

Literacy on the Move



December 2003

Literacy Action

The OLC's Strategy for Making Literacy a Political Priority

By Sue Folinsbee and Anette Chawla, Acting Co-Executive Directors

Opportunities at the Provincial and Federal Levels

WITH THE ELECTION OF THE NEW LIBERAL government in Ontario comes renewed possibilities for the OLC at the provincial level. In fact, the recent election provides the best opportunity for affecting change the OLC has seen in years. The recent throne speech highlights the government's commitment to community consultation, skills training and education, and improved federal/provincial working relations. This echoes the pre-election answers we got from the Liberal Party in response to questions we sent out to all party leaders. This bodes well for the literacy community. However, in view of the provincial budget deficit, we will need to work hard to make sure that literacy stays on the political agenda and that it stays as more than a labour market development issue.

At the federal level, the development of a pan-Canadian Literacy Strategy also provides us with an opportunity to advance literacy in Ontario. A pan-Canadian literacy strategy requires intergovernmental cooperation and an accord

which ties increased federal funding to improved provincial/territorial literacy delivery. On November 6, 2003 the government released its response to *Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response*. That report was first made public in June 2003 by the parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. We know from the federal government's response that it is going to take time before action is taken on the Committee's recommendations. Furthermore, a whole host of new relationships will need to be built with Paul Martin and his new leadership team.

OLC's Plan for Literacy Action: Provincial Work

The OLC worked hard on pre-election activities. This included creating an OLC election kit, sending written questions to party leaders and writing letters to the editors of

newspapers. We shared this work with all our members by e-mail and by posting it on our website.

Now that we are into the post-election period, the OLC has many plans. In the short-term, we have begun to send out letters to secure meetings with key players in the new government, such as Mary Anne Chambers, Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities, and Kathleen Wynne, the Minister's parliamentary secretary. We will write letters to MPPs to build awareness about literacy and secure meetings for further discussion. We will also canvass OLC members to find out from you what the most important literacy issues are.

We have published a two-page inaugural information bulletin on new developments in the provincial legislature that we hope are of interest to the field. The bulletin is in a similar format to the Movement for Canadian

Literacy's Federal Literacy Facts.

In the longer term, we hope to begin to develop a vision for literacy in Ontario in collaboration with all stakeholders that have an interest in literacy. Our collective knowledge could shape a vision that includes principles, values, recommendations and areas for action. Part of our plan is to work with new partners that also have an interest in literacy so that together we present the strongest voice possible.

Our Commitment

The OLC is committed to working on the provincial front. We are also committed to working on the federal front in close partnership and collaboration with the Movement for Literacy. In our work, we are very aptly assisted by Chris Dendys, an expert in policy and government relations.

Message from the Chair



SINCE THE ELECTION ON October 2, 2003, there is a Liberal government in Ontario. The Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC) is looking forward to working with the new government to inform all the MPPs about literacy issues in this

province. We welcome Mary Anne Chambers, the new Minister for Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). Ms. Chambers was a bank executive who has been honoured for her extensive volunteer activities. Her interests include workplace equity, minority rights, education and health care. Ms. Chambers' varied background will be a great asset in her new position.

The OLC has represented the English stream of the Literacy and Basic Skills initiative of MTCU for many years. Our close connection to the grass roots, through the Adult Learners Network of Ontario, Advisory Roundtable, research

projects and our membership, makes OLC a credible voice for the literacy field.

The OLC will be proactive and approach the government to offer recommendations for advancing literacy in Ontario. The OLC board and staff are prepared to draft policy position papers and literacy fact sheets to help MPPs from all parties understand that literacy is an important issue for Ministries such as Health, Justice, Industry and Education and Training. Board and staff will be available to meet with politicians and legislative committees to discuss literacy issues.

The OLC will monitor the legislature to keep abreast of developments affecting the literacy field and we will report back to the membership.

The recent change in government has provided the OLC and the literacy field with opportunities to advance a literacy-friendly policy agenda by building partnerships with politicians.

Making Change

How you can make literacy a political priority

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead, *Anthropologist and Teacher*

By Chris Dendys, *Communications Consultant*

THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES IN ONTARIO. In October, the provincial election brought us a new government and, with it, new opportunities for effecting change. To make the most of this fresh start, literacy stakeholders need to work together to make literacy a policy and budget priority. It is not an easy assignment. Many other social movements will be vying for the government’s attention — as they should. That is why we will need to ensure that our strategies are sound.

To help you, here are some pointers on how to take advantage of the shift in government, forge new connections, and create literacy champions among Ontario’s new political power brokers.

Too busy?

One hour a week is all you need! We are all far too busy — but that is why finding time to effect big picture change is a necessity. There are 2.5 million Ontarians with literacy challenges, but less than 10 per cent of them are getting the help they need. At the same time, literacy organizations are working flat out while resources remain static or effectively decrease from year to year. Add a politician to your mailing list, or secure a meeting. The long-term gains will be worth the investment.

Don’t know who your MPP is?

Identify your MPP (Member of Provincial Parliament) and get contact information from the Elections Ontario website at www.electionsontario.on.ca (click on *Find your electoral district*) or call their information line: 1-800-677-8683.

First impressions are important.

Post-election, there are many new and incumbent MPPs who are eager to make their mark at Queen’s Park and to make a difference in their community. We need to harness this enthusiasm. Now is the time to introduce, or re-introduce, yourself and your program and inform your local MPP about why their support for literacy is important to your community and to the province.

Connecting in person is best.

You can start with a letter, but personal contact is always the best way to forge a relationship. Invite your local MPP to your offices or to a program. You do not need a formal agenda. Tell them it is just an information-sharing session. While they are there, have an informal roundtable chat with literacy workers or learners. Or, if you prefer, go to them. Send a letter or make a phone call and request a one-on-one meeting at the MPPs constituency office. When they are in the community, politicians spend their days meeting with constituents — make sure you are one of them.

Whether your name is attached to phone messages, correspondence, invitations, or requests for meetings — a politician’s constituents move quickly to the top of priority lists.

Stay informed.

To stay up-to-date on important provincial literacy developments, and to stay informed about OLC’s literacy action initiatives, log onto the OLC website regularly at www.on.literacy.ca.

Just Do It!

By Patricia Brady, Learner Coordinator

PETER FITZPATRICK is a member of the Adult Learners Network of Ontario (ALNO). This is the group that advises the Ontario Literacy Coalition on issues that deal with adults who have literacy challenges. ALNO is one way that Peter feels that he can help people. He has also found other ways to help.

On his own, Peter started a literacy program at his child's school. The parents at his child's school knew that Peter had literacy challenges because Peter would mention how having problems reading and writing was affecting his life. People would talk to Peter about their problems too. Many were not willing to admit that they had any literacy challenges. They were not ready to go to a formal literacy program. They first needed to be able to get confidential help in a familiar and comfortable setting. Peter felt the school would be the perfect place.

Peter had a good relationship with the school staff, so he was not afraid to approach the teachers about the possibility of starting a literacy program in the school. He talked to the reading teacher first. She was very supportive. She arranged for a meeting with the school's vice principal. The vice principal and the principal said that Peter could use the school library for literacy classes.

Next, Peter had to get someone to teach the classes. He went back to the reading teacher for help. She found a volunteer teacher from the local high school and arranged for Peter to meet her. Peter wanted a good fit between the teacher and the group so that they both would be happy and would stay. The volunteer teacher now teaches one day a week for two hours.

Next, Peter had to get the word out that this program was starting. He worked with the teachers to let the school community know what was happening. Peter put up posters in and around the school, in the Salvation Army, and at

local businesses. People also found out about it by word of mouth.



Peter Fitzpatrick

It took Peter seven months to get the program going but he never gave up. It has now been going on for over six months. It started last spring and, after the summer break, has started up again. Peter feels that it has been a great success. Everyone came back.

Peter continues to be involved in the program even though his child has moved out of the school. He feels very good about what has happened. He feels that if he can do it, others can, too.

Peter says, "I was always afraid before. I felt that I couldn't do it, but I began to think of my kids and about helping other people. I felt that I had to make a difference somehow. What did I have to lose? Remember, you are as good as anybody else. If it works, good. If it doesn't, try something else. It doesn't matter who takes the credit, as long as it helps. Just do it."

What did you learn today?

LOOK UNDER LEARN
in the Bell Yellow Pages™ directories.



Literacy Action Day 2003

By Shirley Annable, Member of the Adult Learners Network of Ontario

ON OCTOBER 23RD, I PARTICIPATED in my first Literacy Action Day (LAD). LAD is a day that people from across Canada meet and talk with federal Members of Parliament (MPs) about adult literacy. The meetings are planned by the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL), a national literacy organization.

It was a day of many firsts for me. It was the first time I would be acting as the OLC Learner Representative, my first time on Parliament Hill, and my first time at the MCL meetings surrounding the LAD event.

I was excited but not nervous. I was really looking forward to this day. Sandy Johnston, the former OLC MCL learner representative, had helped me to understand what was going to be expected of me.

The day started off very early. We had to be on Parliament Hill before 8:00 a.m., as we had to go through security. The security check is very thorough. It is like going on an airplane at the airport. Once we were cleared by security, literacy groups met in the Aboriginal Peoples Room. There, Senator Joyce Fairbairn gave us an

inspirational speech to help us start the day.

The OLC delegates, Sue Folinsbee, Patricia Brady and I, then had a bit of time to work on strategies and to practise what we were going to say in our presentations. MCL had prepared us well for this at a meeting the previous day.

Our first visit was to Tony Ianno's office, the MP for Trinity-Spadina. There we spoke to Mr. Ianno's legislative assistant, Anita Ratkovic-Baric. She gathers information on the issues Mr. Ianno will concentrate on.

As an adult with literacy challenges, I was able to tell her about the difference literacy education has made to my and my family's life. Ms. Ratkovic-Baric talked about what challenges her family has encountered as immigrants who do not read and write English well.

Our next visit was to Judy Sgro, MP for York West. Ms. Sgro already knew a lot about literacy. She was very supportive and interested in what she could do to support our cause. We talked about the pan-Canadian literacy agenda and what actions Ms. Sgro could take to support literacy at the federal level.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Anita Ratkovic-Baric, Patricia Brady and Shirley Annable at Literacy Action Day in Ottawa

Our last visit was to Roy Cullen, MP for Etobicoke North. Mr. Cullen was also interested in what we had to say. He seemed to become more interested the more we talked. I think that he will listen for, and be supportive of, literacy issues in the future.

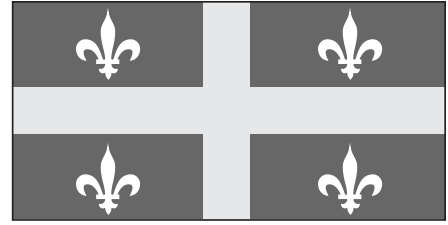
All-in-all, I think it was a very successful day. Everyone was very welcoming and I feel that we really educated people, some even more than they realized.

Literacy Action Day was a very positive experience and I hope to be able to take part again next year.

ABE policy in Quebec

Rooted in a large vision of the world

By Linda Shohet, Executive Director of the Centre for Literacy of Quebec



WHILE DEBATE OVER ADULT LITERACY and basic education simmers in most parts of the country, Quebec passed a broad-based government policy and action plan on adult education and training in 2002. Although it came into effect as a PQ initiative, it has been endorsed by the new Liberal government as a policy that shares all-party support. This brief overview highlights the key points and some of the challenges to implementation outlined in the policy documents themselves. It does not offer a critique of the policy.

The Background Research

Before the policy was written, researchers looked at eleven industrialized countries, two provinces (Ontario and British Columbia), and three international organizations to identify trends in adult basic education.

Overall they identified three emerging trends:

- ▶ That adult education should be mainly based on the needs of the job market
- ▶ That adult education should be regarded as a right for all in order to develop active citizenship and a more just and democratic society.
- ▶ That adult education should reconcile citizenship and employability.

In the view of the researchers, these goals are not incompatible. Adult education is seen as essential to uphold democracies.

They identified that definitions of the terms “literacy” and “Adult Basic Education” vary markedly across jurisdictions, as do program objectives, content and the extent to which they address social roles. They also noted differences in the size of target populations, often guided by International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) data, and the difficulty in reaching the most targeted groups of the

unemployed, youth under 25 and immigrants. Finally, the researchers focused on the emerging interest in certification and prior learning recognition and the particular challenges this poses for basic education.

The Policy Principles

The policy is built on three themes:

1. The complementarity and specificity of education in the youth and adult sectors

The policy-makers argue that education in the youth and adult sectors are separate but equal. Using data from 1990s surveys, they show that participation in the adult sector is now larger than in the youth sector, and that while rates of participation in adult education are increasing internationally, Quebec still has catching up to do.

Raising the general level of education of the population only through education in the youth sector would take 30 years. This is too long to meet the urgent economic and social demands. Quebec cannot wait; it needs to raise the basic competency level of its population in the next 5–6 years.

2. Expression of the demand for education and training

The numbers of undereducated adults, the IALS data, and Statistics Canada participation surveys all suggest that there should be a great demand for adult literacy services, but there is not. The analysis suggests that adults are dispersed and isolated, that information is hard to find and hard to apply to their experiences. There is then a need to set conditions for success before organizing training. These include:

- ▶ Improvement of educational environments
- ▶ Recognition of non-formal prior learning (PLAR)
- ▶ Awareness campaigns

3. Integration of basic education into the specific situation of each individual

The concept suggests that basic education must be seen positively as the foundation for all further education and for active social participation.

The Action Plan

The policy itself has four main strategies, each with a rationale, associated challenges and issues, and detailed plan of action.

1. To provide basic education for Quebec's adults:

The policy proposes to do so in many ways including:

- ▶ preventing illiteracy
- ▶ raising the level of basic education of the population
- ▶ enriching curriculum in literacy and ABE
- ▶ stimulating a demand

2. To maintain and continually upgrade adults' competencies:

The focus will include:

- ▶ making employers and labour aware of the importance of development of competencies
- ▶ ensuring equal access for all workers
- ▶ encouraging small and medium-sized businesses to give greater support to training
- ▶ assisting groups that have difficulties in social and employment integration

3. To acknowledge adults' prior learning and competencies through official recognition:

To do so, the policy proposes to focus on:

- ▶ encouraging all forms of acknowledgment and official recognition for adults' efforts in education and training
- ▶ increasing access to mechanisms for the recognition of learning and competencies and for the acquisition of missing components
- ▶ implementing a system for the development and recognition of competencies by the labour market
- ▶ establishing mechanisms for reciprocity between PLAR systems

4. To remove obstacles to accessibility and retention:

This will include:

- ▶ consolidating government incentives to continuing education and training
- ▶ modernizing and developing distance education and on-line instruction
- ▶ increasing, improving and harmonizing reception and referral services
- ▶ Providing ongoing monitoring of the policy and action plan

Conclusion

There are some adult educators who are not satisfied with the balance between economic and social goals in this policy. However, the majority see it as a unique opportunity to reshape the adult education landscape of the province. As Stephen Lewis, U.N.'s special Envoy for HIV/AIDs in Africa, commented at the English-language launch of the policy last January, Quebec has created a broader adult education policy than currently exists in any other province, "rooted in a large vision of the world." Now, he said, it is up to us to hold the government accountable for implementing it.

Linda Shohet is a member of the 15-person implementation group for the new Quebec policy in the English sector. The group visited programs and government bodies and NGOs in five European countries in May 2003.

Resources

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de L'Éducation, *Adult Education: A Lifelong Journey. The Scope of the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training: The Increasing Importance of Adult Education in Québec Education Policies*. November 2002. 2002-02-01387. ISBN 2-55-40246-4.

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de L'Éducation. *Adult Education: A Lifelong Journey, Basic Education International Trends*. 2002-2003 November 2002. 2002-02-01386. ISBN 2-550-40244-8

Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère de L'Éducation. *Adult Education A Lifelong Journey, Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training and the Action Plan for Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. 2002-02-01385. ISBN 2-550-40243-X.

Web address for full text English document:

http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/REFORME/formation_con/Politique/politique_a.pdf

New Resources



By Maria Moriarty, Centre AlphaPlus Centre
1-800-728-1120 — www.alphaplus.ca

The following materials may be borrowed or purchased through AlphaPlus.

IN THE REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA and the Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative, *Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative: Report of the Joint Tables (August, 1999)* (http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/reports_wt.cfm) advocacy is described as follows:

“Advocacy often occurs in the context of activities intended to educate and inform, while at other times it could be described as a political activity. There is a widely shared view that the act of advocacy, as a form of free speech, is an essential part of democracy and therefore intrinsically beneficial to the public.”

In this context the following publications provide the literacy field with valuable and practical tools and information on how to advocate for adult literacy.

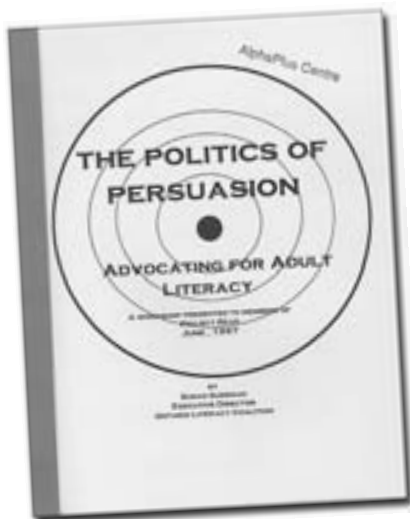


Taking Action: An Advocacy Workshop

Prepared by Community Services Consulting (Edmonton, Alberta) for the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy. 1993

Call no. 374.01206 T12

Taking Action provides easy to use material to assist any literacy group in organizing a program of advocacy. These materials include: eight key principles to successful advocacy focusing on the power of a collective voice, the division of tasks within the group to maximize effectiveness and to make best use of the variety of expertise in the group, the importance of identifying allies, pooling resources with other groups, and the creation of an advocacy plan. The publication also contains practical information on how to connect with provincial politicians and policy makers; although the context is Alberta, these practical tips could be adapted for use by adult literacy agencies in other Canadian provinces.



The Politics of Persuasion: Advocating for Adult Literacy.

Sussman, Susan B. Toronto. Ontario Literacy Coalition. 1997

Call no. 302.2244 S7938

This publication is from a workshop presented by the author to the members of Project Read in June 1997. The objectives of the workshop are to assist participants to “identify the sequence of steps involved in developing advocacy strategies” and to “draft an advocacy strategy for addressing an issue of importance to workshop participants.” (p.2)

The workshop includes an advocacy overview, an advocates’ tool box and worksheets on a range of areas to assist in understanding advocacy and in devising a plan of action. The workshop materials also cover the selection of effective advocacy strategies and the implementation and evaluation of those strategies.



Strengthening Our literacy Foundation is Key to Canada's Future: Recommendations for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

MCL 2003

The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is an advocacy organization representing literacy organizations and individuals across the country. For over twenty-five years MCL has provided a national forum for provincial and territorial adult literacy organizations and has worked to ensure that the federal government and the general public are informed about issues and concerns related to adult literacy.

In *Strengthening Our literacy Foundation is Key to Canada's Future: Recommendations for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities* (April, 2003), MCL has provided a thorough review of the key issues related to adult literacy across the country, in the context of long-term human resource development and the economic and social prosperity of Canada.

This document provides an exemplary brief to policy makers at the federal level on the key issues in adult literacy, outlining the challenges, articulating the need for national attention and for urgent action. It contextualizes the adult literacy issues in relation to economic and social prosperity, underlining the economic benefits and social dividends of a literate employable population. The document also calls for a pan-Canadian literacy strategy and offers direction for the future and recommendations to the members of the standing committee.

The full text of this document is available at:

<http://www.literacy.ca/govrel/strength/strength.pdf>



Politics, Policy, Practice and Personal Responsibility: Adult Education in an Era of Welfare Reform

D'Amico, Deborah. NCSALL (National Center for Studies on Adult Literacy and Learning), 1999. NCSALL Reports # 10A

In this report the author challenges the prevailing policy discourse in the United States with respect to literacy, poverty, work and welfare reform. The author critically examines the current issues and trends and questions what she sees as a developing role of literacy instructors as “ literacy trainers” rather than educators. The author eloquently articulates the difficulties that often face those that advocate on behalf of adult literacy, in that the message that low literacy is an economic problem may lead to policies that effectively undercut the concept of access to adult literacy learning as a fundamental right, and overemphasize the training and employment readiness component of such learning.

The full-text of this report is available at:

<http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ncsall/research/d'amico1.pdf>

What did you learn today?

By Anette Chawla, Acting Co-Executive Director

Monday, September 8

Excitement abounded on Monday, September 8. In five regions of the province, literacy workers, administrators and learners were launching three events and celebrations: the launch of the OLC's *What did you learn today?* Campaign, Adult Learners Week and International Literacy Day.

At Durham College in Oshawa, Jennine Agnew-Kata bid welcome to an audience of 60, including Kevin Costante, Deputy Minister, and Dr. Gary Polonsky, President of Durham College. One after the other, Lisa Welch, Katherine Jocko, Carole Blouin and Behishta Mushtaw stepped up to the podium to share their stories of what it is like to live with literacy challenges. Although the learners represented the Anglophone, Francophone, Native and Deaf literacy streams, it was striking how much their stories had in common despite language and cultural differences.



Campaign launched at Durham College



Puppets take over Belleville

Meanwhile in Belleville, learners dressed themselves in their oversized puppet costumes and began a slow procession through city centre streets, performing a play with a literacy theme the learners themselves had written. The troupe took the show to Trenton later in the week and marched with the moms and their children from the Early Years Centre. One of the moms joined the program the next day! Kevin Barcier, a learner from Trenton, gave a testimonial to the audience. Kevin's goal is to complete his Grade 12 and enroll in the Small Engine Repair course at the high school. Kevin stated, "Like other people, I was a little embarrassed about going to school...[but] from the way this is looking, I am well on my way to achieving that goal."

In Pen Centre in St. Catharines, Literacy Link Niagara's launch was hosted by the chair of the regional municipality, Debbie Zimmerman. Sandy Johnston, a learner from Niagara and a member of the OLC's Adult Learners Network



Jack Walters and Fred Bolton from the Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines Central; Sandy White, Early Literacy Consultant with Literacy Link Niagara; Gay Douglas, Executive Director, Literacy Link Niagara; and Ken Wilkes, Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines Central.

of Ontario, spoke to an audience of more than 50 about her struggles with dyslexia and how she has now overcome it to graduate with a business diploma in Human Resources Management. The event was inspiring!

In Barrie, the group was gearing up for the launch of the Road to Reading Festival the following weekend. More than 5,500 people visited the festival and many of them enjoyed the literacy network's What did you learn today? booth. The whole event received lots of TV and newspaper coverage.



Joe Lockhart — former LBS student now taking a college program.

In Thunder Bay, Literacy Northwest launched the What Did You Learn Today? Campaign at a learners' reception that was hosted by Confederation College. Approximately 110 people attended, including Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) learners and staff, the college president, numerous community dignitaries, and representatives from the North Superior Training Board. Joe Lockhart, a former LBS learner, impressed everyone with his humour and his heartfelt words of encouragement. After the morning's launch, network staff drove 2½ hours from Thunder Bay to Schreiber/Terrace Bay to give a presentation about the campaign and literacy in general at the local literacy group's annual general meeting.

The rest of the week

Interesting, creative and interactive activities continued throughout the week in the five campaign host regions: Durham, Eastern Ontario, Niagara, Simcoe/Muskoka and Thunder Bay. We are talking about a learner celebration with certificates of accomplishment, talk shows on television and radio, interviews in the newspaper, hosting booths at community fairs, open houses at literacy agencies, book sales, word games, square dancing, poetry readings, — and I am all out of breath just naming the sheer range of activities!

And let us not forget the airing of OLC's new *What did you learn today?* commercials on radio and TV and the distribution of postcards to literacy agencies, across the province.

Thank you to Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, Literacy Link Niagara, Literacy Network of Durham Region, Literacy Northwest and Simcoe/Muskoka Literacy Network for participating with the OLC on this Campaign. Thank you to the National Literacy Secretariat of Human Resources Development Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for supporting the campaign. Thank you also to Canada Post for sponsoring the postcard.

We are currently wrapping up the evaluation. Early in the new year, we will revisit the future direction of the Campaign and the social marketing strategy. We will also be contacting our members to hear what you would like to see happen.

The OLC at Word on the Street

By Patricia Brady, Learner Coordinator



Shirley Annable (ALNO member) and Sarah Canzano (Board member) at Word on the Street

THE ONTARIO LITERACY COALITION (OLC) HAD A BOOTH ON LITERACY LANES at the Word on the Street (WoTS) Book and Magazine Fair again this year in Toronto. WoTS is always a fun event, and we were fortunate to have a lovely day.

The members of the OLC's Adult Learners Network of Ontario (ALNO), OLC staff and members of the OLC Board staffed the booth and talked to people who stopped to chat and to gather information about literacy.

The OLC booth was enhanced this year by our large new display board. The board allowed us to organize and display OLC materials on a vertical plane. That way people walking by could see them more easily.

We were able to exhibit many of our materials such as the updated Literacy Facts Sheets and new Learner Profiles in the clear acrylic pockets that came with the board. We added to the display by placing many of the OLC social marketing materials such as the *What did you learn today?* poster, buttons and postcards around the board. The blue, green, purple and

white caught the eye and added colour to the display.

Some of the ALNO members gave out postcards, buttons and pens to the crowd as a way to get people to think about literacy. It seemed to work well, as many people stopped to talk.

Other OLC information, such as new project reports, a selection of OLC newsletters, and other OLC documents, helped us to show and tell people about the OLC.

The members of ALNO enjoyed speaking to people about what it is like to be "literacy challenged". They found that the Fair was not just for people who can read and write; it is also an event where those who have challenges can find help and resources.

It was a wonderful opportunity to talk to the general public about literacy and do some face-to-face outreach.

Hope to see you at the Fair next year!



Dan McGibbon, ALNO member, Patricia Brady, OLC Learner Coordinator and Arnold Stewart, former OLC Learners' Council member, chat behind the scenes at WoTS.



Patrica Ashie, ALNO member, her daughter, Trisha Medonnet and granddaughter, Merrideth.

Action Family Literacy Ontario (AFLO)

AFLO has up to now sent out three updates on its work. They have gone by e-mail to members of the Ontario Literacy Coalition. You can also find all updates on OLC's website.

E-mail Updates

The OLC has started to send out regular e-mail updates, e.g., election information, and family literacy updates. **Make sure we have a current e-mail address on file for you.** Send your e-mail address to olc@on.literacy.ca

What did you
learn today?

We all learn something new every day!



Check out the OLC Website at:
www.on.literacy.ca

Helping Learners to Build Self-Awareness and Self-Direction

By Katrina Grieve, Researcher

MANY LITERACY PRACTITIONERS HAVE READ the report from the OLC's research project on Self-Management and Self-Direction, called *Supporting Learning, Supporting Change*. This report provides a strong foundation for programs to build upon in addressing this important aspect of learning. It highlights the importance of building self-awareness, and exploring context and meaning. It also encourages programs to engage learners in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection.

How do we then take the results of the research and apply it in our own programs?

The OLC received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to address this very question. The project is called Self-Management and Self-Direction Part 2: From Research to Practice. The goal of the project is to help Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs develop their own approaches to helping learners build self-awareness and self-direction.

The project has two parts:

- ▶ workshops for literacy programs
- ▶ a Working Group that will develop particular program approaches

Workshops

The OLC will be offering a limited number of workshops across the province between November 2003 and mid-April 2004. These one-day workshops are open to literacy practitioners and managers. Participants will explore different approaches to helping learners build self-awareness and self-direction. They will also begin the process of developing their own approach, based on the context of their own program.

Contact your local network or the OLC to find out if a workshop is being offered in your area. If you are not able to attend a local event, an online workshop is planned for the spring of 2004. A workshop will also be held at the OLC conference in June 2004.

Working Group

The second aspect of the project is a Working Group to be made up of programs representing different sectors and regions. Together, the members of the Working Group will support each other in developing their own particular approaches to building self-awareness and self-direction. As the project consultant, I will be working with the Working Group, providing training and ongoing support.

I am excited to be involved in this project and look forward to working with you in putting new ideas into practice.

What did you learn today?

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Workforce/Workplace Update

By Sue Folinsbee, Acting Co-Executive Director

THE ONTARIO LITERACY COALITION has recently attended both regional network and umbrella meetings to talk about workforce and workplace literacy. At the meetings, Ministry of Training, Colleges and University (MTCU) staff provided us with an update on plans for workforce and workplace literacy.

Originally, in MTCU's Workplace Literacy Strategy, the plan was to have full implementation for fee-for-service workplace literacy programming across the province in 2003–2004 or Year 3 of the Strategy. In Year 1, MTCU sponsored development projects. In Year 2, the focus was on work with the five first site networks (Mid North Adult Learning Network, QUILL Network, Project Read, Literacy Link Niagara and Literacy Ontario Central South) and their delivery agencies to build their capacity to coordinate and deliver workplace literacy.

The OLC carried out three workplace literacy projects to support this work. One project, Workplace Literacy Training, focused on marketing for and delivery of workplace literacy. A second project, Raising the Profile of Workplace Literacy, focused on developing a marketing look and tool kit. A third project focused on providing support to the five first sites after the training. The OLC produced two reports as a result of this third project: *First Sites Report: Collective Consultation on Workforce/Workplace Literacy* and *Taking the Temperature: A Consultation on Workforce and Workplace Literacy with the LBS Field — Summary Report*. Both these reports can be found on the OLC website at www.on.literacy.ca under Reports on the What's New page.

As a result of the findings of these two reports, MTCU's plans with respect to workplace literacy have changed. The present focus will instead be on building the Literacy and Basic

Skills (LBS) field's capacity to deliver **workforce** literacy (literacy for employment goals) rather than fee-for-service **workplace** literacy.

Some of the MTCU initiatives that will support this **workforce** capacity building include:

- ▶ **an essential skills research project** to look at what makes for successful transitions from LBS programming to further training and education, and employment
- ▶ **practitioner training** that will focus on literacy for employment and be delivered regionally by the five first site networks
- ▶ **a survey called "Taking Stock"** to find out both LBS program and community capacity to deliver literacy for employment-related goals as well as what training is needed for practitioners
- ▶ **extra funding** for the OLC 2004 Conference to include a greater emphasis on workforce literacy.

MTCU's emphasis on building capacity for workforce literacy focuses on the point of contact between practitioners and learners with a focus on meeting the needs of learners.

Literacyworks!

By Diane Douglass, OLC Conference Coordinator

Can you remember a time, when a light went on in your head and "Eureka!" you knew! You knew what the answer was!

That moment was like a colourful explosion of fireworks!

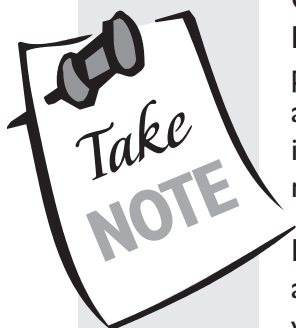
After struggling so hard to see the whole picture, all the pieces of the puzzle fell into place and you understood!

That moment was the confirmation that Literacyworks!

Please join us in the celebration of knowing that literacy works at the Literacyworks! Conference. Share in the excitement of these "Eureka!" moments that explode like colourful fireworks! Connect with over 300 participants at the **Hamilton Convention Center, June 17-19, 2004.**

Together we will explore and share in the wealth of knowledge offered. Your choice might be to attend a workshop that will delve into workforce and family literacy. Or perhaps your interest will be sparked by recent literacy research. Maybe you would like to explore areas of training, volunteers, tutor support or issues around working with the media? Possibly, you might like to share your creative talents in writing and teaching. Join a discussion around literacy access and equity issues. Or swap information about how to lower your stress and stay well.

We guarantee that there will be something for everyone, with many Kodak moments. Our goal is to give each and everyone of you a "Eureka" moment exploding like colourful fireworks Literacyworks!



Subsidized Seats for the Literacyworks!

Conference will be available in early January. People with literacy challenges, literacy practitioners, administrators and volunteers will all find the Conference of interest. For more information, please check with your regional network or visit OLC's website.

Full fee conference information will be available in mid-January. Please visit the OLC's website, www.on.literacy.ca, to learn more.

The Call for Proposals will be opened in early January. Please visit the OLC's website to find out more.

Literacy on the Move

Literacy on the Move is published three times a year by the Ontario Literacy Coalition



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The articles in **Literacy on the Move** do not necessarily reflect the view of the Ontario Literacy Coalition but are published to share experience and stimulate interest in, and discussion on, adult basic literacy and numeracy issues.