



**POLICY CONVERSATION ON  
LITERACY RESEARCH  
February 5-7, 1996  
A REPORT**

READ EVERY DAY!



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## FOREWORD

The National Literacy Secretariat is pleased to publish this report on our Policy Conversation on Literacy Research, which was held in Aylmer, Quebec on February 5-7, 1996.

The theme for the Policy Conversation was "Defining a Research Strategy for Literacy in Canada". This Policy Conversation was a chance for a group of knowledgeable individuals to share with the National Literacy Secretariat their hopes and concerns, their dreams and visions about a number of key issues relating to literacy research in Canada. Participants had a chance to explore the topic without the need to reach conclusion.

This publication is a compilation of a variety of documents -some were available at the event, others have been prepared to summarize the Policy Conversation itself. The section entitled *A Conversation About Developing a Literacy Research Strategy: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* is a guide to the conversation and the ideas expressed at the meeting.

We hope that you find this publication informative and useful and that you will have conversations on this topic yourself, in your own organisations and jurisdictions. Please inform us of the results of those conversations. We hope that this report will be useful to you because all individuals and organizations connected to literacy have a stake in the development of a vibrant, successful literacy research enterprise. We look forward to continuing our work in this area, with our partners to strengthen literacy research in Canada.

Feel free to distribute copies of this report to anyone you think may be interested in the subject of literacy research. We will be making it available widely both in hard copy and electronically over NALD (National Adult Literacy Database) and Alphacom (formerly CoSy -Ontario Literacy Communications Network).

I would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making the Policy Conversation on Research such a success:

- Carol MacLeod, Carol MacLeod & Associates
- Burt Perrin, Burt Perrin Associates
- Liz Kane, Elizabeth Kane Associates
- Joanne Godin, Words That Matter Inc.
- Château Cartier Sheraton, Aylmer, Quebec
- Bernard Deschênes, Tran-script Enr.
- StenoTran
- Nancy Brady
- The Policy Conversation participants

And the dedicated NLS staff who made the meeting the success it was.

James E. Page  
Executive Secretary  
National Literacy Secretariat

# **POLICY CONVERSATION ON LITERACY RESEARCH**

**February 5-7, 1996  
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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT: POLICY CONVERSATIONS**
- II. AGENDA**
- III. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
- IV. *RESEARCH AND LITERACY IN CANADA : A DISCUSSION PAPER TO  
SUPPORT THE POLICY CONVERSATION ON RESEARCH***
- V. *A CONVERSATION ABOUT DEVELOPING A LITERACY RESEARCH  
STRATEGY: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW***
- VI. CLOSING REMARKS – JAMES E. PAGE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NLS**
- VII. REVIEW OF NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT PROJECTS**
- VIII. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**
- IX. EVALUATION SUMMARY**

### **APPENDICES:**

**RESEARCH PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE NLS, 1988-1994  
SELECTED RESEARCH PROJECTS COMMISSIONED BY THE NLS,  
1988-1995**

# **NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT POLICY CONVERSATIONS**

December 18, 1995

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the course of the last eighteen months the NLS has had the opportunity to consult with the literacy field on a variety of issues and concerns. We have done this through our regular meetings with our provincial colleagues, through our on-going contacts in the administration of the federal-provincial programme, through participation in the annual or executive meetings of national organizations and provincial coalitions, through many informal contacts, and through several formal consultative mechanisms which have been developed.

Time and again interests were expressed about the state of research on literacy issues in Canada. There seems to be a consensus that the literacy field needs an opportunity to develop a research strategy for literacy in Canada. We need to consider what sorts of research issues require attention, and how best to use the results of research to further literacy developments.

On December 6th, 1995, the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) was released, a major contribution to empirical work on literacy as it relates to the economy and society. This will be followed in the Spring by a Canadian Report which will provide much more detailed analysis of the implications of the IALS data for Canada. Working with Human Resources Development Canada and with Statistics Canada, the National Literacy Secretariat will support the development of a series of subject or theme specific papers which will appear over the following 24 month period. While these are important research steps they address only one aspect of the research needs of our community.

Given pressures on us to know more about the intricacies of literacy policy and practice, the NLS believes that it is timely to consider the future of research on literacy in Canada.

## **WHY A "CONVERSATION"?**

One of the lessons of the NLS's existence since 1988 has been the importance of close attention to community interests and needs. The NLS has a tradition of consulting closely with the community and with other stakeholders. To aid this process the NLS developed the policy conversation model.

## **WHAT ARE THE ANTICIPATED RESULTS OF THESE POLICY CONVERSATIONS?**

First and foremost the Conversations are to stimulate thinking, to expand knowledge of past and present circumstances, and to canvass future possibilities. We hope that people will come to them with a willingness to participate in free-ranging and unconstrained thinking about the literacy research.

Second, we hope that each individual will be enriched by participating in this process, and that each participant will take back insights for their own consideration and potential action.

We are looking for "intelligence" on the issues in question and will take away from each Conversation the knowledge and information gleaned as part of a wider process of consultation and thinking about future possible orientations for the NLS.

We are not looking for consensus, and will not ask for recommendations of future policies or programmes of the NLS. This is not a decision-making session, nor is it an advisory body in any formal sense. This is but one way, among others, for the NLS to canvass opinion and to explore policy options.

## **WHY FOCUS ON "POLICY"?**

One challenge for the NLS is how best to situate literacy issues in the government's policy development processes and in the programme design stages which follow. Consequently during the "conversations" we focus on "policy" (that is on approaches, tactics, systems and frameworks,) rather than on programme delivery, or technique, or individual projects, or on methods.

Obviously, research policy is not made in a vacuum free of the considerations of impact, public interest, priority and choice. So, we are looking for wisdom, prudent consideration of potential ways to advance literacy research and an opportunity to think strategically and astutely about how best to proceed on a range of important, related fronts.

## **HOW WILL THE POLICY CONVERSATIONS BE STRUCTURED?**

In advance of the event itself we plan to circulate some documents to help stimulate participants' thinking. This will include a "think piece" to set the context for the discussion and, if time permits, the results of a survey of participants and others to share some early thinking about literacy research.

The Literacy Research Policy Conversation will begin with a presentation on the purpose of the event. After the introductory session the Conversation will have three discrete parts: The Past Tense; The Present Tense; and the Future Tense. The Past Tense will provide time for participants to discuss literacy research developments to date. The Present Tense suggests an opportunity to take stock of where the field is at present. The Future Tense, obviously the heart of the exercise, will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss future research needs and to suggest how key organizations, including the NLS, might best position themselves to advance literacy research in Canada.

Each of these "Tenses" will begin with an "informal conversation", or ice-breaker. We expect about twenty-five participants who will be subdivided into groups for these informal sessions. The informal sessions will provide people with an opportunity to get to know one another and to speak freely in a small unstructured setting. A "formal conversation", or plenary session will follow which will involve all participants. There will be simultaneous interpretation available for the plenary sessions. There will be no "reporting-back" from the informal conversations.

## **WHY IS THE NLS TAKING THIS APPROACH?**

There are a number of reasons:

- There is need to take stock of what has been accomplished and to measure where we are at present. This leads naturally to consideration of how literacy might most appropriately develop, and how the NLS should position itself to assist the field, over the medium to long term.
- There is a need for a discussion about a range of key literacy issues/themes. The notion of a policy conversation on a specific topic or theme is intended to advance thinking about the possible future development of literacy issues in the chosen theme areas.
- Policy conversations should link both to the broad themes on government's agenda and to the current interests of the literacy field.

Based on these considerations the NLS organized two policy conversations during January, 1995. One entitled **Literacy and New Information and Communications Technologies**; and a second one entitled **Workplace/Work Force Literacy**.

Both of these meetings were very successful and have stimulated a number of initiatives in the respective areas of interest. Full reports on both of these meetings are available to anyone interested in reading them

# Policy Conversation on Research

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*Monday, February 5, 1996*

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**A.M.**

Château Cartier Sheraton  
1170 Aylmer Road  
Aylmer, Quebec  
J9H 5E1  
Phone: (819) 777-1088  
Fax: (819) 777-7161

11:00-  
12:30

## **Registration**

- Frontenac Room

## **Noon**

- Optional Budget Lunch Available  
- Beau Rivage Dining Room

**P.M.**

Setting the  
Context

1:00 -

1:15

1:15 - Opening Remarks - James Page

1:25 Review of Agenda

1:25 - Introductory Exercise

2:30 Break

2:30 -

2:45

The Past Tense

2:45-

2:55

Presentation - *NLS Activities in Research*

Informal Conversations:

2:55 -

3:40

State-of-the-Art of Literacy Research in Canada

3:40 -

4:40

Formal Conversation

4:40 -

The Day in Review

4:50

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**Reception**



6:00

- Beau Rivage  
B

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***Tuesday, February 6, 1996***

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**A.M.**

**The Present Tense**

9:00 - Introduction  
9:15 Informal Conversations:  
9:15 - #1. The Literacy Community and How It Uses Research  
10:30 #2. Awareness of Research and Its Implications  
#3. Activity Within the Research Community in Canada Regarding Literacy  
10:30 - Break  
10:45 Formal Conversation  
10:45 -  
12:00

**P.M.**

**The Future Tense**

1:00-1:15 Introduction  
1:15-2:30 Informal conversations:  
#1. Enabling Researchers & Literacy Practitioners To Work Cooperatively  
#2. Specific Research Issues & Needs  
#3. Elements of a Research Strategy  
2:30 -  
3:00 Break  
3:00 - Formal Conversation  
4:45 The Day in Review  
4:45 -  
5:00

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***Wednesday, February 7, 1996***

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**A.M.**

**The Future Tense**

8:30 - Introduction  
8:45 Informal Conversations  
8:45- #1. Vision to Reality: Acting On A Research Strategy for Canada  
10:00  
10:00 - Break  
10:15 Formal Conversation  
10:15- Closing Remarks by James Page  
11:30 Evaluation

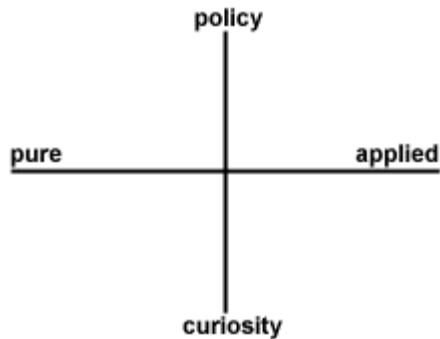
## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### Monday Afternoon: The Past Tense

#### State-of-the-Art of Literacy Research in Canada

1. What does the term research mean to you? Is this grid a useful way to think of research activities?



2. What do you view as the strengths and limitations of existing research in the literacy area?.
  3. Is there a need for additional research and how important is it?
  4. What is your assessment of the quality of research?
  5. Has research been appropriately funded in the past?
- 

## Discussion Questions

### Tuesday Morning: The Present Tense

#### The Literacy Community and How It Uses Research

1. How does the literacy community use research?
2. Are literacy practitioners active in research? In what ways? How important is this?
3. Is there an ambivalence towards research within the literacy community?
4. If so, what strategies may be used to increase support for research among those in the literacy community?

### **Awareness of Research and Its Implications**

5. To what extent are researchers aware of existing research, its implications for policy and practice, and for further research needs?
6. To what extent are literacy practitioners aware of existing research, its implications for policy and practice, and for further research needs?
7. How could awareness of research results and implications be enhanced?

### **Activity Within the Research Community in Canada Regarding Literacy**

8. How would you characterize the current status of the literacy field? What implications does this have for research?
  9. How active is the literacy research community in Canada?
  10. What are ways of stimulating more interest and research in literacy?
- 

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Tuesday Afternoon: The Future Tense**

#### **Enabling Researchers and Literacy Practitioners to Work Cooperatively**

1. How important is it for researchers and literacy practitioners to work together? How can this be best facilitated?
2. Discuss strategies to foster closer working relationships between the two communities of researchers and literacy practitioners.
3. Who needs to be involved in doing research? Where should it be carried out? How should it be carried out? Is there an optimal balance?

#### **Specific Research Issues and Needs**

4. What do you see as priority areas where more research is needed?
5. To what extent and in what ways do Francophone and Anglophone research needs differ? How can this be addressed?
6. How do we best respond to the need for more literacy and research information on special populations (e.g., Aboriginal Canadians, people with disabilities, etc.)?
7. What research issues emerge from the relationship between literacy and ESL/FSL?

#### **Elements Of a Research Strategy**

8. What are possible elements of a literacy research strategy for Canada?
9. What kinds of supports are needed to realize a research strategy?
10. Who needs to act upon a research strategy, and what roles can they play?

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## **Discussion Questions**

### **Wednesday Morning: The Future Tense**

#### **Vision to Reality: Acting On a Research Strategy for Canada**

1. In reflecting on our conversations over the past several days, what do you see as the defining elements of a research strategy for Canada?
2. What priority should be given to pure, applied, policy-relevant, and curiosity-based research?
3. What steps may be taken to articulate a research strategy?

# **Research and Literacy in Canada**

## **A Discussion Paper**

### **prepared by: Burt Perrin**

**Burt Perrin Associates**  
**prepared for: National Literacy Secretariat**  
**Human Resources Development Canada**  
**11 January 1996**

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#### **Introduction and Purpose of This Paper**

This paper highlights a number of considerations regarding research and literacy in Canada. It was commissioned by the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) to stimulate discussion at the NLS Policy Conversation on Research planned for 5-7 February 1996 and may also be useful for discussion in other settings. This paper does not necessarily reflect the views of the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada.

The purpose of this paper is to *raise* questions and issues for discussion and debate. It does not aim to provide answers, but rather to stimulate thought and focus discussion, and to suggest issues about research and literacy which participants at the Conversation may wish to think about in advance.

This paper is based upon in-depth interviews with about a dozen people across Canada, including literacy practitioners in a variety of settings, researchers and provincial government officials. It also takes into account discussions with NLS staff, a review of documents and selective literature, and my own observations.

The balance of this paper discusses topics related to research and literacy under the following headings:

1. State-of-the-Art of Literacy Research in Canada
  2. The Literacy Community and How It Views Research
  3. Awareness of Research and its Implications
  4. Activity within the Research Community in Canada regarding Literacy
  5. Enabling Researchers and Literacy Practitioners to Work Cooperatively
  6. Specific Research Issues and Needs
  7. Development of a Literacy Research Strategy in Canada
  8. Status of the Literacy Field and Implications for Research
-

The balance of this section will be available as soon as possible.

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## **Conclusion**

As the James Draper quote at the beginning of this paper suggested, research can be an important tool in helping literacy programs improve their effectiveness. There appears to be increasing recognition within the literacy community of the value of both conceptual and applied research. The people interviewed in this study demonstrated a strong commitment to literacy and to quality, and expressed their interest and enthusiasm for exploring ways in which the contribution of research can be increased to better serve the cause of literacy.

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(1)James Draper. 1992. Continuing the Debate. In James A. Draper and Maurice C. Taylor (Eds.). *Voices from the Literacy Field*. Toronto: Culture Concepts Inc. p. 400.

## **A Conversation on Developing a Literacy Research Strategy: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

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The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) invited representatives of the literacy and research communities in Canada to come together from February 5-7, 1996, to discuss the need for a research strategy for literacy in Canada. This report presents selected quotes from participants, grouped according to the major themes raised and debated in that meeting. It is not intended to be a weighted summary of conclusions drawn at the meeting, but rather a reflection of the conversations that occurred.

The NLS is convinced that there is a need for a review of the state of research on literacy. Statistical and empirical studies, applied research, evaluation and assessment, best practices and case histories are essential if we are to advance knowledge and understanding of the importance of literacy and of literacy matters to Canada. The goal of this meeting is to share views about whether or not we need a literacy research strategy for Canada. If so, what should the components of such a strategy be? What is the most intelligent way to ensure that literacy is best served by research? I am not referring to a "national" strategy for literacy research. The term "national" too often conjures up the idea of a centrally imposed set of perceptions which does not sufficiently recognize the diversity of this vast country. Rather I choose the formulation "a research strategy for literacy in Canada" because I believe that we need to take a look at what is required in a holistic way. From that perspective we can deduce what we and our organizations can do to advance the state of the art of research in literacy fields.

-James E. Page  
Executive Secretary  
National Literacy Secretariat

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### **A conversation...**

*...on how research can be defined...*

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**Up to now**, there has been a lack of a common definition of literacy "research". From the point of view of political organizations, coordinating groups, grass-roots organizations and universities, there has been no meeting of minds on a definition. Within the groups, however, it's easier to find agreement on the objectives of research. Some look for numbers [to "sell" literacy training], some look for causes [things that contribute to low literacy levels], some look for solutions, and others look for evidence... [to support or supplant existing training] concepts.

**Today**, no matter what our position or location, there are realities that influence how we see research and what we believe it is, and what we might see as its overall purpose and goal.

- The NLS defines research broadly to include needs assessments, evaluation, sectoral research, pilot projects, statistical surveys and a variety of other types of analytical enquiry.
- Within the literacy movement, there are concrete examples of how good pieces of research have had a direct impact on creating good public policy.
- Literacy research cannot be isolated from literacy practice or from literacy conditions.
- Literacy is being equated with economic development, and we're not sure if that is right, good, and just. We're also not sure, if we do longitudinal studies of adult literacy learners, that the answers we receive would be the ones that policy makers want.

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*...on how research can explore the impact of literacy on people's lives...*

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**So far**, research has made real advances in understanding the full range of literacy skills, from basic to advanced.

What is the real impact of literacy-training practices and policies? One phenomenon appears to be the rise of "diplomania" or "credentialism": the threshold for access to jobs rises, so those who are at the back of the line never catch up. They'll always be at the back of the line even though they've improved their reading and writing skills.

*"We have to look at why learners are in programs and what being in a literacy program does for them as individuals, as parents, as workers, as Canadians."*

- Research should be asking "How does literacy lead to the well-being of people, communities and our society?"
- We have to look at why learners are in programs and what being in a literacy program does for them as individuals, as parents, as workers, as Canadians.



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*...on how literacy practitioners can use and contribute to research...*

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**In the past**, research has been too centred on the delivery of literacy training. We haven't spent enough research time on teaching techniques in reading, writing and communications.

- It's difficult to position current or future projects in terms of research, since there is no basic data. We are lacking "the state of the art", the basic information on research into literacy training.
- There is a phenomenal body of voluntary work being performed in our field that has never been properly documented. It has implications for the quality of our practice.
- We have to study the general methodology of teaching literacy, the training of trainers, and self-instruction for trainers.
- We need better documentation of practitioners' experiences. We know certain things work and we have a body of knowledge on good practice, evaluation and learning strategies, but we have not documented that experience well. We have to be very clear in what we want research to do, to ensure that the research stays focused and meets our requirements.
- Perhaps we should broaden our research scope so we can better understand the reality of literacy. What are *Canadian* techniques of reading and writing? Should we reflect on reading and writing as carriers of culture?

**Today**, literacy practitioners use research to make a case, to involve other people, or to legitimize our cause. There is less interest or discussion about research that cannot be applied directly to teaching in the field. There often isn't the luxury of time to read other types of research; quantitative research helps you leverage resources and it is quick and dirty and has great value.

- Some practitioners say there is only one type of research and research that helps them tell the story, to present it to corporations and government policy makers.
- Research helps me be a marketer.

We were working on a research project that required field participation. We first contacted each of the stakeholders and brought them together for a day to discuss the research design. At the end of that day, the research design had changed quite a bit, because they were able to tell us what we could realistically expect.

- In the corporate community or in the private sector, if you are asked to participate in a piece of research, if you're asked to be part of a focus group or to fill out a questionnaire, then you're compensated for that. That type of honorarium wouldn't be so far-fetched in a research proposal to allow the literacy community to be able to participate.

Research and practice are inextricably linked, and **in the future**, that has to be recognized. *"Local research shouldn't be denigrated because it is descriptive or because it is based in the programs".*

- We need to take a rigorous look at some of the practitioner-based research, but we also need more dialogue so that we can struggle with our different frameworks. The Internet can offer us ways to talk to each other.
- A research strategy has to put the learner at the centre and needs to include the practitioner in a very meaningful way. The practitioner needs to reflect on what is happening and to include learners in that reflection.
- As long as the research doesn't acknowledge the actual working conditions of people involved in literacy, then it won't be read and it won't be of use.

I believe in research that affects practice, but I also believe in research that is critical and that questions the frame of that practice. In tight financial times, we narrow our thinking and put blinders on. But if we think only of immediate relevance, we may lose some of the more critical questioning. A reflective practitioner can be as much a part of that critical questioning as someone in a university as the challenge is to respect all our different settings and sites.

- We're too used sometimes to thinking about teachers or practitioners as consumers of knowledge. Teachers are also generators of knowledge.
- Local research shouldn't be denigrated because it is descriptive or because it is based in the programs.

Quality relates to more than methodology. We need to look at whether the research is responding to a need, is recognized, and is being reinvested. We say that learning is not finished until it is translated into real life as we have to apply this concept to research.

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*...on how researchers and practitioners can collaborate for research...*

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**Today**, academics can help practitioners do *"Academics can help practitioners do the research, and practitioners can help the academics make it relevant."*

- With respect to our relationship to the formal education system, the popular community-based literacy movement is a new and emerging field, even though Canada has a great and long tradition of popular education. We must develop the literacy field by working more closely with the formal system and developing new ways to link literacy practice to research.
- We need to determine ways to bring together the literacy and research communities so they understand each other better and can do the most effective literacy research. We also need to determine how the NLS can facilitate this.
- We could bring researchers and practitioners together by identifying together ideas that need study and review, just to identify topics.
- It is important to figure out how collaborative projects can allow dialogue between the two groups.

Is academic work open to the critique of the practitioner, just as much as the other way around? Who has legitimacy and who gets to judge? Is it only academics who can referee journals? Could practitioners referee? Could there be a variety of critiques?

Quality according to whom? Can we interpret certain elements of research in terms of quality based on standards that academics would recognize? Or does it come down to whether the research answers a specific need that has been identified by a community of practitioners?

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*...on the need for "hard" academic research...*

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**In the past**, some research may not have been of high quality; that may be why the question of the involvement of academics in practitioner-based research has come up. If research experts become involved, we may question less the quality and the legitimacy of the research.

**Today**, we need hard academic research to determine the effectiveness of teaching materials and methods. We need to examine the factors that enable other countries to have higher literacy rates than ours and relate those factors to our policies and habits.

- We need to create a greater interest in literacy in a number of university disciplines. Literacy is of interest to people in psychology, sociology and political science-how humans learn is of interest.
- How do we instill passion about research in literacy? The practitioners in the field have passion for this issue. How do we instill that kind of passion in academic researchers to attract more of them to literacy research?  
*"How do we instill passion about research in literacy? The practitioners in the field have passion for this issue. How do we instill that kind of passion in academic researchers to attract more of them to literacy research?"*
- With literacy and adult education, ESL [English as a Second Language], community development, and *action populaire*, we are involved in "education at the margins." That does not have a pre-eminent place in academia.
- Since adult education deals with the needs of poor people who are struggling at the margins, then what we need literacy research to do is to move that practice from the margins to the centre.

**In the future**, research councils need to think about literacy research as an appropriate and important academic activity. We need to create a research field that isn't marginalized, and that serves people who are working in the trenches as well as the research enterprise. We need research to promote the issue, to enhance practice and to connect literacy to other issues and to the community.

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*...on researching literacy's contribution to social development...*

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**Today**, we have to be aware that many people feel silent in this world. I'm not sure that certain kinds of research will find out more of their view of the world and more about the importance of literacy in their lives. How can we make research make a difference? *"How can we make research make a difference?"*

- How did it happen that fishermen who earned very good salaries, supported their families, participated in society, and drove boats with complicated technology aboard them were renamed as "illiterate and a burden on society" simply because of their employment status?
- How can a community decide on its priorities if nobody has established a way for that community to determine what its needs are and to find solutions?

Each of those groups [social development and community groups] wants significantly different information from research, based on their own mandate and on what they have to accomplish every day.

- There are other social causes or issues where good academic research has supported good policy, like health promotion and family violence.

In Ontario, there is a thrust to narrow the definition of literacy work to workplace initiatives, and the provincial government is very interested in doing that. For this reason, I have been trying to gather evidence that links literacy to issues like health, justice, inter-generational effects, and independence of seniors. I discovered that there is not a lot of research to support these claims. I think it is critical that we be able to substantiate these claims.

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*...on researching how to meet the needs of diverse communities...*

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We have 50 Aboriginal languages in Canada, and several are disappearing. The literacy field has a social responsibility to Aboriginal people. This must be a priority for research.

Today, different linguistic and cultural realities give literacy and literacy training a richness and diversity. Recognizing that from the start can help to establish a community and mutual respect.

Canada has a bimodal immigration policy: we have a lot of immigrants at the high end of literacy levels, because we want to attract those sorts of professionals to the country; because of our refugee and family settlement policies, we also have a large number of people who are at the low end of literacy levels.

*"Today, different linguistic and cultural realities give literacy and literacy training a richness and diversity. Recognizing that from the start can help to establish a community and mutual respect".*

- Overall, we have very little information on the relationship between their use of their first language and their second language in Canada.
- There is well-grounded anxiety around this issue, because no one wants to feed any backlash against necessary immigration. But we cannot position it by shying away from it.

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*...on researching francophone literacy...*

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**Today**, we need to know how much the needs of the francophone population differ from those of the anglophone community. We should avoid distinguishing between "us" and "them", but rather try to see the possibilities of fitting information and practice together and working together.

In Quebec, there are few references to literacy research in the media. The media often looks for a figure on the numbers of illiterate people and give the Level 1 and 2 statistics as that there are 900,000 people who have difficulty reading.

**For the future**, research is needed on the phenomenon of francophones who have lost most or all of their maternal language, who are in an anglophone working environment, and who were educated in English or not educated much at all. What are the influences of these phenomena with respect to teaching mother-tongue or second-language literacy?

- If you have French people not living in Quebec who are not in a French environment, what are the issues around their assimilation if they're losing their language and losing their literacy in their mother tongue?

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*...on funding for literacy research...*

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**Today**, research funds are drying up; in recent years that has made it difficult to conduct high- quality research.

**In the future**, groups seeking funding should make a systematic effort to find partners or funding sources for research projects. *"Research funds are drying up; in recent years that has made it difficult to conduct high-quality research"*.

- Support for literacy research needs to come from more stakeholders than business, practitioners and learners. Communities, regions experiencing economic downturns and serious unemployment problems, families, government officials, literacy workers, and policy makers are all stakeholders too.
- The business community has the people, expertise and money. If they saw merit in supporting literacy research, they could do a substantial amount of work.

It would be illusory to think that we could move to a new stage in literacy research in Canada if we can count only on the role and resources of the NLS. The NLS has a role to play, but it's more that of a facilitator. Over the last five years, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has targeted research on key national issues such as literacy.

- SSHRC has made funding available for three years on disability issues and other matters. That could be a concrete way to open up programs of granting organizations to the issue of literacy. There are federal organizations and there are granting and statutory research organizations in every province, such as the Quebec Council on Social Research.

Creating an interdisciplinary research field *"Creating an interdisciplinary research field in literacy is the key to the future of literacy research"*.

- SSHRC developed the field of research on aging in this way: fifteen years ago, sociologists and political scientists were working on aging in an ad hoc way. SSHRC put money into creating centres, networks and partnerships to support PhDs and MAs to train specifically in the field of aging. This pool of expertise developed and sustained a legitimate field that matured and developed, but it needed intervention to do that.

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*...on communicating research results clearly...*

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**In the past**, there has been a gulf between research, the communication of research results, and the effective use of research by policy makers to create good policy. For example, we know a great deal about family literacy and its importance from the work that has been done, but that work hasn't been translated into effective policies at the provincial or national level to help support family literacy programming.

**Today**, literacy workers do not have the luxury of being reflective as they cannot take the time to process information. This is compounded by information overload and by the kind of language researchers often use to report their findings as they use the opposite of plain language.

**In the future**, it will be critical to think of the importance of communications prior to research and about communicating research results to practitioners, policy makers and others.

- We need to make the material simpler and give people opportunities to engage in the challenging thinking needed to move it to "How would this translate into ways to do our literacy practice differently?"
- There is a need for practical research information that the literacy workers can use as a basis for action. Perhaps it's no different from the needs of senior managers who are not going to read large research reports. They really need to have it digested and learn what it really means for them.
- An interesting idea was the description of transfer journals [journals that summarize the results of technical research in plain language].

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*...on the possible elements of a dynamic literacy research strategy...*

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**Today**, we have fewer possibilities to communicate with each other orally and in writing about research activities than we did two or three years ago. Existing networks for communicating research results are being gutted. New research sites need a communications infrastructure that will allow researchers in universities, in private business, and in the literacy training field to communicate.



Research was done on small business and workplace literacy in Alberta and in other places in the country. If Alberta's funding organization had helped to tie the pieces of research together, the researchers could have met and looked for common threads, moving the research to a higher level.

- We need the NLS to provide leadership, to provoke activity and to coordinate efforts with other research organizations, HRDC, and with inter-disciplinary, inter-ministerial, and inter-provincial networks.

**For the future**, if I had one plea for a research strategy for Canada, it would be something that augments participation rather than restricts it.

*"A research strategy is like an airport or a bus terminal. The terminal is not the destination. It is a facility that helps travelers get where they want to go".*

- A research strategy is like an airport or a bus terminal. The terminal is not the destination. It is a facility that helps travelers get where they want to go.
- A strategy or action plan could be confining. It is important to bring a focus to research and to support good research practices, but how do you put forward a plan that allows ideas to emerge from the field that perhaps you hadn't considered?
- We have to find ways to identify research needs continuously, not just take occasional snapshots and live on that for a number of years.

Research networks must be a fundamental component of a strategy.

- How can we go beyond simply giving resources to academics, to try to develop networks that pull together academics and users of research?
- A small research centre could bring a larger group of people from the academic community and literacy practitioners together a couple of times a year to discuss literacy research and to achieve consensus, but to talk about what they're doing and engage in cross-fertilization. The centre might also act as a clearing-house for information databases.

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*Summing up by focusing on the global issues...*

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In the last few days, we have addressed some of the issues we face in developing a research strategy for Canada.

The National Literacy Secretariat isn't going to be able to address all of these issues and concerns on its own. One of the reasons for having a meeting such as this is to try to get a global sense of the issues, so we can look at what we can take on, given the resources that we have. A second reason is to engage other people in this process because literacy research is connected to a host of sectors in this society.

A research strategy for literacy in Canada will emerge out of the commitments various organizations make to this issue, given their respective interests, capacities and resources.

Through events such as this conversation, the National Literacy Secretariat wants to draw attention to issues that are timely, interesting and relevant to our agenda and to your agenda, as our literacy partners. By doing so, we hope to stimulate further progress towards a common vision of a country committed to a culture of learning—A Canada that reads and writes well.

-James E. Page  
Executive Secretary  
National Literacy Secretariat

**Note:**The complete text of James E. Page's closing remarks, presenting a point-by-point summary of the main themes raised in the policy conversation, is reproduced in Section VI of this report.

**CLOSING REMARKS\***  
**POLICY CONVERSATION ON LITERACY RESEARCH**

**JAMES E. PAGE**  
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**NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT**

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***AN IMPORTANT BEGINNING...***

Thank you for asking for a few remarks at the end of this Policy Conversation. In reality it is not possible to conclude our Conversation because this meeting is the beginning of a process and not the end of one.

I think it has been a very important beginning. Important because we have had an opportunity, without the need to arrive at a consensus, to get as many ideas as possible on the table about the future of literacy research. These ideas have been expressed with conviction and with care.

Throughout the few days of this Policy Conversation I have had the feeling that we have been assisted by others who are not physically here. John O'Leary mentioned Roby Kidd. Roby was a mentor for me and for many others. He cared deeply about literacy, adult education and a civil society. People like Roby Kidd are very much with us when we talk about literacy - Roby and others like Moses Cody, from a generation before, have shaped this field and have formed our thinking about it.

As well, throughout these conversations learners have been in our minds as we have talked about the future of literacy research. I was very touched last year by a presentation given during "les Prix de la francophonie" by a learner named Gaston Betty, a man who spoke eloquently about his life's experience and about what literacy meant to him. It seems important to consider, as we talk about research, how learners like Gaton Betty shape our thinking as well.

The prime objectives of this Policy Conversation are to share intelligence, to think through without any constraints the importance of literacy research and how we ought to promote it. Another objective is to help the NLS to make a more focused contribution to research. In my opening remarks I asked you to help us to suggest ways the Secretariat should handle the findings of our program evaluation related to the effective dissemination of research results.

### ***An opportunity to think...***

I think the Policy Conversation has reached its goals. One participant has just said that the last few days have given her an opportunity to think about literacy research - "to think it through". When I heard this I was very pleased because that's exactly what we wanted to have happen.

From this Policy Conversation we have a common understanding of the issues. This understanding provides us with an opportunity to develop a literacy research strategy for Canada which reflects the interests, capacities, and resources of our various organizations. Our task now is to consider how our various organizations can contribute to the advancement of literacy research in Canada.

We have well and truly set aside our individual interests to address what is in the best interests of literacy. I don't think that is rhetoric or empty words. People around the table have set aside personal interests to focus on the future of literacy, a field which means much to many individual Canadians, in their families, in their workplaces, in their public lives and in their private lives.

When one talks about research it is so easy to become entangled in the undergrowth of special interests because, quite frankly, research is a jungle of competing demands, competing prides, competing objectives and competing science, not to mention the competition for resources. But I think we have been able to set these snares aside in order to consider carefully what we can do to advance literacy and, hence, to serve our fellow Canadians.

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### ***SOME PRINCIPLES HAVE EMERGED...***

We have had a very full agenda. But what have we discovered during these hours of reflection? All of us have spoken, in one way or another, about the need for a research strategy for literacy in Canada. While we were not looking for consensus I think we have discovered we share that common purpose. And there were some principles articulated here which we should reflect on further.

#### ***Primacy of the learner...***

The first and foremost principle is the primacy of the learner in the many ways they learn. We have to give learner and learner-practitioner relationships high priority in the development of a literacy research strategy.

### *Importance of partnerships...*

A second principle, mentioned over and over again, is the importance of partnerships in advancing research on literacy - partnerships in which practitioners and researchers work together; partnerships to identify what, in fact, needs to be done; partnerships in providing support and funding; partnerships for the dissemination of results.

### *Praxis...*

The third principle is about praxis, that is, theory being informed by practice and practice by theory. That has to be, I think, one of the pillars of any kind of meaningful strategy in the literacy field.

### *Collaboration between researchers and practitioners...*

Praxis connects to the fourth requirement to ensure full discussion and collaboration between researchers and practitioners in developing a strategy and in realizing it. As someone put it, research needs to be co-owned rather than being the exclusive domain of one or other group.

### *Literacy research for well-being...*

A fifth principle to be borne in mind is that literacy is premised on social, economic, political (citizenship) and cultural participation. I liked very much the turn of phrase, "literacy research for well-being". We need to keep that word "democratic" in mind - democratic in how we phrase a research agenda - and also in how we go about fulfilling it and sharing the results of it.

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## **ARCHITECTURE OF A STRATEGY...**

In addition to these principles there are many other considerations to be carried away from this meeting. There are elements of design in the literacy strategy we wish to create. Susan Sussman's analogy of the design of an airport as being a model for our task seems to have gained some currency. Be it a blueprint for an airport, or a train station, or a bus stop, our research strategy will result in an architecture, in form and function.

### ***"State of the art" review...***

For me, clearly one of the first elements in this evolving architecture is a "state of the art" review of literacy research. This taking stock of where we have come over the last eight years is required to identify, to clarify, to explain and to make accessible research in Canada on literacy in both official languages. After this meeting I hope we will be able to think through with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council how we can undertake such a review, expeditiously and in partnership.

### ***Dissemination of results...***

Any research strategy, it seems to me, needs to include the dissemination of research results in both French and English. This needs to encompass a variety of tactics including, as was suggested, one-page fiche designed to make the results of a particular research project understandable to the field, to the public and to policy makers; the development of an appropriate database and WEB site; and the development of a publication infrastructure which might include a transfer journal, a set of occasional papers, and an academic journal.

The publication of research findings and the sharing of research methods in a coherent, predictable, established way is important. The transfer journal notion attracts me a great deal because it addresses some of the principles I have just mentioned: sharing across domains, not just disciplines; and blending intellectual endeavour and practical concerns which touch the lives of the learners with whom and for whom we work.

### ***Research advisory mechanism...***

Another important part of this (and I want to think through how we, in the NLS, might deal with it), would be the establishment of a research advisory mechanism to help us remain relevant and current when making choices about what we should support. Based on that process, we could regularly identify changing research priorities to articulate clearly what we plan to do to advance the field at any particular point in time.

### ***Identify our priorities...***

Lots of examples of specific research projects were mentioned and I am attracted to many of them. More thought is needed, I think, about where we should place our priorities. I heard a lot of talk about policy relevance and about action-oriented and participative research. Do these have equal weight now? Will they in the future?

From this discussion, I think we need to identify priority fields, picking up on the "macro" concept Serge Wagner used. We need to identify broad areas and then see, both by active solicitation by the NLS and by what people bring to our door, how we can advance research on Aboriginal literacy; minority language, official language and immigrant language literacies; family literacy; workplace literacy; empirical work; statistical work; and analyses of what happens to learners throughout their lives.

Doing something of a long-term nature around learners is both attractive and necessary. What happens to learners as a consequence of the programs they complete? What sorts of literacy practice affects them? Do learners become part of a culture of learning and a culture of reading?

I like the concept of a culture of literacy and learning. Literacy and learning are inextricably linked. I have a feeling that if we talked more about a culture of literacy people might identify more readily the importance of literacy as we grapple with the increasingly complex learning needs of citizens in modern societies.

#### ***Information on work abroad...***

Another point made several times during this Policy Conversation is that, in addition to identifying what needs to be looked at in Canada, we would well be served if we were to ensure that we have access to information on quality work abroad. I am pleased to say that we have been making some steps in that respect. As you may know, the National Literacy Secretariat presently supports the UNESCO International Award for Literacy Research. We have supported UNESCO's ALPHA collections on a biannual basis. We have struck what I believe will be a very fruitful collaborative arrangement with our counterpart in the United Kingdom, the Basic Skills Agency, formerly ALBUSU. Next week, I will be meeting with La Groupe permanente de lutte contre l'illettrisme, our counterpart in Paris, about the possibility of an exchange with France. We have very good links with the OECD as the IALS study shows and we hope to be able to build on that relationship as well.

#### ***Work with other federal departments and agencies...***

We also need to develop of a plan to work with other federal departments and agencies on literacy research issues, in particular with DIAND on native issues, with Canadian Heritage on official languages, (particularly official language minority issues,) with the Department of Health, with Solicitor General and Justice, and with the research granting councils.

### ***Development of a research capacity...***

Short, medium and long-term attention must be paid to the development of research capacity. We talked about training and education, graduate scholarships for students, research fellowships for faculty. I love Jennifer Horsman's idea of practitioner sabbaticals to provide literacy workers with time to refresh their thinking and to learn about what is current in research. Thank you very much, for that idea.

Since we support an international award for literacy research, it strikes me that we should be looking at the development of a domestic award to stimulate literacy research in Canada.

Those are some things that we have considered on the "people side" of the research enterprise. But there are other matters on the "infrastructure side" which require attention over the short, medium and long-term as well. We need a time series of empirical data which periodically defines and continuously refines the literacy challenge. We have started this in a sense with the statistical base found in LSUDA (Literacy Skills Used in daily Activity done in 1989) and the first round of IALS (the International Adult Literacy Survey released in December, 1995). We need to identify some additional longitudinal work. We have already mentioned the importance of a literacy component in the Longitudinal Survey of Children.

### ***Bring legitimacy and recognition to the field...***

Another part of the architecture must be designed to ensure literacy is perceived as a legitimate area of academic activity with appropriate scholarly recognition and rewards. I have already mentioned that much can be accomplished towards this goal through creating publishing venues in both official languages, so that there are ways in which literacy scholars can get their work published to receive the academic recognition they deserve. The involvement of organizations like SSHRC can bring legitimacy and recognition to the field. I have already mentioned the notion of fellowships. International research links are quite important and perhaps we should be thinking about ways in which we can foster those.

In July 1997 there is going to be a World Congress on Adult Education in Hamburg, Germany. My understanding is that one of the themes will be literacy and Canada should play a role in that. While we have lots to offer we also have lots to learn.

### ***Research communication strategy...***

Beyond all of this, there is a need for a coherent research communication strategy as part of our architectural drawings. We were talking this morning, in our small group, about the need to encourage several high profile French and English columnists and editorialists to be informed about what is going on in the area of literacy research, not



necessarily to write about every piece of research done, but to build up, in their own files and in their minds, the depth of knowledge of literacy to write about it effectively and pointedly.

We need to make literacy research part of the agenda of other non-literacy organizations, as we have discussed, and that is something that we must address.

***What can the NLS do...***

On another note, the NLS needs to consider a number of changes to its operational policies. These are things that are more micro than macro, but they are important. We can support multi-year research projects. Perhaps we should make that better known. We also could consider ways to promote research-sharing or collaborative research. Or, as someone suggested, when we fund conferences and seminars, we might encourage sessions devoted to the sharing of related research results so that those who are active in research can run workshops on what they are doing. This would provide research leaven to assist the development of the field.

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***THANK YOU ALL...***

I am sure that when we read the transcripts of all of the plenary sessions of this Policy Conversation many, many more things will come to mind. The thoughts I have summarized indicate how rich this discussion has been. I want to thank you all, because each of you has contributed to this valuable blend of ideas.

May I express special thanks to several people. To Marla Waltman Daschko, to Margaret Robinson and to Lynne Lalonde, my colleagues in the NLS who have worked very hard to make this Conversation a reality. They share my concerns about literacy research in Canada and the need to set directions for the future.

I want to thank Burt Perrin for his thoughtful discussion paper and the care that he brought to researching and writing it. Thanks to Liz Kane for all of the work that she put into the logistics of this event. She made sure everything was ready for us, and that arrangements for this meeting were complete and elegant. Thank you to Carol MacLeod who has been our facilitator in these policy conversations. She brings to them, as you now know, a very deft and delicate touch to keeping people focused and on task.

Finally, thanks to you all for your time, your thoughtfulness and your participation. You have made this a successful meeting and I applaud your generosity.

## REVIEW OF NLS RESEARCH ACTIVITY

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I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide a brief overview of the research activity funded by the National Literacy Secretariat-funded research activity. After reviewing the records of the NLS, and speaking with other NLS staff, I have compiled this overview. First, however, I would like to preface my presentation with an acknowledgement of the experience and history that all of you bring to this table.

Many of you have worked in literacy, or been involved in literacy research, long before my colleagues or I joined the NLS. You are, therefore, in a better position to give this historical overview of research activity than I am. Nevertheless, I will press on and ask you to intervene if you feel I have misrepresented or forgotten something.

When the NLS was established in 1988, research was one of the five activities that we were authorized to support. According to our program terms and conditions, our research objective is to "stimulate research and development initiatives which address the needs of literacy practice and practitioners".

Since the program began, the NLS has devoted a significant portion of its project funding to research activities. Well over 300 projects, some large, some small, that have a research component have been approved. We have defined research very broadly to include needs assessments, evaluations, sectoral research, pilot projects, statistical surveys and a variety of other types of research not as easily categorized.

The NLS research strategy has been primarily a responsive rather than a strategic approach. As the field developed we felt it was important to respond to the needs identified by the literacy community, rather than attempt to direct its research agenda. This is in keeping with the model the NLS follows in its project funding. Initially our funding was primarily seed money used to motivate the research community; in other words, to get things going. We wanted to be responsive to the community and to its needs. We wanted to see who was active and to sponsor the work of those individuals or organizations which presented projects which would further our knowledge about literacy and related issues.

This is not to say that the NLS did not see a need to keep an eye on the general direction of the field. For this reason we have funded research which we felt would allow us to be on the cutting edge of research. We saw the benefit of funding research initiatives that would break new ground for literacy, would open up new areas of research, or would respond to previously unmet needs of specific communities.

The goal of NLS funding of research has been to be sure that we are benefiting from the best thinking available, to help people put into place the most effective literacy programming available, to serve populations that haven't been well-served, and to focus on how to better reach our clients.

In addition to our grant-based research activity, NLS carries out strategic research with our O&M budget. This aspect of our research activity has been more active in some years than others. I will speak a little more about this later.

As part of your policy conversation kit you have received a report which the NLS has put together. It is a summary of the grants that have been directed toward research - either all or part - since 1988/1989. As with the reports which we compiled for the other policy conversations, this report is based upon our departmental coding system. We have used this system to list all projects, since 1988, which were coded "research". We recognize that, if we were to recode these projects today, we might not choose to classify some of them under this category, as our definition of research has evolved over time. We have edited the report somewhat to clear up many of the anomalies but some remain. As well, in order to make the report more meaningful, we have grouped the projects into a number of sub-categories.

The projects are grouped as follows: needs assessment, evaluation, sectoral research, pilot projects, and general, which we used for everything else which did not clearly fit into the other four categories.

### *Needs assessment*

In the early days of the NLS a large number of needs assessment projects were funded. It was necessary to establish the needs of specific communities for literacy programming, as well as to demonstrate that literacy funding was, in fact, required in Canada. This type of funding has been very useful to help develop the field. For example, as you look over the needs assessment projects, you will see that they cover communities and locations across the country, from large organizations to small community assessments.

### *Evaluation*

Lately, evaluation projects have become a much larger part of our research funding activities. This is a reflection on how far the field has progressed and demonstrates that we are moving toward a more mature range of services and a professionalization of those services. A variety of well-established programmes now exist across the country. The field recognizes now that evaluation plays an important role by allowing us to study and to understand what works and what doesn't.

For example, in 1993/94, The Prospects Adult Literacy Association in Edmonton tested two program evaluation tools. They were the "Adult Literacy Volunteer Tutor Program Evaluation Kit" and the "Progress Profile". This project has allowed approximately 400 members of four literacy programs across Alberta to assess what their programs have accomplished. A mark of success of the project is the fact that these evaluation tools are now available to all Alberta literacy programs for use in their formal evaluations.

### *Sectoral*

Sectoral projects tend to be those which primarily evaluate the needs of specific sectors of the workplace. An excellent example is a study undertaken by Praxis Adult Training and Skills Development of Toronto, which investigated the extent of workplace literacy training initiatives in the hospitality industry. The result is a book which is now widely used by that industry.

Another interesting project was developed by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union in Rexdale, Ontario. They examined the scope and nature of literacy difficulties facing its members and designed five pilot projects to respond to these difficulties.

### *Pilot projects*

Pilot projects allow organizations to explore new models for literacy programming. One pilot project of great interest is an adaptation, in Perth county, Ontario, of the British Manchester model which allows practitioners to obtain information about learner's prior learning experiences. It is a learner centred, community based project which involved local literacy workers and learners. The system is now being adapted and applied across the province.

### *General*

Everything else we have listed under the General category. A couple of interesting examples include:

A multi-phase project by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities For Women (CCLOW), which studied and documented how gender affects women's access to, and experience of, literacy programs.

Another project, entitled "En toutes lettres en français" by the Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes in Montreal, and the Fédération des francophones hors Québec, studied the situation of francophones with low levels of literacy. One result of the project was the identification of the need for a francophone literacy organization in Canada. It led to the establishment of FCAF.

Also of interest is the literacy portfolio development project of the University of Ottawa. It is a great piece of work which is being used widely across the country.

The NLS has also been instrumental in its support of the UNESCO International Award for Literacy Research and the Alpha publications series, the latest of which is Alpha 96, entitled "Literacy and the World of Work".

Finally, I wish to direct your attention to a separate listing of selected research projects commissioned by the NLS since 1988/89. I am sure that some of these will be familiar to you, including the 1989 Canadian Survey of Literacy Skills used in Daily Activity (LUSDA), and the 1995 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS).

These surveys are major pieces of research which have been and will continue to be a fundamental part of our research activities. We expect the IALS data, in particular, to be used extensively by the research community over the coming years. There is much to be mined from the data and, in fact, over the next two years, the NLS along with the Applied Research Branch of HRDC and Statistics Canada, will be supporting the research and publication of around a dozen individual research monographs based on the IALS data which will cover a variety of subjects.

There are obviously many more research projects with which the NLS has been involved over the past seven years. You have the reports in front of you and I will leave them to you to review at your leisure.

**NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT  
RESEARCH POLICY CONVERSATION**

**February 5 - 7, 1996  
Aylmer, Quebec**

**PARTICIPANT LIST**

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**SECRÉTARIAT NATIONAL À L'ALPHABÉTISATION  
DIALOGUE DE POLITIQUE SUR LA RECHERCHE**

**5 au 7 février 1996  
Aylmer (Québec)**

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## Evaluation Report

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This report is a tabulation of the evaluations completed anonymously at the end of the think tank by 18 of the 23 participants. The number of times that a theme is reiterated by different people is noted in brackets following the comment. N/C stands for no comment.

**1. Rate the dimensions of the Policy Conversation on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) by circling a number on the scale to the right of each factor.(may not add up to 100% due to rounding)**

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	<i>Low</i>				<i>High</i>
<b>Pre-Conversation</b>					
a) Discussion Paper by Burt Perrin	1	2	3	4	5
	5%	--	28%	45%	22%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The French Version is very well translated</li> </ul>					

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### Setting The Context

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b) Opening Remarks, Review of Agenda Introductory Exercise	1	2	3	4	5
	--	--	28%	61%	11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bit long. Very formal, started things off in a somewhat intermediary mode.</li> </ul>					

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### The Past Tense (Mon. Afternoon)

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c) Presentation - NLS Activities in Research	1	2	3	4	5
	5%	11%	28%	50%	5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I rated this at 1 because Nova Scotia is absent from the research listing, yet extensive research has been carried out in a number of areas.</li> <li>• Would have been better to have had time to review summary before the presentation and then discuss it a bit.</li> </ul>					

d) Informal & Formal Conversations	1	2	3	4	5	N/C
	--	--	16%	72%	6%	6%

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**The Present Tense (Tues. Morning)**

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e) Informal & Formal Conversations	1	2	3	4	5
	--	--	6%	78%	16%

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**The Future Tense (Tues. Afternoon)**

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f) Informal & Formal Conversations	1	2	3	4	5
	--	6%	17%	55%	22%

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**The Future Tense (Wed. Morning)**

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g) Informal & Formal Conversations	1	2	3	4	5
	--	--	6%	55%	39%

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**Facilitation**

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h) The Facilitator - Carol MacLeod	1	2	3	4	5	N/C
	--	--	--	50%	44%	6%

- Carol's role was nearly invisible -- given the design of the conversation that seemed entirely appropriate.
- Very skilled.
- I would have appreciated it if the facilitator spoke in French from time to time. She did a good job but I feel that at times she should have reminded participants to keep to the issue.

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## 2. List two things that you liked most about the Policy Conversation.

- opportunity to think/learn/talk with colleagues from such diverse perspectives (4)
- the brains in the room and the thoughts they provoked/chance to reflect and hear a variety of view points (5)
- quality of participants (3)
- context and open forum, nature of things; ability to brainstorm in free-ranging manner (3)
- the people/the sharing (2)
- informal conversation (2)
- opportunity to meet 'famous' literacy people and hearing their views (2)
- excellent facilitation and comfortable atmosphere (2)
- strong sense of shared mission and commitment - discussion evolved over the two days
- accommodations were comfortable
- location was fine
- timetable reasonable
- chance to think - good example of a mini-sabbatical to practitioners and others
- the debates
- development of a strategy which may challenge constraints of academy and of practice
- final plenary "coming together" of thoughts - Jim's summary
- able to make contacts to continue to develop support for literacy initiatives
- free expression and quality of content of NLS
- quality of information; richness of exchanges; the facilitators
- variety of participants; facilitators; location; language; issues
- no pressure to arrive at a consensus

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### 3. List two things that you liked least about the Policy Conversation.

- felt group was divided along language lines (2)
- positioning/jockeying for position/speech making; the posturing (2)
- would have been preferable to receive the documentation on the researched financed by the NLS in advance -the presentation would have been easier to do in a more timely fashion.
- format/setting a bit imposing/intimidating
- too much airtime given to introduction and summary
- room temperature - ambivalent
- didn't meet everyone I wanted to
- didn't feel there was an open mind to some contributions that can be made by the academic community
- not sure interpretation was accurate
- changed timetable after booked flights - but can live with it
- a little too inclusive of grass roots literacy community - a more diverse group could have given the policy conversation a broader perspective in terms of defining future directions
- barriers created in formal session relating to the process, i.e. not really a conversation
- needed more time
- interruptions by people were too long
- culture(s) of group, at first, inhibited truly open discussion
- no heat in room
- the redundancy/repetition
- many points seemed to ramble
- formal/informal divide made it unclear whether important points needed to be repeated in the formal section to "count"
- more education and business voices were needed
- certain participants didn't have clear enough translation - lost a little precision in the translation and possibility of dialogue

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**4. Did the Policy Conversation meet its stated objectives?**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>N/C</i>
83%	6%	6%	5%

YES: 15

NO: 1

SOMEWHAT: 1

NA: 1

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**5. Did the Policy Conversation meet your personal objectives and expectations?**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>N/C</i>
89%	0%	11%	0%

YES: 16

NO: 0

SOMEWHAT: 2

NA: 0

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## 6. Comments. The last word is yours.

- Thank you / Well done (7)
- great example of what NLS can do better than any other agency - provide leadership in a deliberate way and bring diverse voices together to discover common ground
- Thank you - one of the rare public administrations where we are considered partners not clients
- congratulations to NLS for these initiatives - Thank you, research helps the practical side and the practical side helps research
- appreciated the exchange with such a variety of participants - expressions were very clear and enlightening - hope this will translate into action
- would have liked more up-to-date handout literature
- discussion fascinating, but felt people weren't comfortable to speak from the heart until third morning - conceptual ideas need to be surfaced and examined to move field forward
- it will have been of value if an innovative strategy results
- will we get another kick at the cat regarding setting the agenda
- I still wonder how I can interest my colleagues at the University to become engaged in literacy research
- Thanks - keep and expand connections
- information was not carried back from small groups as well as it could have been.