

**Needs Assessment Study
on Literacy
for Métis People**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY ON
LITERACY FOR MÉTIS PEOPLE

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Project Coordinator

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Introduction

What is Literacy?

Literacy is certainly a "hot" topic. Every few days, or weeks, we hear about literacy from our neighbours, friends, family members, or in the media. The information may vary, but it will generally look like this:

- Four Canadian adults out often cannot meet daily reading demands ...
- Children do not appear to be learning the three Rs (writing, reading and arithmetic) ...
- His job now requires a written exam and he can't read, so he lost his job even though he had been doing it for fifteen years...
- I know this university graduate who can't read...

These examples clearly show the omnipresence of literacy in your day-to-day life, but what do we mean exactly by literacy? Traditionally, literacy has been defined as "the ability to read and write," which implied that a literate person could read and write while an illiterate person would be "unable to read" or "uneducated."

However, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) defined literacy as "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential"¹. Clearly, the IALS definition is much more encompassing than the simple "ability to read and write" and it recognizes the fact that literacy is not simply black and white, but rather shades of grey. Some participants in our Focus Groups on Literacy echoed this definition of literacy as they stated that reading was important, but comprehending the information was even more so.

Literacy is an illness in itself, in my opinion. I mean, if you're illiterate you have a serious problem, you can't deal with society, and can't function in society today. It doesn't matter what you do, you've got to be able to read, you get your welfare cheque, you've got to be able to read cause you are going to be ripped off.

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

1. OECD, *Literacy, Economy and Society*, 1995. p. 14.

In a previous joint report the Métis National Council and the Gabriel Dumont Institute² stated that a literacy campaign involving Aboriginal peoples must:

1. Recognize the existence of a variety of literacies in Aboriginal communities;
2. Recognize English-language literacy programming for Aboriginal peoples as cross-cultural experiences;
3. Recognize the tensions between orality and literacy;
4. Recognize that non-literate people have different language methods, concepts, and techniques than English or French writers;
5. Recognize that the teaching of essayist English is a narrow and restricted training in English literacy;
6. Recognize that literacy is not new to communities and that the resistance in the present context is related to the system which has forced English or French language literacy at the expense of the Aboriginal languages;
7. Recognize that there is resistance to literacy within Aboriginal communities based on the threat to cultural identity posed by the assumption of the values of an outside culture bound within the English or French language literacy;
8. Recognize that there are serious differences of opinion within Aboriginal communities on the costs and benefits of English or French language literacy;
9. Recognize the rich heritage of language experience both oral and literate that Aboriginal peoples possess;
10. Recognize that issues of English or French language literacy cannot be considered in isolation from issues of Aboriginal language retention, retrieval and renewal.

Importance of Literacy

As we discussed literacy, many Focus Groups' participants were quick to point out that having difficulties in reading and writing does not mean that the person is not intelligent. In this regard, one of the participants said:

My mom she has never been in school in her life, and yet she is a very smart old lady.

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

And, he is right! Literacy is a very important skill, but it is nothing more and nothing less than a skill, that can be learned. But, why is this skill so important? Because as the Focus Groups' participants were quick to point out, it has an impact on every aspect of our lives:

2. Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and applied Research Inc. & Métis National Council, [Literacy for Métis People: A National Strategy](#), p. 13.

It's the parent that has been labeled as an abusive parent because she didn't know how to read and write... has ruined the digestive system of her child. She had no intention of hurting this child, but because she didn't know how she had to do this...

- Woman, Winnipeg, Manitoba

What made me actually go back to school, was when my son came after me, he was 4, and he asked me to read him a book and I just couldn't, and it was like go see grandma. I couldn't tell him that I couldn't read or nothing. I just sent him to my mom... So, then I told my mom I definitely have to go back at school, but I said I just don't have the self-esteem to turn around and do it right now, just kept putting it off, and just staying home... When I came here, I couldn't even do half the stuff here. I wouldn't be able to talk to anybody, I wouldn't be able to do what I'm doing right now. I wouldn't be able if it wasn't for Jim and Ruby and the staff from here. Last year, we had our Learner Conference, and I was the MC for that and I wouldn't have had self-esteem to go up in front of everybody and handle it from the start to the finish if it wasn't for Beat the Street. Like Beat the Street helped me a lot with self-esteem and that, and getting it, like right now I'm doing my pre-GED (General Education Diploma)...

- Woman, Winnipeg, Manitoba

We are not only trying to get these people in the labour market we're trying to have them overcome their barriers, and this (literacy) is a great barrier ...

Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta

Literacy is also as a component of life skills...some people are not training ready, because they don't have a life skills...command of a language that would allow them into the workplace in a competitive sense, but you can't really segregate the two...they are tied together and is there a way to include this in other programs as well...

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

Measuring the Literacy Skills of the Canadian Population

In the last few years, the federal government, through Statistics Canada, has tried to assess the literacy skills of Canadians. The first national study developed by Statistics Canada was the 1989 Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA). The LSUDA completed in 1989 "measured and reported on three literacy dimensions: a reading scale (including both prose and document items); a numeracy scale; and a writing test, which was experimental"³.

Although Statistics Canada used a four-level reading scale, its most famous quote refers to only one number: "38% of Canadian adults are not functioning at the required reading level to meet daily demands"⁴. You are probably shocked by this amazingly high figure, even though you probably heard it before, but imagine its impact back in 1989!

What the report said was certainly shocking, but it did not mean that nearly four Canadians out of ten could not read. In fact, this survey clearly demonstrated that the Canadian population could not be simply divide between literate and illiterate people. Table 1 demonstrates these shades of grey, as 7% of the Canadian population would say they cannot read, 9% would say they have difficulties with some reading materials, and 22% would have some difficulties and try to avoid situations requiring reading. Therefore, the quoted figure of 38% is made up of these three groups of people, who have highly different literacy needs. The remaining 62% were able to meet most daily reading demands even though their literacy abilities varied considerably.

3. Statistics Canada, [Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey {IALS}](#), Technical Note #1, p. 1.

4. Statistics Canada, [Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey {IALS}](#), Technical Note #2, p. 2.

Table 1⁵ 1989 Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (Canadians aged 16 to 69)

| level | Reading | Numeracy |
|-------|---|---|
| 1 | Canadians at this level have difficulty dealing with printed materials. They most likely identify themselves as people who cannot read. In Canada, 7% of adults are at this level. | Canadians at this level have very limited numeracy abilities which enable them to, at most, locate and recognize numbers in isolation or in a short text. In Canada, 14% of adults are at this level. |
| 2 | Canadians at this level can use printed materials only for limited purposes such as finding a familiar word in a simple text. They would likely recognize themselves as having difficulties with common reading materials. In Canada, 9% of adults are at this level. | Canadians at this level can deal with material requiring them to perform a simple numerical operation such as addition and subtraction. In Canada, 25% of adults are at this level. |
| 3 | Canadians at this level can use reading materials in a variety of situations provided the material is simple, clearly laid out, and the tasks involved are not too complex. While these people generally do not see themselves as having major reading difficulties, they tend to avoid situations requiring reading. In Canada, 22% of adults are at this level. | Canadians at this level meet most everyday reading demands. This is a large and diverse group which exhibits a wide range of reading skills. In Canada, 62% of adults are at this level. |
| 4 | Canadians at this level meet most everyday reading demands. This is a large and diverse group which exhibits a wide range of reading skills. In Canada, 62% of adults are at this level. | |

Note: The LSUDA included a writing skills component, which required participants to write a note to a family member to turn on the oven and a letter requesting the repair of an appliance. However, these questions did not provide the information necessary to establish a continuum of skills as the:

- Time constraints allowed time for only two questions; and,
- Dimensions of everyday writing are not well known.

5. Statistics Canada, Adult literacy in Canada: results of a national study, pp. 17-21.

The second national literacy survey was part of a broader international survey being conducted in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. This study, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), was undertaken in 1994. One of the main goals, or challenges, of the IALS was to assess the literacy and numeracy skills of people across cultures and languages. Table 2 shows examples of IALS levels for its three literacy domains⁶:

- Prose Literacy: The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, poems and fiction;
- Document Literacy: The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphics; and,
- Quantitative Literacy: The knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

6. Statistics Canada, Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), p. 10.

Table 2⁷ International Adult Literacy Survey (1994)

| Level | Prose | Document | Quantitative |
|-------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Use the instructions on the bottle to identify the maximum duration recommended for taking aspirins. In Canada, 18% of adults are at the level. | Identify the percentage of Greek teachers who are women by looking at a simple pictorial graph. In Canada 19% of adults are at the level. | Fill the figure on the last line of an order form, "Total with Handling." by adding the ticket price of \$50 to a handling charge of \$2. In Canada, 18% of adults are at this level. |
| 2 | Identify a short piece of information about the characteristics of a garden plant, from a written article. In Canada, 26% of adults are at this level. | Identify the year in which the fewest Dutch people were injured by fireworks, when presented with two simple graphs. In Canada, 25% of adults are at this level. | Work out how many degrees warmer today's forecast high temperature is in Bangkok than in Seoul, using a table accompanying a weather chart. In Canada, 26% of adults are at this level. |
| 3 | Answer a brief question on how to conduct a job interview, requiring the reader to read a pamphlet on recruitment interviews and integrate two pieces of information into a single statement. In Canada, 35% of adults are at this level. | Identify the time of the last bus on a Saturday night, using a bus schedule. In Canada, 32% of adults are at this level. | Work out how much more energy Canada produces than it consumes, by comparing figures on two bar chart. In Canada, 34% of adults are at this level. |
| 4 | Answer a brief question on how to conduct a job interview requiring the reader to read a pamphlet on recruitment interviews and integrate two pieces of information into a single statement. In Canada, 22% of adults are at levels 4 and 5. | Summarize how the percentages of oil used for different purposes changed over a specified period, by comparing two pie charts. In Canada 24% of adults are at levels 4 and 5. | Calculate how much money you will have if you invest \$100 at a rate of 6% for 10 years, using a compound interest table. In Canada, 22% of adults are at levels 4 and 5. |
| 5 | Use an announcement from a personal department to answer a question that uses different phrasing from that used in the text. | Identify the average advertised price for the best-rated basic clock radio in a consumer survey, requiring the assimilation of several pieces of information. | Use information on a table of nutritional analysis to calculate the percentage of calories in a Big Mac [®] that comes from total fat. |

7. Statistics Canada, Results from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), p. 16 & p. 20.

Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People

Both the 1989 Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities and the International Adult Literacy Survey provided amazing insights in the understanding of literacy in Canada. But, they failed to measure the literacy skills of Aboriginal peoples.

Therefore, this Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People provides a unique opportunity for the Métis National Council to assess the literacy skills of the Métis people. The two main objectives of this needs assessment study are to:

1. Assess the literacy level of Métis people; and,
2. Identify how the literacy needs of Métis people can be addressed.

Métis National Council's Literacy Strategy

The Métis National Council first became involved in the area of literacy by collaborating with the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research Inc. of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in preparing "Literacy for Métis People: A National Strategy" for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. As the purpose of the "research was to provide recommendations for action in the areas of policy, program and strategies to meet the literacy needs of Métis people," it constitutes the underlying principles and guidelines for the Métis National Council's Literacy Strategy.

In their report, the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Métis National Council recommended the following:

- 1 That a national forum be held in the near future for Métis people to discuss and debate the issue of literacy for Métis people;
- 2 That the government of Canada in collaboration with members of the Métis community, develop a literacy campaign specifically designed to meet the needs of Métis communities and individuals;
- 3 That the government of Canada pass the Métis Peoples' Education Act to define the parameters for federal funding of educational programs for Métis people;
4. That the government of Canada adopt the concept of Métis control of Métis education as a framework for the provision of educational services to the Métis people of Canada;
- 5 That the government of Canada establish support structures for the education of Métis people;
6. That a national literacy needs assessment of the Métis people be undertaken;
That a national literacy coalition for Métis people be formed made up of representatives of the Métis people of Canada with the mandate to manage the activities of the literacy campaign;
8. That research be undertaken to establish philosophical and pedagogical criteria for the foundation of curriculum and programs for Métis people; and,
9. That a national literacy council for Métis people be formed to bring together practitioners working in the literacy campaign for Métis people.

Phase I - Increasing Awareness of Literacy

In early 1995, the MNC undertook Phase I of the MNC's Literacy Strategy which had as its main objectives:

- Prepare for the National Métis Forum on Literacy by involving leaders of the Métis Nation;
- Increase awareness on literacy and the National Métis Forum on Literacy in Métis communities;
- Research, write and produce a background paper for the National Métis Forum on Literacy.

During Phase I, the MNC President, Gerald Morin, played a pivotal role as he increased awareness in Métis communities by making literacy a central topic of all of his discussions throughout the Métis Homeland.

A number of recommendations was also brought forward during this phase including:

- 1 That our National Métis Forum on Literacy creates a mission statement;
- 2 That there should be an analysis of the current literacy situation;
- 3 That there be expert guidance in realizing the steps between the current situation and the vision of the future;
- 4 That Métis leaders need to facilitate the process whereby bottom-up initiatives are harmonized with top-down ones and each supports the other;
- 5 That various literacy models be available to participants to demonstrate community literacy programs; and,
- 6 That outside agencies be exposed to Métis culture, so that their energy and knowledge can be properly harnessed along with local literacy volunteers.

Phase II - National Métis Forum on Literacy

With Phase II of the MNC's Literacy Strategy, the Métis National Council fulfilled the first recommendation of "Literacy for Métis People: A National Strategy" by organizing the National Métis Forum on Literacy in Calgary, on November 23 - 24, 1995. More than one hundred and fifty Métis participated in this Forum providing them with a great opportunity to discuss, debate and share information on literacy for Métis people.

At the end of the National Métis Literacy Forum, a number of recommendations were also brought forward including:

- 1 Involve of youth in any decision-making body or forum dealing with literacy initiatives;
- 2 Involve Elders in planning and directing literacy projects as they must play a key role in preserving education and culture;
- 3 Direct leaders to devote more time to the elders' circle and-provide opportunities for youth to learn and preserve Métis culture;
- 4 Establish a inter-provincial working group on literacy, which would be broadly mandated to address the wide range of issues related to improving the literacy of Métis people;
- 5 Work in conjunction with the Gabriel Dumont Institute to develop materials and curriculum;
- 6 Share information on success stories;
- 7 Continue study and revival of the Michif language;
- 8 Honour both Native and European traditions in Métis personality;
- 9 Punctuality and enterprise; and,
10. Training in computer literacy skills should be made available for Métis people.

Phase III - Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People

With Phase III of the MNC's Literacy Strategy, the Métis National Council followed up on the sixth recommendation from the joint report by the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Métis National Council, and the second recommendation arising from Phase I. The Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People represents the first study on literacy for Métis people across the Métis Homeland and provides the groundwork for future Métis-specific literacy campaigns or programs.

This Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People had two main objectives:

1. Assess the literacy level of Métis people; and,
2. Identify how the literacy needs of the Métis people can be addressed.

To answer these two important questions, we used both questionnaires and focus groups. The literacy survey was mainly used to obtain quantitative data, while focus groups provided the qualitative information required.

MNC Literacy Survey

To develop the MNC's Literacy Survey, we relied upon information gathered from national and provincial literacy organizations, as well as surveys developed by the Métis Nation of Alberta and Statistics Canada. Our main concern in developing the MNC's Literacy Survey was its cultural appropriateness. However, this raised some important questions:

- What is meant by culturally-appropriate?
- What is meant by Métis-specific?
- Can a literacy survey be culturally-appropriate, or for that matter, culturally- inappropriate?

In gathering information, we quickly realized that experts were divided on the issue of cultural appropriateness. Some experts believe it is not an issue; when you are assessing literacy in a language (in this case English) you are assessing the knowledge of the vocabulary, syntax, grammar, not the cultural knowledge. Others believe that since language is an important part of the culture, literacy surveys and programs can and should be culturally appropriate. In many ways, we took a middle-of-the-road approach. In developing the MNC's Literacy Survey, we relied heavily on the surveys developed by other organizations, such as Statistics Canada, and adapted them as required.

A. Pre-Testing of the MNC's Literacy Survey

An important component of the development of the MNC's Literacy Survey was its pre-test during the Métis Nation of Alberta's 68th Annual Assembly in Medicine Hat, August 9-11, 1996. The questionnaire was pre-tested with nearly 50 participants at the Assembly providing us with insight on various aspects of the survey. The pre-test allowed us to examine the content as well as the distribution method that should be used for the MNC's Literacy Survey. The MNC's Literacy Survey was successful in that it met our most important criteria. That is, it was not deemed offensive nor threatening by the participants.

B. Development of the MNC's Literacy Survey

Questions 1 and 33 were only used as tools for the Provincial Literacy Coordinators, allowing them to quickly identify potential participants for the Focus Groups on Literacy, as well as keeping track of the people surveyed. In that respect, it should be noted that the names were not compiled nor tabulated, and the confidentiality of the respondents was ensured.

Questions 2, 3, 4 and 18 gathered basic demographic information about the participants, such as city and province of residence, age, gender and/or labour force activity. These questions will be used in tabulating the results as age, gender, location or labour force activity may have an impact on the literacy levels and needs of the Métis people. In addition, they will provide the information necessary to establish the validity of the information gathered through the MNC's Literacy Survey.

With question 2, we hoped to compare the literacy levels and needs of the rural and urban Métis population. However, this question was often not answered or it was answered incorrectly (e.g., street name and number but the city was not identified), so we decided to simply group the information at the provincial and national levels.

Questions 5 to 11 inclusively gathered valuable information on knowledge of Aboriginal languages (Michif, Cree, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, etc.) and of Canada's official languages. With respect to the knowledge of Aboriginal languages, the survey did not list any Aboriginal languages. Rather it asked the participants to specify the Aboriginal languages they practiced. Some Focus Groups' participants criticized this decision.

My first observation on the questionnaire, and it's ironic that our institutions, I guess, through the MNC would not have the foresight, I guess, or the courtesy to acknowledge their language in their own questionnaire ... I think Métis is an Aboriginal too... There's no reason how and why you should know about the Michif, not being one, because that's acknowledge. The comment, I guess, is to the people that you report too, who represent us Michif.

-Man, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

We would like to apologize for this oversight which is mainly due to our desire to shorten the length of the questionnaire.

Questions 12, 21, 30 and 31 were used as indicators of literacy. Although we cannot assess literacy levels with these questions, they could provide some valuable information. For example, numerous studies have demonstrated that literacy practices are a good proxy measure for literacy levels, therefore, we asked the participants about their reading habits and also about the availability of reading material, as it might encourage reading. Studies have also demonstrated that literacy is inversely related to the number of hours spent watching television, that is if a person spends a significant number of hours watching television, chances are that his or hers literacy level will be relatively low.

Questions 13 to 17 inclusively dealt with the level of education attained by the respondents and their parents. Studies have demonstrated that the parents' level of education is correlated to the level of education attained by the offspring. We decided to use education as a proxy measure for literacy even though it is flawed. The International Adult Literacy Survey has concluded that roughly a third of the respondents had literacy skills that did not match their education levels. In other words, even though Statistics Canada defines as "functionally illiterate" someone with less than nine years of education, some of these people would be able to meet daily reading and writing demands. So, if education is a somewhat flawed proxy measure for literacy why do we use it? We use education because it will allow us to compare the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey with the Canadian results.

Questions 19, 20, 22 and 32 asked the participants to assess their own literacy skills. As we were developing the survey, we quickly realized that testing the literacy level of participants would not be appropriate for a number of reasons. First, participants might feel threatened by a literacy test and refuse to participate. Second, as the questionnaires were distributed widely across the Homeland, it would have been extremely difficult to ensure uniformity in the administration of the questionnaire. Third, testing one's literacy level would have required extensive training for literacy coordinators which was simply not feasible due to financial constraints. For example, the questionnaire used for the International Adult Literacy Survey cost over \$100 per person surveyed to administer. In opting for a literacy self-assessment, we relied on a system which is less threatening, easier to administer and more cost-efficient.

Questions 23 to 29 inclusively directly addressed the issue of literacy campaign and programs. With these questions we were trying to gather information on literacy needs and how they could be fulfilled. Although these issues were also addressed more thoroughly during the focus groups, the literacy survey allowed us to gather preliminary information from the participants surveyed.

C. Distribution of the MNC's Literacy Survey

The MNC's Literacy Survey was distributed through different channels. In Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario the distribution of the surveys was delegated to Provincial Literacy Coordinators, who were specifically hired to conduct this project. This decision was severely criticized by a participant at one of the Focus Groups on Literacy who said:

My personal opinion, that there is certainly a need for a needs assessment study, but I think it's something that's going to be, has to be brought down to the provincial organizations, rather than the MNC trying to identify the needs of Canada. I mean if every provincial organization that is out there identifies and does the work for the MNC, you may be able to accomplish something. Like, for the MNC to try to identify the needs of the province on their own, I don't see where the success rate is going to be. I don't see where, there's gonna be any validity to what they are doing.

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

In Manitoba and British Columbia, the MNC's member organizations distributed the literacy survey through their membership.

Focus Groups on Literacy

Focus Groups on Literacy were held in ten Métis communities across the Métis Homeland during the winter of 1997:

- Ontario (North Bay and Thunder Bay)
- Manitoba (Swan River and Winnipeg)
- Saskatchewan (Regina and Saskatoon)
- Alberta (Mayerthorpe and Slave Lake)
- British Columbia (Duncan and Kamloops)

The ten Focus Groups on Literacy played a pivotal role in the success of this Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People, and these sessions provided the impetus for future phases of the MNC's Literacy Strategy. It also provided another great opportunity to increase awareness in Métis communities about the importance of literacy.

The Big Picture

National Results of the MNC Literacy Survey

Whether we look at a public opinion poll or a needs assessment study, they share one important component. They all provide information on the people surveyed, their age, gender, place of residence, and so on. This Needs Assessments Study on Literacy for Métis People will not be any different. We will also examine the age, gender, languages spoken, and province of residence of the respondents before addressing any literacy issues. This information is crucial, as it will allow us to determine if the 1,743 respondents in the MNC's Literacy Survey truly represent the Métis Nation.

So, who are the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey? First of all, it should be noted that the MNC's Literacy Surveys were administered throughout the Métis Homeland. As 340 persons from Ontario, 308 from Manitoba, 423 from Saskatchewan, 448 from Alberta, and 224 from British Columbia participated in the MNC's Literacy Survey.

Graph 1 shows that more women (53.6%) than men (46.4%) took part in the survey. Does this represent the Métis Nation? This is a very important question as the Census continuously fails to adequately identify the Métis population of this country. As an enumeration of the Métis people has not been undertaken yet. So, we have to rely on the only source of information available on the Métis, the "Profile of the Métis" published by Statistics Canada, in 1996, even though it is flawed.

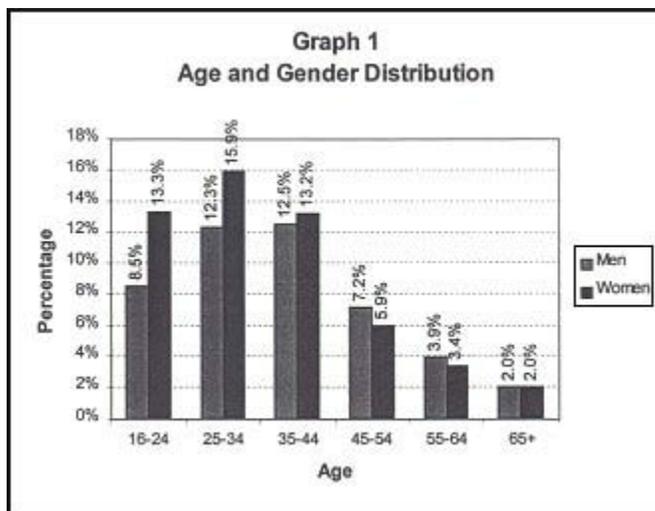
The "Profile of the Métis"¹ stated that women represent 50.6% of the Métis population, while men represent 49.4%. Therefore, women seem to be slightly over represented in this MNC's Literacy Survey. This overrepresentation is mainly due to the fact that more than two-thirds (67.1%) of the respondents in Alberta were women, and to a lesser extent where 55.0% of the respondents in Manitoba were women.

Graph I also shows that the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey were quite young. As more than three-quarters (75.7%) of the respondents are less than 45 years old. Does this reflect the age distribution of the Métis Nation? Once again, we need to compare the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey to the "Profile of the Métis"², where less than two-thirds (63.6%) of the respondents over the age of 16, are between the ages of 16 and 44.

1. Statistics Canada, [A Profile of the Métis](#), 1996, p. 15.

2. Statistics Canada, [A Profile of the Métis](#), 1996, p. 15.

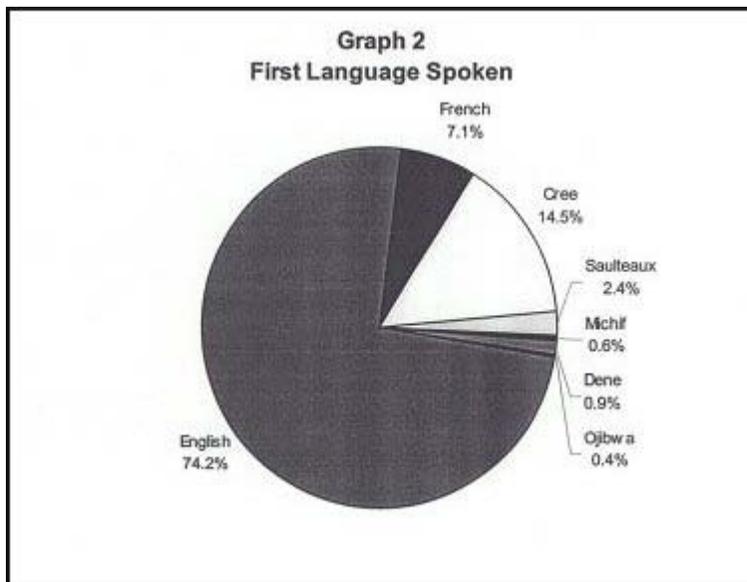
As a result, it is not surprising to note that the 16-24 years old are slightly over represented, and the people between the ages of 25 and 64 are slightly underrepresented.



When we first started this project, we decided to assess the literacy skills and needs of the Métis people in English. Therefore, a close look at the languages spoken, read and written by the Métis people can provide some valid insights on their literacy skills. What are the first languages spoken by the Métis people? Graph 2 shows that English is the mother tongue of nearly three-quarters (74.2%) of the respondents. Cree comes in second with roughly one person out of seven (14.5%), followed by French at 7.1% and Saulteaux at 2.4%. Collectively, Michif, Dene and Ojibwa were the mother tongues of less than 2% of the respondents.

Even though English is the mother tongue of roughly three-quarters of the respondents in four of the five provinces; the picture is quite different for the other languages. In Ontario, French comes in second place, as it is the mother tongue of more than one respondent in four. In Manitoba, the most common mother tongues after English are Saulteaux and French, which are each spoken by roughly one respondent in ten. Cree comes in second in Saskatchewan, roughly one participant in five (21.3%), and Alberta, three respondents in ten (29.9%).

The situation is different in British Columbia, where well over four respondents in five (85.4%) of the respondents identified English as a mother tongue. The second most common mother tongues are French and Cree with less than one respondent in fifteen (6.7%).



As we are trying to assess literacy skills in English, this raises an interesting question. What is the language they have first learned to read and write? Nearly all (93.2%) the respondents first learned to read and write in English. Roughly one respondent in twenty (5.5%) first learned to read and write in French, while a handful of people say they've first learned in Cree, Ojibwa or Saulteaux. Even though we never asked the participants where they've learned to read and write, these results suggest that most respondents learned to read and write in school.

But does it mean that they have never learned how to read and write in their mother tongue? No, as more than four respondents in five (82.3%) say they can read and write in their mother tongue. It reaches a high of 95.9% for the people identifying English as a mother tongue, to drop to two-thirds (66.4%) of the people identifying French, and roughly a third (35.0%) of the people identifying an Aboriginal language.

Even though nearly all (95.3%) respondents still speak their first language, it might not surprise you to find out that most respondents (92.8%) say they communicate more easily in English. In fact, virtually all (99.8%) the respondents identifying English as their mother tongue say they communicate more easily in English. And, it is also true for four respondents in five (79.5%) who say their first mother tongue is French, and by seven out of ten (70.0%) respondents who say they have first learned to speak an Aboriginal language.

While most participants say they communicate more easily in English, it is interesting to see that roughly two-thirds (65.7%) of the respondents say they communicate well or very well in English. But, once again regional variances can be found. Three-quarters of the respondents in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta say they speak English well or very well. But, this proportion drops to nearly three respondents in five (57.5%) in British Columbia and less than half (44.7%) of the respondents in Saskatchewan.

Education

Education and literacy are often considered one and the same thing. After all, why do we go to school, if it's not to learn how to read and write? This relationship between education and literacy has been acknowledged by Statistics Canada, which often used education as a proxy measure for literacy by defining as "functionally illiterate" someone with less than nine years of education.

Some may question this proxy measure, as we all know people who have graduated from high school without knowing how to read and write, and we also know people with less than nine years of education who can read very well. In fact, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)³ found that for a third of the respondents education was not a good indicator of literacy skills. Second, the IALS concluded that 44%⁴ of the Canadian population could not meet daily reading demands, while only 9.6%⁵ of the Non- Aboriginal Canadian population had less than nine years of education. Therefore, education as a proxy measure for education can seriously underestimate the number of people who need to improve their literacy skills.

So, should we still use education as a proxy measure of literacy? Absolutely, even though we acknowledge its important weaknesses, it allows us to compare the education levels, and to a certain extent the literacy skills, of the Métis people with the Canadian population. Before you take a closer look at Graph 3, we have two questions for you:

1. Who do you think has higher levels of education, the participants of the MNC's Literacy Surveyor their parents?
2. What is the most common level of education attained by the participants and their parents?

You probably don't need to look at Graph 3 to answer the first question, as you probably already know the answers. A quick look at your family and friends tells the story, participants have usually attained higher levels of education than their parents. A well- educated participant in a Focus Group on Literacy in Alberta said:

3 Statistics Canada, [Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada](#), 1996, p. 26.

4. Statistics Canada, [Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada, Background](#), 1996, p. 3.

5. Statistics Canada, [A Profile of the Métis](#), 1996, p. 35.

Both my parents have very little schooling. My father taught himself how to read so that he wouldn't be ignorant when we went to school... it was a big challenge for him and he was very proud that he could read the newspapers, and things like that, but he was self-taught, and my mother the same way. And they couldn't cope with what we were learning in school and that was very frustrating for them.

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

This "generation gap" is also evident in the Canadian population, and results mainly from a changing society, where opportunities to pursue schooling are better and demands from the job market for higher education levels are greater. This "generation gap" is also clearly explained by a participant in a Focus Group on Literacy who said the following:

It wasn't hard to find jobs. You could walk out the door and the next day you'd have a job. I mean, you look back to my grandparents, my grandfather worked all his life, he had a Grade 5 education if that, and he worked all his life at a good paying job. The emphasis wasn't put on education, and jobs were a dime a dozen so to speak, you know...

- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario

And, what is the answer to our second question? Any wild guesses? Graph 3 shows that more than two respondents in five (42.3%) have attained a Grade 9-11 education level, while three parents out of five have attained a Grade 5-8 education level.

But, Graph 3 tells a lot more than that, so let's take a closer look. First of all, it is obvious that roughly two-thirds of the respondents did not graduate from high school. In comparison, a third (33.5%)⁶ of the non-Aboriginal Canadian population did not graduate from high school. Further, the proportion of people with less than nine years of education doubles when we compare the Métis and the non-Aboriginal population. As one non-Aboriginal Canadian in ten (9.6%)⁷ has less than nine years of education while it is the case for more than one Métis respondent in five (22.6%).

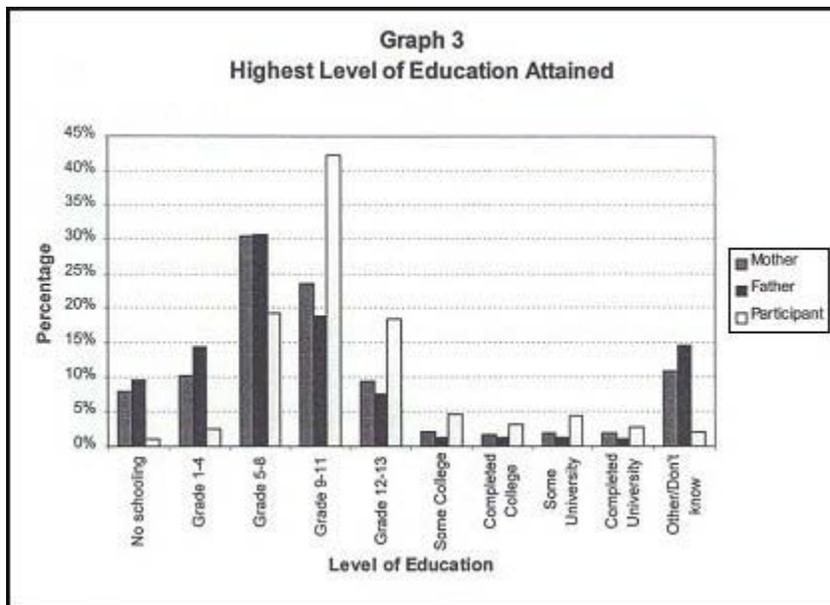
Similarly, 8.8% of the Métis population has some post-secondary education, while it climbs to 15.0%⁸ for the non-Aboriginal population. But, the gap between the people who have completed a post-secondary education is even greater. Roughly one Métis respondent in twenty (5.8%) has completed a post-secondary education, but over a third (35.9%)⁹ of the non-Aboriginal population has obtained a postsecondary certificate, degree or diploma. But, why is this so? We'll ask for your patience at this time, as Graph 6 will provide more information explaining why the Métis respondents left school.

6. Statistics Canada, *A Profile of the Métis*, 1996, p. 35.

7. Statistics Canada, *A Profile of the Métis*, 1996, p. 35.

8. Statistics Canada, *A Profile of the Métis*, 1996, p. 35.

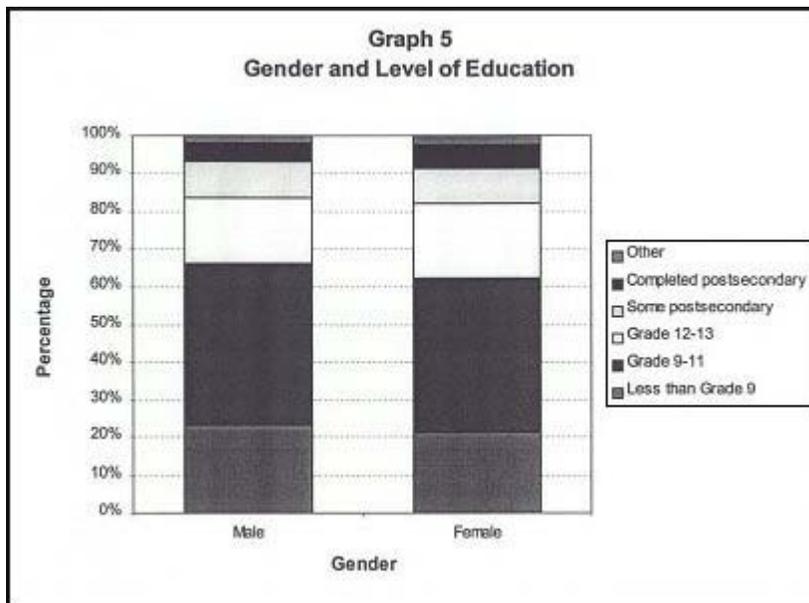
9. Statistics Canada, *A Profile of the Métis*, 1996, p. 35.



In regard to the education level attained by the participants, it is interesting to note some of the regional variances. For example, while two respondents out of five have a Grade 9-11, it is as low as one respondent in four (26.2%) in Ontario, and it peaks at half (50.5%) of the respondents in British Columbia. Further, Ontario has a much higher proportion of people with a Grade 12-13 (25.6%), some postsecondary education (15.0%) and completed postsecondary education (11.1%).

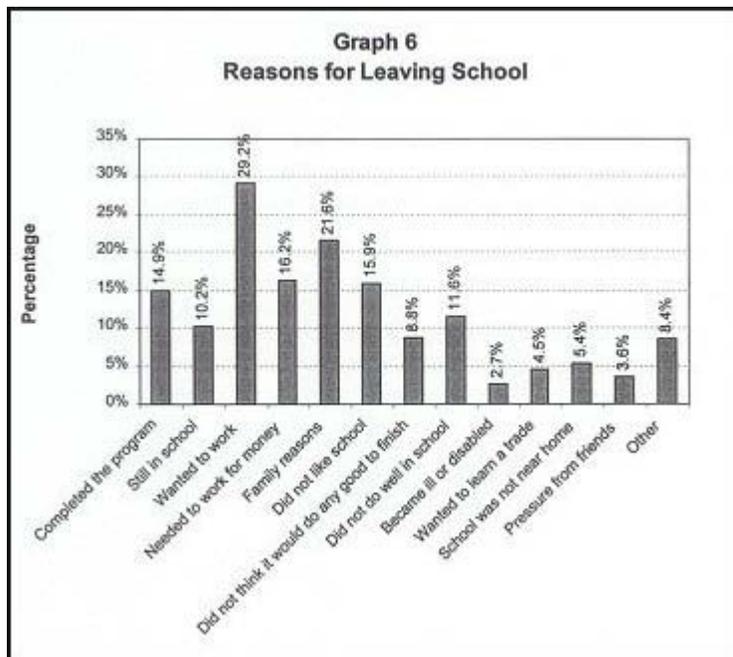
Even if there is a relatively high proportion of people who answered "other/don't know" for the level of education of their parents, it is still clear that Graph 3 shows quite a different educational attainment picture. This is true even though roughly seven parents out of ten often did not graduate from high school, compared with roughly two-thirds of the respondents. Why? Because roughly half of the parents have less than nine years of education, while one parent in five has a Grade 9-11 education level.

This "generation gap" between the level of education attained by the respondents and their parents raised another important question: Is that "generation gap" also evident among the participants? Absolutely, as Graph 4 shows that while one respondent in ten (11.8%) between the ages of 16 and 24 has less than nine years of education, it steadily climbs to reach seven participants out of ten for the respondents over the age of 65.



Graph 3 showed that the levels of education attained by the Métis respondents are much lower than for the non-Aboriginal population. But, why is it so? Even though Graph 6 cannot provide all the answers, it will certainly provide some insight. In the MNC's Literacy Survey, we had asked the participants to state why they had left school. As they could answer this question by more than a single answer, Graph 6 totals more than 100%.

So, what are the most common reasons for leaving school? Three respondents in ten (29.2%) say they left school because they wanted to work, and over one respondent in five (21.6%) state family reasons. Having "completed the program" comes in fifth at 14.9%, after "needed to work for money" at 16.2% and "did not like school" at 15.9%.



But, what does it mean exactly? Participants at the Focus Groups on Literacy provided some invaluable insights as to why Métis people left school before graduating. Here is what they have to say:

The basic question is, if we're illiterate, why are we illiterate? Assumptions are made here that it's our fault, somewhere or somehow, somebody is going to ask that question: Where the education system fails you? That's a more fundamental question. Because now we start talking about the education system... we have an education system that is race bound. That's teaching our children to be racist, not only to be racist but to be ashamed of who they are and to try to spend the rest of their lives going through an education system trying to be white, which is physically impossible. So, of course we reject it, we're not failures, we're not dummies, but we reject that ... That's what wrong with the education system, and unless you can deal with that, you won't be able to deal with our illiteracy problem, because we don't want that kind of education, and that's the big fundamental question.

- Man, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Kids they face so much of that kind of racism, that discrimination, that peer pressure, that rather than constantly fight that system their option is just to leave it. And you know, they're hungry for an education, they want careers, they want to be valuable members of society, too. But, they have no option and particularly in this small community, there are no choices ...

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

It's probably a lot different, I still feel like I can remember going to school, I didn't like going to school, because I was separate from those kids, you know, I was different. I imagine every race feels like that, it's changing nowadays it's getting better ...

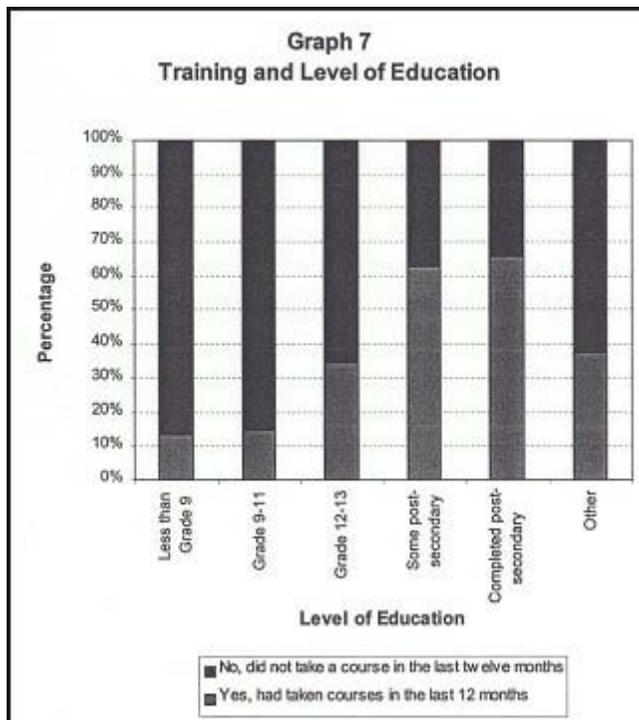
- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

Whether you like it or not there's racism, it's even the highest of educators. They say, I am not racist, I am not racist, you know, so we'll give that poor Indian this ... It's hard to admit, but you just have to understand it...

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

Who has heard about "continuous learning?" Some of you may be aware of it, since it is one of the key concepts of the 1990s. But, for those of you who may not have heard about it, here is the concept in a nutshell. You've probably already noticed that the labour market is more and more demanding in terms of skills, education and technology. While a few years ago, a high school diploma would open doors to a decent job, it is now considered as a basic requirement for the most menial of jobs. However, acquiring a college diploma or a university degree does not mean you are set for life either. In fact, even recent graduates quickly realize they need to adapt to the changing labour market, by continuously upgrading their skills. So, what could "continuous learning" mean in practical terms? No, it does not necessarily mean that they have to go back to school for three years, but simply that they may have to attend seminars, or taking a course here and there.

But, how does this concept of "continuous learning" affect the lives of the Métis people? We've asked the respondents if they had taken any courses in the last twelve months, and the results in Graph 7 are startling. As it clearly shows that the people who may be in more need of upgrading, such as those persons at the lower ends of educational levels, do not access upgrading as much as the people with higher levels of education.



This "education gap" is quite remarkable. While nearly three respondents in ten (28.1%) had taken courses in the last twelve months, it is as low as 15.4% for the people with less than nine years of education, while more than half (54.0%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education had done the same.

You may be wondering why it peaks at nearly three respondents in five (58.2%) for the people with some postsecondary education. This can be explained by the fact that roughly a third of them are still in school.

But, why is it so? Once again, the participants of the Focus Groups on Literacy provided some valuable insight. First of all, they talked about the requirements of most upgrading programs, whether it is Grade 10 or 12, we can easily tell from Graph 3, that it excludes a lot of people. The Executive Director of a Learning Centre in Winnipeg explained how her program was able to help people in her community by teaching the literacy skills required to take part in those upgrading courses:

There were education programs around but not accessible, because certain criteria had to be met in order to get to these programs. And, a lot of them didn't have at least a Grade 10 level, so that really eliminated a lot of people in accessing anything out there. So keeping that in mind, we just decided to create a program an innovative program without barriers so that people could access us... We registered, took applications, but never said no. No set guidelines for the individual... It wasn't going to be structure like the regular education institutions. It didn't work before, so we had to be creative and try to find another way so that we could attract and keep the individuals in the program.

Participants in other Focus Groups on Literacy across the Métis Homeland also noted the importance of reading and writing abilities in accessing upgrading courses:

For some, literacy was not a problem, not even a question. But, there are some people who are afraid even to take even that training which seems very easy and simple. They're afraid to take it because their reading and writing skills are not up to par, and they're not necessarily older people either. They're kids between 20 and 25...

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

I guess, that sort thing, the upgrading has not addressed the literacy problem. We have people with Grade 12 diplomas that can't read and write at a Grade 3 level. So, it hasn't addressed them. So, there's something wrong there at the root. But, I think, all the people like the ones we have in our community, if they all took upgrading again, they will be reading and writing at the same level they are now. They need the basics.

- Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta

There's so much emphasis put on going in and lets get these people job training going and get them training for this. You're still dealing with the same person that has the same education before, you only now, you've given them some skills, but you haven't given them all the skills that they require. They're still illiterate.

- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Literacy is also as a component of life skills...some people are not training ready. Because they don't have the life skills, command of a language that would allow them into the workplace in a competitive sense... But, is there a way to include this in other programs as well?

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

These last statements point out to a major concern in Métis communities. While resources are available for upgrading and training for employment, literacy training has been left out. The federal government, who is providing funding for these training courses, has excluded literacy training as it is not seen as being a component of job- readiness programs. This clearly represents a lack of vision, or foresight, as literacy skills are a major determinant of employment. A participant in a Focus Group on Literacy had the following to say about students in a job-readiness program in her community:

We have 11 students, they are Métis, and about half have a Grade 12 education. I don't know how they got there, because their literacy rate is maybe Grade 3 or 6. I use plain English all the time, but I'm happy to stop and explain very simple words, the spelling is very poor, little words like adult, guilt, you know. Their goals, what they want, what kind of jobs they want when they're done this program, are very realistic, and they aren't many barriers to those goals, until you see, the writing. One girl wants to start as receptionist and work her way into a secretary position. She can't spell secretary well. So those are the barriers, the literacy. The only barrier, that I can see, in actually getting employment.

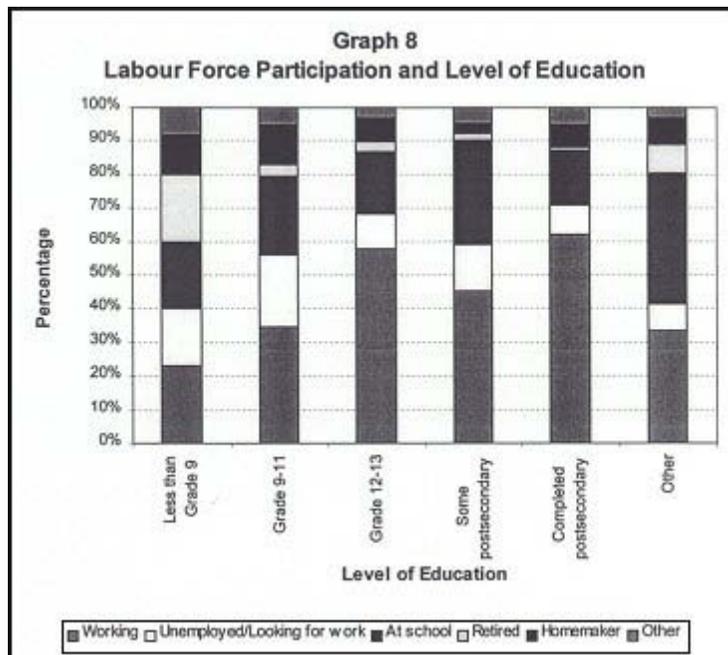
- Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta

But, does this mean that people with lower education levels do not access courses? Obviously not, as some had taken courses in the last twelve months. However, it is certainly more difficult for them. One of the persons administering the MNC's Literacy Survey talked about her own personal experience:

I thought I was one of the outsiders that didn't finish their high school, but went back after. And, when I did the survey, I realized I was in the majority of the people who have got between Grade 9 and 11, then had to go back and get their education as an adult. So that was a good feeling for me... I thought wow, you know, it's not just my family, or just me, and it felt really good.

So, here's the last, but certainly not the least important question regarding education: Does education pay? Oh, yes, as Graph 8 clearly demonstrates that while two respondents in five (39.0%) were working, their education levels were a major force. Less than a quarter (23.3%) of the people with less than nine years of education were working, compared to more than three respondents in five (62.0%) for people who have completed their postsecondary education.

Some skeptics might be tempted to point out that just over two respondents in five (45.1%) with some postsecondary education are working. But, if you look carefully, you'll see that over three respondents in ten (31.4%) are still in school.



In speaking about school, it is certainly interesting to note that over one respondent in five (22.2%) is still in school. This very sizable proportion can be explained partly by the relative youth of the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey, but also by the fact that more than half (54.8%) of the 448 respondents in Alberta are still in school. Therefore, the proportion of Métis people in school is over represented in this survey.

Literacy

We have said before that education is a useful proxy measure of literacy, even though it is flawed. We believe that the information presented in the previous section fulfills its mandate as it allows a comparison with the rest of the Canadian population. But, what else can we do to measure literacy?

One option we used to measure literacy was to ask the respondents to assess their own skills. But, this strategy could also be flawed. So, what is wrong by asking people to assess their own literacy skills? After all, who could know better about his or her own literacy skills than the actual person? Such an assumption ignores one thing: the personal factor. Some of the participants at the Focus Groups on Literacy talked about the difficulties of talking about their literacy skills, and we can only admire their courage in sharing their stories:

But, you might be asking why did we bother to ask the participants to assess their literacy skills? First, because it still provides some valid information, and by comparing some of the results with the International Adult Literacy Survey, we will still be able to gather some valuable information. Second, and most importantly, we will be able to see if the Métis population is interested in literacy training.

We asked the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey to assess their literacy skills through the following questions:

1. How would you evaluate your reading and writing abilities?
2. Have you ever had problems on the job/at school because reading and writing were hard for you?
3. Do you think that your reading and writing abilities limit your chances of getting a promotion or a job?

Nearly half (46.3%) of the respondents say their reading and writing skills are good or excellent. Does it mean that it is the same thing across the Métis Homeland? Not at all, as only three respondents in ten (29.9%) in Saskatchewan would say they have good or excellent writing skills, while nearly three respondents in five (59.2%) would say the same thing in British Columbia.

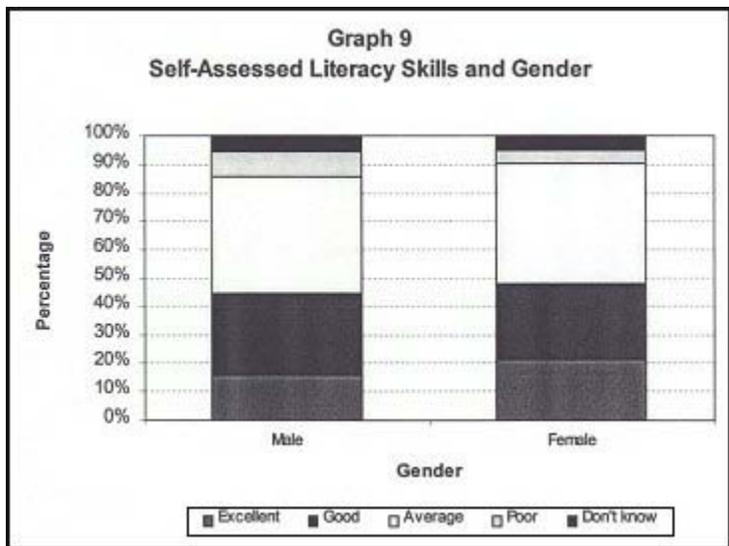
Should we be satisfied with these results? In order to understand these results we have to compare them to the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). And, what did the IALS respondents say? In the seven countries where the IALS was conducted, more than four respondents in five (80%) said they had good or excellent literacy skills, even some of the people who had been tested as having poor literacy skills would say that.

Therefore, the relatively low proportion of Métis respondents who say they have good or excellent literacy skills hints at serious literacy problems in Métis communities. Even though just over one respondent in twenty (6.3%) say they have poor literacy skills.

Further, over one respondent in five (22.3%) say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. As with previous question, this proportion is much higher in Saskatchewan, where more than one respondent in three (37.7%) said so, and much lower in British Columbia, where just over one participant in ten said the same thing (11.5%).

As well, more than a third (35.7%) of the respondents think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. As with the previous questions, regional variances are significant. Roughly a quarter (24.6%) of the respondents in Ontario compared with nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents in Saskatchewan think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

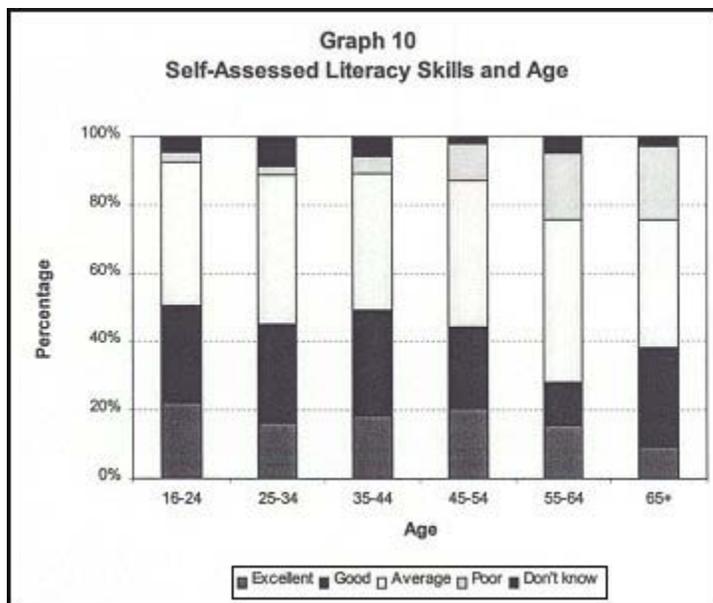
So, important regional variances exist with the self-assessed literacy skills. But, can we see a "gender gap?" Even though Graph 5 showed no noticeable differences between the level of education attained by Métis men and women, Graph 9 shows that men and women have somewhat different literacy skills. For example, a slightly higher proportion of women (48.0%) than men (44.2%) would rate their reading and writing abilities as good or excellent. Even though, the proportion of people rating their literacy skills as good or excellent varies considerably in each of the five provinces, this higher proportion of women than men is also present in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. However, in Alberta and British Columbia, men are more likely than women to rate their literacy skills as good or excellent.



This "gender gap" between men and women is even more evident with our second question. As more than one man in four (27.1%) say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, compared to less than one women in five (18.1%). Three provinces have significantly different results. In both, British Columbia and Manitoba, roughly one woman in twenty compares to more than one man in ten who say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. In Saskatchewan, the proportion skyrockets to roughly three women in ten (30.9%) and to more than two men in five (42.5%) who say they had problems on the job or at school because of their reading and writing abilities.

Finally, more than two men in five (42.6%) think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion compared to three women in ten (30.2%). This "gender gap" is not as evident in Alberta and Manitoba, as only five percentage points separate men and women on this issue.

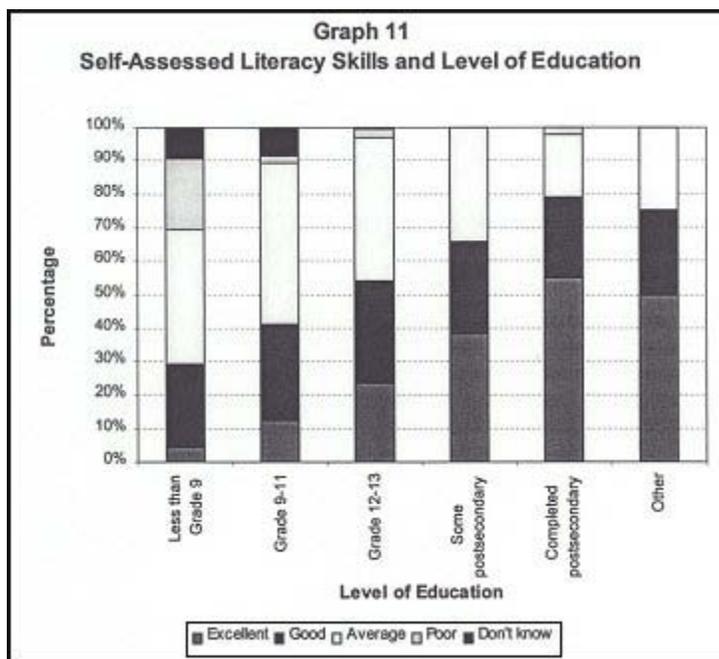
With Graph 4, we saw a relatively strong connection between education and age; do you think we can see a similar connection between self-assessed literacy skills and age? Not really, even though Graph 10 shows that the self-assessed literacy skills of the respondents start decreasing with the 55-64 age group. A much clearer connection can be seen at the provincial level. For example, in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, the self- assessed literacy skills decrease with age. In British Columbia, the proportion of people who rate their literacy skills as good or excellent increase from roughly half (51.7%) of the 16-24 respondents to more than four respondents in five (82.6%) of the people between the ages of 45 and 54.



When we examined the number of people who say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills per age group, we found a pattern quite similar to Graph 10. It is relatively stable for the people between the ages of 16 and 54 at more than one participant in four (22.4%), but it increases to more than three respondents in ten for the 55-64 age group, to go back at 22.4% of the respondents over the age of 65.

Interestingly, the picture is quite different for our third question. As roughly two participants in five between the ages of 16 and 64 think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, but less than one respondent in four (23.0%) over the age of 65 think so. Why? Quite simply, because for a large number of Canadians and Métis, 65 is retirement age. So, some of our respondents over the age of 65 might have felt limited in their younger age, but not anymore as they are not looking for a job nor a promotion.

We've previously said that education can be a useful proxy measure for literacy, even though it is a rather crude tool. But, we thought it might be interesting to take a closer look at the connection between literacy and education. So, we compared the self- assessed literacy skills with the educational attainment of the respondents. And, guess what? There is a strong connection between literacy and education.



Graph 11 clearly shows that while three respondents in ten (29.1%) with less than nine years of education say they have good or excellent reading and writing skills, it climbs to nearly four respondents in five (79.0%) for the people who have completed their postsecondary education. But, it is also obvious that education does not tell the entire story. And, some of the participants of the Focus Groups on Literacy can attest to that:

I think there's a myth that you graduate from Grade 12, 13 and then automatically you are a literate person, because I went through high school, I never wrote one exam, and I've graduated with honours. Believe me my reading and writing were terrible ... I felt really cheated by the education system, that they didn't do it right the first time, that I went through high school and they didn't pick up that I couldn't read and write to a level 8.

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

But people who have completed their Grade 12 but cannot read and write more than someone who is in Grade 6 or Grade 5; they've just sort of made it through the school system. So, it's not necessarily the individual, but it's also the entire education system that's failing everybody ... Each person say well we'll just put you through, it's OK if you can't spell, it's OK if you can't read, we're going to put you through, we're going to give you Grade 12. Therefore, you can become employable in the workforce.

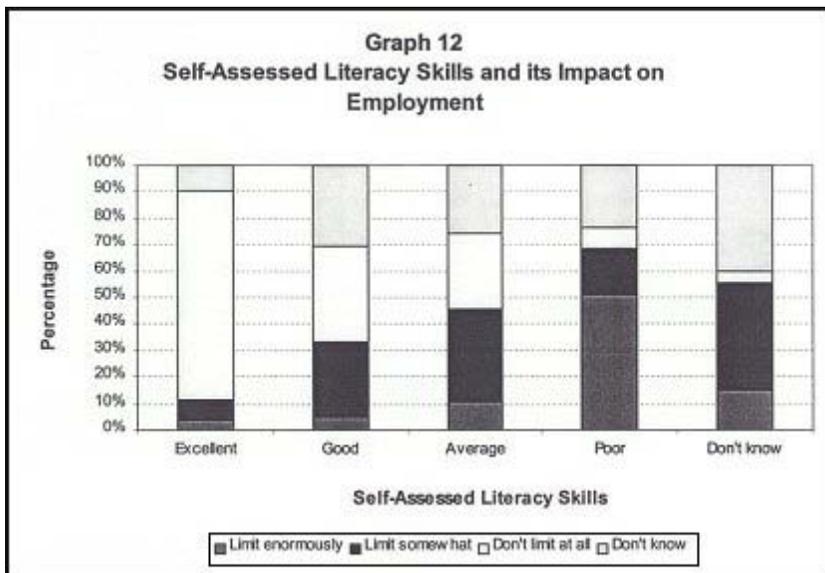
- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Further, two respondents out of five (41.3%) with less than nine years of education say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, but it drops to roughly one person in seven (13.1%) for the people who have a postsecondary education.

Similarly, more than half (54.0%) of the people with less than nine years of education versus one respondent in eight (12.3%) who have completed their postsecondary education think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

This strong connection between literacy and education also raises another interesting question: Are we educated because we're literate or are we literate because we're educated? Somehow, we think that the only person who could answer this question, would have been able to resolve this famous conundrum: What came first the chicken or the egg?

Now, that we know that education and literacy are connected, and that education pays (Graph 8), what do you think is the relationship between literacy and employment? Graph 12 shows that the Métis respondents see a very strong connection between their self-assessed literacy skills and their chances of getting a job or a promotion. We stated earlier that more than two respondents in five (45.8%) think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. But, Graph 12 shows that this proportion varies considerably between the self-assessed literacy skills.



For example, just over one respondent in ten (11.4%) who say they have excellent reading and writing abilities think they are limited in their chances of getting a job or a promotion, but it climbs to over two-thirds (68.5%) of the respondents with poor literacy skills.

Further, a third of the people working and studying think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, but it quickly climbs to half of the people who are unemployed or looking for work, as well as for the homemakers.

It is also interesting to note that the first language spoken by the respondent also has an impact. Roughly a third of the respondents who identified one of Canada's official languages as their mother tongue think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. But, this proportion climbs to more than half (53.0%) for the respondents who identified one of the Aboriginal languages as a mother tongue. One of the participants to a Focus Group on Literacy said:

For kids in those (northern) communities, English is a second language, not a first language, Cree is the first language. And, it's hard to get a grasp on the English language and understand what's going on if you don't have a person who can speak both languages... When immigrants come to Canada, the first thing they have is a course-of English as a second language, so that they can understand. That's one thing that has never been considered for the Aboriginal community ... Unlike Quebec where French is the dominant language over there, up north the Cree is the dominant language, but most of the non-native people have been pushing the English first, whether those kids have an understanding or not.

- Man, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

Literacy Practices

With this Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People, we also decided to look at the literacy practices of the respondents. Why? Quite simply, while reading is like riding a bike, in the sense that we never completely forget it, it also improves with practice. In this respect, it is interesting to include a comment from one of the participants at our Focus Groups on Literacy:

The only way you'll get better at reading and writing is by reading. If you read, your spelling gets better, your English gets better. It comes by word association, like subject, verb, and complements. If you read them properly so many times, it's automatic. If somebody talks out of context you'll realize it, because of all the reading you've done and you've seen people use good English, in novels or magazines and all of a sudden they're associated to words in your own life. That's what I found anyway, my spelling increased dramatically when I started reading novels and stuff, just by word association.

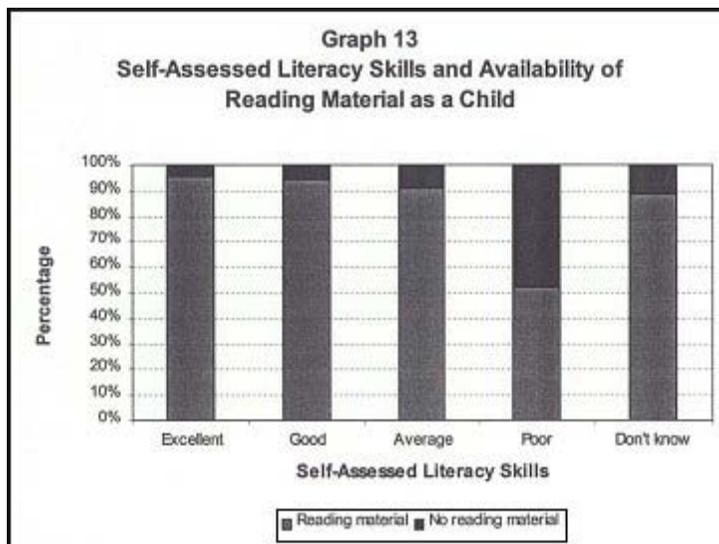
- Man, North Bay, Ontario

So, do you think that the availability of reading material at home while you were growing up had an impact on your reading and writing abilities? Not too sure... A quick look at Graph 13 might startle you, as it shows a very strong connection between the availability of reading materials and reading abilities.

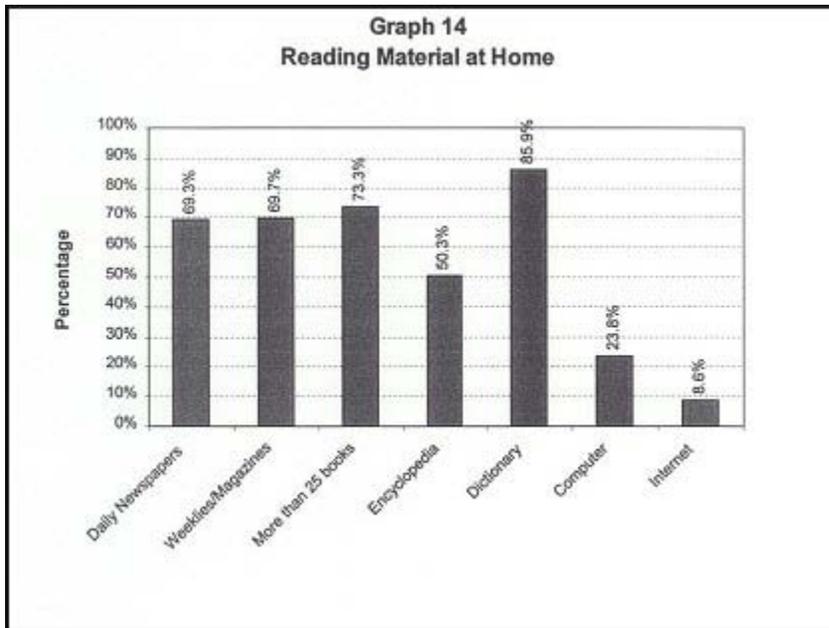
To fully grasp Graph 13, it should be noted that nine respondents out of ten (90.0%) had reading material at home while growing up. For example, nearly all (95.5%) respondents who say they have excellent literacy skills had reading material at home while growing up, but it drops to just over half (52.3%) of the respondents with poor reading skills.

Further, one participant in five (20.1%) with reading material at home while growing up had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities, but it more than doubles to 46.7% for the people who didn't have reading material available.

Similarly, more than a third (35.8%) of the people who had reading material at home while growing up think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. But, it climbs to nearly three respondents in five (59.6%) for the people without reading material at home while growing up.



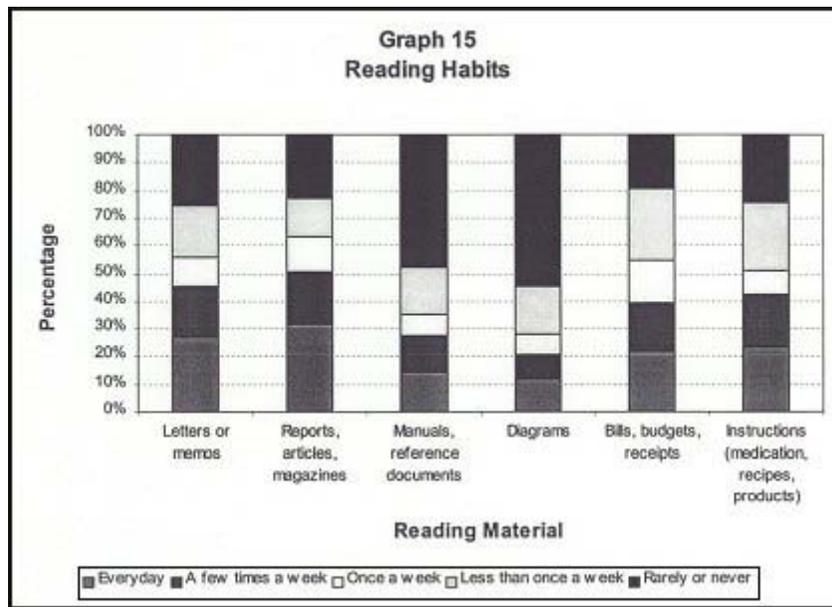
So, since the availability of reading material had such an important impact on the literacy skills of the respondents of the MNC's Literacy Survey, we decided to see if the respondents had reading material at home for themselves and their children. Graph 14 shows that most respondents had reading material at home. For example, more than four respondents in five (85.9%) have a dictionary at home, while nearly three-quarters have more than 25 books. However, it is surprising to note that half of the respondents say they have an encyclopedia at home, this is certainly a very high number that could easily be questioned.



But, reading and writing skills are not acquired simply at school or at home during our childhood; it is a lifelong process. So, are our respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey reading? To correctly answer this question, we'll have to break it down by reading activities. Graph 15 shows that when it concerns, "letters and memos" and "reports, articles and magazines," the results are similar. That is roughly one respondent in four reads them everyday, and roughly one respondent in four "rarely or never" reads them.

The situation is also quite similar for "manuals, reference documents" and "diagrams," where roughly one respondent in ten reads them everyday, and half of the respondents rarely or never reads them.

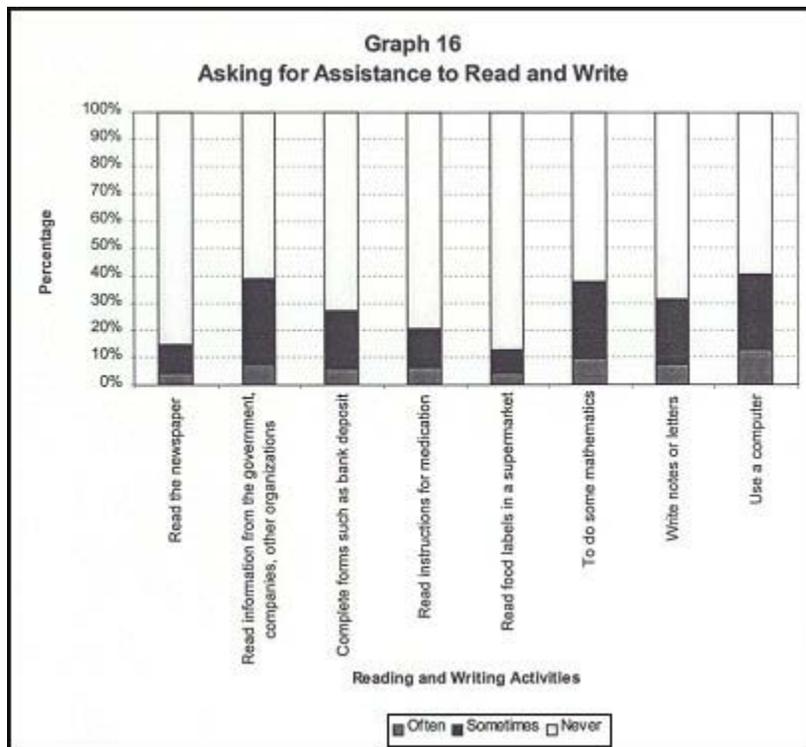
Finally, "bills, budgets, receipts" and "instructions (medicines, recipes, products)" also received similar treatment from the respondents. As one participant in five reads them everyday and a similar proportion rarely or never reads them.



But, what does it mean? Even though we still cannot provide a clear answer as to whether all the respondents read, these results hint that as much as one respondent in five rarely or never reads. These relatively low literacy practices would also suggest low literacy skills.

Finally, we have taken a last look at the literacy practices of the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey by asking the participants if they ever asked friends or family for assistance in reading or writing some specific material. Graph 16 shows that most respondents never ask for assistance in reading and writing.

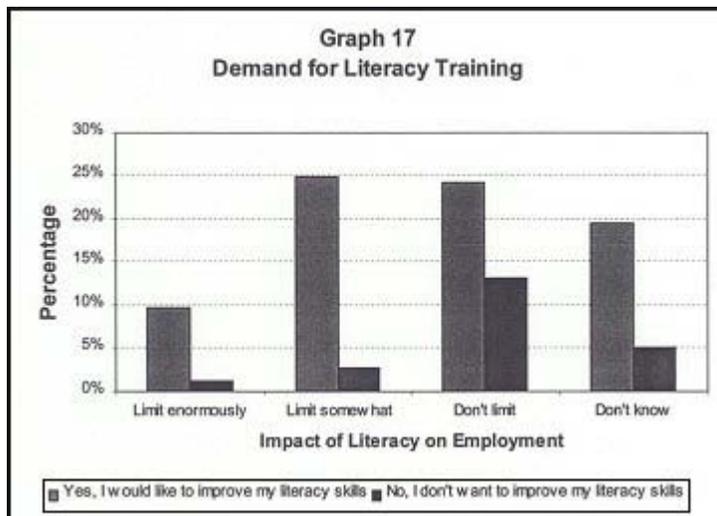
However, two respondents in five would ask for assistance to read "information from the government, companies, and other organizations," to "do some mathematics," and to use a computer. As well, three respondents in ten would ask assistance to "complete forms such as bank deposit" and to "write notes or letters."



Conclusion

For this Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People, we've tried to assess their literacy skills by using a number of proxy measures. In fact, whether we used education, self-assessment or literacy practices, the result is the same: A large number of Métis people need to improve their reading and writing abilities.

But, one crucial question remains: Are the Métis people interested in improving their reading and writing abilities? The answer is a resounding yes. Nearly four respondents in five (78.2%) would like to improve their reading and writing skills. Graph 17 shows that nine respondents out of ten who think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion would like to improve their literacy skills. Further, more than two-thirds of the people who do not think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion would also like to improve those skills.



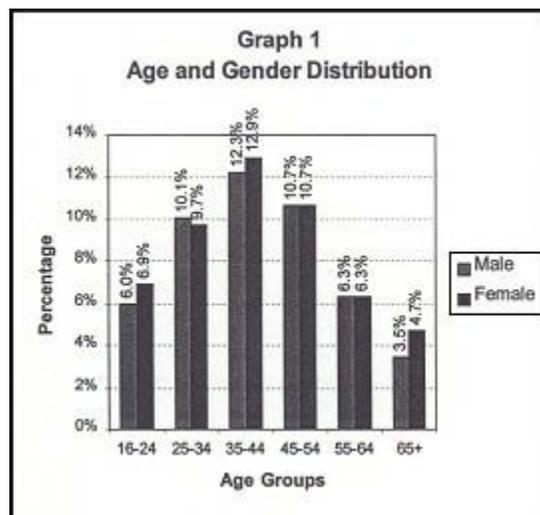
This overwhelming interest for literacy training can be seen across the Métis Nation, only in Ontario (58.0%) do we have a lower proportion of people interested in reading and writing courses.

It is also interesting to compare those results with the actual number of people who have already taken courses to improve their reading and writing skills. In fact, one respondent in five (19.9%) in the MNC's Literacy Survey has taken courses to improve his or her reading and writing abilities. This high proportion is due in large part to the Alberta respondents of the MNC's Literacy Survey, as more than half of them are still in school.

MNC Literacy Survey in Ontario

Although the MNC's Literacy Survey focused mostly on literacy, education, training and employment, the first few questions, regarding age and gender should be examined carefully. Why? Simply because these general characteristics play a crucial role in establishing the validity of this survey. In other words, if most of the respondents were male over the age of 65, this study would never be able to provide valid information about the entire Métis population of Ontario.

So, who are the 340 respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Ontario? The respondents are almost evenly split between both genders, as women represent 50.9% and %of the people surveyed. men 49.1



Graph 1 shows a relatively even distribution of the different age groups. But, this relatively even age distribution contrasts with the survey's national results. For example, while nearly three respondents in five (57.9%) in Ontario are between the ages of 16 and 44, these age groups represent more than three-quarters (75.7%) of the respondents on the national level. As well, people over the age of 65 represent one respondent in twenty-five (4.0%) in the national results, but represent 8.2% of the respondents in Ontario. So, the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Ontario appear to be older than the respondents in the other four provinces.

As this literacy survey is trying to assess literacy skills in English, we thought it might be interesting to take a closer look at the first language spoken by the Métis people in Ontario. Graph 2 clearly demonstrates that English is the mother tongue of more than three-quarters (76.9%) of the respondents in Ontario, while just over one participant in five (21.7%) state French, and a handful (1.5%) say Ojibwa.



Even though nearly all (97.6%) respondents still speak their mother tongue, most (94.8%) communicate more easily in English. Clearly, most respondents who have identified French and Ojibwa as their mother tongue communicate more easily in English.

But, does it mean that nearly all respondents speak English well or very well? No, as only three-quarters (73.7%) of the respondents state they speak well or very well in English. Only a handful of respondents (5 people or 1.5% of the respondents) say they speak English poorly.

For most people the first language they learned to speak, is also the first language they learned to read and write. This is especially true for the people identifying English as their mother tongue, as 98.0% first learned to read and write in English. A quarter (25.4%) of the respondents identifying French as their first spoken language say that the first language they learned to read and write is English.

Education

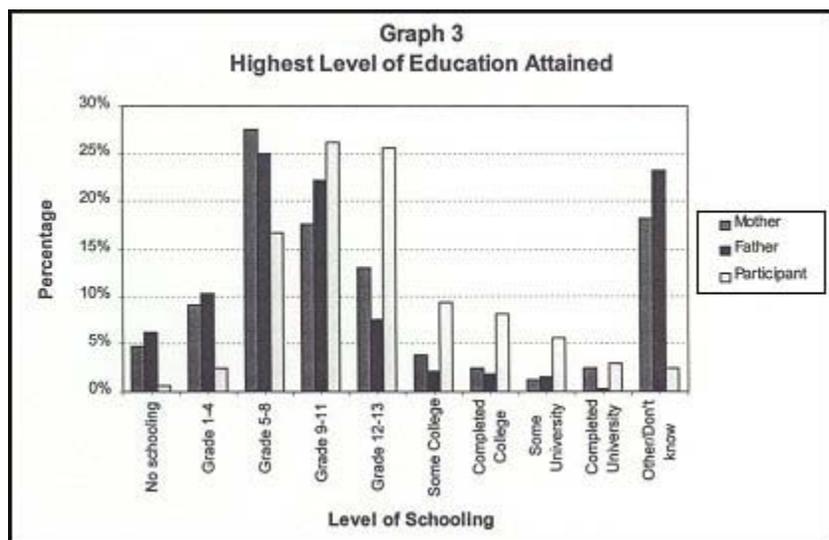
Literacy and education have often been seen as one and the same thing. In fact, Statistics Canada often defines as "functionally illiterate" a person with less than nine years of education. Even though that proxy measure for literacy has been questioned over the years, it will be interesting to note the relationship between literacy and education for the Métis people of Ontario.

Over the last few decades in Canada, the level of education attained has increased with each generation. But, is it also the case for the Métis population? So, who do you think has a higher level of education the participants or their parents?

As you've probably guessed, Graph 3 shows that participants tend to have higher levels of education than their parents. One of the participants in a Focus Group on Literacy explained this "generation gap" as follows:

It wasn't hard to find jobs. You could walk out the door and the next day you'd have a job. I mean, you look back to my grandparents, my grandfather worked all his life, he had a Grade 5 education if that, and he worked all his life at a good paying job. The emphasis wasn't put on education, and jobs were a dime a dozen so to speak, you know...

- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario



For more than half (51.8%) of the participants the highest level of education attained is evenly split between Grade 9-11 and Grade 12-13. This result contrasts sharply with the national results, as across the Métis Homeland over two respondents in five (42.6%) have a Grade 9-11 education and less than one respondent in five (18.3%) have attained a Grade 12-13 education level.

Does this mean that the Métis respondents in Ontario are more educated than their counterparts in the Métis Homeland? It seems that the Métis in Ontario are more educated, and it is even clearer when we look at the postsecondary education. Slightly more than a quarter (26.1%) of the participants in Ontario has some postsecondary education, but less than one respondent in ten (8.8%) can say the same on the national level. Furthermore, more than one respondent in ten (11.1%) in Ontario has completed his or her postsecondary education, but only one respondent in twenty (5.8%) can say the same thing across the Homeland.

Even though Ontario participants tend to be better educated than their counterparts in the other provinces, a significant number of them, roughly one participant in five (19.7%), has less than nine years of education. This is no significantly lower than the national results, as 22.6% of the respondents across the Métis Homeland have less than nine years of education.

Graph 3 clearly shows different levels of education for the parents of the participants, even though the large number of "don't know/other" answers make the analysis of their level of education less reliable.

It should be noted that two parents out of five have less than nine years of education, as with the participants this is slightly better than in the Métis Homeland as a whole, where roughly half of the parents do not have a Grade 9 education. Even though very few parents in Ontario have postsecondary education, nearly 10% of the mothers, and just over 5% of the fathers, it is still higher than elsewhere in the Métis Homeland.

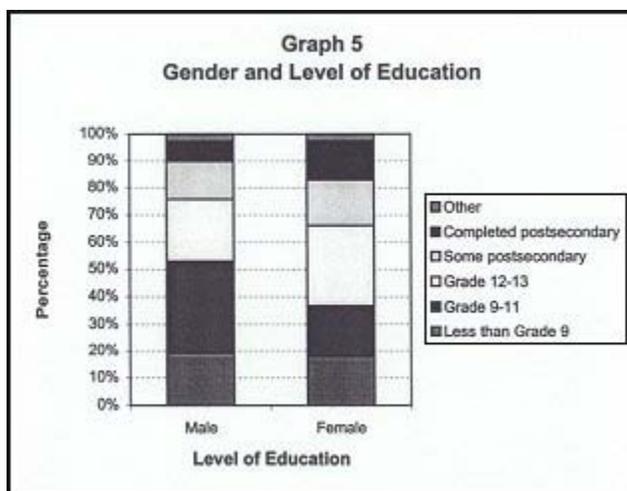
Graph 3 clearly shows a "generation gap" between the educational attainment of the participants and their parents. But, do you think we can also see such a "generation gap" among the participants?

55 have attended a postsecondary institution, while nearly half (46.5%) of the 16-24 respondents have done so. College education also seems to be more popular with the younger age groups, 16-24 and 25-34. It should be noted that roughly a third (36.2%) of the respondents who have some postsecondary education as their higher level of education are still in school.

Graph 3 showed that mothers tend to be slightly more educated than father, so could we have a "gender gap" in the education attainment of men and women in Ontario? Yes, and Graph 5 shows that women tend to be slightly more educated than men. Surprisingly, this "gender gap" is not evident at the national level.

So, what is different in Ontario? First, more than three female respondents in ten (31.3%) have attained a postsecondary education level compared to just over one man in four (21.7%). Significant differences can also be noted in the Grade 9-11 category, as for nearly a third (33.8%) of the men it is their highest level of schooling, but it is the case for only one woman in five (19.0%). The situation is more or less reversed for the Grade 12-13 education level, as more than one man in five (22.9%) has attained that level compared to three women in ten (29.5%).

However, Graph 5 does not show any significant "gender gap" for the lower levels of education, as 19.1% of the men and 17.8% of the women have less than a Grade 9 education.



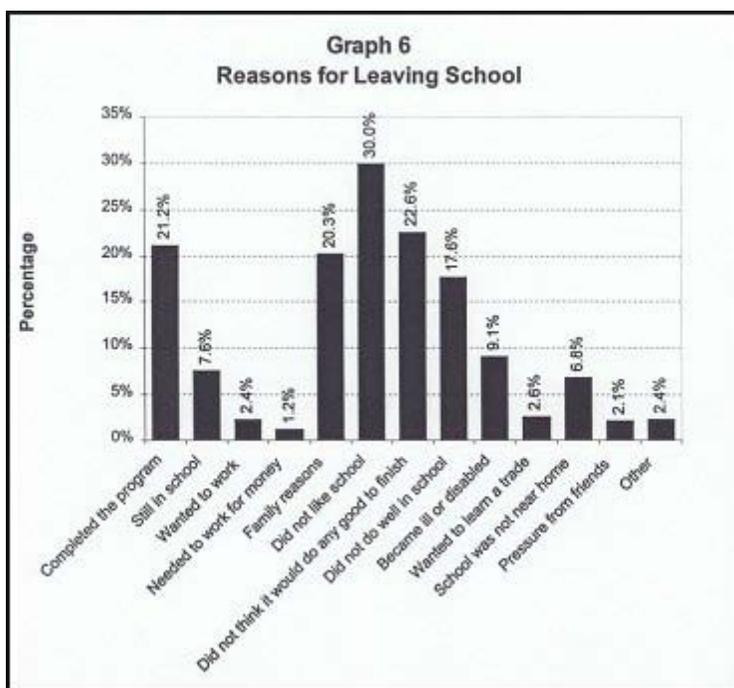
Clearly, the level of education attained by the Métis people in Ontario seems to be influenced both by the age and gender. It is also clear that most (39.7%) participants left school between the ages of 15 and 17. But, one important question remains: Why did they leave school?

Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People

Graph 6 shows that about one respondent in five (21.2%) left school because they had completed their studies, while 7.6% of the respondents are still in school. Three of the most frequent reasons stated in the survey "did not like school," "did not think it would do any good to finish" and "did not do well in school," were discussed during the Focus Groups on Literacy. And, it should be noted that the participants explained this by the racism they had encountered and the school system's failure to address Métis issues.

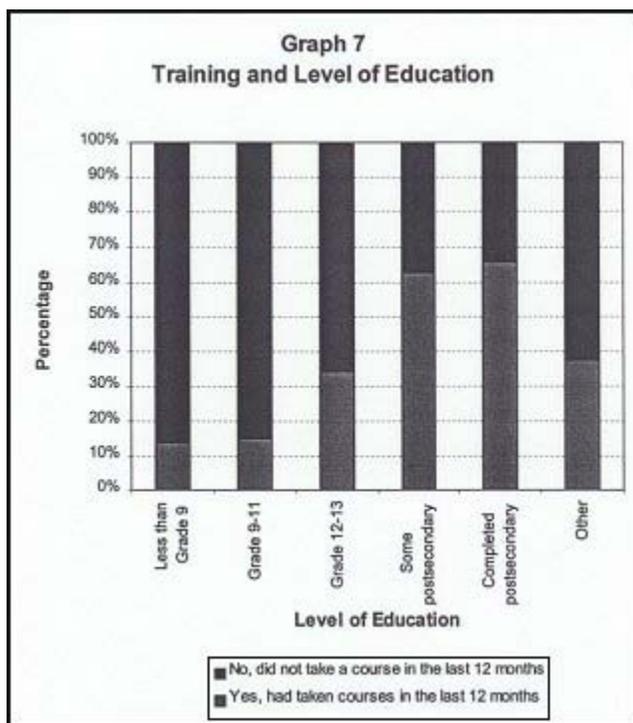
It should also be noted that nearly one respondent in ten (9.1%) left school because of an illness or disability. This relatively high proportion mirrors the results of the "Profile of the Métis" by Statistics Canada, which stated that 32% of the Métis aged 15 and over had disabilities in 1991, compared with 18% for the Canadian population.

Interestingly though, this picture is quite different when we look at the national results. As the most frequently stated reasons are "wanted to work," "family reasons" and "needed to work for money."



Graph 6 showed that a high proportion of Métis in Ontario leaves school without graduating. But does it mean that they stop learning? No, since roughly a third (33.1%) of the respondents have taken a course in the last twelve months. A quick look at Graph 7 shows that this proportion of people varies widely across the different levels of education.

In fact, the more educated people are the more inclined they are to take courses. Nearly two-thirds (64.0%) of the respondents with postsecondary education took part in a training course over the last 12 months, but less one respondent in eight (13.4%) with less than nine years of education can say the same. We found a similar situation across the Homeland where the people who seem to be in the most apparent need of upgrading did not take upgrading or training courses.



In Ontario, it is interesting to note that there is no noticeable difference between persons with less than Grade 9 (13.4%) and people with a Grade 9-11 education (14.9%). Why is this so, when it jumps to over a third (34.5%) of the respondents with a Grade 12-13 education level? The relatively lower literacy skills of these groups could be a factor, but it should also be noted that most training courses target people who have already completed their high school education.

A participant in one of the two Focus Groups on Literacy in Ontario noted the importance of reading and writing abilities in accessing upgrading courses:

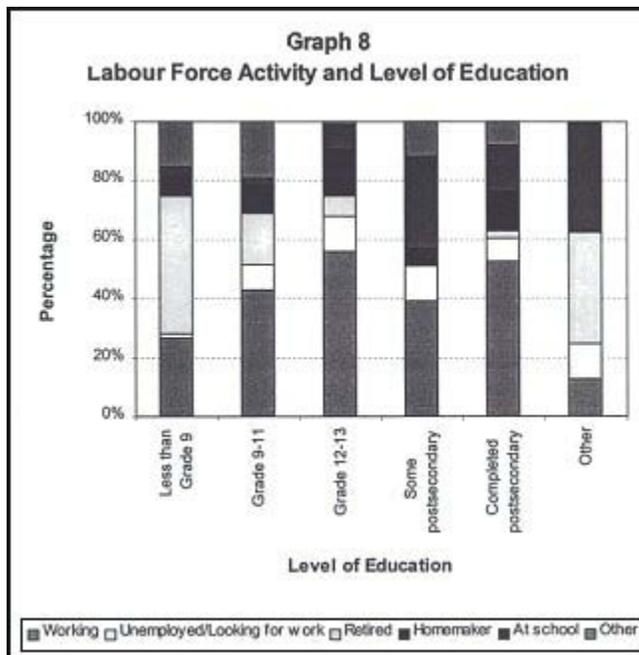
There's so much emphasis put on going in and lets get these people job training going and get them training for this. You're still dealing with the same person that has the same education before, you only now, you've given them some skills, but you haven't given them all the skills that they require. They're still illiterate.

- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario

So, what do training and education have in common? Money. Why? Quite simply because people might not be inclined to take part in a training course further their education if there is no financial reward, for example, the prospect of a job at the end of the program.

We also know, that self-esteem and self-confidence, can also be important factors. However, we decided to see if the level of education had an impact on employment. Graph 8 clearly shows a relationship between employment and education, as employment steadily increases from just over one respondent in four (26.9%) with less than Grade 9 to more than half (56.3%) of the respondents with a Grade 12-13 education.

But, what happens with people who have some postsecondary education? Do we have an "all or nothing" situation, where it pays off to complete your postsecondary education, but some postsecondary education is worse than a Grade 12-13 education? This is certainly not the case as it can be explained by the fact that three respondents in ten (31.4%) with some postsecondary education are still in school. Are you also curious about the situation of the respondents with a university degree or a college diploma? To a smaller extent, the same scenario applies here, as 15.8% of the respondents are still in school.



Literacy

We often assume that if a person has been in school for a number of years, that person must be literate. After all, why do we go to school, if it's not to learn how to read and write? So, can we simply say that since 19.7% of the respondents have less than nine years of education, 19.7% of the Métis people in Ontario are functionally illiterate? Not exactly, as education is a useful proxy measure for literacy but it is a rather crude tool. It is crude because we all know people with less than nine years of education who can meet daily reading and writing demands.

So, to complement this proxy measure, we decided to ask the participants to assess their reading and writing skills. But, this strategy could also be flawed as some of the participants at the Focus Groups on Literacy talked about the difficulties of talking about their literacy skills:

A great many people will try to hide that they're illiterate, and if they can get away with it, even in some cases the wives, or their girlfriends, or even the dog, the cat, won't know about it. So, they don't, they just stay at that level because they're in a comfort zone.

- Man, Thunder Bay, Ontario

I was scared to go and tell somebody, I didn't know how to read and write. Now, I don't care who knows that I couldn't read and write... and I would love to help somebody else who doesn't know how to read and write, because I know how it felt, when I didn't know how to read...I know how to do my financial bills, and everything else. I thought I was in the dark, but not anymore...I know how it feels to be put down...

- Woman, North Bay, Ontario

I know where she's coming from because we're in the same boat... I have a problem with writing I just start to learn to read few years back, but it doesn't make me a dummy...and I know how she feels, because a lot of time, I can't write, so I use a tape recorder ...I was hoping that someday maybe I'll be able to write... Another thing too, you've got to fight, you cannot go down. I mean a lot of people looked down on me before, but not now... I didn't know how to write and read. I know how to count... and I hired people and I'm a handy-man like I do all kinds of trade, building houses, plumbing, wet basement all that stuff, like I know not that it's not that I'm stupid ...

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

...keep using the word stupid. I don't like that word; I like the idea of ignorant, which means I haven't been taught. People have a tendency of taking that word ignorant and not using it to its right, rightful meaning. Ignorant means just a simple explanation that's never been taught. And, I'm the first person to admit that I'm ignorant in some areas, but I can be taught, and everybody can be. There's just no limitation; the mind is stronger than any computer.

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

Nonetheless, here is what the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey had to say. Nearly half (49.9%) of the respondents rate their literacy skills as good or excellent. This is slightly better than the national results where 46.3% of the respondents rated their reading and writing skills as good or excellent. But, is 49.9% good or not? In fact, when this result is compared with the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), 49.9% seems amazingly low, because in the seven countries surveyed over 80% of the respondents rated their literacy skills as good or excellent. Furthermore, when the IALS compared the self-assessed and tested literacy skills, it became obvious that most respondents, regardless of their tested literacy skills, were satisfied with their skills. This discrepancy between the tested and self-assessed literacy skills was explained by the different coping mechanisms, which allow people to construct their lives around their literacy skills.

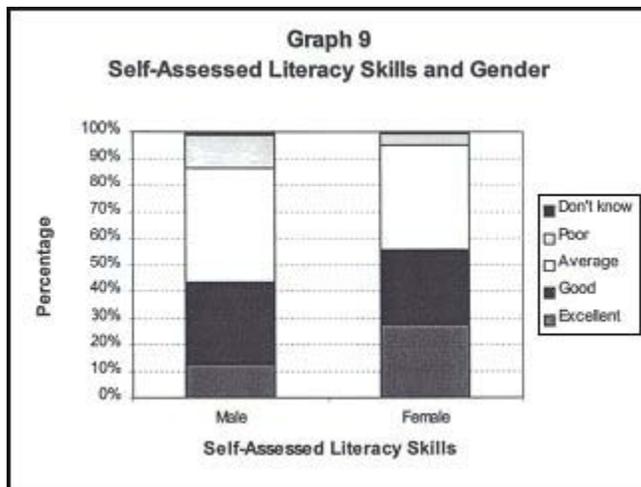
When we asked the participants if they ever had any problems at school or on the job because reading and writing was hard for them, an overwhelming majority (82.2%) said they didn't have problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. Once again, this is slightly better than the national result where roughly three-quarters (77.7%) of the respondents didn't have any problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills.

So, should we rejoice? No, since it still means that one participant in five had had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing difficulties. We should also be careful as the question is narrowly formulated, referring to past experiences at school or at work. It doesn't take into consideration the "literacy trap," as the respondent might stay in an environment, whether it is school or work, where their literacy skills won't pose any problems.

Furthermore, a quarter (25.1%) of the respondents think their literacy skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. This is significantly lower than in other parts of the Métis Homeland, where well over a third (35.7%) of the respondents think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

Graph 5 showed that women respondents in Ontario were more educated than their male counterparts. So, do you think that we'll also see a "gender gap" with the reading and writing abilities of men and women in Ontario?

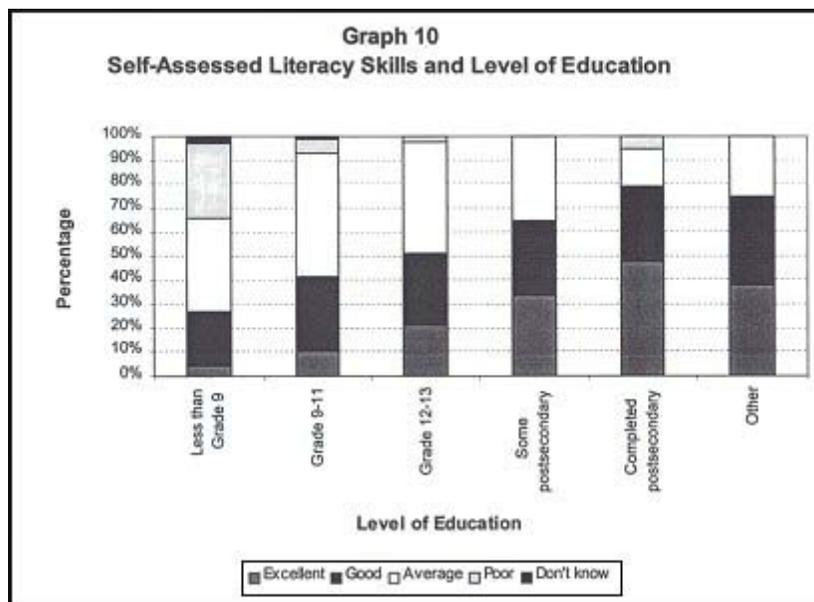
Graph 9 shows significant differences between the reading and writing abilities of men and women. For example, more than one man in ten (12.3%) rates his reading and writing abilities as poor compared to less than one woman in twenty (4.3%) of women. It is also clear that a much higher proportion (27.8%) of women than men (12.3%) rated their skills as excellent.



This gender gap was also evident when we asked the participants if they ever had problems in school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. Nearly a quarter (23.1%) of the men and 10.4% of the women had problems at school or on the job because of their literacy skills. Surprisingly, such a "gender gap" could not be found at the national level, where women and men have similar levels of literacy and education.

How many times have you heard people say: "Young people don't know how to write, we knew how to write we were taught the three Rs in school." Maybe you even said it yourself. The MNC's Literacy Survey tried to answer that question by comparing the self-assessed literacy skills between the different age groups. So, do you think we will be able to see a "generation gap" in Ontario, even though age has limited impact on the literacy skills of the respondents at the national level?

Graph 10 shows that age certainly is a factor in Ontario, as nearly two-thirds (62.8%) of the respondents between the ages of 16 and 24 rate their literacy skills as good or excellent while less than two respondents in five (37.0%) over the age of 65 say the same thing. So, what do you think? Are you cynical, thinking: "Those kids, they always think they know everything!" But, more seriously, could this "generation gap" be explained by the higher levels of education attained by the younger generations?



It seems that this generation gap can be partly explained by education, as Graph 11 shows a relatively strong relationship between education and literacy. For example, just over a quarter (26.9%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education rates their reading and writing skills as good or excellent, compared to nearly four respondents in five (79.0%) for the people who have completed their postsecondary education.

As well, three participants in ten (31.3%) with less than nine years of education had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities, compared with less than one respondent in five (18.0%) for the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Ontario.

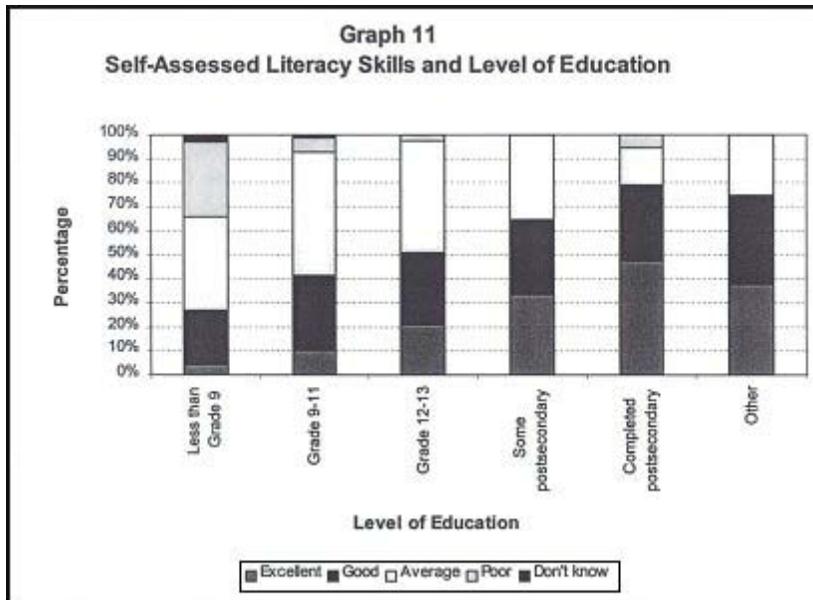
But, it is also obvious that education does not tell the entire story. And, some of the participants of the Focus Groups on Literacy can attest to that:

I think there's a myth that you graduate from Grade 12, 13 and then automatically you are a literate person, because I went through high school, I never wrote one exam, and I've graduated with honours. Believe me my reading and writing were terrible ... I felt really cheated by the education system, that they didn't do it right the first time, that I went through high school and they didn't pick up that I couldn't read and write to a level 8.

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

But people who have completed their Grade 12 but cannot read and write more than someone who is in Grade 6 or Grade 5; they've just sort of made it through the school system. So, it's not necessarily the individual, but it's also the entire education system that's failing everybody ... Each person say well we'll just put you through, it's OK if you can't spell, it's OK if you can't read, we're going to put you through, we're going to give you Grade 12. Therefore, you can become employable in the workforce.

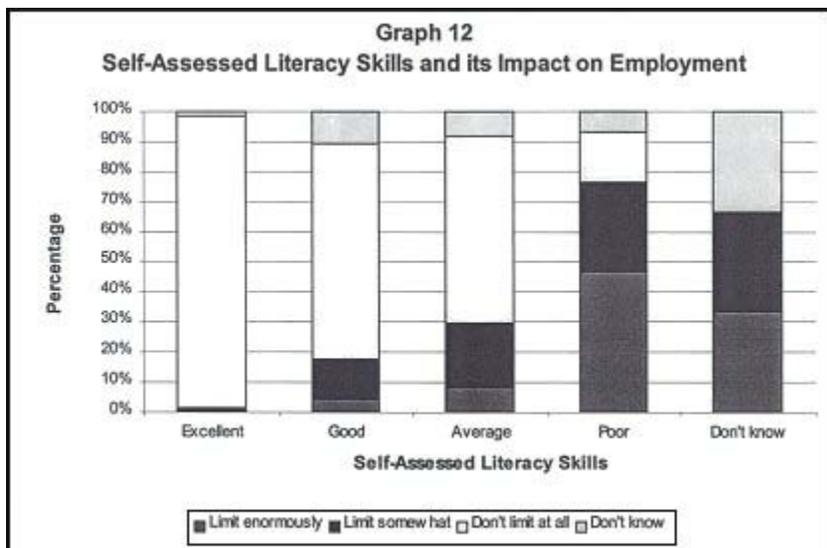
- Woman, Thunder Bay, Ontario



A strong connection between education and literacy was also expressed across the Métis Homeland and raises another interesting question. Is education a result of literacy or is literacy the result of education? As with the famous question: What came first the chicken or the egg? There is no clear answer to this question.

Graph 8 showed that education pays and Graph 10 just revealed that education and literacy are connected. So, what do you think could be the relationship between employment and literacy?

As you might have expected, Graph 11 shows that literacy skills have an impact on employment. In fact, the perceived impact of literacy and employment is shared across the Métis Homeland. But, nowhere is the relationship stronger than in Ontario. Less than one respondent in fifty (1.5%) who say they have excellent literacy skills think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. This proportion climbs to more than three respondents in four (76.7%) for the people who say they have poor literacy skills.



Literacy Practices

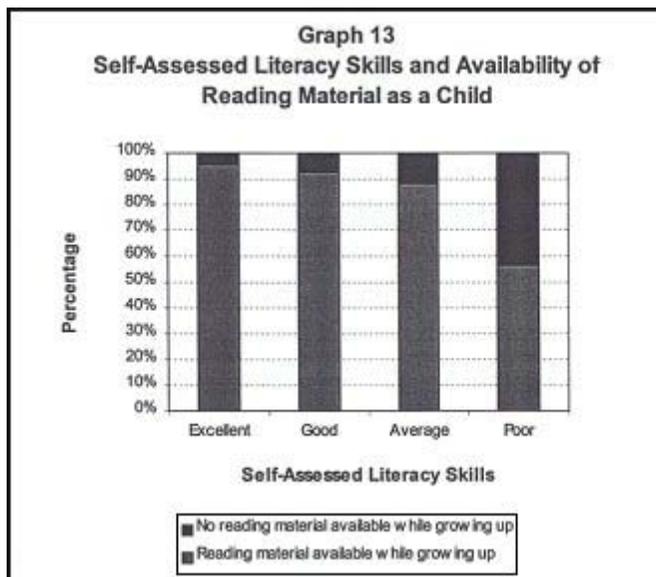
Education and self-assessed literacy skills are certainly useful proxy measures for literacy. But, over the years researchers have also come to value another proxy measure: Literacy practices. How do reading and writing practices influence our reading and writing skills? Reading is like riding a bike, we never completely forget how to do it. But reading and writing also requires practice. We can only improve if we read or write on a regular basis.

In this respect, it is interesting to include a comment from one of the participants at our Focus Groups on Literacy:

The only way you'll get better at reading and writing is by reading. If you read, your spelling gets better, your English gets better. It comes by word association, like subject, verb, and complements. If you read them properly so many times, it's automatic. If somebody talks out of context you'll realize it, because of all the reading you've done and you've seen people use good English, in novels or magazines and all of a sudden they're associated to words in your own life. That's what I found anyway, my spelling increased dramatically when I started reading novels and stuff, just by word association.

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

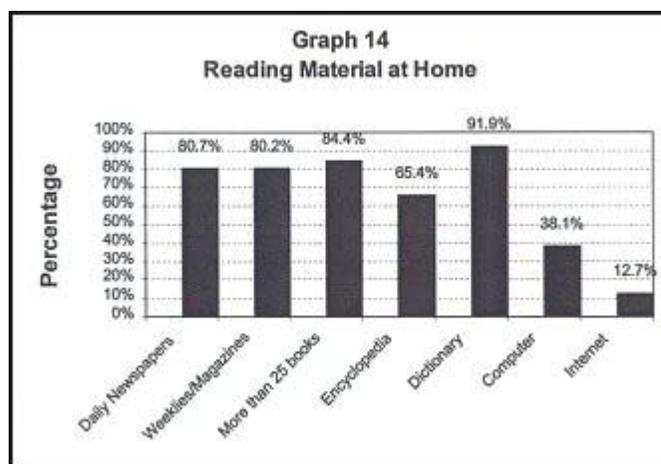
In examining the literacy practices of the Métis people, we have to go back to the childhood of the respondents to illustrate how literacy practices have a strong impact on reading and writing abilities. Graph 13 shows that while nearly nine respondents in ten (88.2%) had access to reading material at home while growing up, there are important differences between the different literacy levels. Nearly all respondents (95.6%) who rate their literacy skills as excellent had reading material available while growing up, but it drops to just over half (51.2%) for the people who rank their literacy skills as poor.



Similarly, two respondents in five (41.0%) who did not have access to reading material while growing up say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. Further, more than half (55.2%) of the respondents who didn't have access to reading material while they were growing up think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, but only one respondent in five (21.0%) with access to reading material think the same thing.

If access to reading material while growing up was such an important factor, do the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey have reading material at home for themselves and their children?

Graph 14 shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents have reading material in their home. More than nine respondents out of ten (91.9%) have a dictionary, while more than four respondents in five have daily newspapers, weeklies, magazines, and more than twenty-five books.

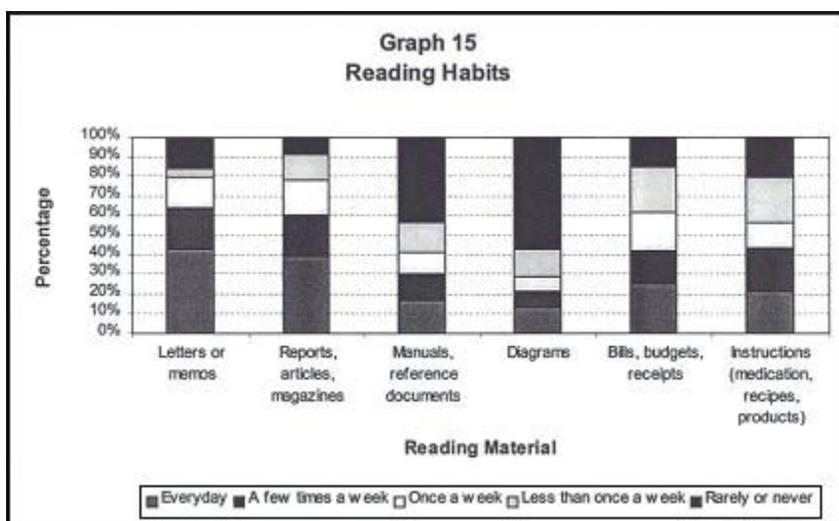


The number of people who say they have an encyclopedia can probably be questioned since this statistic is much higher than in the Canadian population.

When we compare Graph 14 for Ontario with the national results, we quickly realize that Ontario has the highest proportion of available reading material at home in all categories throughout the Métis Homeland.

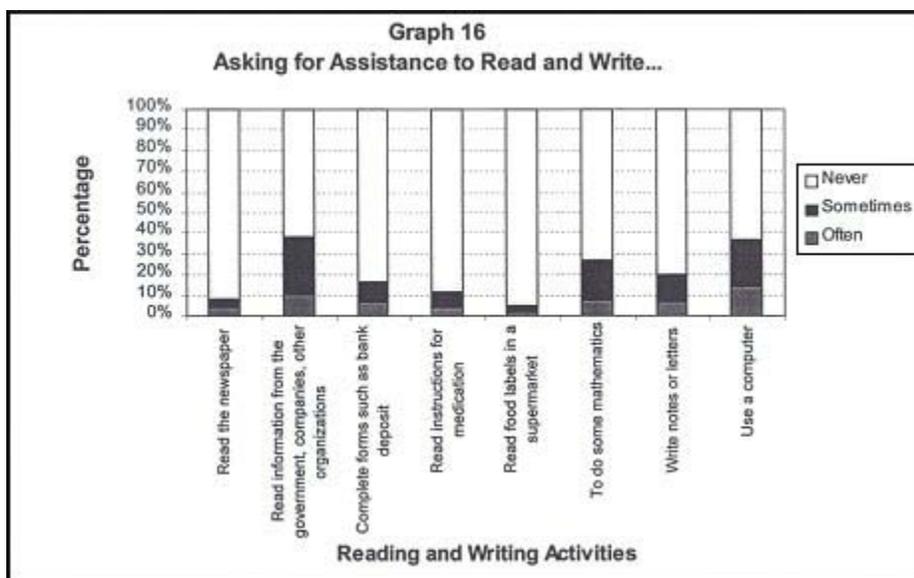
Having reading material at home, might entice you to read, but what we really want to know is do the Métis people of Ontario read? Graph 14 clearly shows that they do. Roughly two respondents in five read "letters, memos," "reports, articles, magazines" everyday, while roughly one respondent in ten rarely or never reads these. It should be noted that at the national level the proportion of people who reads this type of reading materials everyday is only three respondents in ten.

Across the Métis Homeland and in Ontario "manuals, reference documents" and "diagrams" are clearly not as popular as less than one respondent in six reads them everyday, and roughly half rarely or never looks at them. In between, we find the reading material we can rarely avoid, "bills, budgets, receipts" and "instructions (medication, recipes, products)," which are read everyday by roughly one respondent in five, and roughly the same proportion manages to avoid them as they read them rarely or never.



This leaves us with one last issue, how many people ask for assistance to read and write? Graph 16 shows that even though few people call for help, for some reading and writing activities it is a more common practice. For example two respondents out of five ask for assistance to "read information from the government, companies and other organizations" and to use a computer. As well, nearly three respondents in ten ask for assistance from their friends and family members to "do some mathematics." While roughly one respondent in five would ask for assistance to "write notes or letters" and to "complete forms such as a bank deposit."

Even though Ontario respondents often differ from the other respondents across the Métis Homeland, in this regard the results are quite similar.



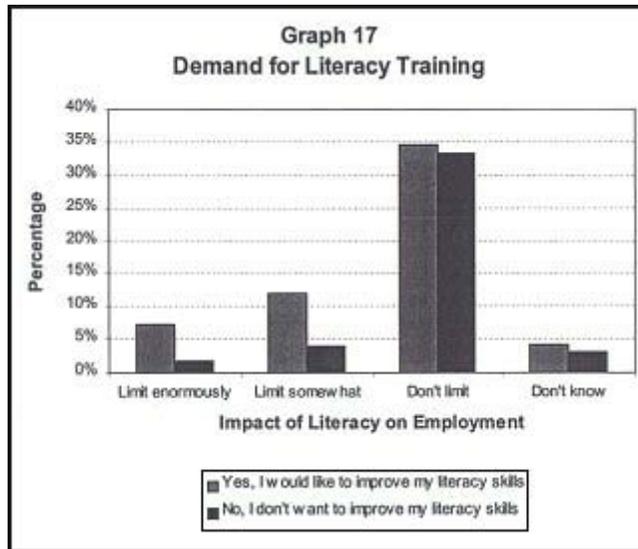
Conclusion

Whether we use education, self-assessment of literacy skills or literacy practices as proxy measures for literacy: the result is the same. Even though the literacy difficulties and needs are less important in Ontario than in the other provinces across the Métis Homeland, the Métis people of Ontario also need to improve their reading and writing skills.

However, one essential question remains: Do the Métis people of Ontario want to improve their reading and writing skills? The answer is yes, as well over half (58.3%) the respondents would like to improve their reading and writing skills.

Even though this figure is much lower than in the other provinces, where more than four respondents in five would like to improve their reading and writing abilities, these needs and demands should not be ignored.

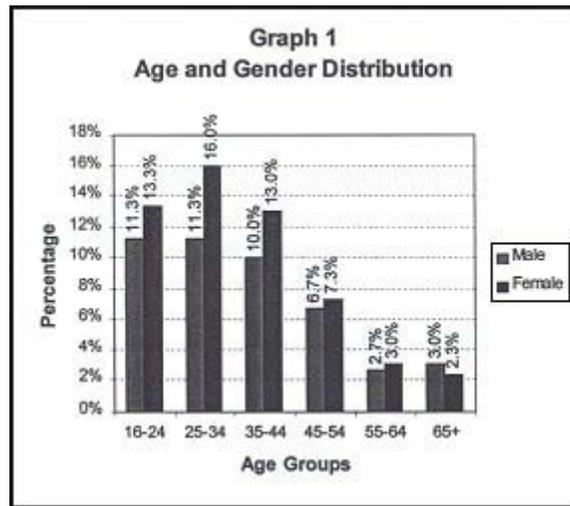
Graph 13 shows that, as in the other provinces, the interest in improving reading and writing skills is not only limited to the people who think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. Even the people who don't think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion would like to improve their literacy skills.



MNC Literacy Survey in Manitoba

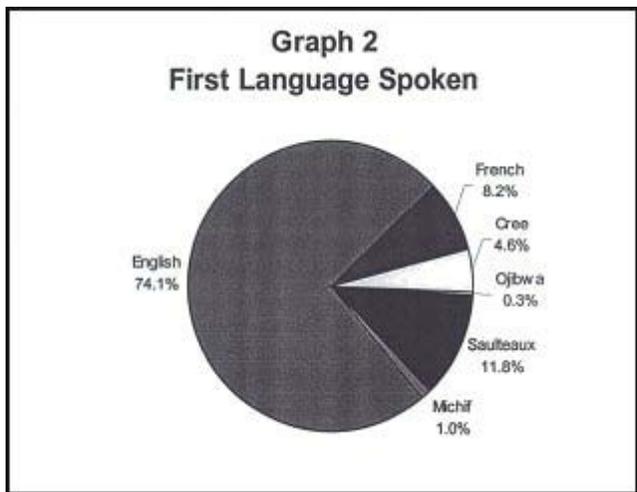
As with every other survey, our first step in analyzing the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey in Manitoba will be to examine the main characteristics of the respondents, that is their gender, age, mother tongue, and so on. Why should this be our first step? Quite simply, because we need to know who the respondents are. These characteristics will allow us to establish if they represent the Métis population in Manitoba, and by doing so will determine the validity of this study.

So, who are the 308 respondents in Manitoba? Graph 1 shows that the respondents are fairly divided between the two genders, as 45.0% of the respondents are male, and consequently 55.0% are women. This gender distribution is quite similar with the results across the Métis Homeland, where men represent 46.4% of the respondents and women 53.6%.



As with the national age distribution, three-quarters (74.9%) of the respondents are between the ages of 16 and 44. Graph literacy shows that all age groups have participated in the survey. However, as in most provinces, the participation of the people over the age of 55 is fairly limited. Therefore, the last two age groups, 55-64 and more than 65 years old, will be grouped from now on.

What is the first language spoken by the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey? Graph 2 clearly shows that English is the first language spoken by most (74.1%) respondents in Manitoba. Graph 2 also shows that more than one participant in ten (11.8%) has Ojibwa as a mother tongue, while 8.2% of the respondents first spoke French.



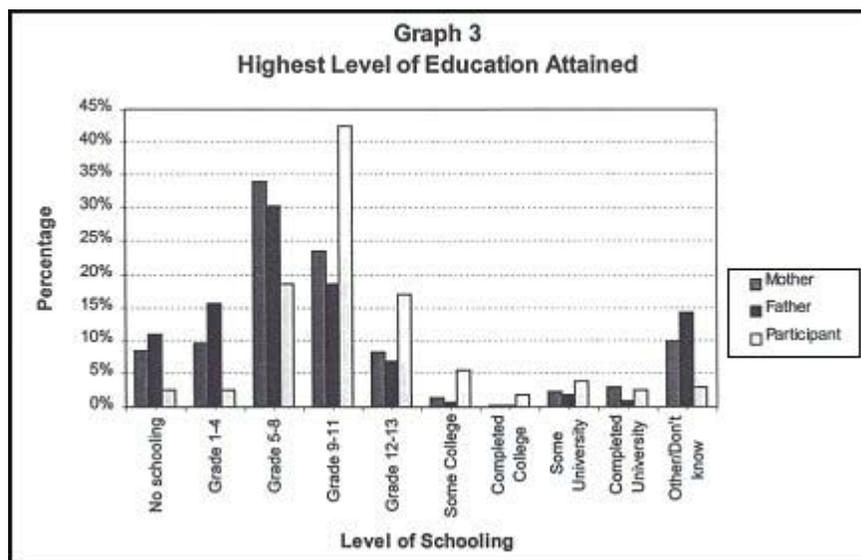
Did they also first learn to read and write in that same language? No, as you might have expected, nearly all (95.6%) respondents first learned to read and write in English. This very high proportion suggests that most Métis people in Manitoba, as with their counterparts throughout the Métis Homeland, first learned to read and write in school. However, it is interesting to note that many of the respondents also learned to read and write in their mother tongue later in life, as over four participants in five (82.7%) say they can read and write in their mother tongue.

Does the written language have an impact on the spoken language? Yes, as nearly all (93.7%) respondents in Manitoba say they communicate more easily in English. This result also mirrors the national results, where 92.8% of the Métis people across the Métis Homeland say they communicate more easily in English.

Education

It is often assumed that education and literacy are one and the same thing. After all, why do we go to school if it's not to learn how to read and write? In fact, Statistics Canada defines as "functionally illiterate" a person with less than nine years of education. Although education is a very useful proxy measure for literacy as it allows us to easily compare the results of this study with the Canadian population, it is not a perfect instrument. In fact, education as a proxy measure for literacy has one main flaw: we don't suddenly become "functionally literate" in Grade 9. We all know people who have graduated from high school without really knowing how to read and write, and we know people who have less than nine years of education who can read quite well.

Despite this flaw, education as a proxy measure for literacy can provide valuable information. So, we decided to examine the highest level of education attained by the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey and their parents. But, before you take a look at Graph 3, let's see if you can answer the following question: Who do you think attained higher levels of education the participants to the survey or their parents?



As you might have guessed, Graph 3 shows that participants have attained higher levels of education than their parents. Why is it so? Quite simply because our society has evolved:

- The education system is more accessible;
- The basic educational requirements to obtain a job have been increasing steadily.

So, what is the level of education of the Manitoba participants to the MNC's Literacy Survey? If you have read the chapter explaining the national results, you will not be surprised by Manitoba's results as they mirror Graph 3 in "The Big Picture." Graph 3 clearly shows that over two participants out of five (42.5%) have a Grade 9-11 education level. Further, nearly a quarter (23.7%) of the respondents have less than a Grade 9 education. If we were to use education as a proxy measure for literacy, it would mean that nearly a quarter of the respondents in Manitoba are "functionally illiterate."

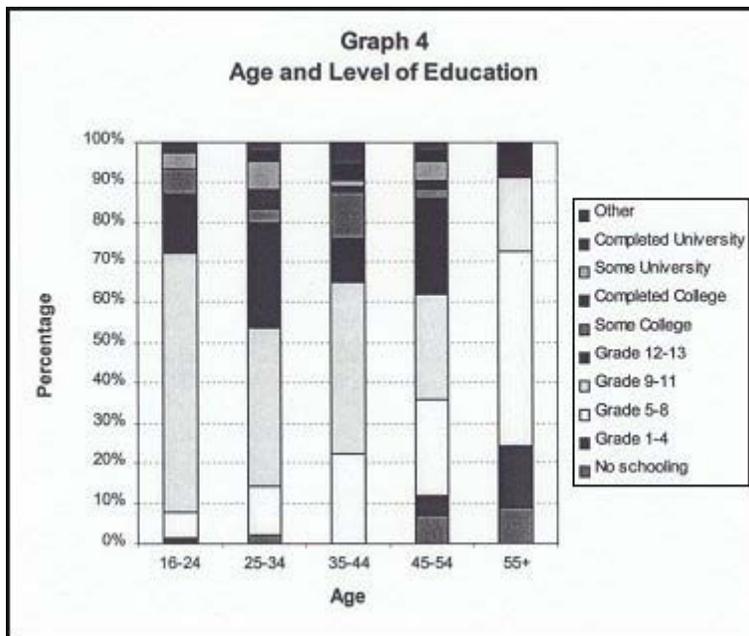
Graph 3 also shows that roughly one participant in six (16.9%) has a Grade 12-13 education level. While just under one participant in ten (9.4%) has some postsecondary education, less than one participant in twenty (4.5%) has obtained a postsecondary degree or diploma.

But, what is the situation for the parents of the respondents? Graph 3 shows that as in Alberta and British Columbia, the mothers and fathers of the respondents have similar levels of education.

A glance at Graph 3 shows that most parents have less than nine years of education, as 51.7% of the mothers and 56.8% of the fathers do not have a Grade 9 education. The second most important group, roughly one parent in five, is the Grade 9-11 education level. It should be noted that roughly one parent in twenty has postsecondary education, compared to roughly one respondent in seven (14.0%). Finally, as in the other provinces, a significant number of participants answered "other/don't know" for their parents' education level.

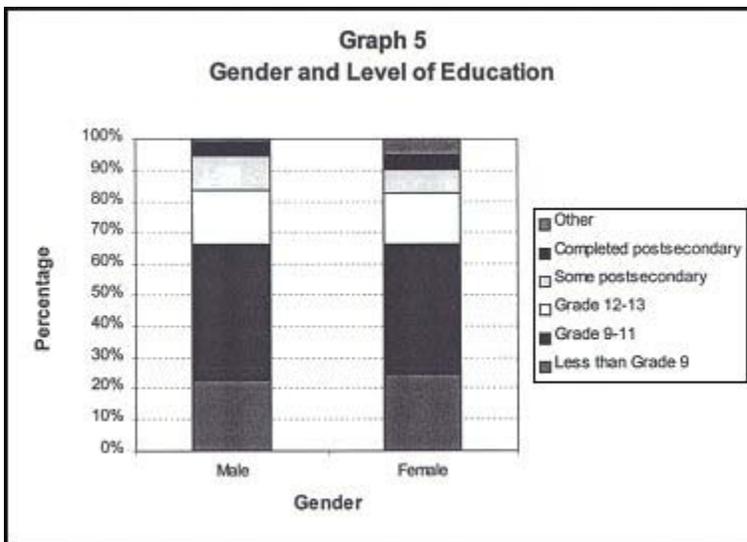
Graph 3 clearly hints at a "generation gap," but is this also the case when we compare the educational level attained by the respondents? Graph 4 shows that a "generation gap" exist, but it is mainly for the lower levels of education. For example, while less than one participant in ten (7.9%) between the ages of 16 and 24 has less than nine years of education, it quickly climbs to more than seven participants out of ten (72.7%) for the people over the age of 55 years.

Graph 4 also shows that nearly two-thirds (64.5%) of the 16 to 24 year old respondents have a Grade 9-11 education level. Why? First of all, some of the people in this age group are still in school. Second, this is the youngest age group they may have left school a few years ago, and have not returned yet. Their young age also explains why no one in this age group has completed postsecondary education. However, one participant in ten (10.5%) has some postsecondary education.

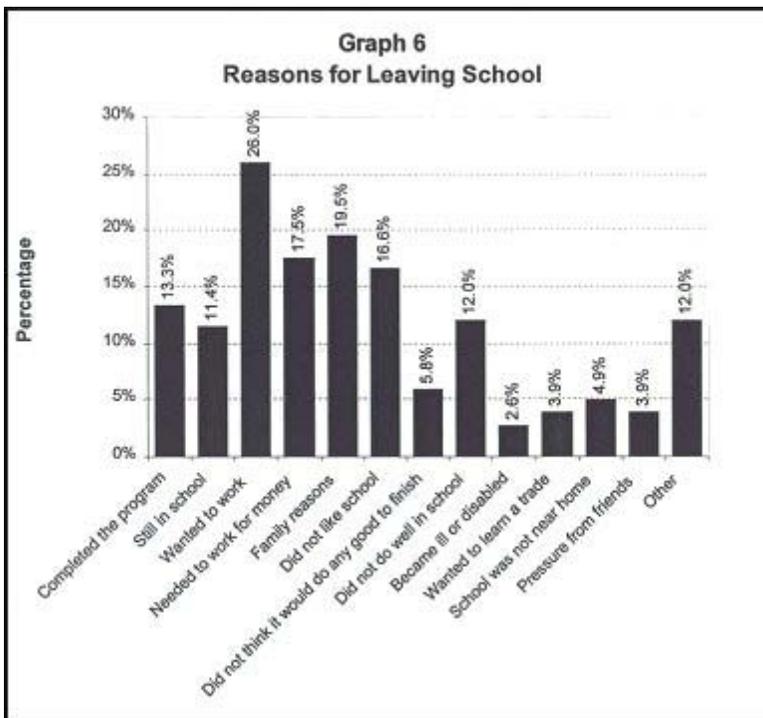


Interestingly, the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups have somewhat similar levels of education. For example, roughly three respondents in five did not graduate from high school. Also, roughly a quarter of the respondents in this age group has a Grade 12-13 education.

Graph 4 shows a "generation gap," but is there also a "gender gap?" Graph 5 shows that for the Métis respondents in Manitoba, there are no significant differences between men and women. For example, while roughly a quarter of the women (24.7%) have less than nine years of education, a slightly lower proportion of men (22.8%) have the same education level. Even though a "gender gap" is noticeable in some provinces, the national and the Manitoba results do not indicate educational attainment differences between men and women.



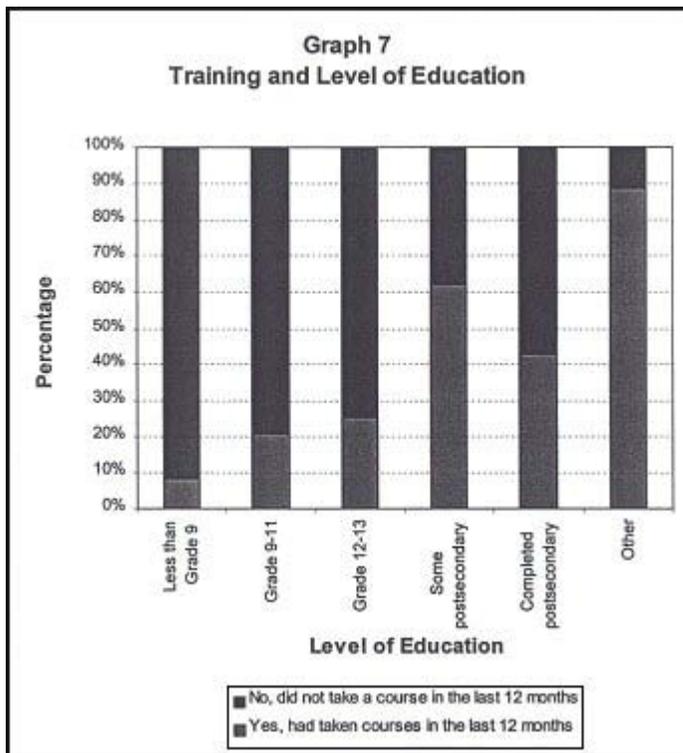
Graph 3 clearly showed that a high number of Métis in Manitoba left school before completing their studies. So, it is interesting to take a look at Graph 6, which partly explains why the respondents in Manitoba left school. The two reasons used in Manitoba "wanted to work" and "family reasons" are also the two most common reasons given for leaving school throughout the Métis Homeland. Financial pressures also forced a significant number of students to leave school, as the third most common answer is "needed to work for money." Less than one respondent in eight (13.3%) state they had completed their studies, and just over one respondent in ten (11.4%) are still in school.



Over the years, we have all heard about the importance of education in getting a job, but even more so in getting a good job. So, what happens to the high number of people who have left school before graduating? They can return to school, but they can also take more specialized upgrading and training courses. And, they have, as roughly a quarter (25.6%) of the respondents had taken courses in the last twelve months. But, Graph 7 clearly shows that not everybody can upgrade their skills.

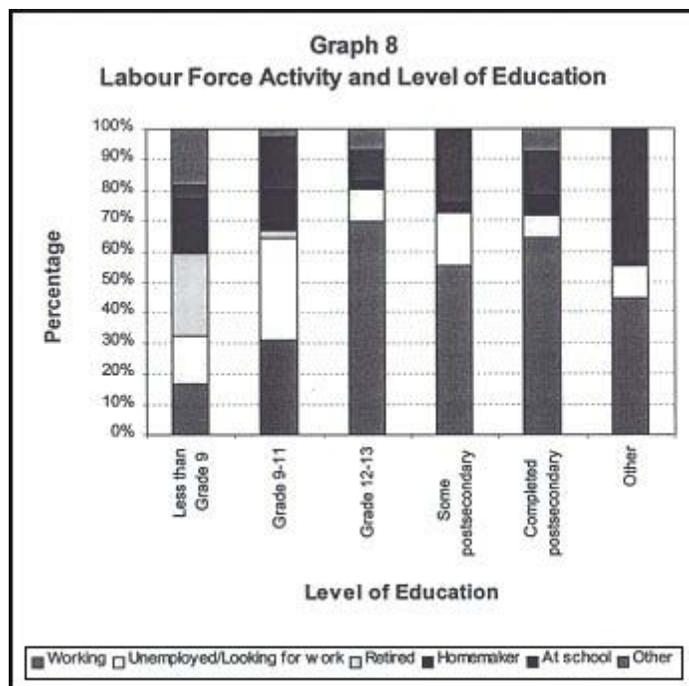
Graph 7 clearly shows that, in Manitoba, as throughout the Métis Homeland, "continuous learning" is mainly for the most educated people. For example, one respondent in twelve (8.3%) with less than nine years of education had taken courses in the last twelve months compared to more than two respondents out of five (42.9%) for those who have completed their postsecondary education. Why do people who appear to be in the most need, did not take any courses in the last twelve months? Focus Groups' participants explained the situation by saying that many of the upgrading and training courses offered require a Grade 10, if not a Grade 12 education.

There were education programs around but not accessible, because certain criteria had to be met in order to get to these programs. And, a lot of them didn't have at least a Grade 10 level, so that really eliminated a lot of people in accessing anything out there. So keeping that in mind, we just decided to create a program an innovative program without barriers so that people could access us... We registered, took applications, but never said no. No set guidelines for the individual ... It wasn't going to be structure like the regular education institutions. It didn't work before, so we had to be creative and try to find another way so that we could attract and keep the individuals in the program.



You might have noticed that Graph 7 peaks at over three respondents out of five (62.9%) for the people with some postsecondary education. Why is it so? Mainly because some of them are still in school, therefore, they would have taken courses in the last twelve months.

How many times have you heard people tell you that education pays? Or, that you should stay in school? Probably more times than you would care to remember? But, do you think this is true? Like many of the things your parents might have said and you did not believe at the time, they were right, once again, as Graph 8 clearly shows that education pays.



For example, less than one participant in five (16.9%) with less than nine years of education are working compared to roughly two thirds of the respondents with a Grade 12-13 education or better.

Some skeptics might point out that the proportion of people working drops to roughly half (55.2%) for the people with some postsecondary education. But, a closer look at the graph also shows that roughly a quarter (24.1%) of the respondents with some postsecondary education are still in school.

Interestingly, Graph 8 shows a lower unemployment rate for people with less than nine years of education, than for the people with a Grade 9-11 education. How can this be so? First, we must recognize that our sample is relatively small. But, an even more important part of the answer can be found in Graph 8, as more than a quarter (26.8%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education have retired. Certainly age could be a factor, education is also a factor as they might have stopped looking for work ...

Literacy

As we said before, education can certainly be used as a proxy measure of literacy. But, we also know that it is a rather crude tool. So, we also decided to ask the MNC's Literacy Survey respondents to assess their own literacy skills.

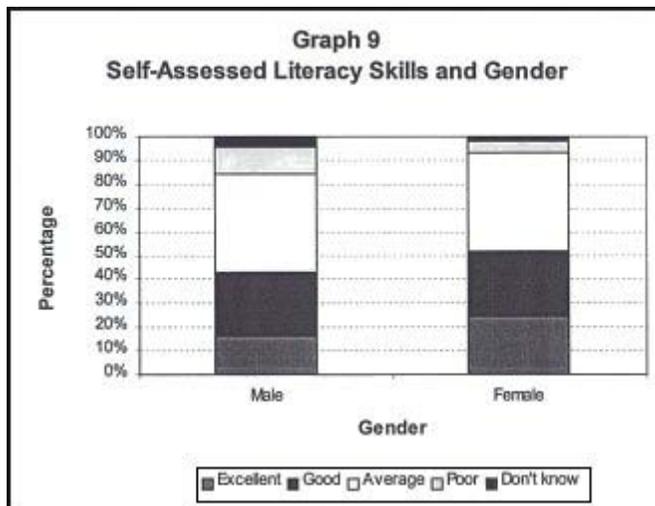
Less than half (47.0%) of the respondents in Manitoba say they have excellent or good reading and writing skills. Is this good? It is marginally better than across the Métis Homeland, where 46.3% of the respondents said the same thing. But, it is much lower than in the Canadian population, where 82% of the International Adult Literacy Survey¹ respondents said they have good or excellent reading and writing skills. Further, while 7.3% of the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey say their reading and writing skills are poor, just 4% of the Canadians said the same thing in the IALS.

Further, one respondent in five (20.1%) had problems on the job or at school because of their reading and writing skills. Thirdly, more than a third (34.3%) of the respondents think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

As with Graph 5, Graph 9 shows slight differences in the self-assessed literacy skills of male and female respondents. For example, while roughly two men out of five (42.7%) rate their literacy skills as good or excellent, over half (51.8%) of the women say the same thing. However, men (11.0%) are much more likely than women (4.9%) to rate their reading and writing skills as poor.

As in the other provinces, men (22.9%) are more likely to say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills than women (17.8%). Similarly, well over a third of the men (37.5%) think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, compared to more than three women out of ten (31.7%).

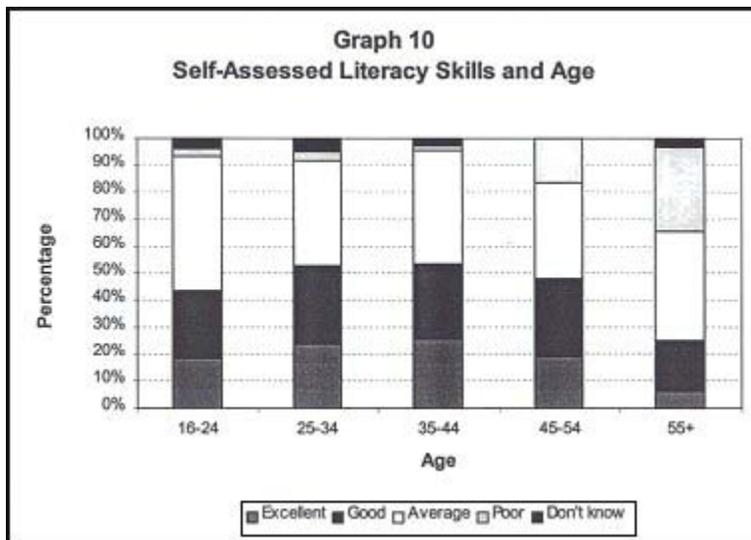
1. Statistics Canada, Reading the Future: A Portrait of Literacy in Canada, p. 64.



In some of the other provinces, we can see a "generation gap" between respondents related to both their educational attainment and their literacy skills, but it is not as clear in Manitoba. Graph 10 shows that the literacy skills of the people between the ages of 16 and 54, are more or less, the same as roughly half the respondents, who say they have excellent or good literacy skills. However, Graph 10 clearly shows a drop for people over the age of 55, as only a quarter (25.0%) of them say they have good or excellent literacy skills. Once again, the results from Manitoba are quite similar to the national results.

Interestingly, while roughly one respondent in five says he or she had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, it is different for two of the age groups. First, it decreases to roughly one respondent in seven (13.4%) for the 25-34 age group, and increases to more than one respondent in four (27.3%) for the people over the age of 55.

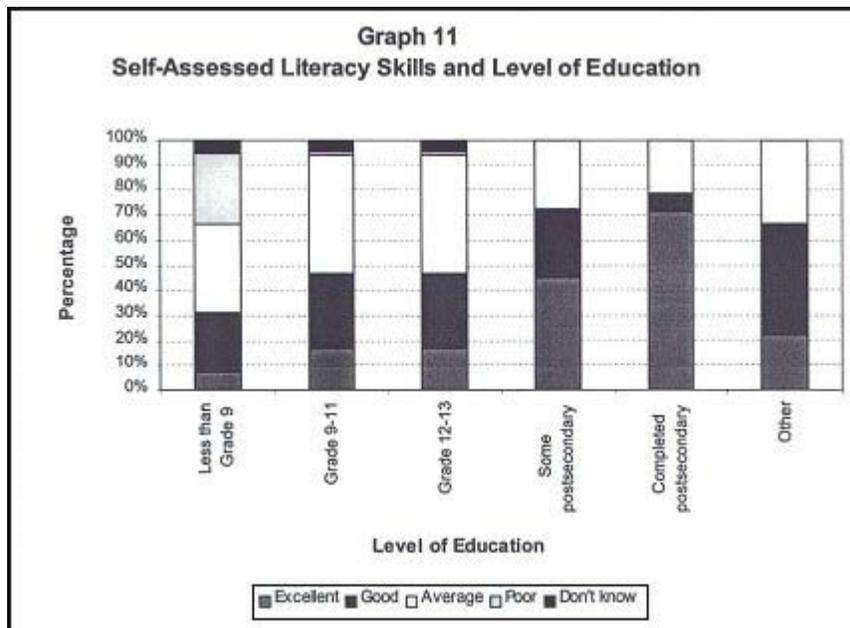
When we asked the respondents if they think that their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, we received another set of answers. Roughly three respondents in ten for the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups, think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. The proportion of people who think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion climbs to roughly two respondents in five for people between the ages of 35 and 44. But, it suddenly drops to less than one respondent in five (16.1%) for people over the age of 55.



As we have said earlier, we have always assumed that literacy and education are related. But, is this really true? Graph 11 clearly shows that there is a very strong relationship between literacy and education. Approximately a third (36.6%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education say their literacy skills are good or excellent compared to nearly four respondents out of five (78.6%) for the people with postsecondary degrees or diplomas.

Further, while roughly a third (35.2%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, it drops to less than one respondent in ten (9.5%) for the people with postsecondary education.

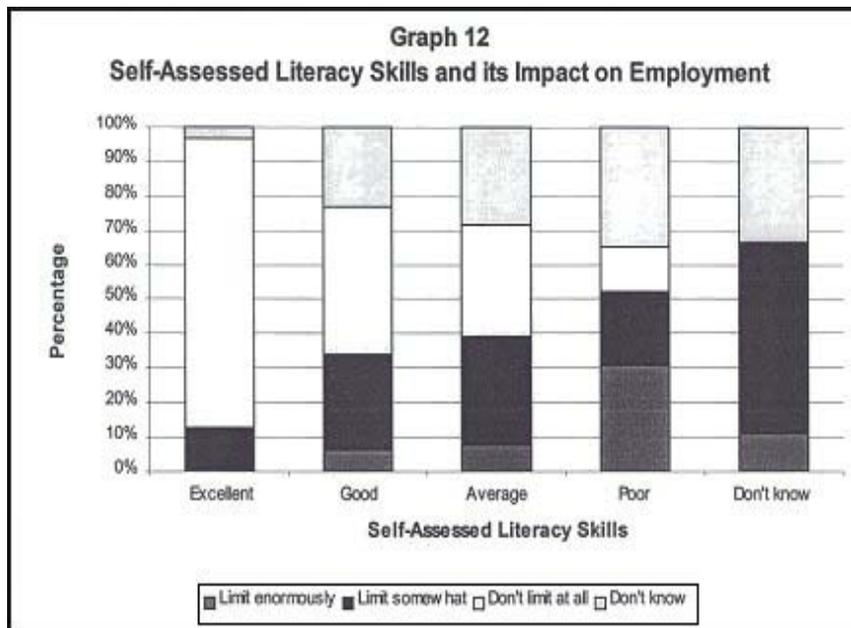
Finally, the picture is slightly different when we examine how reading and writing skills can limit one's chances of obtaining employment or receiving a promotion. In fact, it looks more like a roller-coaster than a ski hill. As roughly a third of the people with less than nine years of education and those with a Grade 12-13 education think they are limited, but it climbs to more than two respondents in five (42.6%) for the people with a Grade 9-11 education, and drops to 13.6% for the people with postsecondary education.



As we have asked the MNC Literacy Survey respondents to assess their reading and writing skills it might be interesting to compare the results of the following questions:

- How would you evaluate your reading and writing abilities?
- Do you think that your reading/writing abilities limit your chances of getting a promotion or a job?

Graph 12 clearly demonstrates the similarity of the two questions, but it provides another window of information on literacy. As even some (12.9%) of those who say they have excellent reading and writing skills think they are limited in their chances of getting a job or a promotion by those skills. As expected, it quickly climbs to over half (52.2%) of the people who say they have poor reading and writing skills.

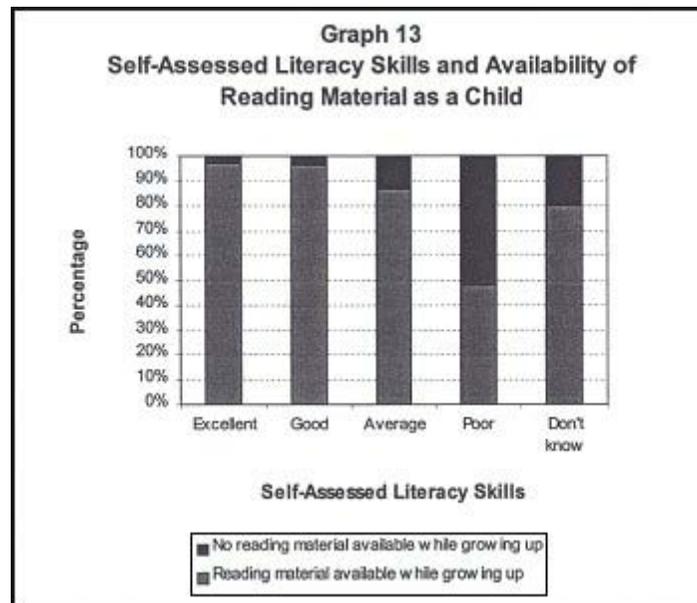


And, how does this translate on the job market? More than half of the respondents who are working or studying say their literacy skills are good or excellent compared to roughly three out of ten for the unemployed or retired respondents. So, clearly literacy skills have an impact on the employment situation of the Métis people in Manitoba.

Literacy Practices

It often seems that reading and writing is like riding a bike. Once we have learned it we never forget it. But, like many other things, if we do not use our literacy skills we lose some of them, and we become rusty. So, what are the literacy practices of the respondents and how do they relate to their literacy skills?

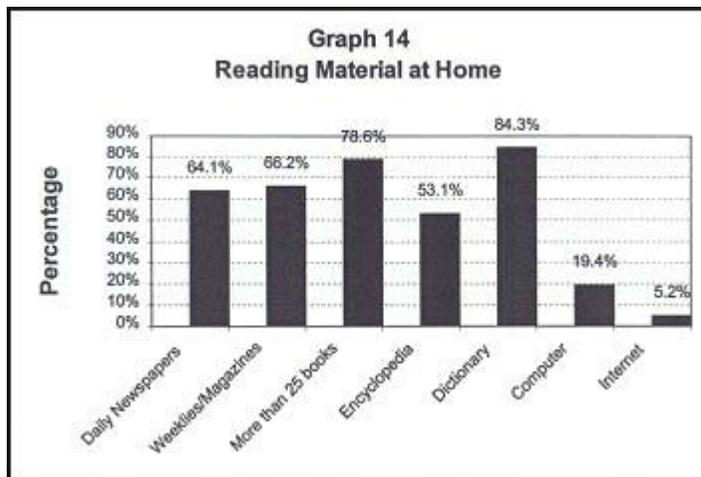
One of the most interesting findings in regard to the literacy skills of the participants is the availability of reading material while growing up. Graph 13 clearly shows that while nearly all (96.8%) of the respondents with good or excellent writing skills had reading material at home while growing up, it drops to less than half (47.8%) for the respondents with poor literacy skills.



Furthermore, people without reading material at home while growing up (57.1%) are twice as likely than the respondents with reading material available while growing up (31.3%) to think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

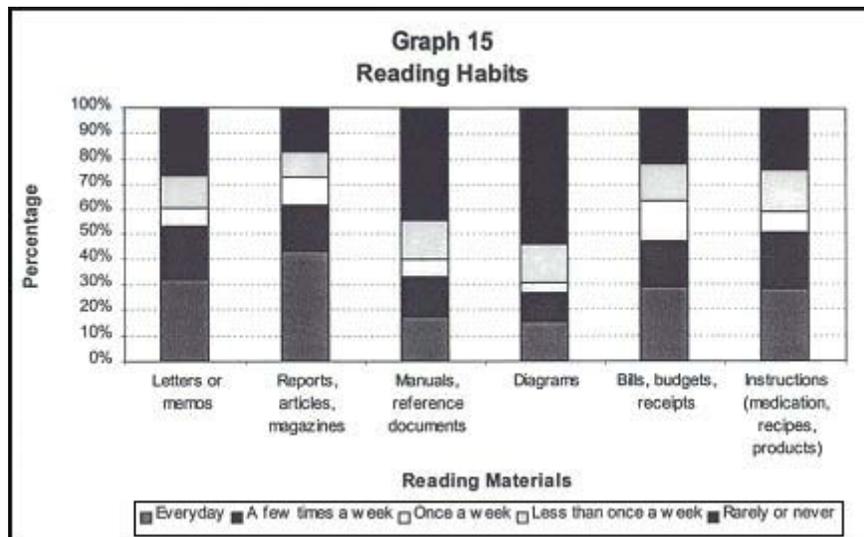
Graph 13 clearly showed the importance of reading material at home while growing up, so we thought it might be interesting to see if the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey have reading material at home.

Graph 14 clearly shows that most respondents in Manitoba, as in the rest of the Métis Homeland, have reading material at home. If you compare these results with Graph 14 in "The Big Picture," you will see that they are slightly lower than the national results. But, still more than four respondents in five (84.3%) have a dictionary, and more than three-quarters (78.6%) of the respondents have more than twenty-five books. As with the other provinces, we must exercise caution regarding the relatively high proportion of people who say they have an encyclopedia at home, as this result is much higher than in Canadian households.

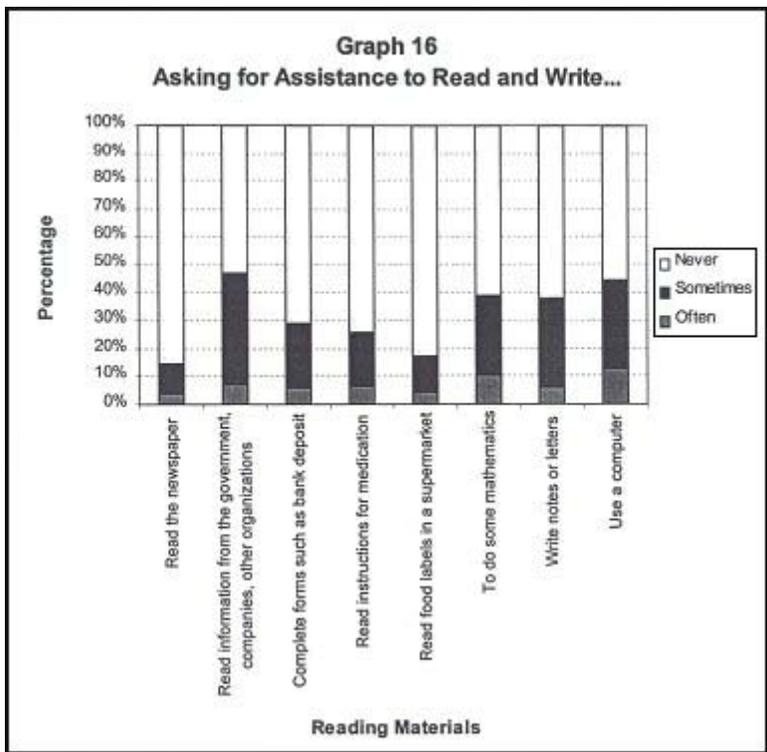


So, most Métis have books, newspapers, and magazines at home, but that still leaves us with one important question: Do they read? Graph 15 clearly shows that indeed Métis people read. But, different reading materials are also read differently. For example, while more than two respondents out of five read "reports, articles and magazines" everyday, less than one respondent in five would say the same thing about "manuals, reference documents" and "diagrams."

More importantly Graph 15 suggests that at least one respondent in five rarely or never reads any reading materials, whether it is a letter, a book or a magazine.



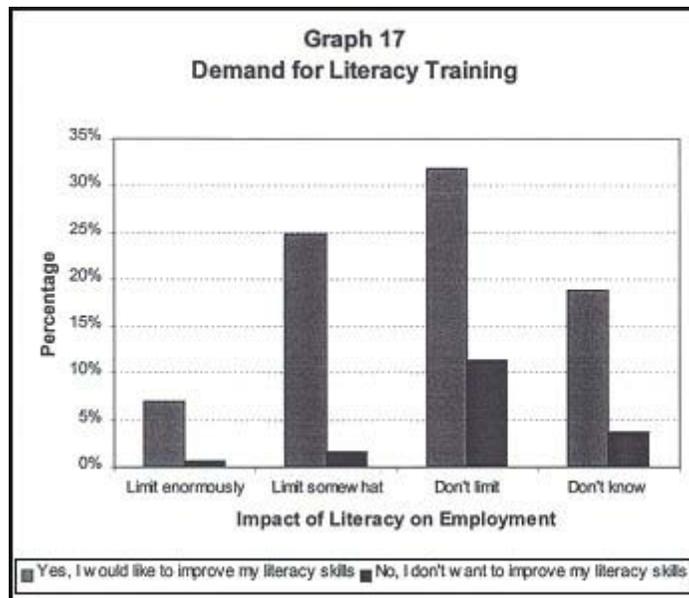
Graph 16 goes one step further as it shows when the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Manitoba ask their friends and family members for assistance in writing or reading some specific materials. For example, roughly two respondents in five ask for assistance when they "read information from the government, companies and other organizations," "do some mathematics," "write notes or letters" or when they "use a computer." Also, less than three respondents in ten ask for assistance in completing "forms such as bank deposits" and reading "instructions for medication,"



Conclusion

Whether we use education, self-assessment literacy skills or literacy practices, the result is the same: The Métis people of Manitoba need to improve their reading and writing skills.

Therefore, one key question remains. Are the Métis in Manitoba interested in enrolling in reading and writing programs? The answer is a resounding yes, as more than four participants in five (82.6%) would like to improve their reading and writing skills. Graph 13 clearly shows that more than nine participants out of ten who think they are limited in their chances of getting a job or promotion by their reading and writing skills would like to improve those skills. But, even the participants who do not think their chances of getting a job or a promotion by their literacy skills are interested in improving those skills, and nearly three-quarters (73.6%) of them said so.

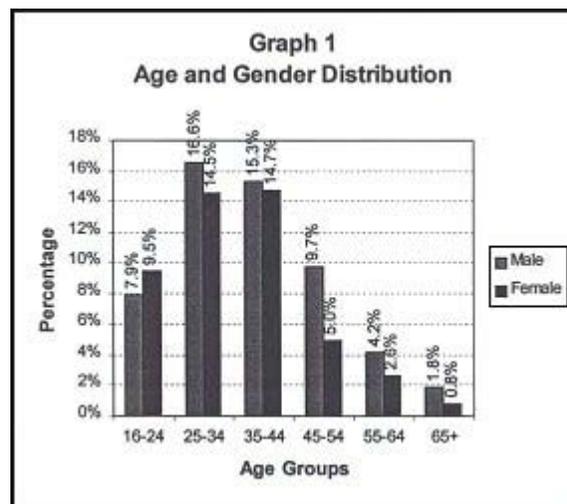


It should also be noted that one participant in five (20.2%) has already taken part in a reading and writing program as an adult.

MNC Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan

As with every other surveys, our first step will be to take a quick look at the main characteristics (age, gender, mother tongue, and so on) of the 423 respondents to the MNC's literacy survey in Saskatchewan.

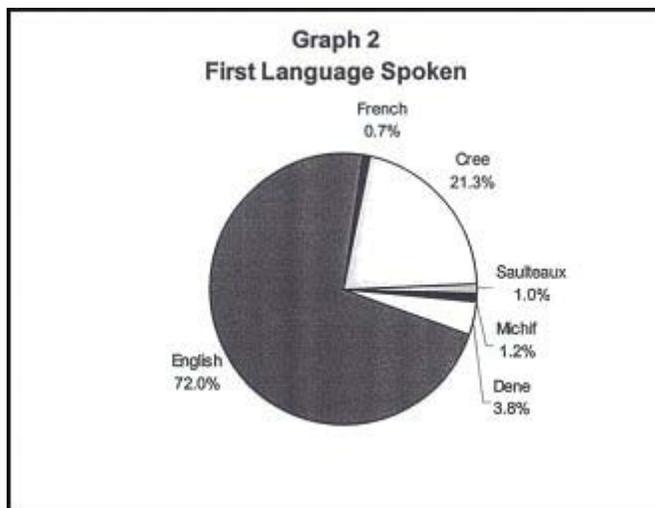
Graph 1 shows that in Saskatchewan, as across the Métis Homeland, three-quarters (78.5%) of the respondents are between the ages of 16 and 44. However, in comparison with the national results, the youngest age group is slightly underrepresented, while both the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups, are slightly over represented. As in the other provinces, the relative low numbers of participants over the age of 55, 39 persons, forced us to combine the two older groups into one.



Men and women respondents are represented fairly evenly, as men represent 54.6% of the people surveyed, and women 45.4%. These results are nearly exactly opposite to the distribution throughout the Métis Homeland, where men represent 46.4% of the respondents and women represent 53.6%. Graph 1 shows that women are more underrepresented in the older age groups.

This Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People tries to assess the literacy levels and needs of the Métis in one of Canada's official languages, English. Therefore, a closer look at the many languages spoken, written and read of the respondents is warranted.

The issue is especially important for the Métis in Saskatchewan as more than a quarter (28.0%) of the respondents identify a mother tongue, which is not English. In fact, more than one participant in five (21.3%) say that their mother tongue is Cree. A handful of participants, 28 people representing 6.7% of the respondents identified other languages, namely: Dene, Michif, Saukteaux and French.



But, what happens to reading and writing abilities? Is the picture as fragmented? No. In fact, nearly all (97.6%) respondents say the first language they've learned to read and write is English. But, does it mean that people who identify Cree as their first spoken language cannot read and write in their mother tongue? Not exactly, as nearly half (43.2%) of the respondents who identified Cree as their mother tongue also say they can read and write in Cree.

Even though English is a second language for a large number of respondents, nearly all (93.0%) say they communicate more easily in English. Not surprisingly, all Métis people who identify English as their first language will say they communicate more easily in that language. But, what about the people who identify Cree as their first language? More than three-quarters (78.4%) of the people who identify Cree as their first spoken language say they communicate more easily in English.

Clearly, English is the main language of communication for the Métis people in Saskatchewan. But, how do they rate their English speaking skills? Less than half (44.7%) of the respondents say that they speak English well or very well. This is significantly lower than the national average of 65.7%, and lower than any other provincial results across the Métis Homeland.

Education

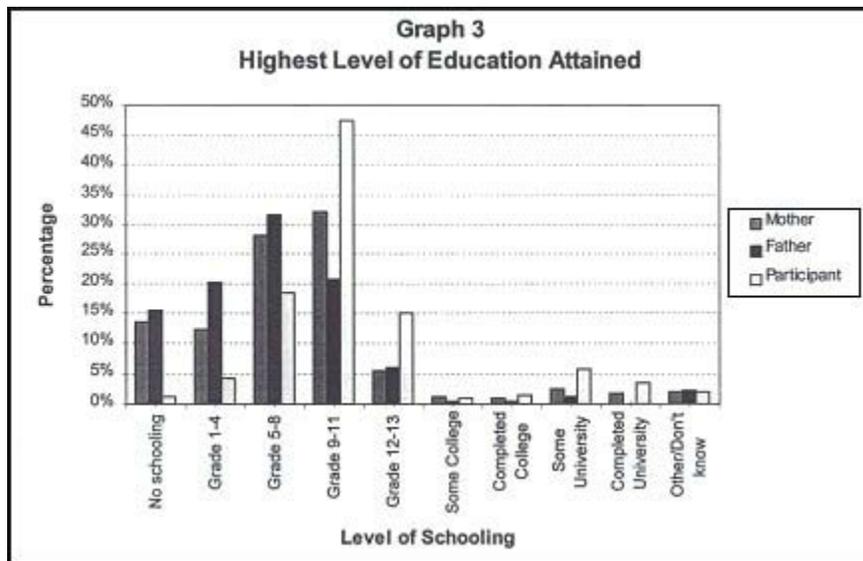
Some of you may wonder why we need to address the education issue in a needs assessment study on literacy. Quite simply, because it is often difficult to separate education and literacy issues. In fact, Statistics Canada defines as "functionally illiterate" a person who has less than nine years of education.

So, what do you think is the level of education of the respondents of the MNC's Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan? Graph 3 shows that in Saskatchewan, as elsewhere in the Métis Homeland, most of the participants did not graduate from high school, as nearly half (47.5%) of the respondents have a Grade 9-11 education, and nearly a quarter (24.0%) have less than a Grade 9 education. So, by using Statistics Canada standard, we can conclude that nearly a quarter (24.0%) of the respondents in the MNC's Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan are "functionally illiterate."

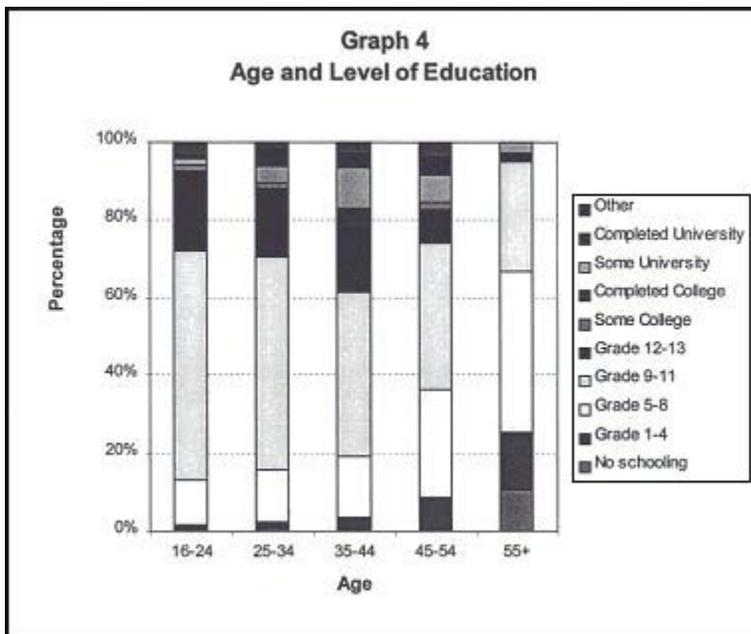
Further, more than one respondent in ten (11.7%) have some postsecondary education, while 15.0% of the respondents have a Grade 12-13 education. How does this compare to their parents? Who do you think would be more educated?

As you have probably guessed, by looking at your own family and friends, the parents are generally less educated than the respondents. This trend is also present in the Canadian society at large where both educational opportunities and educational requirements in the labour market have increased.

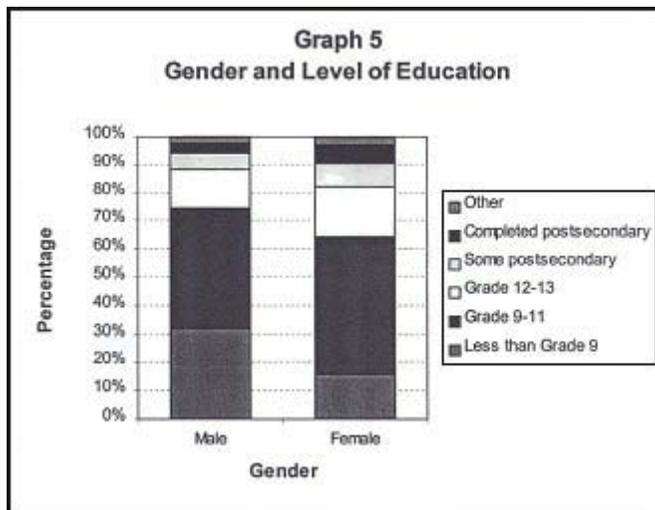
Even though roughly 80% of the respondents' parents did not graduate from high school, mothers tend to be slightly more educated than the fathers of the respondents. The mothers tend to be more educated as over half (54.0%) of the mothers have less than nine years of education and more than two-thirds (67.6%) of the fathers can say the same. As well, nearly a third (32.2%) of the mothers and just over one father in five (20.8%) have a Grade 9-11 education. A quick look at Graph 3 also shows no important differences between the mothers and fathers of the respondents for Grade 12-13 and postsecondary education.



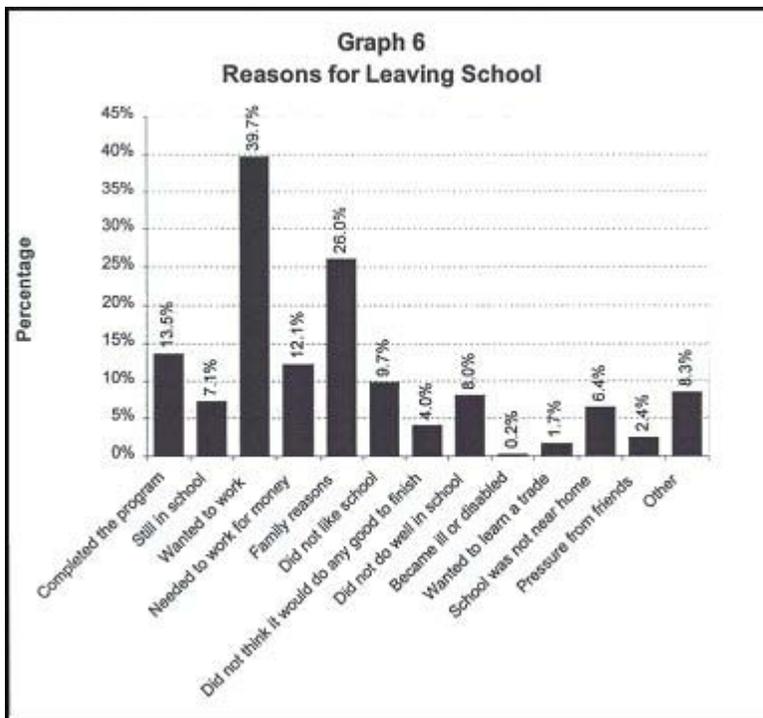
Graph 3 clearly shows that the respondents are better educated than their parents, but can we take this statement one step further and say that younger generations are more educated than older generations? Graph 4 shows that for the Métis people in Saskatchewan the answer is not as clear as in other provinces. However, Graph 4 clearly shows that the proportion of people with less than nine years of education increases from over one participant in ten (13.2%) for the people between the ages of 16 to 24, to nearly three-quarters (72.7%) of the respondents over the age of 65. Further, while just over one participant in ten (11.8%) have pursued postsecondary education, nearly one participant in five (19.3%) between the ages of 35 and 44 have attained that level.



When we compared the level of education attained by the parents of the respondents, we found that their mothers are slightly more educated than their fathers, especially at the lower levels. But, what happens when we compare male and female respondents? Do we get similar results? Not exactly, as Graph 5 shows that the differences between the level of education attained by female and male respondents is not strictly limited to the two lower levels. In fact, we find a higher proportion of women than men in all categories, except for the lowest one, less than Grade 9. To that effect, Graph 5 shows that while 15.6% of the women have less than nine years of education, twice as many men, nearly a third (31.9%), have attained this level of education. However, it should be noted that such a "gender gap" does not exist when we examine the national results.



The previous graphs have demonstrated that the Métis in Saskatchewan leave school at a young age before graduating. But, why do they do so? With Graph 6 we took a closer look and found out that two respondents in five (39.7%) state they left school because they "wanted to work," and more than a quarter (26.0%) left because of "family reasons." Even though Saskatchewan respondents share these reasons with their counterparts across the Métis Homeland, these percentages are much higher than elsewhere. Far behind in third position comes "completed the program" which is stated by less than one respondent in eight (13.5%).



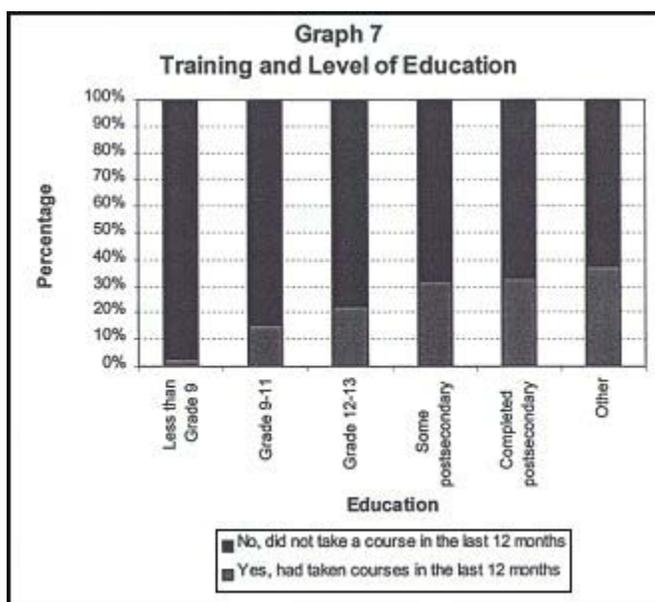
One of the participants at a Focus Group on Literacy in Saskatchewan provided some invaluable insight as to why Métis people left school before graduating:

The basic question is, if we're illiterate, why are we illiterate? Assumptions are made here that it's our fault, somewhere or somehow, somebody is going to ask that question: Where the education system fails you? That's a more fundamental question. Because now we start talking about the education system... we have an education system that is race bound. That's teaching our children to be racist, not only to be racist but to be ashamed of who they are and to try to spend the rest of their lives going through an education system trying to be white, which is physically impossible. So, of course we reject it, we're not failures, we're not dummies, but we reject that ... That's what wrong with the education system, and unless you can deal with that, you won't be able to deal with our illiteracy problem, because we don't want that kind of education, and that's the big fundamental question.

- Man, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

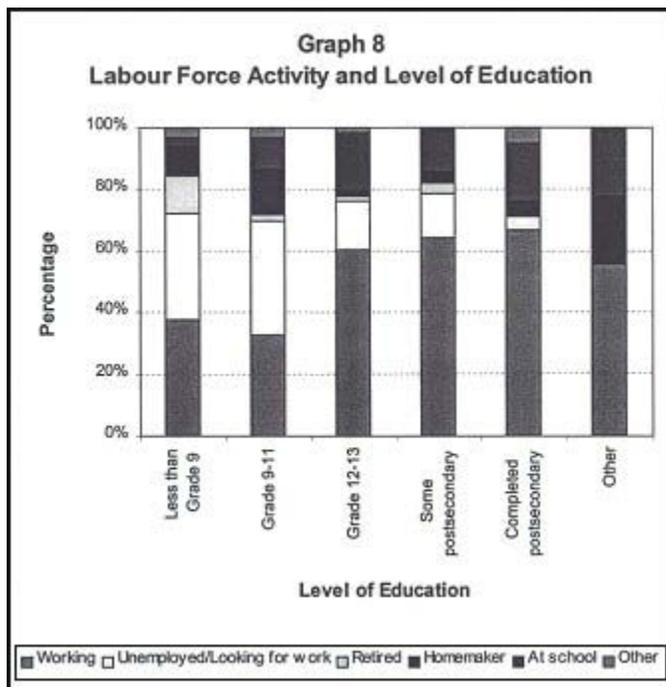
It appears the Métis people in Saskatchewan tend to leave school at an early age before graduating from high school. But, does it mean that once they have walked out of school, they have stopped upgrading their skills? No. In fact, more than one person in six (15.9%) has taken courses in the last twelve months.

But, a quick look at Graph 7 shows that the people in most need of training did not take any courses. As Graph 7 shows that while 3.0% of the people with less than Grade 9 have taken courses in the last twelve months, a third (33.3%) of the respondents with a postsecondary degree or diploma had done the same. Such an important "education gap" in regard to training and upgrading is consistent with the results from the Métis Homeland. As such 15.4% of the Métis people with less than nine years of education have taken any courses compared with more than half (54.0%) of the respondents who have completed their postsecondary education.



One crucial question regarding education remains to be addressed: Does education pay? Graph 8 clearly shows that it pays indeed. While just over two respondents in five (42.4%) are working, two-thirds (66.7%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education are working compared to less than two respondents in five (37.6%) for the people with less than nine years of education.

Graph 8 also clearly shows that the proportion of people unemployed or looking for work is strongly influenced by their level of education. Nearly three participants out of ten (29.3%) are unemployed or looking for work. But over a third (34.7%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education are unemployed or looking for work compared to less than one person in twenty (4.8%) for people with a postsecondary degree or diploma.



Literacy

Education can certainly be a useful proxy measure for literacy, but we decided to complement it by asking the respondents to assess their own reading and writing skills. They were asked to evaluate their literacy skills with the following questions:

Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People

1. How would you evaluate your reading and writing abilities?
2. Have you ever had problems on the job/at school because reading and writing were hard for you?
3. Do you think your reading/writing abilities limit your chances of getting a promotion or a job?

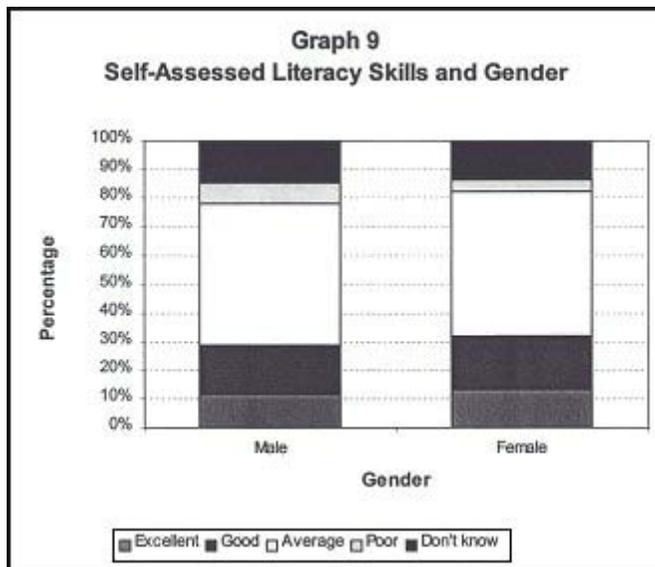
The results to these three questions are somewhat different, but they provide invaluable information, which will be further studied and compared amongst age groups, gender and education levels.

In answer to the first question, three participants in ten (29.9%) describe their reading and writing abilities as good or excellent. Is that good or bad? First, we should note that 29.9% is much lower than the results across the Métis Homeland where nearly half (46.3%) of the respondents rate their reading and writing skills as good or excellent. Second, this question was asked in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), and more than 80% of the respondents in the seven industrialized countries surveyed said their reading and writing abilities are good or excellent.

To the second question, nearly two respondents in five (37.7%) said they had problems on the job or at school because of their reading and writing abilities. Once again, this is much higher than throughout the Métis Homeland where less than one respondent in four (22.3%) had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills.

Finally, nearly half (48.9%) of the respondents thought that their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a promotion or a job. It is also higher than elsewhere in the Métis Homeland where just over a third (35.7%) of the respondents think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

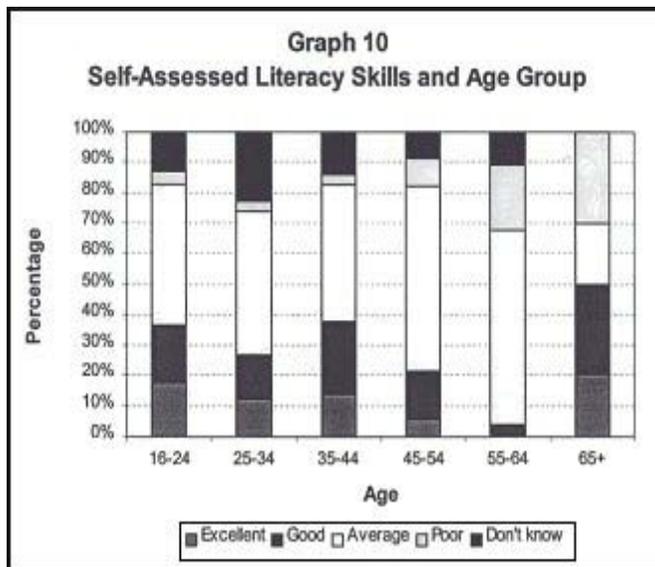
Graph 5 showed differences between the level of education attained by women and men, but what do you think happens with their literacy skills? Are women's literacy skills different from men's?



Graph 9 shows slight differences between the literacy skills of men and women. For example, nearly a third of the female respondents (32.0%) compared with less than three male respondents in ten (28.6%) say they have good or excellent literacy skills. As well, a higher proportion of men (7.5%) will say they have poor reading and writing skills compared to 4.5% of the women.

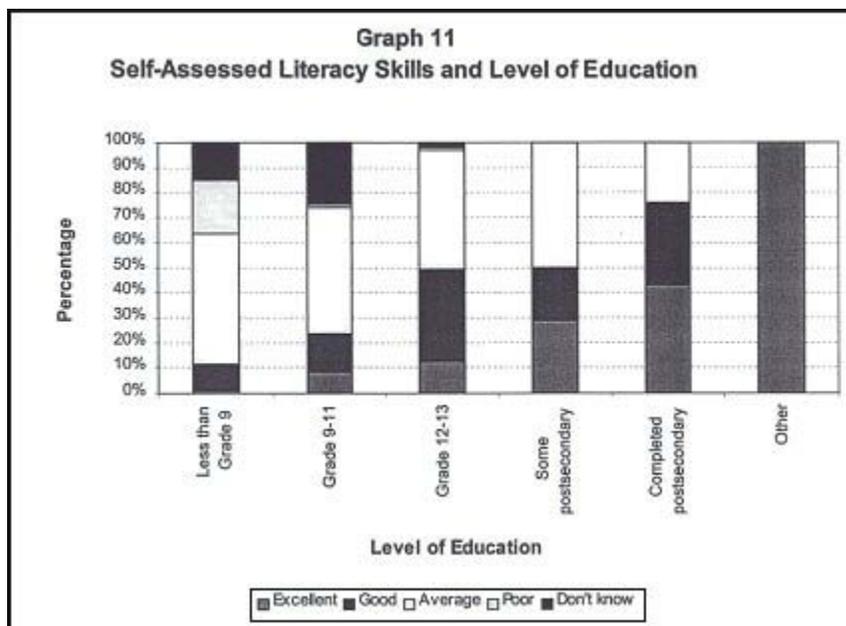
However, more important differences can be found with the other two questions. As more than two men out of five (41.6%) say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills compared to three women out of ten (30.9%). An even more important "gender gap" can be seen when we look at the third question. As nearly three men out of five (59.2%) compared to well over a third (37.7%) of the women think they are limited in getting a job or a promotion because their reading and writing abilities.

In the other provinces, we've seen that younger generations tend to be both more educated and more literate than the older generations. However, Graph 4 has already demonstrated that this relationship between education and literacy is not as clear in Saskatchewan than elsewhere. So what happens with literacy? As with education, the relationship between age and self-assessed literacy skills is not as clear in Saskatchewan as in the other provinces.



For example, across the Métis Homeland the 35-44 age group ranked their literacy skills between those of the 25-34 and 45-54 age groups. But, in Saskatchewan both the 16-24 and the 35-44 have rated their reading and writing skills in a similar fashion, with well over a third of them rating their skills as good or excellent. Similarly, roughly a third of the people in these age groups say they had problems on the job or at school because of their reading and writing skills.

Education and literacy have often been considered as one and the same thing. After all why do we go to school if it's not to learn how to read and write? With Graph 11, we decided to take a closer look at this relationship between education and literacy. But before we examine the results, what do you think is the relationship between education and literacy?

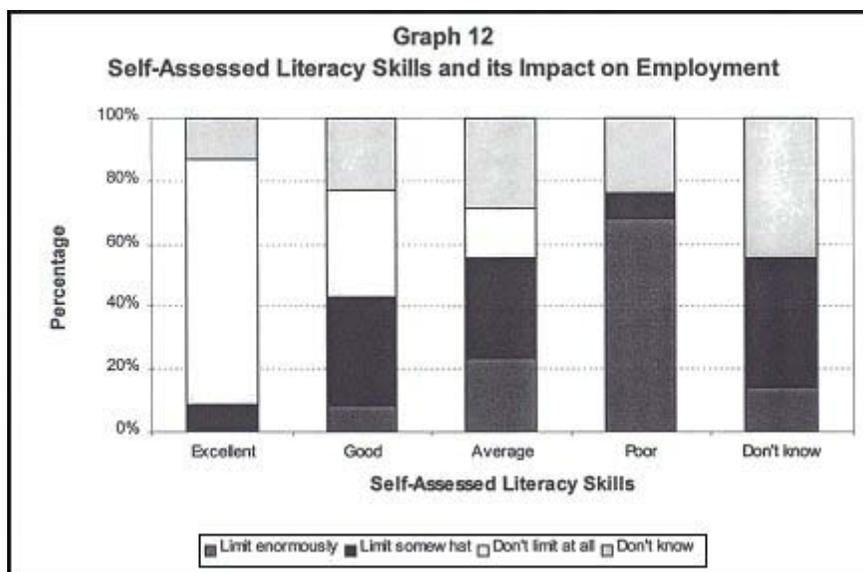


As you might have expected, Graph 11 clearly shows that as the level of education increases, the literacy skills also increase. For example, more than three-quarters (76.2%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education rate their literacy skills as good or excellent, this proportion drops to just over a person in ten (11.1%) for people with less than a Grade 9 education. However, it should be noted that this "education gap" is much more important than elsewhere in the Métis Homeland. As three respondents in ten (29.1%) with less than nine years of education rate their literacy skills as good or excellent compared to four respondents out of five (79.0%) for people who have completed their postsecondary education. Furthermore, while less than 1% of the people with more than a Grade 9 education rate their literacy skills as poor, it climbs to more than one person in five (21.2%) for the people with less than nine years of education.

This "education gap" is also evident when we look at the other questions on literacy. For example, more than three respondents in five (63.0%) with less than nine years of education say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities. This proportion drops to two participants out of five (39.9%) for people with a Grade 9-11 education, and drops even further to roughly a respondent in ten for the people who have at a minimum a Grade 12-13 education. Once again, this "education gap" seems much more important in Saskatchewan than throughout the Métis Homeland.

The previous graph shows an "education gap" but it should also be noted that an "employment gap" seems to exist. As nearly two workers in five (38.1%) rate their literacy skills as good or excellent, but less than one respondent in seven (14.5%) of the people who are unemployed or looking for work rate their literacy skills that way. Furthermore, 15.6% of the homemakers and less than a quarter (23.5%) of the retired respondents rate their literacy skills as good or excellent.

But, what do Métis people of Saskatchewan think about the relationship between their literacy skills and employment? Graph 12 clearly demonstrates that nearly half (49.4%) of the respondents in Saskatchewan think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. It is marginally higher than in the Métis Homeland where it stands at 45.8%. But this proportion varies according to the self- assessed level of literacy. For example, more than three-quarters (76.0%) of the respondents with poor literacy skills think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, while just over one participant in ten (12.2%) who say they have excellent literacy skills also think that.

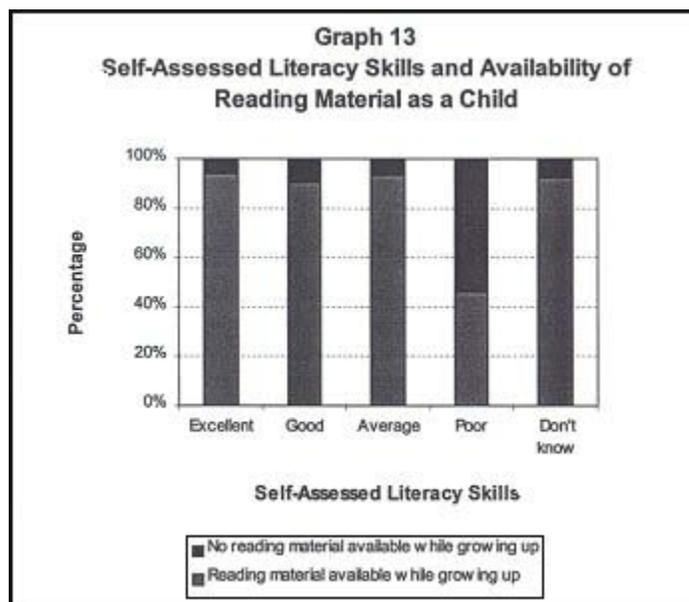


We should also point out that the mother tongue of the respondents has an impact. In fact, nearly half (45.3%) of the people who identify English as their first language think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion compared to more than three respondents in five (62.8%) for the people whose mother tongue is Cree.

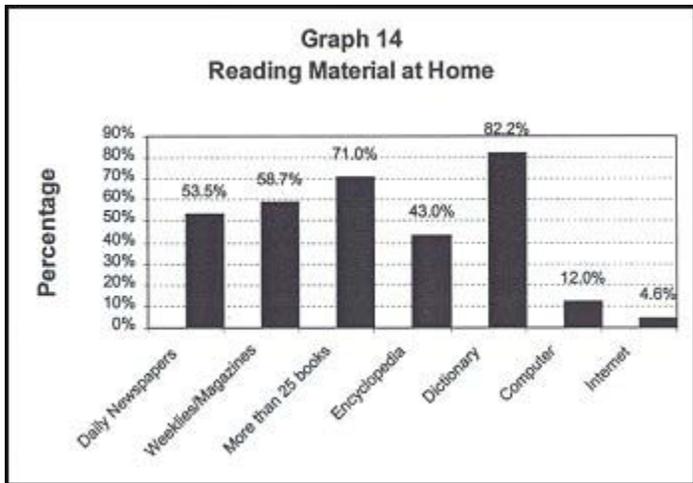
Literacy Practices

Did you notice that the more you read the better you get at reading? You improve your vocabulary, your grammar, increase your reading speed, and so on. So, you may not be surprised to learn that literacy practices can also be used to assess literacy skills.

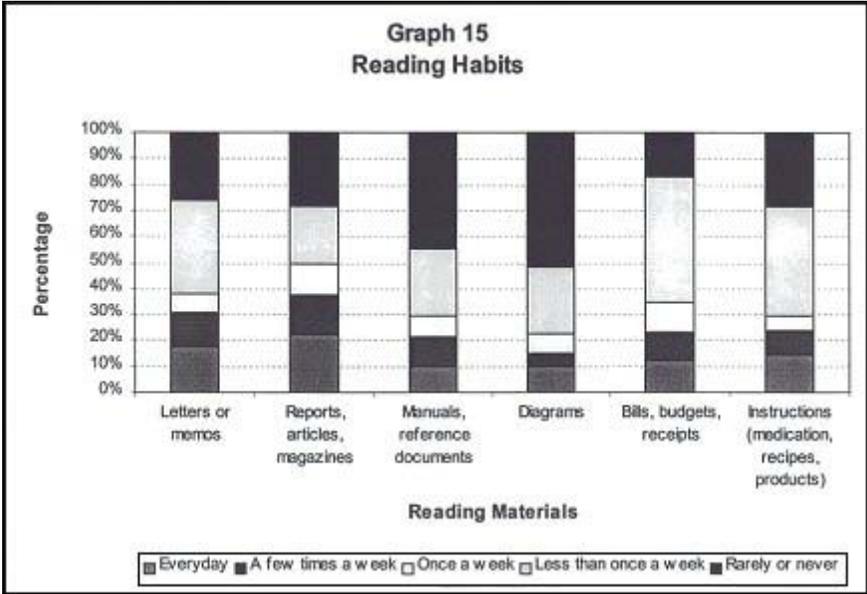
But, would you think that associating literacy skills and reading material is a far fetched idea? Maybe, but Graph 13 clearly shows that it is not. Nearly nine participants out of ten (89.6%) had reading material at home while growing up, but more than half (54.2%) of the people with poor reading and writing skills did not have any reading material available at home. Furthermore, while over a third (35.4%) of the respondents who had reading material at home say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, it climbs to nearly three respondents in five (56.1%) for the people without reading material. Similarly, nearly half (48.0%) of the people who had reading material at home while growing up compared to nearly two-thirds (62.5%) of the respondents without reading material think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.



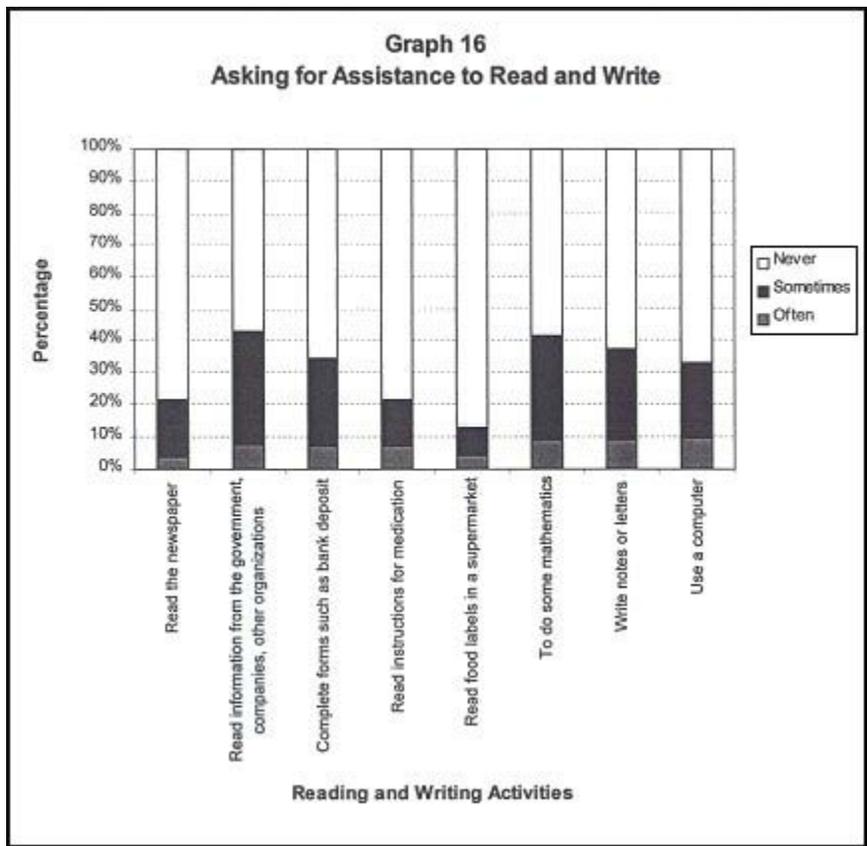
Considering the importance of reading material while growing up, do you think that the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan have reading material at home? Graph 14 shows that most respondents have reading material at home. But, in all categories, except for "encyclopedia" and "more than twenty-five books," they have the lowest proportions throughout the Métis Homeland. For example, while more than four out of five respondents (82.2%) in Saskatchewan have a dictionary at home, 85.9% of the Métis people across the Homeland say the same thing. Similarly, while well over half of the respondents in Saskatchewan have "weeklies, magazines" and "daily newspapers," roughly seven respondents out of ten say the same thing across the Homeland.



Graph 13 has clearly demonstrated the importance of reading material, but this raises another question: Do the respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan read? Of course they do. Though Graph 15 shows that not all types of reading materials are read with the same frequency. For example, roughly one respondent in five reads "reports, articles, magazines," "letters or memos" everyday, all the other reading materials suggested are read everyday by roughly one respondent in ten. But, even more important is the fact that Graph 15 suggests that as many as three respondents in ten might rarely or never read, implying that these people would have relatively low literacy skills.



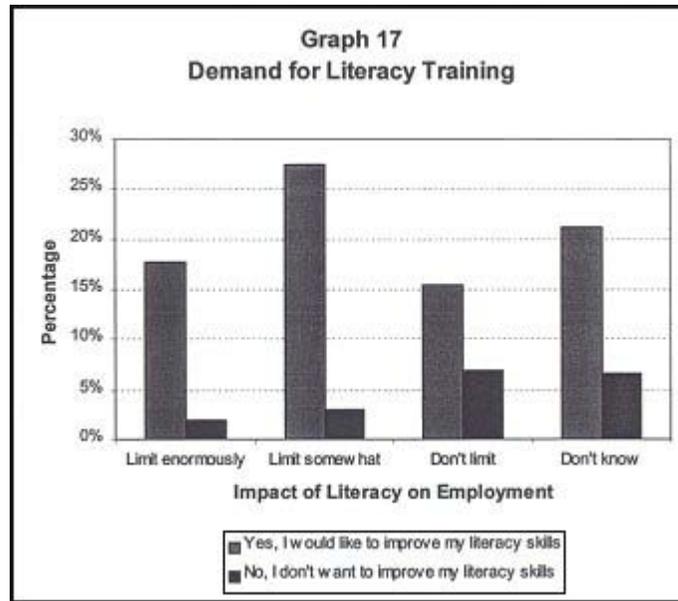
Graph 16 goes one step further by looking at the respondents' requests for assistance with some specific reading and writing abilities. In Saskatchewan, roughly two respondents out of five, ask for assistance their friends and family members to "read information from the government, companies, other organizations," "do some mathematics" and "write notes and letters." Also, three respondents in ten say they ask for assistance ton "use a computer" and "complete forms such as a bank deposit."



Conclusion

So, whether we used education, self-assessment of literacy skills or literacy practices as a proxy measure for literacy, one fact is clear: The Métis people of Saskatchewan may find it to their advantage to improve their reading and writing abilities.

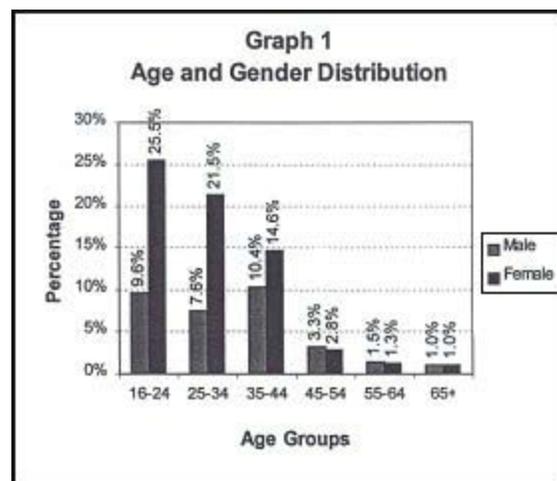
However, an essential question remains: Are they interested in literacy training? The answer is a resounding yes, as an overwhelming majority (81.6%) of the Métis people in Saskatchewan would like to improve their reading and writing skills. Graph 17 clearly shows this strong interest in literacy training as even the people who don't think they are limited in getting a job or a promotion by their reading and writing skills would like to improve those skills. Further, roughly one participant in six (16.5%) has taken some reading and writing courses as an adult.



MNC Literacy Survey in Alberta

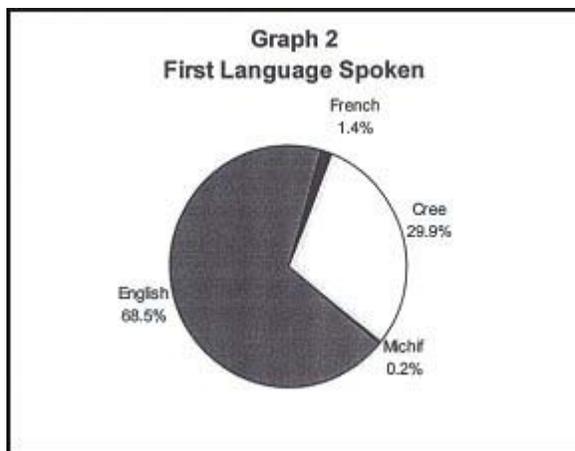
You may have noticed that all survey analysis usually starts by providing information such as the age and gender of the people surveyed. This analysis will not be any different, as this information is crucial in establishing the validity of any survey.

Graph 1 clearly shows that out of the 448 MNC's Literacy Survey respondents in Alberta, most are young women. As a quarter (25.5%) of the respondents were women between the ages of 16 and 24, while just over a fifth (21.5%) of the respondents were women 25 to 34 years old. Graph 1 clearly shows that women are over represented in Alberta, where they represent over two-thirds (67.1%) of the survey respondents in Alberta.



Graph 1 also shows that nearly nine respondents out of ten (89.2%) are between the ages of 16 and 44. This is much higher than the results across the Métis Homeland, where three-quarters of the respondents are in those age groups. So, the people over the age of 45 are clearly underrepresented as they account for only 12.0% of the people surveyed. Therefore, for this survey, the 55-64 and over 65 years old age groups will be merged into one. Although, the 45-54 and over 55 age groups are still relatively small, their different education and literacy characteristics require the establishment of two separate groups.

As the MNC's Literacy Survey tried to assess English literacy throughout the Métis Homeland, it is interesting to look at the mother tongue of the participants. Graph 2 shows that most participants identify English (68.5%) and Cree (29.9%) as their mother tongue.



It is interesting to note that nearly all of the respondents (96.6%) still speak their first language. Obviously, most respondents identifying English as their mother tongue should still be able to speak it, but this is also true for nearly all the respondents (95.5%) identifying Cree as their mother tongue.

What language do most respondents communicate more easily in? Nearly nine respondents out of ten (87.6%) say they communicate more easily in English. But, how well do they speak English? Over three-quarters (77.9%) of the MNC's Literacy Survey respondents in Alberta say they speak English well or very well. Clearly, this is better than the national result of nearly two-thirds (65.7%).

Even though most respondents identifying Cree as their mother tongue still speak it, more than half (60.5%) of them communicate more easily in English. One of the Focus Groups' participants provided a personal account of the situation when he said:

I spoke fluently Cree, until I was five years old, then I quit using it because I had to (speak English) in school. They wouldn't allow us to speak Cree. However, when I was 18, I could understand it, but I could speak very little. I had to learn it over again, even now I get tongue-tied every now and again, because I don't use it all the time.

- Man, Slave Lake, Alberta

This statement also brings up another question: What is the language nearly all respondents (98.1%) first learned to read and write? Any idea? As you've probably guessed, English is the first language most respondents learned to read and write. This result is only marginally higher than the national result of 93.2%.

It is also interesting to note that nearly three-quarters (74.3%) of the respondents know how to read and write in their mother tongue. But, this figure is somewhat misleading as nearly all (94.3%) the respondents identifying English as their mother tongue know how to read and write in that language. But, the situation is quite different for the people identifying Cree as their mother tongue, as only 30.0% of them say they can read and write in Cree.

Education

You might be wondering why we decided to examine the education levels of the respondents in a needs assessment study on literacy. We have done this because education is generally considered to be one of the most important factors and indicators of literacy. In fact, Statistics Canada has defined as "functionally illiterate" a person with less than nine years of education. Even though, we all know exceptions to this rule of thumb, its value cannot be underestimated, as the results can be compared with the Canadian population.

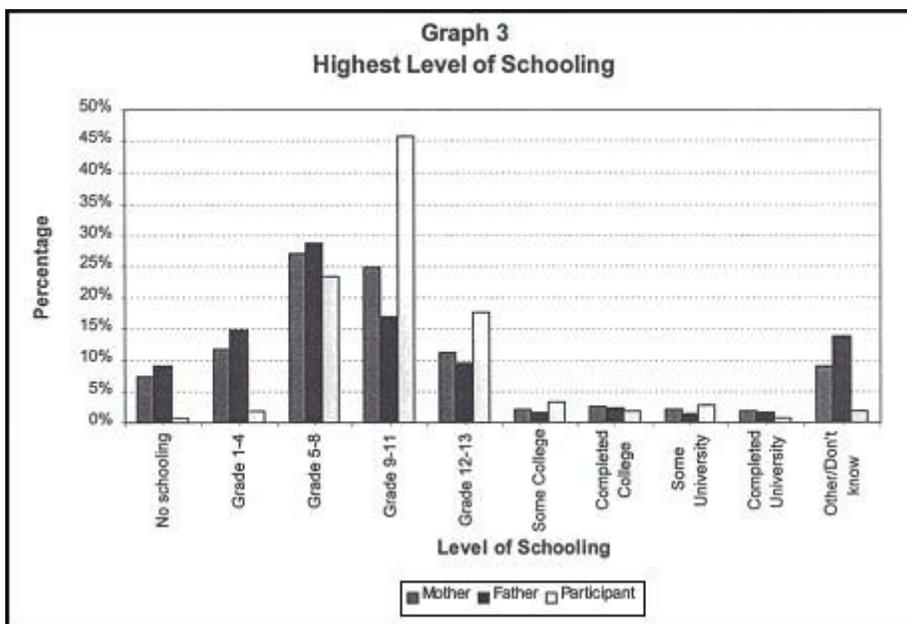
Graph 3 clearly shows that a significant proportion of the respondents did not graduate from high school, as more than seven out of ten (71.6%) respondents have less than a Grade 12 education. It is interesting to note that it is quite similar to their parents' educational attainment, as 70.9% of the mothers and 69.5% of the fathers have less than a Grade 12 education.

However, a closer look at Graph 3 shows significant differences at the Grade 9-11 education level. As nearly half (45.6%) of the respondents have between nine and eleven years of education, but nearly one mother in four (24.9%) and less than one father in five (16.9%) has a Grade 9-11 education. A Focus Groups' participant expressed it as follows:

Both my parents have very little schooling. My father taught himself how to read so that he wouldn't be ignorant when we went to school. .. it was a big challenge for him and he was very proud that he could read the newspapers, and things like that, but he was self-taught, and my mother the same way. And they couldn't cope with what we were learning in school and that was very frustrating for them.

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

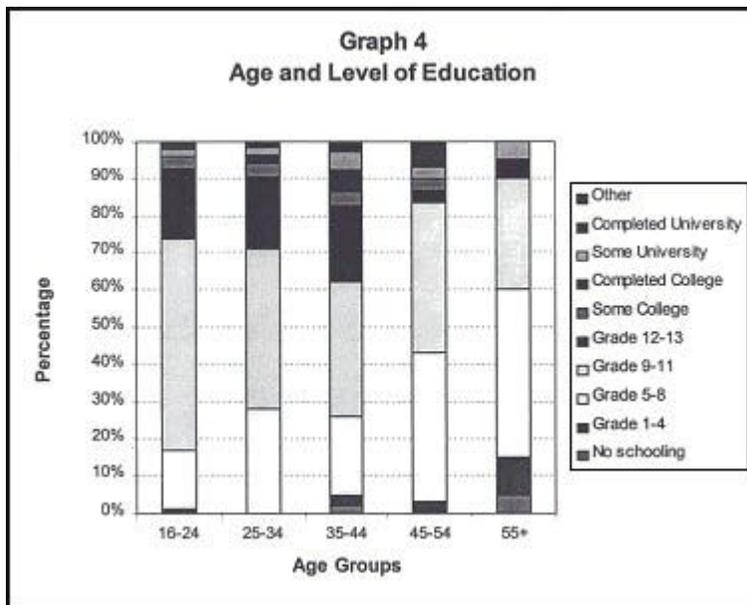
The situation is reversed when we look at people with less than nine years of education. As more than one participant out of four (26.0%) has less than a Grade 9 education, and roughly half of the respondents say their parents have less than a Grade 9 education. Graph 3 also demonstrates that only a handful of respondents can be found at the lower levels (no schooling and Grade 1-4). Therefore, if we use Statistics Canada's definition we can conclude that more than a quarter (26.0%) of the respondents are functionally illiterate. By comparison, in the non-Aboriginal Canadian population, less than one person in ten (9.6%)¹ has less than nine years of education.



Graph 3 shows that the respondents are more likely to have a Grade 12-13 education than their parents, as nearly one participant in five (17.6%) has a Grade 12-13, compared to one parent in ten. It is interesting to note that Graph 3 also shows no significant differences at the postsecondary level between the respondents and their parents.

Graph 3 shows that the respondents are slightly more educated than their parents. So, if we compare the highest level of education attained by the respondents for the various age groups, who do you think have higher levels of education, the younger or the older generations?

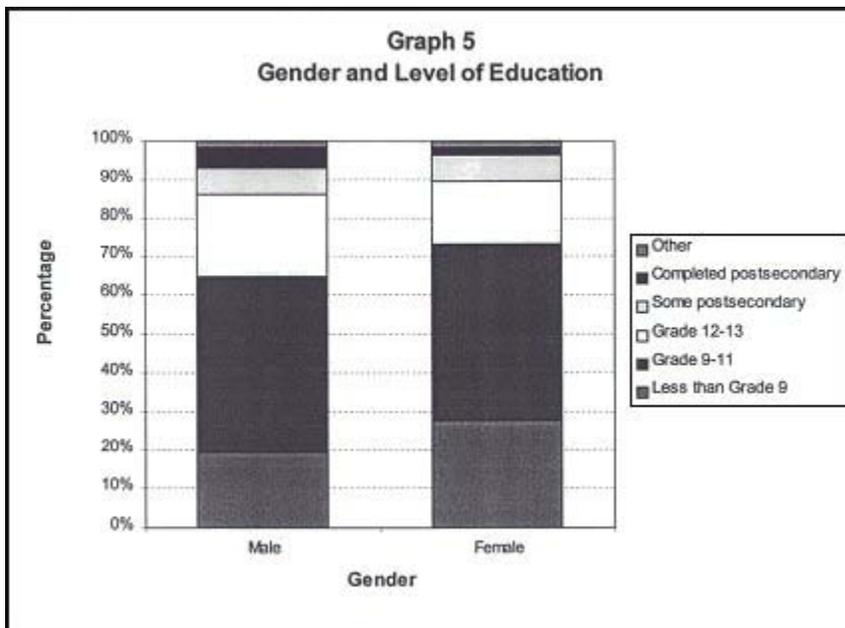
1. Statistics Canada, *A Profile of the Métis*, 1996, p. 35.



Graph 4 shows that younger generations are generally more educated than the older generations. For example, the proportion of people with less than nine years of education increases from less than one person in five (16.9%) for the 16-24 age group to three respondents in five for people over the age of 55.

Graph 4 also shows that while roughly one respondent in five in the three younger age groups (16-24, 25-34, 35-44) have a Grade 12-13 education level, it suddenly drops to roughly one in twenty for the people over the age of 45.

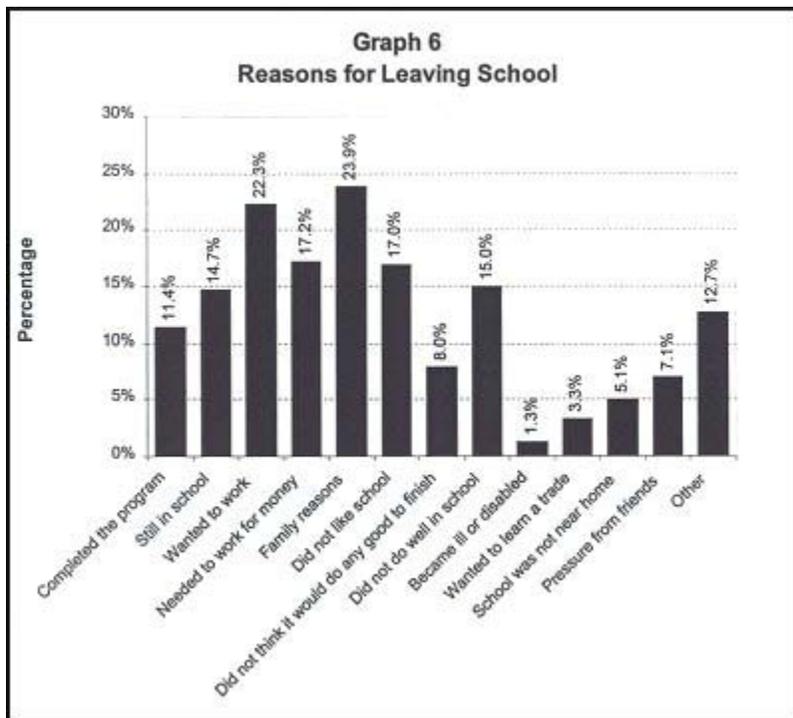
So, Graph 4 demonstrated the existence of a generation gap. But, do you think that we can have a "gender gap?" Yes, as Graph 5 shows that men and women have slightly different levels of education. For example, a higher proportion of women (26.0%) than men (19.2%) have less than nine years of education. While there is no gender gap at the Grade 9-11 level, Grade 12-13 shows that 21.5% of the men and 16.2% of the women, this is their highest level of education attained. Interestingly, while there is no gender gap for people with some postsecondary education, it is a different story for the people who have completed their postsecondary education, as 5.4% of the men have completed their postsecondary education compared to only 1.9% of women.



Considering that nearly seven out of ten respondents left school without graduating from high school, the reasons cited by the respondents for leaving school might provide us some insights about school leaving. While just over one participant in ten (11.4%) left school because they had completed their program, 14.7% say they are still in school. More than one respondent in five state that they left school because of "family reasons" (23.9%) and "wanted to work" (22.3%). A significant proportion of respondents (17.2%) also provide a related explanation, that is "needed to work for money." The decision to leave school without graduating was also explained as follows:

Kids they face so much of that kind of racism, that discrimination, that peer pressure, that rather than constantly fight that system their option is just to leave it. And you know, they're hungry for an education, they want careers, they want to be valuable members of society, too. But, they have no option and particularly in this small community, there are no choices...

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta



The next two graphs will look at the impact of education on our lives. So, if nearly half of the respondents (42.4%) have taken a course in the last twelve months, who do you think is more likely to access training courses? People with higher levels of education or people with lower levels of education?

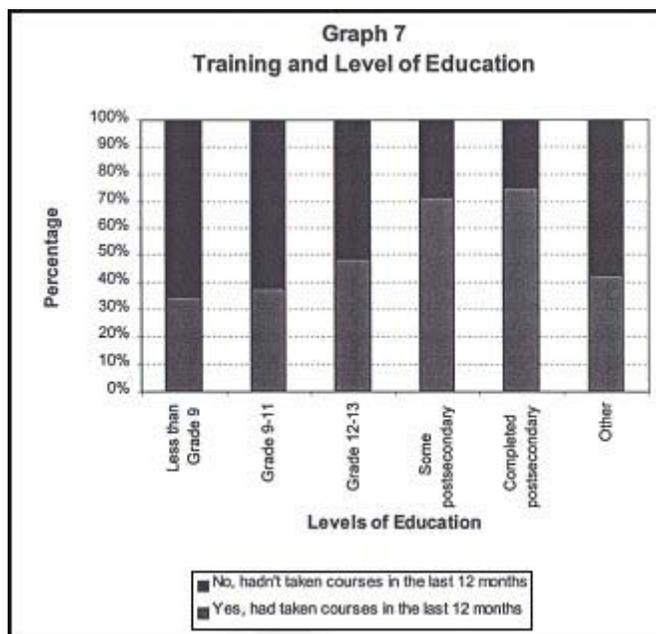
As incongruous as it seems, Graph 7 clearly demonstrates that training increases steadily with the level of education, from over a third (35.1%) of the respondents with less than Grade 9 to three-quarters (75.0%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education. Why do the people who need the training the most don't access it? Focus Groups' explained it as follows:

There are some people who are afraid even to take that (truck driving) training which seems very easy and simple, they're afraid to take it because their reading and writing skills are not up to par, and they're not necessarily older people either. They're kids between 20 and 25...

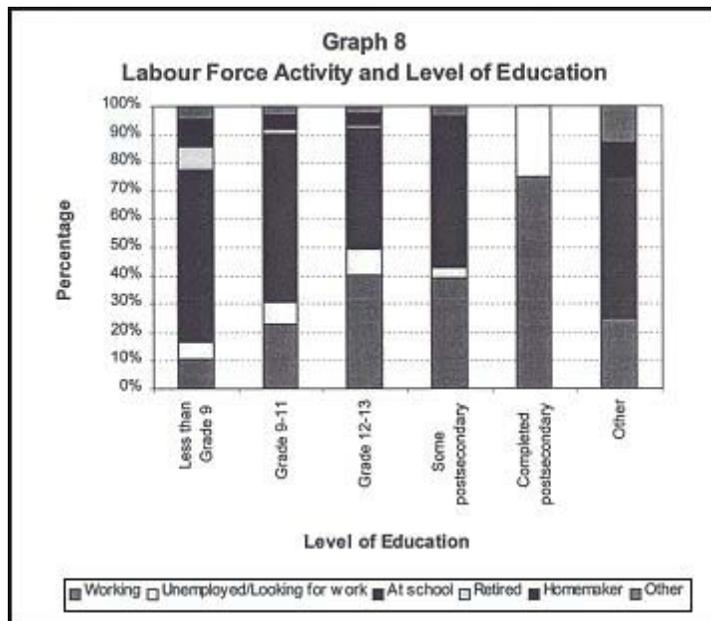
- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

I guess, that sort thing, the upgrading has not addressed the literacy problem. We have people with Grade 12 diplomas that can't read and write at a Grade 3 level. So, it hasn't addressed them. So, there's something wrong there at the root. But, I think, all the people like the ones we have in our community, if they all took upgrading again, they will be reading and writing at the same level they are now. They need the basics.

- Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta



Over and over again, participants at the Focus Groups on Literacy across the Métis Homeland emphasized the importance of education in getting a job, let alone a "good job." Graph 8 clearly shows that there is a strong relationship between employment and education, as just over one respondent in ten (11.9%) with less than a Grade 9 education is working, compared to three-quarters (75.0%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education.



However, we should draw your attention to the fact that half (54.7%) of the respondents say they are still in school. Obviously, this does not reflect the situation for the Métis population in Alberta. However, it still serves an important purpose as it suggests that the respondents left school in their teenage years, and have gone back to further their education.

Literacy

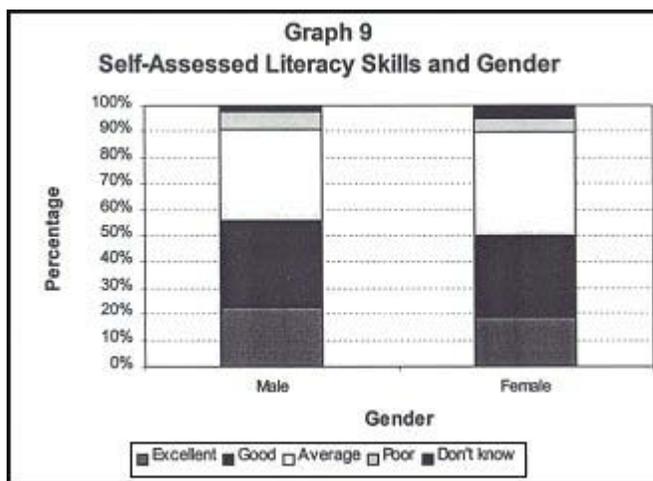
At the beginning of the previous section, we stated that Statistics Canada often uses as a proxy measure of literacy the highest level of education attained, defining as "functionally illiterate" a person with less than nine years of education. If we were to use this proxy measure, just over a quarter (26.0%) of the respondents would be defined as functionally illiterate, that is they cannot meet daily reading and writing demands. We should point out that even though this proxy measure provides a good snapshot of the situation, it is a rather crude tool, which has been questioned over the years.

Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People

To get a better picture, we decided to complement these results by asking the respondents to rate their own literacy skills. More than half (52.0%) of the respondents rate their literacy skills as good or excellent. But, is this good or not? It is better than the results across the Métis Homeland where less than half (46.3%) of the respondents say they have good or excellent reading and writing skills. But, when the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) asked a similar question, over 80% of the respondents in the seven industrialized countries surveyed said that their literacy skills were good or excellent. So, the 52.0% does not seem so good anymore, does it?

Even though half of the respondents rate their literacy skills as good or excellent, just over one in five (20.5%) of the respondents say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities. Once again, this is marginally better than the national results where more than one respondent in five (22.3%) say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. However, while two respondents in five in Alberta think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, it is somewhat lower across the Métis Homeland, as it stands at 35.7%. Are these results consistent across gender or age groups?

In fact, Graph 9 shows that these results are fairly consistent for both men and women. More than half (55.7%) of the men rate their reading and writing abilities as good or excellent compared to half (50.0%) of the women. Interestingly, this is different from the national results, where women rank their literacy skills higher than men.

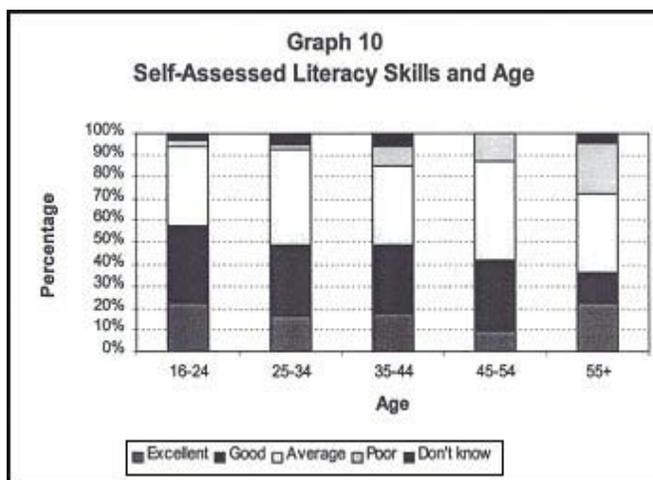


However, it seems that men would more easily say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities. In fact, nearly one man in four (23.4%) say they had problems at school or on the job, compared with less than one woman in five (18.7%). In this case, the results are nearly identical with the national results.

Further, men (39.2%) are slightly less likely than women (43.4%) to think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. Once again this differs considerably from the national results where 42.6% of men and 30.2% of women think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

When we compared the level of education of the respondents across the different age groups, in Graph 4, we realized that the age of the respondents influenced their level of education. But, is it also true for self-assessed literacy skills?

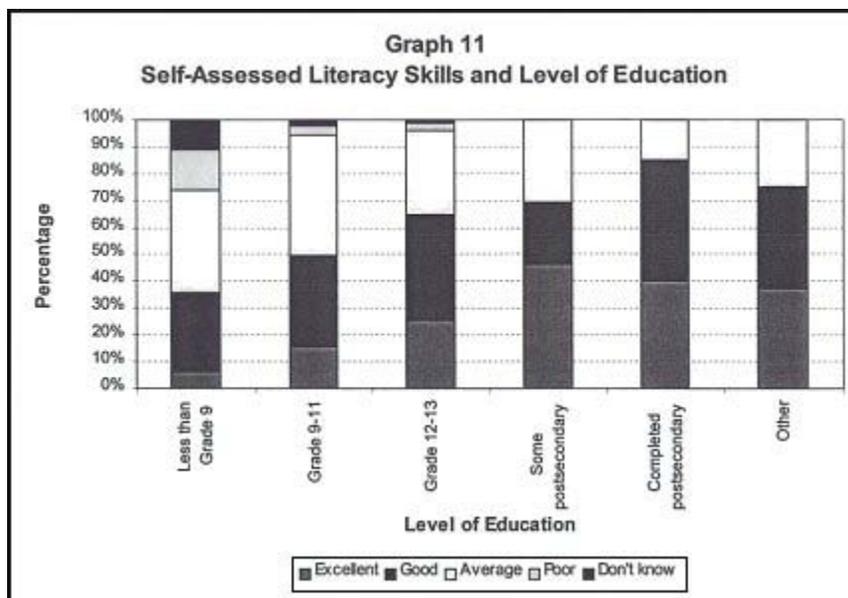
Graph 10 shows that younger generations tend to rate their literacy skills higher than older generations. For example, while well over half (57.4%) of the respondents between the ages of 16 and 24 rate their skills as good or excellent, just over a third (36.4%) of the respondents over the age of 55 did the same. This is quite different from the national results, which plateau at roughly two respondents in five for the people between the ages of 16 and 54, and then drops for the people over the age of 55.



This generation gap is also evident when we compare the proportions of people who had problems at school or on the job because of their literacy skills. While less than one respondent in five (16.4%) between the ages of 16 and 24 ever had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities, more than half (52.4%) of the people over the age of 55 experienced those problems.

Further, roughly two respondents in five in all age groups in Alberta think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. It differs slightly from the national results. As two respondents in five between the ages of 16 and 64 think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, but it drops to less than one respondent in four (23.0%) for people over the age of 65.

Graph 4 demonstrated that younger generations are more educated and Graph 10 demonstrated that younger generations tend to rate their literacy skills higher than the older generation. So, what does this mean exactly? It seems to imply that there is a strong relationship between literacy and education, and Graph 11 demonstrates this. Take a quick look at Graph 11 and you will see that the higher the level of education, the higher the respondents will rate their literacy skills. For example, just over a third (35.7%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education rate their literacy skills as good or excellent, while three-quarters (75.0%) of the people who have completed their postsecondary education will do the same.

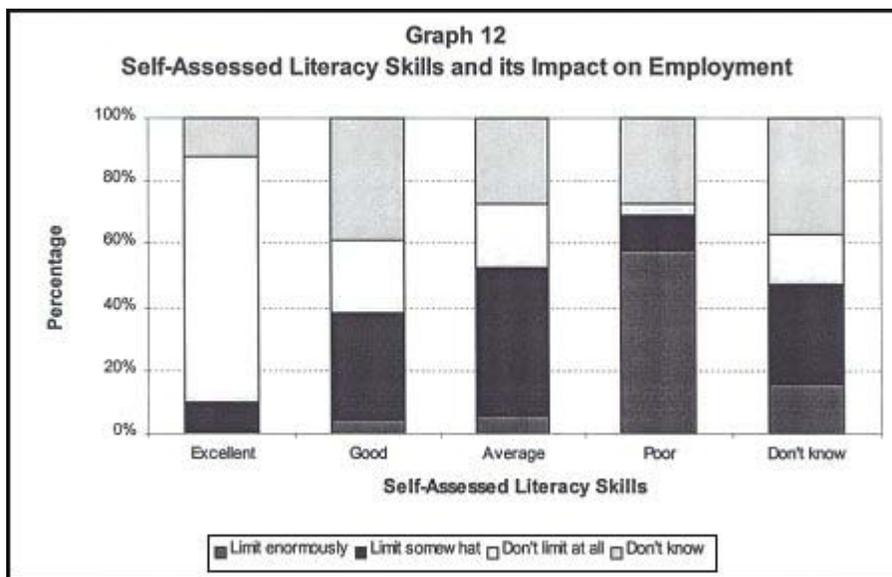


This education gap is also evident when we look at the proportion of people who had experienced problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities. This proportion quickly drops from over a third (38.3%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education to less than one participant in ten (9.1%) for those with a Grade 12-13 education. Few people with postsecondary education have experienced problems because of their reading and writing abilities, so the results are not statistically valid.

Further, more than half (53.9%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. However, only a quarter (25.6%) of the people with postsecondary education think the same thing.

Graph 11 clearly demonstrates there is a strong relationship between literacy and education, but it also raises an important question. What came first literacy or education? It seems that the answer to this question cannot be found any more easily than the answer to this famous question: What came first the chicken or the egg?

Graph 8 has clearly demonstrated the effect education has on the employability of a person. But, what is the impact of literacy on employment? It is interesting to note that over four respondents out of ten (42.6%) think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. Surprisingly, the remaining respondents are evenly split between people who don't know (28.5%) if their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, and people who are not limited at all (29.0%) by those abilities.

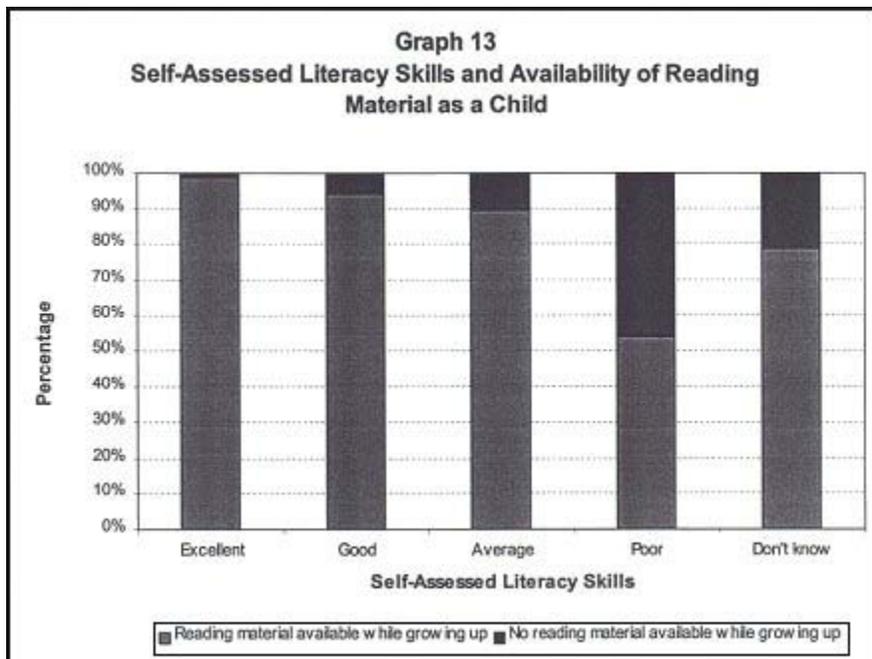


However, Graph 12 shows important differences between the self-assessed literacy skills ratings. While less than one participant in five (18.8%) who assessed their literacy skills as excellent think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, it climbs to over two-thirds (69.2%) of the people who rate their literacy skills as poor.

Literacy Practices

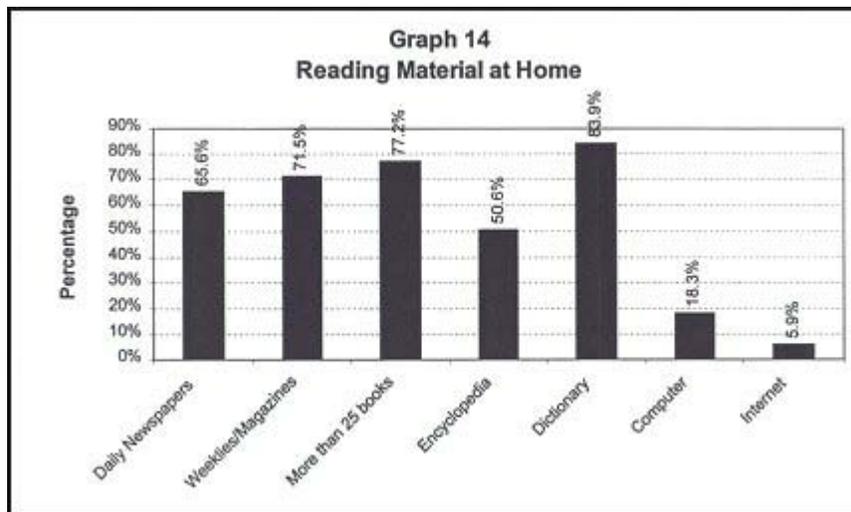
Over the years, some researchers have come to associate literacy skills with literacy practices, that is people who read on a regular basis will tend to be more literate. If "reading is like riding a bike," once you've learned it, it's never totally lost. But, we can also say "if you don't use it, you'll lose it," which in this case implies that if you don't read or write on a regular basis, you'll forget some of it.

While nine respondents out of ten (90.0%) had reading material available while they were growing up, it still affected their literacy skills. For example, nearly all (98.8%) of the people rating their literacy skills as excellent had access to reading material, while only half (53.9%) of the respondents with poor literacy skills had the same access to books, magazines or newspapers.



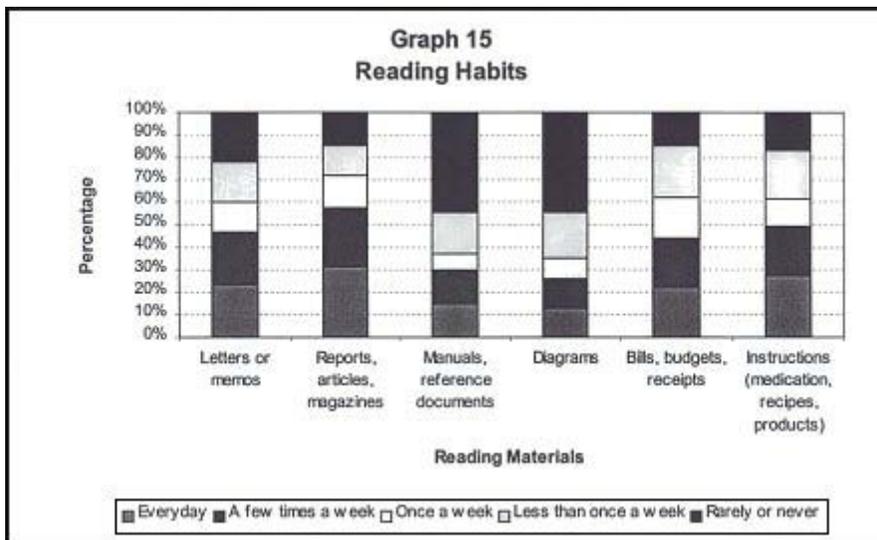
This is also confirmed by two of the other indicators used to assess literacy levels. Less than one participant in five (16.8%) who had reading material at home while growing up had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, compared to nearly half (48.0%) of the people without reading material. Second, while two participants out of five (41.1%) who had reading material at home while growing up think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, it climbs to nearly two-thirds (63.6%) for the respondents who did not have reading material available.

So, considering the impact the availability of reading material at home while they were growing up, had on literacy skills, we thought it might be interesting to see if the respondents have reading material at home. Graph 14 shows that most of the respondents have reading material at home. As in the other provinces, more than four respondents in five (83.9%) have a dictionary at home. Also, as throughout the Métis Homeland, roughly seven respondents in ten in Alberta have "daily newspapers," "weeklies, magazines," and "more than twenty-five books."

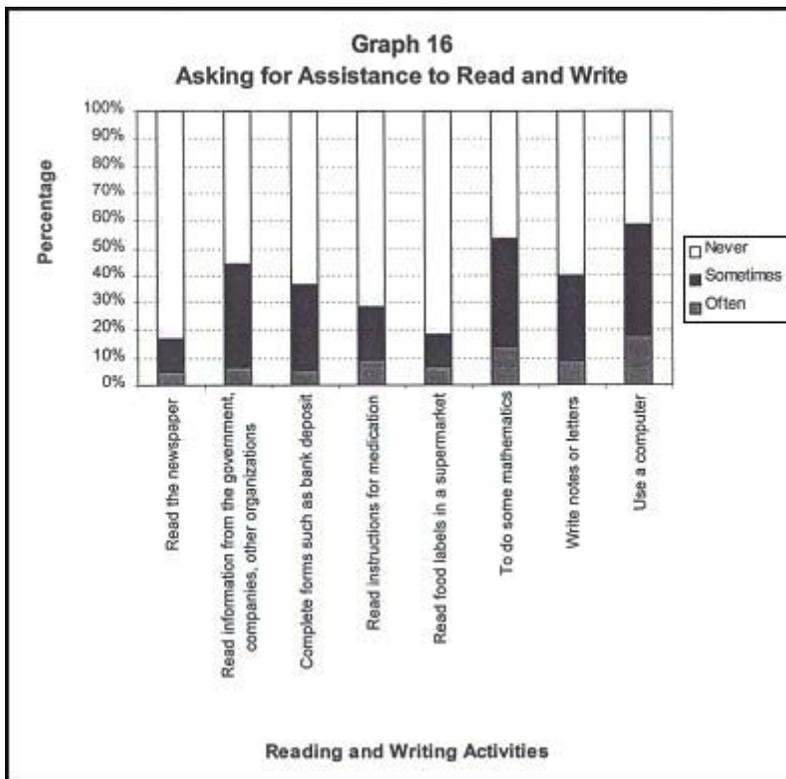


The previous graph certainly provides interesting information, but how often do the Métis respondents read? In this regard, Graph 15 shows that the Albertan respondents reading habits are quite similar to the national results. For example, roughly one respondent in five reads "bills, budgets, receipts," "letters or memos" everyday. As well, roughly one participant in ten reads "manuals, reference documents" or "diagrams" everyday. And, roughly three respondents in ten read "reports, articles, magazines" and "instructions for medication, recipes, and products" everyday.

But, even more importantly Graph 15 suggests that roughly one respondent in five rarely or never reads, implying poor literacy skills.



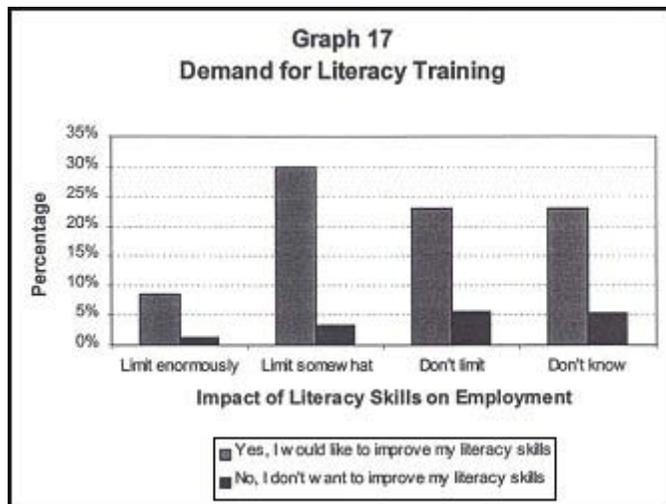
We have also asked the MNC's Literacy Survey respondents in Alberta whether or not they ask for assistance from their friends or family members for some specific reading and writing abilities. The results are significantly different from the national results, as these respondents are more likely to ask for assistance than their counterparts in the other provinces. For example, nearly three respondents in five ask for assistance to "use a computer" and "do some mathematics." Also, roughly two respondents in five ask for assistance to "complete forms such as bank deposits," "read information from the government, companies, other organizations" and "write notes or letters," and so on.



Conclusion

Whether we use education, self-assessment of literacy skills or literacy practices as a proxy measure of literacy, one result is clear: The respondents to the MNC's Literacy Survey in Alberta need to improve their reading and writing skills.

But, one crucial question remains: Are they interested in improving their reading and writing abilities? Yes, as more than four respondents in five (84.7%) want to improve their reading and writing skills. Graph 17 clearly shows that whether or not the respondents think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion has little impact.

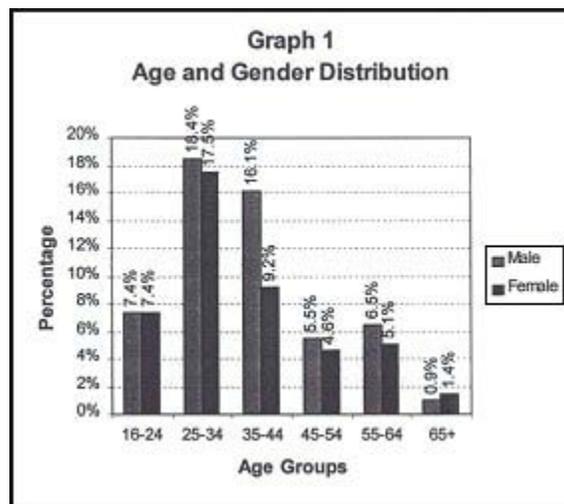


It should also be noted that nearly a third (31.7%) of the respondents have already taken reading and writing programs as an adult to improve their skills.

MNC Literacy Survey in British Columbia

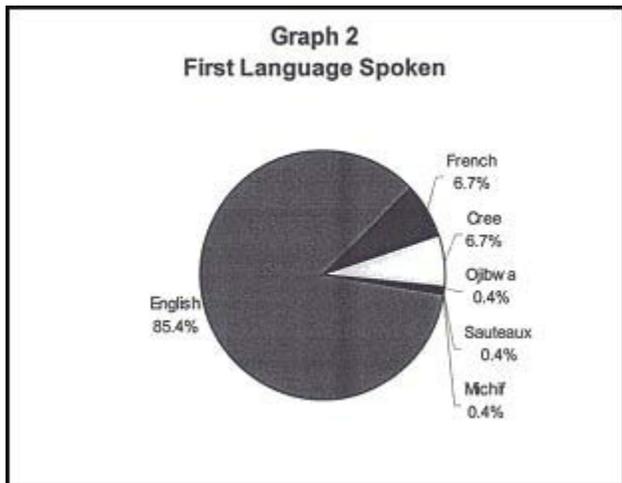
Before we examine the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey in British Columbia, we need to do one thing: take a look at the people surveyed. No, no, we do not need to know if the 224 respondents of the survey are tall or short, dark or fair, but we need to examine their main characteristics such as age, gender, language and so on.

Graph 1 shows that three respondents in four (76.0%) are between the ages of 16 and 44. This is quite similar to the age distribution across the Métis Homeland, where 75.7% of the respondents are in those age groups. But, in comparison with the national age distribution, the 16-24 age group is slightly underrepresented and the 25-34 age group is slightly over represented. So, you will not be surprised if, once again, we group the 55-64 and the over 65 age groups into only one group.



Graph 1 also shows a relatively fair gender distribution, as men represent 54.6% of the people surveyed compared with 45.4% of women. In fact, this gender distribution is the exact opposite of the national result. However, it should be noted that the women are slightly underrepresented in the 35-44 age group, as they represent roughly a third (36.4%) of the people in that age group.

Graph 2 clearly shows that the first language spoken by an overwhelming majority (85.4%) of Métis respondents in British Columbia is English. Cree and French, which lag far behind, are equally represented at roughly one respondent in fifteen (6.7%). It should be noted that British Columbia is the only province in the Métis Homeland where more than four respondents in five have English as their mother tongue.



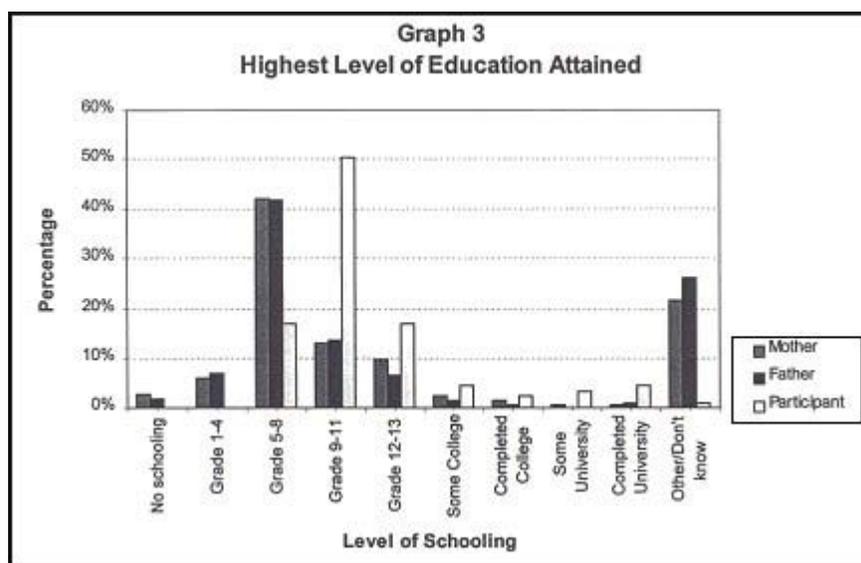
Even though nearly all (96.0%) participants still communicate in their mother tongue, most participants, in this case 98.6%, communicate more easily in English. But, less than three participants out of five (57.5%) say they speak English well or very well. This is significantly less than the national average of 65.7%.

As we intend to assess literacy skills in English, it is interesting to note that once again nearly all participants (96.8%) first learned to read and write in English. For a handful (7 people) of participants, French and Cree are the first languages they learned to read and write. Does this mean that the people who did not first learn to read and write in their mother tongue never learned it? No, as 16 of the 31 people who identify a mother tongue other than English, learned to read and write in their first spoken language whether it was Cree, Ojibwa, Saulteaux or French.

Education

Do we really need to look at the education levels of the participants in a needs assessment study on literacy? Yes, because numerous studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between education and literacy. In fact, Statistics Canada defines as "functionally illiterate" someone with less than 9 years of education.

So, what is the level of education of the participants? Graph 3 clearly shows that roughly half (50.5%) of the participants have a Grade 9-11 education. Both people with less than a Grade 9 education and those who have attained a Grade 12-13 education are represented equally at less than one respondent in five (17.0%). Even though not a single respondent has no schooling or a Grade 1-4 education, the proportion of people with less than nine years of education is marginally lower in British Columbia than across the Métis Homeland (22.6%). So, if we use education as a proxy measure for literacy, we can conclude that less than one respondent in five (17.0%) is "functionally illiterate."

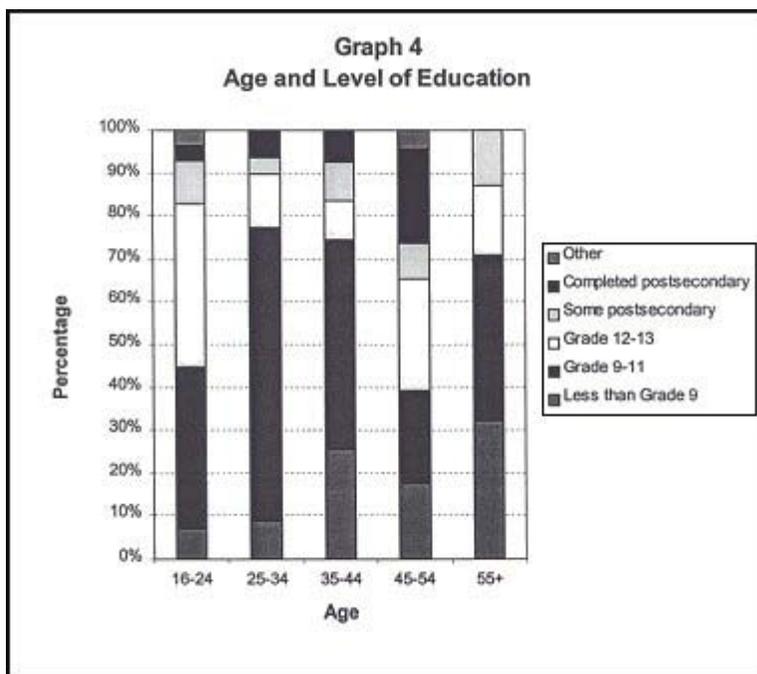


Therefore, the lowest level of education attained is a Grade 5-8 education. The participants who have attained postsecondary levels of education are split between those who have obtained their degrees and diplomas (6.9% of the respondents), and those who have not (7.8% of the respondents).

With Graph 3, we also examine the level of education attained by the parents of the respondents, but why do we do so? Simply, because it will be interesting to see if, as in the Canadian population, the level of education attained by the Métis people is increasing. So, what do you think? Is the level of education in the Métis population increasing?

Yes, and Graph 3 probably shows a picture which is not that far off from what you see with your friends and family. In British Columbia as in Alberta, the parents of the participants have similar levels of education. For example, half of the parents have less than a Grade 9 education, and roughly one parent in eight has a Grade 9-11 education. A somewhat higher proportion of mothers (9.7%) than fathers (6.6%) have a Grade 12-13 education level. Similarly, one mother in twenty (4.7%) has attained a postsecondary education level compared with 2.8% of fathers.

Graph 3 demonstrates that the level of education has been increasing in the Métis population, as the participants have attained higher levels of education than their parents. So, will the age of the respondents also have an impact on the level of education attained? A quick look at Graph 4 shows that the relationship between age and education is not as clear in British Columbia as it is in some of other provinces.



For example, Graph 4 shows that the proportion of people with less than nine years of education increases from less than one participant in ten (6.9%) for the 16-24 age group to nearly a third (32.3%) of the people over the age of 55. But, for the 45-54 age group less than one person in five (17.4%) has less than a Grade 9 education.

In fact, it should be noted that the 45-54 age group in British Columbia seems to be a wild card, as three respondents in ten (30.4%) have postsecondary education. This situation might be partly explained by the small number of respondents (23) in that age group.

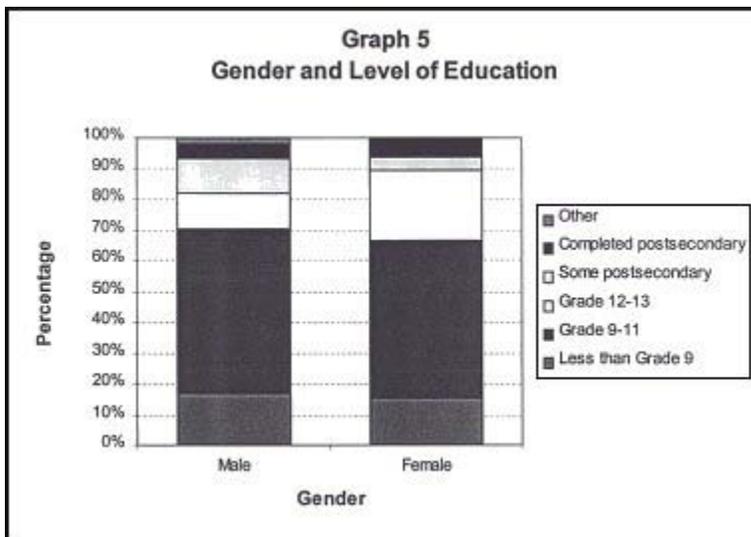
Graph 4 also shows that more than three-quarters (75.8%) of the respondents between the ages of 16 and 24 have a Grade 9-13 education, and that these respondents are evenly split between Grade 9-11 and Grade 12-13. Even though similar proportions of people in the 16-24 and 25-34 age groups have less than a Grade 9 education, the breakdown of the Grade 9-13 age group is quite different. More than two-thirds (68.4%) of the 25 to 34 years old respondents have a Grade 9-11 education, and 12.7% have a Grade 12-13.

Further, while the 35-44 age group has roughly the same proportion of people with less than a Grade 12 education than the 25-34 age group, it has a much higher proportion of people with less than Grade 9 (25.5% vs. 8.9%).

The education level of the people over the age of 55 could be divided in three large groups, as roughly a third (32.3%) of these people have less than nine years of education. Nearly two participants in five (38.7%) have a Grade 9-11 education level, while in the last group nearly three respondents out of ten (29.0%) are split evenly between Grade 12-13 and some postsecondary education.

In Graph 3, we compared the level of education of the fathers and mothers of the participants, and found that they had attained similar levels of education. But, what about the respondents? Do men and women have similar levels of education? At first glance, there are no noticeable differences between the lower levels of education, as seven men out of ten (70.1%) compared to two-thirds of the women (66.3%) have less than a Grade 12 education.

However, an important "gender gap" can be seen for Grade 12-13 where nearly a quarter (23.2%) of the women have attained this level compared to just over one man in ten (12.0%). A gender gap also exists at the higher levels of education as a higher proportion of men (16.2%) than women (10.5%) have pursued their studies in college and university.



Since nearly seven respondents out of ten (67.5%) in British Columbia, left school without graduating, it is imperative to examine why they are leaving school. They appear to leave school mainly for financial reasons. As Graph 6 shows that two-thirds (66.5%) of the respondents left school because they "wanted to work" and more than two respondents in five (42.0%) say that they "needed to work for money." The third reason, "completed the program" lags far behind, as less than one respondent in five (16.5%) justified their decision this way.

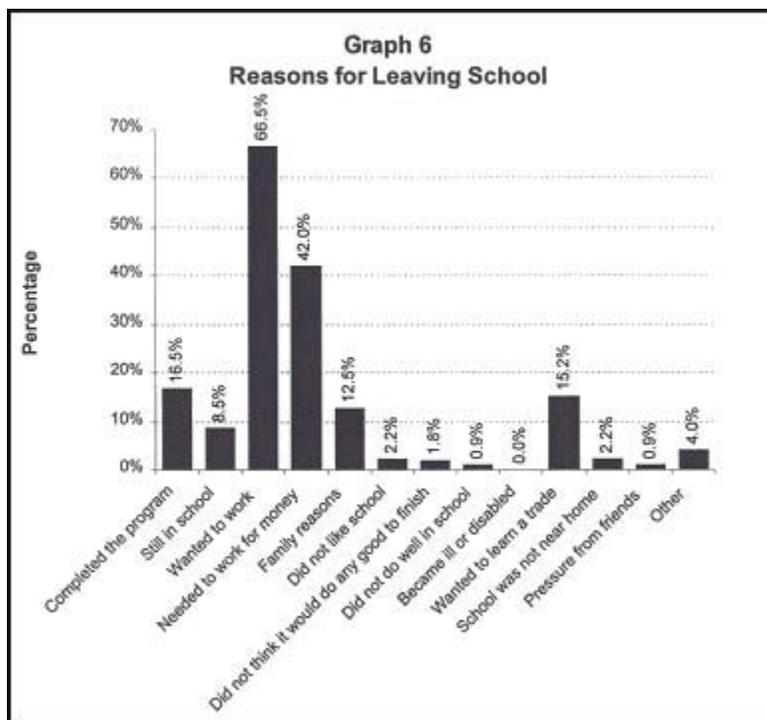
But, what does it mean exactly? Participants at the Focus Groups on Literacy also said the following:

It's probably a lot different, I still feel like I can remember going to school, I didn't like going to school, because I was separate from those kids, you know, I was different. I imagine every race feels like that, it's changing nowadays it's getting better ...

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

Whether you like it or not there's racism, it's even the highest of educators. They say, I am not racist, I am not racist, you know, so we'll give that poor Indian this... It's hard to admit, but you just have to understand it.

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia



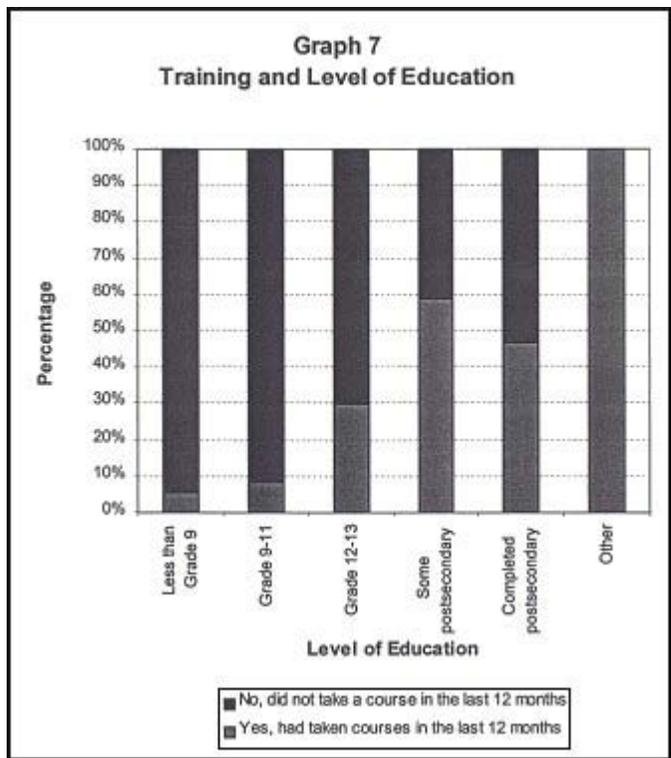
The previous graphs show that a high proportion of Métis people in British Columbia left school without graduating, but does it mean that they will never go back? No, as Graph 7 shows that nearly one participant in five (18.9%) had taken courses in the last twelve months. Who are the people pursuing their education? Are they the people most in need, that is the people at the lowest levels? No, as only one respondent in twenty (5.6%) with less than nine years of education and less than one person in ten (8.1%) with Grade 9-11 has taken a course in the last twelve months.

This contrasts sharply with the people who have pursued their studies at the postsecondary level since more than half of them have taken courses in the last twelve months. You might have noticed that a higher proportion of people with some postsecondary education have taken courses in the last twelve months than the people who have obtained their postsecondary degrees or diplomas. Why? It might simply be due to the fact that some of the people with some postsecondary education are still in school.

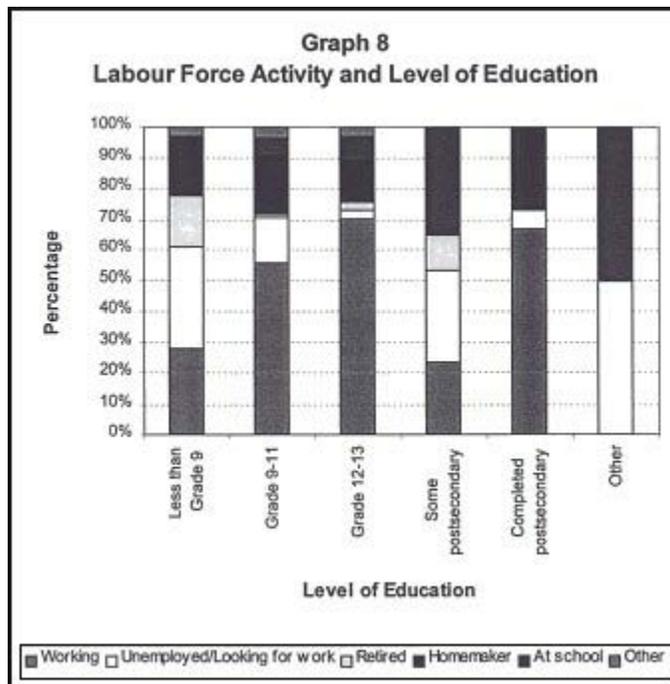
But, why is it so? A participant in one of the Focus Groups on Literacy in British Columbia explained it as follows:

Literacy is also as a component of life skills...some people are not training ready. Because they don't have the life skills, command of a language that would allow them into the workplace in a competitive sense... But, is there a way to include this in other programs as well?

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia



Who has not heard about the importance of education in getting a job? We suspect that you have all heard about the benefits of education, but are you still in doubt? After all, you can all tell me that so and so has a university degree and is still looking for a job. But, Graph 8 should dispel your doubts. For example, while just over a quarter (27.8%) of the participants with less than nine years of education are working, seven out of ten (70.3%) participants with a Grade 12-13 education are working.



But, a quick look at Graph 8 also shows that the employment situation of the people with postsecondary education is not that rosy as less than half (43.8%) of them are working. Now don't start thinking that education doesn't pay, because if you look more carefully you will also see that more than three out of ten (31.3%) persons with postsecondary education are still in school.

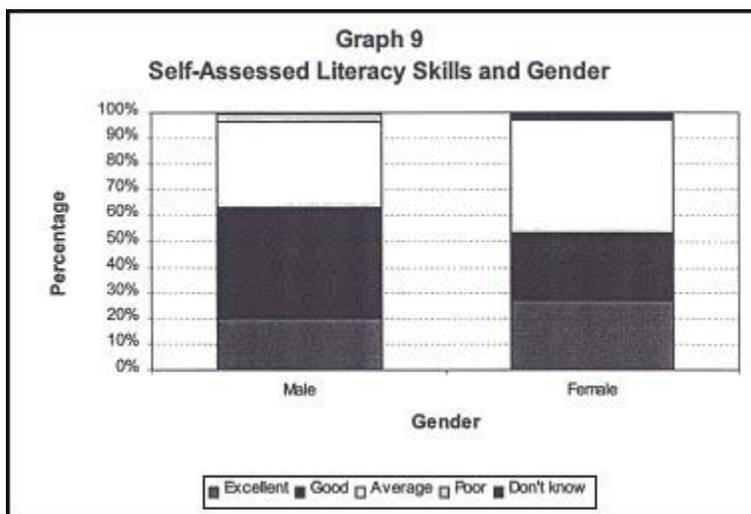
Literacy

Education is certainly a useful proxy measure for literacy as it can easily be compared with the Canadian population. But, we also decided to ask the participants of the MNC's Literacy Survey to self-assess their reading and writing abilities.

So, how do the Métis people of British Columbia rate their reading and writing skills? Three participants out of five (59.2%) rate their literacy skills as good or excellent. So, is 59.2% good or not? In comparison with the other provinces throughout the Métis Homeland, it is good, as nationally, less than half (46.3%) of the respondents think their reading and writing skills are good or excellent. But, when compared with the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey, 59.2% is quite low, as over 80% of the respondents in the seven industrialized countries surveyed said their literacy skills are good or excellent.

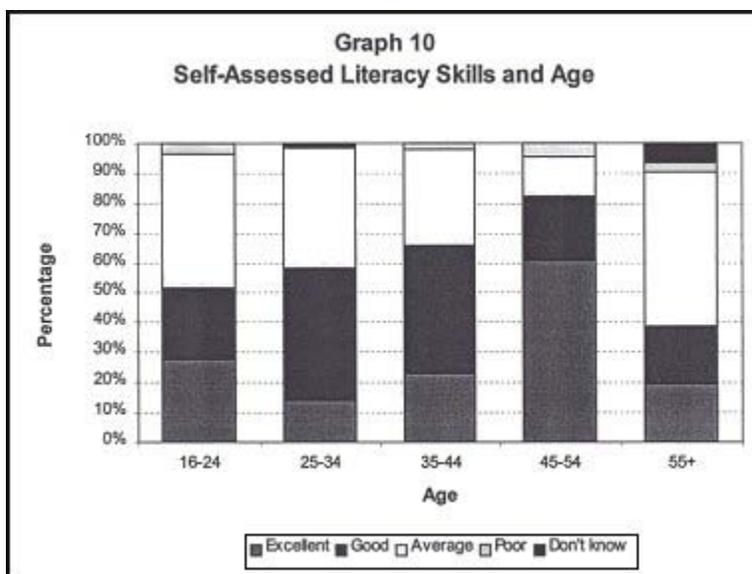
It is also interesting to note that while only a handful of participants rated their literacy skills as poor, just over one participant in ten (11.5%) say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills. Once again, this is much lower than the national average, which stands at more than one respondent in five (22.3%). However, just over three respondents in ten (31.9%) think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion. This is only marginally lower than the national average of 35.7%.

As with education levels, we wanted to compare the literacy levels of the male and female respondents. Across the Métis Homeland, women tend to rate their literacy skills higher than men. So, do you think this is the same in British Columbia? No. In fact, Graph 9 shows that nearly two-thirds of the men (63.3%) compared to just over half (53.1%) of the women say their reading and writing skills are good or excellent.



But, as in other provinces, men (14.5%) are more likely to say they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing abilities, compared to 6.3% of the women. Similarly, over a third (37.4%) of the men compared to over a quarter of the women (27.1%) think that their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

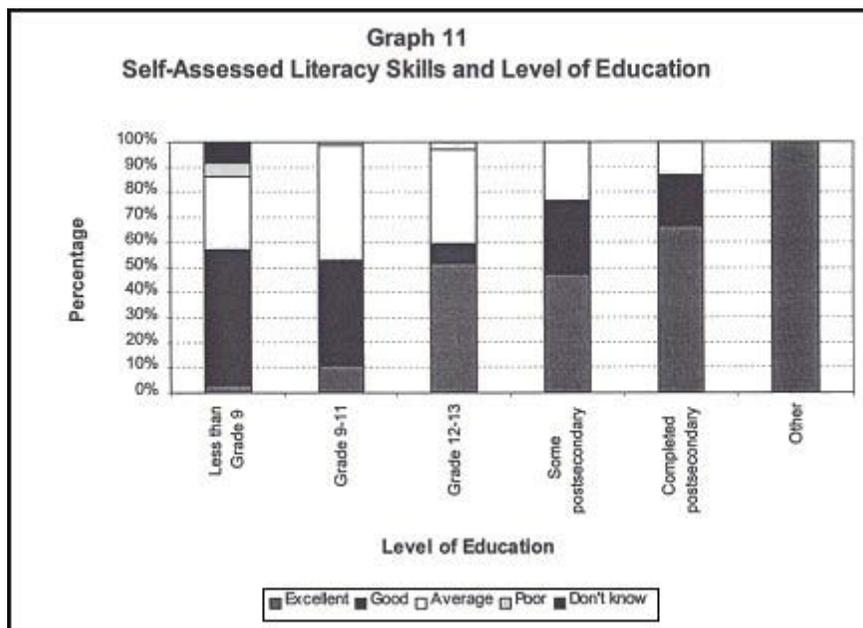
Graph 4 examined the relationship between education and age, and found that this relationship is not as clear in British Columbia as in other parts of the Métis Homeland. But, what is the relationship between literacy and age in British Columbia? Graph 10 shows that contrary to the rest of the Métis Homeland, in British Columbia reading and writing abilities appear to increase with age. As over half (57.7%) of the respondents between the ages of 16 and 24 say they have good or excellent reading and writing skills compared to more than four out of five (82.6%) respondents between the ages of 45 and 54. However, reading and writing skills drop to less than two respondents in five (38.7%) for the people over the age of 55.



Interestingly, the proportion of people who had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills increases with age. Roughly one respondent in fifteen (6.9%) between the ages of 16 and 24 had problems because of their literacy skills, compared to over a quarter (21.7%) of the respondents between the ages of 45 and 54. But, less than one respondent in ten (9.7%) over the age of 55 said they had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills.

Similarly, roughly a third (32.1%) of the 16 to 24 years old respondents think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, compared to just over half (51.6%) of the respondents over the age of 55. Once again though, our wild card, the 45-54 group, stops that steady climb as roughly one respondent in five (21.7%) thinks that his or her reading and writing abilities limit his or her chances of getting a job or a promotion. Why is it so? Could it be because of their higher level of education?

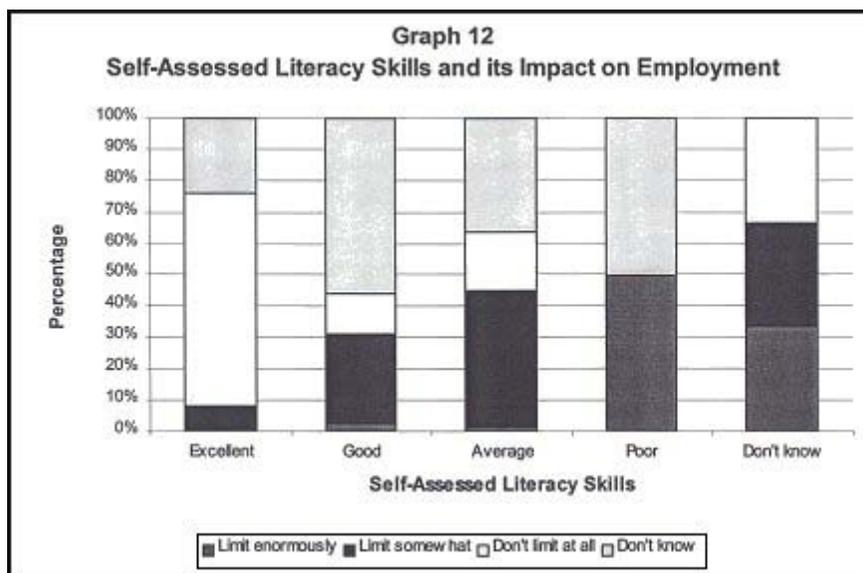
Graph 11 clearly shows that indeed education has an impact on the literacy skills of the respondents. After all, why do we go to school if it's not to learn how to read and write? Graph 11 shows that the higher the level of education, the more likely the participants will rate their reading and writing skills higher. For example, while over half (56.8%) of the respondents with less than Grade 9 say they have good or excellent reading and writing skills, more than four respondents in five (86.7%) who have completed their postsecondary education say the same.



Further, more than one respondent in five (21.6%) with less than nine years of education had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, but it decreases to less than one respondent in ten for the other education levels. Similarly, nearly half (46.0%) of the respondents with less than nine years of education think their reading and writing skills limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, this compares to roughly one participant in six (15.6%) for people with postsecondary education.

In the previous section, we have clearly demonstrated that education has an impact on employment. But, what is the effect of literacy? Before examining the results, we should point out that the extremely limited number of people, only seven, who rated their skills as "poor" or "don't know" limits our ability to analyze them further. However, the results in the first three categories provide enough information to establish a trend.

Graph 12 shows that while nearly a third (32.2%) of the respondents think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion, important differences exist between the self-assessed literacy levels. For example, less than one participant in ten (9.8%) who has excellent literacy skills compared to nearly half (45.1%) of the respondents with average skills think they are limited in their chances of getting a job or a promotion.



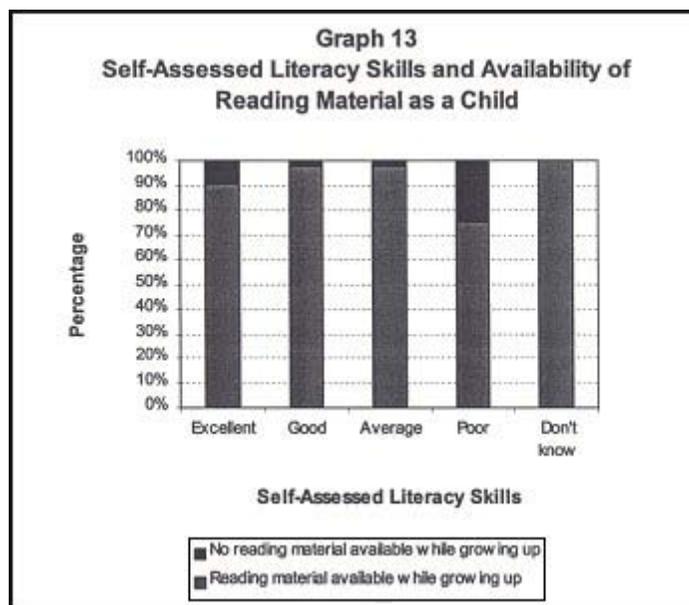
This is also evidenced by the fact that while nearly two-thirds (64.9%) of the people working and studying have good or excellent literacy skills, less than half (48.9%) of the people unemployed or looking for work would say the same.

Literacy Practices

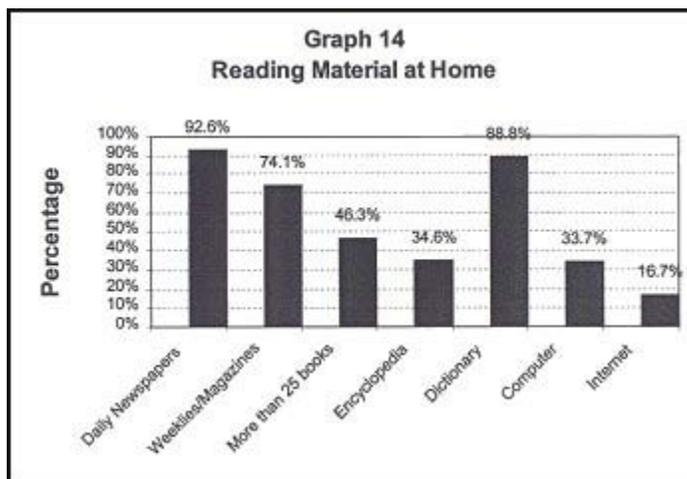
Reading and writing might well be like riding a bike: You never forget it. But, as in many other things, practice will make you better. So, we decided to look at the literacy practices of the Métis people in British Columbia.

First, we turn back the clock, and look at the childhood of the respondents. As we usually learn to read and write as a child, is the availability of reading material at home while growing up an important factor in the development of literacy skills? Graph 13 shows that the relationship between the availability of reading material while growing up and literacy skills is not as strong in British Columbia as in the rest of the country. This can be partly explained by the fact that nearly all (95.4%) respondents had access to reading material as a child. However, Graph 13 still shows that the people without reading material growing up are more likely to have poor literacy skills.

Similarly, while one participant in ten (10.5%) with reading material available while growing up had problems at school or on the job because of their reading and writing skills, three respondents in ten (30.0%) without reading material experienced those difficulties. As well, three respondents out of ten (30.9%) with reading material compared to nearly three respondents in five (60.0%) without reading material while growing up think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion.

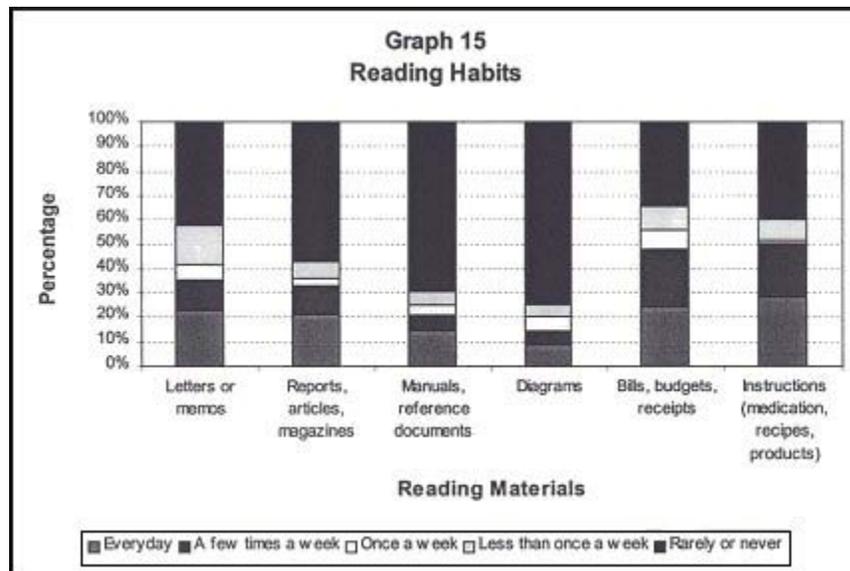


As reading materials at home while growing up plays such a major role in the reading and writing abilities of the respondents, we decided to see if they have reading materials at home. Graph 14 shows that most respondents in British Columbia have reading materials at home. Respondents in British Columbia have the highest proportion of people throughout the Métis Homeland with "daily newspapers" (92.6%) and access to the "Internet" (16.7%). But, they have the lowest proportion of people with "more than twenty-five books" and "encyclopedia."

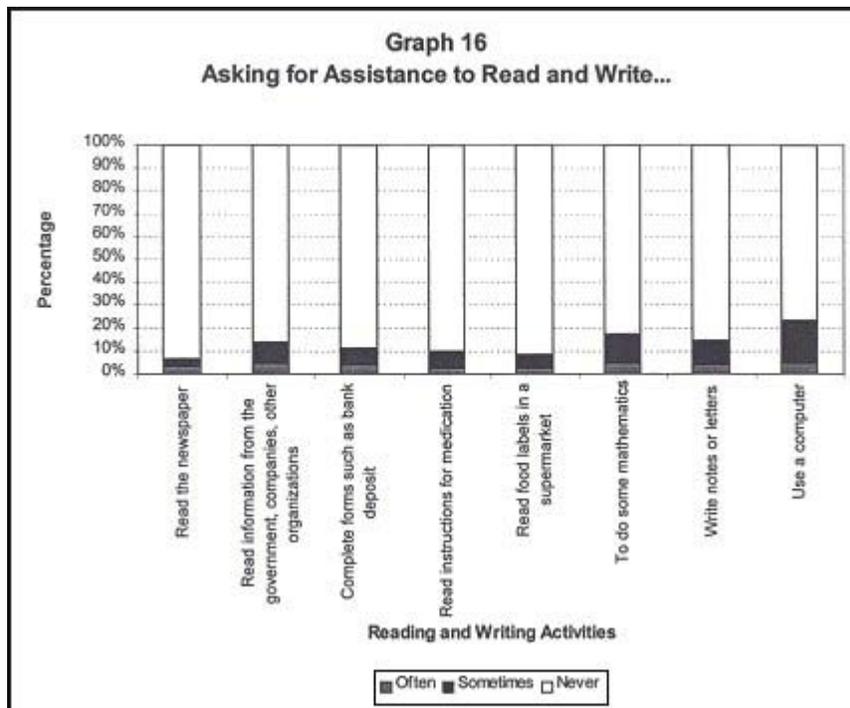


Reading material is certainly a good starting point, but do the Métis people of British Columbia read? Yes, but a much higher proportion of Métis in British Columbia than in the Métis Homeland, roughly two respondents out of five, rarely or never reads. These results are startling to say the least.

But, Graph 15 shows that British Columbia's respondents also differ from their counterparts elsewhere in the Métis Homeland, as reading practices do not vary as widely according to the different reading materials. For example, the most frequently read documents are instructions which are read by three respondents in ten everyday. But, "bills, budgets, receipts," "reports, articles, magazines," "letters or memos" are all read everyday by roughly two respondents in ten. While one respondent in ten would read everyday "manuals, reference documents" and "diagrams."



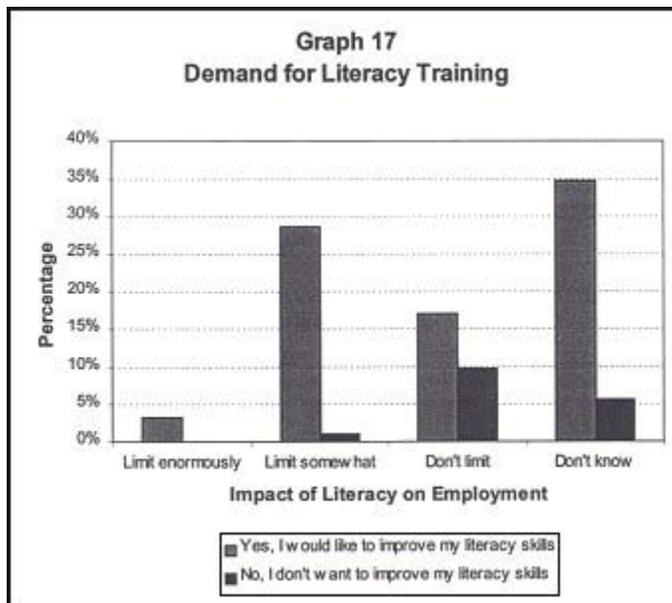
Graph 16 also depicts an interesting literacy picture. Even though most of the respondents across the Métis Homeland did not ask for assistance for these specific reading and writing activities, in British Columbia only a few of the respondents said they ask for assistance. As in most provinces, people hesitate less to ask for assistance to "use a computer" than for any other activities.



Conclusion

Whether we use education, self-assessment of literacy skills or literacy practices as a proxy measure for literacy, only one conclusion can be drawn: The Métis people of British Columbia need to improve their reading and writing abilities.

But, one question still remains: Are the Métis people in British Columbia interested in improving their reading and writing skills? The answer is an overwhelming, yes. As more than four respondents in five (83.3%) would like to improve their reading and writing skills. Graph 17 shows that even the people who do not think their reading and writing abilities limit their chances of getting a job or a promotion would like to improve those skills. Graph 17 also sends a clear message from the people who are limited by their reading and writing skills: They want literacy training.



In the past, just over one respondent in ten (11.1%) has taken courses to improve their reading and writing skills.

The Next Steps...

In the previous six chapters, we analyzed the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey. Whether we used education, self-assessment of literacy skills or literacy practices, only one conclusion can be drawn: The Métis people need to improve their reading and writing skills. We have also demonstrated that most Métis across the Homeland would like to improve their reading and writing skills.

This information is certainly invaluable, however, one crucial question remains: What should we do next? To answer this question, we decided to ask the Métis people. Focus Groups on Literacy were held in ten Métis communities throughout the Métis Homeland. At each of these Focus Groups we briefly outlined the MNC's Literacy Strategy since 1993, and asked them to suggest goals, objectives, and activities for possible future phases. These Focus Groups on Literacy provided a unique opportunity for nearly one hundred Métis to discuss the main issues of literacy.

Whether we were in North Bay, Winnipeg or Slave Lake, Focus Groups' participants agreed on one thing: The need for action. One of the participants probably expressed the feelings of many participants across the Métis Homeland when she stated:

I can tell one thing, everybody is conferenced to death, studied to death. Now, it's action that has to be implemented. When does that take place? We have been so surveyed, so many times. And, you know what happens with these surveys, we seem to get lost in the shuffle or they've forgotten about us. A perfect example is the youth. They've been repeatedly conferenced to death and they've given recommendations, but nobody is doing nothing about them. They are tired of it. What more do you want? We told you what we want and now start implementing it.

- Woman, Winnipeg, Manitoba

The MNC's Literacy Survey has clearly demonstrated that roughly three respondents in four did not graduate from high school and roughly one person in four has less than nine years of education, which is defined as "functionally illiterate" by Statistics Canada. Clearly, this high drop out rate has an impact on the literacy skills of the Métis people. So, what can we do? Here is what Focus Groups on Literacy participants suggested.

1. Establishment of Métis-Specific Literacy Programs

Focus Groups' participants expressed their frustrations regarding a school system they believe has failed them, and left them little choice but to drop out before graduating from high school. Therefore, you will probably not be surprised to find out that many of them reject mainstream literacy programs, as they questioned the motivation behind such programs.

They get dollars to train Aboriginal people, but that's the same thing as the school system... being trained by non-Aboriginal peoples... their incentives is to make money, they don't have any interest in the community whatsoever.
- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

Furthermore, the mainstream education system has "burned" a number of them, as most of them left school with a bitter taste. They feel betrayed by a system that some have described as race bound.

Literacy programs that are setup in high schools, in colleges and universities, those white elephants, people do not want to go to. It's already an intimidating place to see.
- Man, Thunder Bay, Ontario

If you have the same people teaching literacy programs, people that you walked away from, you're not really giving them an alternative. They already went there once, and already walked away so...
- Man, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Since the Métis people need to improve their reading and writing skills, only one solution remains: To develop a program that will be culturally appropriate and will answer to the specific needs of the Métis. This is only possible if they have control over the literacy programs offered. This control can be obtained by having a Métis- specific literacy program. But, what do we mean by Métis-specific? One of the Focus Group's participants defined it as follow:

Métis-specific means that it is for Métis people, about Métis people, for Métis people... so we will be the benefactors of this, and we will also be the people who are driving this program ... It's going to be Métis people doing the work, it's going to be Métis people establishing the protocol, defining the literacy program for Métis people, our Elders, our youth, our women, and our men... and as such we will control our destiny, somebody else won't, and that's all the part of being self- government.
- Man, Kamloops, British Columbia

And, why should it be Métis-specific?

By having a Métis-specific program, you'll be building self-esteem, which is important, and it is of course, crucial. You want to create a desire for lifelong learning, or create a desire for learning.

- Woman, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

By giving the control of literacy programs for Métis people back to the Métis people, we will eliminate one of the most important barriers to literacy upgrading: fear. Fear of admitting to strangers that reading and writing is difficult.

You can do something within your own local, in your own community that sort of knocks things down... You don't have the initial fear, you're not going into a brand new situation, you're meeting with people that you have past experiences with...

- Man, North Bay, Ontario

What would a Métis-specific literacy program would look like? First and foremost it should be adapted to the needs of the Métis community. So, computers, tutoring, small groups, classrooms, and so on could be used. Even more importantly, the Métis culture should be an essential part of it.

Culture-bound, people who know who we are... teaching them, making them understand a second language... that's basically what it is, it's a second language.

- Man, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Métis-specific also means that the target group of a Métis-specific Literacy Program would not be limited by age, skills, and so on.

We think that after you get old, that's the end of life now, and it's remarkable how much, how the seniors would like to get back...with our youth. But, nobody's taking any initiative to do anything and even our age category, 40, 35 and up, everything is focused from 16 to 24, on the youth, but you also have to educate the other part of the family. Family literacy has to be there also, not just one person getting the education, but it has to be the whole family too...

- Woman, Winnipeg, Manitoba

And I think our people, no matter how old they are, they would like to... I know even myself, I would be going further, because I think it's important and I would feel comfortable by doing that, but I wouldn't do it by going to one of the colleges and that's how I would feel.

- Elder (woman), Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

I don't want people 40 years up, I want the young people and the old people, because we have our respect for our elders. You have a young person who's illiterate and they see there's an elder who's illiterate, and they are all learning at the same time. You've got that community spirit ...

- Woman, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

There's so many different levels we have to take into account, there's no generalization here, each person is pretty well unique. So, any kind of literacy project that comes in, volunteers or people who are wishing to participate in a literacy program to elevate their levels...you're not going to be able to set a criteria and say if you fall above or below this, we're not going to include you in the program. It has to be not only open and flexible to schedules and personal feelings, but it's going to have to address many levels of proficiency.

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

Métis-specific also means that a "holistic approach" should be used. One of the participants in Saskatoon said "all of that person's needs have to be met." The need for support program was also emphasized:

With the support program, you can work with the family... I think support really needs to be offered along with that literacy program, because if you have problems at home and he's coming in to learn, whoever it is, and they're dealing with alcoholism, divorce, whatever is in the home. He's still not going to be literate, he's got too much on his mind.

- Woman, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Finally, the Focus Groups' participants emphasized the need for long-term commitment and funding:

Lets say that you develop a curriculum, you have the design, you sent this out, and what's going to happen...submit proposals... lets say, we're going to run a program, 1-year long... So, next year they put in a proposal and say well, that one worked good, we'll try again, we'll run one more year, and you're not progressing, you're just standing ...areas are still gonna be left out... Phase 1 was to get us started here, Phase 2, could be Métis outreach. Phase 3, could be whatever ...that keeps going, and then you have a goal set for yourself...

- Man, Thunder Bay, Ontario

I think the big issue would be informing people, that there is help because if you have problems reading and writing you're not going to read about it in the newspaper that there's help and you can't just do it in spurts, like it has to be consistent, so people know that they can go for help and not just hear about it for a month and...they have to know that there's help there, that they can get.

- Woman, North Bay, Ontario

2. Development of Métis-Specific Literacy Materials

In setting up Métis-specific programs, it will be essential to develop literacy materials that will be culturally appropriate. Therefore, Focus Groups' participants suggested that the resources necessary to develop a Métis-specific literacy curriculum and its required materials be pooled together.

The first step in developing Métis-specific literacy curriculum and resource materials would be to establish a Working Group on Literacy.

I would like to make a very strong recommendation that a committee from the Homeland ... I want people that can put some input, that would be inputting at the community grassroots level... If you have two for each province you can have twelve people, they should be able to meet... I believe it should one man and a woman, I think it's important to get a woman involved because I think that's important.

- Woman (Elder?), Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

It would also make sense to have the working group made up of people who are going to deliver it...

- Woman, North Bay, Ontario

I think what we could do is have regular people, but people who have some ability in designing programs, but we don't want to have to train them into that ...

- Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta

Focus Groups' participants strongly suggested that the Working Group gather and develop Métis-specific literacy materials, as well as devise a flexible curriculum that could assist communities in establishing their own literacy programs. One participant explains it as follows:

And, what we need to do is develop it ourselves... because the school boards are not going to do it for us, and that's too large a fight. So, I think that the development of our own resources ...is very critical. And who better to know our history? Who better to know our culture?

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

Focus Groups' participants have already suggested some possible avenues for the Working Group and here they are:

And books are one thing, but books aren't all there is in today's world. There's computers, so why not programs? So why don't we have programs? Why don't we work on programs that are relative to us? You know, like I'm sure we've got programmers that can develop literacy that is more comfortable with us.

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

I would like to see a development for resources library through the Métis National Council... A resource publications of our own materials, videotapes... if we were looking at a plan that's what I would like to see is the development of our own resource library and again utilizing who we are, while we're learning to cope in society and we're learning the literacy skills, why aren't we learning about ourselves... And that's a good step in preserving our heritage too.

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

3. Métis-Specific Literacy Program sin the School System

Many participants in the Focus Groups on Literacy pointed out that literacy problems do not start in Grade 9 or in Grade 12 for that matter. Literacy problems start at an early age, so many participants suggested to offer Métis-specific literacy programs in the regular school system.

If there are Métis children in the school that are experiencing literacy problems at an early age, early school grade, that those teachers are made aware that this program, or whatever program ... is available, and to include that in the regular school system. I'm not saying after school class, I'm saying right there in the school, or during school time, bring those children out.

- Woman, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

We believe that literacy for our youth, very particularly, for our youth has to come in the school system. It has to be there in the schools, at least from this community standpoint that's where the learning environment is. So, why duplicate process when you could be delivering right inside and that's really the focus we're taking in the community here... What we propose to do is place tutors inside the school and give our Métis children the opportunity to learn basically the literacy skills and just that alone should give them their self-esteem, should take away from that trauma about keeping, about coping with difficulties. Those tutors will be Métis as well, and that's the way ...

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

4. Increase Awareness in the Education System about Métis

Roughly three respondents in four to the MNC's Literacy Survey did not graduate from high school. In the previous chapters, we've included the comments of the participants in the Focus Groups on Literacy, who explained it by a number of factors including racism, failure of the school system to address their needs, English being a second language, and so on.

Across the Métis Homeland, Focus Groups' participants suggested that the awareness in the education system about the Métis people be increased. By increasing awareness, the participants thought that the school system would then be better able to meet the needs of the Métis. Some of the recommendations dealt with the structure of the school system:

We have to tap into our education boards. We have to be more involved, we want to get more involved, we want to be involved in the curriculum 'that is being drawn up, we may want to have some input in some of the books that are being prepared instead of being negative regarding the Aboriginal community ... My criticisms of the school system as it presently stands and where literacy stands from, is because of our lack of input into the school boards, lack of input as far as educators...

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

In communities like Regina, where we have a heavy Métis community, right in the city, 20,000 Métis people ... We don't have one single Métis person sitting on the school board . Because they have to make a special seat for Métis people We get the odd one into city council, school board, but basically we still cannot win. Because of the stereotypes and the racism that exist out there, we still cannot win.

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

While others tackled the curriculum issue:

In terms of what is taught in school today, there is very little that deals with us as Métis people. I don't care where you go in Canada, you will find that we are more than just forgotten, we're seriously neglected here.

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

I'd like to see is some of this dedicated and targeted directly towards educators and bringing up their literacy levels, as to what Native peoples are and their needs and also the problems...

- Man, Duncan, British Columbia

5. Literacy and Education Campaign for Métis People

We need to promote education and literacy in Métis communities. The first three phases of the MNC's Literacy Strategy have significantly increased awareness in Métis communities, but we need to go further. Some participants suggested to hire an Aboriginal motivational speaker to visit Métis communities to promote the benefits of education and literacy.

An older participant in Winnipeg emphasized this point by talking about the importance of role models, of seeing Métis people succeed:

There is more sense of pride now that I feel, like when we were young. There weren't many Aboriginal people that had good jobs or up there in political places and stuff like that. We couldn't relate, we couldn't see them up there. But the generation now, there is so many of our people getting jobs and being heard across the nation. It's a sense of pride for them. All around here you see role models of your community members and other people in Canada.

- Man, Winnipeg, MB

6. Post-Secondary Education

The federal government has facilitated access to postsecondary education to First Nations and Inuit peoples by allocating resources to pay for their tuition fees and related expenses (i.e., living expenses). However, Métis people have always been denied access to these resources, forcing a number of students to borrow the money required to pursue their education.

It's my second semester of my second year in university, and being a Métis student, I have to pay my own way. I had to go to the Student Finance Board, borrow money. I owe \$21,000 now, and I'm still one year short of writing the bar exam to go to law school. And, there's no funding. And, you're not entitled to own anything by going to school, they want me to liquidate my car, sell everything I owned just to get an education, and that's where, that's the biggest barrier in our Métis community is the funding for education. And once, you say I owe \$21,000 now, for me to go finish my final year, I'm looking at owing probably \$35,000. And, in the end, how many people can be devoted to pay \$35,000 to get an education ... I've been in school four years and I'm brain dead, I'm sick of school, and yet I need that one more year ... go all the way and finish that year or I'm losing everything education, money, everything is gone.

- Woman, Slave Lake, Alberta

In this regard, the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples¹ recommended that:

When implementing this Commission's recommendations on education affecting Aboriginal persons, great care be exercised to ensure the preservation and propagation of distinct Métis cultures. Measures to achieve that goal might include, where appropriate,

- a. consultation with Métis elders when educational programs are being planned;
- b. establishment of and public funding support of separate Métis schools where numbers warrant;
- c. assisted access to postsecondary education for Métis persons;
- d. creation of a college or faculty of Métis studies and professorships, scholarships and programs of Métis studies; and
- e. provision of residential facilities in postsecondary educational institutions that will be congenial to Métis students.

7. Métis-Specific Schools

For many participants in the Focus Groups on Literacy, the high drop out rates and low levels of literacy, clearly demonstrate the failure of the education system to address the needs of the Métis community. Therefore, as they see the education system as a source of the problem, they are suggesting the establishment of Métis- specific schools, which was also suggested by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

1. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Perspectives and Realities, vot. 4, 1996, p. 239.

Don't forget these people were children before they became adults, and they weren't taken care of... we have a problem in excluding our people when we think we'll deal with the adults, we'll forget about the kids. By keeping in mind, our kids are having that same problem in school that our adults that are there now had...What we need to do is establish our own education system, not only GDI (Gabriel Dumont Institute) for adults, I mean, schools, Métis schools... Treaty have school that are much more successful...

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

We need an educational process that is drawn by ourselves, of course with input from experts, and something that we can control ourselves, which would make people comfortable and feeling comfortable in a comfortable setting.

Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

8. Economic Development

One daunting question was raised at every Focus Group on Literacy: Does education pay? Graphs 8 in the previous chapters have clearly demonstrated that indeed education pays. But, some participants pointed out that we need to do more to promote education. In this regard, a participant in Slave Lake, Alberta, stated "in order to promote education, we have to promote economic development."

Similar statements were also made elsewhere throughout the Métis Homeland:

It's also... people kind of think, OK, you get this education, you finally get out there and there's no jobs, or you still have to go to university ...and get more education, and there still might be no more jobs. And then you have that huge loan you have to pay back and you kind of think it's not worth the money

- Woman, Mayerthorpe, Alberta

The bottom line is that Métis don't have an economic development fund. Allweget through the province or through the federal government are just funds to run our offices. What else do we get? Do we have x amount of dollars that we can put into a business venture where it's gonna create a profit and employment. No, we don't and these are the things that we need to address. We have to create the opportunities ... we are not basically empowering ourselves to become the entrepreneurs that we need, and we don't have that.

- Man, Slave Lake, Alberta

9. Enumeration

It may seem odd to discuss enumeration in a Needs Assessment Study on Literacy for Métis People. However, it should be acknowledged that the lack of reliable data on the Métis has certainly created its fair share of difficulties.

To compare some of the results of the MNC's Literacy Survey, we have used Statistics Canada's "Profile of the Métis." However, Statistics Canada's report is flawed, as it seriously underestimates the number of Métis people in this country.

For years, the Métis National Council has demanded to the federal government to enumerate the Métis people and this was also brought up during our Focus Groups on Literacy.

I myself brought up the fact of somewhat of an enumeration, so that the people would, we could have numbers go to government and say that these are what we need, which is part of that survey...

- Man, Kamloops, British Columbia

One of the things we've got to start doing is identify ourselves, not just by saying I am a Métis. Prove it. That's what we got to start doing. Because everybody now is hiring people based whether they're Aboriginal or not. Then, they say what you identify yourself, just say you're Métis, and that's not good enough...

- Man, Regina, Saskatchewan

APPENDIX A THE MÉTIS

The Métis Nation evolved in the historic Northwest in the 18th and 19th centuries. Born of a mixture of French and Scottish fur traders and Cree, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine women, the Métis in the Northwest developed as a people, distinct from either Indian or European.

Following the annexation of the Northwest by Canada in 1869, the political economy of the Métis was destroyed. Both the Manitoba Act (1870) and the Dominion Lands Act (1879) recognized Métis claims to Aboriginal title, but the federal government moved to "unilaterally extinguish" these claims through individual land and grants scrip. Denied the recognition of their collective rights, the Métis became Canada's "forgotten people." Only in Alberta was any action taken to alleviate Métis distress through the establishment of Métis settlements by the provincial government in 1938. The Métis were officially recognized as one of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples in the Canadian Constitution of 1982.

The estimated number of Métis in Canada varies widely, from 300,000 to 800,000. A proposed federal enumeration should provide a more accurate count of Canada's Métis population. Métis account for more than 20% of the Aboriginal population.

Most Métis live in Western Canada, both in remote and urban communities and in Métis-only and mixed communities. There are over three hundred Métis communities, most are English-speaking with some northern communities using Cree or Michif. The Métis are distinguished by their unique Michif languages.

The Métis have never received the benefits governments grant to Status Indians and Inuit possess. In its recently released report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated "it is unjust and unreasonable to withhold from Métis people the services and opportunities available to other Aboriginal peoples."

APPENDIX B

THE MÉTIS NATIONAL COUNCIL

The Métis National Council is the national representative of the Métis Nation in Canada. The Métis National Council was established in 1983, following recognition of the Métis as a distinct people with Aboriginal rights in the Constitution Act, 1982. The MNC has been recognized as the voice of the Métis Nation in constitutional negotiations at the national level, and acts as an advocate and negotiator for the Métis people with the Government of Canada and at national conferences and for a. It also represents the interests of the Métis people on the international stage.

The MNC has an organizational structure which is composed of local, regional and provincial associations and affiliated institutions. The MNC is governed by a Board of Governors made up of Presidents of provincial Métis associations. There are provincial associations throughout the Métis Homeland of the historic Northwest: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. In turn, each provincial association has a regional structure and a network of community-based locals, the number and size of which vary from region to region and province to province. The President of each provincial association is elected through secret ballot-box elections organized throughout the province, in which all Métis persons have a right to vote. Collectively, they oversee the affairs of the MNC, aided and assisted by a small permanent secretariat located in Ottawa.

The central goals and aspirations of the Métis Nation are to:

- Represent and promote the interests of the Métis Nation;
- Restore Métis lands and resources for future generations;
- Achieve the full recognition of the Métis Nation and its jurisdiction within the Canadian federal system;
- Seek cooperative and productive relations with other Canadian governments and peoples based on mutual respect, sharing and tolerance;
- Promote progress and prosperity among Métis people in all cultural, social, economic and political fields;
- Achieve self-sufficiency for the Métis people and the institutions of the Métis Nation;
- Maintain and promote respect for the individual rights and freedoms of the Métis people and the equal protection and advancement of female and male Métis; and,
- Maintain the independence and integrity of the Métis Nation, safeguard its stability and resist any aggression upon its existence or any of its people.

APPENDIX C - MNC Literacy Survey

1. **Name:** _____

Not to be used for data tabulation, but would be useful in keeping track of who has been surveyed, and in identifying potential participants for focus groups.

2. **Where do you live?** _____ **Region:** _____

3. **Age group:**
 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

4. **Gender:**
 Female Male

5. **What language did you first speak when you were a child?**
 English French Aboriginal language, please specify _____

If French or Aboriginal languages were the first spoken languages, ask the following question: How old were you when you started learning English? _____

6. **What is the first language that you learned to write and read?**

7. **Do you still speak your first language?**
 Yes No

8. **Can you read or write in your first language?**
 Yes No

9. **How well do you speak English?**
 Very well, please go to question 11, Average, please go to question 11, Do not speak English, please go to question 10, Well, please go to question 11, Poorly, please go to question 10

10. **If you learn to speak, read and write in English, do you feel that you will lose some of your culture?**
 Yes No

11. **In which language do you communicate more easily?**
 English French Aboriginal language, please specify

- 12. When you were growing up, was there reading material in your home? (Magazines, books, comics, newspapers, etc.)**
 Yes No
- 13. What is your mother's highest level of schooling?**
 No schooling, Grade 1-4, Grade 5-8, Grade 9-11, Grade 12-13,
 Some College, Completed College, Some university
 Completed university: Please specify the level attained
 Other: _____
- 14. What is your father's highest level of schooling?**
 No schooling, Grade 1-4, Grade 5-8, Grade 9-11, Grade 12-13,
 Some College, Completed College, Some university
 Completed university: Please specify the level attained
 Other: _____
- 15. What is your highest level of schooling?**
 No schooling, Grade 1-4, Grade 5-8, Grade 9-11, Grade 12-13,
 Some College, Completed College, Some university
 Completed university: Please specify the level attained
 Other: _____
- 16. How old were you when you stopped your schooling? _____**
- 17. Why did you stop your schooling? (Check all the answers that might apply)**
 Completed the program, Still in school, Wanted to work, Needed to work for money, Family reasons, Did not like school, Did not think it would do any good to finish,
 Did not do well in school, Became ill or disabled, Wanted to learn a trade,
 School was not near home, Pressure from friends
 Other: _____
- 18. Are you presently...**
 Working Unemployed/looking for work Homemaker Studying Retired
 Other

19. Have you ever had problems on the job/at school because reading and writing were hard for you?

Yes No

20. Do you think that your reading/writing abilities limit your chances of getting a promotion or a job?

Limit enormously Don't limit at all Limit somewhat Don't know

21. How often do you read/write information at work/leisure?

| | Everyday | A few times | Once a week | Less than a week | Rarely or Never |
|--|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
|--|----------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|

Letters or memos

Reports, articles, magazines

Manuals, reference documents

Diagrams

Bills, budgets, receipts

Instructions (medications, recipes, products)

22. How would you evaluate your reading and writing abilities?

Excellent Good Average Poor Don't know

23. Did you in the last twelve months taken any courses (including private lessons, workshops, workplace training, apprenticeship, etc.)

Yes No

If yes, how many courses did you take?

Types of programs:

24. If you wanted to improve your reading and writing skills, which of the following types of programs would you prefer?

One to one tutoring, Learning in small groups, In a classroom, By computer, Distance education

Other:

25. Would you like to improve your reading, writing, spelling or mathematics skills?

- Yes No

If yes, please check all the answers that might apply:

- To get a job, To help your children, To feel better about yourself,
 To get a better job, To further your education,
 Other

26. Are there any reading and writing programs in your area?

- Yes No Don't know

27. As an adult have you ever taken any reading and writing programs?

- Yes, go to question 28 No, go to question 29

28. What are your reasons for taking a program? (Check all the answers that might apply)

- To get a job, To help your children, To feel better about yourself, To get a better job,
 Other: _____

29. What are your reasons for not taking programs? (Check all the answers that might apply)

- Not aware of programs, No programs in your community,
 Programs do not meet my needs, Too old, Don't need it in your job, Not interested, Too
busy, Cost too much, Too embarrassed, Health reasons, Family reasons, Don't know,
 Feel your reading and writing are good, Don't have any money, Other:

30. How many hours a day do you spend watching TV and video films/games?

- Don't watch TV everyday, Less than 1 hour per day, 1 to 2 hours a day, More than 2, but less
than 5, 5 hours and more, Don't have a TV

31. Among the following things, what do you have presently in your house?

| | Yes | No |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Daily newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Weeklies/magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| More than 25 books | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An encyclopedia | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A dictionary | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Access to the Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

32. Sometimes, people ask friends or family to help them in writing/reading. How often do you ask people to help you...

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Read the newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Complete forms, such as bank deposit | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Read instructions for medications | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| To do some mathematics (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Write notes or letters | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Use a computer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

33. Would you accept to take part in a discussion on literacy?

Yes No

APPENDIX D

National Results of the MNC Literacy Survey

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in National

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|--------|
| Male | 137 | 199 | 203 | 116 | 64 | 33 | 752 | 46.6 |
| Female | 215 | 257 | 214 | 96 | 55 | 32 | 869 | 53.9 |
| Total | 352 | 456 | 417 | 212 | 119 | 65 | 1621 | 100.00 |
| % | 21.7 | 28.1 | 25.7 | 13.1 | 7.3 | 4.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 2 - First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|--------------|--------|-------|
| English | 1280 | 74.2 |
| French | 122 | 7.1 |
| Cree | 250 | 14.5 |
| Saulteaux | 41 | 2.4 |
| Michif | 10 | 0.6 |
| Dene | 16 | 0.9 |
| Ojibwa | 7 | 0.4 |
| Total | 1726 | 100.0 |

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|----------------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| No Schooling | 135 | 161 | 18 |
| Grade 1-4 | 174 | 243 | 42 |
| Grade 5-8 | 520 | 517 | 333 |
| Grade 9-11 | 400 | 317 | 731 |
| Grade 12-13 | 161 | 126 | 317 |
| Some college | 36 | 21 | 78 |
| Completed college | 28 | 21 | 54 |
| Some university | 31 | 21 | 75 |
| Completed university | 33 | 17 | 46 |
| Other | 186 | 246 | 36 |
| Total | 1704 | 1690 | 1730 |

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 17 | 1.0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 42 | 2.5 |
| Grade 5-8 | 39 | 73 | 83 | 61 | 45 | 31 | 332 | 19.5 |
| Grade 9-11 | 194 | 237 | 164 | 69 | 44 | 12 | 720 | 42.0 |
| Grade 12-13 | 74 | 100 | 82 | 40 | 14 | 5 | 315 | 18.4 |
| Some college | 20 | 21 | 24 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 78 | 4.6 |
| Completed college | 8 | 17 | 21 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 54 | 3.2 |
| Some university | 13 | 23 | 26 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 75 | 4.4 |
| Completed university | 2 | 12 | 16 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 46 | 2.7 |
| Other | 10 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 2.0 |
| Total | 364 | 495 | 435 | 229 | 123 | 68 | 1714 | 100.0 |

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 10 | 6 | 16 | 1.0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 24 | 16 | 40 | 2.5 |
| Grade 5-8 | 140 | 164 | 304 | 18.8 |
| Grade 9-11 | 324 | 356 | 680 | 41.9 |
| Grade 12-13 | 131 | 172 | 303 | 18.7 |
| Some college | 40 | 37 | 77 | 4.8 |
| Completed college | 18 | 33 | 51 | 3.1 |
| Some university | 32 | 41 | 73 | 4.5 |
| Completed university | 21 | 22 | 43 | 2.7 |
| Other | 13 | 21 | 34 | 2.1 |
| Total | 753 | 868 | 1621 | 100.0 |

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Completed | 258 | 14.9 |
| Still in school | 176 | 10.2 |
| Wanted to work | 505 | 29.2 |
| Needed to work for money | 280 | 16.2 |
| Family reasons | 374 | 21.6 |
| Did not like school | 275 | 15.9 |
| Not any good to finish | 152 | 8.8 |
| Did not do well in school | 200 | 11.6 |
| Ill or disabled | 46 | 2.7 |
| Learn a Trade | 77 | 4.5 |
| School far from home | 93 | 5.4 |
| Pressure from friends | 63 | 3.6 |
| Other | 146 | 8.4 |
| Total | 2645 | 152.9 |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take any courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| No Schooling | 4 | 13 | 17 |
| Grade 1-4 | 3 | 39 | 42 |
| Grade 5-8 | 53 | 277 | 330 |
| Grade 9-11 | 154 | 566 | 720 |
| Grade 12-13 | 105 | 209 | 314 |
| Some college | 49 | 29 | 78 |
| Completed college | 31 | 23 | 54 |
| Some university | 40 | 35 | 75 |
| Completed university | 23 | 23 | 46 |
| Other | 19 | 15 | 34 |
| Total | 481 | 1229 | 1710 |
| % | 28.1 | 71.9 | 100.0 |

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 17 |
| Grade 1-4 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 3 | 4 | 42 |
| Grade 5-8 | 76 | 71 | 56 | 55 | 42 | 28 | 328 |
| Grade 9-11 | 250 | 169 | 156 | 26 | 88 | 36 | 725 |
| Grade 12-13 | 194 | 62 | 36 | 9 | 25 | 10 | 336 |
| Some college | 36 | 21 | 12 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 78 |
| Completed college | 32 | 9 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 54 |
| Some university | 33 | 27 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 46 |
| Completed university | 30 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 46 |
| Other | 12 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 36 |
| Total | 677 | 385 | 291 | 119 | 174 | 91 | 1737 |
| % | 39.0 | 22.2 | 16.8 | 6.9 | 10.0 | 5.2 | 100.0 |

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 118 | 214 | 313 | 62 | 43 | 750 | 46.4 |
| Female | 183 | 233 | 368 | 39 | 43 | 866 | 53.6 |
| Total | 301 | 447 | 681 | 101 | 86 | 1616 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.6 | 27.7 | 42.1 | 6.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 | |

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 16-24 | 81 | 104 | 152 | 10 | 17 | 364 | 21.3 |
| 25-34 | 80 | 143 | 215 | 12 | 44 | 494 | 28.9 |
| 35-44 | 79 | 135 | 171 | 22 | 26 | 433 | 25.4 |
| 45-54 | 47 | 54 | 97 | 24 | 5 | 227 | 13.3 |
| 55-64 | 19 | 16 | 59 | 24 | 6 | 124 | 7.3 |
| 65+ | 6 | 19 | 25 | 14 | 2 | 66 | 3.9 |
| Total | 312 | 471 | 719 | 106 | 100 | 1708 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.3 | 27.6 | 42.1 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 100.0 | |

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | 1 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 16 | 0.9 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 7 | 11 | 21 | 2 | 41 | 2.4 |
| Grade 5-8 | 16 | 88 | 145 | 50 | 33 | 332 | 19.3 |
| Grade 9-11 | 91 | 210 | 349 | 16 | 61 | 727 | 42.3 |
| Grade 12-13 | 75 | 96 | 135 | 7 | 2 | 315 | 18.3 |
| Some college | 30 | 23 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 77 | 4.5 |
| Completed college | 26 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 54 | 3.1 |
| Some university | 28 | 18 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 74 | 4.3 |
| Completed university | 29 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 2.7 |
| Other | 18 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 36 | 2.1 |
| Total | 314 | 476 | 722 | 106 | 100 | 1718 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.3 | 27.7 | 42.0 | 6.2 | 5.8 | 100.0 | |

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | 11 | 23 | 79 | 55 | 15 | 183 | 18.2 |
| Limit somewhat | 24 | 132 | 249 | 19 | 40 | 464 | 27.6 |
| Don't limit at all | 244 | 171 | 206 | 9 | 4 | 634 | 42.0 |
| Don't know | 30 | 144 | 181 | 25 | 40 | 420 | 6.3 |
| Total | 309 | 470 | 715 | 108 | 99 | 1701 | 5.8 |
| % | 10.8 | 27.5 | 37.3 | 24.7 | 100.0 | | 100.0 |

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|--------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 161 | 21 | 182 |
| Limit somewhat | 416 | 46 | 462 |
| Don't limit at all | 407 | 217 | 624 |
| Don't know | 329 | 83 | 412 |
| Total | 1313 | 367 | 1680 |
| % | 78.2 | 21.8 | 100.0 |

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Had reading material at home | 299 | 440 | 650 | 56 | 89 | 1534 | 90.1 |
| Did not have reading material | 14 | 27 | 66 | 51 | 11 | 169 | 9.9 |
| Total | 313 | 467 | 716 | 107 | 100 | 1703 | 100.0 |

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Daily Newspapers | 976 | 70.7 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 970 | 71.6 |
| More than 25 books | 994 | 72.8 |
| Encyclopedia | 663 | 50.9 |
| Dictionary | 1196 | 86.4 |
| Computer | 303 | 24.9 |
| Internet | 112 | 9.3 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than once a week | Rarely or never |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Letters or memos | 364 | 253 | 143 | 277 | 354 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 440 | 273 | 173 | 202 | 310 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 196 | 161 | 109 | 232 | 631 |
| Diagrams | 163 | 113 | 96 | 231 | 703 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 293 | 245 | 207 | 337 | 264 |
| Instructions (medicines, recipes, products) | 317 | 259 | 124 | 325 | 329 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 62 | 150 | 1190 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 105 | 450 | 826 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 87 | 305 | 992 |
| Read instructions for medication | 85 | 201 | 1090 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 58 | 124 | 1184 |
| To do some mathematics | 135 | 402 | 840 |
| Write notes or letters | 101 | 342 | 936 |
| Use a computer | 158 | 368 | 808 |

APPENDIX E

MNC Literacy Survey in Ontario

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in Ontario

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| Male | 19 | 32 | 39 | 34 | 20 | 11 | 155 | 48.7 |
| Female | 22 | 31 | 41 | 34 | 20 | 15 | 163 | 51.3 |
| Total | 41 | 63 | 80 | 68 | 40 | 26 | 318 | 100.0 |
| % | 12.9 | 19.8 | 25.2 | 21.4 | 12.6 | 8.2 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 318

Missing cases 22

Table 2 - First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| English | 259 | 76.9 |
| French | 73 | 21.7 |
| Ojibwa | 5 | 1.5 |
| Total | 337 | 100 |

Valid cases 337

Missing cases 3

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| No Schooling | 16 | 21 | 2 |
| Grade 1-4 | 31 | 35 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 94 | 85 | 57 |
| Grade 9-11 | 60 | 75 | 89 |
| Grade 12-13 | 44 | 26 | 87 |
| Some college | 13 | 7 | 32 |
| Completed college | 8 | 6 | 28 |
| Some university | 4 | 5 | 19 |
| Completed university | 8 | 1 | 10 |
| Other | 62 | 79 | 8 |
| Total | 340 | 340 | 340 |

Valid cases 340

Missing cases 0

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-54 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 8 | 2.4 |
| Grade 5-8 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 19 | 12 | 13 | 57 | 16.9 |
| Grade 9-11 | 10 | 19 | 20 | 19 | 14 | 7 | 89 | 26.3 |
| Grade 12-13 | 10 | 19 | 28 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 86 | 25.4 |
| Some college | 6 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 9.5 |
| Completed college | 7 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 8.3 |
| Some university | 6 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 8.3 |
| Completed university | 1 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 3.0 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2.4 |
| Total | 43 | 64 | 87 | 76 | 41 | 27 | 338 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 338

Missing cases 2

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Grade 1-4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2.2 |
| Grade 5-8 | 26 | 24 | 50 | 15.6 |
| Grade 9-11 | 53 | 31 | 84 | 26.3 |
| Grade 12-13 | 36 | 48 | 84 | 26.3 |
| Some college | 16 | 16 | 32 | 10.0 |
| Completed college | 9 | 17 | 26 | 8.1 |
| Some university | 6 | 11 | 17 | 5.3 |
| Completed university | 3 | 7 | 10 | 3.1 |
| Other | 4 | 4 | 8 | 2.5 |
| Total | 157 | 163 | 320 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 340

Missing cases 0

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Completed | 72 | 21.2 |
| Still in school | 26 | 7.6 |
| Wanted to work | 8 | 2.4 |
| Needed to work for money | 4 | 1.2 |
| Family reasons | 69 | 20.3 |
| Did not like school | 102 | 30.0 |
| Not any good to finish | 77 | 22.6 |
| Did not do well in school | 60 | 17.6 |
| Ill or disabled | 31 | 9.1 |
| Learn a Trade | 9 | 2.6 |
| School far from home | 23 | 6.8 |
| Pressure from friends | 7 | 2.1 |
| Other | 8 | 2.4 |
| Total | 633 | |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take any courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| No schooling | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 8 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 9 | 48 | 57 |
| Grade 9-11 | 13 | 74 | 87 |
| Grade 12-13 | 30 | 57 | 87 |
| Some college | 19 | 13 | 32 |
| Completed college | 18 | 10 | 28 |
| Some university | 13 | 6 | 19 |
| Completed university | 7 | 3 | 19 |
| Other | 3 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 112 | 226 | 338 |
| % | 33.1 | 66.9 | |

Valid cases 338

Missing cases 2

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 24 | 4 | 8 | 57 |
| Grade 9-11 | 38 | 2 | 8 | 15 | 9 | 17 | 89 |
| Grade 12-13 | 49 | 7 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 87 |
| Some college | 13 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 32 |
| Completed college | 16 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 28 |
| Some university | 7 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 19 |
| Completed university | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Other | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Total | 146 | 36 | 29 | 56 | 36 | 37 | 340 |
| % | 42.9 | 10.6 | 8.5 | 16.5 | 10.6 | 10.9 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 340

Missing cases 0

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 19 | 48 | 67 | 19 | 2 | 155 | 48.9 |
| Female | 45 | 45 | 64 | 7 | 1 | 162 | 51.1 |
| Total | 64 | 93 | 131 | 26 | 3 | 317 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.2 | 29.3 | 41.3 | 8.2 | 0.9 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 317

Missing cases 23

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 16-24 | 14 | 13 | 16 | | | 43 | 12.8 |
| 25-34 | 11 | 21 | 29 | 2 | 1 | 64 | 19.1 |
| 35-44 | 14 | 31 | 33 | 7 | 1 | 86 | 25.7 |
| 45-54 | 19 | 18 | 31 | 7 | | 75 | 22.4 |
| 55-64 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 9 | 1 | 40 | 11.9 |
| 65+ | 3 | 7 | 13 | 4 | | 27 | 8.1 |
| Total | 68 | 99 | 136 | 29 | 3 | 335 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.3 | 29.6 | 40.6 | 8.7 | 0.9 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 335

Missing cases 5

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | | | | 2 | | 2 | 0.6 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 2 | 1 | 5 | | 8 | 2.4 |
| Grade 5-8 | 3 | 13 | 25 | 14 | 2 | 57 | 16.9 |
| Grade 9-11 | 9 | 27 | 45 | 5 | 1 | 87 | 25.8 |
| Grade 12-13 | 18 | 26 | 40 | 2 | | 86 | 25.5 |
| Some college | 10 | 11 | 11 | | | 32 | 9.5 |
| Completed college | 12 | 8 | 6 | 2 | | 28 | 8.3 |
| Some university | 7 | 5 | 7 | | | 19 | 5.6 |
| Completed university | 6 | 4 | | | | 10 | 3.0 |
| Other | 3 | 3 | 2 | | | 8 | 2.4 |
| Total | 68 | 99 | 137 | 30 | 3 | 337 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.2 | 29.4 | 40.7 | 8.9 | 0.9 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 337

Missing cases 3

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | | 4 | 11 | 14 | 1 | 30 | 9.1 |
| Limit somewhat | 1 | 13 | 29 | 9 | 1 | 53 | 16.0 |
| Don't limit at all | 65 | 69 | 84 | 5 | | 223 | 67.4 |
| Don't know | 1 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 25 | 7.6 |
| Total | 67 | 96 | 135 | 30 | 3 | 331 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.2 | 29.0 | 40.8 | 9.1 | 0.9 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 331

Missing cases 9

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|--------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 24 | 6 | 30 |
| Limit somewhat | 40 | 13 | 53 |
| Don't limit at all | 114 | 110 | 224 |
| Don't know | 14 | 10 | 24 |
| Total | 192 | 139 | 331 |
| % | 58.0 | 42.0 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 331

Missing cases 9

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|------|
| Had reading material at home | 65 | 90 | 120 | 17 | 3 | 295 | 88.1 |
| Didn't have reading material | 3 | 7 | 16 | 13 | 0 | 39 | 11.6 |
| Total | 68 | 98 | 136 | 30 | 3 | 335 | 100 |

Valid cases 317

Missing cases 23

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Daily Newspapers | 267 | 80.7 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 268 | 80.2 |
| More than 25 books | 282 | 84.4 |
| Encyclopedia | 217 | 65.4 |
| Dictionary | 307 | 91.9 |
| Computer | 125 | 38.1 |
| Internet | 41 | 12.7 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than a week | Rarely or never |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Letters or memos | 129 | 65 | 45 | 15 | 48 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 129 | 71 | 58 | 43 | 30 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 55 | 43 | 35 | 51 | 141 |
| Diagrams | 43 | 24 | 25 | 43 | 184 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 82 | 57 | 65 | 75 | 50 |
| Instructions (medicines, recipes, products) | 69 | 73 | 43 | 74 | 68 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 14 | 14 | 305 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 35 | 93 | 206 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 23 | 32 | 278 |
| Read instructions for medication | 13 | 26 | 291 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 6 | 10 | 312 |
| To do some mathematics | 25 | 66 | 242 |
| Write notes or letters | 22 | 46 | 265 |
| Use a computer | 47 | 70 | 203 |

APPENDIX F

MNC Literacy Survey in Manitoba

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in Manitoba

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| Male | 34 | 34 | 30 | 20 | 8 | 9 | 135 | 45.0 |
| Female | 40 | 48 | 39 | 22 | 9 | 7 | 165 | 55.0 |
| Total | 74 | 82 | 69 | 42 | 17 | 16 | 300 | 100.0 |
| % | 24.7 | 27.3 | 23.0 | 14.0 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 300

Missing cases 8

Table 2 - First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| English | 227 | 74.2 |
| French | 25 | 8.2 |
| Cree | 14 | 4.6 |
| Ojibway | 1 | 0.3 |
| Sauteaux | 36 | 11.8 |
| Michif | 3 | 1.0 |
| Total | 306 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 418

Missing cases 5

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| No Schooling | 25 | 32 | 8 |
| Grade 1-4 | 28 | 46 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 101 | 90 | 57 |
| Grade 9-11 | 70 | 55 | 131 |
| Grade 12-13 | 24 | 20 | 52 |
| Some college | 4 | 2 | 17 |
| Completed college | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Some university | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Completed university | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Other | 29 | 42 | 9 |
| Total | 298 | 296 | 308 |

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | | 2 | | 3 | | 3 | 8 | 2.6 |
| Grade 1-4 | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 2.6 |
| Grade 5-8 | 5 | 10 | 16 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 57 | 18.6 |
| Grade 9-11 | 49 | 33 | 30 | 11 | 4 | 2 | 129 | 42.2 |
| Grade 12-13 | 11 | 22 | 8 | 10 | 1 | | 52 | 17.0 |
| Some college | 5 | 3 | 8 | 1 | | | 17 | 5.6 |
| Completed college | | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | 6 | 2.0 |
| Some university | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | | | 12 | 3.9 |
| Completed university | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 8 | 2.6 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | | | 9 | 2.9 |
| Total | 76 | 84 | 71 | 42 | 17 | 16 | 306 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 417

Missing cases 6

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2.6 |
| Grade 1-4 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 2.6 |
| Grade 5-8 | 23 | 33 | 56 | 18.5 |
| Grade 9-11 | 59 | 69 | 128 | 42.4 |
| Grade 12-13 | 24 | 27 | 51 | 16.9 |
| Some college | 9 | 7 | 16 | 5.3 |
| Completed college | 3 | 3 | 6 | 2.0 |
| Some university | 6 | 6 | 12 | 4.0 |
| Completed university | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2.6 |
| Other | 1 | 8 | 9 | 3.0 |
| Total | 136 | 166 | 302 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 392

Missing cases 31

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Completed | 41 | 13.3 |
| Still in school | 35 | 11.4 |
| Wanted to work | 80 | 26.0 |
| Needed to work for money | 54 | 17.5 |
| Family reasons | 60 | 19.5 |
| Did not like school | 51 | 16.6 |
| Not any good to finish | 18 | 5.8 |
| Did not do well in school | 37 | 12.0 |
| Ill or disabled | 8 | 2.6 |
| Learn a Trade | 12 | 3.9 |
| School far from home | 15 | 4.9 |
| Pressure from friends | 12 | 3.9 |
| Other | 37 | 12.0 |
| Total | 460 | 100.0 |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take any courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| No Schooling | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 8 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 4 | 53 | 57 |
| Grade 9-11 | 27 | 103 | 130 |
| Grade 12-13 | 13 | 38 | 51 |
| Some college | 11 | 6 | 17 |
| Completed college | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Some university | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Completed university | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Other | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Total | 78 | 227 | 305 |
| % | 25.6 | 74.1 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 302

Missing cases 6

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 7 |
| Grade 1-4 | 2 | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 56 |
| Grade 9-11 | 40 | 22 | 43 | 3 | 18 | 3 | 129 |
| Grade 12-13 | 50 | 7 | 8 | | 2 | 5 | 72 |
| Some college | 10 | 3 | 3 | | 1 | | 17 |
| Completed college | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | 6 |
| Some university | 6 | 4 | 2 | | | | 12 |
| Completed university | 7 | | | | | 1 | 8 |
| Other | 4 | 4 | 1 | | | | 9 |
| Total | 131 | 45 | 69 | 22 | 35 | 22 | 324 |
| % | 36.5 | 14.8 | 22.7 | 7.2 | 11.5 | 7.2 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 304

Missing cases 4

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 22 | 36 | 57 | 15 | 6 | 136 | 45.3 |
| Female | 40 | 45 | 68 | 8 | 3 | 164 | 54.7 |
| Total | 62 | 81 | 125 | 23 | 9 | 300 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.7 | 27.0 | 41.7 | 7.7 | 3.0 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 391

Missing cases 32

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 16-24 | 14 | 19 | 38 | 2 | 3 | 76 | 25.0 |
| 25-34 | 20 | 24 | 32 | 3 | 4 | 83 | 27.3 |
| 35-44 | 18 | 20 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 71 | 23.4 |
| 45-54 | 8 | 12 | 15 | 7 | | 42 | 13.8 |
| 55-64 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 17 | 5.6 |
| 65+ | | 4 | 7 | 4 | | 15 | 4.9 |
| Total | 62 | 81 | 128 | 23 | 10 | 304 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.4 | 26.6 | 42.1 | 7.6 | 3.3 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 415

Missing cases 8

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | 1 | | 1 | 5 | | 7 | 2.3 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 2 | 2 | 4 | | 8 | 2.6 |
| Grade 5-8 | 4 | 15 | 22 | 11 | 4 | 56 | 18.3 |
| Grade 9-11 | 22 | 39 | 62 | 2 | 6 | 131 | 42.8 |
| Grade 12-13 | 10 | 14 | 27 | 1 | | 52 | 17.0 |
| Some college | 8 | 5 | 4 | | | 17 | 5.6 |
| Completed college | 3 | 1 | 2 | | | 6 | 2.0 |
| Some university | 5 | 3 | 4 | | | 12 | 3.9 |
| Completed university | 7 | | 1 | | | 8 | 2.6 |
| Other | 2 | 4 | 3 | | | 9 | 2.9 |
| Total | 62 | 83 | 128 | 23 | 10 | 306 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.3 | 27.1 | 41.8 | 7.5 | 3.3 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 306

Missing cases 2

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | | 5 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 23 | 7.6 |
| Limit somewhat | 8 | 23 | 40 | 5 | 5 | 81 | 26.7 |
| Don't limit at all | 52 | 35 | 41 | 3 | | 131 | 43.2 |
| Don't know | 2 | 19 | 36 | 8 | 3 | 68 | 22.4 |
| Total | 62 | 82 | 127 | 23 | 9 | 303 | 100.0 |
| % | 20.5 | 27.1 | 41.9 | 7.6 | 3.0 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 303

Missing cases 5

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|---------------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 21 | 2 | 23 |
| Limit somewhat | 74 | 5 | 79 |
| Don't limit at all | 95 | 34 | 129 |
| Don't know | 56 | 11 | 67 |
| Total | 246 | 52 | 298 |
| % | 82.6 | 17.4 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 298

Missing cases 10

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Home reading material at home | 60 | 78 | 111 | 11 | 8 | 268 | 88.2 |
| Did not have reading material | 2 | 3 | 17 | 12 | 2 | 36 | 11.8 |
| Total | 62 | 81 | 128 | 23 | 10 | 304 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 304

Missing cases 4

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Daily Newspapers | 180 | 64.1 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 188 | 66.2 |
| More than 25 books | 224 | 78.6 |
| Encyclopedia | 144 | 53.1 |
| Dictionary | 247 | 84.3 |
| Computer | 49 | 19.4 |
| Internet | 13 | 5.2 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than once a week | Rarely or never |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Letters or memos | 90 | 61 | 19 | 37 | 76 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 124 | 53 | 32 | 30 | 49 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 46 | 41 | 20 | 40 | 117 |
| Diagrams | 41 | 30 | 11 | 42 | 145 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 80 | 52 | 44 | 41 | 61 |
| Instructions (medicine, recipes, products) | 79 | 62 | 23 | 45 | 67 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 11 | 32 | 251 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 20 | 114 | 151 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 17 | 65 | 203 |
| Read instructions for medication | 19 | 55 | 214 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 13 | 36 | 236 |
| To do some mathematics | 29 | 81 | 175 |
| Write notes or letters | 17 | 91 | 180 |
| Use a computer | 34 | 86 | 151 |

APPENDIX G

MNC Literacy Survey in Saskatchewan

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in Saskatchewan

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Male | 30 | 63 | 58 | 37 | 16 | 7 | 211 | 54.1 |
| Female | 36 | 55 | 56 | 19 | 10 | 3 | 179 | 45.9 |
| Total | 66 | 118 | 114 | 56 | 26 | 10 | 390 | 100.0 |
| % | 16.9 | 30.3 | 29.2 | 14.4 | 6.7 | 2.6 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 390

Missing cases 33

Table 2 - First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|-----------------|--------|-------|
| English | 301 | 72.0 |
| French | 3 | 0.7 |
| Cree | 89 | 21.3 |
| Sauteaux | 4 | 1.0 |
| Michif | 5 | 1.2 |
| Dene | 16 | 3.8 |
| Total | 418 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 418

Missing cases 5

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| No Schooling | 56 | 64 | 5 |
| Grade 1-4 | 51 | 83 | 18 |
| Grade 5-8 | 116 | 129 | 78 |
| Grade 9-11 | 133 | 85 | 199 |
| Grade 12-13 | 23 | 25 | 63 |
| Some college | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Completed college | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Some university | 10 | 5 | 24 |
| Completed university | 7 | 4 | 15 |
| Other | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| Total | 413 | 408 | 421 |

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1.2 |
| Grade 1-4 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 18 | 4.3 |
| Grade 5-8 | 8 | 18 | 19 | 16 | 13 | 3 | 77 | 18.5 |
| Grade 9-11 | 40 | 73 | 50 | 22 | 10 | 1 | 196 | 47.0 |
| Grade 12-13 | 14 | 23 | 20 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 63 | 15.1 |
| Some college | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1.0 |
| Completed college | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1.4 |
| Some university | 1 | 6 | 12 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 24 | 5.8 |
| Completed university | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 3.6 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 2.2 |
| Total | 68 | 133 | 119 | 58 | 28 | 11 | 417 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 417

Missing cases 6

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1.0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 15 | 3 | 18 | 4.6 |
| Grade 5-8 | 50 | 24 | 74 | 18.6 |
| Grade 9-11 | 91 | 87 | 178 | 45.4 |
| Grade 12-13 | 29 | 32 | 61 | 15.6 |
| Some college | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1.0 |
| Completed college | 1 | 5 | 6 | 1.5 |
| Some university | 11 | 13 | 24 | 6.1 |
| Completed university | 7 | 7 | 14 | 3.6 |
| Total | 4 | 5 | 9 | 2.3 |
| % | 213 | 179 | 392 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 392

Missing cases 31

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| Completed | 57 | 3.6 |
| Still in school | 30 | 1.9 |
| Wanted to work | 168 | 10.6 |
| Needed to work for money | 51 | 3.2 |
| Family reasons | 110 | 7.0 |
| Did not like school | 41 | 2.6 |
| Not any good to finish | 17 | 1.1 |
| Did not do well in school | 34 | 2.2 |
| Ill or disabled | 1 | 0.1 |
| Learn a Trade | 7 | 0.4 |
| School far from home | 27 | 1.7 |
| Pressure from friends | 10 | 0.6 |
| Other | 35 | 2.2 |
| Total | 588 | |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take any courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| No Schooling | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| Grade 5-8 | 2 | 75 | 77 |
| Grade 9-11 | 30 | 166 | 196 |
| Grade 12-13 | 14 | 49 | 63 |
| Some college | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Completed college | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Some university | 6 | 18 | 24 |
| Completed university | 7 | 58 | 15 |
| Other | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Total | 66 | 350 | 416 |
| % | 15.9 | 84.1 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 416

Missing cases 7

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 1 | | 1 | 3 | | | 5 |
| Grade 1-4 | 8 | | 6 | 3 | 1 | | 18 |
| Grade 5-8 | 29 | 3 | 28 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 78 |
| Grade 9-11 | 65 | 20 | 73 | 4 | 30 | 6 | 198 |
| Grade 12-13 | 38 | 12 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 63 |
| Some college | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 6 |
| Completed college | 3 | 2 | | | 1 | | 6 |
| Some university | 16 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | 24 |
| Completed university | 11 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 15 |
| Other | 5 | 2 | | | 2 | | 9 |
| Total | 178 | 45 | 123 | 18 | 45 | 11 | 420 |
| % | 42.4 | 10.7 | 29.3 | 4.3 | 10.7 | 2.6 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 420

Missing cases 3

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 25 | 36 | 105 | 16 | 31 | 213 | 54.5 |
| Female | 23 | 34 | 89 | 8 | 24 | 178 | 45.5 |
| Total | 48 | 70 | 194 | 24 | 55 | 391 | 100.0 |
| % | 12.3 | 17.9 | 49.6 | 6.1 | 14.1 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 391

Missing cases 32

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't Know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 16-24 | 12 | 13 | 31 | 3 | 9 | 68 | 16.4 |
| 25-34 | 16 | 20 | 63 | 4 | 31 | 134 | 32.3 |
| 35-44 | 16 | 29 | 53 | 4 | 17 | 119 | 28.7 |
| 45-54 | 3 | 9 | 34 | 5 | 5 | 56 | 13.5 |
| 55-64 | | 1 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 28 | 6.7 |
| 65+ | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | 10 | 2.4 |
| Total | 49 | 75 | 201 | 25 | 65 | 415 | 100.0 |
| % | 11.8 | 18.1 | 48.4 | 6.0 | 15.7 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 415

Missing cases 8

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | | | 1 | 3 | | 4 | 1.0 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 2 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 17 | 4.1 |
| Grade 5-8 | 1 | 8 | 45 | 11 | 13 | 78 | 18.7 |
| Grade 9-11 | 17 | 29 | 101 | 2 | 49 | 198 | 47.4 |
| Grade 12-13 | 8 | 23 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 63 | 15.1 |
| Some college | 2 | | 2 | | | 6 | 1.0 |
| Completed college | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | 6 | 1.4 |
| Some university | 6 | 6 | 12 | | | 24 | 5.7 |
| Completed university | 7 | 5 | 3 | | | 15 | 3.6 |
| Other | 7 | 1 | 1 | | | 9 | 2.2 |
| Total | 50 | 76 | 203 | 24 | 65 | 418 | 100.0 |
| % | 12.0 | 18.2 | 48.6 | 5.7 | 15.6 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 418

Missing cases 5

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | 2 | 6 | 47 | 17 | 9 | 81 | 19.5 |
| Limit somewhat | 4 | 26 | 65 | 2 | 27 | 124 | 29.9 |
| Don't limit at all | 37 | 25 | 32 | | | 94 | 22.7 |
| Don't know | 6 | 17 | 58 | 6 | 29 | 116 | 28.0 |
| Total | 49 | 74 | 202 | 25 | 65 | 415 | 100.0 |
| % | 11.8 | 17.8 | 48.7 | 6.0 | 15.7 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 415

Missing cases 8

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|---------------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 72 | 8 | 80 |
| Limit somewhat | 112 | 12 | 124 |
| Don't limit at all | 63 | 28 | 91 |
| Don't know | 86 | 27 | 113 |
| Total | 333 | 75 | 406 |
| % | 81.6 | 18.4 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 408

Missing cases 15

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Had reading material at home | 47 | 66 | 185 | 11 | 60 | 369 | 90.0 |
| Did not have reading | 3 | 7 | 13 | 13 | 5 | 41 | 10.0 |
| Total | 50 | 73 | 198 | 24 | 65 | 410 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 410

Missing cases 1

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Daily Newspapers | 206 | 54.0 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 219 | 58.7 |
| More than 25 books | 269 | 71.0 |
| Encyclopedia | 154 | 43.0 |
| Dictionary | 315 | 82.2 |
| Computer | 40 | 12.0 |
| Internet | 15 | 4.6 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than once a week | Rarely or never |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Letters or memos | 70 | 52 | 30 | 143 | 105 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 87 | 60 | 49 | 87 | 111 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 38 | 45 | 30 | 99 | 171 |
| Diagrams | 36 | 21 | 27 | 98 | 192 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 46 | 41 | 45 | 186 | 63 |
| Instructions (medicines, recipes, products) | 54 | 35 | 23 | 159 | 106 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 15 | 71 | 310 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 29 | 138 | 223 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 28 | 106 | 256 |
| Read instructions for medication | 27 | 57 | 302 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 16 | 33 | 335 |
| To do some mathematics | 34 | 126 | 226 |
| Write notes or letters | 35 | 110 | 248 |
| Use a computer | 35 | 90 | 255 |

APPENDIX H

MNC Literacy Survey in Alberta

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in Alberta

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Male | 38 | 30 | 41 | 13 | 6 | 4 | 132 | 33.2 |
| Female | 101 | 85 | 58 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 264 | 66.5 |
| Total | 139 | 115 | 99 | 24 | 11 | 8 | 396 | 100.0 |
| % | 35.3 | 29.0 | 24.9 | 6.0 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 396

Missing cases 51

Table 2- First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|----------------|--------|-------|
| English | 302 | 68.5 |
| French | 6 | 1.4 |
| Cree | 132 | 29.9 |
| Michif | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 441 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 418

Missing cases 5

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|-------------|
| No Schooling | 32 | 40 | 3 |
| Grade 1-4 | 51 | 64 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 118 | 124 | 104 |
| Grade 9-11 | 109 | 73 | 202 |
| Grade 12-13 | 49 | 41 | 78 |
| Some college | 9 | 7 | 15 |
| Completed college | 12 | 11 | 9 |
| Some university | 9 | 6 | 13 |
| Completed university | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| Other | 40 | 60 | 8 |
| Total | 437 | 433 | 443 |

Valid cases 436

Missing cases 12

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | | | 2 | | | 1 | 3 | 0.7 |
| Grade 1-4 | 2 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1.8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 23 | 38 | 22 | 12 | 4 | 5 | 104 | 23.9 |
| Grade 9-11 | 84 | 58 | 37 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 197 | 45.2 |
| Grade 12-13 | 28 | 26 | 21 | 1 | | 1 | 77 | 17.7 |
| Some college | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 | | | 15 | 3.4 |
| Completed college | | 3 | 6 | | | | 9 | 2.1 |
| Some university | 3 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | 13 | 3.0 |
| Completed university | | 1 | 2 | | | | 3 | 0.7 |
| Other | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 7 | 1.6 |
| Total | 148 | 135 | 103 | 30 | 11 | 9 | 436 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 436

Missing cases 12

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 2 | | 2 | 0.5 |
| Grade 1-4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1.8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 21 | 68 | 89 | 22.7 |
| Grade 9-11 | 59 | 121 | 180 | 45.5 |
| Grade 12-13 | 28 | 43 | 71 | 17.9 |
| Some college | 4 | 11 | 15 | 3.8 |
| Completed college | 4 | 5 | 9 | 2.3 |
| Some university | 5 | 8 | 13 | 3.3 |
| Completed university | 3 | | 3 | 0.8 |
| Other | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1.5 |
| Total | 130 | 265 | 395 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 395

Missing cases 53

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Completed | 51 | 11.4 |
| Still in school | 66 | 14.7 |
| Wanted to work | 100 | 22.3 |
| Needed to work for money | 77 | 17.2 |
| Family reasons | 107 | 23.9 |
| Did not like school | 76 | 17.0 |
| Not any good to finish | 36 | 8.0 |
| Did not do well in school | 67 | 15.0 |
| Ill or disabled | 6 | 1.3 |
| Learn a Trade | 15 | 3.3 |
| School far from home | 23 | 5.1 |
| Pressure from friends | 32 | 7.1 |
| Other | | 12.7 |
| Total | 713 | |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take any courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| No Schooling | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Grade 1-4 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 36 | 67 | 103 |
| Grade 9-11 | 75 | 122 | 197 |
| Grade 12-13 | 37 | 39 | 76 |
| Some college | 9 | 6 | 15 |
| Completed College | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Some university | 11 | 2 | 13 |
| Completed university | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Other | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 184 | 250 | 434 |
| % | 42.4 | 57.6 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 434

Missing cases 14

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 3 | | | | | | 3 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 4 | 2 | 2 | | | 8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 9 | 64 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 5 | 101 |
| Grade 9-11 | 46 | 119 | 15 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 199 |
| Grade 12-13 | 31 | 33 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 77 |
| Some college | 8 | 6 | | | | 1 | 15 |
| Completed college | 7 | | 2 | | | | 9 |
| Some university | 3 | 9 | 1 | | | | 13 |
| Completed university | 2 | | 1 | | | | 3 |
| Other | 2 | 4 | | | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Total | 111 | 239 | 33 | 13 | 25 | 15 | 436 |
| % | 25.5 | 54.8 | 7.6 | 3.0 | 5.7 | 3.4 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 436

Missing cases 12

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 29 | 43 | 45 | 9 | 3 | 129 | 32.6 |
| Female | 49 | 84 | 105 | 15 | 13 | 266 | 67.2 |
| Total | 78 | 127 | 150 | 24 | 16 | 395 | 100.0 |
| % | 19.7 | 32.3 | 37.9 | 6.1 | 4.0 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 395

Missing cases 53

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 15-24 | 33 | 52 | 54 | 4 | 5 | 148 | 33.9 |
| 25-34 | 22 | 43 | 59 | 3 | 7 | 134 | 30.7 |
| 35-44 | 18 | 31 | 37 | 9 | 6 | 101 | 23.2 |
| 45-54 | 3 | 10 | 14 | 4 | | 31 | 7.1 |
| 55-64 | 4 | | 7 | 2 | | 13 | 3.0 |
| 65+ | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 2.1 |
| Total | 81 | 139 | 172 | 25 | 19 | 436 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.6 | 31.9 | 39.4 | 5.7 | 4.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 436

Missing cases 12

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|----------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | | 1 | | | 2 | 3 | 0.7 |
| Grade 1-4 | | 1 | 2 | 5 | | 8 | 1.8 |
| Grade 5-8 | 7 | 32 | 42 | 12 | 11 | 104 | 23.7 |
| Grade 9-11 | 31 | 69 | 90 | 6 | 5 | 201 | 45.8 |
| Grade 12-13 | 20 | 30 | 24 | 2 | 1 | 77 | 17.5 |
| Some college | 4 | 4 | 6 | | | 14 | 3.2 |
| Completed college | 6 | | 3 | | | 9 | 2.1 |
| Some university | 8 | 2 | 2 | | | 12 | 2.7 |
| Completed university | 2 | 1 | | | | 3 | 0.7 |
| Other | 4 | 1 | 3 | | | 8 | 1.8 |
| Total | 82 | 141 | 172 | 25 | 19 | 439 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.7 | 32.1 | 39.2 | 5.7 | 4.3 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 439

Missing cases 9

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | 8 | 6 | 10 | 15 | 3 | 42 | 9.7 |
| Limit somewhat | 7 | 48 | 79 | 3 | 6 | 143 | 32.9 |
| Don't limit at all | 56 | 32 | 34 | 1 | 3 | 126 | 29.0 |
| Don't know | 9 | 55 | 46 | 7 | 7 | 124 | 28.5 |
| Total | 80 | 141 | 169 | 26 | 19 | 435 | 100.0 |
| % | 18.4 | 32.4 | 38.9 | 6.0 | 4.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 435

Missing cases 13

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|--------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 37 | 5 | 42 |
| Limit somewhat | 129 | 14 | 143 |
| Don't limit at all | 99 | 24 | 123 |
| Don't know | 99 | 23 | 122 |
| Total | 364 | 66 | 430 |
| % | 84.7 | 15.3 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 430

Missing cases 18

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Had reading material at home | 80 | 131 | 153 | 14 | 15 | 393 | 90.1 |
| Did not have reading material | 1 | 8 | 18 | 12 | 3 | 43 | 9.9 |
| Total | 81 | 139 | 171 | 26 | 19 | 436 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 436

Missing cases 12

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|--------------------|--------|------|
| Daily Newspapers | 227 | 69.9 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 266 | 71.5 |
| More than 25 books | 294 | 77.2 |
| Encyclopedia | 176 | 50.6 |
| Dictionary | 329 | 83.9 |
| Computer | 57 | 18.3 |
| Internet | 18 | 5.9 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than once a week | Rarely or never |
|---|----------|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Letters or memos | 92 | 93 | 53 | 69 | 88 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 128 | 106 | 58 | 55 | 59 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 55 | 56 | 28 | 69 | 166 |
| Diagrams | 47 | 48 | 33 | 74 | 163 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 84 | 83 | 68 | 90 | 55 |
| Instructions (medicines, recipes, products) | 105 | 87 | 47 | 85 | 64 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 21 | 49 | 338 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 26 | 150 | 224 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 21 | 126 | 255 |
| Read instructions for medications | 37 | 77 | 291 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 27 | 47 | 323 |
| To do some mathematics | 57 | 158 | 188 |
| Write notes or letters | 35 | 122 | 239 |
| Use a computer | 72 | 158 | 164 |

APPENDIX I

MNC Literacy Survey in British Columbia

Table 1 - Age & Gender Distribution in British Columbia

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| Male | 16 | 40 | 35 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 119 | 54.8 |
| Female | 16 | 38 | 20 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 98 | 45.2 |
| Total | 32 | 78 | 55 | 22 | 25 | 5 | 217 | 100.0 |
| % | 14.7 | 35.9 | 25.3 | 10.1 | 11.5 | 2.3 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 217

Missing cases 7

Table 2 - First Language Spoken

| Language | Number | % |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|
| English | 190 | 85.2 |
| French | 15 | 6.7 |
| Cree | 15 | 6.7 |
| Ojibway | 1 | 0.4 |
| Saulteau | 1 | 0.4 |
| Michif | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | 223 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 223

Missing cases 1

Table 3 - Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Mother | Father | Participant |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| No Schooling | 6 | 4 | 0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 13 | 15 | 0 |
| Grade 5-8 | 91 | 89 | 37 |
| Grade 9-11 | 28 | 29 | 110 |
| Grade 12-13 | 21 | 14 | 37 |
| Some college | 5 | 3 | 10 |
| Completed college | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Some university | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| Completed university | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Other | 47 | 56 | 2 |
| Total | 216 | 213 | 218 |

Table 4 - Age and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | 16-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65+ | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 5-8 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 37 | 17.1 |
| Grade 9-11 | 11 | 54 | 27 | 5 | 11 | 1 | 109 | 50.2 |
| Grade 12-13 | 11 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 37 | 17.1 |
| Some college | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 4.6 |
| Completed college | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2.3 |
| Some university | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3.2 |
| Completed university | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 4.6 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.9 |
| Total | 29 | 79 | 55 | 23 | 26 | 5 | 217 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 217

Missing cases 6

Table 5 - Gender and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Male | Female | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 5-8 | 20 | 15 | 35 | 16.5 |
| Grade 9-11 | 62 | 48 | 110 | 51.9 |
| Grade 12-13 | 14 | 22 | 36 | 17.0 |
| Some college | 9 | 1 | 10 | 4.7 |
| Completed college | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1.9 |
| Some university | 4 | 3 | 7 | 3.3 |
| Completed university | 5 | 3 | 8 | 3.8 |
| Other | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0.9 |
| Total | 117 | 95 | 212 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 212

Missing cases 12

Table 6 - Reasons for Leaving School

| | Number | % |
|----------------------------------|--------|------|
| Completed | 37 | 8.9 |
| Still in school | 19 | 4.9 |
| Wanted to work | 149 | 38.4 |
| Needed to work for money | 94 | 24.2 |
| Family reasons | 28 | 7.2 |
| Did not like school | 5 | 1.3 |
| Not any good to finish | 4 | 1.0 |
| Did not do well in school | 2 | 0.5 |
| Ill or disabled | 0 | 0 |
| Learn a Trade | 34 | 8.9 |
| School far from home | 5 | 1.3 |
| Pressure from friends | 2 | 0.05 |
| Other | 9 | 2.3 |
| Total | 388 | |

Table 7 - Courses Taken in the Last 12 Months

| | Had taken courses | Didn't take courses | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 5-8 | 2 | 34 | 36 |
| Grade 9-11 | 9 | 101 | 110 |
| Grade 12-13 | 11 | 26 | 37 |
| Some college | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Completed college | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Some university | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Completed university | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| Other | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 41 | 176 | 217 |
| % | 18.9 | 81.1 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 217

Missing cases 7

Table 8 - Labour Force Participation and Level of Education

| | Working | At school | Unemployed, Looking for work | Retired | Homemaker | Other | Total |
|-----------------------------|---------|-----------|------------------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No Schooling | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 1-4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grade 5-8 | 10 | 0 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 36 |
| Grade 9-11 | 61 | 6 | 17 | 1 | 21 | 4 | 110 |
| Grade 12-13 | 26 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 37 |
| Some college | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Completed college | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Some university | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Completed university | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 111 | 20 | 37 | 10 | 33 | 6 | 217 |
| % | 51.2 | 9.2 | 17.1 | 4.6 | 15.2 | 2.8 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 217

Missing cases 7

Table 9 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Gender

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|---------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Male | 23 | 51 | 39 | 3 | 1 | 117 | 54.9 |
| Female | 26 | 25 | 42 | 1 | 2 | 96 | 45.1 |
| Total | 49 | 76 | 81 | 4 | 3 | 213 | 100.0 |
| % | 23.0 | 35.7 | 38.0 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 213

Missing cases 11

Table 10 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Age

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| 16-24 | 8 | 7 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 29 | 13.3 |
| 25-34 | 11 | 35 | 32 | 0 | 1 | 79 | 36.2 |
| 35-44 | 13 | 24 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 56 | 25.7 |
| 45-54 | 14 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 23 | 10.6 |
| 55-64 | 6 | 4 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 26 | 11.9 |
| 65+ | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 2.3 |
| Total | 52 | 77 | 82 | 4 | 3 | 218 | 100.0 |
| % | 23.9 | 35.5 | 37.6 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 218

Missing cases 6

Table 11 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Highest Level of Education Attained

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| None | | | | | | | |
| Grade 1-4 | | | | | | | |
| Grade 5-8 | 1 | 20 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 37 | 17.0 |
| Grade 9-11 | 12 | 46 | 51 | 1 | | 110 | 50.5 |
| Grade 12-13 | 19 | 3 | 14 | 1 | | 37 | 17.0 |
| Some college | 6 | 3 | 1 | | | 10 | 4.6 |
| Completed college | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | 5 | 2.3 |
| Some university | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | 7 | 3.2 |
| Completed university | 7 | 2 | 1 | | | 10 | 4.6 |
| Other | 2 | | | | | 2 | 0.9 |
| Total | 52 | 77 | 82 | 4 | 3 | 218 | 100.0 |
| % | 23.9 | 35.3 | 37.6 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 218

Missing cases
6

Table 12 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and its Impact on Employment

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|--------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Limit enormously | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3.2 |
| Limit somewhat | 4 | 22 | 36 | | 1 | 63 | 29.0 |
| Don't limit at all | 34 | 10 | 15 | | 1 | 60 | 27.6 |
| Don't know | 12 | 43 | 30 | 2 | | 87 | 40.1 |
| Total | 51 | 77 | 82 | 4 | 3 | 217 | 100.0 |
| % | 23.5 | 35.5 | 37.8 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 100.0 | |

Valid cases 217

Missing cases 7

Table 13 - Demand for Literacy Training

| | Would like to improve their reading and writing skills | Don't want to improve their reading and writing skills | Total |
|--------------------|--|--|-------|
| Limit enormously | 7 | | 7 |
| Limit somewhat | 61 | 2 | 63 |
| Don't limit at all | 36 | 21 | 57 |
| Don't know | 74 | 12 | 86 |
| Total | 178 | 35 | 213 |
| % | 83.6 | 16.4 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 213

Missing cases 11

Table 14 - Self-Assessed Literacy Skills and Availability of Reading Material at Home while Growing up

| | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor | Don't know | Total | % |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|---------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Had reading material at home | 47 | 75 | 81 | 3 | 3 | 209 | 95.4 |
| Didn't have reading material | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 10 | 4.6 |
| Total | 52 | 77 | 83 | 4 | 3 | 219 | 100.0 |

Valid cases 219

Missing cases 5

Table 15 - Reading Material at Home

| | Number | % |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Daily Newspapers | 199 | 92.6 |
| Weeklies/Magazines | 157 | 74.1 |
| More than 25 books | 99 | 46.3 |
| Encyclopedia | 73 | 34.6 |
| Dictionary | 190 | 88.8 |
| Computer | 69 | 33.7 |
| Internet | 34 | 16.7 |

Table 16 - Reading Habits

| | Everyday | A few times a week | Once a week | Less than once a week | Rarely or never |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Letters or memos | 47 | 27 | 13 | 33 | 89 |
| Reports, articles, magazines | 43 | 25 | 6 | 14 | 118 |
| Manuals, reference documents | 29 | 14 | 8 | 11 | 142 |
| Diagrams | 17 | 11 | 12 | 9 | 146 |
| Bills, budgets, receipts | 48 | 49 | 16 | 20 | 70 |
| Instructions (medicine, recipes, products) | 59 | 45 | 3 | 18 | 82 |

Table 17 - Asking for Assistance to Read and Write

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Read the newspaper | 7 | 7 | 191 |
| Read information from the government, companies, other organizations | 9 | 19 | 178 |
| Complete forms such as bank deposit | 8 | 15 | 181 |
| Read instructions for medication | 5 | 15 | 182 |
| Read food labels in a supermarket | 6 | 12 | 186 |
| To do some mathematics | 9 | 26 | 169 |
| Write notes or letters | 8 | 22 | 174 |
| Use a computer | 10 | 37 | 156 |

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