

Literacy on the Move



December 2004

MEDIA 101: Raising Public Awareness of Literacy

By Maija Saari

“What’s new about literacy?”

Any journalist asking you that question is highlighting an important principle of news gathering.

News is about change—we expect our media to tell us what’s new or different from our daily routines. News is what perks up our ears, the first words off a friend’s lips when asked what’s new. As such, a friendly reporter that takes you up on your offer to write a story about literacy is merely doing what reporters do best—digging around for that kernel of information that gives her a reason to write.

More often than not, the changes reported as news are negative. It’s a reality that walking to work daily without incident isn’t news. Neither is the smooth operation of your organization. One day, a car strikes a pedestrian, causing minor injuries but stopping rush hour traffic for 30 minutes. Suddenly, articles about pedestrian safety, the overuse of vehicles, staffing of police, even heroic paramedics could show up in the media, hinging on that one accident.

Therein lies the challenge to any non-profit organization that seeks to raise its community

profile through the mainstream media. The benefits of a news article are obvious—publicity, editorial legitimacy over placing an advertisement, and wide circulation at no cost. The reporter comes to you, does a story, and the rest is history.

It may seem you have little control over when and how literacy issues appear. Negative issues may seem to be sensationalized or over-emphasized, while alternate viewpoints or happy events don’t seem to attract reporters to cover them. This doesn’t have to be the case.

Consider the media as only one mode of transportation on your journey from the boardroom to the public sphere. Relying on the media for all of your public relations is a little like standing on the side of the Trans-Canada Highway with your thumb up—there is no guarantee your ride will be going your way, if anyone stops at all.

Rather, imagine how you and your organization would reach a destination under your own steam. Imagine yourselves as the drivers of the bus, not the passengers waiting to hitch a ride. Create a journey intended to realize an explicit vision central to your mission. Start down the road yourselves, but stop along the way to let the curious find out more and maybe even get

on your bus. As you progress and move closer to your goal, you'll generate true change in your community. Generating change creates news. If you build it, the media will come.

The first step is identifying the destination. How do you want to be perceived? How are you perceived now? Focus groups, short street-corner surveys and team brainstorming sessions are ways to generate your individual snapshot.

Imagine you are a literacy association struggling to make people aware that you also help people with numeracy and computer training issues.

A provincial public relations campaign linked to a library reading competition isn't raising the profile you need.

Once you've identified the perception you want to change, don't think the next step is calling the local paper and asking for a story to "clear this all up". Again—ask yourself who cares? It's not the paper's job to clarify or explain on your behalf, although they often do so on slow news days.

What's better is to devise your own strategy or campaign that will make the public (and the media) take note, seek more information and, hopefully, hop on the bus. Keeping the above example in mind, you might decide to take part in or begin a used computer exchange program. The work would help the community, keep computers out of landfill, and give your organization a reason to approach the media.

This sort of project takes a lot of vision, cooperation and plain hard work. But it also offers opportunities to engage directly with many more people who would normally not be open to your traditional messages. You might engage high school students needing community service hours, a local computer store to donate some service, or another agency that would also benefit from improving public access to free computers. As you all work together, the missions and goals of your organization are communicated directly, potentially building your volunteer, client, or

any other target base to your core programs.

You now have several legitimate reasons to contact the media: to launch the project and call for volunteers and donations, to update progress, and, at the conclusion of the event, to name a few accomplishments. Apply standard media relations techniques here. Send out clear press releases well in advance and follow up by telephone or a reminder fax in the days before the event.

Target your media appropriately, remembering the readership value of your local free weekly newspaper or other community newsletters, websites, or call-in radio shows. In your media sweep, send second copies of your releases to the same organizations, specifically addressed to the individuals who

produce free announcement columns, or radio and television morning shows. Meet their deadlines and create flexible appearances and personal photo opportunities to improve the chances they will cover your story.

Once the media attend the event, you can talk about the broader issues. Again, the story might be about the launch but now there's a reason for a secondary story about the local issues of computer training availability and your core programs.

The key here is that you're the one driving the bus—you've generated a sincere and legitimate purpose that helps you, helps your mission and helps your community. The media will come, but so will a new group of individuals. The mutual relationships you build will strengthen your community and your organization.

What a success story! I can't wait to read about it in the paper.

Maija Saari, B.A., B.Ed., M.A, is an assistant professor at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford Campus, in a journalism program scheduled to launch in Fall 2005. Ms. Saari based this article on two workshops presented to OLC members in May and September of 2004.

Generating change creates news. If you build it, the media will come.

Media Advocacy in Action

The Role of the Media Strategy in a Bid to Save the Hospitality Workers' Resource Centre

By Sue Folinsbee, Labour Education Centre

Background

The Hospitality Workers' Resource Centre (HWRC) was set up in Toronto by the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 75 and employers during the SARS crisis to assist workers facing job loss or reduced hours of work. The Labour Education Centre was an important partner in the initiative, providing project management support, as well as other in-kind support and services.

The HWRC provided one-stop shopping for employment services, upgrading and training, support services (e.g., food vouchers and Rent Bank) and emotional support. Funded by both federal and provincial governments, the Centre opened in November 2003 and was slated to close at the end of October 2004.



Above and right: Staff and volunteers at the HWRC packing up just before the final press conference to save the centre.

CREDIT: RAY CHAN, THE SING TAO NEWSPAPER

The Need to Keep the Centre Open

Although Toronto hotel occupancy rates had improved by the fall of 2004, employment for hospitality workers had not. Job cuts and reduced hours continued. There was a clear need to keep the HWRC open to address these ongoing issues.

The HWRC's Overall Strategy

The HWRC's media strategy was one aspect of an overall campaign to keep the Centre open. We submitted briefings to, and had meetings with, pivotal bureaucrats and politicians at all levels of government. Hospitality workers signed petitions and completed surveys. They also participated in a phone and letter writing campaign with their MPPs and MPs.

The Media Strategy

In August 2004, we launched our media strategy by developing goals, a work plan, and media contacts. We developed a Q and A with responses to questions that journalists might ask and held sessions with the Centre's peer counselors to go over responses to these questions. We also made sure that we had a variety of clients who were willing to talk to the



media. Journalists were most interested in hearing about the personal stories of workers in the industry.

In early October, we hired Valerie Dugale, a media specialist retained by the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, to help coordinate and implement our media strategy. There was a need to intensify our efforts as time was running out.

The Results

In total, our story had approximately 15 hits with the media. Stories about the Centre appeared in print media such as the *Toronto Star* several times, the *Sing Tao Daily Chinese Newspaper*, and the *Ming Pao* newspaper. We were on CBC TV evening news twice as well as on Global, CFTO, 680 News, CFRB, and CBC Radio's Metro Morning. Stories were favourable to keeping the Centre open.

There were several reasons why we were able to get such good media coverage. First, *Toronto Star* columnist Joe Fiorito told the personal stories of some of the HWRC's clients. This created an interest in the HWRC story with other media, and became a strategy we used throughout the campaign. Second, the Inn on the Park, a large Toronto hotel, announced its closure at the height of our campaign. We were able to capitalize on the closure as an example of how the hospitality industry was still in trouble and why the Centre should stay open. Hiring a media specialist proved to be invaluable. Valerie was able to build relationships with journalists and get them interested. She was able to shift our messaging as new information became available.

Unfortunately, the HWRC closed down at the end of October in spite of the media coverage and the continued need for the Centre's services by hospitality workers. However, the HWRC's success with media advocacy proves that it is possible to secure a high level of media coverage with good planning, strong energy, and a compelling story.

KEY DEFINITIONS



ADVOCACY— The act of supporting or promoting a cause, policy or idea. Advocacy can be any action to assure the best possible services for, or intervention on behalf of, an individual or group. It is undertaken to influence public opinion and societal attitudes or to bring about changes in government, community, or institutional policies.

LOBBY— The activities of a group (lobbyists) that seeks to influence legislation, laws, or public policy in favour of a specific cause. Some examples of lobby groups include commercial and industrial interests, trade associations, labour unions, and professional networks. A lobby group's power to influence is often linked to its size, and financial and membership resources. Lobbying is at the far end of the advocacy spectrum.

MARKETING— The process of identifying and reaching specific target audiences for the purpose of promoting or selling a product or service.

MEDIA— Forms of mass public communication designed to reach large numbers of people. The most common forms of media include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet.

MEDIA STRATEGY— The plan of action used to achieve your media objectives. It involves identifying the message you wish to convey, who the target audience is, ways to build connections with members of the media, as well as defining and deciding what kind of media would work best to deliver your message.

PUBLICITY— The act of delivering an unpaid educational message to a target audience. Involves placing positive and newsworthy information to promote a cause, idea, or organization and its policies in the media.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT— A process that encourages listening, talking, and developing multiple perspectives and exploring choices within a community. This process is a way to establish relationships around interests of mutual concern, as well as a way to connect people and their communities. It is also a precursor to any meaningful social change.

Tools for Engaging the Media

The OLC's On-Line Public Awareness Action Guide

By Alicia Homer, Communications Coordinator

FINDING WAYS TO RAISE THE PUBLIC PROFILE of literacy in the media is a constant challenge for the Ontario literacy community. Earlier this year the OLC published its *On-Line Public Awareness Action Guide* to support local literacy agencies in planning and conducting public awareness campaigns. The guide provides key resources to successfully launch activities, engage the public and the media, and evaluate the success of a campaign.

The *Action Guide* includes a section called "Engaging the Media" that deals specifically with the steps needed to organize a media strategy and action plan.

Tailored for community agencies, the media relations section addresses topics such as:

- ▶ Who works on the news?
- ▶ Types of media
- ▶ When the reporter calls: negotiating the interview
- ▶ Preparing for interviews
- ▶ Doing the interview

The guide also includes a "Tool Box" with supporting tools and sample materials to help local agencies work successfully with the media. Tools include the following:

- ▶ Media checklist
- ▶ Sample Adult Learner Stories
- ▶ Media coverage tracking template
- ▶ Media release template
- ▶ Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

The target audience for literacy public awareness campaigns usually includes youth and adult members of the public who could benefit from assistance with literacy skills, as well as members of the general public. Common goals of public awareness campaigns include:

- ▶ increasing public awareness and understanding of literacy issues
- ▶ reaching individuals who could benefit from the services of literacy agencies
- ▶ increasing the public profile of literacy issues, and
- ▶ increasing the prospects for literacy funding.

When using the media as part of a public awareness campaign, it is important to remember that literacy learners are not likely to get the message directly from print media such as newspapers, magazines and the Internet. They get messages through radio and television. However, their friends and relatives will hear or read about literacy programs and pass the information along with encouragement and support.

Media coverage is a great way to share the message of literacy with both learners and the general public. In the past, the media have been key partners in the success of the OLC's public awareness efforts. When asked how they heard about the OLC or literacy issues, target audiences usually mentioned television, newspapers, radio, posters, and bookmarks.

The OLC's *Action Guide* is a complete and easy-to-use tool for literacy agencies interested in improving their public profile and raising awareness about literacy in their local communities. The guide's step-by-step ideas and examples of how to organize and implement a media strategy also provide some answers to that question we often hear from local literacy agencies: "How can we better access the media?"

The OLC's "On-Line Public Awareness Action Guide" is available at: www.on.literacy.ca/aware/paag/cover.htm.

Let the Experts Do the Talking

Involving People with Literacy Challenges in Media Events

By Patricia Brady, Learner Coordinator

WHEN LITERACY ORGANIZATIONS PLAN a media strategy or campaign, they have the best experts available to talk about the issues—the learners. Adults with literacy challenges can be the most effective spokespersons for literacy. They can speak with realism and passion to the media about their own experiences with reading and writing difficulties. This personal perspective provides powerful and memorable information for journalists to use in their articles. Just what a reporter wants!

How do these spokespeople feel about the public exposure of their literacy difficulties? Many of them feel that it has not only benefited literacy in their area, it has benefited them as well.

Learners' experiences

Shirley Annable has been interviewed for a number of newspaper articles both at home in her own community of London and for OLC work in Toronto. A member of the Adult Learners Network of Ontario, Shirley has been a public spokesperson for literacy since 2002.



Shirley Annable

Passionate about raising literacy awareness, Shirley is also a member of the OLC Board of Directors and the OLC Advisory Roundtable. In addition to her own struggles with literacy, Shirley is the parent of children with learning disabilities.

Shirley says that the best part about her media experiences was being able to educate people who didn't know about the need for adult literacy. She says, "I am the expert here, and a pretty good one, especially when a parent wants to have a child tested for learning disabilities."

Dan Haley was first interviewed about 16 years ago but he remembers it very clearly. He was asked to do an interview by the head of the literacy program that he had been attending for about a year. The local television station was coming to the program's International Literacy Day Open House and the reporter wanted to do an interview with a student.



Dan Haley

Dan was terrified. He had the television studio black out his face. He didn't want his neighbours and friends to know that he couldn't read. He was afraid that people would make fun of him.

Dan's disguise didn't work. People recognized his voice. They stopped him on the street to say keep up the good work. Dan says that this was a turning point, a "coming out" for him. What he was so afraid of turned out to be a positive experience. He says that his involvement with literacy and the media helped build his self-esteem, and led to the successes he has achieved in his life.

Denis Lemieux was involved with the OLC *What Did You Learn Today* Campaign in 2003/04. He was the student representative and a speaker at an event hosted by the Timmins Learning Centre to celebrate the opening of the centre's new facilities.



Denis Lemieux

A reporter asked Denis about what brought him to the program. The reporter wanted to know what it was like, going back to school as an adult. Denis says that he was very nervous before he spoke, but people listened attentively to what he had to say. After the event Denis felt proud that he could do something to support literacy. He says that if you believe in something, you should support it.

Donna Lovell, an OLC Board Member, has also been involved with media events around literacy for many years. Donna was first interviewed when she was attending a program at Frontier College.



Donna Lovell

Donna has spoken about her relationship with her tutor, read some of her own stories and talked about literacy on such programs as CBC Radio's *Morningside*. She has also been

interviewed for newspapers and magazine articles. She thinks it is important to involve adults with literacy challenges as spokespersons for the literacy field. "It is the best way to help the rest of our community to see that there are people who need help along the way," she says.

Tips on talking with the media

Shirley, Dan, Denis, and Donna all said that the experience of working with the media increased their self-esteem by making them feel that they had something important to say. It also made them feel that they were doing something important for their community.

They have some tips to help other people with literacy challenges who may also be asked to take part in a media event. Donna says to remember that journalists are there to do a job. While she has had many good interviews, sometimes reporters are more interested in creating a good story than in learning about literacy which can be frustrating.

Shirley says that you have to be very careful about how you say things. Dan agrees. They have both experienced being misquoted. This can be hurtful, not only to you but to others as well. Usually you will not be able to see the article before it is printed or view the television tape. The best way to be properly quoted is to be prepared.

If possible, find out what you will be expected to talk about. Create a plan or script of how you will say it. Practise with someone before the interview. Have someone from your literacy program, or a family member or friend, do some coaching or role-playing with you. This will help you remember the things you want to say. You won't be as nervous, and you won't say things you don't mean to. Stay on topic. Be very clear so that your words or meaning cannot be changed. Don't be afraid of the reporter—remember—you are the story. They don't have an article without you!

For more information and ideas on how to involve learners in media outreach and speaker programs, read the OLC manual *Let the Experts Do the Talking!* The manual is available at: www.on.literacy.ca/research/experts/cover.htm.

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.

How can literacy organizations and agencies use the media to raise public awareness about literacy issues and to promote their programs?

In order to make effective use of the media, literacy organizations and agencies need to sharpen communications strategies and skills and learn how the media work and how to work with the media. The consistent challenge of working with the media is to make sure that the message about literacy is accurate, and to avoid distortions and sensationalism.

The following resources should be helpful tools for literacy organizations in their efforts to access and use the media effectively.

Building Public Awareness— A Manual for Literacy Practitioners

By Audra Making Maio and Patti Miller. Southwestern Ontario Adult Literacy Network, 1997.

Call no. 374.01206 M115



This manual was developed in an adult literacy network in Ontario. It is intended for use as a guide for literacy programs looking for ideas to promote their program and to enhance public awareness about literacy within their communities.

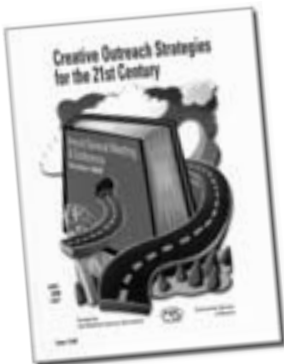
The manual covers a wide range of issues to be considered when undertaking a promotional or public awareness campaign. The section on “Working with the Media” contains a wealth of practical tips and advice to assist programs in making best use of the media and in effectively taking the literacy message to the media.

These include a section on media etiquette, how to approach the media, useful reminders about effective presentations, how to work with media deadlines to maximize effectiveness, how to format a standard press release, how to prepare for an interview, how to organize a media event and a press conference, and how to compose a letter to the editor.

“A Happy Media: Using Public Relations to Meet Your Outreach Needs” in Creative Outreach Strategies for the 21st Century

Community Literacy of Ontario, 2000.

Call no. 659.288 C67



This publication is based on a half-day workshop delivered to participants at the Community Literacy of Ontario Annual General Meeting and Conference in October 2000. It consists of a series of seven progressive exercises designed to help programs identify who it is they want to communicate with, and how to reach their target audience through the mass media. The exercises are designed to help programs to:

- recognize the role of the media as part of an outreach strategy
- learn about criteria for selecting and approaching media
- develop an effective press release
- prepare spokespersons for media events
- develop strategies to ensure media involvement in events
- develop techniques for getting articles published without a reporter

A Happy Media is an interesting and practical tool to help programs to enhance their communications strategy and to work effectively with the media as part of an overall outreach strategy.

Media Resource Guide. How to Tell your Story (4th ed.)



Rossie, C. Los Angeles, CA. Foundation for American Communications. 1985.

Call no. 659.2 R59 1985

The Media Resource Guide is a “golden oldie”, a tried and true resource to help non-profit groups to identify themselves as sources of information which will be valued and sought out by news people as media resources. Although the guide was published twenty years ago it is still available for sale on the FAC website <http://www.facsnet.org/about/pubs.php3>, a testament to its continued usefulness. The guide provides a comprehensive list of media do’s and don’ts that will prove helpful to literacy programs as they develop or enhance their communications strategies and work on becoming media-savvy.

Community Literacy Agencies. Shining Across Ontario. Promotional Kit



Community Literacy of Ontario, 2004. **Call no. AV659.288 C12**

This is a brand new promotional kit produced by Community Literacy Ontario to mark CLO’s 10th anniversary and to highlight the accomplishments of Ontario’s community literacy agencies. The kit contains fact sheets with statistical, factual and anecdotal information about community literacy agencies in Ontario. It also includes overhead masters that can be used by individual agencies in media releases, for board recruitment information and tutor training packages, for presentations to local organizations, and for fundraising initiatives. The kit includes a CD-ROM containing electronic versions in Word and PowerPoint of all kit materials, making it simple for agencies to use the contents to create their own promotional or media kit.

Literacy Awareness Media Kit

ABC Canada, 1998.

Call no. AV659.29374

The Literacy Awareness Media Kit was designed by ABC Canada to be used by literacy agencies as they develop public awareness campaigns and communications strategies. The kit contains: a collection of tips and tools for implementing a publicity campaign and for developing public service announcements and media releases. Although some of the information about literacy may be somewhat out of date, the material, particularly the sample public awareness materials including audio, video and print materials that can be customized by agencies for use by local media, should be useful to help agencies get started on a public awareness campaign.

What Adult Literacy Learners Would Like YOU To Know

Movement for Canadian Literacy. Available at: <http://www.literacy.ca/lac/3-3/3-3.htm>



This booklet produced by the Learners Advisory Council of the Movement for Canadian Literacy is a thought-provoking reminder that the voices of adult literacy learners must be heard in all discussions about literacy in the media and elsewhere. This publication is an essential component of any communications or public awareness strategy.

Adult literacy learners articulate their concerns about how they are portrayed in the media, and their desire that media images reflect the way they see themselves, as unique and competent individuals who are active as lifelong learners, parents, workers, voters and taxpayers.

Learners provide the following advice to literacy promoters and publicists:

- Be positive in your portrayal of learners; “personalize” literacy!
- Emphasize the gains that improved literacy is making in their lives
- Focus test your printed materials with learner groups
- Consult with the literacy community in your area
- Research your literacy facts (for example, see MCL’s fact sheets and website).

Message from the Chair

By Corry Wink, Chair, OLC Board of Directors



THE ONTARIO LITERACY COALITION EXISTS so that all people in Ontario who have literacy challenges can participate fully in society. This means that we believe that people with literacy challenges should be made aware of literacy programs

and encouraged to participate in them. It also means that people who for whatever reason do not participate in literacy programs have access to the information that they need, and that they are treated with dignity by their communities.

In my career as a literacy practitioner, I have learned that there are many reasons why people have difficulties in school and are unable to acquire the skills that they need to achieve their dreams for meaningful participation in society and secure employment. These reasons include: childhood poverty, very stressed family situations, and learning disabilities. However, lack of intelligence is not the main factor in their lack of success. Many of the people that I worked with in literacy programs had average or above average intelligence.

In 1987, the Ontario provincial government began a comprehensive program to make literacy programs more widely available and visible in the community. Funding was made available to a wide range of delivery agencies. Over the years, the government has funded many research and development projects which have resulted in a better understanding of the needs of literacy students, of the learning process, and of the skills needed to function effectively in the community and the workplace. Practitioners are better prepared to help students succeed and better learning materials are available in the classroom. Research has also produced information on Clear Language and ways to present

information so that it can be accessible to everyone.

We would like to think that our community has been able to reach more people with literacy challenges and to help them achieve their goals. However, there is still more to be done to reach people with literacy challenges who continue to be marginalized in Canadian society. The OLC has many projects to raise awareness about literacy, including "The OLC's On-line Public Awareness Action Guide" and "Attracting Learners and Dispelling Myths: A Literacy Awareness Campaign". All these tools play an important role in helping our members to create a society that is more sensitive about literacy issues and to encourage those who need literacy support to participate in literacy programs.

OLC Board of Directors 2004-2005

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Tom McEwan—Mississauga (filling vacancy)

Annual General Meeting 2004

By Anette Chawla, Executive Director

THIS YEAR'S AGM TOOK PLACE IN HAMILTON, Ontario on October 1, 2004. It was a bit later than usual because of the provincial conference we organized in June. The day began with a media workshop with Maija Saari, a journalism professor at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford campus. The session was in follow up to the wonderful workshop that Maija gave at the provincial conference in June.

To learn more about Maija's advice on the basic steps needed for working with the media, read her article "Media 101" on the front page of this newsletter.

At lunch, we were joined by Kathleen Wynne, the parliamentary assistant in charge of the Adult Education Review. Since the final report has not yet been released by the government, Kathleen reviewed the general findings from the consultations. No less than 500 groups and individuals wrote submissions. The OLC's paper in response to the Adult Education Review is available on our website at: www.on.literacy.ca/aware/paper.pdf.

Aaron Cantor, OLC's outgoing President, chaired the meeting. He guided us effortlessly through the AGM business; the agenda, minutes and financial statements were approved, Robert Veltheer was reappointed as the OLC's auditor and a new Board was elected. Aaron and five other board members left the Board at the AGM. Thank you to Jennine Agnew-Kata, Aaron Cantor, Sarah Canzano, Cheryl Conway, Sandy Johnston and Linda Lott for their wonderful contributions to the OLC.

The AGM was part of a set of meetings from September 30th to October 2nd that included the Advisory Roundtable on Thursday, the Board of Directors on Friday and the Adult Learners Network of Ontario on Saturday.

Thanks to all who came and thanks to all our members who sent in their proxy forms to vote for the new Board!

Next year's AGM will be on Friday, June 24, 2005. Make a note in your calendar now!



Discussions at the Advisory Roundtable meeting



Kathleen Wynne speaks on the Adult Education Review



Executive Director listens as outgoing president Aaron Cantor speaks at the AGM



Members of the Adult Learners Network of Ontario at the AGM

Recent Research

Research-in-Practice—Talking about the student-practitioner relationship

By Dr. Pat Campbell, President, Grass Roots Press

A successful relationship with our student is bound by a “certain rapport,” an intuitive intelligence. This rapport means we are sensitive, responsive, and attentive to our student and our student responds to us (p. 15).

TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE STORIES with colleagues about tutoring and teaching is a luxury for literacy practitioners. In Ontario, a group of 13 practitioners made time to share their stories about the student-practitioner relationship by participating in a research-in-practice circle. Some of the practitioners were volunteer tutors while others were paid staff. The research-in-practice circle also included a research coordinator, expert, and facilitator, along with one administrator.

The circle provided a rare opportunity for colleagues to spend time exchanging ideas, information, and reflections about their relationships with students. In fact, one of the study’s recommendations is to use research-in-practice circles as venues for professional development. The circle members met 5 to 6 times over the course of five months. Between circle meetings, the practitioners worked with students. After each tutoring session, the practitioners recorded their thoughts and observations in a journal. In their notes, they tried to make the “familiar strange” by recording and reflecting upon seemingly commonplace experiences.

After the initial meeting, the practitioners collectively examined and compared notes, identifying themes from their collective experience. Some of the members systematically coded the groups’ journals according to topics that were discussed in the circles. These topics included emotional rapport, acceptance, trust, and risk. The major theme that emerged from the data in the journals was that a “certain

rapport” characterized the practitioners’ relationships with the students. One of the study’s recommendations is to include the topic of establishing rapport in tutor training and professional development, as this topic is frequently neglected.

This “certain rapport” helps to develop the student’s confidence, opening the door to risk-taking and the learning process. The study recommends that practitioners honour the time it takes for students to gain confidence and alter their attitudes about their potential for learning. The practitioners recognized that this is easier said than done, especially when one is expected to place a higher value on academic outcomes than on other indicators of success, such as an increase in confidence.

In the last circle session, the practitioners listed ways of measuring student progress and success that moved beyond academic outcomes. They referred to these measures as process indicators. These indicators included a change in the students’ vocabulary and body language, a willingness to learn more, work independently, and actively help others. The study recommends further research to figure out how process indicators can be incorporated into accountability frameworks that stress academic outcomes.

Zimmerman, S. and the Report Writing Committee. (2004). *What goes on here: Practitioners study the student-practitioner relationship*. Peterborough, ON: Trent Valley Literacy Association.

Literacy Action Day 2004

By Anette Chawla, Executive Director

LITERACY ACTION DAY ON OCTOBER 21, 2004 marked my visit to the Hill. What an exhilarating experience, trotting up to the front of the Parliament Building in my finest!

In the Aboriginal People's room, we met and formed our team of Shirley Annable, member of the Adult Learners Network of Ontario (ALNO) and an OLC board member, Ellen Richardson from Frontier College, and myself. During the day we met with three members of Parliament to talk about literacy and stress the importance of government action. We also highlighted the important work done by the National Literacy Secretariat.

We met first with **Tony Martin**, the NDP Critic for HRDC, Social Policy, and Childcare. Tony hails from Sault Ste. Marie, where he has been involved in running a soup kitchen and working with the poor and marginalized. Tony took a keen interest in what we had to tell him.

After meeting with Tony, we jumped back in the bus and moved on to visit with **Jack Layton**, leader of the NDP party. Jack was so interested in hearing about adult literacy that he delayed another meeting so he could continue talking with us. It probably did not hurt that his constituency office lent a helping hand to Shirley 10 years ago and that both Ellen and I live in his riding!



Anette Chawla, Shirley Annable and Ellen Richardson meet with NDP leader Jack Layton

Our third meeting was with **Peter Van Loan** of the Conservative Party. Like Tony and Jack, Peter is new to Ottawa politics. Peter is a lawyer and adjunct professor and has a long history

with the Conservative Party. He met with us in the Opposition Lobby, where the MPs hang out between meetings to talk and follow the news on TV screens.



Anette Chawla, Shirley Annable and Ellen Richardson meet with Conservative MP Peter Van Loan

Although all these men are very busy, none of them had any problem fitting us into their schedules. All three MPs listened carefully to what we had to say but unfortunately not much commitment came out of our meetings. Regardless, this kind of face-to-face time is invaluable in terms of raising awareness about literacy among politicians. For at least 20 minutes each, they listened to learners like Shirley tell their stories, and learned more about how their communities are involved.

The Canadian literacy community has a vision for the future where all literacy needs are addressed, but we need government support to put it into place. As Jack Layton commented at lunch, literacy is a non-partisan issue and should really receive support from all political parties.

Building on the momentum of Literacy Action Day 2004 at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, it would be great to organize a similar event with Ontario MPPs at Queen's Park in Toronto. It would be a great goal for the future.

Kudos to the Movement for Canadian Literacy for arranging this event and for making LAD 2004 a success. I am already looking forward to next year!

OLC Highlights

By Lesley Brown, Director, Program Development

OLC responds to the Postsecondary Review

On November 15, 2004, the OLC sent a letter to the Honourable Bob Rae, responding from the adult literacy perspective to the Ontario Government's Postsecondary Review. The review of postsecondary education in Ontario is currently underway and involves examination of past studies and reports on postsecondary education, research and analysis of best practices, consultations and Town Hall meetings across the province, and the development of recommendations to the government. The OLC welcomes the Postsecondary Review, as the issues of postsecondary education intersect with the interests of the Adult Literacy community and the Review is an excellent opportunity to link with the Ontario Government's parallel Adult Education Review. For more information about the Postsecondary Review, visit www.raereview.on.ca. To read OLC's letter to the Hon. Bob Rae, visit the OLC website at www.on.literacy.ca.

Update on Action for Family Literacy in Ontario (AFLO)

New Members join AFLO

The Action for Family Literacy in Ontario (AFLO) working group is pleased to welcome three new members: Lorri Sauve, Penny Smith-Jensen and Kim Oastler. These new members bring with them extensive family literacy, emergent literacy, and early literacy knowledge, as well as experience working with Family Literacy initiatives on a provincial and national level. Lorri and Penny are also certified trainers for Foundational Training in Family Literacy.

The new members join our existing coterie of AFLO members that includes: Alimamy Bangura, Trudy Lothian, Deborah Nesbitt-Munroe, Marilyn Perkovich-Farand, Shirley Wellman, and Lesley Brown. The new members round out the AFLO team very well and enable us to take on the ambitious goals set for this year.



ALNO members working and networking at the OLC LiteracyWorks! conference in June 2004.



Supporting Sustainable Family Literacy Programming in Ontario

AFLO has launched a new research project, working in partnership with Kim Falcigno, a researcher at Lakehead University's Faculty of Education, Department of Lifelong Learning. This valuable project will form the basis for discussion and recommendations to policy makers and funders, highlighting the importance of supporting sustained funding models and professional development opportunities for Family Literacy delivery in Ontario.

Research will include an environmental scan to identify the current gaps and structures needed to build sustainable Family Literacy programming in Ontario. From this research, a position paper will be drafted, as well as two reports that will articulate partnership potentials, sustainable funding requirements for Family Literacy programming, and models for professional development in Ontario.

In conjunction with this research, Kim Sutherland, a family literacy specialist and a former member of AFLO, will develop a Reference Guide to support literacy practitioners including family, adult and Early Years Centre staff in recognizing and applying key elements of best practices for family literacy.

To provide communication venues for the Family Literacy community, AFLO is developing a new website that will be launched in early 2005. It is our hope that the website will provide a much needed forum for Family Literacy practitioners to exchange information for the purpose of building a stronger community of practice. Watch for the AFLO website launch in 2005.

The Workforce Literacy Symposium

We are pleased to announce that Brigid Hayes of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre will be working closely with the OLC and our Advisory

Group as we begin planning for the Workforce Literacy Symposium in 2005. The Advisory Committee will include three literacy representatives, two members from the First Sites project, and a literacy learner, as well as two members representing business, two representing labour, and one member representing OISE.

The committee will be charged with identifying key partners who will represent their particular interests at the Symposium. The Symposium will provide an opportunity for these stakeholders to learn more about each other, find areas of common interest and need, and identify "next step" recommendations for developing solid partnerships between LBS, labour, and business.



Family Literacy Day Materials Distribution

The OLC wishes to thank ABC Canada for providing Family Literacy Day materials free of charge to our members. We had an overwhelming response to our promotion of FLD materials and have distributed all the items that we received. We hope everyone involved has a successful day promoting family literacy on January 27, 2005. For more information about

Family Literacy Day and FLD activities planned for 2005, visit www.abc-canada.org/fl-d-jaf/.

Workforce Literacy Resource Bulletins

We are fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Cindy Davidson, an expert in workplace literacy, who will be the researcher and writer of the Workforce Literacy Resource Bulletins for both learners and facilitators. We are currently in the process of bringing together an advisory committee and identifying sites to pilot the bulletins. If you are interested in becoming a pilot site for the bulletins please contact Cindy Davidson at cindy@quillnet.org.

RENEWAL TIME!



It's time to renew your Ontario Literacy Coalition membership!

As an OLC member you enjoy the following great benefits:

- * Invitations to participate in OLC events and conferences
- * Subscription to the OLC newsletter, *Literacy on the Move*, and the OLC monthly E-Bulletin.
- * Access to OLC publications and reports on current literacy issues
- * Eligibility to participate in the OLC group employee benefits plan

and much more.

Annual OLC membership runs from January 31, 2005 to January 30, 2006. Contact the OLC at: olc@on.literacy.ca for more information.



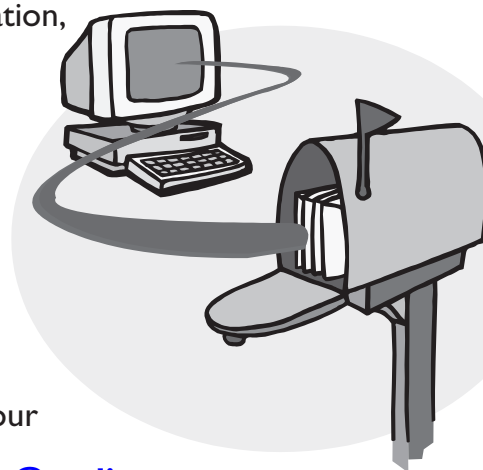
Find out about the OLC Employee Benefits Program

Introducing an Employee Benefits Program designed specifically for Ontario Literacy Coalition member agencies. Customized choices are available to you at an affordable price. Enrolling is easy! For more information contact the OLC's insurance broker, Owen & Associates, at 416-252-6116.



The OLC is sending 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.



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.