



Keeping Literacy on the National Agenda

These are interesting times for the literacy movement in Canada. Since Paul Martin became the leader of the federal Liberal party and the new Prime Minister, there has been massive reorganization at the former Ministry of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). Literacy now falls within the new Ministry of Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD), under Minister Joe Volpe.

It's not yet clear how these changes might impact federal literacy policies and programs.

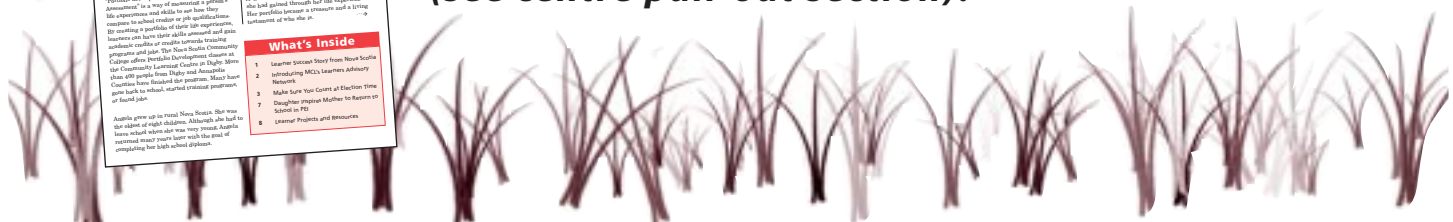
All this is unfolding against the backdrop of a growing awareness of the need for intergovernmental and intersectoral action on literacy. Two throne speeches; wide-ranging national consultations; a national Summit on Innovation and Learning; a parliamentary Standing Committee Report; and the ...→

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NEW! *Learners in Action* newsletter is now an insert (see centre pull-out section).



government's response to that report have all positioned literacy as a national priority. Over the past two years, leaders from many sectors have echoed that message. The hard work of the literacy community played a key role in fostering this increased understanding and commitment.



It's likely that a federal election will be called this Spring, and election time is a great time to raise awareness and support for important social issues. **Here are a few suggestions for helping to make literacy an election issue in your community and a priority in Ottawa.**

Get to know your current MP. In most election races, incumbent MPs have the advantage — in the last election, 256 of 301 MPs were re-elected. Don't wait until the election to start forging a strong connection with your MP. And don't be shy — politicians want and need to stay in touch with the realities of their constituents.

Invite your MP, or registered election candidates, to visit your program. Personal contact is always the best way to build a relationship. Try to involve learners since they can provide the reality of personal experience. Many politicians have become literacy advocates after visiting local programs.

Organize voter education activities for learners in the lead-up to the election. Election time provides an opportunity to practice literacy skills in the real-life context of learning how to participate

in the electoral process. The Elections Canada website at www.elections.ca provides free resources that may help you to plan these activities. As well, MCL is producing voter education materials which will be available online at www.literacy.ca by the time the election is called.

Use the election to mobilize support. In addition to our voter education materials, MCL is also developing issue-oriented resources to help make the upcoming election an opportunity to build commitment to action on literacy.

Remember, you are the experts when it comes to literacy in your community. You have the frontline experience that MPs need to help them understand the issues and make informed decisions.

Feel you're too busy? Start with an hour a week. MOST people in our field are too busy — and that's why this kind of engagement is so important. It doesn't take long to write a letter, add a politician to your mailing list, or set up a meeting. Increasing political support for literacy is worth the investment.

"...we must commit to investment in human capital – education and training. That means investing the dollars required and using the tax system to fulfill a simple promise: *that all Canadians seeking to improve themselves through learning will be provided the opportunity to do so.*"

Prime Minister Paul Martin,
Making History: The Politics of Achievement, 2003.

Stay Active in Provincial/Territorial Politics Too!



Solid, long-term literacy advances in Canada will depend on cooperation between the federal and provincial / territorial governments. Provincial and territorial leaders have expressed their support, in principle, for a national literacy agenda. The above suggestions can be applied to your interactions with your provincial / territorial politicians as well. We can't have too many literacy champions!

Research and Innovation

Moving The Markers



A new report from the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) encourages literacy researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to take a fresh look at literacy statistics. In *Moving the Markers: New Perspectives on Adult Literacy*

Rates in Canada, author Susan Sussman reviews the data from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and discusses the technical and conceptual issues associated with methods of estimating population literacy rates. The report walks the reader through a re-analysis of the IALS data to give a more detailed and complex picture of those with low literacy in different provinces and territories. The author argues that literacy stakeholders must take a more active role in discussing and debating literacy statistics, who uses them, and how they are used. The report ends with 25 recommendations with broad-reaching implications for literacy practitioners and policy-makers.

The report is available at the MCL website at: www.literacy.ca.

Increasing Participation



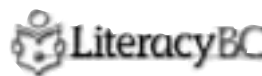
Strategies to Increase Participation: A Look at Underemployed Adults in Basic Skills Programs is a report prepared by the QUILL Learning Network in Ontario.

The study examines the barriers to accessing training for underemployed adults. Based on six months of research, the report contains recommendations developed by frontline workers for how basic training and employment preparation programs can make their services more accessible to underemployed adults. The report is available for \$15. Contact the QUILL Network at tel: 519-881-4655 or info@quillnet.org, or visit www.quillnet.org.

Innovative Approach to Youth Literacy

Approximately 25 percent of eight-grade students in British Columbia do not obtain their high school graduation certificate within six years of finishing grade eight. Many do not graduate at all. Some of these young people have serious difficulty with reading and writing, and as a result, have difficulty with all their school subjects. The New School @ Surrey is a pioneering program developed by Literacy BC and the Surrey School District for high school students who have great difficulty reading and writing. This experimental research project is intended to establish an alternative program in Surrey and to foster improved literacy services for youth in British Columbia and throughout Canada.

The school has one full-time onsite researcher. Two other researchers develop curriculum materials and work with staff to assess effective approaches to instruction and learning. The program uses the concept of Multiple Intelligences, which emphasizes multiple ways of learning and interacting with the world. Traditional education emphasizes learning through listening, reading, and rote memorization. But some students who have trouble with those skills may have strengths in other areas such as artistic or physical skills. Since students may not learn easily from traditional methods, the program offers multiple ways of engaging course content, including a strong emphasis on visual content.



Literacy BC has released a summary of Year One Research Findings for the program. Researchers noted great improvements in the overall attendance records of the students. On average, reading levels jumped approximately two grade levels during the year, and all of the students finished at least one novel during the year, most for the first time. Some students who were previously non-readers were even caught sneak-reading in other subjects and had to be asked to put away their novels!

For a program description and more of this project's interesting findings, visit the Literacy BC website at: www.literacy.bc.ca. Look under the New School Project Update.

Linking Literacy and Libraries



Do literacy programs know what their local public library has to offer? Do public libraries understand the structure and resource needs of literacy programs? Since the fall of 2002,

Ontario's AlphaPlus Centre has been funded by the National Literacy Secretariat to study the relationship between Ontario's literacy agencies and local public libraries, to examine partnerships that are working, and to assess where others could take root.

The Phase One findings indicate that:

- Over 30% of the literacy programs surveyed have existing partnerships with their local library
- Over 40% of the libraries surveyed have existing partnerships with local literacy programs
- 78% of libraries without partnerships said that it would be "very to somewhat" helpful to develop them
- A majority of the libraries surveyed expressed strong interest in accessing AlphaPlus resources and staff expertise to support adult literacy programming in their libraries.

These findings confirm that in Ontario there is a growing commitment on the part of both literacy groups and public libraries to forge viable partnerships. As library boards increasingly target adult literacy promotion as a service goal that supports community development, the *Linking Literacy and Libraries* project will help encourage effective community partnerships in Ontario and perhaps beyond. Phase Two, now underway, is working on these issues with a focus on Anglophone and Native literacy.

For more information contact the Project Coordinator, Mary Reynolds at mreynolds@alphaplus.ca or 416-322-1012 or 800-788-1120, ext. 104. You can also read about the Linking Literacy and Libraries project at: www.alphaplus.ca/LinkLitLib.html.

Calling Learners with Disabilities

The Neil Squire Foundation is studying the barriers that learners with disabilities face in accessing adult literacy training. They would like to interview students about their experiences. If you or someone you know has a physical disability and has trouble with reading and writing, please contact the following researchers to participate in a one hour interview. A small honorarium will be paid to participants.

- In British Columbia or Alberta, contact Tim Readman at tel: 604-874-8895 or email: tim@timreadman.com.
- In Saskatchewan or Manitoba, contact Rod Ashfield at tel: 306-751-2624 or email: roda@neilsquire.ca.
- In Ontario, contact Ellen Cornell at tel: 613-723-3575 or email: ellenc@neilsquire.ca.
- In the Maritimes, contact May Burrell at tel: 506-450-7999 or email: mayb@neilsquire.ca.

Not too Late to Subscribe



Literacies is the journal about adult literacy and research and practice in Canada. The journal is celebrating its first year of publication. Now free distribution to the literacy field comes to an end. For the low subscription price of \$15 per year, you

can continue receiving this dynamic and evolving publication.

Response to the first two issues has been very positive. Some articles are theoretical, some are descriptive, some are challenging and some are creative. The range of pieces includes articles, interviews, reviews, personal reflections and e-mail discussions. Through listserves and web forums, *Literacies* also seeks to expand the opportunity for discussion and connection. *Literacies* also wants you to share your thoughts and words. For more information check www.literacyjournal.ca.

Learner Self-Management and Self-Direction



Supporting Learning, Supporting Change is a field report that summarizes a 2002 research project by the Ontario

Literacy Coalition (OLC) on self-management and self-direction. The purpose of the research was to highlight the importance of self-management and self-direction to the learning process and lay a foundation for further research in the area. The project included interviews with practitioners, researchers, and learners from a broad range of programs across Ontario, as well as academic research, a literature review, and an online discussion. The field report describes the research method and findings, explores current practices in Ontario, lists resources, and offers a new model for supporting learners in building self-awareness and self-direction.

The field report is available on the OLC website at: www.on.literacy.ca. Print copies of both the field report and the full research report can be purchased from the OLC at tel: 416-963-5787 or email: olc@on.literacy.ca.

The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy



National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy

The Annual Review of Adult Learning and Literacy is a resource for policymakers,

scholars, and practitioners, published annually by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) in Boston. Each annual review presents the major issues, important research, and best practices in the field of adult learning and literacy. Volume Four has just been released and features articles on the year's most critical topics, annotated reviews of the best books and journal articles, and timely updates on evolving policy and research. For information, contact NCSALL at tel: 617-495-4843 or e-mail: ncsall@gse.harvard.edu, or visit the website at: www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/index.html.

Statistics Canada Offers Resources for Literacy Researchers and Educators

The Statistics Canada website offers two resources of interest to literacy researchers and educators.



The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) Database, 1998, is now available for free download. The interactive system allows users to retrieve customized tables of information drawn from more than 20 countries using variables such as adult

education, community activities, demographics, educational experience, household information, and many others. IALS, initiated in 1994, offers the world's only source of comparative data on participation in adult education and training and includes data from 23 countries or regions.

To download the database, visit

www.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89-588-XIE.htm or for more information on the database or how to order IALS reports, tel: 1-800-263-1136 or e-mail: infostats@statcan.ca.

The Statistics Canada website also includes E-STAT, an interactive learning tool for teachers and students. E-STAT offers an enormous warehouse of statistics about Canada and its population in a dynamic, easy-to-use, and versatile format. For teachers, E-STAT contains lesson plans developed by educators specifically for senior elementary level and up as well as links to relevant data sources for compulsory Social Studies courses organized by province, grade, and major topic. Canadian educational institutions can obtain free access to the internet version by registering at the E-STAT website. Once their institution is registered, teachers and students can access E-STAT from school or home with the institution's user identification and password.

For information, tel: 1-800-465-1222, or e-mail: e-stat@statcan.ca or visit: www.statcan.ca/english/Estat/intro.htm.

Research Spotlight



In this section, we feature research highlights from the Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English. This comprehensive online resource is constantly updated to improve coordination and information-sharing among Canadian literacy practitioners and researchers. Find completed research as well as research in progress in the Directory at www.nald.ca/crd/start.htm.

Here's a summary of one innovative family literacy research project.

Promoting Literacy Among Children From Low-Income Families

This research examined reading beliefs and proficiency in very young children and parents from low-income families in Newfoundland. Julia O'Sullivan and Mark Howe conducted a large-scale study with 702 low-income parents and 539 children, aged 4 to 8 years. As a group, these children had pre-reading and reading skills well below national averages. Although the majority of the children were not proficient readers, the sample included children who were among the most outstanding readers in Canada. This study examines why some children became excellent readers, while others did not.

The findings suggested that before Grade 2, proficient readers follow one of two independent paths to reading excellence: skill vs. will. The skill path is based on knowledge of print conventions while the will path is based on the child's confidence in their reading ability. This article focuses on the skill path.

In this study, outstanding readers on the skill path were very knowledgeable about book and print conventions. For example, these children knew that English is read from left to right. This type of knowledge comes from interaction with and exposure to books. The implication of this finding is that even small increases in exposure to print for children living in poverty could result in considerable benefits for their reading.

The parents of the proficient readers on the skill path were distinguished by their extremely positive beliefs about their child's competence. In every



grade level, small increases in parents beliefs about their children's competence went hand-in-hand with increases in the children's knowledge of print conventions and, in turn, with an increase in children's reading proficiency. This finding suggests that professional development (PD) for parents involved in family literacy programs should include an in-depth exploration of their beliefs about competent reading.

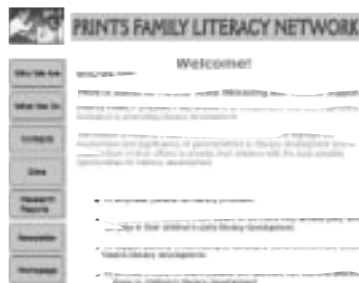
To obtain the full-text document for this study, go to the Directory of Adult Literacy Research database at www.nald.ca/crd/. At this site you will also find the recently released report called *From Coast to Coast: A Thematic Summary of Canadian Adult Literacy Research*. This overview of research projects identifies 10 major themes as well as gaps within Canada's body of adult literacy research. Look up this report by clicking on *From Coast to Coast* at the Directory website.

Reference: O'Sullivan, J. & Howe, M.L. (1999). *Overcoming poverty: promoting literacy in children from low-income families*. Thunder Bay, ON: Lakehead University.

Family Literacy

PRINTS Helps Parents Foster Early Learning

The PRINTS Family Literacy Network grew out of the idea that parents and teachers can work together to provide children with the best possible opportunities for literacy development. PRINTS stands for **P**arents **R**oles **I**nteracting with



Teacher **S**upport. Begun at the MacMorran Community Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland, the PRINTS model encourages parents

and other caregivers to engage very young children in literacy-promoting activities at home. Through the 12-week program, participants learn to use talking, reading, play, drawing and scribbling, and print materials in the environment (such as street signs and food packaging) as a springboard to encourage literacy skills.

From its modest beginnings, the PRINTS model has now spread across Canada to communities in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba. The PRINTS Family Literacy Network publishes a twice-yearly newsletter, runs train-the-trainer workshops, and has a number of print and video resources for parents and facilitators. The Regina Learning Centre, which works with many aboriginal learners, is developing an aboriginal supplement to the PRINTS model. And a new family literacy program called "STEPS" (**S**trategy **T**eaching, **E**mpowerment, **P**artnerships, and **S**uccess) has just been launched to address parents and teachers of children in grades one to nine. For more information on PRINTS, contact Dr. William Fagan at tel: 709-895-2022 or email: wfagan@mun.ca or Dr. Mary Cronin at tel: 306-585-5229 or email: cronin@leroy.cc.uregina.ca. You can also find PRINTS on the web at www.nald.ca/prints.

Weaving Literacy into Family and Community Life



In 2000, the partnership of the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP Canada) and the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) created a series of resource guides entitled *Weaving Literacy*

into Family and Community Life. Although family resource programs were receptive to promote literacy in their programs, they also requested more direct support and information in order to make connections and partnerships with literacy agencies in their communities. As a result, a new project by MCL and FRP Canada is now preparing training based on the *Weaving Literacy* materials. The goal is to support family resource programs and literacy organizations to integrate literacy initiatives into their communities.

The project will conduct training events on a regional level in 'teams' that include representatives from both literacy and family support projects. After initial training, the project will support ongoing collaboration as the teams develop their literacy action plans. Aboriginal literacy and Francophone literacy needs are integral to this project that is aiming to keep training close to the community level.

Applications have now been received from family resource programs. Successful applicants will be asked to find a literacy partner from their community to attend the training. Stay tuned for updates as this project unfolds. For more information, contact Janice MacAulay at tel: 613-237-7667 (ext. 222) or email: macaulay@frp.ca or Suzanne Smythe at: smythemu@interchange.ubc.ca or Bonnie Soroke at: bsoroke@thehub.literacy.bc.ca.

Non-Profit Sector Issues and Resources

Funding Matters



A new report by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) and the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO) indicates that recent changes in funding models are affecting the ability of the non-profit and voluntary sector to fulfill its important role

in Canadian society. *Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada's New Funding Regime on Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations*, by Katherine Scott, warns that the sector as a whole is at serious risk if action is not taken immediately. The report is based on a series of focus groups held in different regions of the country as well as roundtable discussions and interviews with funders, a written survey of non-profit and voluntary sector organizations, in-depth case studies, and a review of existing research.

The report stresses that non-profit and voluntary organizations participating in the study were generally supportive of the aims of funders to increase accountability, support partnerships, promote diversification of funding sources, and foster efficiency and innovation in the sector. But the study found that changes in funding models have had unforeseen consequences for non-profit and voluntary organizations.

In particular, moves towards more targeted and project-based funding initiated in the 1990's have left non-profit and voluntary organizations scrambling to come up with money for administrative costs and core programming. Administrative costs not attached to a project are considered less and less "fundable." Funding is now provided for shorter periods of time, and is increasingly unpredictable. The resulting swings in revenue can undermine organizations' capacity to provide consistent quality programs and services, to plan ahead, and to retain experienced staff. The report warns that some organizations are

losing their basic infrastructure and are becoming "a series of projects connected to a hollow foundation."

As organizations move toward more project-based funding, some are falling prey to what the report calls "mission drift," a move away from the organization's core mandate, in order to fulfill funding requirements. Not only does this mean the organization's primary reason for existing is not being addressed, but it can also damage an organization's credibility in the community.

In addition, funders' increased emphasis on funding programs based on partnerships and in-kind contributions means that organizations often need financial commitments from other sources in order to be eligible for funding. This can lead to a financial "house of cards" where the loss of one partnership can bring down a whole interlocking funding structure. And when organizations must cobble together projects and partners to survive, being seen as an outspoken advocate on behalf of one's client group can be regarded as too risky, leading to an "advocacy chill" in the non-profit and voluntary sector.

Finally, the report notes that— partly as a result of the new funding models— the non-profit and voluntary sector is suffering from "Human Resource Fatigue." Increased reporting requirements, the necessity of seeking funding from multiple sources, and the move towards project-based programming is stretching paid staff and volunteers to the limit.

All this in a sector where human resources are already in critical condition due to lower pay levels, fewer benefits, and less security than in government and for-profit sectors.

While the report warns that the non-profit and voluntary sector as a whole is at serious risk, it also emphasizes that immediate action on the part of funders and non-profit/voluntary organizations could help reverse some of the alarming trends noted in the study.

You can read the full study at www.ccsd.ca (under publications). For more information, contact the Canadian Council on Social Development at tel: 613-236-8977 or email: council@ccsd.ca.

Charities, Advocacy and Political Activities

Last fall, the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) released new administrative guidelines on political activities by charities. Organizations can become registered as charities by meeting certain requirements in the Income Tax Act (the Act). In particular, they must demonstrate that they generate a public benefit. Once registered, a charity pays no income tax and is able to provide donors with the incentive of charitable tax receipts that are then used for non-refundable tax credits or deductions.

In recognition of the invaluable contribution and expertise of charities, the federal government created the new guidelines to enable charities to inform the public about certain issues and to contribute to public policy debates. Under the Act, a charity must devote substantially all of its resources to charitable purposes and activities however a small amount of no more than 10% of total resources per year, may be devoted to political activities.

So what are political activities?

Activities are considered political if a charity explicitly: communicates a call to political action; communicates to the public that government laws, policies or decisions should be retained, opposed or changed; or indicates in its materials (internal or external) that the intention of the activity is to incite or organize to pressure an elected representative or public official to retain, oppose or change the law, policy or decision of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country.

A charity may take part in these type of activities if they are non-partisan and come under the stated purposes of the charity. This means that within its 10% of allowable political activity, a charity may engage in permitted activities such as:

- Buying a newspaper ad to pressure the government
- Organizing a march or rally on Parliament Hill
- Using a mail campaign to urge supporters to contact the government
- Organizing a conference to support the charity's views.

And what are charitable activities?



The Act considers advocacy to be "demonstrated support for a cause or particular point of view". It also states that advocacy may not necessarily be a political activity if it is part of a charity's work to further its charitable purposes. For instance, the following activities are allowable within the 90% of an organization's charitable activities:

- Distributing the charity's research (online, to election candidates, etc.)
- Preparing reports to Parliamentary committees or distributing research reports to all Members of Parliament
- Giving interviews about a research report
- Joining a government advisory panel to discuss policy changes.

The guidelines are outlined in a CCRA policy statement released in September 2003 and can be viewed on the web at:

www.ccradrc.gc.ca/tax/charities/policy/cps/cps-022-e.html.

Does this go far enough?

Many groups have said the new guidelines are still too restrictive, and several national organizations, including the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF), the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (CCP), and the Institute for Media, Policy, and Civil Society (IMPACS) have publicly called on Ottawa to re-think the policy. In response to the new guidelines, IMPACS and the CCP published a report in September called *Charities: Enhancing Democracy in Canada*, which argues charities should not be restricted in their ability to advocate for policy change and recommends a minor change to the Income Tax Act to lift the restrictions. For more information, contact the IMPACS Charities and Democracy Project, at tel: 604-682-1953 ext. 101, or email:

outreach@impacs.org, or visit: www.impacs.org.

Resources for the Non-profit Workplace

Job quality and human resource issues are a hot topic in the non-profit sector these days. Here are a few resources worth exploring.

- The Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) has conducted a series of comprehensive studies of paid employment in Canada's non-profit sector. The groundbreaking research examined the **non-profit sector's workforce**, its working conditions and opportunities for skill development, its retention and renewal challenges, and its human resource management practices. CPRN has published five reports detailing the findings of their research. All five research reports, as well as summary reports and supplemental articles, are available for free download at the CPRN website at: www.cprn.org. You can also call CPRN for more information tel: 613-567-7500.
- The CPRN also has an interesting web resource for those interested in finding out **how their job compares to those in other organizations**. The site at www.jobquality.ca allows visitors to browse through dozens of indicators on job quality, and to compare their work experience, their firm and their industry with others across the country. The site is updated regularly with new indicators.
- One very informative website is called **Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector (HRVS)**. HRVS provides information and tools to help voluntary organizations attract, support, and keep employees. The site includes a *Good Human Resource Practices Toolkit*, a *Human Resource Planning Guide*, reports on employee and retirement benefits in the voluntary sector. You can even order a CD-ROM information package for boards of directors on the importance of human resources, and more. For more information call tel: 613-236-2664 or visit their website at www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca.
- The Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE) has released the *2003 Association*

Executive Benefits and Compensation Report.

The report is recognized as the definitive source of compensation and benefits information in Canada's not-for-profit sector. For more information, contact CSAE at tel: 800-461-3608 or visit their website at

www.csaecanada.com/compensation.

- Volunteer Canada has released a 28-page *Guide to Volunteer Program Management Resources*. The guide lists books, guides, manuals, and other resources from Canada and around the world. A brief description and review accompanies each item. The guide is available as a free download from the Volunteer Canada website at: www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php. You can also purchase a print copy for \$7.50 plus taxes and shipping from Volunteer Canada at tel: 800-670-0401 or email: info@volunteer.ca, or visit: www.volunteer.ca.

Advocacy on the Agenda



Increasingly, voluntary organizations recognize that playing an active role in influencing government policy is key to achieving their missions. At the same time, government acknowledges that the voluntary sector has a valuable and crucial role to play in shaping effective public policy. Yet many voluntary boards don't have the background or skills needed to successfully engage in policy dialogue.

In response to this need Volunteer Canada and United Way of Canada-Centraide Canada have developed *Advocacy on the Agenda: Preparing Voluntary Boards For Public Policy Participation* to support voluntary organizations and their boards of directors in their policy dialogue efforts.

The 58-page manual is available for free download at: www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/boardadvocacymanual.pdf or you can order a print copy for \$12 plus taxes and shipping. Contact Volunteer Canada at tel: 1-800-670-0401, e-mail: info@volunteer.ca, or visit www.volunteer.ca.

Resources



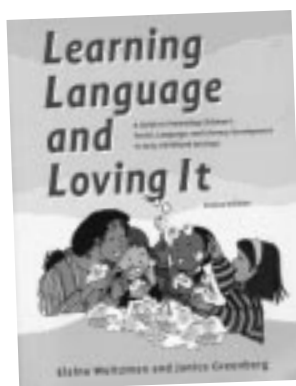
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The latest Grass Roots Press catalogue is now available. Request your catalogue or order some of the following new resources by calling tel: 888-303-3213, e-mailing

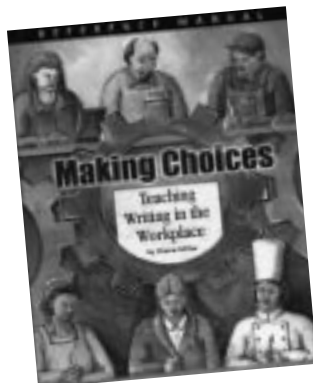
grassrt@telusplanet.net, or check the website at www.literacyservices.com.

Learning Language and Loving It



A beautifully illustrated and updated guidebook that provides a step-by-step approach to promoting children's social, language and literacy development in child care, preschool and other early childhood settings. Also available in French. Cost \$44.95.

Making Choices: Teaching Writing in the Workplace



A flexible resource package with dozens of writing activities for workplace educators. Instructional activities manual \$64.95, Instructors reference manual \$21.95.



From New Readers Bookstore



The latest New Readers Bookstore catalogue is now available from Laubach Literacy of Canada. Request your catalogue or order some of the following new resources by calling tel: 877-634-1980 or email: newreadersbookstore@nb.aibn.com.

Math Sense

A comprehensive series that will help adult students overcome math anxiety and discover math as interesting and purposeful. The five titles integrate instruction, assessment and GED skills to help learners develop good number sense — all within the context of real-life experiences. Prices of student workbooks and teacher guides vary.



Writing Canadian English

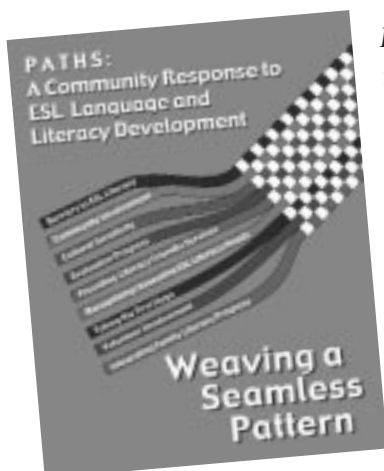
A two-level series that can be used from Junior High Schools to adult levels in a regular structured classroom or in one where the students proceed at their own pace. The beginning level combines grammar and vocabulary lessons encompassing Canadian culture, history, and politics. The intermediate level explores topics such as law, citizenship, and the government. Both levels include a student book and a teacher's handbook. Student book \$18.95, Teacher's handbook \$20.95.



Community Responses to ESL and Literacy Needs

Paths: A Community Response to ESL Language and Literacy Development is a resource to share with partners and agencies in your community!

Imagine yourself in an agency that is working, for the first time, with numerous ESL clients who have weak language or literacy skills. You may find yourself asking questions such as, "does he understand my instructions?" "Is she really able to comprehend the written instructions I've given her?" "Why won't he fill out the questionnaire?" "Why is she asking questions about things she just read?"



Paths was created as a resource for a wide variety of community agencies that work with clients with low literacy and/or English language skills. Whether in the health industry, social or education fields, *PATHS* is meant to provide

frontline community workers with information that will help them address language and literacy issues in their own way.

The resource is divided into nine sections: Cultural Sensitivity, Community Involvement, Barriers to Literacy, Evaluating Progress, Providing Literacy Friendly Services, Recognizing/Assessing ESL Literacy Needs, Taking the First Steps, Volunteer Involvement, and Integrating Family Literacy Programs. Each section includes an overview, a workshop outline, and a resource list.

Paths can be purchased as one product or as a series of four packages. For more information, contact the Further Education Society of Alberta, tel: 403-410-1501 or email:

lmackenzie@bowvalleycollege.ca or
ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca.

Adaptive Technology

Two new resources explore the use of adaptive technology with literacy learners.

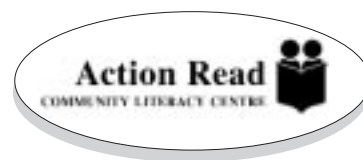
Captured Wisdom is an interactive CD-ROM resource designed to demonstrate ways of integrating technology into adult education instruction. The set contains seven short videos of actual adult education classrooms. Each video clip includes a Q & A session with the featured teacher and other adult educators who watched the clips in focus groups. The questions are divided into the following categories: Learners, Instructional Activities, Project Management, Technology Issues, and Products and Assessments. The set also includes a short instruction booklet to help educators get the most out of "Captured Wisdom."



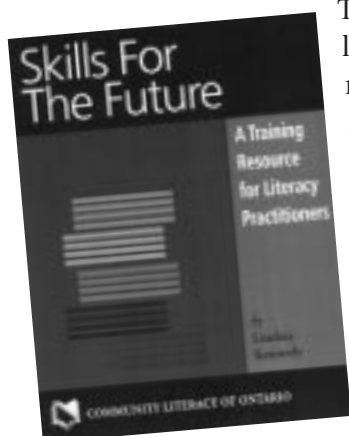
The CD-ROMs are free-of-charge while supplies last. For more information, email: ginsburg@literacy.upenn.edu or visit: www.literacyonline.org/capturedwisdom.html.

The Action Read Community Literacy Centre in Guelph invites you to learn

about its *Literacy and Adaptive Technology Project*. The project evaluated adaptive software that assists learners in reading and writing text. In their two studies, they report that many learners found adaptive technology very helpful. They found that learners experienced success with greater independence; that the multi-sensory approach appealed to a wide range of learning styles and needs; that using adaptive software increased learners' motivation; and that the skills learned increased the employability of the learners. For project reports and evaluations of different adaptive software visit the Action Read website at: www.actionread.com. (Follow the links under Computer Learning).



Training for Literacy Practitioners



The demands placed on literacy practitioners are many and varied. If you are feeling just a little busy, then the latest resource from Community Literacy Ontario (CLO), may be just what the doctor ordered. *Skills for the Future: A Training Resource for Literacy*

Practitioners is a handbook that has earned rave reviews from practitioners who've gotten their hands on them. It includes sections on volunteers, adult learners, understanding the role of your agency, identifying and meeting needs, instructional strategies, learner exit and follow-up, and professional development.

The manual was distributed free of charge to CLO members, and was available for purchase for \$50 by other groups until CLO ran out. Although the resource is technically out of print, CLO may be able to reprint if they get enough orders. If you're interested contact CLO at tel: 705-733-2312 or email: clo@bellnet.ca or online at: www.nald.ca/clo.htm.

Promoting Civic Literacy

All of us are concerned about promoting broader participation in political life. In his book, *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work*, political scientist Henry Milner of Laval University explores how the ability of citizens to make sense of their political world — their “civic literacy” — can influence democratic institutions and processes. He also shows that the more “politicized” citizens are, the more likely they will be to take part in public life. The book is published by UBC Press and is available in major bookstores and on the internet. You can also contact the distributor toll-free at tel: 877-864-8477 or e-mail orders@gtwcanada.com.

Free Software

The Neil Squire Foundation and Capilano College are proud to announce the release of SARAW LITE for Windows™. SARAW LITE is an entry level version of the award winning SARAW, Speech Assisted Reading and Writing, adult literacy software. SARAW is a self-paced and effective software package designed to help instructors teach basic adult literacy at the grade 2 to 7 level. Its built-in audio feedback allows students to hear and identify mistakes in grammar and spelling by themselves.

Any Canadian non-profit organization or publicly funded educational institution that teaches adult literacy can receive 2 free licenses for the SARAW LITE software. Simply send your request on your organization's letterhead to:

SARAW LITE Registration
c/o Neil Squire Foundation
Suite 220, 2250 Boundary Rd.
Burnaby, BC
V5M 3Z3



If you are a non-profit organization, include a copy of your non-profit certificate of registration as well as your email and telephone contact information. Once approved, you can download the software at: <http://www.saraw.net>. For more information, contact the Neil Squire Foundation at tel: 604-412-7599 or email: info@saraw.net.

Looking for Feedback from SARAW Instructors

For those already using SARAW, a project called the Literacy and Disability Study (LADS) needs your help! The Study is gathering the different models and approaches that are used to deliver literacy instruction to adults with disabilities, using SARAW software. Please contact Harry Lew at the Neil Squire Foundation at tel: 604-412-7599 or email: harryl@neilsquire.ca.



Workplace/Workforce Literacy

How We Read Work

Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace is a book based on the first large-scale Canadian ethnographic study of workforce literacy. Researchers Mary Ellen Belfiore, Tracy A. Defoe, Sue Folinsbee, Judy Hunter and Nancy S. Jackson explore workplace literacy as a complex social practice that exists within the distinct culture of workplaces.



The ethnographic approach examines in detail, aspects of life that are taken for granted, or seen as just part of how things work. By using this methodology, the researchers were able to view workplace literacy in relation to how work is organized and how that affects who is expected to read and write what and why. This is a radical departure from the more common perspective, which sees workplace literacy in relation to the concrete skills needed to deal with specific work-related paperwork.

To order a copy of *Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace*, order through your local bookstore or contact the publisher, Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates, at: www.erlbaum.com. You can also read the book's introduction at: www.nald.ca/insites/intro.htm.



Ontario's Workplace Work

The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) has been focusing on literacy for work for several years. It is currently involved in a project to build support and develop partnerships for workforce and workplace literacy in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Division of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Presently, the OLC is undertaking a consultation with labour, business, and the literacy field to find out what these groups need from each other and how they might work together and support each other's work in the future. The results of the consultation will be available in June 2004.

For over two years, the OLC worked with five first site networks and their delivery agencies to develop their capacity to market and deliver workplace literacy programs. Three OLC workplace literacy projects were funded through the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. As a result of feedback through evaluations and consultations from these projects, it became clear that the Ontario literacy field was not in a position to deliver workplace literacy. Instead, there was a need to focus on building the capacity of literacy deliverers to prepare their students for employment-related goals.

At the OLC website you can read reports on the progress of these initiatives and download several excellent resources and publications.

For more information on OLC's projects or to order materials, contact the OLC at tel: 416-963-5787 or visit: www.on.literacy.ca.

Action Research Guide for Workplace Literacy Instructors

Action Research in Workplace Education: A Handbook for Literacy Instructors is a new resource by Maurice Taylor. This book focuses on how to use action research in workplace education programs. Based on a project funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, the handbook contends that action research can help change literacy practices in teaching and learning. Through the handbook, workplace instructors are introduced to the ideas of action research and are guided through the process of carrying out a research project. The resource includes models of action research, case studies of eight action research projects, a bibliography, and practical exercises.



Hard copies of the handbook are sold out, but the handbook can be viewed or downloaded from the NALD website at:

www.nald.ca. Follow the links to the NALD Literacy Collection.

Integrating Essential Skills in Adult Basic Education Programs

The Government of Canada has produced occupational descriptions of the essential skills needed in over 150 entry-level jobs. Unfortunately these Essential Skill Profiles are under-used in adult basic education programs.

As part of the province of Manitoba's ongoing efforts to develop materials to help literacy practitioners teach their learners, the Centre for Education and Work (CEW) is developing an online workshop and DVD to go along with a Facilitator's Guide. The focus of these resources is to integrate Essential Skills career information with a community literacy approach. For more information on this project contact Robin Millar at email: rojomillar@shaw.ca or visit: www.cewca.org.

Learning Disabilities

Destination Employment Program is a Lifeline For Many Participants



Destination Employment is an employment preparation program for Canadian adults with learning disabilities. Developed by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, five years ago, the program has now expanded to 15 sites from coast to coast.

Since *Destination Employment* was launched over 600 adults with learning disabilities have received formal assessments, acquired employment preparation skills, and participated in work placements. More than half the participants discovered for the first time that they had a learning disability. Over 75% of participants have found employment or returned to school to further their education or enhanced their employability skills. Furthermore, *Destination Employment* continues to serve as an important capacity-building project in helping provincial/territorial Learning Disabilities Associations develop the skills required to work with adult consumers.

There were 200 participants enrolled in the 2003/04 program. The next enrolment for the program is April 2004, subject to funding. In order to be eligible for the program, individuals must have learning disabilities, be unemployed, and be looking for work. Participants are referred to the program from other employment agencies, literacy programs, word-of-mouth and self-referral.

Destination Employment is funded by the national component of the Opportunities Fund, Department of Social Development Canada. For more information, contact the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada at tel: 613-238-5721, or email: information@ldac-taac.ca or visit: www.ldac-taac.ca.

Adapted from 'National' the newsletter from the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (Volume 40, #2)

Official Definition of Learning Disabilities

Adopted by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada on January 30, 2002



“Learning Disabilities” refer to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information.

These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from global intellectual deficiency.

Learning disabilities result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These include, but are not limited to: language processing; phonological processing; visual spatial processing; processing speed; memory and attention; and executive functions (e.g. planning and decision-making).

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- oral language (e.g. listening, speaking, understanding);
- reading (e.g. decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension);
- written language (e.g. spelling and written expression); and
- mathematics (e.g. computation, problem solving).

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction and perspective taking. Learning disabilities are lifelong. The way in which they

are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested by unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement which is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury that alters brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with various conditions including attentional, behavioural and emotional disorders, sensory impairments or other medical conditions.

For success, individuals with learning disabilities require early identification and timely specialized assessments and interventions involving home, school, community and workplace settings. The interventions need to be appropriate for each individual's learning disability subtype and, at a minimum, include the provision of:

- specific skill instruction;
- accommodations;
- compensatory strategies; and
- self-advocacy skills.

New Scholarships for People with Learning Disabilities



The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) has just announced a new scholarship for students with learning disabilities. The Donald Cummings Apprenticeship and Industry Training Scholarship is designed to recognize and encourage Canadians with learning disabilities to pursue training for careers in the trades. One scholarship of \$500 will be awarded annually. The deadline to apply is May 15.

A fourth scholarship will be launched in the fall of 2004 and will be for Canadians with learning disabilities who wish to pursue an education in the field of fine arts. For more information on the new and existing scholarships, contact LDAC at tel: 613-238-5721 or visit: www.ldac-taac.ca.

New and Noteworthy

Donated Products Available



Gifts in Kind Canada is a non-profit organization that helps distribute donated products and services from leading

corporations to organizations and individuals who need them. Since 1995, the organization has distributed more than \$20 million in donated products and services to registered charities across Canada. An affiliate of the Gifts in Kind International, Gifts in Kind Canada now boasts 14 affiliates working with thousands of charitable organizations.

Products available include software, office products, building supplies, personal care items, arts and crafts materials, cosmetics, sports equipment, books, toys, school supplies, and many other items. Gifts in Kind Canada can also match charities with retailers in their area and help arrange for routine donations. Corporate participants include Office Depot, Adobe, IBM, Corel, The Gap, Disney Stores, Gillette, and more.

Charitable organizations must apply for membership and pay an annual registration fee. There is a small administration charge for donations, which covers shipping, storing, and processing of donated items. Donations must be used to operate offices or provide community services.

For more information, contact Gifts in Kind Canada at tel: 905-565-1009 or email: hzimmer@giftsinkindcanada.org or visit: www.giftsinkindcanada.org.

If you are looking for computer equipment, you may want to check out the "Computers for Schools" project. This a federal program that collects computers and donates them to schools, libraries and provincial/territorial employment and training programs across Canada. Visit <http://cfs-ope.ic.gc.ca> for more information.



Also try Reboot Canada, a non-profit organization that refurbishes computer equipment and distributes it to charitable organizations. Find out more at: www.reboot.on.ca.

News from Laubach Literacy of Canada



Congratulations to Laubach Literacy of Canada for being awarded the 2003 "Fitzpatrick Award" from Frontier College. The award, given each year to an organization doing excellent work in support of literacy, was presented at LLC's Annual General Meeting in September. "You and your colleagues at Laubach are doing important and innovative work for literacy in our country," said Executive Director John O'Leary in his presentation.

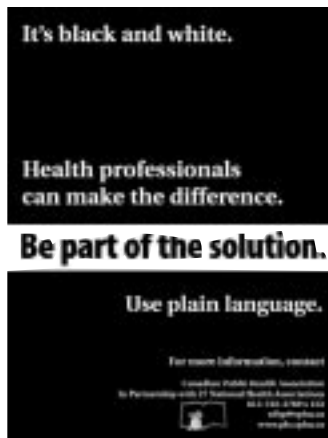
Laubach Literacy also reports that they recently welcomed Gay Hamilton as LLC's new Executive Director. Gay brings ten years of experience in the non-profit sector to her new work.

New Executive Director in Newfoundland and Labrador

The Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador welcomes a new Executive Director, Kimberly Gillard, and bids a fond farewell to former Executive Director Della Coish.

Canadian Public Health Association Launches Plain Language Campaign

This winter, the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) is helping get the word out about plain language. In partnership with 27 national health organizations, CPHA developed a series of advertisements encouraging plain language use by health professionals. Partner organizations included the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Nurses Association,



the Association for Occupational Therapists, the Canadian Physiotherapy Association, Dieticians of Canada, and more. The ads have already appeared in several of these organizations' regular magazines, with more to come.

The purpose of the ads is to encourage doctors, nurses, and other health professionals to use plain language with their clients. But CPHA also offers help to healthcare organizations that want to make their printed material clearer and easier to read. Through their Plain Language Service, CPHA can assess, edit, and re-design publications using plain language principals. The Plain Language Service also offers focus testing of materials, workshops on plain language, translation to plain French, and adaptation of French materials into plain French.

For more information, contact the CPHA Plain Language Service at tel: 613-725-3769, or email: nlhp@cpha.ca, or visit: www.pls.cpha.ca.

Privacy Legislation Applies to All of Us

The Federal Government's new Privacy Legislation came into effect on January 1, 2004. The following link will give you additional information about practical steps for implementing a privacy policy in your organization:

www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rpri2.html.

Towards Clearer Communications

The Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF) and Frontier College have launched a new project called *Toward Clearer Communications* to create a more inclusive country. As part of the project, the FCAF and its local, provincial, and federal partners are organizing a series of forums on clear communications. The forums aim to raise awareness of the communication obstacles faced by less literate adults, and to narrow the communication gap between the government, the private and non-profit sector, and the general public.

The first forum will take place in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in April. Other regional forums will take place across Canada in 2004. You can get the latest project updates from the website at: www.clearercommunications.ca. For more information, contact Tobias Keogh, Project Manager at tel: 613-749-5333.

Nominations for Partnership Awards



Imagine's *New Spirit of Community* Partnership Awards were established in 1996 to recognize and celebrate outstanding joint projects created between Canadian businesses and nonprofit or voluntary organizations. Each year, a panel of senior leaders from the private and voluntary sectors selects five winning partnerships that each receive community recognition and a \$5,000 cash award for the nonprofit organization in the partnership.

To be eligible for the award, the partnership must be between a business and a nonprofit organization working in Canada, and the partnership program must have been running for a minimum of two years. In addition, the business partner must be a member of Imagine's Caring Company Program or agree to become a member.

The details of the 2004 awards are now posted at: www.imagine.ca.

Coming Events

Learning Disabilities Awareness Month

March 1–31, 2004

Canada-wide

The theme of this year's event is Transition Points for Adults with LD. Check out the fact sheets on this topic at www.ldac-taac.ca.



National Volunteer Week

April 18–24, 2004

Canada-wide

For more information, visit: www.volunteer.ca.

Literacyworks! Conference

June 17–19, 2004

Hamilton, ON

The Ontario Literacy Coalition hosts this conference for people from the literacy field and related disciplines to share their knowledge, projects, research, and initiatives. For more information, phone 416-963-5787, e-mail olc@on.literacy.ca, or visit www.on.literacy.ca.

Strengthening the Learning Circles: The Nokee Kwe Professional Development Institute

June 20–24, 2004

London, ON

A national professional development training institute focused exclusively on the learning needs of Aboriginal literacy practitioners. For more information, contact: Bernice@nokeekwe.ca.

Summer Institute Adult Basic Education: Impact of Policy on Practice

June 28–30, 2004

Montreal, QC

This summer institute is a highly collaborative, three-day facilitated exchange that will bring together practitioners, researchers, and policy makers to explore and identify strategies to move literacy policy and practice forward. For more information contact the Centre for Literacy of Quebec at 514-931-5181 or check www.nald.ca/litcent.htm.

Staying the Course: Literacy and Health in the First Decade

October 17-19, 2004

Ottawa, ON

Still in the planning stages, this event will bring together learners, people who work in literacy and health care, researchers, and government policy-makers to discuss what is being done to improve the health of Canadians with low literacy skills. For more information, contact Lynn Chiarelli, Project Coordinator at 613-725-3769 or lchiarelli@cpha.ca.



Next Issue

The theme for the spring issue of the literacy.ca newsletter is partnerships. Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2004. Expect your spring newsletter in June 2004!

literacy.ca

Movement for Canadian Literacy

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Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1P5
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The Movement for Canadian Literacy is a national non-profit organization representing literacy coalitions, organizations and individuals from every province and territory. Our mission is to be a national voice for literacy for every Canadian.

Our member coalitions:

Labrador Literacy Information & Action Network
Literacy Alberta
Literacy BC
Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland & Labrador
Literacy Nova Scotia
Literacy Partners of Manitoba
Literacy Partners of Quebec
New Brunswick Coalition for Literacy
NWT Literacy Council
Nunavut Literacy Council
Ontario Literacy Coalition
PEI Literacy Alliance
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
Yukon Learn

The *literacy.ca* newsletter is a vehicle for literacy workers and supporters to share information, ideas, resources and research on emerging literacy issues. We welcome letters to the editor, articles, photos and suggestions for future issues as well as feedback on what you find in these pages. 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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For Action

Share Your Election Teaching Resources



Elections Canada is working with MCL to develop a Literacy Educator's Kit on Elections. Please share your experiences, your favourite resources and lesson plans for teaching election and citizenship skills to literacy learners. We appreciate all ideas about what you know or what you'd like to know about preparing learners for elections. Call 613-563-2464 or email: fiona@literacy.ca.

Help Make Literacy and Health Connections

We encourage you to start thinking about the Literacy and Health conference to be held October 17-19, 2004. The Canadian Public Health Association has just released the Invitation for Presenters, which you can find at the MCL website at www.literacy.ca.

Consider the workshops you'd like to see. Think of ways to help us involve learners. Spread the word to health partners in your community. Help us make this major event even more successful than the first Literacy and Health conference held in 2000!

September Festivities

This year's International Adult Learners Week (IALW) will soon be announced by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. MCL would like to hear about the events and activities that you've been involved with or are planning for IALW. Tell us about speeches, festivals, presentations, community events, and news coverage in your program or community. We'd like to learn what's worked, what the challenges have been and what supports and resources you might need to participate in the future. We believe IALW is an important opportunity to include literacy on the continuum of lifelong learning. Help us share good ideas and resources within the literacy community. With your help we can make suggestions to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO as they plan for this and future years. Contact Fiona at MCL at tel: 613-563-2464 or email: fiona@literacy.ca.