under News Releases and Reports) or call CCSD at tel: 613-236-8977.

### Nation-wide Study on Administration and Organization of Workplace Literacy Programs



Researchers at the Centre for Integrated & Credit Studies at BC’s Simon Fraser University are exploring the involvement of Canadian unions in workplace literacy programs. Funded by a three-year grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council,

the researchers are looking at ways that workplace literacy programs can be developed for the benefit of working people rather than the bottom line of their employers. The project’s aim is to give union literacy practitioners and others involved in bargaining for workplace education programs a deeper understanding of the ways that workplace literacy programs can be organized to support and develop the interests of workers.

Researchers have travelled to different regions of the country to look at union-sponsored workplace literacy programs and talk to staff and learners in addition to local union representatives. The researchers are specifically interested in which types of organizational and administrative structures work best for workers and their unions and how various partnership arrangements between labour, management and government affect the way programs are developed, administered, and taught. ... →

The findings of this study will contribute to knowledge about the development and implementation of literacy and workplace education in Canada. The study is expected to be completed in 2002. For more information contact Tom Nesbit (tel: 604-291-5090 or [tnesbit@sfu.ca](mailto:tnesbit@sfu.ca)) at Simon Fraser University.

### Essential Skills



Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has done extensive research on the skills required for different occupations. This was built on earlier work in Canada, the United States, Australia and Great Britain that identified a set of “essential” skills that are used in virtually all occupations.

Essential skills include reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving and can range from simple tasks, such as filling in credit card receipts, to more complex tasks, such as writing scientific reports. The essential skills list also includes attitudes and behaviours valued by employers.

The Essential Skills Research Project has assembled a number of occupational profiles that describe how skills are used in different jobs that require a high school diploma or less. They have also gathered authentic workplace materials that are used in a wide range of Canadian workplaces. They provide suggestions on how these materials can be used in classroom learning and goal-setting activities.

The Essential Skills listing is constantly being updated at the HRDC website at [www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/essentialskills](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/essentialskills). You can also order the CD-ROM for \$10.00 from NALD at: 1-800-720-6253 or [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)

### Literacy and Employment

*Employees with higher literacy skills earn more income, are less likely to be unemployed, have greater opportunities for job mobility, are more likely to find full-time work, and are more likely to receive further training. They also report higher self-esteem and fewer occupational injuries.*

*(From one of MCL's factsheets, available online at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca))*

### Learners Speak

Over 100 learners from 10 different regions of Canada responded to an MCL Learners Advisory Network survey in 2001. The survey was designed to gather the experiences and ideas of adult learners to help inform the federal government's skills and learning agenda. When asked why they returned to school/training, only 18% cited “getting a job” as the reason. Another 16% chose both the “need for better/higher education” and “having a better choice of job and more secure future.” Many acknowledged that there was no possibility of any work without literacy skills. Here are some quotes from the survey.

**“ Take the focus off jobs, jobs, jobs. Learning is a process and one of the rewards is work, but it is only one of the rewards. The goal of literacy has to be learning, not a career. ”**

**“ The [government's] plan should include enough money to take some of the pressure off and enough sense to acknowledge that as people learn they blossom and as they blossom they get more productive. One follows the other if the focus is on the learning not the product. ”**

## Cross-Canada Snapshots

### ■ *Knowledge Matters: First Impressions*

*Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians* is a federal government “Green” (ie. discussion) Paper just released by Human Resources and Development Canada. It focuses on “what we can do to strengthen skills and learning in Canada, to develop people’s talent and to provide the opportunity for all to contribute to and benefit from the new economy.” The full document and an Executive Summary can be found online at [www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca](http://www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca)

*Knowledge Matters* focuses exclusively on labour market development with literacy and other skills development viewed as a means to that end. It is disappointing to note that the importance of learning for social and personal development is not even mentioned.

The need to raise literacy and foundational skill levels is mentioned frequently through the paper. However, because literacy delivery falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, finding an appropriate role for the federal government in shaping, investing in, and achieving literacy goals appears to be a challenge.

In the section entitled “A Call to Action,” stakeholders are invited to participate in a consultative phase that will lead to “developing and implementing a national action plan on skills and learning for the 21st century.” The federal government does commit to working with provinces and territories through “existing multi-lateral forums and bilaterally.” It also commits to “engaging a wide range of partners and stakeholders in discussions on national goals and the actions needed to reach them.”

It is clear that this process will take years and multiple budget cycles to fulfill. Because the official consultation plans may not include much of a role for the literacy community, MCL is developing its own strategy for consultation and influence. Watch for details in upcoming issues of *Federal Literacy Facts* and on the MCL website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca)



*Quick briefs on what is going on in workplace literacy across the country.*

### *At the national level*

#### ■ *The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS)*

Workplace literacy is a top priority for the government of Canada not only because it contributes to the quality of life of individuals but it is also a critical factor in Canada’s social and economic well-being, as well. Workplace literacy is an important part of Human Resources Development Canada’s (HRDC) mission to enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and the community. The National Literacy Secretariat, within HRDC, works to carry out this mission by offering financial and technical support to private and public sector partners that will further the goal of creating a more literate Canada.

The National Literacy Secretariat encourages business associations and labour unions to make commitments to enhance the skills of their workers. On the NLS website you can access a bibliography of workforce literacy development materials which are in the Literacy Resource Collection of the HRDC library and available for loan through inter-library lending.

The NLS contact in this area is Brigid Hayes, tel: 613-957-9845, or email [brigid.hayes@hrdc-drch.gc.ca](mailto:brigid.hayes@hrdc-drch.gc.ca)

### ■ *The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)*



As the central labour body representing 2.5 million members across Canada, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has been active in

workplace literacy over the past several years. The goal of the CLC's Workplace Literacy Project is to promote a vision of literacy centred on the learning needs and aspirations of workers. To that end, CLC helps unions create the conditions for workers to achieve their individual and collective potential as literate, informed and active citizens and union members.

#### **The CLC Workplace Literacy Project:**

- Co-ordinates the CLC Literacy Working Group as a forum for information-sharing, networking and promoting a labour vision of literacy among unions.
- Provides support to the growing number of unions involved in literacy work.
- Produces the CLC literacy newsletter *Learning Together: Solidarity at Work* and resources developed through the CLC *Learning in Solidarity* series (see the Resource section later in this newsletter).
- Develops and delivers courses and workshops on *Union-based Literacy and Clear Language for Union Communications* in various regions.
- Promotes the integration of literacy into the ongoing work of the CLC.
- Brings a labour point of view on worker-centred literacy to other organizations.

For more information on the CLC's initiatives, contact Tamara Levine (Workplace Literacy Co-ordinator) at tel: 613-526-7437 or 613-521-3400 or [tlevine@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:tlevine@clc-ctc.ca) or online at [www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca)

### ■ *The Conference Board of Canada*



The Conference Board supports learning as a key to Canadian prosperity and has produced many research reports on workforce

development, learning technologies, partnerships and workplace training and education. The Conference Board also honours outstanding Canadian businesses through its Awards for Excellence in Workplace Literacy. For more information, contact The Conference Board of Canada at tel: 613-526-3280 or toll-free 1-888-801-8818 or online at [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)

### ■ *Literacy and Basic Skills Development in the Workplace*

The Conference Board of Canada is launching a free, Internet-based tool that employers can use to learn about their employees' basic skills and literacy development needs. Employers can find out what steps to take to improve their workers' skills to improve company productivity and profits. This easy-to-use, decision-making tool lets employers find training solutions and partners to help them with skills development. The tool, developed with funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, will be officially released this spring. For more information tel: 613-526-3280 (ext. 361) or [www.conferenceboard.ca](http://www.conferenceboard.ca)

### ■ *The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)*



NALD has a number of online full-text documents under the subject heading of workplace literacy. Check them out at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)

### ■ *Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA)*

The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) with support from the National Literacy Secretariat has actively supported literacy in municipal workforces by developing the Literate Cities project. Five outreach initiatives were piloted in Moncton and Bathurst (NB), St. John's (NF), Edmonton (AB) and Port Moody (BC). A workshop in 2000 drew representatives from the many stakeholder groups. Several manuals have been produced including *The Writing's on the Wall: Implementing a Municipal Workforce Literacy Program: An Organizer's Guide* (available as a full text document at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)) as well as an evaluation guide. CAMA's work of developing tools and supports to encourage workplace literacy programs in municipal governments has been very successful. The results have positive impacts not just for municipal workplaces but also for families and their communities. CAMA is committed to sharing experiences and to providing support in new and current workplace education projects.

For more information, contact Project Director, Patricia Nutter at CAMA in Ottawa at tel: 613-726-9532 or [pnutter@sympatico.ca](mailto:pnutter@sympatico.ca) or check the website at [www.camacam.ca](http://www.camacam.ca)

### ■ *The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN)*



CPRN's mission is to create knowledge and lead public debate on social and economic issues important to the well-being of Canadians. One of the many networks under CPRN is the Work Network that explores the cutting edge of labour market and workplace changes. They have prepared a number of thought-provoking articles and research pieces that are available by calling tel: 613-567-7500 or checking online at [www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org)

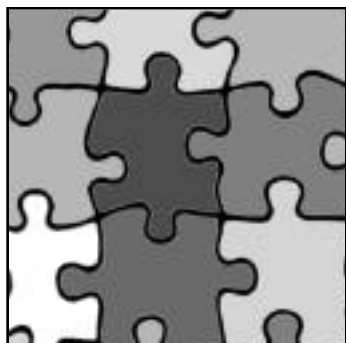
### ■ *A Success Story in Moncton*

The City of Moncton has made workplace education a priority for their employees since 1998. Through partnerships with the province, unions, employees and the literacy community, as well as the backing of CAMA, municipal employees have had the opportunity to keep their reading, writing, computer and communication skills current. Participation has been tremendous with over 90 employees and family members completing a variety of courses. 120 were enrolled for last fall's courses. Not only has Moncton noticed the changes in the self-esteem, adaptability and community involvement of their workers, but also their organization has been recognized through the prestigious awards of the Conference Board, CAMA and Canada Post (both for Business Leadership and Individual Student Achievement). For more information on Moncton's program contact Kathy DeWitt at tel: 506-853-3520 or [kathy.dewitt@moncton.org](mailto:kathy.dewitt@moncton.org)

### ■ *The Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English*

This Directory has online summaries of several studies that have been done on workplace and workforce literacy issues. Check out these abstracts on recent research studies at [www.nald.ca/crd/start.htm](http://www.nald.ca/crd/start.htm)

## Cross-Canada Snapshots



### On the provincial / territorial scene

Like much of literacy delivery in Canada, workforce literacy is also a patchwork quilt of services, systems and approaches that vary across the country. Here are some contacts for workforce and workplace literacy in the provinces and territories. This list is not exhaustive so we urge you to share contacts, projects, resources and information to be included in future newsletters. Please contact Fiona at tel: 613-563-2464 or [fiona@literacy.ca](mailto:fiona@literacy.ca)

#### ■ Yukon

Liesel Briggs, Yukon Learn, tel: 867-668-6280 or [lbriggs@yukonlearn.com](mailto:lbriggs@yukonlearn.com)  
 Diney Williams, Yukon Federation of Labour, tel: 867-668-4724 or [dwilliam@yukoncollege.yk.ca](mailto:dwilliam@yukoncollege.yk.ca)  
 Donna Pearson, Public Service Commission of Canada, Yukon District, Learning Coordinator and Advisor Learning Programs, tel: 393-6810 or [donna.pearson@psc-cfp.gc.ca](mailto:donna.pearson@psc-cfp.gc.ca)

#### ■ Northwest Territories

Sharon Morrison, Department of Education, Culture and Employment Workplace Literacy Program, tel: 867-873-8816 or [sharon\\_morrison@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sharon_morrison@gov.nt.ca)  
 Steve Peterson, NT Federation of Labour, tel: 867-873-5192 or [caw@tamarack.nt.ca](mailto:caw@tamarack.nt.ca)  
 Cate Sills, NWT Literacy Council, tel: 867-873-9262 or [catesills@ssimicro.com](mailto:catesills@ssimicro.com)

#### ■ Nunavut

Steve Peterson, NT Federation of Labour, tel: 867-873-5192 or [caw@tamarack.nt.ca](mailto:caw@tamarack.nt.ca)

#### ■ British Columbia

Irma Mohammed, BC Federation of Labour, tel: 604-430-1421, or [educate@bcfed.com](mailto:educate@bcfed.com)  
 Stacey Huget, Consultant with the BC Workforce Literacy Initiative, tel: 604-633-2161 or [shuget@attcanada.ca](mailto:shuget@attcanada.ca)

*Note:* The Workforce Literacy Initiative (WLI) is a project of Literacy BC.

#### ■ Alberta

Karen Kennedy, Alberta Federation of Labour, tel: 780-423-9000 or [union@cupwedm.net](mailto:union@cupwedm.net)  
 Carolyn Dieleman, Alberta Workforce Essential Skills Committee, tel: 780-427-5717 or [carolyn.dieleman@gov.ab.ca](mailto:carolyn.dieleman@gov.ab.ca)

#### ■ Saskatchewan

Ann Curry, Learning @ Work Project, Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board, tel: tel 306-790-1270 or email: [learningatwork@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:learningatwork@sk.sympatico.ca)  
 Ron Torgerson, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, tel: 306-924-8574 or [sfl.west@sk.sympatico.ca](mailto:sfl.west@sk.sympatico.ca)

#### ■ Manitoba

Marilyn Day, Manitoba Association of Workplace Educators, tel: 204-261-6337 or [mday@drcs.ca](mailto:mday@drcs.ca)  
 Heather Grant-Jury, WLC, tel: 204-942-0522 or [hgj@mb.sympatico.ca](mailto:hgj@mb.sympatico.ca)  
 Sandi Howell, Workplace Manitoba Education Coordinator, tel: 204-945-1682 or [showell@gov.mb.ca](mailto:showell@gov.mb.ca)

*Note:* Workplace Education Manitoba is a consortium that includes business, labour and government. The provincial government has a staff person and provides some financial support to initiatives.

### ■ Ontario

Sande Minke, Workplace Literacy Lead, Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities, tel: 519-885-6366 or [sande.minke@edu.gov.on.ca](mailto:sande.minke@edu.gov.on.ca)

*Note:* Ontario's Workplace Literacy Strategy will support practitioners to create teaching/learning resources however the provincial government does not pay for direct program delivery.

### ■ Quebec

Louise Miller, Fédération de travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), tel: 514-383-8015 or [lmiller@ftq.qc.ca](mailto:lmiller@ftq.qc.ca)

*Note:* Quebec imposes a 1% payroll tax on all employers. This money must be spent on employee training or sent to a fund that funds school boards and/or private trainers to develop worker training programs.

### ■ New Brunswick

Rowena Brooks, Literacy New Brunswick Inc., tel: 506-444-4331 or [rowena.brooks@gnb.ca](mailto:rowena.brooks@gnb.ca).  
Ian Thorn, Communications, Energy and Paper Workers (CEP), Board member of NB Coalition for Literacy, Representative of NB Federation of Labour, tel: 506-852-9229 or [ithorn@cep.ca](mailto:ithorn@cep.ca)

### ■ Prince Edward Island

Leo Cheverie, PEI Federation of Labour, tel: 902-368-3068 or [lcheverie@upe.ca](mailto:lcheverie@upe.ca)  
Barbara MacNutt, Literacy Initiatives Secretariat, tel: 902-368-6286 or [bemacnutt@gov.pe.ca](mailto:bemacnutt@gov.pe.ca)

*Note:* One of the three provinces with a consortium of business, labour and government. Like Manitoba and Nova Scotia, the PEI government provides some financial support through its Workplace Education department.

### ■ Nova Scotia

Marjorie Davison, Workplace Education Coordinator, tel: 902-424-5191 or [DAVISOME@gov.ns.ca](mailto:DAVISOME@gov.ns.ca)  
Linda Wentzel, Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, tel: 902-634-4501 or [linda.wentzel@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:linda.wentzel@ns.sympatico.ca)

*Note:* The third province with a consortium of business, labour and government. The Workplace Education Initiative that provides funding for three types of programs: (1) education programs, for employed Nova Scotians, in partnership with the workplace; (2) adjustment programs for displaced workers and (3) labour market attachment programs for the unemployed. Other provincially sponsored programs include the Community Learning Initiative that is primarily responsible to deliver adult learning programming (levels 1 and 2) through community networks. This is not necessarily driven by workforce needs.

### ■ Newfoundland and Labrador

Ed Brown, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, tel: 709-778-0480 or [ebrown@mi.mun.ca](mailto:ebrown@mi.mun.ca)  
Cindy Christopher, Literacy Branch, Department of Education, tel: 709-729-6281, or web site at [www.gov.nf.ca/edu/](http://www.gov.nf.ca/edu/)  
Della Coish, Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador, tel: 709-738-7323, or web site at [www.nald.ca/nfldlit.htm](http://www.nald.ca/nfldlit.htm)  
Janet Skinner, Labrador Literacy Information and Action Network, tel: 709-896-6212 or [jskinner@hvgb.net](mailto:jskinner@hvgb.net)

*Note:* Newfoundland's Workplace Education Committee is launching a multi-media toolkit and guide to support workplace education in the province.



## Linking Education Directly to Employment Opportunities: A Newfoundland Story

by Michelle Brown

A community development model designed to help people with academic challenges increase their employability is spreading throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and is even turning heads in the rest of Canada.

The Random North Development Association a non-profit community economic development organization, located on the east coast of the province, pioneered the program, Bridging the Gap: From Education to Employment, in 1992. This concept is currently in the process of being expanded to include four other regions and private sector partners in Newfoundland and Labrador with the goal of increasing literacy, essential, and workplace skills.

When the cod moratorium was announced in 1992, it was a turning point in the lives of many men and women involved in the Newfoundland fishery. Many had to assess their lives, examine career options outside the industry and consider the possibility of returning to school. Through listening to real-life stories in numerous kitchen table and community hall meetings, the Random North Development Association (RNDA) concluded that many were interested in completing their high school certificate but their first priority was to find stable employment.

The Bridging the Gap project was born through strong partnerships with community stakeholders, industry, labour, government departments and education providers. In 1996, nine former resource-based workers started academic upgrading and practical training with a local company that was also in the process of expanding, Atlantic Marine Products Inc. The College of the North Atlantic, an accredited post-secondary school, located a site in the plant to enable participants to learn new skills.

The pilot project ended in 1999, but the results are ongoing. Atlantic Marine Products Inc. continues to thrive and maintain a staff of about 30 (80 during peak periods). Participants have been in demand



*Michelle Brown and Ida Marsh (both on left) represent Random North as RNDA receives the Innovations in Education Award from the provincial government.*



*Training participants along with the Hon. Beaton Tulk, the Hon. Percy Barrett and Roger Fitzgerald, MHA, and Michelle Brown, Project Coordinator at the Graduation Ceremony for the participants with Atlantic Marine Products.*

for their transferable skills. Also, a step-by-step guide was produced to lead other groups through the process. The model has in fact expanded to four other regions in Newfoundland and Labrador. Bridging the Gap was nominated for two national awards, and has served as a model for similar projects in other areas of the country. The program recently won the Provincial Community Economic Development Award for Innovations in Education at the Rural Expo 2001 hosted in Gander, Newfoundland.

Bridging the Gap has shown the importance of combining social and economic planning. For more information, contact Michelle Brown at tel: 709-466-1725 or check online at [www.bridginggaps.com](http://www.bridginggaps.com)

## Resources

### ***Workplace Education Development (WED) Customizing Accreditation Curricula: Practitioners Guide***

Bow Valley College

A synthesis of the practice observed among workplace education practitioners across Canada who are customizing curriculum to fit their particular contexts. Cost \$32.00. Contact Bow Valley College, Learning Resource Services, tel: 403-297-4833.

### ***A Quest for Learning: The Canadian Labour Movement and Worker Literacy Education***

Workers Arts and Heritage Centre

This book looks at the history and current challenges of unions and literacy education. Cost \$10.00. Contact the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre at tel: 905-522-3003 or email: [wahc@web.net](mailto:wahc@web.net)

### **From the Canadian Labour Congress**



The following materials can be ordered from the Canadian Labour Congress, tel: 613-521-3400 or email: [clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca) or check the website at [www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca)

### ***Seeds for Change: A Curriculum Guide for Worker-Centred Literacy***

Jean Connon-Unda

This is a how-to guide for literacy instructors in unionized settings. Bringing a union approach to the content and process of worker-centred learning, *Seeds for Change*, uses practical examples to demonstrate how to integrate literacy into a problem-posing curriculum, encouraging critical reflection and action in and beyond the workplace. Cost: \$14.00.

### ***Learning for Our Lives: A Union Guide to Worker Centred Literacy***

Canadian Labour Congress

Describes how worker-centred literacy programs serve members and strengthen the union. A practical handbook for unions wanting to get involved in literacy and basic skills programs. Cost: \$8.00.

### ***Bargaining Basic Skills: what Unions Should Know About Negotiating Worker-Centred Literacy Programs***

Canadian Labour Congress

How to help unions develop strategies to negotiate basic literacy and basic skills programs. Cost: \$8.00.

### ***Making it Clear: Clear Language for Union Communications***

What unions can do to make communications more accessible. A handy binder full of practical suggestions, examples and a clear language workshop. Cost: \$16.00.

### ***Making it Clear: A Clear Language and Design Screen***

A useful reference mat to keep on your desk to help check your writing for clear language. Makes a great placemat for literacy events too! Cost \$3.00.

### ***Literacy is political***

In worker-centred literacy, curriculum is first and foremost a political issue. That's because education isn't neutral, no matter who provides it. It is more than developing the skills we need to carry out particular tasks... Literacy is about critical reflection and action... It is also about understanding the contexts or systems that affect our daily lives.

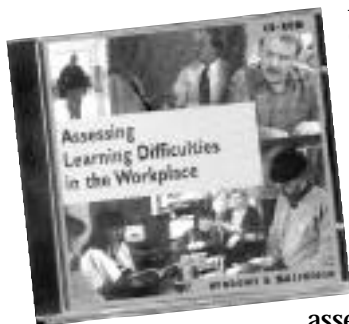
*From CLC's "Learning Together" newsletter, Winter, 2001-2002)*

**From Grassroots Press**



The following materials are available from Grassroots Press. To order, contact 1-888-303-3213 or [www.literacyservices.com](http://www.literacyservices.com)

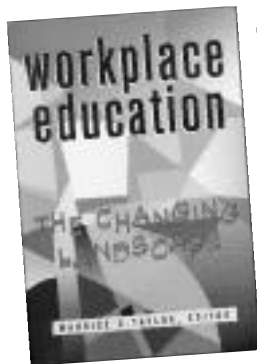
***Assessing Learning Difficulties in the Workplace***  
University of Calgary



This multi-media CD-ROM provides a five-stage process for assessing the learning difficulties of employees. A wide range of topics are covered in the case studies showing the

assessment process in action: learning disabilities, reading, numeracy, attention deficit disorder (ADD), resistance to change. This user-friendly software is easy to install and use on Macintosh or Windows systems. The material is presented through video clips, graphics, audio and text. Cost: \$195.00.

***Workplace Education: The Changing Landscape***  
Maurice C. Taylor, Editor



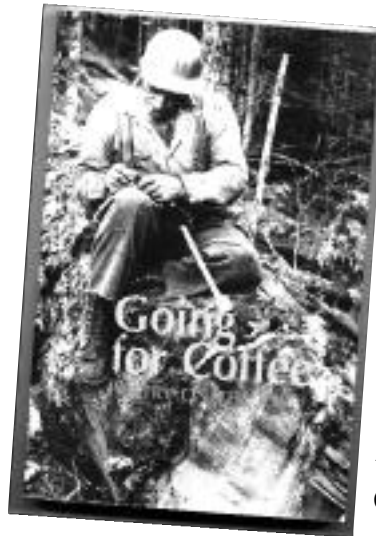
The intensive, practical 23 chapters of this book were written by leading practitioners from diverse walks of life, representing the different regions of Canada. Together they offer a mosaic of current knowledge and practical experience about the major issues confronting the field of workplace training. Cost: \$35.00.

***“Workplace Education - The Changing Landscape, will help business and union leaders, policy makers, educators and others involved in literacy issues to build partnerships.”***

Senator Joyce Fairbairn, Special Advisor for Literacy.

***Going for Coffee: Poetry on the Job***

T. Wayman, Editor



*Going for Coffee* is an anthology of contemporary poems about work. This exceptional book contains poems by over 90 Canadian and U.S. poets. The writers use clear language, and the poems are easy to read and understand. Cost: \$16.95.

**From ABC CANADA**



The following series by Mary Ellen Belfiore, Paul Jurmo and Sue Folinsbee, provides educators,

managers, and union leaders involved in workplace education development with materials to plan, create, evaluate and develop curriculum workplace initiatives. Contact ABC CANADA at 1-800-303-1004 or online at [www.abc-canada.org](http://www.abc-canada.org)

- **Collaborative Workplace Development: An Overview** Cost: \$10.00
- **Collaborative Needs Assessment: A handbook for workplace development planners** Cost: \$20.00
- **Understanding Curriculum Development in the Workplace: A resource for educators** Cost: \$20.00
- **Collaborative Evaluation: A handbook for workplace development planners** Cost: \$20.00.

## **From Laubach's New Readers Bookstore**

The following materials are available from Laubach Literacy Canada's New Readers Bookstore. To find out more about each title or to order, contact tel: 506-634-1980 or toll-free: 1-877-634-1980 or online at [www.laubach.ca](http://www.laubach.ca)

### ***Speaking Up at Work***

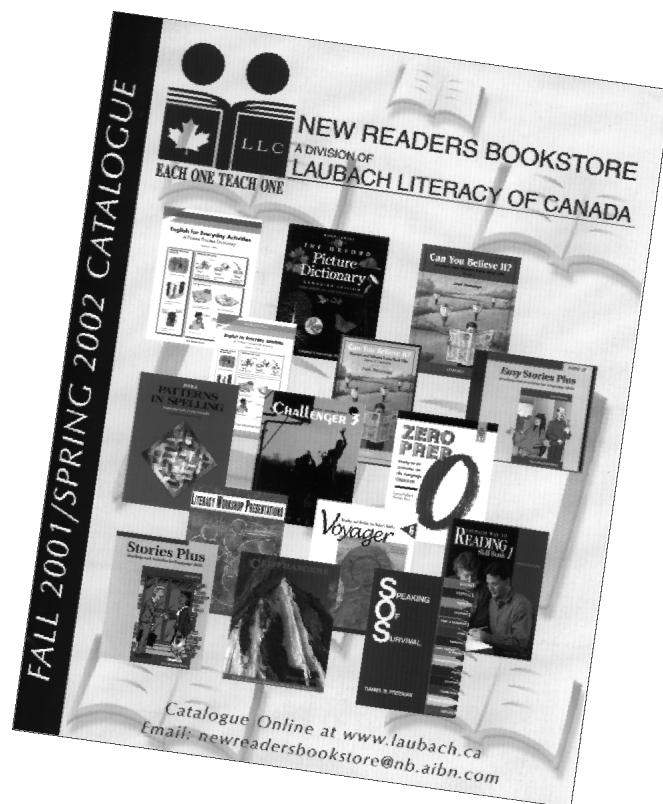
Thirty-three work-related topics including: understanding work scheduling, getting incorrect work explained, phoning in sick, and talking about advancement. Each unit contains useful speaking exercises, on-the-job simulations, and reading and writing exercises that apply the language and communication skills learned. Student book \$25.50, teacher's manual \$18.95.

### ***More than a Job***

Work is a central human experience. This book encourages students to examine the nature of work and its place in their lives. The curriculum helps them develop analytical skills as they read, talk and write in the context of the world of work. Includes short stories, oral histories, song lyrics, charts, newspaper articles and quotations. An appropriate set for any adult basic education class. Book \$15.25, teacher's guide \$18.95, photocopy masters \$51.25.

### ***On the Job English: ESL for Job Success***

This is a series of instructor resources to help ESL learners develop the functional language skills and effective communication strategies they need to succeed in the workplace. Theme-based lessons integrate reading, writing, speaking and listening. Includes student book (\$17.50), audiotope (\$24.95), workbook (\$12.95) and a teacher's guide (\$12.25).



Also on the topic  
of workplace literacy:

- **The Working Experience**  
3 different textbooks at \$15.25 each,  
teacher's guide \$22.50.
- **Health and Safety in the Workplace**  
Cost: \$8.50.
- **150 Ways to Keep Your Job** Cost: \$27.95.
- **Job Savvy: How to be a Success at Work**  
student book \$30.00, teacher's guide \$30.00.
- **Key Vocabulary for a Safe Workplace**  
student book \$17.50, photocopy masters  
\$24.95, teacher's guide \$12.25.
- **Critical Reading for Work**  
(two books at easy and medium levels of  
reading difficulty), \$30.00 each.
- **Job Search Education and Job Survival Skills**  
two workbook texts at \$29.95 and \$28.00  
respectively, program guide \$29.95.
- **Survival Writing Skills** Cost: \$22.00.

## Family Literacy

### *Literacy Campaign Hopes to Entice Young Readers*

Coca-Cola, in conjunction with the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians, the ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation, and Performers for Literacy, recently launched a \$1 million campaign to support child literacy programs across the country. The Share the Stories program will start at least 200 reading circles during the next year. Local authors and library staff will participate in the circles along with Performers for Literacy, which will provide special visits using drama and improvisation games to tell stories to children. The aim of the program is to make reading a pleasurable experience for children. Share the Stories is already running in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax. For more information contact [www.abc-canada.org](http://www.abc-canada.org)

### *Family Literacy Day 2002*



This year ABC CANADA created a larger Family Literacy Day (FLC) promotional campaign than ever, thanks to generous sponsorship from Honda Canada and a growing list of other supporters. Never has the slogan *Learning Can Happen Anywhere* been more appropriate as the message did indeed appear in many ways and places leading up to Family Literacy Day on January 27th. This annual event promotes the importance of reading and engaging in learning activities within the family.

For information on the FLD Toolkit or promotional materials to inspire you to start planning for next year contact ABC CANADA at [www.abc-canada.org](http://www.abc-canada.org) or 1-800-303-1004. To find out more about the various FLD events that took place around the country, check the NALD website at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)

### *A Continuing Story*

The last issue of *literacy.ca* was dedicated to the theme of family literacy. In it we encouraged programs and individuals from across the country to continue sending in new resources and initiatives on this important topic. The following updates were received.

### *Family Learning & Health Pilot Project In New Brunswick*



Improved literacy levels almost always lead to improved standard of living. Yet, some of our most impoverished and least educated adults, many of whom are parents, seldom participate in traditional education programs, for a variety of reasons. These learners need programs that are acceptable, accessible, flexible and rooted in their own social setting. To meet this need, the Family Learning & Health project was developed in Saint John, NB.

The program operates out of a neighbourhood, tenant-run community centre, and is designed to overcome barriers like transportation and childcare to help parents of young children meet their academic, employment and personal literacy goals in a safe supportive environment. The Saint John Learning Exchange uses an individualized, student-centred curriculum in a small group setting where everyone is considered a learner. There are four components. In the **Adult Education** portion of the program, the adult learners work on literacy, pre-employment, parenting, health and life skills. The **Children's program** takes a play-based, holistic approach to child development, with the child leading play in a structured, supportive environment. Joint **Parent – Child Activities** are determined by the parent's interests. In addition, **parent support** is provided throughout the program. Parents can share ideas and concerns privately or in a group setting.

Staff help them find resources and information in a manner appropriate to their learning style and literacy level. All program participants, from staff to learners, are encouraged to set their own goals and engage in reflective practice and self-evaluation.

With sponsorship from Family & Community Services, the National Literacy Secretariat, the Greater Saint John Community Foundation, the James Venner Russel Foundation, the Crescent Valley Tenants Association and many in-kind donations from area businesses, this project provides an inspiring model of what can be accomplished when business, community and government work together. For more information about Family Learning & Health, please contact Cheryl Brown, Family Literacy Coordinator, at (506) 648-0202 or [familylearningandhealth@hotmail.com](mailto:familylearningandhealth@hotmail.com)

### ***Innovative School-based Approach to Early Literacy***



In September 2000, Pat Bock-Philipps and Barb Scott, kindergarten teachers at West Vernon Elementary School in BC, had a vision for creating a literacy program that would address the needs of the kindergarten

children attending their school while affirming and enriching any existing family literacy support.

That vision was also shared by the designers of Parents as Literacy

Supporters (PALS) program: Fiona Morrison, the Primary Coordinator at the Langley District School Board and Jim Anderson in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. The kindergarten teachers submitted their proposal to the district school board and were approved to attend the first training institute for PALS in Langley, BC. Vernon's program soon began to take shape.

Generous support from local agencies has enabled the program at West Vernon Elementary to become self-supporting this year. For the last two years the teachers have successfully raised the funds to purchase quality children's books which are included in each of the take-home kits parents use with their children. Books on numeracy, patterning, rhyming, seasons, celebrations, and culture are some of the themes chosen to best address the diversity in literature.

There are two components in the PALS program. 1) Kindergarten teachers and the children's librarian from the local public library plan a celebration to welcome new students and parents early in the fall. Franklin the Turtle visits with the children to give each new kindergartener a Franklin Goes to School book. In promoting the public library early in the school year, families have the opportunity to learn about the programs the library offers for young children. 2) Parents are given the opportunity to attend 10 workshops throughout the school year that are customized to their needs and interests. They spend time learning various literacy activities, and then practise their new skills with the children in the classroom. Take-home kits are provided for parents to use in the home.

The three-day training institutes have taken place each year since then so that the program is now running in 5 schools in the district. Each school adapts PALS and is responsible for sustaining it. Research on the program is finding a noticeable increase in the parental involvement in learning activities. The parents have become so empowered in some schools that they have continued the program themselves after their children have moved beyond kindergarten.

For more information or to sign up for the next PALS training institute (May 2, 2002), please contact teacher Barbara Scott at tel: 250-545-0549 or [barbscott@sd22.bc.ca](mailto:barbscott@sd22.bc.ca) or contact the Coordinator, Fiona Morrison at tel: 604-530-2711 or [fmorrison@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:fmorrison@sd35.bc.ca)

## Alberta's Parent-Child Literacy Strategy

The Alberta government's 2001-2004 Business Plan introduced a cross-ministry strategy for parents and their children aged 0-6 to improve family literacy practices and children's readiness for school. The Alberta Parent-Child Literacy Strategy focuses on intergenerational education approaches that combine adult literacy instruction and early oral language development in economically and socially disadvantaged families. It relies on strong partnerships with other provincial ministries and three provincial literacy organizations – the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA), the Alberta Association of Adult Literacy (AAAL) and the Centre for Family Literacy. The strategy is designed to

1. enhance the oral language, early literacy and social interaction skills of children aged 0-6 so that they are better able to achieve success at home, school and in the community;
2. strengthen and build the basic literacy skills of parents;
3. support and foster the involvement of parents in their children's learning; and
4. develop and enhance community-based partnerships that support the development of language and literacy skills of families.

Some initiatives already underway include the funding of exemplary models of family literacy programs, public awareness materials, a pilot project with home visitation programs to reach families with young children in "at risk" environments and funding to the Centre for Family Literacy to build on existing work.

For more information contact the Centre for Family Literacy in Edmonton at 780-421-7323 or [www.famlit.ca](http://www.famlit.ca)

## Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) Update

Please note that the Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) head office in Calgary, Alberta has a new telephone number. You can now contact them at tel: 403-410-1501, fax: 403-297-4949, or email to either [lmackenzie@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:lmackenzie@bowvalleycollege.ca) or [ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca)

## Family Reading is Magical



One illustration from New Brunswick's Family Literacy Day (FLD) Calendar. The calendar, which spans the period, January 2002 to April 2003 features 17 winning drawings selected in a poster contest that was launched at FLD 2000. The pictures show children and their families enjoying the many benefits of reading together. The cost is \$6, available by calling tel: 506-444-4474.



## For the Love of Reading

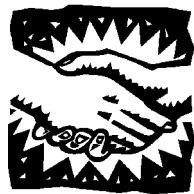
Great new handbook for parents provides information, tips and book suggestions to encourage reading development in each year (0-9) of a child's development. Contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network for a copy of *For the Love of Reading: A family's special journey of growing and learning*, at tel: 306-653-7368 or online at [www.nald.ca/sklitnet.htm](http://www.nald.ca/sklitnet.htm)

## Correction

After the last issue of literacy.ca (page 11), the Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Saskatchewan wanted to make the following clarifications. Although family literacy programming is legally mandated for offenders in the USA, the Keys to Family Literacy is not the only program specifically mandated. The four keys in this innovative program for those in conflict with the law include: Come Read with Me, Parenting, the Oral Tradition and Writing Process and Basic Computer Literacy. For further information contact LaVera Schiele (rather than Leanne McLeod) at 306-764-7204.

## Volunteer Issues

### Federal Government Announces New Voluntary Sector Initiative



On December 5, 2001, Prime Minister Chretien announced a landmark accord between the Government of Canada and Canada's voluntary sector. The Accord, which was developed within the five-year Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), spells out the values, principles and commitments what will shape future practices.

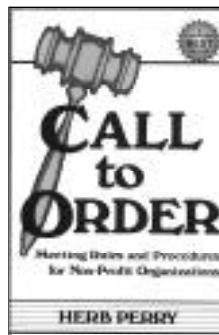
The purpose of the Accord is to strengthen the ability of both the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada to better serve Canadians. While the Accord is not a legal document, it is designed to guide the evolution of the relationship between the federal government and the voluntary sector which includes over 180,000 charities and non-profit organizations. The Accord represents a public commitment to more open, transparent, consistent and collaborative ways of working together. It is also recognition of the valuable contribution provided by millions of volunteers.

The Prime Minister also announced \$50 million over five years for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, a new program to strengthen volunteerism. The funding will also target improved data collection, analysis and dissemination of information that will improve our understanding of volunteerism and its impact on Canada's economic and social well-being. For more information check [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca) or call the Voluntary Sector Initiative at 613-238-1591 or 1-800-821-8814 ext. 235.

### Not-for-Profit Organizational Resources

Johnstone Training and Consultation Inc. has an excellent catalogue of resources for non-profit organizations. This Canadian company carries publications and multi-media resources on board development, partnerships, program

management, volunteer recruitment, fundraising and much more. Tel: 613-256-5516 or online at [www.jtcinc.ca](http://www.jtcinc.ca)



Big Bay Publishing is a small but mighty company that produces some excellent materials for volunteer boards. Two concise and useful books by Herb Perry have been especially popular. They are *Call to Order: Meeting Rules and Procedures for Non-profit Organizations*, and *The Board: A Winning Team*. Contact Big Bay Publishing for information on these and other great resources.

Tel: 519-376-9568, fax: 613-592-1407, email: [info@morfa.com](mailto:info@morfa.com) or online at

[www.morfa.com/associationconsultants/ac.html](http://www.morfa.com/associationconsultants/ac.html)

### Public Attitudes to Ponder



From the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy report, March 2001.

- 45% agree that "many charities are run by disorganized amateurs."
- 80% agree that "the work that charitable and non-profit organizations do should not be a substitute for the government's responsibility to provide services for the public."
- 77% agree that they were "more likely to support a community charity than a national or international charity."

### Call for Nominations from HRDC

The Therese Casgrain Volunteer Award is presented annually to two Canadians, a man and a woman, whose pioneering spirit, social commitment and persistent endeavour have contributed significantly to the well-being of their fellow citizens. The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2002. For more information, call 1-800-622-6232 or website: [www.volunteeraward.gc.ca](http://www.volunteeraward.gc.ca)

## News Updates

### 'Voices' is Back



Do you remember a publication entitled *Voices*? It was a magazine dedicated to the idea that literacy learners have important and powerful experiences to share through writing. Thanks to Lee Weinstein and the John Howard Society of Canada, *Voices* has risen

from the ashes, and is now available in a new format. The *Voices of Canadian Literacy* textbook contains stories gathered from learners across Canada and includes feature chapters devoted to notable Canadian literacy programs. The text is enhanced by exquisite black and white photography. In the workbook, 20 student stories taken from the textbook are accompanied by a set of activities that stimulate discussion and writing. The activities explore universal themes, such as love, loss, hope, and discrimination. The workbook contains a teacher's guide. Textbook: \$24.95, workbook: \$14.95, available from Grassroots Press at 1-888-303-3213.

### Membership Reminder



MCL is gradually switching over to a single renewal date for memberships. In the future, the membership year will run for the calendar year with renewals effective as of January 1st. While many of you receive the MCL publications through your provincial and territorial coalitions, you may find that the distribution schedules lead to late deliveries. Consider an MCL membership as the best way to ensure that you receive publications and updates directly and in the most timely manner. It's a bargain at the low price of \$15.00. Contact MCL at tel: 613-562-2464 or check the website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca)

### The Learning Edge

*The Learning Edge* is an exciting on-line newspaper that can be found at <http://www.thewclc.ca/edge/>. It's fun, it's interactive and students across Ontario are saying it's great. The third issue was just released on February 15, 2002.



*The Learning Edge* allows the learner to be a "doer" and not just a consumer of information; it downloads quickly, using modern but

widely accessible technology; has a guided tour feature; and is written at a level and in a style which is accessible to a range of learners. There are opportunities in each issue for students to try language exercises, do on-line quizzes, and email their writing to the editors.

Mike Kelly and Lindsay Kennedy are the team behind this project of the Wellington County Learning Centre. They say that *The Learning Edge* will soon be introduced as part of the Ontario's AlphaPlus and AlphaRoute online learning environment.

### Valuing Literacy in Canada

The *Valuing Literacy in Canada* program is a joint initiative of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS). It offers several types of funding to encourage multidisciplinary approaches to literacy research that encompass the social, economic and cultural dimensions of literacy in Canada. \$2.5 million has been made available in this five-year Strategic Joint Initiative that offers three types of funding: strategic partnership development grants, strategic research grants and doctoral and postdoctoral fellowship supplements. Find out more at [www.sshrc.ca/english/programinfo/grantsguide/literacy.html](http://www.sshrc.ca/english/programinfo/grantsguide/literacy.html)

## Canadian Literacy Initiatives

MCL has been receiving a number of excited calls and emails from people asking about the “too good to be true” tax advantages of donating to literacy. After some sleuthing we would like to report that the syndicated financial advisor, Jerry White, has been promoting a fundraiser called Canadian Literacy Initiatives (CLI) that is run by the Greek Orthodox Church of Canada. CLI apparently offers individuals an opportunity to participate in a program to donate comic books and trading cards to charities that will use them to promote literacy in Canada and around the world. In return for every \$1 of comic books and trading cards purchased and donated, the individual will receive a donation receipt of \$7.00. This is based on the appraised fair market value of the comic books. The minimum purchase is \$2000.00. They assert that an Ontario resident, for example, could generate a 65% on cash invested, or more.

If you get calls or want to know more, please contact Canadian Literacy Initiatives directly at tel: 905-450-1337 or check online at [www.canadianliteracy.ca](http://www.canadianliteracy.ca). Please note that MCL does not endorse this scheme but is continuing to investigate. We'll keep you posted.

## Seeking Current Research

The Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English is being updated. This online directory currently contains bibliographic information, annotations and full-text documents of adult literacy research conducted in Canada from 1994 to the present. Already it has over 200 references which can be found at [www.nald.ca/crd/search.htm](http://www.nald.ca/crd/search.htm)

Make sure your current or completed studies are included. The resource is not limited to academic research so practitioner and learner research is certainly encouraged. The database does not include evaluations, needs assessments, opinion articles, testimonials or program descriptions.

To share your information, contact Pat Campbell at tel: 780-492-2984 or email: [patty.campbell@ualberta.ca](mailto:patty.campbell@ualberta.ca)

## The NLS Has Moved!

The National Literacy Secretariat has moved from their offices in Hull across the river to downtown Ottawa. The new address is 15th Floor, 360 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J9, tel: 613-946-1388 and fax: 613-946-5882.



## NALD Wins Fitzpatrick Award

On December 7, 2001 in Fredericton, John O'Leary, President of Frontier College, was pleased to award NALD with the Frontier College Fitzpatrick Award, in recognition of leadership and outstanding service for literacy. Congratulations to NALD.

## Federal Front



*Knowledge Matters* (see box on page 9) provides a rallying point for the literacy community to influence the development of a national literacy

strategy. Although the federal government is very concerned about building a “world class” Canadian workforce, there is reason to fear that literacy could drop off the bottom of the government's agenda.

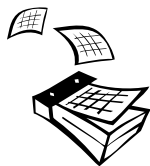
At last November's Literacy Action Day on Parliament Hill, and in discussions with various government officials, MCL has been advised to work with other literacy and non-literacy allies to develop our own vision and framework for a national strategy. Even if this is not a priority for the government, it IS a priority for us. Perhaps we can help move the agenda ahead with a good “case,” a well-developed framework, and a strong alliance. Building the case, the framework and the alliance is on MCL's agenda for the coming months.

Your input is important. Watch for information and tools on MCL's website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca)

## Coming events

**April 14-16, 2002**

**Forging the Future Conference**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Three-day national conference through NAASLN, the National Association for Adult with Special Learning Needs. Call 1-800-496-9222 or check online at [www.NAASLN.com](http://www.NAASLN.com)

**Tuesday, April 23, 2002**

**Canada Book Day**

Canada-wide event that coincides with UNESCO-declared World Book Day. This event celebrates reading and books. See their website at [www.canadabookday.com](http://www.canadabookday.com) for promotional materials and information on a special contest.

**Saturday, May 6, 2002**

**Annual General Meeting of MCL**  
Ottawa, Ontario

**June 27 – 29, 2002**

**Summer Institute:  
Adult Numeracy – Math, Life and Learning**  
Montreal, Quebec

The Centre for Literacy of Quebec in partnership with the US National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) will sponsor a Summer Institute on adult numeracy. This three-day think tank of practitioners, researchers and policy-makers from Canada, the US, the UK and Australia will explore what we already know about adults learning math and what we still need to learn. Come and share model practices in teaching and in staff development from diverse settings. Details online at [www.nald.ca/litcent.htm](http://www.nald.ca/litcent.htm) or call 514-931-8731, ext. 1415 to request a brochure.

# literacy.ca

**Movement for Canadian Literacy**

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*literacy.ca* is an "information space" for the literacy community in Canada. Its purpose is to keep literacy workers and supporters posted on emerging issues, resources and research.

We welcome letters to the editor, articles, news items, ideas for future issues, and feedback on any of the news and views you find in these pages, as well as our web site. While we are particularly interested in material that addresses literacy issues, we welcome submissions that relate literacy to other social, economic or political issues. We have no formal submission guidelines, and the editor reserves the right to edit or not include submissions in future issues. The views expressed in *literacy.ca* are not necessarily those of MCL, its Board of Directors or the Editor, but are published to stimulate discussion on a range of adult literacy issues.

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# www.literacy.ca

Please visit the Movement for Canadian Literacy on the World Wide Web.