Of policies and promises

The tenuous nature of adult literacy stands revealed at the end of 2001.

The year began with promise in Canada when the January Speech from the Throne identified adult literacy as a priority within a Skills and Learning Agenda. Groups in every province mobilized themselves to offer some possible direction. Eleven months later, after a flurry of consultation between the federal government and groups across the country, there has been no official policy statement indicating how this priority will be implemented. So, we wait with a mixture of hope and concern. We have heard some policy makers say that everything has changed since September 11. However, there has been no lessening of the need for learning; if anything, perhaps a greater urgency to ensure that all citizens can access and understand information that relates to their well-being and the preservation of a way of life.

Interestingly, in both the U.S. and the U.K., funds were not reduced for ABE after September 11, despite initial fears. The U.K. has moved ahead with its national strategy, implementing an awareness campaign and a curriculum and seeking a cadre of new teachers to reach the targeted 750,000 learners

by 2004. While it is early to comment on the strategy, regular updates are posted on the web site of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

American providers have celebrated the maintenance of funding although some analysts have pointed out that holding the line translates into reduction in terms of real dollars. Still, one event in the U.S. bears attention.

Just before American Thanksgiving in late November, the Massachusetts Legislature cut state funding to adult basic education by $13 million, or 44%. Funding would have run out in January or February for most publicly-funded programs.

On December 13, the Legislature passed a supplemental budget that restored $12.5M. How did this happen? NLA Moderator David Rosen credits the "organization, collaboration, leadership, and a cultivated climate of advocacy at the grass roots level" of the Massachusetts Adult Education Community.

In a mid-December posting to the NLA listserv, Rosen described the history over the past decade of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) and its predecessor, the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Literacy. Among their accomplishments, he cited encouraging practitioners to educate policy makers at state and federal levels about the importance of adult literacy /basic education (including ESOL). He noted relationships that programs have built with legislators through letters and post cards, phone calls, visits, invitations to attend graduation and more; and he highlighted the growth of adult learner involvement.

The Massachusetts coalition has a Public Policy Committee and regional committees on media, collaboration and

INSIDE

legislative options, and multiple ways of reaching members rapidly. These tools allowed the adult education community to mobilize within two days of the budget cuts "to put together a press briefing at the State House with a panel of 12 major business, labor, foundation and adult learner leaders. Everyone spoke briefly and persuasively. They all urged restoration of funding. The State House hearing room was overflowing. At least six media outlets showed up, including a major TV station." Business and union representatives included Verizon, IBM, Associated Industries of Massachusetts, The Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the Carpenters Union, SEIU, the AFL-CIO, and the Teamsters Union.

The restoration was celebrated as a victory for adult basic education. Rosen said it showed that with organization, leadership, and determination, adult literacy education can make gains at the state level -- and maintain them; he suggested that "advocacy must be seen as part of every practitioner's job: teacher, tutor, administrator, researcher, curriculum developer, librarian, and

others," and noted that "advocacy is an excellent way for students to learn about democracy in action."* He underscored the impact of student voices on legislators.

To an outsider, the Massachusetts story is a cautionary tale. Despite being one of the best-supported and best organized providers of ABE in the U.S., the community was caught by surprise when the cut came without warning, the result of internal state politics (not September 11!)

The ABE infrastructure likely surprised the legislature in return. Still, a watcher can only wonder how secure any ABE agenda actually is if the strongest among them is subject to political whim. We are no strangers to political whim in Canada. The province of Ontario expended millions of dollars in the 1990s shifting adult literacy from the Education Ministry to its own Basic Skills Ministry and back, and radically narrowing the focus of basic skills provision within the LBS framework.

Still a lesson from Massachusetts for Canadians is that building coherent coalitions at the provincial level is one safeguard

against whimsicality. Some of us are further ahead than others on that score.

In this issue

This issue of *LACMF* has a chronology of adult literacy policy in Canada from 1899 to 2001; an insert highlighting the 2001 Summer Institute on adult literacy and learning disabilities; an excerpt from a new Working Paper on cognitive tools and literacy acquisition; and reports on some innovative web-based ABE materials. There are the regular features of conference listing, local happenings, resources and reviews. These are our contribution to ongoing policy development. [LS]

Source: David Rosen, Massachusetts Update, nla@lists.literacytent.org, 12/14/2001.

*Following the Mass. funding cut/restoration, several teachers and curriculum developers created some lessons and materials to help students understand the processes of government which were directly affecting their lives. These, and other campaign-related materials can be found at http://www.sabes.org/budget.htm
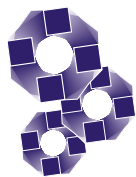
The Centre for Literacy is committed to supporting and improving literacy practices in schools, community and workplace. It is dedicated to increasing public understanding of the changing definition of literacy in a complex society.

Literacy for the 21st century
Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. In a technological society, the concept of literacy is expanding to include the media and electronic text, in addition to alphabetic and number systems. These abilities vary in different social and cultural contexts according to need and demand. Individuals must be given life-long learning opportunities to move along a continuum that includes the reading and writing, critical understanding, and decision-making abilities they need in their community.

1 On making power visible

Literacy that obscures the power relations inscribed in its construction ultimately disempowers. It treats as technical what is in fact socially and politically constructed and is therefore misleading. In one sense, therefore, powerful literacies have to be oppositional. They have to open up, expose and counteract the institutional processes and professional mystique whereby dominant forms of literacy are placed beyond question. They have to challenge the way "literacy" is socially distributed to different groups. They have to reconstruct the learning and teaching process in a way that positions students in more equal social and political terms. In another sense they should be propo-sitional, in that they have to construct alternative ways of addressing literacy practices and interests grounded in real lives and literacy needs. They need to be critical and political too. The agenda for developing powerful literacies has to be informed by issues of social justice, equality, and democracy in everyday life rather than be limited to a narrow, functional definition primarily addressed to the needs of the economy.

Jim Crowther, Mary Hamilton and Lyn Tett, "Powerful literacies: an introduction," *Powerful Literacies*, edited by Jim Crowther, Mary Hamilton and Lyn Tett. (NIACE:Leicester UK), 2001. p.3.

2 On signatures and the lettered world

…So far I have been exploring a little of the mystery behind the apparent simplicity of signatures as a measure of literacy. Far more mysterious than this, I believe, is the personal significance of being able to write our own name. Given the opportunity, we learn young to make marks and draw, later – with help—turning these into the shapes and lines which might, later still, correspond to our names. Once we can do this, many of us repeat the experience over and over again, in idle moments during lessons or meetings—copying, re-copying, trying our styles and shapes until we find the one that pleases us. But what if we find ourselves unable to do it, and others can? What, then, might be our sense of loss? Ursula Howard has a suggestive answer. In her study of self-educated working class women and men in the nineteenth century, she writes of the determination (and evident loneliness) of some of these individuals to teach themselves, in the absence of any other teachers. Reflecting on their autobiographical writing, she concludes:

> The self who lived without a signature and without a voice in a lettered world was a different self than the one who could write. (Howard, 1991:107)

For any of us who happens to have grown up in a society full of writing, she suggests, to be un-able to write our own name is equivalent to being unable to inscribe our selves in that society; for to write our names is to write our selves into the world.

Jane Mace, "Signatures and the lettered world," *Powerful Literacies*, edited by Jim Crowther, Mary Hamilton and Lyn Tett.(NIACE: Leicester UK) 2001, p.19.

3 On a framework for understanding power

Writing by Starhawk (1987) and Cranton (1994) provided an initial framework for me to examine and learn from my efforts to share power. Starhawk writes about three kinds of power: power-over, power-with and power-from-within. Power-over is often thought of in terms of persons, groups or institutions having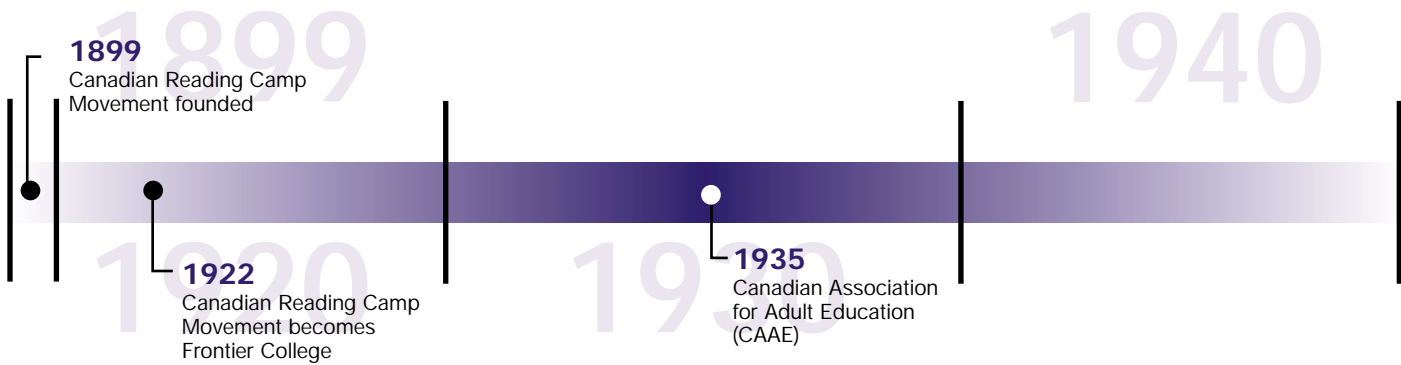 power over others. Such power is sustained by social, political and economic systems and by policies and assumptions about which groups have a right to power. These assumptions are often reflected in prevailing discourses, which help sustain existing power relations. According to Starhawk, power-with is one's influence in a group. It is 'the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to…' (1987:10). Power-with is based in respect, not for the role or position, but for the person…

Cranton writes about a particular form of power-over, namely the position power of an educator. In my position as paid co-ordinator and facilitator at the Learning Center I have certain formal authority and control. As well, because of common discourses about school, teachers and students, I am accorded 'teacher' power. Such factors as my Anglo-Norman heritage and my middle class language, education and income provide access to power in many contexts outside of the Center. These factors intersect with the position power I have at the Center.

Cranton distinguishes between position power and the personal power that educators – and students – have in the form of skills, knowledge, personal attributes and attitudes. Per-sonal power shifts into power-with, or sharing power, when others both value and are open to receiving what is being offered. As I interpret them, personal power and power-from-within are related but different concepts. Power-from-within has to do with being able to say 'I can'; it is a belief in ourselves and our capacities that enables us to use and further develop our skills, knowledge and attributes, and to offer them to others.

Mary Norton, "Challenges to sharing power in adult literacy programmes," *Powerful Literacies*, edited by Jim Crowther, Mary Hamilton and Lyn Tett. (NIACE: Leicester UK) 2001, pp.167-168.

Development of ABE/Literacy in Canada

1899

1899
Canadian Reading Camp
Movement founded

1940

1922
Canadian Reading Camp
Movement becomes
Frontier College

1930

1935
Canadian Association
for Adult Education
(CAAE)

1920

A Chronology

By Linda Shohet

1899-1930's

ABE was not significantly distinguished from other adult education initiatives, carried out through YMCAs and YWCAs, Mechanic's Institutes, churches, labour unions, farm organizations, traveling circuit lecturers and teachers, etc.

1899

Canadian Reading Camp Movement founded.

1922

Canadian Reading Camp Movement became Frontier College that sent university students to the wilderness to teach labourers, mostly lumberjacks and miners, how to read and write.

1935

Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), the first national organization dedicated solely to the field of adult education, was founded as a clearinghouse to serve professionals in the field. It became a developer of educational programs with a focus on citizenship, dedicated to informing adults about political, social, and economic issues. It was the main source of adult education publications until the 1950s and nurtured some early researchers who

separated out for study high-school-equivalent education (sometimes referred to as ABE) and pre-high-school-equivalent education (sometimes referred to as literacy education). CAAE helped create a number of other organizations devoted to adult learning and literacy, including the Canadian Commission for the Community College, founded in 1968, which later became the Association of Canadian Community Colleges; the Movement for Canadian Literacy, founded in 1977; and the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women, founded in 1979. The CAAE's leadership role diminished in the late 1980s, and the organization folded in the mid-1990s.

1960s

This decade was characterized by idealistic social conscious-ness and nationalist feeling in Canada and in Quebec, waves of immigration, and broad social reforms such as the "war on poverty." Means of waging the "war on poverty" included expanded federal funding for technical and vocational education, which led to the exposure of under-education among adults.

1960

The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act authorized Ottawa to join the provinces in funding capital costs for vocational training

facilities. Within six years, projects valued at more than $1.5 billion provided 662 new schools and 439,952 student placements. Because of federal-provincial conflict over roles, and differences between Quebec and other provinces, this Act was the last federal investment in capital and operating costs for technical and vocational education. Many institutes of technology created through this Act were converted to community colleges.

1967

The Adult Occupational Training Act was passed, focusing on unemployed and underemployed workers and on short-term retraining. It led to the development of the Canada Newstart Program, creating six private nonprofit corporations to promote "experimentation in methods which would motivate and train adults who were educationally disadvantaged" Without intending to, the program revealed that a number of Canadian adults were not educated enough to qualify for retraining. This put the need for adult basic education out in the open for the first time.

1969

The Official Languages Act lead to an explosion of second-language teaching across the country and further contributed to awareness of the large numbers of undereducated adults.

Development of ABE/Literacy in Canada

1950

1969
The Official Languages Act lead to an explosion of second-language teaching

1976
Adult Basic Education in Canada and Literacy Activities in Canada 75/76

1979
Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Educational Leave and Productivity

1960
The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act

1967
The Adult Occupational Training Act was passed

1977
First national conference on literacy in Ottawa

Late 1960s/Early 1970s

Federal Basic Training and Skills Development (BTSD) and early Basic Job Readiness Training (BJRT) were developed to target adults who could be trained or retrained in short-term programs leading directly to jobs. BTSD was intended to provide the elementary and high school levels of education that were prerequisites for vocational training.

1970s

This decade was characterized by a retrenchment in spending on adult learning and literacy. Reviews of the BTSD and BJRT showed these programs were not meeting the anticipated goals of skills training, funds were restricted, and by the end of the decade "provision for the most undereducated adults had almost ceased to exist" (Thomas, 1983, 65). Simultaneously, a series of provincial reports and commissions highlighted the needs of illiterate and under-educated adults. Other national reports from various government committees (such as the Senate Committee on Poverty,1971, and the Senate Finance Committee, 1976) raised the same concern in the context of other social issues. The first major study of illiteracy in Canada was writ-ten, and the first organization dedicated exclusively to adult learning and literacy was founded. A concern for literacy

as a social justice issue was dominant among activists.

1970

First Laubach tutor training workshop offered in Canada. Laubach councils were set up across the country during the next decade.

1976

Adult Basic Education in Canada and Literacy Activities in Canada 1975/76, written by Audrey M. Thomas for World Literacy of Canada, provided the first detailed analysis of illiteracy in the country. It used census data on school grade completion to estimate the number of adults in need and collected all available data on provision across the country from federal and provincial sources and from numerous organizations of different types—government, research, and community-based.

1977

First national conference on literacy, held in Ottawa, brought together key people in the field and lead to the creation of the Movement for Canadian Literacy to advocate for the cause.

1979

Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Educational Leave and Productivity (for the Minister of Labour) included recommendations on adult illiteracy, calling for incentives and establishment of an adult

literacy education fund that would offer grants to employers, trade unions, educational organizations, and individual workers to upgrade basic skills. While this fund did not materialize, the recommendations contributed to setting the stage for a federal response to adult literacy.

1980s

Characterized by an increasing number of federal government department reports either mentioning or focusing on adult illiteracy as a social and economic issue. Provinces studied the issue, developed policies, and expanded provision of innovative services (in the community-based and institutional sectors), although there was little coordination within different provincial departments funding different types of services.

1981

Laubach Literacy of Canada was established to coordinate and represent the Laubach Reading Councils across the country.

1983

Adult Illiteracy in Canada— A Challenge, an occasional paper for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, written by Audrey Thomas, was released. The most comprehensive national assessment yet produced in Canada, it presented the

Development of ABE/Literacy in Canada
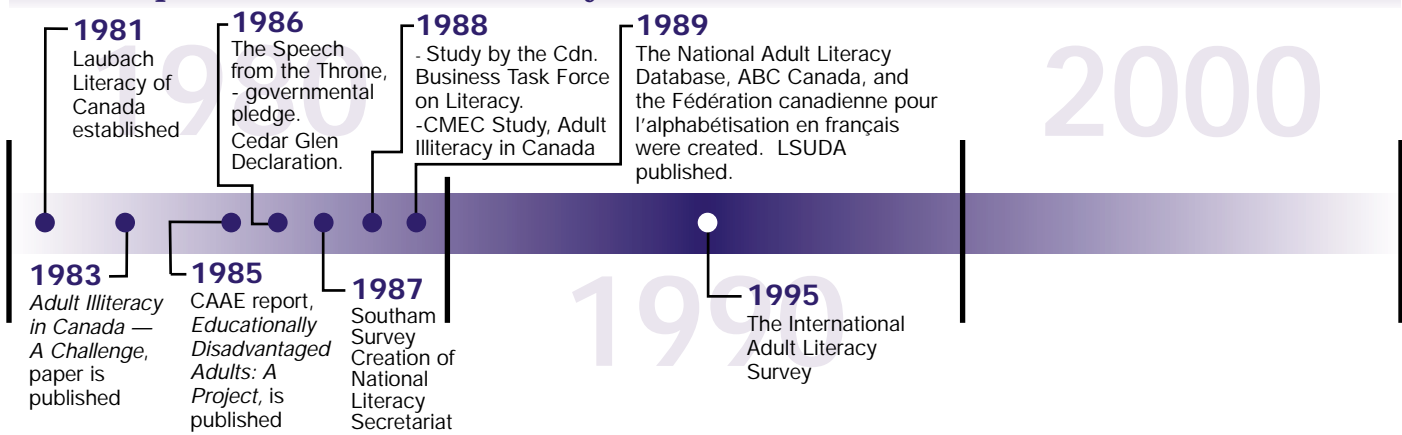
problem in the context of world literacy and characterized the Canadian situation as one of undereducated adults. Thomas described provincial and federal activities as well as those in the volunteer sector and pointed out the fragmentation of services. The juxtaposition of data on labour force participation, educational attainment, and training activities was effective in making connections between the social justice and economic motives of literacy advocates. The paper also identified groups in need of specialized response; these included the incarcerated, indigenous people, the handicapped, immigrants, women, the elderly and school dropouts, thus emphasizing that adults with literacy problems were not a homogenous group.

1985

A CAAE report, *Educationally Disadvantaged Adults: A Project*, contributed to the pressure for government action on literacy.

1986

On October 1, in The Speech from the Throne, the federal government pledged to "work with the provinces, the private sector and the voluntary groups to develop resources to ensure that Canadians have access to the literacy skills that are the prerequisite for participation in our advanced economy." The task of developing a national

strategy within federal jurisdiction fell to the Department of the Secretary of State, which began a lengthy process of consultation with all potential stakeholders.

In December, meeting at a site called Cedar Glen, a coalition of national groups promoting literacy in the volunteer sector crafted a public policy statement. The Cedar Glen Declaration was published as an open letter to the prime minister and provincial and territorial premiers and leaders. It marked the beginning of a public awareness campaign and a new point in the literacy movement when national organizations could speak with common cause.

1987

The Southam newspaper chain commissioned a survey by the Creative Research Group, and published a series of articles on adult illiteracy in Canada. (The articles were reprinted in a monograph by Peter Calamai titled *Broken Words: Why Five Million Canadians Are Illiterate*. This was the first assessment in Canada to test literacy using "real tasks" rather than by extrapolating literacy levels from years of schooling. The Southam survey shocked the country and brought the issue to public attention.

The National Literacy Secretariat was created to fund literacy initiatives.

1988

A study by the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy estimated the annual cost to business of illiteracy in the workforce at $4 billion and the cost to society at $10 billion. The group hypothesized that many errors required work to be redone and that many accidents in the workplace resulting in loss of life or property could be attributable to illiteracy. Although the text contained a disclaimer about the accuracy of the estimates, very few people read the disclaimer; only the figures made headlines. Publicity about the costs of illiteracy, added to all the other discourse, contributed to a government decision to take action.

The Council of Ministers of Education responded to the 1986 Throne Speech by commissioning its own survey of literacy and ABE. Their report, *Adult Illiteracy in Canada*, published in February 1988, outlined provincial programs and policies where they existed (see Cairns, 1988). These descriptions were taken directly from provincial government documents. The analysis updated and expanded the themes of the 1976 and 1983 Thomas reports. Lifelong learning was a theme.

The Prime Minister announced a federal national literacy strategy with funding of $110 million over five years.

Development of ABE/Literacy in Canada

2001
Speech from the Throne,
- governmental pledge

2001   2002   2003

1989

The National Adult Literacy Database, ABC Canada, and the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français were created.

The National Literacy Secretariat funded the national Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Life (LSUDA), a well-respected and widely read report on literacy in Canada. This was the first official document not to use the word illiteracy.

1990s

An infrastructure was created to support literacy activities across Canada, including resource centres, electronic networks and communication systems, and provincial and territorial coalitions, all funded partially or entirely by the National Literacy Secretariat. The NLS, through funding more than 4,500 projects, supported the creation of teaching materials and increased support for academic and community-based research. While most provinces and territories increased spending on adult literacy education, provision of services to students remained inconsistent from one part of the country to another. (See Hoddinott, 1998) The decade ended with attempts to assess, consolidate, and share the best of what had been developed (See Barker, 1999), with repeated references to a

future model of lifelong learning.

1994

The International Adult Literacy Survey, conducted by Statistics Canada in partnership with the OECD in seven countries, including Canada, provided an updated profile of literacy in Canada.

1997

The federal government increased the annual allocation of the NLS to $30 million and targets the additional money to family literacy, workplace literacy, and new technology. The move was seen as a sign of continuing federal commitment, which some in the literacy field had feared might end at the close of the decade when the UNESCO International Decade of Literacy came to an end. Responsibility for training was devolved to the provinces, removing one of the potential mechanisms for directing federal funds into adult basic education.

1999-2000

Most provincial and territorial governments expanded policy statements on adult literacy or developed positions, if they did not already have one. However provision to learners did not increase in most parts of the country.

2001

January Speech from the Throne pledged an increased

commitment to skills and learning with a specific mention of literacy:

> Today, many Canadian adults lack the higher literacy skills needed in the new economy. The Government of Canada will invite the provinces and territories, along with the private sector and voluntary organizations, to launch a national initiative with the goal of significantly increasing the proportion of adults with those higher-level skills.

Federal policy makers began to study the issue to deepen their understanding before defining how that commitment would be implemented. National literacy organizations and provincial umbrella groups mobilized to lobby for a more coherent "system" of ABE across the country. By the end of the year, no federal policy had been announced.

2002

To be continued....

An ABE teacher goes to Antarctica

So, how does an adult basic educator from Oregon get to Antarctica? Stay tuned over the coming months as we trace a project that has taken Susan Cowles, an adult basic skills instructor from Oregon, on a scientific expedition with a team of scientists from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). The team is studying the presence of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the Antarctic. In January-February 2002, Susan Cowles will travel with the VIMS scientists to Palmer Station on the Antarctic Peninsula. She will post a daily report so students can be with the team as they study POPs.

The site contains learning activities that allow students to find out how scientists think and work. A glossary helps them understand terms that the scientists use. If there are any other words that a student wants to learn, there is a dictionary box on every page. If a student types in any word and presses the "Go!" button, a window will pop up with the meaning of the word.

Several projects have allowed Susan to make this extraordinary trip [see SIDEBAR]. Programs such as these give ABE students opportunities to learn in the same ways that high school and university students learn today with access to the most current and sophisticated media. For teachers, the chance to work with science and math from

an authentic science lab is obviously exhilarating. To have a colleague producing curricular materials and posting daily observations are further attractions.

This site, of course, can be used by higher level students as well since users can choose the level of knowledge at which to follow the scientists.

Susan Cowles is the project director for the Science and Numeracy Special Collection at the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). She teaches classes in adult basic skills development at Linn-Benton Community College, Corvallis, Oregon. Susan provides the learning activities and other content for the Polar Science Station website.

Susan will be in Montreal from June 27 –29, 2002, to participate in the Summer Institute on Adult Numeracy, co-sponsored by The Centre for Literacy and NIFL. We are trying to arrange a session for local teachers to meet Susan prior to the Institute.

POP Goes Antarctica?
STUDYING POLLUTANTS IN THE ANTARCTIC FOOD WEB

http://literacynet.org/polar is a project of the Science and Numeracy Special Collection, National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The special collection provides online science and numeracy resources and curricular materials for teachers, tutors, learners, and others who are interested in adult literacy and numeracy programs.

Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic (TEA): This project, funded by the National Science Foundation, trains and sends teachers on scientific field expeditions to the polar regions. While in the field, teachers work alongside scientists and communicate with learners via email. Teachers also send journal articles about their experiences to the TEA website.

Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation (OPP): The Office of Polar Programs coordinates the U.S. scientific research carried out in Antarctica and the Arctic.

Research in practice

A Gathering about Literacy Research in Practice was held at the University of Alberta in Edmonton from July 25 - 27, 2001. Chaired by Mary Norton of the Edmonton Learning Centre, the gathering brought together more than 100 Canadian practitioners who have participated in or are considering doing practice-based research in literacy. Mary Hamilton and Jane Mace, British researchers with many years of experience in the field, acted as respondents and scholars-in-residence for the three days. Besides the formal presentations, there were many opportunities for participants to share and discuss the issues that bind and divide them. A full conference report, edited by Helen Woodrow, will be available in early winter 2002.

Communities of Research: A Study of Literacy Action Research Networks in the U.S., U.K., Australia, (and Canada),

by Allan Quigley & Mary Norton

[Researchers Allan Quigley and Mary Norton, with funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, surveyed eleven research networks that are or have been involved in some form of participatory research in literacy in the U.S., U.K. and Australia. They presented the findings, summarized below, at the Edmonton Gathering.]

Who is involved

Participants included literacy teachers, tutors, administrators and researchers in two general categories: Those with a professional development focus (i.e., most in the U.S., except PALPIN) and those interested in fostering a literacy research culture (i.e., those in the U.K. and some in Australia). [See networks, p.10]

Why practitioners are involved in research

They cited linking research to practice; professional development; improving personal practice, and creating new knowledge. The desire to have a "voice" was explicitly and implicitly named as well. [See SIDEBAR. p.10]

What topics are being researched?

The networks fall into two groups. Some networks have open agendas and focus on dozens of issues, from retention to ESL teaching methods, to fund raising methods. Others have national, state-wide or regional foci. Examples:

• ALNARC: Special Needs issues around literacy and numeracy is a current topic.

• AMI: In New England, the single topic is Adult Multiple Intelligences.

• Kentucky: The main focus is student retention.
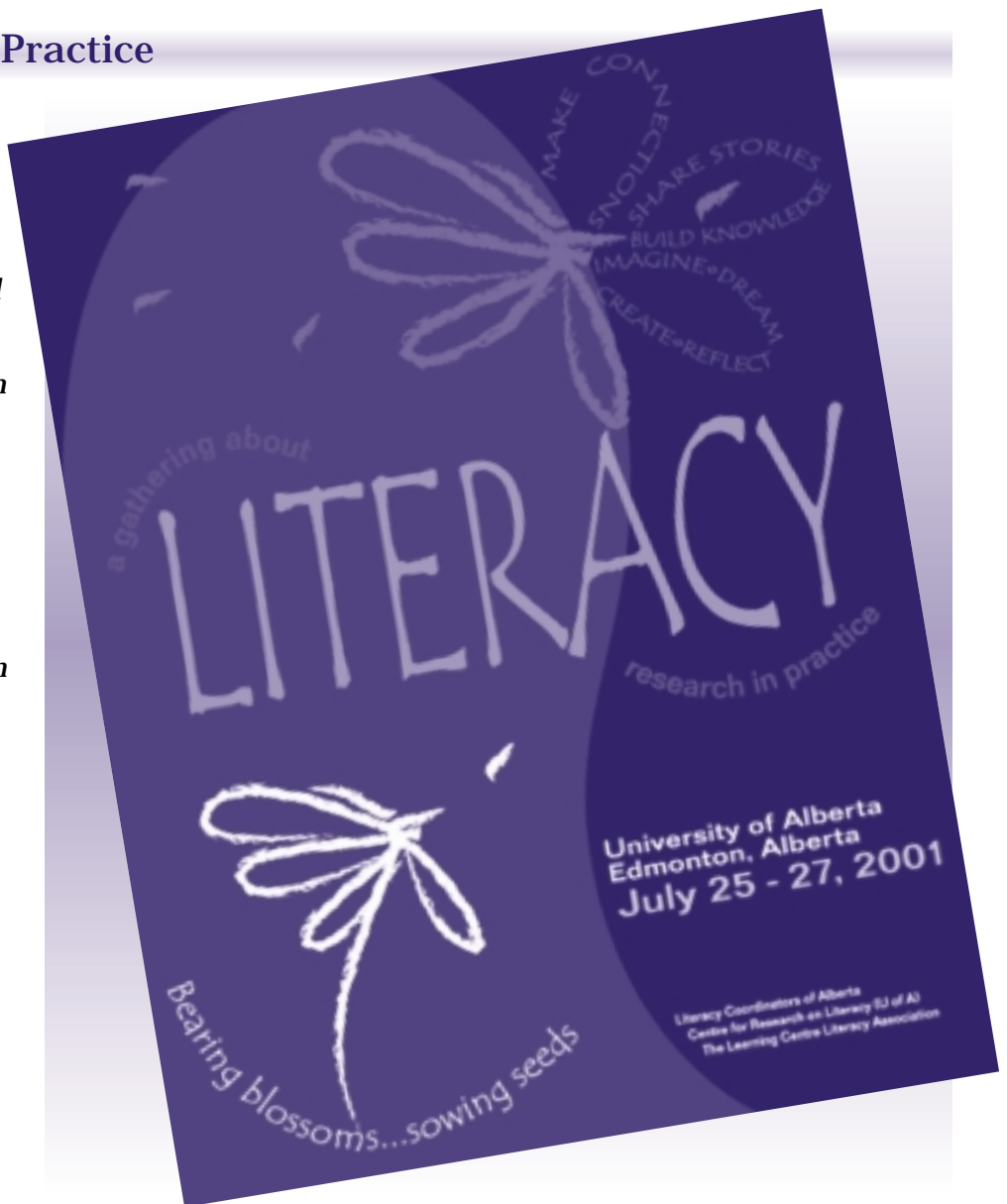
Literacy Research in Practice

Research methods

Action Research, Participatory Inquiry, and Collaborative Research (sometimes defined as "systematic intentional inquiry") were cited.

How the networks are structured and funded

Most are linked to, or have support, from universities, literacy institutes, and/or professional development centres. Except RaPAL, all have received government funding or grants. Some also obtain funding from foundations. In the U.S., all government funding must be awarded through bidding. ALNARC has been funded by government but may go to bidding. All except RaPAL have staff who receive direct or indirect payment. RaPAL is entirely volunteer.

How they support practitioner-researchers

The networks provide support through training and stipends. Training takes the form of institutes or workshops for one or more days; regular group and/or network meetings face-to-face and/or by internet; research mentors and buddies within and across groups; and resources such as research handbooks and Websites for reference. Stipends/honoraria range from $1,200 to $5,000 (Australian) within ALNARC to $100, $300, and $500 (US) for completed projects.

How they disseminate findings

Findings are disseminated through published monograph series, newsletters, websites and Internet connections, and conferences (i.e., special conferences for Networks and as parts of general conferences)

Major Challenges

Respondents named lack of time, issues of identity and self-concept, isolation, writing up the research, and involving learners in the follow-up process of dissemination, write-ups, and conference participation.

Benefits Perceived

Respondents spoke of a transformative process, of heightened critical reflection ability, of creating a culture where one can pose the "unacceptable," of new personal and program self-image, of heightened professional development skills and process, and of new knowledge for everyday practice.

Networks surveyed

(in alphabetical order)

The Adult Multiple Intelligences (AMI) Study was one of ten studies undertaken by the National Center for the Study of Adult Language and Literacy (NCSALL) and coordinated through World Education and the New England Literacy Resource Centre. It involved teachers in participatory and collaborative planning and implementing projects related to AMI theory.

ALNARC (Adult Literacy and Numeracy Researech Consortium) is a national Australian collaboration for research into adult literacy and numeracy. The network operates through university – based centers in each state, with national coordination.

www.staff.vu.edu.au/alnarc

Examples of practices

Linking Research to Practice-Creating New Knowledge

- ALNARC links researchers and practitioners by putting research mentors with new practitioner-researchers.

- RaPAL asks researchers and practitioner-researchers to critically think about and examine both practice and issues.

- PALPIN emphasizes problem-posing and stresses critical examination of practice over problem-solving.

- Bridges to Practice focuses on new topics concerning adults with learning disabilities in literacy.

Professional Development-Improving Personal Practice Through Reflection:

- PAARN, The Virginia Adult-Ed/Research Network, GALPIN, Project IDEA, and the Kentucky Practitioner Inquiry Project emphasize identifying and addressing practice problems. Impact studies in Pennsylvania indicate higher levels of leadership, reflection, critical thinking among participants.

Gaining Voice

- In Australia, ALNARC operates with government funding and has a stated aim of informing policy at the state and federal level.

- RaPAL, which operates with limited government funding, has a stated aim of critiquing policies and practices.

- In the U.S., most networks have developed Websites for wider distribution of findings but none have a stated aim of informing or critiquing policy.

Bridges to Practice in California used On-line Action Research (OAR) to support research and communication about topics not previously researched for adults with learning disabilities.

GALPIN (Georgia Adult Literacy Inquiry Network) was initiated in 1995 as part of a three-year project. The project aimed to contribute to the professional growth of teachers by promoting and strengthening inquiry based staff development opportunities and to better meet learner needs.

Kentucky Practitioner Inquiry Projects involve action research teams to address issues of student retention.

http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/wforce/daelnewsletter/page6.html

The Learning From Practice Project (PA) was initiated in 1995 to provide professional development for practitioners interested in improving teaching, learning, and programs. The project includes the Pennsylvania Action Research Network (PAARN) and the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN).

http://www.learningfrompractice.org/default.htm

NCELTR (The National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research) Action Research Projects are a means to involve teachers in research on their practice. The projects are coordinated and supported through the Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) Research Centre in Sydney, Australia.

http://www.nceltr.mq.edu.au/amep/index.htm

Research in Practice in Canada: A recent chronology

February 1996

National Literacy Secretariat sponsors a "policy conversation" in Edmonton.

October 1997

NLS co-sponsors a Research-in-practice seminar with 18 practitioners, researchers, consultants from Canada and U.S. Report on various Networks, issues, policies.

February 1998

NLS issues *Enhancing Literacy Research in Canada* document highlighting the need for building research capacity in literacy. Practitioner research is one approach.

Research-In-Practice networks begin in Alberta (Literacy Coordinators of Alberta, U of A, Learning Center in Edmonton) and B.C.

A Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) Regional conference in Halifax for the Atlantic Region focuses on Action Research in Practice as its theme.

July 1998

B.C. Ministry of Education and Literacy B.C. co-sponsor a professional development workshop on action research at Simon Fraser University. 27 practitioners attend from all Western provinces, Ontario and the Yukon. This was followed by a 1999 conference in Richmond, B.C.

Literacy B.C hosts an on-line conference on research-in-practice including all Western Canada. In B.C., A Research Circles project is initiated out of Simon Fraser University across B.C. The Ontario Field Research Group, disbanded some years ago, continues on an informal basis.

July 2001

A gathering in Edmonton of practitioners, researchers, consultants from the U.S. , U.K., Australia and Canada.

Project IDEA was initiated in Texas in 1996 to provide an alternative form of staff professional development.

http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/

http://project-idea.com/

RaPAL (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy Network) is an independent voluntary organization based in Britain, founded in 1988.

http://www.literacy.lancs.ac.uk/rapal/RaPAL.htm

The Virginia Adult Education Research Network was initiated in 1991 to encourage practitioner research among adult educators in Virginia.

Source: Presentation by Allan Quigley and Mary Norton.

How do adults with little formal education learn?

A Collaborative Practitioner Research Project

Five practitioners from different small communities in British Columbia received funding from the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education to do a collaborative research study on how adults with little formal education learn.

In this session, each participant described how and why she became involved, how a long distance collaboration process was managed, how the research question was developed, and how the methodology evolved. The team struggled to define their terms and settled on looking at adults over 19 years old without a high school diploma or having completed a modified high school curriculum. The objectives of the project were:

- To explore how adults with little formal education learn
- To use a variety of research techniques, based on a community's needs, to investigate the question
- To involve literacy learners, practitioners and academic researchers in the research process
- To train literacy practitioners and learners in research skills
- To recommend different ways to support adult learners outside the formal system
- To design and document a structure for collaborative research across regions and disciplines.

The team documented the entire process by keeping and filing all e-mails, by taping meetings (and transcribing the first ones) and by recording minutes. They used a common questionnaire for interviews and focus groups, making some personal modifications (i.e., using journals, observing the learning of their own children).

The questions focus on what the interviewees do well and how they learned to do it, and on how they get the information they need daily. Only one researcher had completed her interviews at the time of the presentation; the others were to do them in the fall. Team members discussed the challenges they have faced and the personal growth they've experienced. Challenges included learning to think of oneself as a researcher, being skeptical about qualitative methodology, knowing when to push team members, working through academic structures such as Ethics Committees, which were not designed for literacy projects, finding time for reflection, questioning the power relations when university-based researchers work with non-university researchers, and more.

A rich discussion emerged. One presenter posed the question: Is our personal and professional gratification justification enough for doing and being funded to do research? Will it have a social impact or is it self-indulgent? From a succinct "no" and "hopefully" as answers, the responses broadened. One participant said that research is an educational process in itself and cannot be just personal and professional gratification. Another pointed out that pragmatic skills, such as collaboration and management, are learned that contribute to educational governance. This type of research is a form of professional development. [LS]

Reflections on The Gathering

Jane Mace crystallized her experience of being at the Gathering. "I've met people this week who swim in the lightning," she said of the group. Allan Quigley said that after fifteen years as a practitioner and fifteen as a professor, he believes there is a research revolution going on. He traced the development from the 1930s, when research meant only scientific inquiry to today when qualitative method is accepted and becoming more widespread. Quoting Zora Neale Hurston, he said, "Research is just formalized curiosity."

A tone was set in the opening session. Sitting in a circular Kiva of tiered wooden benches arranged around an open space (in aboriginal culture a gathering place of equality and respect), we listened to Priscilla George, the Rainbow Woman (Ningwakwe) who has inspired the flourishing movement of the past decade in Canadian aboriginal literacy, share her story about overcoming her fear of singing in public as an example of transcendence of fear and working through doubt. These themes recurred through many of the stories told by presenters about their struggle to see themselves as researchers.

In small groups, in workshops, in round tables and in social networks, we asked what it means to do research, when does a teacher call herself a researcher, and why. One participant said, "Research changes us. It forces us to examine who we are and ask why we do this and what we believe in... There is some
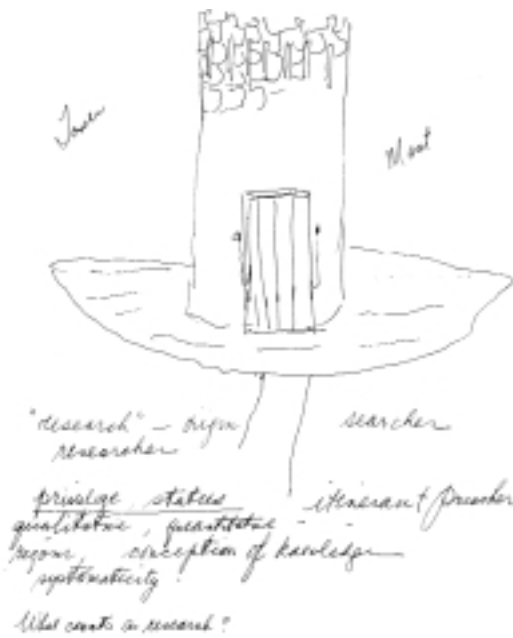
risk for the researcher; she can be so careful of everyone else's vision that that she loses her own...And there is always the sense of being an outsider that creates tension..."

Being outside the mainstream seemed to be one consequence of doing participatory research. This was not necessarily seen as a negative. Mainstream,

suggested one woman, may be a vision that's become stagnant; creating new knowledge means being counter culture.

One presenter used the metaphor of a gap. While we always say, "Mind the gap" perceiving it as a space into which we could fall and get hurt, she suggested that practitioner–researchers are living in the gap, choosing to work where there is some space and freedom.

In feedback from the first day, Mary Hamilton reported hearing discussions of ethics, of consent, and of naming. She highlighted issues of power in the dynamics of research as academics, practitioners and learners work within and against institutional shaping and constraints. She noted the gendered nature of research processes and the challenge of identifying ourselves as researchers.

Replays from the Gathering

In the session called How do Adults with Little Formal Education Learn?" [see p. 12], respondent Jane Mace asked," What comes after the word "learn?" If we say "learn to knit," "learn to care," "learn to care for a diabetic child," or "learn to be," are we talking about the same kind of learning?

"Life as a practitioner got in the way. Institutional bureaucracy got in the way..."

"It's hard to think of myself as a researcher. I'm still a beginner in terms of rigour."

"Research is an educational process in itself, a fascinating exploration."

"Pragmatic skills are learned—collaboration, management— that contribute to educational governance and professional development."

"You don't need funding to think."

But, what counts as research? "The working context of literacy," she said, "forces practitioners to [re]invent the model(s) of research, creating something not quite recognizable in either place." Mary spoke about the challenge of building a research culture, of what supports are needed. "We have a field full of knowledge and wisdom with no one to drive it."

Margaret Herrington, chair of RaPAL (UK), noted that while the UK is less involved with volunteer issues, it is dealing with the professionalization of the field which she supports. Research-in-practice is a form of professional development. She described how discussion inquiry can open up differences in practice. However, she cautioned, "Calling it research-in-practice doesn't resolve the difficulty of practitioners seeing themselves as researchers. I see it as an organic process. The nature of the work is investigatory— trying to resolve difficulties daily. My practice is research-in-practice."

Working against the optimism of new researchers are the realities described in one poorly-attended session where Beth Young shared findings from years of research on part-time workers and changing work conditions-- flexible workplace and workforce. Her study of literacy workers in Alberta

reflected the general North American pattern of part-time workers, mainly women, with low or no benefits, no pensions and often multiple jobs. In conditions such as these, how many teacher-researchers can realistically be expected?

There is no doubt that the research-practitioners at The Gathering spoke powerfully to the possibilities of incorporating inquiry into teaching. Still, at times there was a missionary tone to the event; as one participant noted ironically, "Participatory can also be oppressive."

In a conference that was talking about different ways of knowing and different models of inquiring, there was an undercurrent of anti-academic feeling that silenced the few traditional researchers present. Is every act of reflection or inquiry a piece of research? Is every instance of sharing practice a research event? Every teacher should be a reflective practitioner, but does every teacher have to be a researcher?

Can we work more effectively to bridge the gap between the academic and practice-based researchers?

Many of the tensions that were named at The Gathering call for continuing exploration. [LS]
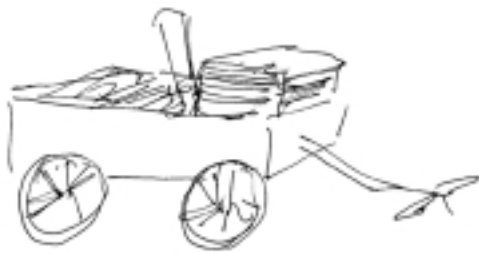
Health literacy and hard-to-reach patients

by Linda Shohet

Who are the hard-to-reach, and how do you identify them? A research team at the Montreal General Hospital has grappled with these questions for more than a year as we have tried to determine how a major medical facility might help low-literate patients take better control of their own health care.

The Montreal General Hospital is a large bilingual teaching hospital inner hospital located in downtown Montreal. An important proportion of its patient population is multicultural. Many patients do not speak English or French as their first language, and many of them are low-literate. The hospital first became involved in health literacy in 1995 when the Director of Nursing Staff Development attended a conference on health literacy and realized that this issue touched many patients at the hospital. Professional development workshops on health literacy for health care professionals were held in 1997-1999, the product of a partnership between The Centre for Literacy and the Hospital. Since then, the Nursing Staff Development Unit has expressed ongoing interest in health literacy. Hospital staff recognize that the changing nature of health care is leading to a growing number of patients having to care for themselves at home. Many are potentially unable to because of difficulties reading, understanding and applying health information received at the hospital.

In 2000, a Steering Committee set up at the Hospital in collaboration with The Centre for Literacy started out to do a Needs Assessment of the health education and information needs of low-literate patients. In conducting preliminary interviews and discussions, the Committee became aware that it was going to be difficult to identify patients with low literacy. There was strong feeling against testing and little confidence in patient self-reporting. There was considerable uneasiness about the word "literacy" itself which was corroborated as the study went on. Finally, the Committee recognized that people could be low-literate for different reasons requiring different interventions, and that some people might appear to be low-literate because of language barriers. So, we enlarged the concept of the target groups to "hard-to-reach" and created an operational definition for this study. For our purposes, "hard-to-reach" patients included low-literate patients, patients who face language or cultural barriers, and patients with learning difficulties due to cognitive or physical disabilities.

The question of how to identify these patients remained. While the term low-literate is an attribute of the patient, the term "hard-to-reach" is not a straight descriptor. It forces one to add "by whom?" And once the question is added, the responsibility is shifted to the person trying to do the reaching, in this case, the health care provider. The next step in our process followed from this. We would ask health care providers to identify patients with whom they found it difficult to communicate both through writing and orally. For these patients, health information and education is often communicated in ways that they cannot understand and is not useful to them. It is difficult for them to get answers to their health-related questions.

Health literacy has been defined as: "The ability to use written materials to function in health care settings and to maintain one's health and the skills needed to advocate for and request needed clarification." As a prior step to this Needs Assessment, a Background Paper on Health Literacy was developed. During the course of this research, it became apparent that the Steering Committee wanted to investigate more than the "ability to use written materials." The Committee also wanted to look at the capacity of hard-to-reach patients to understand and use health information transmitted orally information included in videos, as well as information from other sources (visual materials, workshops, patient discussion groups, etc.). Could these other sources of information and education processes complement and/or replace written information as useful sources for hard-to-reach patients?

The Needs Assessment: Methodology and limitations

The Committee chose a qualitative methodology as most appropriate to this type of exploratory research. We decided to use a small sample of informants and to focus on issues rather than numbers, knowing that the data collection would encompass many uncontrollable variables and that results would require significant interpretation.

The Committee wanted to work with hospital units that care for large numbers of patients and where patients (and/or their families) need to be involved in self care at home. Three hospital units–dialysis, oncology hematology and the pre-operative centre–expressed a desire to participate in the Needs Assessment. Patients from these units require a lot of

health information and education. Health care professionals take significant time to teach patients and their families. Patients and families are generally "hungry" for relevant health information. In two of the three participating units (dialysis, oncology hematology), patients face a chronic health problem and are likely to receive medical care for many years. This would facilitate the potential tracking of patients in terms of evaluating over time the impact of more appropriate patient education methodologies.

Committee members decided to contact four groups: hard-to-reach patients themselves, their families, support staff and health care professionals. These informants were involved in the process of patient education either directly or indirectly. The decision to talk to patients and health care professionals is an obvious one: they are the groups directly involved in the education process. We knew that for many patients at the hospital, the role of the family in caring for the patient and processing health information was very important. We also decided to collect the perspective of support staff knowing from the literature that their role was frequently overlooked and unexplored.

Data were collected through individual interviews and focus groups with the four groups of informants from the three units: hard-to-reach patients, members of their families, support staff and health care workers. Individual interviews were conducted with health care workers from two near-by CLSCs (community clinics). Physicians from the three units were asked to comment on a synthesis of the results. The research process was approved by the hospital's ethics

committee after the Informed Consent form was revised in plain language to meet institutional standards of research practice. Patients and families were invited by a member of the nursing staff to participate. In total, 114 informants contributed to the findings.

Findings

The findings showed that hard-to-reach patients often do not speak either official language. Some have physical or cognitive disabilities caused by or increased by their illness. A majority do not use the written information they receive, but rely on care givers to read or interpret it for them. They would like clear pertinent information, not necessarily in print only, related to their illness and to daily living. Family wanted more information about coping, and about community resources. They all wanted more empathy and responsiveness to their individual needs. Most also welcomed the idea of a centre, but did not want a large centralized facility. They recommended small disease-specific centres located in or near the area where they come for treatment. A large majority of the patients interviewees did not, and did not want to, use a computer.

Health providers recognized that much of their material needed updating. They focused heavily on written resources and tended to feel that making materials clearer through Plain Writing would answer many of their concerns. They also generally felt that patients needed more rather than less information. They agreed that centres should be small and inviting, and wanted professional development activities integrated.

The Steering Committee has used the findings and recommendations from the three units as the basis for a

follow-up project to establish pilot education centres where selected interventions will be implemented and tracked. The Centres will be guided by participatory education committees made up of providers, patients, caregivers, possibly a volunteer, and the project coordinator.

The Committee is aware that any new ways of informing and educating the "hard-to-reach" will have to be sensitive and pro-active. We will be involving some community participation for multi-cultural training and translation, and offering staff development on material design and clear communication. There is also recognition that the patients who gave input are probably among the easier "hard-to-reach," and that there are harder "hard-to-reach," and some who may never be reached. However, these groups of patients are not the minority they have been made out to be. People who have communication barriers likely comprise at least half the population, and as with special needs and learning disabilities in schools, when the health care sector finds ways of meeting the communication needs of the "hard-to-reach," they will be improving health communication for the mainstream as well.

Literacy, Technology and Learning Disabilities:

Today and tomorrow

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)

www.ldac-taac.ca

An overview of Summer Institute 2001

[The Centre for Literacy of Quebec ran the 2001 Summer Institute in Montreal from June 28 - 30, in collaboration with The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC). The three days were filmed by the National Film Board for their projected website called the Learning Centre (www.nfb.ca). While several participants commented that the filming made it "quite formal," Sally McKeown found it to be "an intensive group that reflects and questions and discusses, a group looking for guidance and ideas." Using pre-set issues as a starting point, participants elaborated and responded based on experience from diverse backgrounds. This section of Literacy Across the CurriculuMedia Focus captures some of the discussion and reflections that took place during the Institute, in the hope that sharing can support others engaged by the same concerns.]

Presenters (in alphabetical order) included:

Chris Abbott, King's College London, editor of *Symbols Now* (2000)

Jaleh Behroozi & **June Crawford**, National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), Washington DC, now incorporating the Center for Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities

Nancy Cooper, Field consultant, Native Stream, Alphaplus, Toronto

Elizabeth Gayda, President, The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)

Pat Hatt, Toronto adult educator, LD specialist

Gill MacMillan, Cambridge Training and Development, UK

Sally McKeown, British Educational Council for Technology Agency (BECTA), author of *Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities*

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS POSED AT THE START OF THE INSTITUTE:

How does technology affect adults with LD?

For adults with short-term memory problems, remembering instructions given by a computer on the telephone can be torture. For someone with hand-eye coordination problems, finding keys quickly enough on a keypad can prevent them from using a computerized phone directory. For someone who cannot read letters and numbers, spelling a name can mean the end of the call.

On the other hand, technologies are making learning possible for many who could never sit in a classroom or work in traditional print media. Adaptive technologies hold promise for adults with all types of disabilities. Most research studies have focused on specific adaptations for specific disabilities. But what might be possible if the barriers around specific disabilities were breached, and the adaptations designed for the blind, the deaf, the spastic, the aphasic, the intellectually disabled, were applied more widely?

There is continuing optimism about the potential of new technologies, especially computers and the Web, to increase access to learning for those adults who have traditionally been shut out. The merging of technologies means that televisions may soon be transmitting adapted learning materials directly to learners.

Who will design these materials? Who will assess the adult learners? What roles will teachers play in the process? What roles will volunteers play? Who will pay the bills?

Currently, there are enormous disparities in knowledge and training, even in the same country. In some Canadian sites, on-line curricula are being designed; in others, there are still adult literacy programs without a computer.

How can the field of adult literacy and basic education use the findings from the K-12 and post-secondary education sectors and from the disabilities fields to identify the learning disabled among their clients and to match the technologies we now have to the clients who can benefit from them?

Moving to the visual: Technology and new literacy possibilities for the learning disabled

by Chris Abbott,
King's College London

Literacy, images and symbols

For the past few years I have been researching the move towards multimedia rather than solely text-based communication. I have tracked with interest the uses that young people have developed for their web sites, and the ways in which the texts that are found there have become ever more reliant on the use of sound, images and movement.

During the same period, my other research into the use of symbols within special educational needs settings has also shown an increasing use of pictorial or symbolic tools for communication or

determinism. The fundamental change brought about by these technologies has been related to the way in which people have responded to them by changing the ways in which society controls the ownership of the means of production. Learners of all ages no longer need to be passive recipients; they can be active producers and transmitters of messages as well, and it is often through symbolic and other image-based approaches that they choose to do so.

Defining literacy is a good way of filling a few hours on a wet afternoon, but closure is rarely reachable; it's too slippery a concept. For politicians, of course, it's all very simple: literacy is reading and writing. We know that it

Chris Abbott

… to be literate is to "fully inhabit a culture," and that, surely, is our aim for all learners.

literacy. How might these two developments be connected? Can we really see a genuine shift here towards iconic communication? Some writers and researchers would say this is the case – and I am increasingly convinced by their arguments.

I am now middle-aged by almost any definition, and that means I remember an educational world filled with inkwells and blackboards, rather than computers and technology. It would be easy to see the differences in my lifetime as being about the different devices and technologies that have become available to learners of all ages, but to focus on the computer would be to fall into the trap of technological

is far more complex than that, of course, and that there are close links between literacy, culture and power: not a point that needs to be made perhaps to an audience in a bilingual city. An education officer at the British Film Institute suggests that to be literate is to "fully inhabit a culture," and that, surely, is our aim for all learners.

Other theorists, particularly a group of linguists who met in New England in 1996, have developed alternative theories of multiple literacies or literacy practices, and it is within the latter framework, based on the work of Brian Street, that my research has developed. A theoretical framework based on the notion of literacy practices can more readily accept the

range of communicative styles and strategies that people with learning difficulties might adopt. For that reason, my work focusing on young people and their web sites, personal homepages in most cases, has focussed on their motivations and intentions, as shown by the practices in which they engage.

More recently, the opportunity to edit *Symbols Now*, a book of case studies of how learners of all ages are using symbols, has enabled me to think more deeply about the issues that are raised by the ever-increasing importance of the image in communication. Whether the symbols involved be Rebus, Makaton, PCS, Pictogram or something else, the process involved is one of interpreting a pictorial or symbolic representation.

My thesis, then, is that communication and literacy are becoming more closely connected with the visual image as well as the textual

word. This is an opportunity, not a threat, for people with learning disabilities. We have seen many human responses to technology in the past which have enabled people with disabilities to become more included, and ICT – Information and Communications Technology – is ever more able to provide the same support for literacy.

New options for learners

How, then, can technology assist in the process of helping all learners become literate? Or, to be more accurate, how can we use technology to assist all our learners in their efforts?

I think we must firstly recognise the changes in our own lifetimes, and the differences in the communicative and literacy practices in today's world. If we are still trying to help learners achieve the same kinds of literacy as we were twenty years ago, we are failing them. People with learning disabilities have as much right of access to the Internet as everyone else, and

they can be offered exciting new possibilities of access to multimedia texts through online technology.

We also need to recognise that symbolic communication has entered all our lives, whether through the signs at the airport, the logo on our company notepaper or the small symbol in the corner of the screen which tells us which TV channel we are watching. Symbolic communication is not just a part of life in 2001; it can also be extremely supportive for people with learning disabilities. We need to embrace this development and use the software tools available to ensure that the world in which our learners function becomes ever more symbolic and communicative.

Most of all, however, we need to recognise the rights of all the people we work with to be writers as well as readers, to

make their opinions known as well as respond to direction, and to disagree or dissent where they wish to do so. Those people whose disabilities interfered with their capability to function in this way in the past can now be offered the opportunity to

If we are still trying to help learners achieve the same kinds of literacy as we were twenty years ago, we are failing them.

increase their literacy and to fully inhabit their own - our own - culture.

Dr. Chris Abbott is a researcher and Lecturer in Education at King's College School of Education, University of London. With many years of classroom experience as a special needs teacher and strong interest in uses of ICT, Chris brings a practice-based understanding to his research. He has published articles and books on IT, Literacy and the Internet, ICT and Teacher Education, and Special Education and the Internet, as well on the use of symbols. A list of his publications is available at http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/ cabbott/pub.html.

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teem – Teachers evaluating educational multimedia

teem is an independent UK company supported by government, teachers and hardware and software producers to evaluate digital classroom content. It trains classroom teachers to become evaluators who use the materials with their students before writing up their findings using an evaluation framework. The teem website contains hundreds of evaluations and case studies of CD-ROMs and websites. The web site can be searched like a library catalogue, and offers three sets of information for every title:

Publisher's information describing the product and giving contact details.

Evaluations by teem-trained teacher-evaluators.

Case studies showing how the evaluators used the materials in classrooms.

Every entry has a summary of the evaluations and case studies as well as the full versions.

To become evaluators, teachers must be teaching the National Curriculum, use software in the classroom, have a personal e-mail account, be good at meeting deadlines, and be willing to take teem training. Evaluators receive training and staff development, and learn to look critically at software; they also get paid for each evaluation and keep the evaluated software. In addition, they have access to further professional development opportunities.

The teem website has a number of entries on software for special needs.

See www.teem.org.uk

Not Basic Skills - Essential Skills!

by Sally McKeown, Education Officer, British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA)

[This paper was produced through the work of a small seminar of experts and through consultation with the Basic Skills Agency in the UK. It considers three areas: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a basic skill; how ICT changes existing basic skills; and ICT as a support for learning literacy. Sally McKeown shared it as a background piece against which participants could consider questions about learning disabilities.]

Context

It is unrealistic to talk about literacy in society, education and the workplace without including the full contribution ICT makes today. Over the past decade both the demands of society and the nature of the workplace have changed beyond all recognition. ICT is present in a range of forms all around us, and an inability to use it represents a serious gap in a person's life skills. The Stevenson Report (March 1997) [a UK report] claimed that they hoped to see, "a society within 10 years where ICT has permeated the entirety of education (as with the rest of society) so that it is no longer a talking point but taken for granted - rather as electricity has come to be."

ICT in society

ICT today must be seen as an essential skill, underpinning many forms of information gathering, recording and reporting. Because ICT skills are relatively new and because they have connotations of cleverness, people are not embarrassed to admit that their ICT skills are non-existent. However, the unwillingness to

Sally McKeown

address ICT skills will become an increasingly serious situation in the 21st century and the issue of confidence and self-esteem will apply to those unable to use ICT as much as to those who lack literacy skills.

ICT in education

Under-performance in ICT can hinder the effectiveness of secondary education where ICT is used both to prepare students for the world of work and as a resource through which other subjects are taught. Integrated Learning Systems are used for delivering basic skills work in some colleges. Many aspects of learning will be technologically dependent; for example, the forthcoming University for Industry in the UK has a large technological component. This means that the individual needs to develop literacy at a higher level to access the new curricula and needs to use technology in order to participate in lifelong learning.

ICT in the workplace

The skills demanded in the workplace are changing fast too. For example, in response to the need for improvements in performance and competitiveness, manual workers today will often be required to input data or access databases for information and stock control. Increasingly, professional staff

use e-mail directly rather than dictate to a secretary.

ICT as a basic skill

Because of the prevalence of ICT in every walk of life, there are issues of equity and equality. Every individual should, through their education or training, have the opportunity to become ICT literate, both as consumer and as producer. There is currently no clear definition of ICT as a basic skill since the demands on people to cope will change with context and time, but functional users will appreciate the power of the medium. They will appreciate that the medium allows for the storage and retrieval of data and will be able to scan selectively, use search tools and select and control information. They will be familiar with common ICT conventions and navigation techniques. As producers of content, they find that text and images can be constantly edited and that software provides a non-linear medium. In other words, they will make the media work for them rather than just being a passive consumer. In order to reach this point, individuals may need to alter the way they perceive and use ICT.

How ICT changes the nature of basic skills

Writing

The use of a computer keyboard may mean that everyone can produce work which looks professional. Does handwriting thus become an art rather than a basic skill? Does it become calligraphy?

In the future many people will be writing directly onto screens. Writing will be recognized as a non-linear activity as writers may well start in the middle of a document and produce the main facts and meat of a text and then write the introduction last.

With the use of voice recognition software, which uses spoken language to activate the computer, students may begin to think in more grammatical terms as the spoken word is translated directly into text. Writing, in the sense of getting words on to a page, may become a lower level skill with the advent of voice input systems.

Reading

Reading now needs to be higher level. It is not enough to decode. Readers need to be able to skim and scan as they have more to process. "Supermarkets are crowded with more print than anyone could read in a week."

"The significant shift in literacy with regard to public writing is that the confident literates know what they need not read. Those who cannot read believe that if they were to learn, they would then have to read all they see."

We also need to make judgments about the reliability of information, particularly as the World Wide Web (WWW) means that everyone can have a view and a forum in which to express it.

ICT as a support for literacy

Evidence shows that ICT can support the development of writing skills by allowing learners to explore and develop ideas. There are planning tools and writing frames to help reluctant writers get started. Multimedia systems allow students to understand better the links between sound, pictures and text. This is useful for talking books and web reference materials.

Standard Word tools such as the thesaurus, the AutoCorrect and spell-checker can be used to develop autonomous learning for vocabulary and spelling while speech tools such as voice recognition systems and speech synthesis help the learner develop an ear and an eye for spelling.
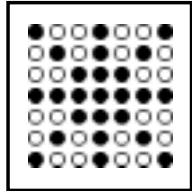
Issues to consider

• Many homes are unlikely to see computer technology as a priority for spending in the foreseeable future. It is important that an imbalance between the haves and have-nots should be addressed in the public sector.

• Some adults associate school with failure and are unlikely to return to school premises. Schools are often unwilling to let adults use their ICT facilities because of the dangers of eradicating files of student work etc. In Britain, there are additional security issues in the wake of Dunblane.

• Inspections of school and college provision in the UK have revealed a disparity in provision. While there are some centres of excellence, many teachers still do not use ICT as a matter of course.

• At present there is an emphasis on equipment provision rather than appropriate use, so there are many examples of students e-mailing other students in the same class, regardless of the fact that this is not the most efficient or effective means of communication!

• There is a great need for role models to encourage the use of ICT. Even now, in the media, successful use of ICT is associated with young, upwardly mobile, males of all ethnic groups.

• There should be links with initiatives such as family literacy schemes or others which encourage a cross-generational approach to encourage lifelong learning.

• As well as college provision, literacy and ICT schemes need to be set in venues such as sports centres, health centres, libraries, football grounds, working men's clubs, village halls and fitness centres.

Finally, it should be recognized that there are currently insufficient funds for high-level equipment for all learners. Priority should be given to learners who have the greatest educational needs. Basic skills students are one of the groups who will benefit most from high-level equipment with good sound and graphics capabilities. But how can we achieve it?

Sally McKeown is an Education Officer at the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA), the national organization in the UK that oversees research into uses of technology in all levels of education, including adult. Sally has written extensively about adults with dyslexia and other types of disabilities. She has prepared the BECTA Information Sheets on Dyslexia and ICT and Special Needs and ICT.
See www.becta.org.uk/ technology/infosheets/html/ dyslexia.html

Thank you to The British Council for covering travel costs for Chris Abbott and Sally McKeown to participate in the 2001 Summer Institute.

Literacy for those with learning disabilities – a personal perspective

Pat Hatt, adult educator and LD specialist

Participants Janet Horwood (L) and Pat Hatt (R).

Pat Hatt has a learning disability, and spent many years fooling the world while thinking she was stupid. Through university and masters studies, she was not able to do things others do, and used every possible strategy to stop appearing stupid. So she has empathy for and insight into the situation of adults with LD. She self-deprecatingly traces her own journey of self-exploration through her own studies as an elementary and a special education teacher, and later an adult literacy teacher. Pat listens to technology presentations focusing on people with limited literacy skills, and feels compelled to address the needs of people who can't log on to technology. With language processing problems and difficulty holding patterns in long-term memory, Pat is one of them. "I think technology is wonderful," she says, " but I just can't use it. I interface with it via others."

In Pat's experience in Canadian literacy programs, people who come in with no literacy make very limited use of technology. She has found e-mail the most useful, but has seen most adult learners start with games and stop there. Most did not move on. Surfing to access information rarely happens in literacy programs, she claims. Many students have problems accessing and navigating a web-page. While icons can improve understanding, even these may be hard for someone who has directional problems. Pat lists the skills that literacy students must master to make use of technology, and the barriers they face [See lists]. Fearful learners, she says, have a fear of print – reading, writing, spelling – and of keyboarding and computer commands. Hesitant learners need each step to be very small, and successful learners, like herself, may not be able to read very well, but do have sophisticated literacy skills.

Skills that literacy students must master to make use of technology

Reading skills –

- Text
- Diagrams
- Icons
- Keywords
- Skimming
- Scanning
- Formulating ideas and following through

Barriers literacy students face

- They have no strategies for looking for and finding information
- They have no spelling rules or tricks
- Hard to follow a thread
- Memory
- Comprehension

Aboriginal peoples and LD

Nancy Cooper, Alphaplus Centre, Toronto

Nancy Cooper described some of the early efforts in Ontario to create the framework, materials and organizations that have lead to Native literacy being one of the recognized streams in the province.

Needs vary in aboriginal communities, but generally, educational, economic and social needs are not adequately met. "We are a problem; we are seen as not assimilating." Among young offenders, breaking and entering and prostitution are usual crimes. Most of the time lack of education is the core of the problem. There is a link between people not being able to express themselves and trouble with the law, but "literacy (provision) is seen as just the white man's way of saying there is something wrong with you," in Nancy's experience Community support is important. The recidivism rate is low among those helped by community.

While many aboriginal adults and young people have alcohol damage, there is little access to resources in isolated regions far from towns, and no access to assistive devices for learning disabilities. There is not enough support in the school system, and First Nations often don't access mainstream agencies. A Train-the-Trainer program has also uncovered a lack of advocacy; there is little or no awareness of what is available because the residential school system engendered mistrust.

Bridges to Practice

June Crawford, National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

Participants June Crawford (L) and Lucinda Doheny (R).

To meet the educational needs of people with learning difficulties, in 1991 the National Institute for Literacy engaged three US agencies – Health, Employment and Education – to set up a program to produce materials for training volunteer teachers.

June noted three terms – difference, difficulty, and disability. Regardless of what the diagnosis is, good teaching is required. The Bridges to Practice initiative is meant to bring stakeholders together; enlist administrative support for funding; provide meaningful and ongoing professional development; identify resources; and continuously monitor and improve good teachers for learning diasabled adults.

The American Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA) gives protection in the job market to adults with disabilities as long as they have a diagnosis. Under ADA, big corporations are being sued if their information is not easily accessible in different formats. AOL was sued by

two blind people. Successful suits have also been brought by LD adults.

Bridges to Practice Training programs

Participatory models have been designed in various regions of the US to develop and test different interventions. Examples include:

Arkansas tried to develop a transparent screening process and diagnosis

New England: Six states are linked to Harvard and other schools of education to develop training techniques that seem to work with adults with learning difficulties

Southern states are working together with volunteer groups.

Key questions and issues

- What are learning difficulties?
- What is screening as a service procedure?
- Understanding the implications of a formal diagnosis
- Learning difficulties and the American Disabilities Act
- Learning difficulties and vocational rehabilitation
- Learning difficulties and goal setting e.g. time
- Learning difficulties and jobs
- Learning difficulties and life challenges

Some figures for literacy are estimates or self-referrals; 15 -20 % of population have some form of learning difficulties; among adults, it may be higher

ISSUES RAISED
Funding; Fighting for a piece of the pie; Training for diagnosis; Self-disclosure vs.

professional diagnosis; Legal status attached to terminology; Adults' approach to terminology -see things in different ways from younger pupils; Labelling how adults learn; Need for computers in classroom; Technology as a barrier; Good support systems --- human resources not valued; Practical approach; Online training; Lack of resources; Different cultural approaches to LDs; Culturally-based translations of symbols; A tool is not a cure; Not a problem to be solved, but a need to be addressed; Weakness in first language - danger of literacy problems; Need for pride in own culture; Genetics, substance abuse, diet toxins, etc., all seen as responsible for literacy problems.

Reaching disabled learners: A software developer's perspective

Gill Macmillan CTAD (UK)

Gill Macmillan, a multimedia developer with Cambridge Training and Development, one of the

Gill Macmillan pioneer companies in quality basic skills software, talked about the challenges of creating software to meet the needs of different disabilities groups. In the UK Basic Skills Strategy Freedom to Learn agenda, six groups were identified: Visually

impaired, hearing impaired, dyslexia, people with mental health problems, physically disabled learners, and those with learning difficulties. The new Basic Skills curriculum post-Moser is providing a curriculum to help teachers who have not worked with these types of students before. These include collections of life stories and people talking about their own lives in their own words; a staff develop-ment pack; and 2 CD-ROMs, one for general literacy and one for deaf learners.

Profoundly deaf learners have the least access to multimedia, and making existing software accessible to deaf learners is a challenge. Gill says the first problem is that multimedia is based on the premise of using one's own voice and having a fair auditory memory. The language used in most products is too colloquial for the deaf. If the auditory channel is cut out on multimedia products, the visuals are not informative enough.

One solution has been to use British Sign Language to introduce the topic and teach some vocabulary, then write in very simple straightforward English. They have also tried to create a common set of activities with a different choice of framework – "aud/symbols/text" – to suit learning styles. Deaf users liked animations and flashing signals to stress things like capital letters and full stops. Regardless of the option, tutor support is critical; the developer can put materials on the web in pictures or student writing, but a tutor has to create the learning context.

Then, there are always technical issues – e.g. a product designed for IE, then faced with Netscape. They have also had to provide alternative activity for those without access to the web.

Issues in learning disabilities

Elizabeth Gayda – Learning Disabilities Association Canada

Elizabeth Gayda

Language poses multiple challenges for education , because it is both curriculum content and learning environment - both the object of knowledge and the means of transmitting information.

Discussion Issues

- Environmental barriers – employers are not knowledgeable about learning difficulties so cannot make accommodations; there is little consultation with end users;
- Confidentiality issues – LD adults do not want others to know.
- Role models are needed
- Sharing good practice and resources is essential.
- Lack of funding is widespread.
- There is lack of interest in using technology with learning difficulties for adults and children.
- A common understanding of LD is needed. Some still ask, Why spend money on all this kit when there are

no books - jealousy.
- Misinformation leads people to be labelled lazy/stupid, especially by peers.
- Self -advocacy – Who I am, What I need; How can I ask for it in apt way?
- Growing emphasis: Do you have to have a problem to be an expert in it? If you have it, does that make you an expert?
- Isolation of staff and students is common.

There is a danger that we always go for a deficit model or end up describing the problem and not the person.

See: http://www.web4all.ca www.ldonline.org

www.ldac-taac.ca for definitions of learning difficulties for advocacy

Software evaluation

Chris Abbott

Chris Abbott

Software is more expensive in Canada than in the U.K., but hardware is much cheaper. Try to buy software online from country where it is cheapest, Chris advises. Software is generally cheaper than it was ten years ago but not necessarily for Special Needs. Governments should be pressured to underwrite software for minority groups.

How should we evaluate software? A checklist is not enough because it misses out context. **teem** (UK) pays teachers to evaluate software and write a case study (see p.19). For every software there are two case studies from different institutions. They have a classification system so if you want to know which word processors have speech it is easy to find. At many trade exhibitions, suppliers claim they have the perfect tool but haven't. Software developers must be willing to listen. We don't always need the next new thing We need to keep up pressure on manufacturers.

LINCS

Jaleh Behroozi Soroui
National Institute for Literacy
Washington

Jaleh gave us an overview of LINCS, the database she manages, that trawls through databases throughout the world.

Jaleh Behroozi Soroui

Issues

- How do we get funding for assessment?
- Teachers are not trained to work with students with learning difficulties, or do accurate diagnosis of learning difficulties in adults.

- No prescriptive information exists for teaching or employment for learning difficulties

- The biggest obstacle to technology is good support systems –tutoring, job aids, peer tutoring

- Human resources are not valued as much as technical resources.

- There is lack of staff and funding.

- Practical approaches rather than theoretical models are needed

- Online training is needed and possible as a joint venture among agencies.

Updates: www.nifl.gov

Notes on pp. 22 -25 wre take by Sally McKeown

Pictures were taken by Janet Horwood.

Bridges to Practice – The Learning Disabilities Training Effort for Adults in the U.S.

National Institute for Literacy

by June Crawford, Learning Disabilities Program Director, National Institute for Literacy

What is *Bridges to Practice?*

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) sponsored the research and development of materials that discuss learning disabilities (LD) in adults and the impact of those disabilities on adult lives. The materials, called *Bridges to Practice*, are designed to train adult educators, social workers, job counselors, rehabilitation counselors, and others who work in service agencies, to be aware of learning disabilities, know how to screen for them in clients or students, and know how to get assistance for an adult who requires a complete diagnosis and support in the classroom, the job, and the community. Developed as a train-the-trainer program, "Bridges" is attempting to change U.S. society by making LD awareness an issue in all social programs.

Professional development and certification

As trainers provide assistance to others, they receive technical assistance from the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) staff and from other experienced trainers. A certification program has been instituted so trainers can learn more about LD and about training, and can move through the various levels to become recognized as national experts in the field of adults and learning disabilities. Professional development for trainers is part of the activity provided by the National Institute for Literacy; this includes assistance in the use of technology.

The use of accommodations and assistive technology is essential to success for many adults who have learning disabilities. Part of the training is designed to help trainers become more aware of the developing technology that is so important to adults who have learning needs. In order to become recognized as a Master Trainer in Bridges to Practice, for instance, a trainer is expected to be able to discuss the most commonly used technologies and to refer those being trained to resource materials and manufacturers.

Thousands of professionals have been trained in the U.S. at this point and there are currently 60 people in the certification program and another 100 who expect to start their training soon. It is a slow process, but change is in the wind and the adults with learning disabilities who have received assistance as a result of this project are finding new success in their lives.

Information: June J. Crawford, Learning Disabilities Program Director, National Institute for Literacy, 202-233-2064, or jcrawford@nifl.gov.

Web site: www.nifl.gov

Bridges to Practice: A research-based guide for literacy practitioners serving adults with learning disabilities

The National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, Washington, DC. (1999).

Based on the need to ensure that quality literacy programs address the needs of adults with learning disabilities, this large binder is designed to support program developers and persons responsible for the professional development of literacy practitioners. The practices outlined reflect research-supported interventions appropriate to the needs of adults having learning disabilities.

The *Bridges to Practice* binder has five sub-sections:

- **Guidebook 1: Preparing to serve adults with learning disabilities**

This section provides (a) a general description of the term 'learning disabilities' and the links between LD and dyslexia; (b) a description of the legal issues related to adults and learning disabilities in the United States; (c) American resources for learning; and (d) a glossary of terms.

- **Guidebook 2: The assessment process**

This section provides (a) an overview of the assessment process, the gathering of data, the planning process with the adult, the instructional phase and the evaluation and use of the information gathered; (b) a guide to screening for learning disabilities; (c) parameters for selecting a screening instrument.
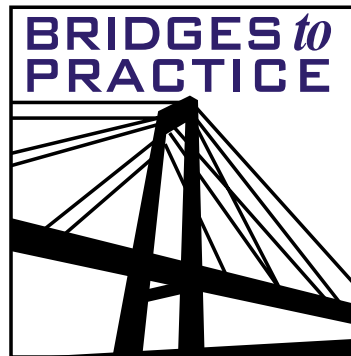
- **Guidebook 3: The planning process**

This section provides (a) a general overview of the components involved in preparing to develop the instructional plan; (b) the process of developing the instructional plan; and (c) information selecting on instructional materials.

- **Guidebook 4: The teaching/learning process**

This section provides information on:
(a) the challenge of teaching adults with learning disabilities;
(b) creating an appropriate learning environment;
(c) making instructional adaptations and accommodations;
(d) two frameworks of LD-appropriate instruction;
(e) collaborative teaching/tutoring; and characteristics of LD-appropriate instruction.

- **Guidebook 5: Creating professional development opportunities**

This section provides objectives, agendas, handout and transparency masters for the individual, who will facilitate professional development sessions on each of the previous guidebooks. It provides the facilitator with some background on adult learning, and staff development, as well as games and activities to be used during the sessions. A video to be used during the sessions is provided.

Each of the guidebooks has a section entitled "Systems and Program Changes", which includes information about how to encourage literacy practitioners to buy into the process of changing some of their current assessment and intervention practices; the importance of enlisting administrative support and the value in monitoring and evaluating the process.

The *Bridges to Practice* Binder is not a program to be applied directly, but it provides the structure to support the provision of quality assessment and instructional interventions to adults with learning disabilities.

Bridges to Practice is a collaborative effort of the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disabilities Center, The Academy for Educational Development and The University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities.

Elizabeth Gayda, President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, prepared this brief overview of *Bridges to Practice.*
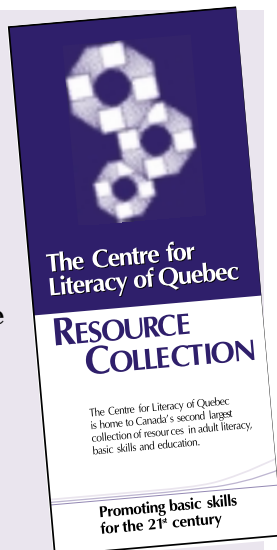
The binder can be borrowed from The Centre for Literacy.

The Centre for Literacy holds an extensive collection on materials on learning disabilities, including the items in the Travelling Resource Trunks. For the 2001 Summer Institute, we created an annotated bibliography of recent resources on adults with LD, arranged by topic. The entries below have been selected from the document. The full bibliography can be downloaded from our web site or ordered in print.

The Centre for Literacy of Quebec

RESOURCE COLLECTION

The Centre for Literacy of Quebec is home to Canada's second largest collection of resources in adult literacy, basic skills and education.

Promoting basic skills for the 21ⁿᵈ century

Assistive technologies
Book article 17 pp.

Raskind, M.H. (1998). Literacy for adults with learning disabilities through assistive technology. In S.A. Vogel & S. Reder (Eds.), Learning disabilities, literacy and adult education, pp. 253- 270, Paul H. Brookes: Baltimore.

After describing the instructional and compensatory approaches to adults with learning difficulties, and defining 'assistive technologies', the author outlines research findings related to the following technologies: optical character recognition (OCR)/ speech synthesis; speech synthesis/ screen review; speech recognition technology; and word processors and spell checkers. Descriptions of various available technologies are provided under the following headings: written language; reading; listening; organization/ memory, and math. The cost and availability of assistive technologies are discussed, as well as selecting the appropriate technology and learning how to use it.

Assistive technologies
Journal article 2 pp.

Bryant, B.R. (Ed.).(1998, Jan/Feb). Assistive technology: An introduction. Journal of Learning Disabilities 31(1), 2-3.

This introduction, to a "Special Series" of articles in the same journal, emphasizes the fact that AT has been shown by the author to be effective for persons with LD. Barriers to the access to, and use of, AT devices and services that were elicited through public hearings are described in relation to school children. Brief introductions are given to the 6 papers in the series.

Advocacy
Online article 3 pp.

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). (1999, December). Adult basic skills for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Retrieved May 17, 2001 from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) Web site: http://www.niace.org.uk/ organisation/advocacy/Moser/ Default.htm

This article summarizes the status of basic skills provision for people with learning disabilities in the U.K., and offers recommendations for action, based on evidence from Local Education Authorities, self-advocacy groups and key organisations for the Moser Sub-Group.

Advocacy
Online article 8 pp.

Working group looking into the basic skills needs of adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. (2000, May). Freedom to learn: Basic skills for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Retrieved May 30, 2001, from the Lifelong Learning (Basic Skills) Web site: http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/f reedomtolearn/index.htm.

Established to respond to the call by Sir Claus Moser for "a special study" on the needs of this adult population in the U.K., this group concludes that the findings in 'A Fresh Start' are applicable if certain conditions are met around such issues as entitlement, access and standards. Recommendations for people with dyslexia and with other learning disabilities included mention of multi-sensory resources, photocopying/enlarging facilities and ICT.

Assistive technologies
Online article 10 pp

Taking the mystery out of assistive technology. Retrieved June 6, 2001, from the LDOnline Web site: http://www.ldonline.org /ld_indepth/technology/tfl_mystery. html.

This article is reprinted from Learning disabilities and assistive technology: an emerging way to touch the future (a guide available from Tools for Life site). It answers the question: why should persons with LD consider using assistive technology? Myths, realities and action steps are clearly outlined on the easy-to-read, 'Bobby-approved' website. Although directed toward adult learners, this article is of use to professionals as well.

National strategies
Online article 14 pp

Sticht, T. (2001). Reforming adult literacy education: Transforming local programs into national systems in Canada, the United Kingdom & the United States. Retrieved April 20, 2001, from the National Adult Literacy Database (Full Text Documents) Web site: http://www.nald.ca /fulltext/sticht/reformin/ cover.htm.

This brief paper reports on activities undertaken in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. to expand local programs into free, national adult basic education systems. The provision of such programs, issues surrounding levels of need and access, as well as the nature and quality, and final accountability for programs are discussed. The many uses and importance of information and communication technology (ICT) are mentioned, though the terms "adults with learning disabilities" and/or "difficulties" are not used. [References]

National strategies
Online article 9 pp

Department for Education and Employment. (2001, March). Skills for life: The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills. Retrieved June 6, 2001, from the Learning and Skills Development Agency Web site: http://www.lsagency.org.uk /PDF/BriefingPaper14.pdf.

This summary of the final strategy document of the U.K. government outlines the challenge and strategy, the groups targeted, and the means of delivering higher standards. Technology is only briefly mentioned in the summary but can be found in several areas of the longer report.

Adults with learning disabilities/difficulties are specifically addressed in the full-text strategy. [References, web site resources in full report].

National strategies
Online article 16 pp

National Literacy Summit Initiative. (2000). From the margins to the mainstream: An action agenda for literacy. Retrieved May 20, 2001, from the National Literacy Summit Initiative Web site: http://www.nationalliteracysummit .org.

This U.S. report on adult literacy synthesizes recommendations made to the National Literacy Summit 2000 Steering Committee at one major summit meeting and over twenty-five meetings nationwide. Referred to as the 'Action Agenda,' it outlines the outcomes desired and the specific actions necessary to meet the three key priorities: quality services for adult students, ease of access for those students; and sufficient resources to support quality and access. Technology increases the need for greater literacy and, at the same time, provides tools to facilitate its development. The issues of learning disabilities and of the literacy needs of older adults are discussed.

Technology planning
Online article 11 pp

PBS LiteracyLink (2001, February). Technology - how it can empower teaching and learning in adult literacy, language, and lifelong education in the 21st century. Retrieved May 20, 2001, from the National Literacy Summit Initiative Web site (Background Documents): http://www.nationalliteracysummit .org.

Commissioned by the National Institute for Literacy, this report addresses the use of technology to improve the quality of content and access to training and resources for adult learners, including those with learning disabilities. Following the model of the 'Action Agenda' (2000), this report outlines desired outcomes and specific action steps for, first, emerging and new technologies and, then, for better preparation for and use of current technologies. Necessary policy-making, staff developmen, and the use of libraries and mass media are included.

Selected books presented at the Institute.
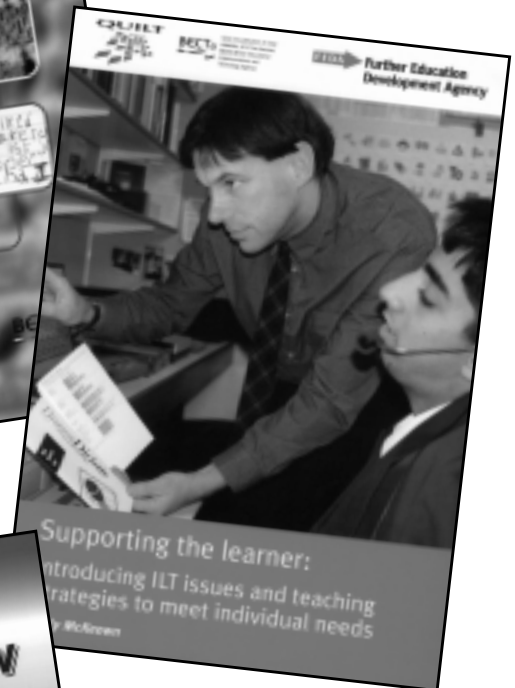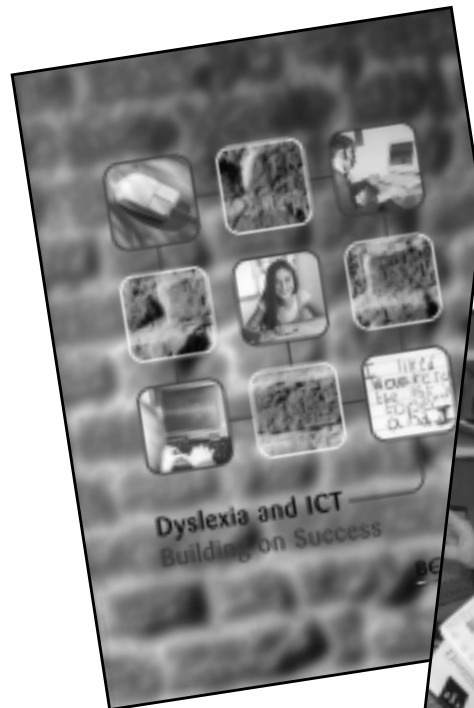
Literacy and learning disabilities: Defining terms and supporting the print-disabled

by Elizabeth Gayda

There have been many discussions of the overlap between literacy and learning disabilities, mostly in reference to problems in learning to read and write. In literacy programs, many adults have undiagnosed learning disabilities, but others have reading and writing difficulties due to any number of other causes in the environment, in the individual or in their prior schooling.

Although the causes of reading difficulties may vary, an individual's inability to read fluently and at a reasonable level, influences the capacity to access information necessary for full participation in Canadian life. "Information" here is defined in the broadest of terms to include reading the latest best seller, understanding tax forms, mastering a mechanic's manual, or participating in any type of post secondary education.

This article has two purposes. One is to explain what is meant by the term 'learning disabilities' by outlining the national definition of learning disabilities proposed by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada.[1] The second is to describe a Canadian initiative to support individuals, who are print-disabled, in their pursuit of enjoyment and knowledge from the written word.

A national definition of LD

The proposed LDAC national definition (full text available at http://www.ldac-taac.ca/) reflects the current research on learning disabilities as a "distinct lifelong, neurological

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC)
www.ldac-taac.ca

condition." This implies that learning disabilities are not to be confused with other disabilities or difficulties. Learning disabilities are established through differences in brain, or neurological, functioning, and remain throughout a person's life. The causes of these disabilities may be attributed to genetic inheritance or other biological factors influencing the developing fetus and the individual as he or she grows and matures. Such disabilities are not the result of "visual or hearing impairments, generalized intellectual impairment or emotional disturbance." Learning disabilities may be severe and interfere significantly in learning in one or several areas or they may be limited in their impact. These neurological differences in brain functioning are manifested in varied patterns of strengths and weaknesses influencing the following abilities:

(a) to learn and understand language;
(b) to make the large muscle movements required by bicycle riding and various sports, and the small muscle movements required in handwriting and drawing;
(c) to be aware of oneself in space, as in finding one's way around a building, reading maps, doing geography;
(d) to remember spelling words, people's names, directions;
(e) to focus, shift and sustain attention, to organize and to plan;
(f) to acquire academic knowledge, such as reading and writing and mathematics; and,
(g) to interact appropriately with others, including teachers, peers, family members.

It should be noted that few individuals who have learning disabilities show a profile indicating weakness in all areas. Finally, the pattern of learning disabilities in any one individual will interfere with the "acquisition, application and integration" of any of the above-mentioned abilities. As such, a learning disability is a complex phenomenon.

Despite this complexity, individuals with learning disabilities can have a successful school experience if they are identified early and provided with "specialized interventions appropriate to their individual strengths and needs, including direct instruction, teaching of compensatory strategies and appropriate accommodations."

However, a large number of adolescents and young adults still leave school without receiving any specialized intervention and before completing their secondary education. Often this means that they enter their post secondary life with weak reading skills, either because they cannot decode (sound out words), remember words or read fluently enough to cover large amounts of text within a reasonable time span. These weaknesses influence the schooling, job and training options available for such young adults. Some of them do end up in adult literacy programs. Without accommodations of various kinds, they will not be able to access information readily available to other Canadians.

[1] All quotations in the LD section have been taken from the LDAC definition on http://www.ldac-taac.ca/

National Library of Canada

KNOWLEDGE WITHIN REACH

www.nlc-bnc.ca

Access to information for print-disabled Canadians

Access to information is crucial for knowledgeable citizenship, personal growth, successful job performance and leisure activities. In the summer of 2000, Roch Carrier, National Librarian of the National Library of Canada (NLC) and Dr. Euclid Herie, President of the Canadian National Institute of the Blind (CNIB) initiated a Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians.

Some broad principles guide the work. The first principle is that the definition of print-disabled includes those with vision impairments, learning disabilities or physical or motor impairments, which interfere with the reading of print. The second principle affirms that "all Canadians have the right to access all publicly available print information in a timely, affordable and equitable manner" (*Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians*, p. 8). Contributors to the final report included individuals with print-disabilities, those providing support and assistance, producers of alternate formats (e.g. large print, audio, Braille and e-text) in both the public and private sectors, and service providers. In all twenty-six wide-ranging recommendations were made, from one that "self-identification be sufficient to give a person with learning disabilities the right of access to multiple alternate formats." (p. 12) to one that calls for the establishment, of a Council on Access to Print information to "provide advice, recommend funding, monitor progress and make recommendations regarding the implementation of this report" (p. 43).

This Council was established in February 2001, and includes members from consumer groups, publishers, alternate format producers, educational institutions, public libraries and the Federal government. As its work progresses, the Council will set priorities from among the recommendations made by the Task Force and will establish the funding needs to implement these priorities.

Over the next three years, improvements in the availability of and access to information should become apparent to print-disabled Canadians. Availability refers to a variety of printed materials, such as those providing general information, recent literature and biographies, as well as textbooks. Availability also refers to having knowledge of what has already been published across Canada and elsewhere. Accessibility to materials published elsewhere may be helped through negotiations with alternate format producers in other countries. In addition, some individuals with print-disabilities would benefit from having screen readers, but they will need access to computers powerful enough to run the software programs and training in how to use the software. Screen readers can make web-sites more accessible for those who have difficulty reading text. Although some of the report's

recommendations touch on how these goals might be achieved, the Council has just begun its deliberations.

Such an initiative establishes that all Canadians have the right to equal access to new information and emerging knowledge, as well as to enjoyment derived from the written word. Availability and accessibility to alternate formats and supports to read these formats will allow print-disabled individuals choices among options for learning and pleasure. Finally, this undertaking has the potential to make lifelong learning a real possibility for all persons needing support to access print either in a paper or in electronic format.

References

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Definition of learning disabilities. Web site: http://www.ldac-taac.ca/

Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. (2000). Fulfilling the promise. Ottawa. Web site: http://www.nlc-bnc.ca

Elizabeth Gayda, President of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, has many years experience as a special educator. She is serving a three-year term on the Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians.

Copyright law on photocopying for the print-disabled in Canada

The rights of print-disabled students to request photocopies of journal articles and selections or chapters of texts or manuals that are required reading, are often ignored because educators do not know that Canadian copyright law permits this. Section 32 of the copyright legislation allows single copies of such materials to be made by institutions providing secondary, post-secondary, or vocational education. This in turn allows the student to scan the material into a computer and use a screen reader, to increase the print size, or to print it on coloured paper to make contrast more evident. The institution has the responsibility to (a) make sure that the student requires such adapted format to fulfill course requirements; and (b) that only a single copy is produced for that specific student. This can be very helpful to students who lack the fluency to cover the extensive reading required by many courses and vocational programs. [E.G.]

Assistive or adaptive technologies

The range of assistive technologies for all types of disabilities is steadily growing and improving in quality. Costs for computer technologies are high, so it is important before making a decision to purchase, that potential buyers do research on the best solutions for their needs, and on prices. For many programs, lack of funding makes high-end purchase difficult or impossible. In institutional settings, purchases are often made without consulting teachers or students. All presenters agreed that no technology stands alone; it requires trained teachers, tutors, mentors, to guide new users.

One of the most up-to-date Canadian suppliers of assistive technologies is **Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.** in Mississauga, Ontario. Baruch Chai, the company president who attended the Institute, demonstrated the Kurtzweil system and other software for participants. At the end of the event, he donated a Kurtzweil to The Centre for Literacy for our Preview Collection.

For information on assistive technologies: Microcomputer Science Centre Inc.

www.microscience.on.ca or
E-mail: sales@ microcomputerscience.on.ca

To preview software, contact the Librarian at The Centre for Literacy.

The Adaptech Project is a team of academics, students and consumers conducting research on the use of computer, information and adaptive technologies by Canadian college and university students with disabilities. Their goal is to provide empirically based information to concerned individuals, groups and organizations to ensure that new computer technologies are accessible to postsecondary students with disabilities.

Based at Dawson College in Montreal, their research is funded by federal and provincial grants, and guided by a bilingual Advisory Board from across Canada. The web site has findings from research studies over the past three years and the listserv offers users a forum for posing questions and discussing issues related to adaptive technologies.

While their focus is postsecondary students, their findings can be applied to users in any milieu as the name ADAPTECH suggests.

Information:
http://omega.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/adaptech/

Conclusion

The Summer Institute tries to open up new ways of thinking about an issue by bringing participants from diverse backgrounds with years of practice and varied expertise. We do not necessarily answer all the questions raised, but we do offer new frames of reference, by gathering resources and giving people opportunities to examine them in the context of their own milieus. In that respect, in 2001, we created an annotated bibliography and laid out international materials and web links for participants to view or visit.

Learning Disabilities is more complex than many previous topics have been. We came away understanding that terminology and definitions vary from one country to another. For example, LD in Canada is applied to people with normal or above-average intelligence, while in the U.K., it usually refers to people with intellectual disabilities. The term "dyslexia" is used more broadly in the UK to cover many of the language-related disabilities. These terms become important as legislation is built around definitions.

For the practitioner who has to assess or teach a student, the immediate need is pragmatic. We learned that there are large numbers of excellent materials for all types of disabilities, including assessment tools and teacher training programs. There is little reason at this point to be developing new materials for LD in adult literacy. On the contrary, what teachers need are guides to the international resources that are available, with some training and tools for deciding which ones are appropriate for particular students. Many participants were surprised to recognize how much they already knew and how frequently they were doing the 'right thing' instinctively. While researchers and developers have to be stringent in their use of terminology, practitioners are usually better off working without blinders. A strategy or technology created for a deaf student might work brilliantly with other students. Educators have said for years that the best practice for LD is usually the best practice for all learners. That truism was corroborated at Summer Institute 2001. [LS]

Cognitive tools and the acquisition of literacy

by Kieran Egan, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Excerpt from *Working Paper No. 5*, The Centre for Literacy, 2001

*[This Working Paper is a condensed version of a manuscript that Kieran Egan submitted for the UNESCO Award for Research in Adult Literacy in 1999. When the judges met in April 2000, they agreed that because the submission was not based on empirical research, it could not be given the award. It was, however, an insightful provocative discourse on acquisition of literacy that excited and engaged us all. We felt that it should be acknowledged and shared with a larger audience, and asked Professor Egan if he would allow The Centre to publish a version as a Working Paper. In this paper, he draws on his many years of innovative thinking and publication on the history and philosophy of education, and applies a broad frame of cross-disciplinary reference to the acquisition of literacy. His thesis is that our understanding of the world is shaped by language-based intellectual tools, or what Vygotsky called mediational means" or shapers of the kind of sense we make of the world (**The Educated Mind**,1997). Egan suggests that understanding these tools can inform approaches to teaching literacy more effectively than either the traditional emphasis on intellectual development as the acquisition of knowledge or the more modern psychological model of intellectual development.]*

…What I will do now is make a simple inventory of some of the most prominent characteristics common to oral traditions. This is not to say that all these characteristics are to be found equally in all oral cultures, nor that "orality" is some uniform kind of thinking, or that oral cultures are all alike. But it is to say that the development of oral language has had a profound influence on the human mind and provides our minds with an array of capacities, which we can deploy in greater or lesser degree depending on our needs and circumstances. I will describe these characteristics in no particular order, and, even though I am listing them under discrete sub-headings, it is important to recognize that they are not discrete capacities, but overlap in various ways. The categories I choose are not to be taken as anything more than a convenience for purposes of exposition.

Some characteristic cognitive tools of orality

Each of the following cognitive "tools," or capacities, has come along with the development of oral language. They are cultural universals, observable in all known human cultures–they seem to be cognitive tools that we cannot not use. They are also tools that do not go away with the development of literacy, even though they are all influenced in one way or another by literacy not always to our advantage.

Consequently they are cognitive tools that literates will recognize as theirs too.

I will begin with one of the most complex and general.

Story

All oral cultures use stories, and in all such cultures stories play a central role in the life of the society. Why should this be so? To answer that question, we need first to understand what stories are and do for us. So, what are stories?

I will tell a story in starkest outline and we will see if we can't quickly identify one of the most important distinguishing features of stories. To begin: "Jennifer walked into the rose garden." Well, what do you make of that? Not much, no doubt. It might be pleasant for Jennifer to walk into the rose garden; it might be her favourite moment of calm during her hectic days in the corporate jungle. But she might also be a notorious rose bush poisoner. Not knowing anything else than that she walked into the rose garden, one can't know whether to feel glad or sorry about it or what to expect next.

One needs to know what caused her action and what is caused by it. So let me add that Jennifer entered the rose garden to give her sad Irish grandfather some news that would cheer him up. Now one might begin to feel a twinge of gladness; good old Jennifer, cheering up the sad old guy.

But as the story goes on, you will discover that this is a crucial event because Jennifer and her grandfather are major drug-dealers, specializing in the youth market. The grandfather is sad because he lacks a specific piece of information that would enable him to pick up a ton of cocaine and deliver it to his network of distributors who are poised to

move it into school yards across the city. Jennifer walks into the rose garden to tell her grandfather the location of the cocaine.

Now, your feeling about Jennifer walking into the rose garden will likely be regret. If only she could have been prevented! But wait! I have to tell you further that the information Jennifer carries is a 'plant' from her supposed friend, Marsha, who is actually an undercover cop. Jennifer's disclosure of the location of the cocaine and the grandfather's immediate attempt to grab it spring the trap that enables the police to arrest Jennifer, the evil Irish grandfather, and their whole network of dealers and distributors. The key was to have Jennifer give the false information in the rose garden. Now, you will likely feel glad that Jennifer walked into the rose garden, springing the carefully laid trap.

One could perform the same simple analysis on a fairy-tale, of course: "The hungry children came upon a lovely cottage made of gingerbread and candies." What a relief, as they were lost in the forest and starving! But…

One knows how to feel about Jennifer's walking into the rose garden only when the story is finished. Indeed, that is how we know we have reached the end of a story—we know how to feel about the events that make it up. We cannot program a computer to recognize a story as distinct from other narratives. The instrument for detecting stories is human emotion.

So the kind of meaning stories deal with has to do with our emotions. Stories are instruments for orienting our emotions to their contents. That is, stories do not just convey information about events and characters, nor do stories just convey information in a way that engages our emotions; stories orient our emotions to the events and characters in a particular way. They convey information while directing us how to feel about it. No other form of language can do this, and so no other form of language can achieve the range and kinds of effects that stories can. The story is like a musical score and our emotions are the instrument it is designed to play.

The great power of stories, then, is that they perform two tasks at the same time. They are, first, very effective at communicating information in a memorable form and, second, they can orient the hearer's feelings about the information being communicated.

In an oral culture one knows only what one remembers, and as the story is one of the most effective forms for encoding important social information in a memorable linguistic construction, it is used universally. In addition, it can shape the emotions of the hearer to respond to its contents as can nothing else. For these reasons we literates continually tend to shape our histories from a pure account of what happened towards some story that carries a moral about the virtues of our country or people, highlighting 'our" beliefs and values over those of other countries' and people's. We deploy stories constantly in our daily lives to give emotional meaning to what would otherwise remain, as it has been eloquently put, "just one damn thing after another." Stories shape events into emotionally meaningful patterns.

We cannot program a computer to recognize a story as distinct from other narratives. The instrument for detecting stories is human emotion.

Relatedly, participants in oral cultures tend to be much more efficient than is common for literates in using their memories. In their cultural conditions, lacking literacy, memorizing is obviously vitally important. When anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries approached oral communities with the presupposition that they were, relatively, mental incompetents, they were faced with odd anomalies. Lévi-Bruhl described various prodigious feats of memory that were commonplace to the people he was studying. He summed it up like this:

> This extraordinary development of memory, and a memory which faithfully reproduces the minutest details of sense-impressions in the correct order of their appearance, is shown moreover by the wealth of vocabulary and the grammatical complexity of

the languages. Now the very men who speak these languages and possess this power of memory are (in Australia or Northern Brazil, for instance) incapable of counting beyond two and three. The slightest mental effort involving abstract reasoning, however rudimentary it may be, is so distasteful to them that they immediately declare themselves tired and give it up. (Lévi-Bruhl, 1910/1985, P. 115).

Now there are some difficulties in Lévi-Bruhl's way of putting this, due in part to his assumptions about the "prelogical" and "mystic" nature of "primitive mentality. His subjects, for example, do not so much have a "power of memory" as a highly developed set of techniques for learning and remembering. Also I will argue below that the problem for his subjects does not lie in "abstraction" as such–a common assumption also applied to children's thinking–but rather in the dissociation of thought from matters embedded in one's lifeworld–"decontextualization," as it has been called. Goody, for example, describes his innocent request of some LoDagaa to count for him. "Count what?" was their, to them, obvious question. They had a number of sophisticated forms of counting, and an abstract numerical system, but their methods of counting cows and cowrie shells differed. Nor, as we shall see, is "abstract reasoning" beyond anyone with a human mind; it is just that certain particular mental capacities involving abstraction that are very heavily dependent on writing are not easily available to people who do not

write or read.

Nevertheless, Lévi-Bruhl describes the apparent anomaly of mental prodigies in the supposedly mentally deficient. He perceived that there were no differences on any simple scale of mental superiority/inferiority, but that the conditions of life in oral cultures stimulated different mental developments to deal with those conditions. And he was precise in locating a wide range of these differences. The uses of memory in oral cultures, he concluded, "are quite different because its contents are of a different character. It is both very accurate and very emotional" (Lévi-Bruhl, 1910/1985, P. 110).

The emotions are engaged by making the culturally important messages event-laden, involving characters and their emotions in conflict in developing narratives—in short, by building the messages into stories. "All myths tell a story," Lévi-Strauss points out (1966, P. 26), and Albert B. Lord concluded his account of the constant reconstruction involved in reciting epic poems by showing how the story provided a firm basic structure. The formulas and groupings and meter in the end "serve only one purpose. They provide a means for telling a story …. The tale's the thing" (Lord, 1964, p. 68). We find these techniques in greater or lesser degree in all oral cultures: "At different periods and in different cultures there are close links between the techniques for mental recall, the inner organization of the faculty (of memory), the place it

occupies in the system of the ego, and the ways that [people] picture memory to themselves" (Vernant, 1982, P. 75).

In considering the transition to literacy, then, we will want to consider what happened to the story. And if we want to teach literacy, we might do well to observe both what happens to stories in the historical transition and, more importantly, that those we teach will likely have a highly developed sense of how story can be used to give shape and meaning to events. Obviously, we will not be wise to ignore the capacities our students possess, and might seek techniques that build literacy on the cognitive strengths they currently possess.

…..

Egan goes on to elaborate on metaphor, binary oppositions, rhyme and rhythm, jokes and humour, gossip, images, and embeddedness in lifeworld as other cognitive tools of orality that should to be considered in the acquisition of literacy.

Kieran Egan has won praise and awards for his publications. Lists of titles and excerpts are on his web site at www.educ.sfu.ca/people/faculty /kegan/default.html

The Working Paper can be ordered from The Centre for Literacy. It will be up our web site in early February 2002.

Technology and teaching: Honouring teachers' wisdom

Captured Wisdom documents the ways some educators and learners actually use technology in their classrooms as a tool to support instruction and learning in a variety of content areas.

The two CD-ROM set, developed in the U.S. at the National Center for Adult Literacy (NCAL) contains seven short videos of authentic adult education classrooms. Each video clip has a section with the featured teacher answering questions posed by other adult education teachers who first watched the video clips in focus groups. A short instruction booklet tells teachers how to get the most out of *Captured Wisdom.*

To develop each of the *Captured Wisdom* stories, teachers and learners were filmed describing and demonstrating how they use technology in classroom-based projects. Each edited videotaped segment was viewed by focus groups of adult educators who wrote down questions that they wanted to ask the teacher. They felt the answers to these questions would prepare them to use the activities in their own classrooms. Their questions were grouped into categories such as Instructional Activities, Project Management, Assessment, and Technical Issues, and were given to the presenting teacher. Responses were tape-recorded and are included as companion segments on the CD-ROM. This development process was meant to assure that the needs and concerns of real teachers in real adult education programs are addressed. *Captured Wisdom* can help teachers to think about and question the approaches of other teachers and the ways they might adapt what they see and hear for their own milieu.

Featured teachers were selected from recommendations through postings on adult literacy listservs, state literacy directors, presenters at conferences, and through word of mouth. The project attempted to provide variety in the kinds of activities shown, technologies utilized, and instructional content.

The model for *Captured Wisdom* was developed by the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (NCREL) for K-12 teachers and was extended to address adult literacy instruction by the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) under the North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NCRTEC) project. Available in videotape and CD-ROM formats.

The videotapes contain the classroom vignettes that were used to create the full question/answer CD-ROM set. A "How to Use" guide for using the videotapes in professional development activities is being developed.

For ten ways that teachers, administrators and professional developers can use *Captured Wisdom,* go to http://litserver.literacy.upenn.edu/capturedwisdom.html

The site also contains transcripts of video segments.

Information: Lynda Ginsburg at ginsburg@literacy.upenn.edu. Or by mail: Dr. Lynda Ginsburg, Captured Wisdom Project, National Center on Adult Literacy, University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111. Abridged from http://litserver.literacy.upenn.edu/capturedwisdom.html

U.S. national technology lab for adult education

In October 2001, the U.S. Department of Education awarded $2.4 million dollars to the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) at the University of Pennsylvania/Graduate School of Education to establish TECH.21(SM), a National Technology Lab to foster the use of technology in adult education instructional programs in the United States. The technologies include distance learning, the Internet, CDs, and others.

The lab will serve as a hands-on, virtual research-to-practice and dissemination system for high quality technology applications for adult education. TECH.21(SM) will develop, evaluate, and disseminate cost-effective, high quality and user-friendly models and practices of using technology for adult learning. It will also focus on new models of technology-assisted professional development.

NCAL has three national partners in this initiative. Seven adult education field sites across the U.S. will provide continuous feedback of practice-based information.

The funding represents a new direction in the U.S. federal government's approach to educational technology use for adult education by creating a one-stop research, training, and evaluation laboratory to assist and support adult education program directors, practitioners, and state-level policymakers.

Information: Janet Smith at 215-746-6736, or E-mail at smith@literacy.upenn.edu

Sample video scenarios from *Captured Wisdom*

"The Antarctica Project":
Could you survive in an ice-covered environment? Adult learners in Susan Cowles' class gathered information and corresponded electronically with a scientist in Antarctica to find out about research and life on the continent.

"Home Countries":
How can you share your memories with new friends? ESL learners in Suzanne Leibman's class use the Internet to find pictures and information about their home countries for oral and written reports.

"The Mars Project":
Did you ever dream of visiting Mars? Susan Cowles' adult learners went on an electronic fieldtrip to Mars and used project resources to learn about the environment and rocketry.

"**The Restaurant Problem**":
If you were a consultant hired to save a failing restaurant, what would you do? Lyndy Girten's GED class uses technology to deal with irate customers, schedule work hours, and design new menus.

"Intrepid Tales":
Have you ever thought of publishing a book? Stephanie Thomas' class relied on technology to help them publish an account of their fieldtrip to the "Intrepid".

"Creating Family Histories":
How can you develop English and technology skills simultaneously? Susan Gaer's ESL learners use a variety of technologies to present family histories online.

"Presenting the Whole Package":
What will you do at your next job interview? Crystal Hack and David Baker's learners will show electronic slide presentations and the professional portfolios they created with business software.

Is there a difference between 'good' teachers and 'great' ones?

Review of *Awakening Brilliance, How to Inspire Children to Become Successful Learners,* by Pamela Sims, Atlanta & Toronto: Bayhampton Publishing, 1997, 205 pp

by Isa Helfield, adult educator

In this award-winning book, Toronto teacher and consultant Pamela Sims presents a superb philosophy of education that touches on some of the most fundamental of human needs. Indeed, this book is very special: it marries philosophy and practicality. Through a story line in a series of short novel chapters, Sims highlights the intimate connection between a society and its schools and casts light on the extremely critical role that teachers play in the lives of children. It is immensely readable.

Much of her philosophy is encapsulated in the answer to the question she poses at the beginning of her book. Is there a difference between 'good' teachers and 'great' ones? Her distinction is critical. Good teachers, she explains, focus solely on curriculum, teaching students to read, write and do math. Great teachers, however, relate to the whole student. They are non-judgmental and caring individuals who concern themselves with the total being of their students - their mind, their body and their soul. Sims has derived her philosophy and her stories from years of classroom and consulting experience.
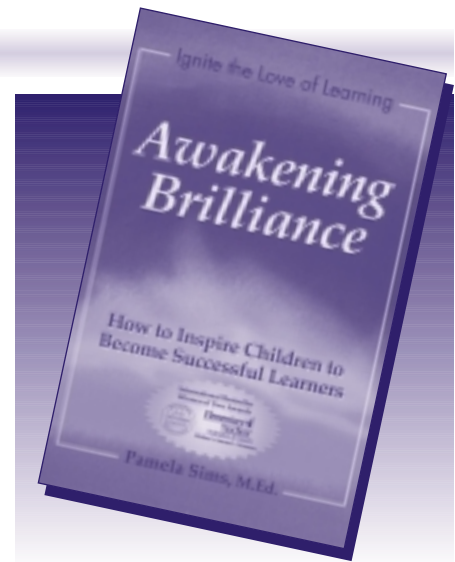
Great teachers have broken away from the habitual negative thinking patterns that have permeated our schools and classrooms. They teach the child, not the subject. They emphasize the importance of respect and caring, rather than discipline. They acknowledge the child's humanity, understanding that he may come to school with his physical and emotional needs unmet; and because great teachers realize that bad behaviour is often motivated by fear, they ask questions and empathize rather than blindly discipline. Schools, they say, must be places that teach children to be successful rather than places that confirm feelings of failure. And so they teach from the heart, knowing full well that each time they interact with a student they are programming him how to feel about himself, a feeling that remains with him for the rest of his life. Their respectful and caring attitudes form the foundation of their classrooms: they fully recognize that children must first feel safe and cared for before they are able to focus their attention on learning.

Every one of these principles is embodied in a story chapter; any one of them can be read alone to illustrate a particular point, but consecutively they trace the voyage of one school principal who learns what a great teacher is through a personal journey of discovery.

Through her main character, elementary school principal Jane Madison, Pamela Sims challenges the concept of a 'normal' learning style and suggests that schools have too narrow a definition causing many children to needlessly be placed in special education classes. Because children learn in a variety of ways - visual, auditory and kinaesthetic - teachers must use a variety of techniques to satisfy the needs of all their students. When they don't, they sometimes create failures. It is this mismatch between teaching and learning styles, not intelligence, that often determines how well a child will learn in school. The author believes that teachers should have better teacher training and smaller classes so that special education classes with their inherent labelling can be avoided.

Pamela Sims believes that too many of our young people have 'lost themselves' by attempting to play by the rules of others. Schools, therefore, should encourage children to take charge of their own lives and to view destiny as something that they create. She suggests, that they should be involved in setting their own goals and objectives and participating in their own evaluation. We must give children the power over their own successes and failures and imbue them with feelings of self-confidence, self-trust, and self-worth.

Part One of the story introduces chapter by chapter the basic philosophical concepts ; Part Two demonstrates their application by administrators and teachers. Two appendices offer concrete information on pedagogy. The first has five teacher plans for applying the principles in their own classroom. The second has contact information for educational associations for parents and teachers and for specialized associations dealing with dropout prevention, special education, substance abuse, and more. There are listings for the US, Canada, Australia, Britain, and other nations. The Canadian list is broken down by province. Sims concludes with an excellent bibliography and suggested reading list on communication, learning styles, self-esteem, and teaching strategies, as well as a reference section and index for the whole book.

Awakening Brilliance is a 'must' for anyone who is involved with the care and education of children.

Isa Helfield is an adult educator at the English Montreal School Board and a freelance writer.

Adult Literacy Now

Edited by Maurice C. Taylor. Toronto: Culture Concepts (imprint of Irwin Publishing), 2001. 348 pp. ISBN 0-7725-2863-2.

reviewed by David Dillon, McGill University

Maurice Taylor (and the National Literacy Secretariat) chose the millennium to mark what he calls the coming of age, or the reaching maturity, of the field of adult literacy education in Canada. Since its simpler and humbler beginnings not all that long ago, the field has exploded in the last several decades in two ways. One is the rapidly increasing proliferation of services, programs, materials, approaches, and scholarship. The other is the increasingly multidimensional nature of adult literacy from traditional school-based literacy to today's community-based literacy, workplace literacy, and family literacy—to name just a few. Taylor's goal in this collection was to examine where we are now in regard to adult literacy in Canada; among the guiding questions were what historical developments have shaped the field's recent path, what critical issues confront the field today and what might be some promising ways forward. Taylor and his contributors succeed enormously well.   In fact, the publication of this text was timely since the federal government's mention of literacy as a priority in last winter's Speech from the Throne provided the hope of a national literacy policy and an increased profile for literacy efforts in this country.

Adult Literacy Now has a unique structure and organization. The text focuses on four key perspectives on adult literacy today—community-based literacy, workplace literacy, family literacy, and school-based literacy —each comprising a major section of the book. Each section is organized in the same way. A "framing chapter" provides a broad overview of historical developments; fundamental theoretical, philosophical, and particularly ideological themes; and key issues

faced by this aspect of the field. Each section then contains four chapters that examine more specific topics within that particular aspect of adult literacy. Each concludes with a brief "synopsis' that highlights the key themes and issues in the section. Finally, the entire text is book-ended by an introductory chapter by Audrey Thomas and an epilogue by Taylor himself. The contributors to the volume represent a broad spectrum of expertise but also of positioning within the adult literacy field—academics, researchers, government civil servants, trainers and consultants from the world of private business, staff members from NGOs, ABE teachers, and labour union educators.

A further significant feature is that all the authors have been asked to engage in critical reflection on their topic. As Taylor himself explains,

> But amid these many accomplishments [in adult literacy in Canada in recent decades], there has been little time for serious reflection. To help fill this void, all chapters in this book feature critical reflection on literacy development in Canada. As Brookfield (1991, 1995) points out, critical reflection involves the identification of a problem or incident that represents some aspect of practice requiring examination and possible change. He believes that by identifying our own assumptions that underlie the beliefs and actions connected to this problem, we can better analyze the nature of our practice. This process results in the capacity to imagine and explore alternatives to existing ways of thinking. (p. ix)

This approach creates a multidimensional text not only through the four key aspects of adult literacy, but also through the viewpoints and perspectives of the contributors. The effect is almost kaleidoscopic, yet surprisingly powerful and coherent. The volume provides an excellent bird's eye view of each aspect in terms of both historical development and
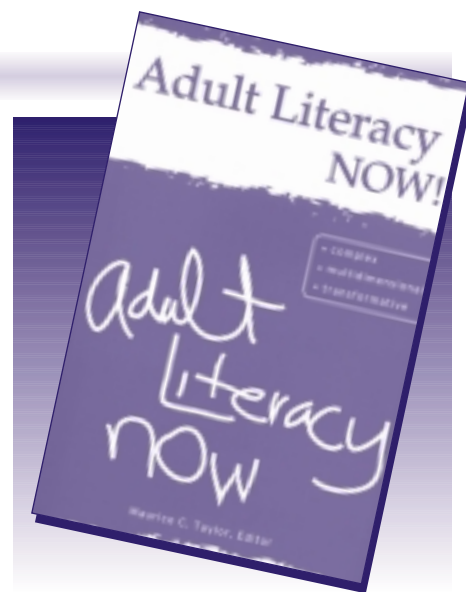
current issues and themes. My own experience with the section on workplace literacy is illustrative. It is the aspect of adult literacy with which
I am least familiar, yet I came away feeling I had a good grasp of the basic developments, issues, and directions.   This volume would serve as important reading for those who could benefit from this kind of "big picture" perspective— policy makers, civil servants, administrators, researchers, academics.

If there is a shortcoming in the volume, it is that it ultimately reflects the situation in English Canada only, and does not include French Canada in its analysis. Certainly readers can extrapolate many of the issues to French Canada, yet there are particular issues of a minority language situation that are unique. Unless those are included, a volume such as this cannot be said to be truly and completely Canadian.

Nevertheless, any reader finishing this volume would, I think, certainly feel that he or she had a good understanding of where adult literacy has come in Canada in the year 2001 and should be in a better position to contribute to the debate on the key issues in the field today. If that is the case, the volume has achieved the purpose it set for itself very well indeed.

David Dillon is a professor in the Faculty of Education, McGill University. He is President of The Centre for Literacy

CHRONOLOGICAL CONFERENCE LISTING

Local

Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec (LDAQ)

27th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities
March 21 - 23, 2002
Montreal, QC
Information: LDAQ,
Tel.: (514) 847-1324;
Fax: (514) 281-5187;
www.aqeta.qc.ca
E-mail: aqeta@sympatico.ca

Blue Metropolis Literary Festival

April 3 - 7, 2002
Montreal, QC
Information: 2100 Guy St., #106,
Montreal, QC, H3H 2M8
Tel: (514) 932-1112;
Fax: (514) 932-1148;
www.blue-met-bleu.com;
E-mail:
josee.matte@Blue-met-bleu.com

Springboards 2002 6th National Literacy Conference

Annual Conference of the Association of Teachers of English of Quebec (ATEQ) and the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (CCTELA)
Literacy Beyond the Classroom
April 25 - 26, 2002
Montreal, QC
Information: Faculty of Education, McGill University, Montreal. Fax: 514-398-4529. Registration forms available January 2002.or CCTELA Office, #10-730 River Road, Winnipeg, MN R2M 5A4
Tel: (204) 255-1676;
FAX: (204) 253-2562
E-mail: cctela@ilos.net

National &International

BETT: The Educational Technology Show

January 9 - 12, 2002
Olympia, London, UK
Information: 020 7537 4997
Web site: www.bettshow.com

Connecting the World of Family Literacy – A Shared Vision

11th Annual National Conference on Family Literacy
March 3 - 5, 2002
Albuquerque, NM
Information: National Center for Family Literacy, 325 West Main Street, Suite 200, Louisville, KY 40202-4251
Tel: Family Literacy InfoLine: 1-877-FAMLIT-1
Web site: www.famlit.org
E-mail: ncfl@famlit.org

The Education Show

March 7-9, 2002
Birmingham, U.K.
Information: Tel: 0870 751-1549
Web site: www.education-net.co.uk

ASCD Annual Conference & Exhibit Show

March 9 - 11, 2002
San Antonio, TX
Information: ASCD Conference Registration, PO Box 79734, Baltimore, MD 21279-0734, USA
Tel: 703-578-9600, then press 2 or toll free 1-800-933-ASCD (2723); FAX: 703-575-5400
Web site: www.ascd.org

13th Annual Conference of the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education and The Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education

March 18 - 23, 2002
Nashville, TN
Information:
Tel: 757-623-7588;
FAX: 703-997-8760
E-mail: AACE Conference Services

CSUN 17th Annual International Conference on Technology and Persons with Disabilities

March 18 - 23, 2002
Los Angeles, CA, USA
Information: 18111 Nordhoff Street, Building 11, Suite 103, Northridge, CA 91330-8340
Tel: 818-677-2578
Fax: 818-677-4929
Web site: www.csun.edu/cod/
E-mail: ctrdis@csun.edu

Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs)

March 20 - 23, 2002
Chicago, IL, USA
Information: NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096
Tel : 217-328-3870, ext. 203
Fax : 217-328-0977
Website: www.ncte.org

83rd Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA)

Validity and Value in Education Research
April 1 - 5, 2002
New Orleans, LA
Information:
Tel: 202-223-9485
Fax: 202-775-1824
Web site: www.aera.net

TESOL 2002: Language and the Human Spirit

36th Annual International Convention and Exposition
April 9 - 13, 2002
Salt Lake City, UT, USA
Information: Web site:
www.tesol.edu
E-mail: info@tesol.org

International Reading Association (IRA) 47th Annual Convention

Gateway to Global Understanding
April 28 - May 2, 2002
San Francisco, CA, USA
Information: Tel: 302-731-1600
Web site:
www.reading.org/2002/index.html

CONFERENCE LISTING

Computers and Advanced Technology in Education (CATE 2002)
5th IASTED International Multi-Conference in cooperation with The Hong Kong Institute of Education
May 20 - 22, 2002
Cancun, Mexico
Information: IASTED Secretariat-CATE 2002, #80, 4500-16th Avenue NW, Calgary, AB, T3B 0M6
Tel: 403-288-1195;
FAX: 403-247-6851
E-mail: calgary@iasted.com
Web Site: www.iasted.org

International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) and Canadian Association for Distance Education (CADE-ACED)
New Century – New Models: New Standards for the Educational Mainstream
May 26 - 29, 2002
Calgary, AB
Information: Dr. Ken Collier, Athabasca University
Tel: 780-428-2065;
FAX: 780-497-3411
E-mail: kenc@athabascau.ca

21st Annual Conference, Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education
Adult Education and the Contested Terrain of Public Policy
May 30 - June 1, 2002
Toronto, ON
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
Information: Web site:
http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CAS
AE/cnf2002/cnf2002.html
E-mail: lenglish@stfx.ca

Literacy for All – Laubach Literacy Action Biennial Conference
May 30 - June 1, 2002
San Diego, CA
Information: Pam Alger, 2002 LLA Biennial Seminar Chair, 5240 The Toledo, Long Beach, CA 90803
Tel: 315-422-9121, ext. 352
Email: pcalger@usa.net
Information:
Tel: 757-623-7588;
FAX: 703-997-8760
E-mail: AACE Conference Services

2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning
Open Learning: Transforming Education for Development
July 27 - August 2, 2002
Durban, South Africa
The Commonwealth of Learning, National Association of Distance Education Organizations of South Africa (NADEOSA) and the South African Department of Education
Information: Ms. Jennie Louw, Conference Information Secretariat, PO Box 31822, Braamfontein, Johannesburg 2017, South Africa
Tel: +27-11-403-2813;
FAX: +27-11-403-2814
E-mail: jenny@saide.org.za

International Reading Association
The 19th World Congress on Reading
July 29 - August 1, 2002
University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, Scotland
Information: World Congress Program Committee, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139
FAX: 302-731-1057

The Plain Language Association International (PLAIN)
4th International Conference
At the Heart of Communication
Toronto, Canada.
September 26 - 29, 2002
Information:
www.plainlanguagenetwork.org

Canadian Vocational Association and UNEVOC-Canada Developing Skills for the New Economy
October 17 - 19, 2002
Winnipeg, MB
Information: Dr. Chris Chinien, UNEVOC-Canada, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3Tt 2N2, Canada.
Tel: 204-474-8271;
FAX: 204-474-7696
E-mail: chinien@ms.umanitoba.ca
Web: www.umanitoba.ca/unevoc/2002conference/

Living Literacies
November 14 -16, 2002
Toronto, ON
York University

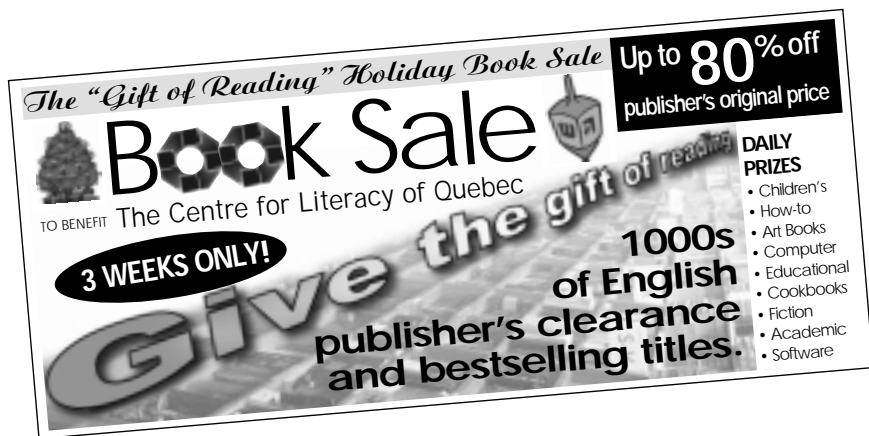### International Conference on Computers in Education – ICCE 2002
December 3 - 6, 2002
Auckland, New Zealand
Information: Julie Lyons, Conference Secretary, Department of Information Systems, Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
Tel: +64-6-350-5233;
FAX: +64-6-350-5725
Web site: http://icce2002.massey.ac.nz/
E-mail:
icce2002_admin@massey.ac.nz

International Federation of Teachers of English (IFTE)
Transforming Literacies, Changing English
July 5 – 9, 2003
Melbourne Australia
Information: E-mail:
fte2003@netscape.net.au
Web site: http://www.ifte.net

Summer Institutes 2002

Adult Numeracy: Math, Life and Learning
The Centre for Literacy of Quebec in collaboration with NIFL
June 27 - 29, 2002
Montreal, QC
Information: Tel.: (514) 931-8731, ext1415; Fax: (514) 931-5181;
Web site: www.nald.ca/litcent.htm
Email: literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

The "Gift of Reading" Holiday Book Sale

Book Sale

TO BENEFIT **The Centre for Literacy of Quebec**

3 WEEKS ONLY!

Give the gift of reading

Up to **80**% off
publisher's original price

DAILY PRIZES
• Children's
• How-to
• Art Books
• Computer
• Educational
• Cookbooks
• Fiction
• Academic
• Software

1000s of English publisher's clearance and bestselling titles.

Book Sale benefits local community and underprivileged schools

The Centre made a beneficial alliance in 2001with Giant Booksales that markets remaindered books.   Our International Literacy Month sale in September raised awareness about literacy through media interviews and articles, and also raised money for The Centre and books for needy schools and community groups.

A second sale for Christmas allowed us to distribute more than $12 thousand worth of new books to groups in and around Montreal. [See sidebar]

The September sale also generated enough funds to increase our library collection, upgrade our software and replace three deteriorating computers.

Book sale beneficiaries

- Auberge Shalom
- Batshaw Youth
- Coronation School
- Montreal Children's Hospital
- Montreal General Hospital
- Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec, Montreal Chapter One
- Literacy Unlimited
- Point Association for Community Education (PACE)
- Quebec Federation of Home and Schools
- St. Gabriel's School
- Storysacks QC
- Sun Youth libraries
- The Centre for Literacy of Quebec
- Tyndale-St. George's Community Centre
- Westmount Park School

Customized workshops, conferences and services for you

The Centre is offering customized workshops related to all aspects of literacy and basic skills to support the training needs of other organizations or those of several groups that want to collaborate around a common need.

We have access to local, national and international expertise.

We have years of experience designing training workshops, organizing conferences and seminars.

We have implemented literacy across the curriculum projects in schools; these practices are part of the current education reform.

We specialize in health literacy, technology and media education, and community-based popular education.

Contact us to ask what we can do for you or with you.

National Storysacks Update

The Storysacks Canada project is underway at the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Project Directors are Jan Greer Langley and Diane Ross who have each taken a one-year leave from their organizations, the NB Coalition for Literacy and la Fédération d'alphabétisation du N.-B.

Standards and materials are being developed in both official languages in consultation with those in the field across Canada who have experimented over the past year or more in delivering Storysacks workshops. The "Standards" will guarantee quality control around the production and use of Storysacks. The web development team at NALD is currently updating the English Storysacks site and developing the French one. If you visit the English website www.storysacks.nald.ca and the French website www.pret-a-conter.nald.ca early in the New Year, you should see changes. A registration page will be functional by February, 2002, so you can register your completed Sacks and everyone can see the wonderful creations from across the country. These websites will continue to be upgraded and updated throughout the coming year. While all this is going on, Jan and Diane will assist people in any way they can by e-mail and phone, and do whatever research is required to develop resources to meet your immediate needs.

A letter will soon go out across the family literacy field in Canada announcing the new project and a brochure will be produced early in the New Year.

Information: Jan or Diane by E-mail: storysacksinfo@nald.ca or pret-a-conter@nald.ca or toll free at 1-800-720-6253.

Learning Disabilities Resources Partnership

The Centre is collaborating with the Learning Disabilities Association of Quebec (LDAQ) Montreal Chapter 1, to make resources available to their tutors and to the general community of teachers and parents.

The LDAQ chapter has used a grant from the mother association to purchase instructional materials for their tutors. Since LDAQ does not have lending capacity, The Centre will catalogue and circulate these resources to their own tutors.

In addition, LDAQ has reviewed The Centre's LD collection and recommended titles to be added. The Centre is purchasing materials, including videos, of interest to parents.

These will available for general circulation.

To view our LD collection, check our library catalogue on the front page of our web site. Look under the subject heading Learning Disabilities.

New on the web site

A guide to recognize signs of delay in language development

The Child Who Doesn't Speak: Clinical Approaches

by Dr. Aviva Fattal-Valevski

Dr. Fattal-Valevski is a pediatric neurologist at The Child Development Centre, Tel Aviv Souraski Medical Centre, Tel Aviv University, Israel. This Power-Point presentation was given at The Child Development Centre in November 2001. Although designed for nurses, it provides an extremely clear guide for parents and educators in recognizing early signs of delay in language development.

The architecture of literacy

At this year's Grassroots: Community Writing event, using the Blue Metropolis theme of the architecture of language, we will bring together storytellers and writers from coastal communities in

Newfoundland, from a homeless shelter in Toronto, from displaced youth programs in Montreal, and from a native writing circle in British Columbia. One accomplished writer-musician collects alphabet songs and oral stories from rural Newfoundland, another writes her life. An urban group of young men and women who have experienced violence and used it against others now write poetry and take photographs that move them in a new direction. Two writers who have been homeless publish a magazine to reach their brothers on the street and tell their stories from the inside. A native survivor of residential schooling writes his way out of despair and tries to bring community members with him. Several of these writers work with literacy programs in their own settings. One is the 2001 Canada Post Literacy Award winner as a learner who has joined the ranks of published writers. In these different contexts, literacy provides the building blocks for further learning and for community engagement.

Who will participate?

Writers who have written and published in community-based settings rather than inside institutions, and who have built bridges among verbal, oral, and visual literacies.

- Larry Loyie, and Constance Brissenden, Living Traditions Writing Circle, B.C. (Larry won the 2001 Canada Post Literacy Learner Award)

- Michael Paul Martin and Robert Payne, St. Christopher House Meeting Point, Toronto

- Carmelita McGrath, poet-storyteller, and Jim Payne, poet-song writer, Newfoundland

- A group of writers from Leave Out Violence (LOVE), Montreal.

- A group of writers from Shawbridge Youth, Montreal

- Jennifer Ottoway and David Gutnick, CBC Radio, who produced "Jennifer's Story," a broadcast of a homeless woman's diary, in May 2001. It won a Commonwealth Broadcast Award.

Share their stories, poems, songs, and experience in effecting change in their own milieus.

Dates

Friday, April 5, two-hour public reading at the Blue Metropolis Literary Festival

Saturday, April 6, 9: 30 -1:00, a workshop at The Centre for Literacy, Dawson College

Information: (514) 931-8731, ext 1415, or check our web site.

Brochures will be available in February.

Grassroots: Community writing 2002

April 5-6, 2002

New in January 2002

Working Paper No. 5

Cognitive Tools and the Acquisition of Literacy

by Professor Kieran Egan, Simon Fraser University

Check the web for details on ordering.

The Association of Teachers of English of Quebec (ATEQ) and The Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (CCTELA) announces Springboards 2002 and the 6th National Literacy Conference

Literacy Beyond the Classroom

Thursday – Saturday, April 25 –27, 2002

McGill University, Faculty of Education

Montreal

How can we help our students become truly literate for life—to read beyond the text, to think critically, to interpret media? ATEQ and CCTELA invite you to join them in an advocacy of literacy that reaches beyond classroom walls.

Registration forms available in January.
Information: Fax (514) 398-4529

Canadian Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (CCTELA)

Merron Chorney Award

recognizing significant contribution to English Language Arts Education in Canada

Who is eligible?

Teachers, coordinators, administrators, researchers

Nominations must be accompanied by a 200-300 word statement of support for the candidate, and the names and addresses of three referees willing to provide letters of support. The selection committee will contact referees during the final round of selection.

Send nominations to:

Trevor Gambell, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, 28 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0X1. Fax: (306) 966-7644;

E-mail:
gambellt@duke.usask.ca

Deadline:
January 31, 2002.

Canada Book Day 2002

April 23, 2002

Canada Book Day coincides with UNESCO's World Book Day. April 23 is a symbolic date. In 1616, Shakespeare and Cervantes both died. Other prominent authors of world literature, such as Nabokov, were born on April 23. The UNESCO day promotes reading, books, publication, as well as a better understanding and application of copyright.

Information on World Book Day:
www.unesco.org/general/eng/events/books/book.html

Materials and information on Canada Book Day: Heather Wiley, Writers'Trust of Canada, hwiley@writerstrust.com

Barry's Bulletin — a popular culture digest for media educators

Barry Duncan's monthly bulletin, put out through the Media Awareness Network in Ottawa, contains resources, reviews and news for media educators. Current and usable.
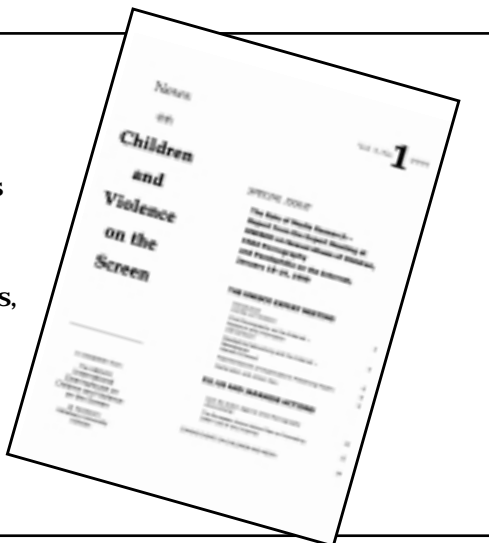
Web site: www.media awareness.ca/eng/med/class/multilib/jan2002.htm

News on Children and Violence on the Screen

is a newsletter that offers news briefs, abstracts of current research, specialized bibliographies, notices of new publications, regional overviews, and seminar, course and conference information, etc.

Volumes 1 –5 (1997-2001) are available in pdf format

http://www.nordicom.gu.se/unesco/newsletter.html

New media education journal seeks contributors and subscribers

The International Journal of Media Education is the first academic journal devoted to Media Education. It is edited by Dr. Andrew Hart, Director of the Media Education Centre Research and Graduate School of Education, University of Southampton, U.K.

The journal is seeking articles around four strands:

• Media products and processes (including study of media organizations, the production and consumption of media texts)

• Media teachers and teaching (including curricula, training and accountability)

• Media classrooms and learning (including learning strategies in relation to teaching modes, learning outcomes and assessment)

• Connections between Media learning and industrial practices (including industrial views on what media education might include/exclude in its vocational forms)

Information: Dr. Andrew Hart, Media Education Centre, Research and Graduate School of Education, University of Southampton, S017 1BJ, England.

Web site:
http://www.soton.ac.uk/~mec/

Research Training and Master's Courses On-line Learning Web site (password-protected):
http://www.webct.soton.ac.uk

Tel (0)2380-593387;
Fax (0)2380-593556;
Email: aph1@soton.ac.uk

Setting Research Directions for Media Literacy and Health Education
New Web site

In April 2000, a two-day working conference was held at the Rutgers' Center for Media Studies. Thirty leading media education and public health researchers met to try to chart future research directions for media literacy and health education. The goals were (1) to identify approaches to measure the impact of media literacy interventions aimed at health threats to youth; (2) to stimulate descriptive evidence about the growth and nature of media literacy education in the United States and around the world; and (3) to begin to more fully appreciate the complex, interdisciplinary connections among the fields of media studies, education and public health.

The conference web site includes a full conference report with pictures, and a downloadable pdf version.

Go to: http://www.mediastudies.rutgers.edu/mh_conference/index.html

Conference sponsors were Johnson & Johnson, The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: HHS Secretary's Initiative on Youth Substance Abuse Prevention; National Cancer Institute; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; American Academy of Pediatrics; Alliance for a Media Literate America; Journalism Resources Institute.

INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR LITERACY RESEARCH

CALL FOR PAPERS
(in English and French)

For the fifth time since 1991, the UNESCO Institute for Education is offering an award for outstanding research in adult literacy. The competition, open to researchers all over the world, is supported the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Human Resources Development Canada.

Deadline:

December 31, 2001

Information: http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/news/award.shtml

Free Electronic Journal Subscriptions to Developing Countries

*Multilingual Matters/*Channel View Publications are offering free electronic access to journals for institutional subscribers in countries of "low human development" as defined by the Human Development Index(HDI) published annually by the United Nations Development Project (http://www.undp.org). The company will also offer subscriptions at a substantially reduced rate to institutional subscribers in countries of "medium human development." Libraries in over 100 countries will be able to receive journals either completely free or at substantially reduced cost.

Multilingual Matters is one of the world leaders in research on multilingualism and minority language rights. Under the Channel View Publications imprint, the company has developed a number of publications on sustainability in tourism, agriculture and transport. The company believes that adequate access to academic materials is a vital aspect of sustainable development. They hope that the new pricing policy will encourage other publishers to adopt similar schemes to support academic activity in the developing world.

Libraries should contact: Multilingual Matters Ltd., Frankfurt Lodge, Clevedon, England, BS21 7HH; E-mail: info@multilingual-matters.com; Tel: +44 (0)1275 876519; Fax: +44 (0)1275 871673

Contact: Mike Grover, Managing Director; mike@multilingual-matters.com;

Mobile: +44 (0)7779 156794

At the Heart of Communication
The Plain Language Association International (PLAIN)

4th International Conference, Toronto, Canada.

September 26 - 29, 2002

This conference will focus on the key role of plain language--across disciplines and around the world. Plain language means language that your audience can easily understand. It saves time, money, and lives. It helps readers understand their rights and obligations. It protects them from ambiguous, evasive or bureaucratic language. Plain language helps people fill out forms, read labels, follow directions, and learn new skills. Whether you are preparing a brief, writing a procedure, managing a department or training workers, plain language is your business.

PLAIN's members come from a wide range of disciplines, including law, health care, marketing, public relations, human resources, research, editing, technical writing and other disciplines that rely on effective communication. Internationally, English has become the language of business, science and the Internet. This creates new and urgent issues for communicators around the world.

Information: www.plainlanguagenetwork.org

Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom

by Kristin Lems, is the latest digest from

National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). It offers suggestions for using music and music-based activities to develop and practice reading and writing, listening comprehension, vocabulary, and speaking, and to expand cultural knowledge.

It is available on line at http://www.cal.org/ncle/digests/music.htm or from NCLE at the National Center for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE), Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th Street NW, Washington, DC 20015. Tel.:(202) 3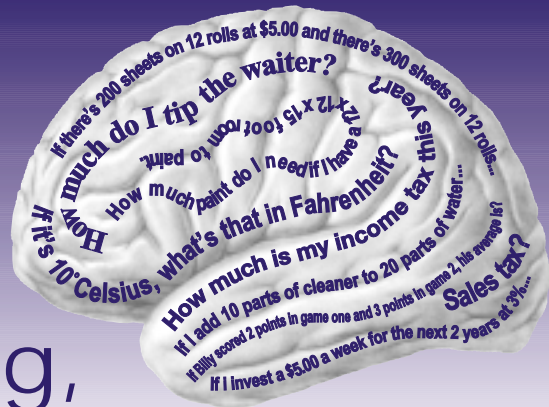62-0700; Fax (202) 363-7204; E-mail: miriam@cal.org