

# **STRONG FOUNDATIONS**

## **A Guide to Regional Literacy Coordination in British Columbia**

### *Table of Contents*

#### **Part 1: Building Blocks**

- [History of Regional Literacy Coordination in British Columbia, 1989 to 2008](#)
- [Job Description Template](#)
- [Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development - Contacts](#)
- [Role of Literacy BC](#)

#### **Part 2: Support for Communities, Learners, Practitioners, and Programs**

- [Funding and Program Administration](#)
- [Partnership and Community Development](#)
- [Sharing Information and Raising Awareness](#)
- [Learner Support](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Policy Input and Strategic Leadership](#)

#### **Part 3: Tools of the Trade**

- [Commonly Used Acronyms](#)
- [Working Tools](#)
- [What It's All About!](#)

## **Part 1: Building Blocks**

### **History of Regional Literacy Coordination in British Columbia 1989-2008**

#### **Summary**

In 1989 the Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee recommended that each college in BC have a Regional Literacy Coordinator. The first three RLCs in BC began work as a pilot project in 1994 under the management of Literacy BC. Over the next fourteen years, Literacy BC maintained a coordination role as the number of regions gradually increased. While funding remained low and supported part-time work only, funding did increase over time and more than tripled over a period of 10 years, as different funders came on board. Many partners in the literacy field, including Literacy BC, advocated for full-time funding for RLCs and in February 2008 the dream came true. On Valentine's Day the Ministry of Advanced Education announced the provision of more than \$1.6 million to fund full-time Regional Literacy Coordinators at 16 public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia.

#### **Milestones**

1989

The Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee publishes a report called 'Opening the Doors to Lifelong Learning: Empowering

Undereducated Adults' which recommends that 'each college ... have a regional literacy coordinator, working with a community-based advisory committee to develop active partnerships ... for the coordinated planning and provision of adult literacy opportunities in the communities of each college region.'

1990

Literacy BC is founded during International Literacy Year.

1992

A report by Ron Faris is published: 'Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century: A Report on the Future Development of Adult/Continuing Education in British Columbia'. The report is the result of a study regarding the policy framework and delivery of adult continuing education in British Columbia. One of the seven recommendations is 'to ensure coordination and decentralization of programming to the community level'.

1993

Literacy BC brings together Volunteer Tutor Program Coordinators from across BC to talk about training needs, the development of a network and shaping a strategic plan for training volunteers. At the end of the meeting, the need for a coordinated network of literacy practitioners at the regional level emerges as a significant priority. Literacy BC and the Adult Basic Education Association of BC jointly submit a proposal to the BC Adult Literacy Cost-Shared Program (ALCSP) for a regional literacy coordination pilot project. The proposal is accepted.

1994

An Advisory Committee selects three regions to pilot Regional Literacy Coordination: East Kootenays, Selkirk, and Northern Lights. The RLCs are contracted directly by Literacy BC and funding comes from the National Literacy Secretariat through the BC ALCSP.

1997

In order to ensure continued funding through the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), the project is decentralized. RLCs no longer work directly for Literacy BC. Proposals for the work are submitted regionally and RLCs are employed directly by colleges, libraries, or non-profit organizations in their regions.

2000

By 2000 there are ten RLCs working in ten regions. Audrey Thomas of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Yvette Souque of the NLS are champions for Regional Literacy Coordination and work to find continued funding for the RLC position.

2004

The NLS transfers money to AVED to fund the RLC position and funding for the part-time RLC position is doubled.

2005

Literacy Now, under the leadership of Brenda LeClair, recognizes the key role the RLCs play in the Literacy Now community literacy planning process. Literacy Now demonstrates its support for Regional Literacy Coordination by providing funds which double the usual amount for each region and enable the funding of the last three RLCs in Mid-Island (Malaspina), Victoria (Camosun) and the Lower Mainland (Vancouver, Kwantlen, Douglas). Literacy Now funding also gives added support to Literacy BC's oversight role in maintaining a 'community of practice' among RLCs.

2008

AVED announces full-time funding for 16 faculty positions dedicated to Regional Literacy Coordination within post-secondary institutions in BC.

## **RLC Job Description Template**

*This template was created by a joint committee of representatives from Literacy BC, Literacy Now, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (ALMD) and the Deans and Directors, March 31, 2008.*

Given the importance of literacy to the well being of individuals, and its fundamental relationship to the health of society and the economy, the issue of literacy goes beyond the traditional education community. To significantly improve literacy rates, attention must be paid to coordinating the efforts and resources of both traditional and non-traditional literacy stakeholders at the local, regional and provincial levels. In British Columbia, adult literacy services and programs are

delivered by a variety of providers (school districts, post-secondary institutions, non-profit community organizations and private sector organizations); in a variety of settings (one-on-one tutoring, classroom-based, online, work-place based); using content that ranges from formal curriculum, to informal and customized learning materials.

Regional Literacy Coordinators (RLCs) work with a variety of partners to: develop regional literacy networks, provide strategic direction, build the capacity of service providers, and raise community awareness of literacy as a vital social and economic issue. It is the role of the RLCs to facilitate the development of a coherent and coordinated adult literacy system for each designated college region of the province. The ultimate goal of the position is to work with community, regional and provincial partners, including government ministries, to ensure adult learners have access to literacy programs appropriate to their needs.

## **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

Activities performed by the RLCs will focus on the following:

- Enhancing coordination, outreach and support for literacy programming throughout the region and sharing best practice;
- Strengthening post-secondary linkages with community-based and school district literacy plans and supporting coordination among these initiatives to establish regional level planning and coordination;
- Assessing community learning needs and identifying service gaps; and facilitating the development and funding of effective initiatives to support learners;
- Facilitating the implementation of the Provincial Literacy Assessment and Articulation initiative that will ultimately identify and articulate learning outcomes and benchmarks/standards for all sectors;
- Mentoring, supporting and training community partners and literacy practitioners;
- Encouraging and supporting regional participation in the provincial Workplace Essential Skills initiative;
- Being part of a province-wide community of literacy practice coordinated by Literacy BC.

## **KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

### **1. Funding and Program Administration**

- Manage regional literacy funding and resources
- Coordinate and develop relationships with donors and funding agencies
- Coach and train others in the process of proposal and report preparation
- Facilitate monitoring of learner progress by assisting in the development, articulation and implementation of assessment and reporting tools in consultation with regional and provincial partners

### **2. Networking, Partnership and Community Development**

#### *Regional Networks:*

- Liaise with, and encourage the development of partnerships among community groups, organizations and agencies, K-12 and post-secondary education providers, employers, unions and individuals for the provision literacy programs and services
- Liaise with community agencies to encourage and develop opportunities for learners to progress beyond their current capabilities

#### *Sharing Information and Raising Awareness:*

- Provide ongoing information, resources, and referrals
- Maintain current knowledge of literacy best practices in general, and best practices in relation to particular communities and learners, and share that knowledge
- Raise awareness of workplace literacy initiatives among regional businesses and industry sectors
- Raise awareness of, and support for the integration of essential skills into workplace training
- Assist in the planning and implementation of special events that highlight issues surrounding literacy

#### *Learner Support:*

- Enhance access to information regarding available resources, programs and services
- Coordinate referral services for learners, when appropriate
- Facilitate and support communications to learners and service providers regarding student financial supports
- Coordinate and evaluate community-based learner events

*Training:*

- Facilitate training for community literacy practitioners

**3. Policy Input and Strategic Leadership**

- Gather and document regional literacy issues and concerns and communicate these to provincial, regional and community partners.
- Utilize regional, provincial, and national data (i.e. International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey) and other policy-driven research, to advise program and policy development.

**Ministry of Advanced Education & Labour Market Development Students and Learning Division**

Learning Programs Branch, PO Box 9882 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC, V8W 9T6

Phone: 250-356-2336. Fax: 250-387-0878

**Janice Nakamura, Director** 356-2336

Margaret Achadinha, Administrative Coordinator 356-2336

Emily Walsh, A/Administrative Assistant 387-5839

Rebecca Olson, A/Office Assistant 387-8918

**Bo Hansen, Manager International Education** 356-0677

Tegan Tang, Senior Policy Advisor 387-9479

Laurie Brucker, Coordinator 387-3639

**Dawn McKay,  
Manager Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education** 387-6148

Jacqueline Dennis-Orr, Senior Policy Advisor 387-2043

Vacant, Research Officer	952-6114
Emma Battell Lowman, Research Officer	387-5636
<b>Vacant, Manager, Developmental, Adult Literacy and Workplace Programs</b>	387-2347
Emily Horton, Senior Analyst (Literacy Assessment and Aboriginal Literacy)	952-6776
Marissa Thola, Senior Policy Advisor (Workplace Essential Skills)	387-6174
Wendy Magahay, Special Advisor (Workplace Essential Skills)	356-7559
Shelley Gilmour, Education Officer (CALP, RLC Liaison, ABE Liaison)	356-9733
Barbara Binczyk, A/Education Officer (ESL Liaison, ASE Liaison)	356-7738
Martin Breuhan, Coordinator (ESL Settlement Assistance Program)	387-2572
Mary Shi, Co-op Student	356-2068

## **Role of Literacy BC**

### **Community of Practice**

For close to two decades Literacy BC has been a steadfast champion of Regional Literacy Coordination. The heart of Literacy BC's role is support for and facilitation of a 'community of practice'. The concept of a community of practice refers to the process of learning that occurs - and the shared practices that emerge and evolve - when people work together to achieve common goals.

Literacy BC uses a variety of tools and forums that bring RLCs together - virtually and in person - to exchange information and ideas about literacy in BC and to collectively develop actions and strategies to further literacy. Using virtual tools such as an electronic network and Elluminate, conference calls, and face-to-face meetings, Literacy BC provides networking and training opportunities for RLCs as well as group and individual consultation and support.

Contact Diana Twiss, Deputy Executive Director: 604-684-0624 ext. 114  
[dtwiss@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:dtwiss@literacy.bc.ca)

### **BC Literacy Directory**

Literacy BC's online and toll-free information and referral services are a vital entry point for people taking the first step towards engaging in a program to upgrade their literacy skills.

The BC Literacy Directory is a comprehensive, up-to-date online directory of literacy programs. Visit <http://www.literacybc.ca/directory>. Programs can add and edit their information online.

The toll-free Learning Hotline is 1-888-READ-234 (1-888-732-3234). It responds to learner calls from every corner of the province, helps aspiring volunteers find programs that link them with learners, and provides other general information on literacy issues, contacts and resources.

RLCs support the directory and hotline by assisting Literacy BC staff to connect with resources in their communities and to keep the information in the directory accurate and current.

### **Provincial Literacy Resource Centre**

Literacy BC maintains a provincial literacy resource and lending library. The resources from this specialized collection of print, audio-visual and web-based literacy materials are available to the literacy community and general public throughout BC. Materials are mailed using the Canada Post library book rate. There are no borrowing costs; all mailing costs for books are covered by Literacy BC. Literacy BC also provides research assistance, training and advice on literacy resources. Visit [www.literacybc.ca/PLRC/ResourceCentre.php](http://www.literacybc.ca/PLRC/ResourceCentre.php) to:

- search the catalogue and order loans online
- request research assistance, training or advice
- view resource lists on topics of interest
- receive the latest news and information about literacy resources

RLCs can promote the services of the Provincial Literacy Resource Centre in your community, distribute resource lists to your contacts, initiate your own regional collection or enhance an existing one.

Contact Deb Monkman, Librarian: 604-684-0624 ext. 105  
[library@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:library@literacy.bc.ca)

### **Exemplary Literacy Materials Online**

ELMO Reviews ([www.elmoreviews.ca](http://www.elmoreviews.ca)) is a free, interactive, online database of adult and family literacy resources and reviews. It was developed to meet the ongoing need adult literacy practitioners and learners have for appropriate and high quality instructional and learning resources.

ELMO Reviews is about bringing together *literacy resources + best practice in using them*. An important part of the project is the Working Committee. Members represent a range of literacy programs across the province, and across school districts, colleges and communities. On this committee are three practitioners, a tutor, a learner and a community librarian.

Visit ELMO Reviews to learn more and sign up for ELMO e-News

### **Communication and Policy Support**

Literacy BC provides a range of communication and public awareness materials for use by RLCs and other practitioners. These are designed to keep key stakeholders and the public informed about and motivated by literacy issues. They include powerpoint slides - for example on the International Adult Literacy and LifeSkills data - press releases, case studies, and news bulletins. Literacy BC also organizes special events and forums to share and expand knowledge and to discuss and disseminate new ideas and research.

Contact Mark Campbell, Policy and Communications Manager: 604-684-0624, ext. 107  
[mcampbell@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:mcampbell@literacy.bc.ca)

Visit [www.literacybc.ca/AboutUs/staff.php](http://www.literacybc.ca/AboutUs/staff.php) to find full functions and contact details for our staff.

## Part 2: Support for Communities, Learners, Practitioners, and Programs

### Funding and Program Administration

Regional Literacy Coordinators play an important role in building the capacity of service providers within their regions. They assist practitioners in the areas of fund development and program development, and proposal and report writing.

All Community Adult Literacy Programs (CALP) are expected to assess, monitor and report on learner progress. The RLC assists practitioners in CALP programs to implement the new Community Literacy Benchmarks and to complete the necessary reporting requirements to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. The benchmarks are posted on the Literacy BC web site along with a guide to the benchmarks and other helpful information including a quick guide to using the benchmarks. Visit [www.literacybc.ca/Research/benchmarks.php](http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/benchmarks.php).

RLC's also act as a resource for practitioners in English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Programs (ESLSAP). ESLSAP programs use the Canadian Language Benchmarks to assess and monitor learner progress ([www.language.ca](http://www.language.ca)).

Regional Literacy Coordinators distribute information about bursaries and awards available in their region.

#### BURSARIES

**PACE Bursary:** [www.literacybc.ca/supportinglearners/financialaid.php](http://www.literacybc.ca/supportinglearners/financialaid.php)

Literacy BC provides direct financial assistance to part-time adult learners through the PACE Bursary. The bursary supports learners who are pursuing educational upgrades at a registered public or private institution, but who are not eligible for financial support from student loans or other government student assistance programs. They could be taking post-secondary course work or continuing studies courses; they might be training to be dental hygienists, internet support workers or educational assistants. The PACE Bursary enables learners to fund tuition costs as well as transport, childcare and books in order to continue and complete their studies. The value can be up to \$700. The deadline for receipt of applications is September 30 each year. Awards are determined and distributed by December 31. Details for each competition are posted on the Literacy BC website in the summer.

**Paul Gallagher Community Access Fund:** [www.literacybc.ca/supportinglearners/financialaid.php](http://www.literacybc.ca/supportinglearners/financialaid.php)

The Paul Gallagher Community Access Fund, named in memory of the former Literacy BC President, provides financial assistance to community-based adult learning programs. Programs can use the funds to support their students with short-term needs such as transport, childcare, books or other costs that would make the difference between attending and not attending their literacy/ABE program. The purpose of the Fund is to help remove barriers by providing financial resources with few strings attached in order to fill gaps that more formal funding channels do not meet. Awards of up to \$1000 are granted to community-based adult learning programs in BC that demonstrate a need for assistance related to student access where other financial support is not available. Priority is given to programs that demonstrate the greatest need. Eligible applicants must be (or be in partnership with) a registered non-profit corporation/society/host agency, school board, or public college in British Columbia. Returning applicants must have submitted a report in order to be considered again. Applications must be received by the end of May each year. Disbursements are in August. Details for each competition will be posted on the Literacy BC website in March.

**Literacy BC's Provincial Volunteer Recognition Program:** [www.literacybc.ca/Volunteering/VolunteerBursary.pdf](http://www.literacybc.ca/Volunteering/VolunteerBursary.pdf)

Literacy BC's Volunteer Recognition Program honours the contributions of volunteer tutors who work in community literacy programs in BC. Volunteers are at the heart of community literacy programming. A meaningful relationship with a tutor is often cited by learners as the reason they remain in a literacy program. Tutors make an enormous contribution to furthering literacy and learning and Literacy BC is delighted to sponsor the Volunteer Recognition Program as a tribute to tutors across BC. An exciting component of the Volunteer Recognition Program is the Volunteer Bursary Fund. The Bursary Fund gives tutors who have been working in a program for at least a year the opportunity to take a course and be reimbursed the course tuition. Courses can be credit or non-credit and for academic or recreational purposes. The maximum reimbursement is \$200. The next round of applications for the Bursary will take place in March 2009.

As part of our Volunteer Recognition Program Literacy BC also distributes recognition items to community literacy programs across the province.

## AWARDS

### **Canada Post Community Literacy Awards:** [www.canadapost.ca/AboutUs/Community/Literacy/Awards/](http://www.canadapost.ca/AboutUs/Community/Literacy/Awards/)

The Canada Post Community Literacy Awards were established 15 years ago to discover and acknowledge the achievements of Canadians who have made a special effort or an important contribution to literacy. Today, the program continues to celebrate the achievements of both adult learners and those who have helped them learn to read and write. Prizes and awards are presented at special ceremonies that take place across the country in the fall. Each winner is invited to attend the ceremony nearest to his or her home to receive their award. Winners in the Individual Achievement award category will receive a cash award of \$300 and a framed, personalized Certificate of Achievement. Educator category winners each receive a cash award of \$500 and a framed, personalized Certificate of Achievement.

### **Council of the Federation Literacy Award:** [www.councilofthefederation.ca](http://www.councilofthefederation.ca)

In order to bring recognition to achievements in literacy in every province and territory, Premiers created a Council of the Federation Literacy Award medallion. The award recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice and excellence in literacy. Thirteen Council of the Federation Literacy medallions are presented annually, one for each province and territory. The Council of the Federation Literacy Award covers the entire spectrum of the field, including family, Aboriginal, health, workplace and community literacy and is given to recognize the excellence of educators, volunteers, learners, and community organizations (including non-governmental organizations) and businesses in each province and territory.

### **Learner Achievement Award**

The Learner Achievement award was established in 1992 and is intended to reward an individual who distinguishes him or herself as an outstanding adult learner. The award is presented to the learner at the yearly PGI Golf Tournament. The significance of this award is huge and it represents precisely why the PGI Golf Tournaments are held. The winner attends the PGI where they traditionally receive \$200.00, an engraved pen, and a certificate. Each year applicants are nominated by their teacher/tutor to apply for the Learner Achievement award. Each application is reviewed by a panel of literacy practitioners and adult learners. Deadline for applications is normally in May and details for each competition are posted on the Literacy BC website in March.

## Partnership and Community Development

### LITERACY NOW

Regional Literacy Coordinators have a leading role in the Literacy Now community planning process, which guides communities through a planning process to identify local literacy needs. The process focuses on building partnerships, networking and sharing best practices within BC's communities and regions. Communities go through three stages: an expression of interest; preparation of a community literacy plan; and implementation of the plan. Find out more at [www.2010legaciesnow.com/literacy\\_now\\_communities](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/literacy_now_communities)

### DISTRICT LITERACY PLANS

In 2007, the Ministry of Education introduced legislation that requires Boards of Education to develop District Literacy Plans on an annual basis. This plan includes the literacy assets and potential in the community or communities that make up the geographic area of the school district. The 2010 Legacies Now Society, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, supports the community literacy planning work that becomes a major part of the District Literacy Plan. The Ministry's ReadNow strategy, Working Together for Literacy (<http://www.readnowbc.ca/pdfs/booklet.pdf>) describes how communities work together. See completed District Literacy Plans at [www.readnowbc.ca/dlp.html](http://www.readnowbc.ca/dlp.html). The District Literacy Planning Guide is available at [www.readnowbc.ca/pdfs/dlp\\_guide.pdf](http://www.readnowbc.ca/pdfs/dlp_guide.pdf).

### LITERACY OUTREACH COORDINATORS

In order to facilitate the planning process and the implementation of actions arising from the plan, most communities have identified the need to hire someone to coordinate networks, build partnerships, and support actions. Overall goals of a literacy outreach coordinator are to facilitate, stabilize, and sustain literacy work that results from planning. Specific objectives are:

- Support District Literacy Plan development, review and implementation as this requires broad-based community participation
- Strengthen and support community literacy work as a result of broad-based planning

- Develop and strengthen partnerships and communication between organizations and agencies that have a stake in literacy and with the school district
- Mobilize community resources and support fund development
- Create awareness and understanding about literacy
- Support training and best practice for an integrated literacy delivery system
- Be part of a province-wide community of literacy practice

## RESOURCES AND LINKS

### Community Literacy Development (CLD) monitoring tools

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/groundup/mtcld/columbia.pdf>

Created by Betty Knight and Christy Luke of the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy for the project "From the Ground Up" (<http://ripal.literacy.bc.ca/fromthegroundup/>) (2006). This set of tools is designed to identify the range and importance of community networking and collaboration, and their effect on literacy service delivery. The tools provide valuable information about the number and type of partnerships community literacy groups develop, the amount of money and resources those partnerships leverage which add value to funding, and the increase in service delivery and resources available for literacy programs in communities. The mapping tools can also be used to identify the sectors that partner most often with literacy at the community level, providing useful information to foster cross-ministerial cooperation.

### The Weaving Literacy Planning Guide: Supporting Integrated Approaches to Literacy and Community Building in Canada

by Suzanne Smythe et al. (2005). Email [library@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:library@literacy.bc.ca) to borrow. The Weaving Literacy project worked with literacy and family support groups across Canada to develop and implement a literacy plan. One of the key principles of the project was to integrate literacy and learning opportunities into community settings where people already feel comfortable and have few barriers to participation.

### Learning Communities

<http://www.ccl-ca.ca/CCL/Reports/CLI/LearningCommunities.htm>

Learning communities are defined as "neighbourhoods, villages, towns, cities and regions in which the concept of lifelong learning is explicitly used as an organizing principle and social goal as the learning resources of every one of the five sectors of the community - civic, economic (private-cooperative enterprise), public (e.g. libraries, museums, health and social agencies), education, and voluntary - are mobilized to foster environmentally sustainable economic development and social inclusion."

See Faris, R. (2007). *Learning Communities: Webs of Life, Literacy and Learning*

<http://www.ns.literacy.ca/symposium/workshop/LngComms%20Victoria%202007.ppt>

For more information, Literacy BC has compiled a list of resources on community development, literacy needs assessment, statistical resources, and planning:

[www2.literacy.bc.ca/resources/documents/CommunityDev.doc](http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/resources/documents/CommunityDev.doc)

## Sharing Information and Raising Awareness

### LITERACY IN CONTEXT

Traditionally, literacy has been narrowly defined as just reading and writing. Literacy was seen as a set of discrete skills that you learned in school and that were transferable from one context to another. It used to be defined as something that you either had or didn't have. However, over the past decade new ideas about literacy have been surfacing that give us a broader view. Today, we look at literacy as the ability to accomplish tasks and to participate in the world around us. Literacy is about how we are able to use what we learn and to apply our knowledge. In addition to reading, writing and numeracy literacy encompasses those foundational competencies and essential skills that we need to fully participate in social, economic, family and community life such as computer use, oral communication, thinking skills, problem-solving, and being able to work well with others.

New approaches to literacy emphasize the importance of context and the fact that literacy is not an abstraction but a set of socially embedded practices or literacies (Ewing, 2003). The New Literacy Studies, for example, talk about multiple literacies in a range of social situations, community settings, and cultural contexts where people integrate written language into their lives in a multiplicity of ways. To meet these multiple needs, community literacy provides opportunities for literacy development in context and works with people on the issues that are important and immediate in their lives - for example,

health, housing and homelessness, job preparation, learning more about parenting or grandparenting, helping kids with their homework, and all kinds of other issues.

Betsy Alkenbrack and Lucy Alderson (2006) of the Carnegie Learning Centre describe what they mean by literacy in context in their work in Vancouver's downtown eastside:

What do we mean by literacy in context? We have had some success with non-formal learning groups in settings that do not look like schools: in a drop-in centre for women in the sex trade; in a seniors' program at the community centre; at a park outreach program. This work engages with people who are outside of literacy classes and are dealing with many issues such as poverty, health, substance use and homelessness. We believe that literacy opportunities are essential for this sector of our community. Literacy in context means creating learning spaces where people normally gather for other essential reasons: food, shelter, a human touchstone, health.

## **ABORIGINAL LITERACY**

The skills, competencies and approaches that are valued in mainstream society are often different and disconnected from those of traditional cultures. Aboriginal perspectives and values are not typically reflected in the curriculum of educational institutions, or the program content of non-aboriginal literacy groups. Aboriginal literacy reflects aboriginal worldviews and philosophical approaches to learning. From aboriginal perspectives, traditional methods of teaching and learning by and for aboriginal people can nurture a positive identity and provide aboriginal people with connections to the land, their families, their communities, their languages and their ancestors (Antone, 2003).

Literacy BC has compiled a resource list of books, audio-visuals and web resources on aboriginal literacy. All books may be borrowed from the Literacy BC Resource Centre at no cost. Visit [www.literacybc.ca](http://www.literacybc.ca).

## **ESSENTIAL SKILLS**

Explore Essential Skills at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's website:

[http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home\\_e.shtml](http://srv108.services.gc.ca/english/general/home_e.shtml)

HRSDC has defined nine essential skills: Reading Text, Document Use, Writing, Numeracy, Oral Communication, Working with Others, Computer Use, Continuous Learning, and Thinking Skills (Problem solving, Decision making, Critical thinking, Job task planning and organizing, Significant use of memory, and Finding information).

Measure Up website: Web-based practice and self-assessment tool that links essential skills to Canadian workplaces. Provides more than 100 activity sets based on workplace documents. Each task has been placed on the scale used by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's Essential Skills Profiles.

Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES). An assessment that uses authentic workplace documents to measure three essential skills: Reading Text, Document Use, and Numeracy.

Skills2Work: The Provincial Workplace Essential Skills Initiative (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development) is designed to: motivate business and industry to invest in workplace training by understanding the critical need and the financial benefits from both a personal and provincial perspective; provide British Columbia business, industry, post-secondary institutions, and service providers with the tools, support, and funding they need to effectively implement workplace training programs and raise skills levels; work with a broad base of working British Columbians, with special attention to immigrant and Aboriginal populations; focus on providing support for small to mid-sized businesses (currently about 80% of the economy). Phase 1 of the initiative funded ten sector-based research projects. Phase 2 is workplace-based and will issue a request for proposals for resources and programs that is open to employers, labour, and education providers (forthcoming).

## **BEST PRACTICES**

Best Practices in Adult Literacy by Joan Perry (2003) (<http://www.nb.literacy.ca/pubs/Best1/cover.htm>)

A useful guide to best practices in adult literacy by the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (2003).

The Provincial Literacy Resource Centre provides lists of resources that include new and popular resources, and topic-specific lists such as tutoring, ESL, early childhood, aboriginal, workplace literacy, health literacy, among others.

BC Framework of Statements and Standards of Best Practices in Family Literacy by Jean Rasmussen et al. (2000) (<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/framwork/cover.htm>)

The National Adult Literacy Database ([www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)) has links to organizations, information and full-text resources. As Canada's digital literacy library, it links diverse players and builds a united literacy.

Learning and Violence (<http://www.learningandviolence.net/>)

This website was initiated as a project of Spiral Community Resource Group, Jenny Horsman ([www.jennyhorsman.com](http://www.jennyhorsman.com)) with Parkdale Project Read, Nadine Sookermany and Mary Brehaut. The website provides practical ideas to make it easier to learn or teach when violence or hard times marks our lives and/or the lives of those we work with. Violence shapes us; it can make us stronger as learners or teachers; it can also make it hard to believe in ourselves, and difficult to learn. Most of the information is Canadian and from the adult literacy field.

RiPAL (<http://www.nald.ca/ripal/>)

The RiPAL Network was initiated in 2000 in order to support adult literacy educators in Alberta to link research and practice and to do research about practice. Although it is not an active organization, we hope that this site can help link people interested in research in practice. The Network initiated this website in 2003, in response to interest expressed at the 2001 Gathering about literacy research in practice. In 2004, the site was expanded to include information and links to research in practice across Canada, and Literacies assumed the role of coordinating the site.

Literacies (<http://www.literacyjournal.ca/>)

Literacies journal is a national forum that includes university-based researchers, program-based researchers, policy-makers and program workers. The journal provides a medium for a range of inquiries including analysis, discussions, debates, reflections and creative work in all aspects of research and practice in education. Literacies objective is to promote writing about research in practice in Canada and to cultivate and develop writer ship among literacy and adult education workers. By communicating and documenting individual scholarship and experiences, Literacies advances a collective understanding of literacy work in the field, promotes the exchange of ideas with policy-makers and theorists, and builds and strengthens the community.

## **RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Literacy BC is collaborating with 2010 Legacies Now to produce a suite of useful communications tools for community literacy development organizations and literacy programs, with the support of the Government of British Columbia's ReadNow BC Action Plan. Visit [www.literacycentral.bc.ca](http://www.literacycentral.bc.ca) to learn more.

Infosheets and publicity materials can be found on the Literacy BC website. To request materials, contact [mcampbell@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:mcampbell@literacy.bc.ca).

We have also compiled a list of resources that give an overview of literacy at <http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/resources/documents/LiteracyOverview.doc>

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS OPPORTUNITIES**

### **International Literacy Day**

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/hip/lld/nls/Resources/ild.shtml>

September 8 was declared International Literacy Day by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1966. Since then it has been celebrated by literacy organizations worldwide. Local activities often include learning centre open houses, celebrity read-ins, literacy displays and fundraisers, and literacy awareness initiatives. A list of ILD activities is posted by Literacy BC and NALD ([www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)) every year.

### **Family Literacy Day/Week**

<http://legacy.abc-canada.org/flld/orders.shtml>

Family Literacy Day (Jan. 27) was created by ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation in 1999 with support from founding sponsor Honda Canada to promote the importance of reading and learning together as a family all year round. ABC CANADA distributes Family Literacy Day materials through the provincial literacy coalitions. Literacy BC celebrates Family Literacy Week in the last week of January every year with events including the Breakfast of Champions.

### **International Adult Learners' Week**

<http://www.unesco.ca/en/activity/education/AdultLearners.aspx>

IALW celebrates adult learners across the country, and the joy of learning throughout life, in the first week of March.

### **National Volunteer Week**

April 27 to May 3. <http://volunteer.ca/nvw>

### **Multiculturalism Week**

British Columbia - third week of February. <http://www.welcomebc.ca/en/enjoy/multicultural.html>

## **Learner Support**

For information on the characteristics of adult learners, principles of adult education and the characteristics of community-based programming in meeting learners' needs, consult Literacy BC's publication, *Learning Without Borders: An Introduction to Community-Based Adult Literacy in British Columbia*.

### **LEARNER LEADERSHIP**

#### **Learners Advisory Network (Movement for Canadian Literacy)**

The Learners Advisory Network (LAN) is a committee of the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL). Each province and territory chooses a learner representative to sit on the committee. The learner representatives help to move literacy policy ahead in Canada by speaking about their knowledge and experiences. The MCL website has a section designed for learners, with text and audio, describing various ways that learners can support literacy: [www.interactivistlearning.com](http://www.interactivistlearning.com)

#### **Learner Leadership Initiative**

Building from a successful 2007 Summer Literacy Institute which brought together learners, tutors and practitioners, Literacy BC moved forward with a new project to empower adult learners with the skills and confidence to play a leadership role in their communities as advocates for literacy. Learners participated in International Adult Learners Week, and the Council of Ministers of Education conference. Learners sit on the Literacy BC Board, as well as on literacy project committees. Currently, there is an ad hoc advisory committee made up of learners from BC and across Canada. Funding is being sought to support learners in further leadership skill development.

### **LEARNER STORIES**

The Literacy BC website highlights BC learners' stories

The Book of Changes: Movement for Canadian Literacy, [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca)

The Learning Lives of Adults with Low Literacy Skills: A Close up Look at 10 Canadians. Maurice Taylor. Ottawa:

Partnerships in Learning, 2004. <http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/mtaylor/closeup/closeup.pdf>

Living and Learning: Essential Skills Success Stories. HRSDC, 2006. <http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/oles/living/living.pdf>

Profiles in Learning - ABC Canada. [http://www.abc-canada.org/en/adult\\_literacy/profiles](http://www.abc-canada.org/en/adult_literacy/profiles)

Story of the Week (National Adult Literacy Database). <http://www.nald.ca/story/story.htm>

## **Training**

Regional Literacy Coordinators facilitate training and professional development for community literacy practitioners and other practitioners in their communities.

To identify possible workshops or experts, view the 2004 Directory of Literacy Resource People in BC, developed by Vancouver Community College: <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/direct/1.htm>.

Literacy BC's **Provincial Literacy Resource Centre** provides lists of resources that include new and popular resources, and topic-specific lists such as tutoring, ESL, early childhood, aboriginal, workplace literacy, health literacy, among others. Demonstrate the availability of information and resources on workshop topics by bringing a selection of resources for display at events and workshops. The Provincial Literacy Resource Centre will send you a box of library resources on a particular topic, such as tutor training, workplace and essential skills, health literacy, etc.

In partnership with Literacy BC, the Centre for Family Literacy and 2010 Legacies Now, Vancouver Community College hosts the **Family Literacy Certificate Program**. Designed for those who currently work or plan to work in family literacy, this

certificate program builds participants' knowledge and skills in a wide range of areas that are key to high quality programs and services. Unique in Canada, this credential offers an excellent curriculum facilitated by leaders in the family literacy field.

**Pivotal Moments in the Classroom** is a new workshop with Kate Nonesuch and Shayna Hornstein that RLCs can bring to their regions. Using reflective dialogue and activities, this workshop helps practitioners explore pivotal moments in the classroom with the wisdom of hindsight, humour, and compassion; uncover issues that help clarify the challenges they feel; and discover alternate paths that refresh practice and support health. Contact Kate Nonesuch: 250-381-1824 or [KateNonesuch@shaw.ca](mailto:KateNonesuch@shaw.ca)

**Writing Out Loud** (<http://www.writingoutloud.ca/>) is an approach to writing that allows us to write about our lives in new ways. Used in a safe, nonjudgmental environment, Writing Out Loud does not emphasize the mechanics of grammar and spelling; rather it focuses on putting our thoughts, feelings and worries into written words and on enjoying the writing process. Instructors and students write and learn together. Achieve certification as a Writing Out Loud instructor through an online training course and/or bring a Writing Out Loud instructor to your community to do a workshop. Contact Deborah Morgan ([Deborah\\_Morgan@elit.ca](mailto:Deborah_Morgan@elit.ca)) or Diana Twiss ([Diana\\_Twiss@elit.ca](mailto:Diana_Twiss@elit.ca)).

## Policy Input and Strategic Leadership

The role of the Regional Literacy Coordinator is to gather and document regional literacy issues and concerns and communicate these to provincial, regional and community partners.

Regional Literacy Coordinators also utilize regional, provincial, and national data and other policy-driven research to advise program and policy development.

### KEY POLICY RESOURCES

#### **International Adult Literacy & Skills Survey (IALSS) (2003)**

Measured Canadians' ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community. See Literacy BC information sheet 'Literacy in British Columbia' (available at [www.literacybc.ca](http://www.literacybc.ca)) for a summary of findings to find more details about the state of literacy in BC and its many implications.

#### **Adult Opportunities Action Plan** <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/literacy/actionplan.htm>

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development's adult literacy strategy to enable British Columbian adults to attain and maintain the literacy skills necessary to participate fully in the modern society and global economy.

#### **Canadian Council on Learning, Composite Learning Index.** <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/ccl/reports/cli?Language=EN>

Provides an annual measure of Canada's performance in a number of areas related to lifelong learning. Based on statistical indicators that reflect the different ways Canadians learn - in school, in the home, at work and within their community.

#### **Reading the Future.** Canadian Council on Learning (2008).

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/ReadingFuture?Language=EN>

Provides projections of adult literacy levels through to 2031, a close-up look at the 'face' of low literacy, and approaches to improve literacy among six identified groups.

## Part 3: Tools of the Trade

### Commonly Used Acronyms

<b>ABE</b>	Adult Basic Education
<b>ALMD</b>	Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
<b>CALP</b>	Community Adult Literacy Program
<b>CCL</b>	Canadian Council on Learning
<b>CLI</b>	Composite Learning Index
<b>DLP</b>	District Literacy Plan
<b>ESLSAP</b>	English as a Second Language Settlement Assistance Program
<b>ES</b>	Essential Skills
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time equivalent
<b>HRSDC</b>	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
<b>FLD/FLW</b>	Family Literacy Day/Family Literacy Week
<b>IALSS</b>	International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey
<b>IALW</b>	International Adult Learners' Week
<b>ILD</b>	International Literacy Day
<b>LBC</b>	Literacy BC
<b>LD</b>	Learning Disabilities
<b>MAG</b>	Ministry of the Attorney General
<b>MCL</b>	Movement for Canadian Literacy
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education

<b>NALD</b>	National Adult Literacy Database
<b>OLES</b>	Office of Literacy and Essential Skills
<b>RiP</b>	Research in Practice
<b>RiPAL</b>	Research in Practice in Adult Literacy
<b>RLC</b>	Regional Literacy Coordinator/Coordination

## **Working Tools**

In April 2008, Regional Literacy Coordinators were asked to name the tools that enable them to do this work. Here are some of their responses ...

A supportive spouse

Flexibility

Ability to think BIG picture

Respect for all people

Patience

Tact

Consistency

Winter tires

A better wardrobe

Dementia

The ability to work while being pulled in multiple directions

Humour

Humility

Honesty

## What It's All About

In April 2008, Regional Literacy Coordinators were asked to select a fictional character they identify with and to name their theme song. Here's what they said ...

RLCs identify with:

Jane Austen's 'Emma'  
Anne of Green Gables  
Kermit the Frog  
The Crocodile Hunter  
Zorro  
Tinkerbell  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer  
A Super Hero Dog on Many Leashes

RLC theme songs:

Climb Every Mountain  
Leaving on a Jet Plane  
Volunteers  
Always Look on the Bright Side of Life  
Is That All There Is?  
A Little Less Conversation (A Little More Action)  
I Will Survive  
I'm Walking Backwards for Christmas  
You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet  
Do You Remember?  
Both Sides Now  
Helpless  
Imagine  
Hallelujah!