

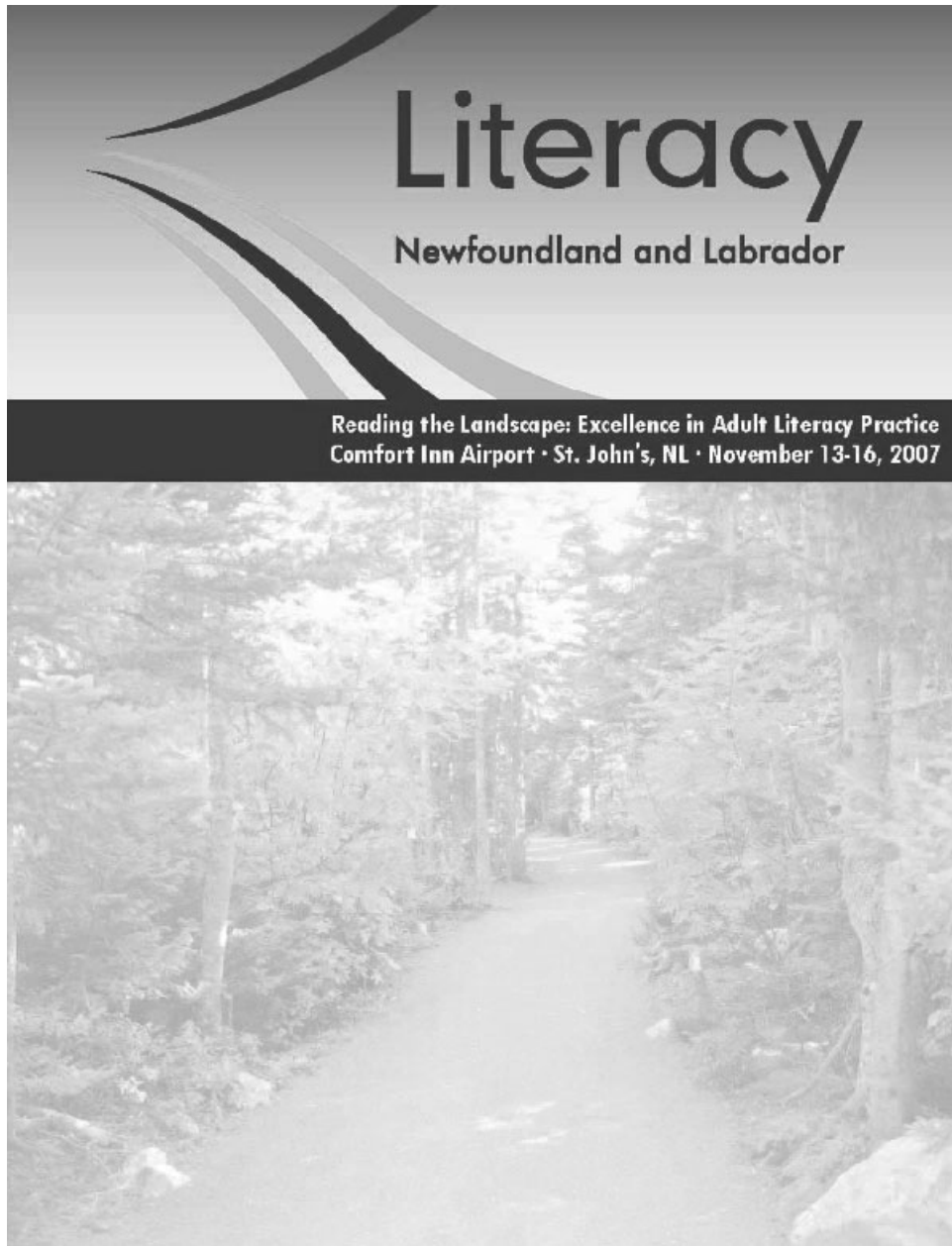


Literacy

Newfoundland and Labrador

Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice
Comfort Inn Airport · St. John's, NL · November 13-16, 2007





Proceedings Report: Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador "Reading the Literacy Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice" November 13-16, 2007

Supported by the

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Proceedings Report

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Proceedings of the Literacy NL Fall 2007 Institute

Reading the Landscape: *Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice*

Summary Overview

The fall 2007 institute hosted by Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador, *Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice*, was a milestone initiative for literacy in this province. It was the first time in over a decade that a provincial literacy coalition was able to gather a body of practitioners together for the purpose of professional development and effective networking.

A total of eighty-eight practitioners from across the spectrum - university, college and community-based instructors and researchers, volunteer literacy tutors, program administrators, adult learners, national partners - came together in a spirit of sharing and learning. Colleagues from the fields of English as a Second Language and Aboriginal Learning shared insights into their areas of practice. Government agencies and the business sectors also participated, sharing insights into the impact of agency programs and workplace initiatives on the province's literacy landscape.

The institute offered a full- practice approach, highlighting elements of promising practice from across disciplines. From this, the theme of *Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice* was developed. Guest speakers offered sessions on effective partnerships, assessment, workplace literacy, essentials skills, curriculum development and cultural/other language literacy. The participation of both local presenters and guest presenters allowed practitioners meaningful opportunities to identify and share promising practices in adult education from across Canada.

Participants spoke of the institutes offerings with enthusiasm, expressing their interest in participating in more such events into the future. Literacy NL hopes to be able to respond to the professional development interests of practitioners with increased opportunities for practitioner networking and resource development sessions at both the regional and provincial levels.

Across the board feedback on this initiative was very positive as people from various programs and organizations gathered to share elements of their practice with colleagues and friends.

Detailed proceedings are shared in the pages which follow to help inform practitioners and stakeholders as to the current literacy landscape in the province.

Caroline Vaughan

Executive director

Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

on behalf of the "Reading the Landscape" Institute Steering Committee

Programme for Reading the Landscape: *Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14 ... SURVEYING THE TRAIL

9:00—10:15 am Session A — Official Opening and Keynote Address

Official Opening

Emcee — Pamela Bennett, Co-Chair, Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

Keynote Address:

Finding the Cracks Where the Light Shines Through — Helen Woodrow

10:15—10:30 am Coffee Break

10:30—Noon Session B — Partnerships for Literacy

B1 — *Effective Literacy Partnerships* — Sharon Park, Barbara Marshall

Overviews of two successful literacy partnerships, one in the Stephenville area, the other in the Labrador Straits.

B2 — *HOPEworks ABE* — Rob McLellan, Yvonne McDermott, Sharon Lush

Winner of the 2007 Council of the Federation Literacy Award, this program operates within a family of initiatives at Stella Burry Community Services.

B3 — *Government Support for Literacy Learners* — Service Canada, Dept of HRLE

Summary and explanation of support available for the adult learner through these departments of the federal and provincial governments.

Noon—1:15 pm Lunch (Pre-assigned seating according to Dine-A-Round topics. Please sign up by 10:30 am)

1:30—3:00 pm Session C — Creative Curriculum

C1 — *Connecting Self & Learning: Journal Writing with Young Adults* — Lynn Best

Recent research, how personal writing can stimulate learning, and experiencing the "writing out loud" approach.

C2 — *What Do I Do Now? Lesson Planning for One-on-One* — Tom Dawe

The dynamics of the one-on-one relationship in literacy tutoring, including a hands-on opportunity to put knowledge into practice.

C3 — *Transferring Literacy Through the Arts* — Robin Grant

Trans- literacy, or how alternative art mediums can be used to educate and engage people in activities for reading and writing.

3:00—3:15 pm Coffee Break

3:15—4:45 pm Session D — Cultures of Literacy

D1 — *Literacy in a Multi-Cultural Classroom* — Bobby Bessey, Janice Siu, Barbara Mulcahy

Diversity in the classroom, meeting the needs of various types of learners, and assessment of literacy entrance/exit criteria.

D2 — *Reading Other Cultures* — Barbara Burnaby

Exercises to shed light on the meanings we hold for various literacy practices— close to home and further abroad.

D3 — *Aboriginal Literacy Issues & Resources* — Linda Anstey, Geoff Lightfoot/Doug Bartlett

First hand experiences and observations of an ABE instructor; an introduction to the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15 ... CHANGING THE LENS

9:00—10:00 am Session E — Welcome and Keynote Address

Welcome

Ed Brown, Co-Chair, Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

Keynote Address:

***The British Columbia Literacy Landscape* — Diana Twiss**

10:00—10:15 am Coffee Break

10:15—11:45 am Session F — Assessment

F1 — *Tricks of the Trade: Writing Winning Proposals* — Diana Twiss

An interactive session to explore & share tricks of the trade in securing funding, and a hike through the steps Diana and her B.C. colleagues have developed

F2 — *Informal Formative Assessment: The QWERTY Dilemma* — Dr. Marc Glassman

An exploration of learner-centered strategies in which teachers may utilize informal formative assessment to guide instruction.

F3 — *What in the World is PLAR Anyway?* — Pat Roberts

An introduction to the concepts, complexities, practices and possibilities associated with Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition. Bring along YOUR "prior learning" to share!

Noon—1:15 pm Lunch — Open Seating

1:30—3:00 pm Session G — Transitions in the Workplace

G1 — *Meeting the Grade: Transition Skills to GED Preparation* — William Fagan

How is the GED viewed as a stepping stone to work? What to do when the number of learners is small & the range of levels is great? How to conduct RiP while offering the program?

G2 — *Resources on the Web for Transition to Work* — Lorette Chiasson

An exploration of literacy and transition to work resources on the web, particularly the NALD website.

G3 — *Making the Link: Essential Skills and Business Success* — Brian Hicks

A review of the 2006-07 joint Essential Skills project between the College of the North Atlantic & the NL Division of Canadian Manufacturers/Exporters.

3:00—3:15 pm Coffee Break

3:15—4:30 pm Session H — Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills

Moderator — Caroline Vaughan, Literacy Newfoundland & Labrador

Panel Jeff Birmingham, Fortis Properties

Brian Hicks, College of the North Atlantic

Mary Walsh, City of St. John's

Presentation by each panelist, and open session for questions and comments by Institute participants.

THURSDAY EVENING BANQUET

Join colleagues, friends, and new acquaintances in the Plaza Ballroom beginning at 7:00 Thursday evening. Hear dinner speaker, Peter Larose, Director General—

Workplace Partnerships Directorate with Human Resources and Social Development Canada, speak on *Literacy and Essential Skills: Future Directions*. Stay around after dessert for traditional music, a few scuffs & traditional Newfoundland dances, and a general 'good time' with The Art Stoyles Band.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16 ...

FORGING A NEW TRAIL TO EXCELLENCE

8:30 - noon Literacy Mini-Tradeshow

Visit the booths & table displays of literacy and affiliated organizations.

9:00 — Noon *A Travel Guide to Literacy in Newfoundland and Labrador*

— **Pamela Bennett and Jean Rasmussen** A mapping of resources, information services and contacts for literacy practitioners across Newfoundland and Labrador. An interactive who's who and what's what of literacy to determine the toolkit needed by practitioners to meet the needs of their literacy practices.

OTHER INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES

Registration and Meet & Greet

On Tuesday evening, from 7:30—9:30 pm, an informal Meet & Greet, with finger foods and a cash bar, will take place in Salon B, in conjunction with Registration. Registration will continue on Wednesday morning at 8:00.

Continental Breakfast

Muffins, croissants, coffee, tea and chilled juices will be available each morning beginning at 8:30.

Dine-A-Rounds — Wednesday Lunchtime

Choose your table seating assignment by topic. *Sign up at the Institute Registration Desk by 10:30 am.*

Annual General Meetings

Wednesday 5:00—6:00 pm — Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

Wednesday 6:00—7:00 pm — Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council

Learners Network Get-Together

Join Jean Rasmussen and Caroline Vaughan for supper on Wednesday at 7:00 pm to discuss the value of developing a provincial learner network to address learner issues. *Sign up in advance at the Institute Registration Desk.*

Finding the Cracks Where the Light Shines Through

Keynote by Helen Woodrow

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Session A

Helen's keynote address titled: *Finding the Cracks Where the Light Shines Through* provided an insightful foundation to allow participants at the conference to be able to 'read the landscape' of literacy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Her remarks began with a reminder of the sudden cuts by Canada's new government to literacy programs one year previous. Helen then lamented that in recent years, education and literacy have gone from being considered as a basic human right and tool for citizenship to being strictly a training and economic issue.

Helen then 'reversed engines' to recount some historical moments in the development of adult literacy education in Newfoundland and Labrador. One was a fisher who used his literacy skills in an 1830 court case to protect the rights of settlers became known as the professor for fostering the development of literacy at Stone Island. Another was the Fisherman's Protection Union that advocated for night schools for adults and an end to denominational schooling for the outports. Finally, the work of Florence O'Neill, who had been employed by the Commission of Government and later the Department of Education, was highlighted. Florence believed there were 3 purposes to an education: to earn a living, live a life, and mould the world.

The 2nd part of her keynote address focused on the 'Contemporary Landscape.' Here, Helen recounted more recent developments, such as the creation of the Division of Adult Learning and Literacy and its mandate for formal education programs, including the GED and the ABE program. On ABE she voiced two very real concerns. The first was the urban bias of the Level 1 provision. Currently, all of the 11 community programs are in five cities or larger towns including Baie Verte, Stephenville, Marystown, St. John's and Corner Book. She also questioned the difference in the Level I budgets between the college and community, particularly as it relates to wages. She also spoke about the rich environments

for learning that existed outside classrooms in the nonformal sector and how Aboriginal people and grass roots movements have much to teach us about the power of non-school approaches.

In the final segment of her address, Helen asked us to look ahead with 'new eyes.' She examined a variety of research studies to see how they might shine a light through the cracks in the field. Clearly, there has been a decline in adult education and training of people not in the workforce coinciding with the decline in government financial support between the two IALS studies. A large portion of adults (especially older and so-called unskilled people) are not being reached by 'organized' forms of learning. Referring to Sweden where all those with low levels of education (not just those likely to succeed, as in Canada) are the priority group for provision, she challenged us to find new ways to 'turn people on' to learning. She also urged governments to follow the lead of UNESCO and engage the literacy community in meaningful policy dialogue. Finally, she asked the audience not to let their knowledge remain invisible and invited everyone to record their comments, concerns, and suggestions on the papered wall at the back of the room.

Helen's address was an excellent start to the Institute. Her presentation was engaging and interactive. Based on the body language in the room during her remarks and the questions after, most people generally acknowledged and validated the reality of the landscape she painted. In the spirit of her Marcel Proust quote, Helen's presentation was a guided 'voyage of discovery' about the literacy landscape of Newfoundland and Labrador seen through her informed, community-based eyes.

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. *Marcel Proust*

EFFECTIVE LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

Overview of two successful literacy partnerships, one in the Stephenville area, the other in the Labrador Straights

Presented by: Sharon Park, Community Education Network, Stephenville
Barb Marshall & Sheila Downer, Partners in Learning
Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Session B1

Barbara Marshall has had experience with K-12 system and 14 years with Advanced Education through the College of the North Atlantic. She has been involved with Adult Basic Education Level 2 and 3 significantly since the Cod Moratorium in 1992 and has done Level 1 "on the sly".

In 1995 a committee was formed to cover seven communities from L'Anse-au-Clair to Red Bay with Agnes Pike, mayor of West St. Modeste as chair. These people were the partners in learning plus mentors Helen Woodrow, Janet Skinner, and Sarah Thompson.

This group established a learning philosophy by asking, "What do we mean by Literacy?" and "What do we believe?" It was established that literacy involves a variety of contents, settings, skills, and knowledge. It was also deemed that literacy and learning is the work of the community. Mentors provided a lot of insight.

In the town of West St. Modeste (population 155) activities revolve around the learning centre, and it also includes family resource centre, post office, youth centre, and Partridgeberry Festival. The Labrador South Health Centre covers BP clinics, foot clinics, cervical screening clinics, and provided a site to dispense information.

Effective Literacy Partnerships

The town runs Partridgeberry Festival in September, and the Learning Centre helps organize and give help with paperwork. The Centre also assists church groups with concerts, songbooks and bulletins.

Other alliances included Memorial University and issues around distance learning: Labrador Straits Development Corporation with "Strait Talk and We Learn".

Sheila Downer came in at this point to provide the example of participatory learning evident in "Women's Voices" - where women learned basic computer skills to tell their stories about gardening, history of older houses, etc. So eight to nine women began to

learn Microsoft and other computer skills with help of CAP and Smart Labrador Technology support.

CBC's Dorothy King did an interview with two participants in "Women's Voices". The two women were a mother Alma (age 70) and daughter Bonnie. Alma said she had learned to use a digital camera, scan photographs, and could now do banking online and "talk" to grandchildren.

The final outcome was that the remaining seven women produced a CD themselves at the end of eight weeks.

Considerations in Partnership Development were decided to include:

1. Shared vision.
2. Needs to be met.
3. Key stakeholders are those with human and financial resources.
4. Leadership.
5. Clearly defined roles.

Effective Literacy Partnerships

Sharon Park has had twenty-five years experience in adult education and is now the director of community education network in Stephenville.

Community education effort began about fifteen years in Port au Port area. It was quickly decided that partnership was required to achieve success - (i.e.) "Common Vision is Essential to Success".

The area of inclusion is now the whole of the west coast and literacy must involve all of the person's development. This area covers approximately seventy communities. An aim was to be life long learning for all at local level rather than following course of national direction or even an American route.

Forming partnerships obviously lightens workloads and maximizes useful resources. Some of the dangers to be considered are that it can be more work to placate some people who perceive they are being unfairly "overshadowed" and time can be lost "smoothing ruffled feathers".

The aim and goal is to facilitate, enhance access and an understanding of literacy across generations at community level. Community literacy must be connected to everything that happens in the community and not just academic issues.

Early years supports are in three divisions on west coast including Northern Peninsula, Stephenville area and Port aux Basque area.

There have been provisions of support for literacy "Lunch and Learns". Books for babies, summer reading programs and ABE Level in Stephenville and Cape St. George.

Workplace literacy programs such as "Bridging the Gap", Life Works and Planting Seeds for Learning for women who had never been in the work place.

Effective Literacy Partnerships

Parents as teaching partners, grand-friends doing Story time also were useful initiatives.

High school pregnancy rate led to an infant care center at Stephenville High School.

These are just some of the efforts that Sharon mentioned. She concluded with an admonition for us all to celebrate the following:

1. That we work together.
2. That we have created something new.
3. That hard work and honest work leads to progress.
4. That people give of themselves in honest ways.

HOPEworks ABE

Winner of the 2007 Council of the Federation Literacy Award, this program operates within a family of initiatives at Stella Burry Community Services.

Presented by: Rob McLellan, Yvonne McDermott, Sharon Lush

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, Session B3

Stella Burry Community Services was formally incorporated in 1995. Governed by a volunteer board of directors, SBCS serves individuals with a variety of backgrounds, many of whom have developed significant personal barriers that make it very difficult to success at traditional education/employment programs and prepare for the work force.

The organization provides a range of client services: counselling and support, education and skills training, housing and property management. These programs have grown out of the

identified needs of its client population. Clients are approached by staff from a people-first philosophy. The needs and the strengths of clients are assessed, and appropriate supports are offered through the Stella Burry family of programs. Over 500 people have been assisted in the past year through the SBCS program model.

The additional support and encouragement of the "no-fail" philosophy enable participants to achieve meaningful gains in their ability to fully participate in the community. Residential counselling is often a first point of engagement with clients, and affordable housing is one of the hallmarks of the organization. SBCS has a large number of units it operates around St. John's.

Other programs are built around these adult learners in an effort to ensure they achieve active participation in the community. Linking affordable housing with education and employment programming increases the likely hood that clients will succeed. Clients are supported through their literacy and essential skills development through the *HOPEworks Inc. ABE program*, which has been very successful in providing academic skill development for clients.

Stella Burry's *HOPEworks ABE* was awarded the Council of the Federation 2007 Literacy Award in recognition of the organization's contribution to improving the lives of St. John's residents wishing to improve their literacy levels. Staff at SBCS sees this award as a true testimony to the hard work of this program, its volunteers and especially its learners, whose love of learning and desire to improve their lives has made all the difference in their achieving success.

HOPEworks Pre-Employment provides preparation for the workforce, and has been very successful in assisting participants with limited work experience to enter the work force or prepare for additional training programs. Additional programs provide a range of support, from emergency shelters to counselling and support, from on the job training to social enterprise. Program staff consult regularly with social workers to ensure that participating individuals have the best chance of successfully completing these programs, eventually eliminating the needs for income support.

Government Support for Literacy Learners

Summary and Explanation of Support Available for the adult learner through these departments of the federal and provincial governments.

Presented by: Barb Butler, Service Canada (HRSDC), and Deborah Gallant, Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE)

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, Session B3

The presentations focused on available government services for literacy learners in the Adult Basic Education System. Services are provided by both the department of Human Resources, Labour, and Employment (HRLE), and Service Canada. The level of interest as expressed by participants was evident throughout the presentations.

Deborah Gallant, Human Resources, Labour and Employment (HRLE)

Deborah Gallant talked about the services available through HRLE and under what criteria people would qualify for these services. There were some very refreshing items of information within this presentation. It appears that unlike other funders, HRLE are willing to fund for an indefinite period of time, so long as the student is progressing and advancing toward an education. This takes a lot of pressure off both the student and teacher because they can handle the material of ABE in an appropriate and timely manner, rather than have to deal with limited funding and an interruption in schooling and potentially employment. Unfortunately, this funding is not extended to college programs, where tuition can be expensive. Here, the student has the option of taking on student loans, but in many cases they are not willing to take on additional expense without guaranteed employment.

There seemed to be some debate as to whether HRLE funding was available to help people who are learning disabled. There needs to be clearer rules in this area because people who are receiving social services and are learning disabled are going to need access to additional supports- such as talking dictionaries, dragon eight, and etc- to be successful.

Recognizing that it is virtually impossible to gain employment without an education now, HRLE seems to be trying to guarantee education levels will improve in the province. In general, HRLE appears to be working toward its goal of reducing poverty and dependence on income support. It was also refreshing to find that this support continues long after schooling to areas of career development and exploration. Therefore, the Methodology and practice of HRLE seems to be at a high level and accomplishing its goals.

Speaking from a personal level, I have found HRLE very helpful for my ABE classroom and was disappointed to hear that standards are not applied equally across the province in all cases. I hope this bridge can be gapped so all HRLE clients who are attending school across Newfoundland can be positively guided the same way as the clients on the West Coast. As the presenter found themselves unable to answer some of the participant questions, it might be helpful to have additional representative on hand to provide the fullest picture possible.

Barb Butler, Service Canada (HRSDC)

Opportunities for clients of Service Canada to connect with supports are available in two distinct areas: *Skills Development* and *Skills Link*.

Skills Development is available to current or former Employment Insurance clients. The identified purpose of *Skills Development* is to help people who are not employable get jobs, and is therefore limited to those people who are not working. Someone who is looking to better their skills development and employability, and potentially rise in their career options, is not eligible for this program.

A discussion of the application of this program by individual client brought forward certain areas of contention.

Service Canada department policies do not always appear to make the connection between optimizing client needs and program goals. In the area of *duration of supports for ABE participation*, for example, support for ABE participation is limited, usually to 3 years. This is not satisfactory in every case. For example, a student at a grade 3 level cannot successfully complete 9 years of school in 3 years time. Alternately, the 3 year period is not always set as a cut off, however the application of providing additional time to complete the ABE program is not applied equally to clients across the province. *Participants felt the need to voice their support to extend the 3 year limit, so it is*

accessible for all people regardless of their education, and so they too can benefit and gain employment. Limiting the program's application to certain clients challenges the programs integrity. There was no clarity offered by the presenter as to criteria used to determine level of service provision by client.

Another area of uneven application of policy is in the *interruption of schooling to allow for workforce participation.* Clients will sometimes run into difficulty with leaving school for work when attending ABE through Service Canada. Again, with no set policy there is an uneven application of resources, with some clients allowed to go to work in April and return to classes in September, while others are not allowed to go at all. In many cases, adult learners attending ABE are not getting any money in the summer from Service Canada. How are they supposed to feed their families and survive if they can't make money? The options are to survive without a job, or quit school. Not allowing for seasonal work does not make either common or monetary sense, as the flexibility of a work option would both save the government money, and better resource clients to continue with their skills development in the fall.

The application of policy for *Skills Link* appears to be more equitable. This program provides resources for books, and supports their clients with what was termed by participants as "very respectable amounts of money". This program will also fund post secondary education for three years which is excellent when you think about the high costs of tuition. The skills link program also allows someone to participate in an alternative and potentially a more appropriate path to skills development and potential employment, outside of the "time-weighted" formal school programs.

In conclusion, the presentation was quite informative and an overall success. The HRLE presentation identified certain strengths in policy and procedure which were not as evident within the programs of Service Canada. The presentation also highlighted the potential benefits of greater collaboration between the two organizations so there are set policies and procedures for all clients of ABE in the province. It would also be beneficial to have set rules for the students about ABE and college to give the program more credibility and strength.

Connecting Self & Learning: Journal Writing with Young Adults

Recent research, how personal writing can stimulate learning, and experiencing the "writing out loud" approach. (Part A is about the study; Part B is about session activities)

Presented by Lynn Best

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Session C1

Part A

In 2005, a 10-week study in journal writing was held at the Murphy Centre with 10 participants between the ages of 17-26. Participants came from various backgrounds, 2 with high school completion, 8 had grade 9 or less.

Guidelines for writing were as follows:

- Not to be concerned with spelling or grammar
- Write about what you know
- There is no *wrong* way to write
- Provide an opportunity to share writing
- Respect and support all writers
- Facilitator writes *with* the group

Results: Over 300 journal entries were reviewed with themes of self-knowledge emerging throughout most. Participants wrote poems and/or letters expressing feelings about personal situations; future planning; affirmation of belief, values & knowledge; creative thinking; reflection; and understanding one's place in the world. (The facilitator felt early on in the study that there was a need to set parameters on writing that was shared because of possible legal implications).

Participants' Thoughts about the Study: The participants had various thoughts of how they felt - some of them expressed surprise, interest, higher self-esteem, encouraged to continue their education and/or go on to do other things. One person stated that she/he "felt smarter".

Insights (what staff learned from this study)

- Learning relationships are really important
- There is a connection between creativity and self-esteem
- There is a connection between creativity and knowledge
- It's important to model
- Most write about what they know
- There is a need to provide opportunity for creativity
- Skilled facilitation is required
- It is important to have a safe and non-judgmental environment
- Writing gives insight into people's lives

Part B (Activities - Session C1)

Let's Write (3 activities).

1. Free writing. This was a timed (3 mins.), non-directed, continuous writing activity. Purpose - to centre the participant by clearing his/her mind of busy thoughts.
2. Fortune Cookies. Open, read, and write how the message relates to you.
3. Topic: My Treasured Possession. Think about what it is and write about its importance.

At the end of each activity, the facilitator provided opportunity to share our writing with others.

What Do I do Now? Lesson Planning for One-on-One

The dynamics of the one-on-one relationship in literacy tutoring, including a hands-on opportunity to put knowledge into practice.

Presented by Tom Dawe

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, Session C2

Tom Dawe began his session by giving a brief overview of the Teachers on Wheels recruitment process, stating that Teachers on Wheels recruits and trains volunteers from

the general public who do not necessarily have any background in tutoring adults in reading and writing. As a result, there are often questions related to how to best work with the learner to achieve success.

Mr. Dawe indicated that learner success begins with appropriate lesson planning. He expressed that the quality of the tutor/learner relationship and the key to whether the learner is successful lies with the tutors' interpersonal skills and ability to establish a relationship that is positive. Mr. Dawe gives examples of how a tutor can provide an environment where a positive relationship can be established, as well as the do's and don'ts of working one-on-one. His key points included allowing the learner to learn by doing so that the learner takes ownership of the learning process, ensuring positive attitude and respect for the learner as an adult learner and also establishing lines of communication and boundaries within the tutor/learner relationship.

Next Mr. Dawe talked the importance of establishing clear, realistic goals which are established with the learner prior to starting a lesson plan. He indicated that goals should be learner driven and based on what the learner wants. He also indicated that it is important to know that progress is being made; however, evaluation need not be formalized or difficult. In fact, in a one-on-one situation, the tutor often knows where the learner is relevant to their learning goals and the learner also knows where they have trouble.

Mr. Dawe provided an example of a 2-hour lesson plan along with questions to be answered and steps to be taken to create an effective lesson plan based on the learners goals and incorporating the learners strengths. The larger group was divided into three smaller groups who were charged with the task of developing a lesson plan based on a learner scenario and presenting this to the larger group.

Mr. Dawe's session was informative and allowed for sharing of information and knowledge among the participants. The hands-on approach and interactive activity at the end provided the participants with an opportunity to incorporate what they learned and to use the tools provided in the session.

Transferring Literacy through the Arts

Presenter: Robin Grant, For the Love of Learning, Inc.

Wednesday, November 14, 2007, Session C3

Robin is the founder of For the Love of Learning, Inc. A non-profit, arts-based education and entrepreneurship program for resilient youth in Newfoundland and Labrador. She explained that the projects main goal is to improve the self esteem and quality of life for youth, and engage them to act, do and initiate positive change in their lives. Its objective is to help youth realize and build upon their skills set.

Skill Set: skills sets include creativity, literacy, critical thinking, public speaking and entrepreneurship.

The program arose out of a recognized need to address skills, education, employment and wellness of the youth population. It is run by professionally trained volunteers and youth work together, side by side to instill a lifelong love of learning through peer based learning, entrepreneurship, employment, and arts related activities.

Robin explored how print has had a hold on literacy but not a monopoly and now we need to look at new ways like art and creativity to remove barriers to literacy.

Literacy in the Multi-Cultural Classroom

Diversity in the classroom, meeting the needs of various types of learners, and assessment of literacy entrance/exit criteria.

Presented by: Bobby Bessey, Janice Siu, Barbara Mulcahy, Association for New Canadians

Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Session D1

The Three Tiered Approach

As tutors we must understand the needs of our students and put ourselves in their shoes; so we became students by studying Japanese.

Bobby Bessey took the role of a Japanese tutor who doesn't speak English. We were indeed sensitized and made aware of the many difficulties facing students learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Many of our learning skills (such as note taking and remembering by association) are not available to literacy students. Once they learn to take notes, they reach a whole new level of learning. As with all adult literacy students, ESL literacy students have spent so many years struggling to hide their illiteracy. Imagine the extra stresses on ESL literacy students. Some of them may even be from opposing war-torn countries. One of the ANC (Association for New Canadians) classes produced a booklet entitled, "*New Immigrants, New Life, New Problems*". The book highlights causes of stress in the lives of new (or soon-to-be) Canadians.

Since we couldn't understand Japanese, how did we understand? First we are given the letter, then the word, then the meaning (sometimes the full meaning takes time). Through body language, visuals, repetition and oral practice, we learned how to say:

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Good morning (<i>oh ha yo</i>) | |
| Good evening (<i>kon ban wa</i>) | |
| Good afternoon (<i>kon ni chi wa</i>) | |
| Cat (<i>neko</i>) | Marker (<i>ma ka</i>) |
| Water (<i>mizu</i>) | Paper (<i>kami</i>) |
| Pen (<i>boru pen</i>) | |
| What is this? (<i>ko reh wan an desu ka</i>) | |
| This is a ___? (<i>ko re wa ___ desu</i>) | |
| Good-bye (<i>sayonara</i>) | |
| Thank you very much (<i>domo arigato</i>) | |

History of ESL Program (by ANC) ANC started with one class with a one-size fits all approach. As numbers grew, two more classes were created; but there was no differentiation between the literacy ESL students and the formally educated ESL student. Knowing that ESL is not just one level, the three classes were divided according to ability; thus, the three-tiered approach.

Fundamental A (pre-literate students who have come from oral cultures.) This level of the program is free of cost to immigrants. Once the students become citizens, they must pay for their classes.

Fundamental B (non-literate students who are from literate countries.) Often the services of translators must be used to determine the students' levels (ie if they are not from Foundation A in the same ANC program). Exit requirements must be met to move to the next level.

Fundamental C (semi-literacy students who were educated five years or more prior to current classes.) The students would have received prior schooling in the Roman alphabet and know how to learn (ie have learning skills). As well, there are the students who know the English language, but lack the confidence to speak the language and pursue a career or job. This could be due to their age or personal background. These students move more quickly through this level of the program. There is also exit criteria.

Placement Test

- Canadian Language Benchmarks Test
- Translator (often spouse)
- Placement to Fundamental A,B or C.

Benefits of Three Foundations (A, B, C)

- Sense of progress.
 - Heightened sense of self confidence.
 - Decreased time in class (all students are at same level so they are not held back).
 - Teacher has time to develop curriculum.
 - Class size control
-

Reading Other Cultures

Exercises to shed light on the meaning we hold for various literacy practices - close to home and further abroad.

Presented by Barbara Burnaby

Wednesday, November 13, 2007, Session D2

Barbara's workshop titled "*Reading Other Cultures*" was one of three concurrent workshops organized around the theme of Cultures of Literacy. Her session was 'to shed some light on the meanings we hold for various literacy practices - close to home and further abroad.' Her interest and insight in the area of literacy in a multi-cultural setting began early in her career while she taught English as a 2nd language in Japan.

Barbara began by stating that there was not much science on English as a 2nd language until after WWII when Canada became interested in getting the most out of its numerous immigrants. These immigrants wanted so badly to learn. At the same time, interest also grew in the issue of English as a 2nd language for aboriginals or aboriginal literacy.

Considering literacy in its broadest context, Barbara held that there are 3 scenarios of foreign students that could make up your classrooms. The first is learners could come from an industrial area like Canada where there is a strong education system and an extensive literacy experience. Learners from Japan would be an example. The second would be learners from an area (like the Azores) where there is not a lot of literacy but there is a written form of language that is not required. The third scenario would have learners that were refugees from area with no literacy experience and no writing system. An example would be some tribal peoples from Thailand or even the Innu of Labrador.

She stressed that as literacy instructors, we need to be aware of the background of learners from other cultures. For instance, some might find it better to use pictures. Some other strategies she offered were to use the telephone book, corporate brands, newspapers and symbols. Good literacy programs should address text literacy, document literacy, and numeracy but document literacy is the most difficult in a multi-cultural setting.

Barbara ended her session with a breakout to consider some issues she had raised and then facilitated a general discussion with the whole group.

Barbara's session was interesting and informative, especially for anyone who would be working in a multi-cultural setting. She provided some useful strategies to address some challenges in such a setting.

Aboriginal Literacy Issues and Resources

First hand experiences of an ABE instructor.

Presented by: Linda Anstey

Wednesday, Session D3

Linda Anstey is an Adult Basic Education instructor at College of the North Atlantic. Linda engaged her audience in a 40-minute personal - and sometimes emotional -- journey, exploring the challenges and rewards of her experiences in working with the Aboriginal community. The journey stretched from Hopedale, Labrador, to Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, to Maxton, North Carolina, and back to Northwest River, Labrador. Of the twelve students currently in her class at Northwest River, eleven are Innu; one is Inuit. Their reading and writing skills range between grade one and grade five. Her goal - help students achieve a grade six equivalency.

The struggles and challenges to which Linda alluded are present in classrooms across the country, but, of significance here, is their prevalence among the Aboriginal community. Why is it that 58% of Aboriginals aged 20 to 24 have not graduated from high school? Why is it that less than 6% of the Aboriginals with a high school diploma have a university degree as compared with 20% of non Aboriginals? As the audience discovered along their journey, the resounding contributor to these and other questions is the pervasiveness of drugs and alcohol within the community!

Linda imparted the story of Mya, a six year old in North Carolina who, knowing her parents loved to smoke, brought grass from the playground home [because it resembled drugs] for to her parents to smoke....her way of demonstrating her love for her parents. Mya's parents eventually sold everything in their home, including the stove, to a local drug dealer.

Mya was removed from the home by Social Services, hated the change, and her behavior and grades deteriorated. "It's a shame to see a little girl who was so intelligent try to please her family, not by showing off her good grades, but by trying to bring home drugs - at least, what she thought was drugs." Linda relayed another story involving Roger, who, because of alcohol abuse, is currently serving a sentence.

Drugs, alcohol, fetal alcohol syndrome, suicide, absenteeism, poor health and nutrition, and teen pregnancy - all are major barriers to Aboriginals realizing their goal of achieving a grade six equivalency. Each barrier brings a unique challenge for which there is no "simple" solution. Linda identified two prevailing characteristics that have enabled her to experience some measure of success - *patience* and *understanding*. *Patience* has afforded Linda the luxury of making her students feel comfortable and trusting of her; *understanding* enables her to open herself to new experiences....their experiences. Linda's message to the audience - embrace both these characteristics, and, particularly when dealing with the Aboriginal community, *never* give up. "When you see the joy in a student's eye that they finally accomplished something, it all makes it worth while."

The British Columbia Literacy Landscape

Keynote by Diana Twiss

Thursday, November 15, 2007 Session E

Diana's keynote address on the British Columbia (BC) Landscape provided an alternate viewpoint of the literacy landscape from a Canadian 'West Coast' perspective. This address provided an overview of the literacy landscape in BC, casting back 5 years and reviewing how the landscape had developed in the intervening period, and closed by looking ahead to comment on how the gains realized in BC could be retained. Punctuating this narrative was a virtual tour of the physical relief and geographic reach of the province - unique features of land and mountain and climate which make this region distinctive in Canada.

Diana began by relating a strategy for literacy which is in the process of unfolding in BC, a "strategy for the 21st century" of collaborative research and team spirit. As few as five years ago, BC practitioners competed among themselves for "limited drive-by funding", and

spent countless hours in report writing. Today, funding has increased four-fold. Even more important, the buy-in of stakeholders is increasing. Literacy is not just the job of the literacy instructor, or the school teacher; it is the job of everyone, a well choreographed synergy of government and the literacy community. Everybody is coming on board.

There is a temperate climate southwest of the Rockies with no winter - thus the term lotus land. The Okanagan Valley is wine country.

Five years back, community literacy programs were supported solely by project funding. Move ahead five years and the number of community programs has increased from 32 to 60. Regional funding, once capped at \$25,000 has been raised to \$40,000. Available funding for community adult literacy programs increased from \$750,000 to \$2.5 million.

Five years back, English as a Second Language (ESL) was outside the jurisdiction of provincial funding. Today, recognition that ESL and language are linked has resulted in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Minister of Advanced Education and the Attorney General's Office for the provision of ESL instruction. Programming which began as an ESL pilot of 4 programs grew to 7 programs and then expanded to province-wide coverage.

Five years back, workplace learning was the purview of the union or the employer and employee, never the government. Now, money for planning and implementation is on the rise, with \$500,000 for workplace initiatives.

Provincial dollars for literacy are on the rise, so too are coordinating groups and activities. There are 65 *Literacy Now* task force groups involved in 213 communities. These are new partnerships involved in new ideas, exploring how BC can build on what currently exists in its communities. Fully 9 task forces are implementing their plans at present, with more coming on stream. 60 school districts are creating district literacy plans; requisite in each is the collaborative engagement of community and stakeholders. Power shape shifting.

How and why did this happen? Was it the Olympics of 2010? Was it a heightened awareness of low-literacy and the IALSS? Was it a fear of an impending skills shortage? Was BC doing this out of pure altruism, recognizing that this is the right thing to do? Perhaps it was some combination of all of the above....a perfect storm for literacy.

British Columbia has a population of 4.3 million. The main industries are agriculture; fishing, film making. There is an emerging literacy infrastructure in BC.

There are 15 Colleges offering adult programming - fundamental, intermediate and advanced, which sound similar to NL's ABE Levels 1-3. BC's literacy coordinators, paid to work a 2 day week, are attached to the college regions, providing a range of community services and feeding into the activities of Literacy BC.

School and college programs became rationalized about 5 years ago, and learners are able to move between programs as needed. Community organizations and literacy associations are attached to schools and libraries.

Literacy BC was established in 1990 with a mandate to support literacy and learning. Literacy BC works in several areas, providing learner support through learner development opportunities; supporting innovative practice and conducting research; building capacity; policy development; partnership development; provision of human and material resources to support many individual initiatives.

A branch of Legacies 2010, Literacy Now is a creation of a provincial government which determined that all of the province would benefit from the activities centred on the Olympics. Thus were born Sports Now and Volunteerism Now. Determined to provide for a social issue, Literacy Now was established to fund communities.

To be literate is to be able to fully participate and engage. The focus of Literacy Now is to help people engage in a community planning exercise. Communities can apply for up to \$10,000 to identify the impact of literacy on the community, and to plan and implement supportive activities.

BC has two major highways: the TransCanada and the TransCanada of the north - the Yellow Head Highway. BC has lots of inaccessible land, where you have to fly in to get to where you are going.

Rewind to when the Government of BC makes the commitment to become 'the most literate jurisdiction on the continent'. The BC Premier calls a panel on literacy together, with the mandate to define the problem and develop an approach. This panel met, worked, and talked - and determined that there is a need for bold actions. They needed to "embrace a diverse complexity of interrelated strategies within the context of a coherent provincial literacy framework, supported by an increased magnitude of investment and accountability".

The concept overall was very wordy and very welcomed! The one concern was that in implementing an accountability framework, processes and standards of value to literacy practice and acquisition be fully defined. And so practitioners began to move toward better standards of accountability. Ripal BC, in their work *From the Ground Up*, helped Lit BC practitioners to better measure the successes of programs and learners, and better achieve benchmarks. At the same time a first Family Literacy Certificate begins development, a collaboration of practitioners and a local college.

Literacy is a progression: Diana had just learned how to do a PowerPoint; participants in the room have just discovered that the *spring 'freshet' refers to the water rush or melt on the Frazer River*. Literacy is not *us or them*, but is *all of us*. We are all in the practice of acquiring literacy.

Recommendations from the government panel on literacy included these: 1. identify a single lead ministry for literacy, and 2. strengthen inter-ministerial collaboration on literacy. The decision that the Ministry of Education takes the lead on literacy was not the first preference of literacy practitioners. Not to fight the river, but to run with it, Literacy BC made the decision to work with the ministry, and support their Read Now program - a program which supports reading through the lifespan.

A school improvement act was then passed, which required each school district to submit a yearly literacy plan. Some school districts had already taken the lead in this area, and could show the way for others, making the task possible.

Here, and there and there, improvements are happening. And though this BC literacy landscape is "messy", an electronic directory (Lit BC map of British Columbia) can direct you to programs. A 1-800 number will also direct you to a range of services. Translation services are available. A comprehensive library is available to community programs, and these resources can be mailed out.

Through all of these gains, BC remembers what it was like before the *freshet for literacy*. What are some of the things BC now has in place that can be identified and retained for the future? Policy development and the School Improvement Act would be one thing. It is hard to remove, and hard to justify the removal of, an Act of Government. Developed relationships are perhaps the more important thing; something created not through an Act of Government, but thorough an act of thoughtful collaboration.

Tricks of the Trade: Writing Winning Proposals

An interactive session to explore & share tricks of the trade in securing funding, and a hike through the steps Diana and her B.C. colleagues have developed

Presented By: Diana Twiss

Thursday, November 15th, 2007 Session F1

In this session, Diana shared with participants her own reflections and experiences on proposal writing. The session was a "how -to" on the process of creating a successful proposal, and was an effective blend of information and facilitated conversation.

Funding: In writing a proposal, you are not asking for something for nothing. You have to work hard for this funding, both in the proposal writing process and in fulfilling your reporting and project obligations. Caution: This is not free money. It is not easy money either.

Values: Before you tackle any proposal writing process, you must first examine who might be your potential funder. You want to have an effective match. Is their stated philosophy in line with your values?

Idea: So you have an idea. The idea will need to be crafted into a defined goal, and from there into a full proposal. But before you begin you will need to check on whether your proposal will match their criteria.

Criteria: Gather together all of the information they are asking for. If you are not certain of the meaning behind the funding criteria, or whether your proposal will fit, don't be afraid to ask. Be courageous and sell your idea.

Mandate drift: This would be the right moment to be cautious of the potential for you to 'chase' the money, or allow your mandate to 'drift'. You may need to strike a balance between the original idea and what you will need to do. It is critical that you have a vision of what you hope to achieve which cannot be easily taken off course. If you try to make your proposal "fit" the criteria, then you may shift from where you had originally hoped to take your work.

Group Work: Two Heads work better than one: in crafting the ideas behind a proposal and in the editing of the product. Group brainstorm on ideas for the proposal, and feed these back to the funder for their input to ensure you are on course.

The Proposal: Build in a realistic timeline to complete this work. Don't tell the funder what they already know, but rather inspire them with your idea. Have an outsider read the last draft, to ensure clarity.

Debrief: You have put a lot of work into this proposal. Celebrate the completion of the proposal. Ask for feedback from contributors on the process, and what could be improved upon.

The Result: If you do not achieve success, ask for immediate clarification on the result. Do not be afraid to challenge the result, and to continue to champion the proposal to the funder.

Informal Formative Assessment -The QWERTY DILEMMA

An exploration of learner centred strategies in which teachers may utilize informal formative assessment to guide instruction.

Presented By; Dr. Marc Glassman

Thursday, November 15th, 2007 Session F2

Dr. Glassman focused on ways to do informal assessment to help teachers with adult learners in their instruction. Some of the ways could also help the learner. He used overheads and passed out a handout on informal assessment to each participant. The handout also included some strategies for the teacher and the learners.

The session included a reading activity where participants could see first hand what non readers experience. This activity was an actual reading experience trying to decipher the words from symbols. Following this activity, some ideas were given to show things you can do to help those learning to read in a one-on-one or small group situation.

Next, Dr. Glassman stressed the importance of comprehension in learning to read versus phonics and that reciprocal questioning, Re-Quest is a good strategy to increase

comprehension, to check for instructional level, and to see progress of students. Other ideas included a Q- matrix, a matrix of ways to ask questions using what, where, when, which why, and how.

Following the above, Dr. Glassman explained the handout and discussed some of the strategies that are in it. An example of these strategies were different types of "cloze:" and "Sentence Dress-up". He also included some hands on activities that the teachers and learners could use. One of these was the use of sentence pull-strips.

To conclude, this was a valuable and useful presentation. However, was a lot of information to be absorbed by the participants. I feel that each participant should have left this session with at least one good idea or strategy when working with learners. The hands on activities went over very well and it seemed that the presentation was enjoyed by all.

What in the world is PLAR anyway?

Presenter: Pat Roberts

Thursday, November 15th, 2007 Session: F3

This session defined PLAR as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

This workshop focused on the reality that everything does not need to be taught to us in a formal classroom setting. A lot of things are self taught informally. It also recognized the importance of starting to look at the individuals experiences, not just their formal learning, and giving credit for what they know.

PLAR is story telling about peoples lives. Its goal is to help people get on paper what they can be recognized for and what they are good at. Pat explained how our minds are conditioned to think that nothing we do is good enough. In fact, we each have a wealth of unacknowledged skill. In order to identify these skills, we need to start to meet people where they are so they can build on their self esteem and self confidence.

Pat also spoke on the importance of creating and using portfolios as a tool for assisting people with prior learning assessments. A portfolio can help individuals recognize the things they are good at and the skills they have to bring to the table, regardless of how these skills were learned.

The golden rule of PLAR is to give credit for learning not experience.

Making the Grade: Transition Skills to GED Preparation

How do we view the GED as a stepping stone to work? What do we do in smaller communities where the number of learners is small and the range of reading and writing skill levels are great? How can we conduct research in practice while offering a program? These are some of the questions which will be touched on in this session.

Presented by William Fagan

Thursday, November 15, 2007 Session G1

The following is an overview of Dr. Fagan's work in transitioning adult learners from one skill level to another. The focus of his present work is on adults with low-literacy skills, and is broken into two specific sections. The first section is to provide learners with a transitional program to take them from low-literacy skill to preparing to write the GED. The second section in the process is to build a transition from the GED to the workplace.

Between July and October 2007, the group of adult learners working with Dr. Fagan had progressed through the first transition. For the purpose of today's session, the first section of transitioning was reviewed in detail, and is broken into two parts: Assessment and Transition.

Assessment: Dr. Fagan reviewed the assessment instruments he used in working with his group of adult learners. There were three types of assessments used:

1. Reading Assessments, which took the form of individualized reading tests.
2. Writing Assessments, which were also individualized.

3. Personal Identifiers. Here the focus was on helping the learner discover his/her individual strengths. These could take the form of a learning style, or a personal preference. The goal was to help learners feel secure in the knowledge of their own skills.

Transition: The transition program itself was sub-divided into three areas:

1. Motivational: Many of the adults in the program had been out of the school system for an extended period of time. Many adults had encountered a less than positive experience in formal learning settings.

"Song and Singers as a way to Literacy" provided participants with an opportunity to a) engage in singing as a form of recreation and entertainment, b) explore and develop their storytelling skills, and develop language and vocabulary through the use of relevant and familiar material.

Here the focus was on providing material which was enjoyable and non-threatening. This activity was interspersed throughout the program.

2. Comprehension and parallels in reading and writing: Learners studied different genres of writing: narrative, expository, etc. They were given an opportunity to both read these types of writing by other authors and then create their own writing pieces in the various genres.

Learners explored their own comprehension of writing genres through several learning sessions. In the early sessions a reading would be accompanied by questions on comprehension. Examples, prompts and cues were provided to assist the reader. In subsequent sessions examples would be with drawn. Prompts and cues would also lessen. Finally learners would be directed to apply what they had learned in their own writing.

3. Word Meaning Study: This area of study focused on word structure. Word review exercises focused on word structure. Learners moved from simple to compound words, and reviewed the use of suffixes, pre-fixes, and other forms of structure. The meaning and comprehension of words were reviewed in each session. Many of the study words were also identified, and their meaning reinforced, in both the motivational and comprehension exercises.

As of the end of October - and the date of this presentation - the students in Dr. Fagan's study group had completed their preparatory transitional programming, and had moved on to study for the GED.

Resources on the Web for Transition to Work

An exploration of literacy and transition to work resources on the web, particularly the NALD web site.

Presented by: Lorette Chiasson, National Adult Literacy Database

Thursday, November 15th, 2007 Session G2

Lorette Chiasson engaged her audience in an exploration of a wealth of resources that are available on the web, particularly as it relates to the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD). If anyone had thought that educational resources were difficult to come by, then they were challenged to "think again!"

The slide show introduced the audience to a very comprehensive collection of information that is available to educators - NALD's on-line library of up-to-date and downloadable resources, each of which can be downloaded in either PDF or HTML format.

The NALD site not only provides a comprehensive source of resource materials in breadth and depth of content, but is equally comprehensive in how the resources may be searched. A search can be executed nationally or by province, by key word, by author, or through general browsing. Users can access resources in education, literacy, first nations and news media.

A tour of NALD's website introduced users as to how they might obtain information on events, awards, literacy contacts, discussion groups, and the latest news headlines. They were informed as to utilizing the "library" to access research and learning materials, resources available for purchase, literacy newsletters, and the story of the week. Another of NALD's features to which the audience was introduced was how to visit other literacy organizations in Canada and around the world. Finally, the audience was introduced to NALD's latest feature, the NALD@Work website - a link to the world of workplace literacy and essential skills.

Since attending this session, I have entered my email address at the NALD website to receive weekly NALD updates and I've begun surfing the site. And, as Lorette indicated in her presentation, it is comprehensive. I believe Martin Good of London, England, summed it up quite handsomely when he stated, "The Canadians have created probably the most

useful and comprehensive adult basic skills website in the world. It's the National Adult Literacy Database..."

Making the Link: Essential Skills and Business Success

Presented by: Brian Hicks, College of the North Atlantic

Thursday, November 15th, 2007 Session G3

The session on Essential Skills was informative and very well presented. Mr. Hicks introduced the session by defining essential skills and its impact on the workplace. The statistics revealed from International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) clearly demonstrated that essential skills' training was a significant issue for a many people. He emphasized the necessity of essential skills being in place as a building block for other training. The desired level for a productive workforce is 3, yet according to IALS the majority of the numeric and prose scores for the Canadian population numeric were at level 1 and 2. The numbers in Newfoundland at level 1 and 2 were even higher than the Canadian averages. This statistic demonstrates the need to ensure essential skills are developed at a higher level. Mr. Hicks discussed the implication that essential skills development has on individual earnings, company productivity, safety and employment in general.

He went on to describe the essential skills project which partnered the College of the North Atlantic and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) - Newfoundland. The partnership set out to promote the importance of essential skills development in Newfoundland workplaces. Information sessions on essential skills were held in various locations across the island. At the end of the information sessions nine companies volunteered to participate in the pilot project for essential skills assessment. The first step of the project involved identifying existing gaps in the essential skills of workers. If a level 3 is desired for a productive workforce, then where are we? All employees were invited to information sessions prior to their completion of the Tests of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES). At this time the TOWES tool is the only proven tool for assessment of essential skills. Its usage is licensed and each individual test costs \$69.00. The College of the North Atlantic is licensed to administer the test. The TOWES

assessment tool measures essential skill ability in reading text, document use, and numeric ability.

The result of the pilot project clearly supports the need for essential skills development and assessment, yet despite this there is little awareness of essential skills in Newfoundland. There are no formal programs in Newfoundland; however the provinces of Nova Scotia and Ontario each have a department of Essential Skills.

Summary:

The benefit of the essential skills assessments for learners and teachers was made clear through Mr. Hick's presentation. Assessments are necessary to determine the skill level. If the skill level is assessed at a level lower than required for the job, strategies for development of these skills can be built into training programs. Understanding essential skills and having tools for essential skills assessment can significantly impact how we teach, the design of our training programs and even the design of workplace communication tools.

There was some discussion on essential skills and prior learning assessments. It was agreed that these two programs had areas that were similar and overlapped. The general consensus was that both areas could and should complement and support each other for maximum impact rather than compete for resources.

It was clear from the presentation that the need for essential skills assessment and development is evident at all employee levels. . This will help establish a workforce that is productive and safe. As learners and teachers we need to be informed on essential skills assessment and development. Knowledge of essential skills is necessary in order to champion its development in the workplace .

A Travel Guide to Literacy in Newfoundland and Labrador: *Forging a New Trail to Excellence in Adult Literacy*

Presenters: Pamela Bennet and Jean Rasmussen

Friday Morning November 16th, 2007

Questions around adult literacy were addressed.

- Where do we come from?
- Where do we go from here?
- How do we move forward?
- What are the next steps?

To begin this discussion, participants were put in groups with their regions to address two important questions:

- What currently exists in your area in terms of support for adult literacy development?
- What resources are available in your area?

Next, each region discussed the answers to these questions and feedback was given.

Then, there was discussion with all participants on professional development for teachers and tutors of adults with learning disabilities.

After break, Pam spoke on the desire of Literacy NL to become proactive. An overview was given of Literacy NL services.

To conclude, there was an open microphone session that ended with Helen Woodrow offering to write a piece in *Literacies* on "Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy".

In closing, there was a general air of contentment and fulfillment after a wonderful two and a half days.

Where to from Here: Travelling the Landscape of Practice

Coming out of the institute, several themes or areas of common interest were identified by participants. These are included here to assist in future directions for Literacy NL in the planning of professional development sessions.

1. Plan additional professional development opportunity(s) for practitioners. This institute was welcomed as a long needed opportunity to share and reflect on current practice. Both oral feedback and evaluative feedback identified the need for more such events.

2. Explore in greater depth specific areas of practice highlighted at the institute. Topics covered at the institute were welcomed with enthusiasm. Participants voiced their interest in learning more on topics covered.

- Prior Learning Assessment Recognition
- Learning Disabilities
- Cultural and Aboriginal Literacy
- Tutoring Tools/Learning Resources
- Learner Leadership
- Agency supports for Adult Learners
- English as a Second Language
- Proposal writing
- Building effective partnerships
- Essential Skills for the Workplace

3. Build on the work begun under the regional assets plenary session. An offering of regionally facilitated sessions could identify current and potential assets, existing networks, government and NGO services, and gaps in local programs. Participants felt that a greater understanding and awareness of regional resources could be gained through a more complete review and mapping of regional assets. Better developed regional networks could better identify local priorities for action.

4. Create further opportunities for practitioners to build on the knowledge and experience of other jurisdictions. Provide opportunities for local practitioners to learn more on how colleagues from outside the province undertake literacy planning and program delivery. Promising practices which hold potential application for NL could be identified for further study and/or action.

Appendix A

Reflections on the Literacy Landscape

What do you see on the landscape?

The following is a collection of the thoughts and reflections of the participants at the institute, as recorded on a large newsprint piece with the above-noted title, which was posted at the opening keynote session by Helen Woodrow.

Participants were invited to use this reflective tool to record their thoughts around the provinces literacy landscape. The newsprint remained posted throughout the institute proceedings, and as participants felt moved to add their reflections they availed of the opportunity to write these on the paper: some directly to the newsprint; others on scraps of pasted notepaper; others hidden within envelopes or behind paper "doors".

This collection, along with further reflections from delegates from the conference will be compiled in an article, by Woodrow and collaborators, and submitted to Literacies, a journal about literacy practice in Canada, in February, 2008.

Older people need help accessing health care benefits (i.e.) drug program changes plus re: training in an economy that badly needs seniors` expertise.

Learners get lost in a system where there supports are not in place for transitions-expected in complete in three yrs what everyone else completes in 12.

Closed doors at the Department of Education. (Written behind a drawing of a closed door.)

***Found within a sealed envelope** I think NL needs to become more proactive and outspoken on federal and provincial government policies and programs (or lack thereof) that impact literacy in NL. Clearly the landscape (as described by the Minister) seems quite different from the one portrayed by Helen, with hers being the truer reality. I think NL needs to be challenging and questioning government policy and programs. It needs to be articulating (for all to hear) the realities and views of the people (learners & practitioners) who are "doing" literacy, especially in rural NL.*

There should not be two versions of ABE- community and college

Forced to fit programs to proposals as opposed to proposals to programs

I see government and policy makers increasingly exercising control over my community...God love them but how can bureaucrats in Ottawa or St. John's know what is vital for the survival of my community?...do they live here? Do they even visit?

We are not people who need taking care of. We do have knowledge about where we want to go. We need support, open dialogue and the freedom to speak. We need to tell government to back off, we are taking control. We need to make government answerable to us, not the other way around. Why do we always give them control? Why are we always afraid to speak? DITTO K.K.

Students in ABE programs are generally not good readers yet there seem to be no strategies aimed at improving their reading levels. Many times they drop out or are discontinued due to this. Something needs to be put in place to help them improve their reading while they work towards their goals.

To extend on the above comment, as an instructor of ABE English I teach reading strategies through the "actual read" (modeling); however time is a huge deterrent in allowing these engagements. The high student-teacher ratio (1:18) allows very little time and opportunity.

As Diana Twiss stated: "Compete among ourselves for limited drive by funding dollars." I see LNL taking over NLLLC.

Rural NF is becoming more isolated. We need to bring our communities together to make a strong voice. Literacy practitioners are as a group more approachable than the "suits" and we may need to consider this new role.

Hopefully more sharing of ideas on different levels for basic skills in reading...more materials too

Our volunteers are aging. We need to engage youth or disappear in the next 15 years.

A federal government hell bent on tax relief and debt reduction and little or no interest in social programs. In fact, this agenda is really anti-community and anti-social programs.

Everything seems to be about younger people! What about older ones? People who have contributed so much to communities, particularly rural areas-what about them? Shouldn't they receive some support should they decide to be gainfully employed at a point in their lives?

More collaboration between province and territories. Ideas should be shared, not kept in a safe. All players should be encouraged to give feedback-learners, practitioners, administrators, researchers, government, etc.

There should be more collaboration between all stakeholders in the education system. Many of the problems experienced in adult literacy programs are the same concerns we

have in the K-12 system. There is strength in numbers, and we need to strengthen those partnerships with all stakeholders.

A movement away from community...the richness of contexts for learning in community being dismissed and a totally economic agenda being advanced.

Tutoring: one on one. Programs especially for rural areas needed. Lack of funding at community level.

Fear of not meeting funding criteria each year. Circumstances out of control re: number required.

What about the older adult over 30 who would like to get back in the workforce? We need these workers.

I see amalgamation of some literacy providers. We need to share and combine our talents and resources rather than compete for them. Also we need to be more tolerant of others' ideas. There is a rich literacy community in this province that we should value.

With the increased out migration of workers, the province will be short of skilled workers and will depend on "older people" (50 plus) to return to work. There should be funding made available for these people (some of whom have taken time off from jobs/careers to raise a family and/or volunteer in various capacities in their communities) to become reskilled or obtain marketable skills in today's workplace. Not everyone fits into the category of "youth" or "EI eligible." Wake up politicians, one of your most valuable resources is under your noses!

Adulthood goes well beyond 30 (for funding)

Narrow vision

People leaving

I had two conversations today...one with a community literacy worker and one with a college ABE instructor. I got a clear sense that there is a culture of silence in this province. Collectively we complain about lack of resources, lack of control, loss of community and grassroots voice. Yet for some reason people seem unable to speak out publicly. "Well I have to protect my organization...my job." We talk so much about literacy development enabling adults to participate and have a voice and at the same time here we are with no voice. We are literate, aren't we? Then where is our voice? We bitch and complain but feel unable to speak. Perhaps this literacy for democracy and literacy for civic engagement is a crock! I find we allow ourselves to be silenced and I truly wish we could find our voice. If we can't, then why are we trying to sell this literacy stuff to the adults in our communities?

Lots of communications between everyone - Department of Education, School Boards, teachers, parents, adult literacy programs

The poem "Numbers"

Mapping the Literacy Landscape

The following notes are taken from the Friday morning concurrent session A *Travel Guide to Literacy in Newfoundland and Labrador: Forging a New Trail to Excellence in Adult Literacy*.

At the closing session of the institute, regional caucuses undertook to identify the local and regional assets currently in play in the four regions of the province: Eastern, Central, Western, Labrador. Under the headings of *Gaps/Needs/Wants*, the following priorities were identified by the eighty-eight practitioners in attendance. (Although all items were voiced in separate regional caucus, some are here grouped together, as they were identified in more than one caucus meeting, and are seen as having application for all regions.)¹

All regions:

- The need for a town hall meeting, with meaningful community involvement. The need to draw the Department of Education into the conversation, and to ask the hard questions.
- Serious discussion with the Department of Education's K-12, highlighting a real need for reading supports and skill development as a preventative measure.
- Greater funding for literacy. More resources are needed; human (both volunteer and paid; equitable pay for instructors of similar programs); financial; professional development; learning resources for the 'classroom'; learning supports for special needs; research; child care; transportation; assistive devices for disabled (learning disabled, as well as other forms of disability); more accommodation for the visually impaired and physically challenged.

¹ Proceedings of the Literacy NL: *Reading the Literacy Landscape 2007* draft

- More programs and increased availability of programs that address needs of communities.
- Recognition of the need for alternate models of programming for rural areas. Identify/recognize alternatives to attending formal education.
- Programs (ABE and others) readily available to all learners; realistic timelines for adult learners; long term support of agencies that will invest in the future of students.
- Development of learner leadership and speaking/presentation skills.
- Uniform access to transitional support for learners moving from one program to another. Support for transition to employment /career choices
- Support for development of community-based partnerships, partnerships with institutions, and other sectors.
- Communication and networking at local level - stakeholders need to share knowledge and resources that fit one program and can be used for another
- Creation of a Directory of Services: listing of organizations providing the necessary training for needed skills (*Literacy NL has since developed an up to date listing (August 2008), detailing programming and contact information, and, location by electronic mapping. This resource is now available on <http://www.literacynl.com/map/>, however it will require continuing support to keep it current, and to have it offered in alternative formats.*)
- More and alternative forms of promotion for Literacy and Learning (i.e. literacy fair); targeted promotion to specific groups of stakeholders (i.e. newsletters to churches).

Eastern Regions

- Local level - Proximity of programs among Literacy and ABE stakeholders provides opportunities to share knowledge and resources.

Labrador Region

- Transportation and access around Labrador is a key factor in literacy skills access.
- Accessible communication tools are needed in this region for networking.

Central Region

- Transportation in the Central Region is a key factor in accessing good networking opportunities.

Western Region

Inequitable funding structures for ABE 1 has led to competition between community - based and institutionally based programs for practitioners.

Appendix C

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