

A Pan Canadian Study on Literacy Issues for Youth with Significant Physical Disabilities

FINAL REPORT

Neil Squire Foundation

**NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT**

FINAL REPORT

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Project Title: A Pan Canadian Study on Literacy Issues for
Youth with Significant Physical Disabilities

Start and Finish Dates of Projects: **From:** January 1, 1998 **to:** March 31, 1999

I. **Objectives**

	Objectives	<u>Measure of Success</u> <u>(Scale 0-10)</u>
1.	To understand the barriers of mainstream literacy training by persons with significant physical disabilities.	10
2.	To develop mechanisms of delivery that address these barriers through a process of active field testing.	10
3.	Through the demonstration value of the field testing process, develop partners who are currently responsible for the ongoing delivery of literacy training so that these new mechanisms of delivery can be incorporated into a sustainable model.	8
4.	Increasing public awareness related to youth issues.	5 (pls see comments in report)

II. **How did you evaluate or measure your success?**

(Eg. Attendance, questionnaire, observations, interviews, other. Please match the measure/method with the objectives.)

1. Literature review (Executive Summary attached as Appendix A), National Accessibility Survey - gathered both quantitative and qualitative data (Executive Summary attached as Appendix B).
2. Field tests of different models - in three different locations (Ottawa, Regina and Fredericton) - (see comparison in Appendix E).
3. In three cities - Regina, Fredericton and Ottawa, each Neil Squire Foundation office has liaised with literacy organizations and umbrella groups in the community to determine how to best partner in order to deliver services to this clientele.

III. What activities did your organization do in order to achieve these objectives. Please describe briefly.

The work that we undertook for this project involved research, field testing, and personal interviews.

A. Research

i. Literature Review:

The Neil Squire Foundation conducted a thorough Literature Review on the issues around literacy and people with physical disabilities. An Executive Summary of this is attached as Appendix A. In general, there has been considerable work and research done in the area of literacy and people with disabilities. However, for the purposes of our project and to remain true to the mandate of the Neil Squire Foundation, the literature review focused only on the literature, issues and findings as they relate to people with significant physical disabilities. While we did search for information on youth with disabilities there was little information available - so we did look at some literature that focused on issues regarding youth literacy problems. While not all the issues are the same, it would appear that some are very similar.

According to IALS, the literacy picture in Canada had not changed since Statistics Canada's Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA) survey which said that about 22% of adult Canadians 16 years and older fall into the lowest level of literacy and another 24-26% fall into the second lowest level. Statistics Canada also identified in 1995¹ that persons with disabilities have lower education attainment on average than those without disabilities. It would seem that the number of people with disabilities who consider their literacy adequate does not give an accurate picture of the literacy skills of people with disabilities. Keeping in mind the number of Canadians who have low literacy skills and recognizing that a large majority (20.7%) of those with disabilities have physical (mobility and agility) disabilities, we can see how the literacy skills of people with physical disabilities is such an important issue.

Richard Darville in his book on Adult Literacy Work in Canada (1992), acknowledged that the schooling of people with disabilities has been unproductive and that the limited literacy among people with disabilities is related to the lack of opportunities for education. In 1991, Shelley Butler found through interviews with participants in a literacy program, that many people with a disability have had negative experiences in school and were segregated in special classes.² She goes on to say that the labels placed on people with disabilities can be "self-defining" and that as a labeled person an individual can begin to see themselves as incompetent or inferior and thus have, as Jeffrey Freedman says, a depreciated view of their own potential.²

¹ A Portrait of People with Disabilities, Target Group Project, Statistics Canada, 1995, pg. 10
A Summary of the Statistics Canada Health and Activity Limitation Survey, 1991, p. 37

² Learning About Literacy and Disability at St. Christopher House Adult Program, Shelley Butler, Ontario Department of Education, Toronto, 1991.

The accessibility Literacy Upgrading in lite Community for Adults with Disabilities, Jeffrey D. Freedman, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), 1988.

Our literature review concluded that virtually every piece of literature reviewed acknowledged that the needs of people with disabilities, as they relate to accessing literacy programs and services, have not been met. Everyone agrees on exactly what measures are necessary to make services inclusive and accessible to people with physical disabilities. Nevertheless, it appears that even after the issues and the necessary steps have been identified, there are still barriers that have prevented any follow-up or progress. In the end, all of us pay a high price, if people do not receive the literacy training which gives them the opportunity for socio-economic integration into our workplaces and communities.

ii. **National Survey of Accessibility of Literacy Programs:**

A survey (attached as Appendix B) was distributed to literacy groups and programs across Canada. Its purpose was to identify whether people with physical disabilities are accessing literacy programs. In addition, we wanted to identify any barriers and share the experiences and needs of programs providing literacy training. Sixty-eight surveys were sent to community, school boards, and college based programs. These programs provide a wide range of services through classes, small groups, or one-on-one tutoring. Seven of the 12 provinces and territories responded. Twenty-seven (40%) of the surveys were returned, twelve of which came from Ontario. Both Saskatchewan and New Brunswick each returned four surveys. Three of Quebec's English programs responded to the survey and Alberta was next with two responses. We also received one response each from Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Newfoundland. Although surveys were sent to Manitoba, Nova Scotia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, no responses were received.

The results of the survey would indicate at first blush, that more programs than expected are providing literacy services to people with physical disabilities. However, this must be interpreted with caution because of the 22 programs that provide services to people with physical disabilities, only one program met the survey criteria for a truly accessible literacy program. Our criteria for this survey defines accessible as a program that is physically accessible, flexible, offers the use of computers and access to appropriate technical aids and assistive devices, and can provide at least some measure of support care, in terms of attendants or scribes, when necessary.

It is most interesting to note that the majority of the programs in every province identified the need for training and support in several areas:

- how to make their programs more accessible,
- disability awareness,
- technical aids and assistive devices,
- services and programs who can assess learner's access needs and services who can recommend appropriate equipment and provide training
- educational tools.

IV. Factors Affecting Your Project:

Factors	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• eager, creative and resourceful staff, particularly in Ottawa, Fredericton and Regina.• having other resources available to project staff through other programs and services offered by the Neil Squire Foundation.• excellent, experienced administrative support.• volunteer spending a great deal of time and effort developing the project database.• full cooperation of the literacy community in Ontario, in particular - working in partnership with the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• staff in the Foundation have recognized literacy as being a major barrier to labour market participation for people with physical disabilities.• other resources such as computers, computer technology, adaptive equipment, office machinery, etc. all contributed to the success of this project.• our administrative staff is very experienced in various administrative functions and organizational skills are essential for a project such as this.• we were fortunate in the Ottawa office to have a volunteer who could do the database design for the project.• the literacy communities in all provinces have been very supportive of our endeavours and we would not have been nearly so successful without their guidance and support.

2. **What problems did you have with your project?**

<p style="text-align: center;">Problems</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Comments (Factors which caused these problems and how you solved them)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • given the current resource restraints in non-profit organizations, and ours is no exception, a larger amount should have been budgeted for staff time in the NSF regional offices to do research, follow-up, data collection, etc. • it was difficult to obtain consumer involvement where people were not actively taking part in field tests. • high non-response rate from the literacy programs in British Columbia for our national survey. • locating youth with disabilities who were not in school. • regional variations in labour market demands, policies and procedures for literacy programs, client base and educational (literacy) level, funding mechanism for literacy programs in last part of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff worked diligently and put in a great deal of extra time and effort to ensure the success of the project. • we persevered and were able to convince people of the value of their input. Sometimes, we would meet people on a more informal basis to solicit their input. • we were unable, even with extra phone calls, faxes, etc. to bring many organizations in BC into our study. However, we have made a note of this, and the survey results clearly indicate where the data is from - geographically. • numerous faxes and letters were sent out to different organizations to assist us in locating youth who were not in school. • we liaised a great deal with our literacy partners in the various communities across the country to ensure that all these factors were taken into account.

V. You often need to change your plans after you start a project. Did you change or drop any objectives or were any new objectives added during the project?

If yes, please tell us the changes and the reasons for them.

Changes	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we dropped the public awareness for the youth project from our list of objectives. • we had to change our intake process in order to refine our data collection process. • BC participation in the project was minimalized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we quickly learned we needed to get a better grasp on the issues concerning youth with disabilities. • we developed policies and procedures for the program, including the screening process • their system is very different from the rest of Canada, and in addition no resources had been designated for the BC office

VI. Were there major changes in your group as a result of this project? (increased membership, better planning practices, more or less volunteer involvement, new objectives, etc.)

Changes	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteer involvement. • many people with disabilities taking part in the field test. • developed training tools • better planning of human resources, computer and written material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number greatly increased - both in terms of now having tutors for the one-on-one field test, but also a fair amount of administrative support and database development work was done by volunteers. • these individuals were new tutors and new learners. • this had to be done to carry out the field tests effectively. • to meet everyone's needs, a lot of planning and developmental work was carried out.

VII. What has been the impact on your group and the community?

Impact	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through the field tests, we were able to develop working models with different attributes in four cities - Ottawa, Fredericton, Moncton, and Regina. • improved employment readiness of a number of people with significant physical disabilities. • we were able to offer the only employment program in Ottawa that addresses the issue of literacy and provided the training necessary for people to upgrade their literacy skills. • through having a designated staff, more support was given to learners and tutors and more participation in the overall literacy community in the field test areas. • integration into the literacy community and able to provide awareness of disability issues to community agencies. • partnership development to work jointly on such projects as an overall training manual. • Ministry of Education and Training funding has now been provided to the Ottawa office so Access to Literacy is a Literacy and Basic Skills Program. • a literacy volunteer is now pan of the team in New Brunswick - assisting in literacy work with people with disabilities in the Moncton area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working models were an excellent vehicle to actually determine if our hypotheses were indeed correct, and to figure out in real time what works and what doesn't. Different types of models allow comparisons of success with various methodologies. • we developed some strong partnerships in different regions, to assist with tools such as training manuals. • people with significant physical disabilities are now more integrated into the literacy communities in the test site cities. • we discovered which mainstream programs were truly able to accommodate people with physical disabilities, and some of the issues around this.

VIII. **Should this project/program be continued?**

- Yes (partly)

If yes, what plans do you have?

Many issues that came up during this project still need to be explored, so the Foundation is examining all that we learned and determining the best course of action. Certainly the individual literacy programs (field tests) should be continued and are continuing in Ottawa, Regina and Fredericton/Moncton.

Throughout the project, some of the participants in the field test sites encountered barriers to the successful participation and/or completion of their literacy work. The barriers identified most often were learning disabilities and memory difficulties. Other barriers were the learner's attendance (sometimes due to transportation difficulties), the learner's physical health and psycho/social issues such as low self-esteem and self-confidence or fear as well as a lack of motivation

IX. **What recommendations would you make to another group who was planning a similar project?** (Eg. Different strategies, timing, planning, etc.)

Some of the suggestions we would have are:

- Make sure you allow plenty of time to actually field test the project.
- Have some staff whose sole responsibility is the project - it is so easy with all the demands placed on organizations to get pulled in many directions. Research takes focus.
- Investigate the costs of the resources you will need thoroughly before submitting a proposal.
- Ensure that you have consumer input in all stages of the project - this provides very valuable information.
- A project advisory committee that meets on a regular and consistent basis is an excellent way of getting good, objective feedback on your work, and in ensuring that you really are on track, both in terms of time lines, goals and objectives.

XI. **Assessment of service received (not received) from the Department for your project.**
Please include any recommendations for improvement.

Level of Satisfaction
(use scale 0-10)

0: Totally unsatisfactory
10: Fully satisfactory

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Accessibility - availability of staff. | <input type="text" value="10"/> |
| 2. | Promptness of communications
(e.g. replies to phone calls, letters, follow-up on meetings, etc.) | <input type="text" value="10"/> |
| 3. | Technical assistance provided (if appropriate) | <input type="text" value="n/a"/> |
| 4. | Clear understanding of role of both parties the Department and your organization. | <input type="text" value="10"/> |
| 5. | Service offered in both official languages. | <input type="text" value="n/a"/> |
| 6. | Other | <input type="text"/> |

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Appendix A

Literature Review
Executive Summary

Neil Squire Foundation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Literature Review on Literacy and People with Physical Disabilities

There has been considerable work and research in the area of literacy and people with disabilities in general. However, for the purposes of our project and to remain true to the mandate of the Neil Squire Foundation, the literature review focused on the literature, issues and findings as they relate to people with significant physical disabilities only.

The Statistics Canada's Health and Activity Limitation Survey states that 17.8 percent of Canadians (15 and over) had some form of disabilities in 1991. This survey also defined a physical disability as either mobility or agility disabilities. Mobility and/or agility disabilities are the most commonly reported disabilities. In 1991, 59% of all persons with disabilities aged 15 and over reported a mobility disability and 54% reported an agility disability;¹ Unfortunately, the Southam, the Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA) and the International Adult Literacy (IALS) surveys did not identify "people with disabilities" as a specific category. Only the Health and Activity Limitation Survey in 1991 (Selected Characteristics of People with Disabilities) identified that 82 percent of adults with disabilities residing in households consider their reading and writing skills adequate for their daily needs. Since the International Adult Literacy Survey found that only a minority of persons with weak literacy skills recognize a need to improve their levels and that literacy skills can be lost if not used, it would stand to reason that people with disabilities also may not recognize a need to improve their literacy.

According to IALS, the literacy picture in Canada had not changed since Statistics Canada's Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities (LSUDA) survey which said that about 22 percent of adult Canadians 16 years and older fall into the lowest level of literacy and another 24-26 percent fall into the second lowest level. And since Statistics Canada identified in 1995² that persons with disabilities have lower educational attainment, on average than those without disabilities, it would seem, that the number people with disabilities who consider their literacy adequate does not give an accurate picture of the literacy skills of people with disabilities. Keeping in mind the number of Canadians who have low literacy skills and recognizing that a large majority (20.7 percent³) of those with disabilities have physical (mobility and agility) disabilities, we can see how the literacy skills of people with physical disabilities is an important issue not to be ignored.

Richard Darville in his book on Adult Literacy Work in Canada (1992), acknowledged that the schooling of people with disabilities has been unproductive and that the limited literacy among people with disabilities is related to the lack of opportunities for education.

¹ *A Portrait of People with Disabilities*, Target Group Project, Statistics Canada 1995, pg 10
A Summary of the Statistics Canada, *Health and Activity Limitation Survey*, 1991

² *A Portrait of People with Disabilities*, Target Group Project, Statistics Canada, 1995, pg 10
A Summary of the Statistics Canada, *Health and Activity Limitation Survey*, 1991 p. 37

³ *Population aged 15 and over with a disability, by nature of disability*, Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS), Statistics Canada, 1991

In 1991, Shelley Butler found, through interviews with participants in a literacy program, that many people with a disability have had negative experiences in school and were segregated in special classes.⁴ She goes on to say that the labels placed on people with disabilities can be "self-defining" and that as a labelled person an individual can begin to see themselves as incompetent or inferior and thus as have, as Jeffrey Freedman says, a depreciated view of their own potential.⁵

For those people with physical disabilities who choose to upgrade their literacy skills, they do so for several reasons, according to Shelley Butler⁶:

- literacy skills are a link to employment and independence (which in turn increase self-esteem)
- for a connection to the world of print
- writing opens lines of communication
- for creativity and personal growth

Ms. Butler also says that literacy is a transfer of power and the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres⁷ agrees, saying that for people with disabilities to make informed decisions, advocate on their own behalf, and be in control of their lives they must have basic literacy skills.

The Peel Adult Learning Network's Special Needs Project Final Report (1996) concurs that literacy skills decrease dependency and are a link to employment, but they also acknowledge that due to advances in technology there are fewer jobs for people with low literacy skills. It is a well documented fact that many of jobs held by people with low literacy skills are manual labour, but as Jeffrey Freedman points out a person's physical disability may prevent them from performing manual labour so they must rely on their intellectual and communication skills and these skills are beyond reach without literacy.⁸

Once a person with a physical disability has decided to seek help in improving their literacy and or numeracy skills they may likely experience barriers such as accessing information about existing literacy programs or the physical accessibility of these programs. Jeffrey Freedman defined physical accessibility in its broadest terms. The most common is the architectural design and layout of a building, and an individual's access into and around the premises. However, he also includes, in this category, support services such as attendant care and technical aids or assistive devices. Most significantly, he includes ignorance and prejudice in this category because he believes that "ignorance handicaps learners by creating the most impenetrable and often unconscious barrier influencing all other factors." In order to overcome attitudes much of the literature recommends that staff/tutors receive disability awareness training. It was also suggested by Jeffrey Freedman and Shelley Butler that learners with disabilities take a "real and active part" in these training sessions. This will provide instructors/tutors with an opportunity to ask questions and increase their comfort level.

⁴ *Looming About Literacy and Disability at St. Christopher House Adult Program*, Shelley Butler, Ontario Department of Education, Toronto, 1991

⁵ *The Accessibility of Literacy Upgrading in the Community for Adults with Disabilities*, Jeffrey D. Freedman, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), 1988

⁶ *Looming About Literacy and Disability at St. Christopher House Adult Program*, Shelley Butler, Ontario Department of Education, Toronto, 1991

⁷ *Community Handbook on Developing a Literacy and Disability Awareness Training Program*, Canadian Association of Independent Living Contras (CAILC), August 1994

⁸ *The Accessibility of Literacy Upgrading in the Community for Adults with Disabilities*, Jeffrey D. Freedman, Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), 1988

Almost all of the literature recognized the need for programs to be physically accessible and have access to technology and assistive devices (book holders, page turners) including computers and other hardware or software programs (keyguards, voice input). However, one resource, described as an essential reference for practitioners⁹ when discussing computers and software, did not mention the benefits and increased access to people with physical disabilities. Interestingly, a report from the Nova Scotia Department of Education in 1991 also added that for a program to be accessible they must have a flexible schedule to accommodate the learner's work or medical appointments and the learner must have access to transportation.

Literacy programs themselves identified a lack of funding as a barrier to accommodating people with disabilities, especially around the provision of technical aids or assistive devices and attendant care. The responsibility for the limited funding of accessibility must be shared. Both Jeffrey Freedman (1988) and the Canadian Movement for Literacy (1992) recognized this and recommended that programs need to include the cost of accessibility and the purchase of equipment into their budgets.¹⁰

The Peel Adult Learning Network's Special Needs Project Final Report (1996) also suggested that one way to increase access to literacy services would be to establish partnerships between literacy organizations and agencies that deliver services to people with disabilities, then tutoring could be provided within or by the already accessible support agencies. They did note that some groups of people with disabilities wish to be integrated into the community and that this is a valid concern.

In conclusion, virtually every piece of literature reviewed acknowledged that the needs of people with disabilities, as they relate to accessing literacy programs and services, have not been met. Everyone agrees on exactly what measures are necessary to make services inclusive and accessible to people with physical disabilities. Nevertheless, it appears that even after the issues and the necessary steps have been identified, there are still barriers that have prevented any follow-up or progress. In the end, all of us pay a high price, if people do not receive the literacy training which gives them the opportunity for socio-economic integration into our workplaces and communities.

⁹ *Investigating Literacy*, Colin J. Laine and Sue Geddis, Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc., 1992

¹⁰ *Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada* by Joyce White and Susan Hoddinott, The Movement for Canadian Literacy, 1992

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Appendix B

Literacy Programs Survey
Executive Summary

Neil Squire Foundation

LITERACY PROGRAMS SURVEY

Please Note: For the purposes of this survey, we define a physical disability according to mobility and agility. In 1991, the Health and Activity limitation Survey said that someone had a mobility disability if they were limited in the ability to walk, move from room to room, carry an object a short distance or stand for long periods. If someone reported an agility disability they were limited in the ability to bend, dress or undress, get in and out of bed, grasp or handle objects, or reach or cut food.

Program Description

Program Name _____

Program Location _____

Describe the services you provide and for whom.

What is your funding source(s)? (For example, School board, provincial government, community, self-funded) Please explain.

What geographical area do you serve? _____

Are your services Full-time Part-time Both

Is there a cost for your service? No Yes

If yes, who pays? Learner Sponsor Other

Are your services Full-time Part-time Both

When are your sessions? Day-Time Evenings Both

Are the hours flexible? No Yes

Would there be a problem accommodating your program around an individual's use of a specialized, accessible transit service? No Yes

If so, please explain below

Program Participation

Are there currently any people with physical disabilities registered in your program(s)?
 No Yes

If yes, how many _____

If not, have there been any people with physical disabilities in your program(s) in the last 2 years? No Yes

If yes, how many _____

If not, why not?

- No requests for service
- Unable to accommodate needs
- Referred to other services Program Name _____

Describe the barriers you have encountered in trying to accommodate learners with disabilities.

Were you able to come up with any imaginative or innovative solutions to the barriers encountered? No Yes

If yes, please explain

Would you like more information on how to make your classroom or program more accessible to people with physical disabilities?

Yes No

Do you feel that you and your colleagues have sufficient information and training to work with people with physical disabilities?

Yes No

If training were offered in the following areas would you participate?

Disability Awareness Yes No

Educational Tools (ie. computer software) Yes No

Technical Aids/Assistive Devices (ie. Keyboards, voice input) Yes No

Services who assess your learner's access needs Yes No

Services who can recommend appropriate equipment and provide training Yes No

Physical Accessibility of Program
--

ENTRANCE

Does the entrance have steps/stairs a ramp both

Are there automatic doors going into the building itself? No Yes

If not, are the doors lightweight? No Yes

Is the width of the main doors at least 32 inches or 80 cm? (Hint: 34 -36 inches is recommended)
 No Yes

INSIDE BUILDING

Are there elevators or ramps inside the building or is the building one level?

Are the classroom and other doorways at least 32 inches or 80 cm? (Hint: 34-36 inches is recommended) No Yes

Are there lever handles on the doors? No Yes

Are the door handles within reach of someone sitting in a wheelchair? No Yes

PUBLIC WASHROOMS

Are there signs on the doors indicating access? No Yes

Is the main door to the washroom lightweight? No Yes

Is there enough room inside the stall to turn a wheelchair (5 ft in radius)? No Yes

Does the cubicle door open out? No Yes

Is there a handle on the cubicle door? No Yes

Are there grab bars next to the toilet? No Yes

Is the height of the door latch low enough for a person in a wheelchair to reach?
 No Yes

Is the sink at a height accessible to a person in a wheelchair? No Yes

Does the sink have lever handfed taps? No Yes

Are the hand dryer, paper towel or soap dispensers easy to reach by a person in a wheelchair?
 No Yes

CLASSROOM(S) *Could your classroom(s) easily accommodate a person in a wheelchair?*

Is there enough space in the classroom for someone to move with their wheelchair or other assistive device easily and safely? No Yes

Are the tables/desks/workstations designed so a person using a wheelchair could sit comfortably? (Hint: height 28-30" from the floor) No Yes

If not, do you have access to height adjustable workstations or an innovative way to raise them? No Yes

If a learner could not use their hands or arms would they have access to:

a. a computer No Yes

If yes, would they also have access to assistive devices (ie. keyguards, voice input, different keyboards, easier access mouse or sticks etc.) No Yes

b. a helper to turn pages or take notes No Yes

Could your program provide attendant care services when necessary? No Yes

Is there some flexibility with time for a person with a physical disability to complete:

tasks No Yes

in-class assignments No Yes

tests No Yes

TRAINING

Do your tutors/educators receive training in the following:

disability awareness (for example, attitudes and language, energy conservation, pacing)

computers educational software tools

assistive devices training (for example, different keyboards and keyguards, easier access mouse or stick or voice input programs)

programs and services for people with disabilities

If your program provides one-to-one tutoring off site, do you provide support to ensure that the needs of your learners are met for example, the tutor and learner meeting in an accessible location (as described above). Please explain. If more room is necessary please use a separate sheet of paper.

In your opinion, what needs to be done to make literacy programs accessible to people with physical disabilities?

Additional Comments

Thank you for your time. Your comments are greatly appreciated.

October 1998

Pan-Canadian Literacy Project

LITERACY PROGRAMS SURVEY- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a part of the Pan-Canadian Literacy Project research component, a six page survey of literacy programs was distributed across Canada. Its purpose was to identify whether people with physical disabilities are accessing literacy programs. In addition, we wanted to identify any barriers and share the experiences and needs of programs providing literacy training. A total (known) of sixty-eight surveys were sent to community, school board, and college based programs. These programs provide a wide array of services through classes, small groups or one-on-one tutoring. Eight (67%) out of the twelve provinces and territories responded. Twenty-eight (41%) surveys were returned, twelve of which came from Ontario (42.8%). Both Saskatchewan and New Brunswick each returned four (14%) surveys. Three of Quebec's English programs (10.7%) responded to the survey and Alberta was next with two responses (7%). Finally, we received one response each from Prince Edward Island, British Columbia and Newfoundland (3.5%). Although surveys were sent to Manitoba, Nova Scotia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, no responses were received.

Initially, the programs were asked to describe their services, funding sources and the geographical areas they serve. Surprisingly, when asked about program participation 22 of the 28 programs (79%) identified that they were currently providing services to people with physical disabilities. For the purposes of this survey, the definition of physical disability refers to mobility and agility disabilities. The known total of people with physical disabilities in these programs was 70. Three of the twenty eight programs also mentioned having tutors with disabilities. Eight of the 28 programs (29%) identified that they had a total of 16 learners with disabilities in the past two years. There were 3 programs who did not understand physical disability as we had defined it because they identified that there were no learners in wheelchairs, but they mentioned learners with a limp, stroke or back injury in later questions. These learners were included in the overall numbers of learners in the programs, past and present.

The programs were asked to identify barriers encountered in providing service to people with physical disabilities. The following is a list of those items identified most often. Nine programs (32%) identified *Computers and Technical Aids or Assistive Devices* as the biggest barrier. *Physical Access and Support Care* (ie. Attendant care and Scribes) were each identified by 7 programs (25%). Please note, it was not the same 6 programs that identified both these issues. Lack of *Financial Resources* was identified as a barrier in combination with the issue of support care in 3 out of the 6 programs. *Transportation* was mentioned by 4 (14%) of the programs and finally, *Appropriate Resources* such as curriculum were mentioned by 2 (7%) of the programs. Interestingly, nine (32%) of the programs who responded to the survey said they had not encountered any barriers. Most noteworthy were the comments that accompanied their responses:

"Since the program takes place in schools, and all schools are accessible, there are no barriers"

All tutoring sessions can take place in the students home which is already adapted. We do not use classrooms."

"Other than the washroom problem we feel that wheelchairs can be accommodated in both classrooms."

"Our one physically disabled learner has access to transportation. He comes to the downtown campus and his tutor meets him in one of the many accessible buildings on campus".

In order to make these far-reaching statements or assumptions, these individuals or programs do not have a clear understanding of what is necessary for a program to be completely accessible to people with physical disabilities. Assuming that schools and learners' homes are totally accessible demonstrates the fact that attitudes and awareness are also a barrier (perhaps the largest) which only three programs (11%) acknowledged. One program stated this most clearly "most of the barriers centre around a lack of what it means to be disabled and what barriers do exist".

The programs were asked to answer questions about the physical accessibility of their building entrances, the classrooms and washrooms. The responses varied considerably, 4 programs (14%) identified that they had no site buildings and that classes would take place at accessible locations such as the learners' homes or at libraries etc. There were 7 programs (25%) not accessible to wheelchairs users, another 7 programs (25%) were partially accessible (some elements were missing). In addition, to physical access our criteria of accessibility included support care (attendants or scribes), computers and technical aids/assistive devices. Only one program (3.5%) was able to meet all of our accessibility criteria. There were 5 programs (18%) with physical access and computers (one of which had access to technology) but with no attendant or scribe support. One program was partially physically accessible with computer access and attendant care however, use of the washroom facilities would not be possible for someone in a wheelchair. Another program was accessible physically with support care but did not have access to computers.

Eighteen programs (64%) indicated that they would like information on how to make their programs more accessible to people with physical disabilities. Seven programs (25%) identified that this was not necessary because classes could take place anywhere and mentioned again that learners' homes are accessible or that they have counsellors providing this information. Fifteen programs (54%) identified that they did not feel they or their colleagues had sufficient information and training to work with people with disabilities. Ten of these 15 (67%) said they would like disability awareness training. There were nine programs (32%) that responded that they did have enough training, but 6 out of these nine programs (67%) said they would still participate in Disability Awareness Training.

The issue of disability awareness and attitudes was ranked highly in the questions around Training Needs. Twenty of the 28 programs (71%) currently receive no training in the area of disability, while eight programs (29%) said they do receive minimal training. Overall, twenty of 28 (71%) programs said that if Disability Awareness Training were offered they would participate. When asked about training related to educational tools (ie. computer software) fifteen programs (54%) receive no training, 12 (43%) programs do, but not specific to disability. Twenty-two programs (79%) would participate if training were offered. Twentyseven of the programs (96%) do not receive training about technical aids and assistive devices. When asked if they would participate if training were available, seventeen programs (61%) said yes perhaps because most people may not understand how this issue could be relevant or as previously mentioned the programs did not have the financial resources for this type of support. Fifteen programs (54%) said they would participate in training to learn about services that can assess the learner's needs. When asked if they would participate in training about services who can recommend appropriate equipment and provide training, twenty of the 28 programs (71%) said yes, however, some qualified their responses, depending on cost and requests for accommodation.

From the results of this survey, we can conclude that more programs than expected are providing literacy services to people with physical disabilities. However, this fact must be interpreted with caution because out of the 22 programs (79%) who provide services to people with physical disabilities only one program (3.5%) met the survey criteria for a truly accessible literacy program. Our criteria for this survey defines accessible as a program that :

1. is physically accessible (for wheelchair users as well as others)
2. is flexible
3. offers the use of computers and access to any necessary technical aids and assistive devices;
4. can provide support care (attendants or scribes) when necessary.

The other 27 programs had varying levels of access and whether someone with a physical disability would be able to use their services would depend on their specific needs. The criteria for a truly accessible program in this survey is very specific. Meeting this criteria ensures that no one would be excluded from improving their literacy skills because a program can not accommodate their disability.

The majority of programs identified the need for training and support in several areas:

- how to make their programs more accessible (64%)
- disability awareness (71%)
- technical aids and assistive devices (61%)
- services and programs who can assess learner's access needs (54%) and
- services who can recommend appropriate equipment and provide training (71%)
- educational tools (79%)

The following quotes from the surveys summarize the results most accurately:

- "Classrooms should be made accessible physically and teachers should be provided with the necessary training."
- "Literacy programs need to have the facilities, materials and training in place in order to make programs accessible to people with physical disabilities."
- "More training for instructors/teachers, more financial resources to purchase necessary modification or accommodation tools/software/hardware. More information about available resources in our own community."
- "We lack a process by which learners with physical disabilities can obtain the tools by which they can read and write - computers, software, "hands" to turn pages. We need someone to create and facilitate such a process."

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Appendix C

Database Form

Neil Squire Foundation

ADDRESS

Home Phone #: (____)_____

Fax #: (____)_____

Email:

DISABILITY

Disability Type:

Since When: ____/____/____

Since Birth:

OT Guidance: Yes No

OT Name:

Number of Interactions:

Total Hours: _____

Comments:

WORK INFORMATION

Previously Employed: Yes No

If 'Yes' - specify: _____

Work Type when began Literacy Program:

Full-time Part-time Contract None Other _____

Where/title:

Work Type when ended Literacy Program:

Full-time Part-time Contract None Other _____

Where/title:

Date Last Employed: ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy)

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Program: _____

Start Date: ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy) **End Date:** ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy)

Learning Environment: One-to-one Group Classroom

English:

ESL:

Math:

Received Computer Instruction/Tutoring: Yes No

Name of Computer Instructor: _____

Hours Spent with Computer Instructor: _____

Number of Interactions with Computer Instructor: _____

Name of Tutor/Teacher: _____

Hours Spent with Tutor/Teacher: _____

Number of Interactions with Tutor/Teacher: _____

ENROLLMENT/ LEAVING INFORMATION

Referral Source: _____

Contact Reason: _____

Why NSF: _____

Previous Contacts with other programs: Yes No

If Yes:

Program (previous): _____

Leaving Reason: _____

Leaving Reason (NSF): _____

GOALS

- Goals:*
- Employment*
 - Personal Reasons*
 - Upgrading for Grade*
 - Upgrading for College*
 - Upgrading for University*

Comments:

E - TESTS RESULTS

START ABLE TEST

Done: Yes No

Date: ____/____/____
mm/dd/yy

<i>Test #</i>		<i>Result (grade)</i>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

END ABLE TEST

Done: Yes No

Date: ____/____/____
mm/dd/yy

<i>Test #</i>		<i>Result (grade)</i>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Legend

Test#1 - Vocabulary

Test#2 - Reading Comprehension

Test#3 - Spelling

Test#4 - Language

Test#5 - Number Operations

Test#6 - Problem Solving

BARRIERS

To Successful Participation and Goal Attainment

Yes No

If yes:

Attendance: *Physical Health:* *Tutor:*

ParaTranspo: *Psycho/Social Issues:* *Disability Management:*

Home Care: *Physical Access:*

Funding: *Motivation:* *Other:*

Solutions: (List them)

Additional Comments:

ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations required? Yes No

If Yes:

Details:

F - TESTS RESULTS

START ABLE TEST

Done: Yes No

Date: ____/____/____
mm/dd/yy

<i>Test #</i>		<i>Result (grade)</i>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

END ABLE TEST

Done: Yes No

Date: ____/____/____
mm/dd/yy

<i>Test #</i>		<i>Result (grade)</i>
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Legend

Test#1 - Vocabulary

Test#2 - Reading Comprehension

Test#3 - Spelling

Test#4 - Language

Test#5 - Number Operations

Test#6 - Problem Solving

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Appendix D

Results of Project Research

Neil Squire Foundation

Youth with Disabilities Project Results

Attached as Appendix C is the database form that was used for this survey. It shows in detail the data that was collected by participants in all three test sites - Ottawa, Fredericton/Moncton and Saskatchewan.

In all, data was collected relating to 43 learners. Sixteen were women and 27 were men. There were three other learners who came to the programs in the last month of the project, however, it was impossible to collect much detailed information. The range and level of physical disability was varied. Many participants had mobility impairments, while others had physical disabilities which caused pain and/or fatigue if they were not set up properly. Over half of the participants had never been in the paid labour force. Seven were on a work related disability plan, either Workplace Safety and Insurance Board or Canada Pension Plan -the remainder were either supported by family members or were on income assistance, with the exception of two individuals - one who was supported through private insurance the other person was on Unemployment Insurance. The primary reasons for entering the literacy programs run by the Neil Squire Foundation were accessibility, the safe and non-threatening environment, and their interest in computers. For those with learning disabilities it was also important to have a quiet, distraction free learning environment.

The Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE) was used to obtain a base level of literacy when the literacy skills were at a high enough level. In many cases, this examination was too difficult for people to be able to complete any portion. The ABLE examination shows literacy levels from grade 1.5 (fifth month of grade 1) to post high school. Over the duration of the project we were able to see that a number of individuals moved considerably along the literacy continuum. Three people that were unemployed at the beginning of the project were working at the end of the project. In addition, two more joined an pre-employment training program and three others went on to further education.

There were a total of 14 youth who participated in the literacy field tests - eight women and six men. Their physical disabilities affected them in a variety of ways, from mobility impairment to visual/perceptual issues and/or fatigue. These young people ranged in age from 20 to 25. Their literacy levels ranged from grade 3 to post high school. In assessing the learners' progress using their portfolios (body of work) we identified definite improvement overall. Many of the youth had graduated from a special needs high school or class, with a grade 12 Basic. In searching for employment they found their literacy levels were too low to participate in the paid labour force. Some were referred to the programs from other community services.

The test site in Ottawa provided the learners (and the tutors if required) with the services of an Occupational Therapist to assist in the prescription of adaptive technology and ergonomic set-up and accommodation. In addition, the Occupational Therapist provided input on pacing when this was an issue. Some of the adaptive technologies and ergonomic adjustments that were utilized by the learners in these field tests were:

- sloping table tops
- specifically recommended ergonomic chairs
- screen guards
- special lighting
- track balls
- earphones
- voice input systems (such as DragonDictate)
- seating arrangements such as: set up to allow one leg to remain raised during sessions
- keyguards, and font enlargement programs

In Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, an Occupational Therapist was not on staff, so the technical specialists assisted with the adaptive equipment.

From the small numbers of youth that came to our test sites, it became apparent to us that youth with disabilities who are in the 16 - 19 age group, were not actively seeking out a literacy program to assist them. From our contacts with various schools and organizations it seems that this group stay in educational environments for two main reasons: (a.) Ministry of Education and Training guidelines allow them to stay in school until they are 21, or (b.) they are accessing other services such as the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario or the Children's Treatment Centres. In our discussions with these teachers and service providers, it also became apparent many young people do not really understand what literacy is, or that working at improving your literacy skills helps with memory, problem-solving skills, etc. The International Adult Literacy Survey defines literacy as "the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community - to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential. Youth do not seem to understand that inadequate literacy skills can have a direct impact on participation in the labour market. From our conversations with young people (and others who were not youth), many people are not aware of the literacy level they require for their job choice. In fact, often their job choices are totally unrealistic in relation to their current literacy level. As many young people with disabilities have been very marginalized, and as such, have never had opportunities for summer or part-time employment during their school years, the problem is further compounded - by not having any direct experience to demonstrate what literacy levels are needed in the labour market.

Therefore, to gather more data, we carried out a further, albeit small youth literacy research study through the Ottawa and Fredericton/Moncton offices of the Foundation. This was conducted in order to supplement the information we had already compiled from the three field test sites. A summary of this research is contained in Appendix D. As you will see, the results were contrary to our hypothesis that youth did not have a good understanding of their current literacy levels. In fact, they were very aware of their literacy strengths and weaknesses. The results, did however, suggest that there is a need and desire for most of the participants to improve their reading and writing skills in an accessible literacy program.

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Appendix E

Research Project Summary

Neil Squire Foundation

Pan-Canadian Literacy Project - Youth Research Project Summary

A small youth literacy research study was conducted to supplement the information we had already compiled from all 3 field test sites. The data found would be compared to the information obtained from youth learners currently participating in Neil Squire Foundation literacy programs in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario. The results would either support or contrast the original project hypothesis.

Twelve youth with physical disabilities in Ontario and New Brunswick participated in a threepart research study to assess their literacy needs. The results were contrary to our hypotheses that youth do not have a good understanding of their current literacy levels, in fact, they were very aware of their literacy strengths and weaknesses. The results did, however, suggest that there is a need (and desire) for most of the participants to improve their reading and writing skills in an accessible literacy program.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were youth with physical disabilities between the ages of 16 and 24 who were out of school. They were members of the community at large and not currently participating in a literacy program.

Materials

Part A: The Survey - Questions 1 through 3

The first three survey questions requested background information on the participant's disability, education and whether they felt there was a need for them to improve their reading and writing skills.

Participants were given only the first page of the survey, a pencil, and a staff person was available to assist in filling out responses. One participant did request that their questions and test would be available in large print. This request was accommodated.

Part B: The ABLE Test

The ABLE (Adult Basic Learning Examination, Second Edition Level 3) was used as a standardized tool to assess the current literacy levels of the survey participants. This assessment tests Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Spelling (homophones, structural principles, phonetic principles) and Language (punctuation, capitalization, applied grammar). Only Test Three (Spelling) and Test Four (Language) were used in this study and the Norms Booklet was used to score the test results.

Each participant was given the test booklet (one was photocopied in larger print) and an answer sheet, along with a pencil and staff were available if assistance was required to physically write the answers.

Part C: The Survey - Questions 4 through 9

Each participant was asked to respond to the last six questions on the survey after meeting with a staff person who explained the results of their tests. The questions dealt with whether they were surprised with the results, whether they were familiar with literacy programs in their community, if they had ever tried to access these services, and if so, what their experience was with the services, whether they would like to access a literacy program to improve their literacy skills, and what, if any, special needs they have related to their disability. And finally, they were asked for any additional comments.

Again, they were given pencils, the survey questions (one in large print) and a staff person was available as required to provide physical assistance filling out the questions.

Background Information and Procedure

Initially, we contacted specific youth programs such as the Youth Services Bureau and Frontier College to determine if they had encountered any youth with physical disabilities needing help with literacy. According to these programs, their contact with youth with physical disabilities has either been very limited and not related to literacy, or not at all.

As a result, we liaised with the Bridge to Independence Youth Implementation Committee at Disabled Persons' Community Resources to advise us as to the best way to reach youth with disabilities. The various service providers and consumers on this committee recommended contacting schools with Grade 12 Basic programs, however, under the requirements of the funding for this project, our research was to focus on youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are out of school. The members of this Committee felt that most youth with physical disabilities from 16-21 years of age would more than likely be in school.

In an effort to reach youth with physical disabilities in the community, it was then decided that the next best place to connect with them would be through the disability-related services.

We contacted eight other organizations who service people with physical disabilities such as the Easter Seals Society, the March of Dimes, the Canadian Paraplegic Association, and other services such as Community Centres and a regional Sports Council.

The same process was repeated in New Brunswick. Unfortunately, responses were lower than we envisioned. The information was distributed to service organizations and the media in writing and did not specify the purpose or type of research just the criteria for participation.

Organizations were contacted by phone prior to disseminating information and again to follow-up on any questions or requests. The deadline for participation was extended to mid-January, and the contacts were notified, in hopes of reaching more potential participants. The criteria for participation was as follows:

- a person with a physical disability
- between the ages of 16 and 24
- not in school

An honourarium of thirty dollars was also offered to those who participated. Potential participants were asked to contact the Foundation by phone and after answering questions to determine eligibility were scheduled into one of four possible dates. Some exceptions were made and other dates were set to accommodate the participants schedules.

Twelve people agreed to participate. The average age of the participants was twenty-one. There was only one participant below the age of 19. Participants were not given a time limit and were told to take breaks whenever necessary. Two staff people shared the responsibility of scoring the tests using the answer key provided, and tests were scored right away. Once tests were scored the two staff people alternated meeting one on one with participants and shared the results with them. Participants were asked to answer the second part of the survey after receiving their results, and as they prepared to leave they were given honourariums.

Results and Observations

Youth Response

Due to the lack of response from youth between 16 and 18 years of age, some additional research was conducted to find out from a few community services what their experience has been with youth. It appears from the limited information available that any youth with disabilities who were accessing medical services were most often participating in some type of school program unless there was a difficulty learning, a lack of interest or health problems or illness. From the community feedback, it was suggested that those youth who are sixteen and over and not required by law to go to school are also not accessing other services for people with disabilities in the community. This feedback, may provide some explanation why our efforts to contact youth with physical disabilities who are 18 and under, and not in school were unsuccessful.

Part B - ABLE

Two participants did not complete the test due to the tests' level of difficulty and participants increasing frustration levels. The ABLE advises scoring any unanswered questions as incorrect therefore, their scores were still included in the survey results.

The scores are summarized in Table A and include the spelling and language scores as well as a total language score. On average, the test takers scored at a grade level of 6.6 in spelling, 6.5 in language, and 6.5 for total language (spelling and language combined).

Out of the twelve participants, two (17%) scored at or above their identified educational levels* whereas the remaining ten (83%) scored below their identified levels. Out of these ten participants, four (40%) scored one or two grades below their identified levels, one (10%) participant scored below their educational achievement by at 5 grades, and the remaining five (50%) scored below their identified educational levels by 6 or more grades. These numbers at first glance would indicate that the participants in this study did not have an accurate idea of their literacy levels. However, the responses to the survey questions indicate otherwise.

Part A and C - The Survey

Out of the twelve participants who completed the survey, eight were not surprised by their results. Of these eight, 5 identified that they were aware they needed help and three knew their skills levels. Therefore, overall 67% of the participants were aware of their current literacy levels whether they were high or low. Seven (58%) identified a need to improve their literacy skills and out of these, two were surprised with their results. Five participants (42%) felt that they did not need to improve their skills. The total language scores of these five participants were 11.0, 4.7, 12.1, 5.6, 10.5 and two of them were surprised by their results, three were not. Three of these five participants identified that they would be interested in working on their literacy skills. Out of the other seven participants, four expressed an interest in using literacy services if they were available for a total of seven (58%) out of twelve participants interested in accessing literacy services. Four respondents (33%) identified that they would not be interested and one did not respond.

Seven of the participants (58%) identified that they were not aware of literacy services available to them. The five remaining participants (42%) were aware of some services, and two of these had used services in the past, however, only one was pleased with the services they used.

Four of the twelve participants (33%) identified specific reasons for their test results:

- One expressed frustration at being "pushed through school and then asked to leave in Grade 7.
- Three identified that their first language was french and one of these also identified having a learning disability.

**All participants except one (Gr. 6) identified finishing Grade 12/13 or Grade 12 (Basic)*

Other information shared by the participants that would be important to note: & One participant identified that it took them seven years to complete high school due to changes in their disability
0 One participant identified having the opportunity to use literacy services, but due to personal issues and a lack of motivation they did not

Disability Accommodations Identified

Interestingly, five participants identified no accessibility requirements for using literacy services. Yet, within the field test sites it has been our experience that specific needs or supports may only be identified and provided once a learner has joined a program. Therefore, having access to information, support services and technology has been extremely important to our programs and learners. The needs currently identified in our programs were also identified by seven of the twelve participants in this survey. They felt that in order to use literacy services they would need (some identified more than one need):

- wheelchair access including the entrance, classroom, washroom, etc. (5)
- support services such as scribes and attendant care (2)
- technology such as computers, tape recorders or large print (3)

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the questions raised around youth between sixteen to eighteen, it would seem that more research into their experiences and skills would be appropriate, however, the planning and procedures for conducting the research would have to be revised.

From the discrepancies between perceived literacy levels (ie. A Basic Grade 12) and actual literacy skills, some research could be conducted around the barriers that exist within the school system (inadequate supports, limited budgets and time constraints etc.) which prevent some youth with physical disabilities from achieving their potential. Many of these youth later come to literacy programs as they become aware that their skills leave them lacking in their search for employment.

Sixty-seven percent of the participants in this survey are aware of their literacy levels, whether they are higher or lower. Fifty-eight percent of the participants once they were aware of their levels would be interested in using literacy services. One of those interested scored at a post high school level, but felt there was "always more to learn".

The International Adult Literacy Survey (persons aged 16-64) identified that if literacy skills are not used they can be lost, therefore, the question which asked highest school grade achieved does not necessarily give an accurate indication of the participants current literacy levels.

In order for youth with physical disabilities to access literacy services they need to be aware of the services and have access to supports and technology. As a result, more outreach to youth with physical disabilities is required. Existing services need to be made aware of the needs of youth with physical disabilities. Information, services and expertise need to be shared.

RESULTS

Subjects	Spelling Raw Score /30	Spelling GE	Language Raw Score /30	Language GE	Total Language GE
A	23	9.9	26	PHS	11.0
B	29	PHS	29	PHS	PHS
C	28	PHS	22	9.1	11.5
D	7	4.1	17	5.9	4.7
E	8	4.4	13	4.5	4.3
F	18	7.4	19	6.9	6.9
G	24	10.7	27	PHS	12.1
H	7	4.1	7	3.4	3.6
I	15	6.3	15	5.0	5.6
J	15	6.3	0	-	3.7
K	0	-	19	6.9	4.0
L	20	8.2	28	PHS	10.5

LEGEND

GE - Grade Equivalency

PHS - Post High School

Total Language Score - the sum of the Spelling and Language Raw Scores /60)

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Appendix F

Field Test Sites Summary

Neil Squire Foundation

	CASP- Fredericton, NB	SARAW- Regina, SK	ACCESS TO LITERACY- Nepean, ON
Type of Program	Classroom and one-on-one with instructor. There is currently one instructor. Beginning this fall, the program will be accessible to learners in Moncton with the help of another instructor/volunteer tutor.	Classroom and one-on-one with instructor or tutor. There are 2 instructors and 8 tutors.	One-on-one tutoring program with ten volunteer tutors.
Length of Program	The program has been running since November 1994. As of April 98, the program was receiving funding in 5 month blocks (20 weeks), however, they recently received funding to March 1999. This program breaks for July and August	The program runs over the school year, September to June and has been in operation for the last 2 years.	The program itself has been running for the last 3 years. The program offers tutoring and tutor training all year long.
Intake and Assessment Process	<p>This program has 2 intake forms, one for the Community Academic Services Program (CASP) and one for the instructor, there is an informal intake interview.</p> <p>The learners in this program are assessed using informal tests or exercises. There are review exercises or tests after each section or subject. The teacher responds to questions as the need arises and reviews lessons with students daily.</p>	<p>The SARAW program has an intake form and intake interview.</p> <p>No particular assessment process, but the Informal Reading Inventory (IRI) is used as a level indicator.</p> <p>Learners review their work daily with their instructors and receive immediate feedback.</p>	<p>There is a formal intake and assessment process within this program. Learners are interviewed and must complete the Spelling and Language components of the Adult Basic Learning Examination (level 3) for a Total Language Score. The ABLE test identifies a specific Grade Equivalency up to Grade 12 and post high school. The total score and individual questions give the tutor an idea of the learner's specific weak area(s) ie. punctuation.</p>

	CASP- Fredericton, NB	SARAW- Regina, SK	ACCESS TO LITERACY- Nepean, ON
Total Number of Learners	5 (4 Men and 1 Woman) <i>Learners in this program may or may not have disabilities, however, this is the only CA SP in New Brunswick which services people with physical disabilities</i>	13 (8 Men and 5 Women)	8 (5 Men and 3 Women)
Length of Stay in Program <i>None of these programs has time limits on the length of a learner's participation, as long as there is some measure of progress then a learner is encouraged to continue. When programs feel a learner has moved beyond the scope of their program, every attempt is made to find another appropriate and accessible community program for the learner. Unfortunately, this has not always been possible and thereby a learner's hard work and progress are halted.</i>	On average learners can stay in the program for a year or more. Learners can join the program at any time throughout the year.	On average, learners stay in the program for two years or more. Students can join the program at any time and may decide to continue in the fall.	Learners in this program stay anywhere from 2 months to 2 years or more.
Age Category of Learners <i>Youth are those 16 to 24 years old</i>	5 Adult Learners	9 Adult Learners 4 Youth Learners	3 Adult Learners 5 Youth Learners
Types of Disabilities of Learners	Physical (ie. Mobility and Agility)	Physical, Developmental, Hearing, Communication, Cognitive	Physical and Communication
Areas of Study	Reading and Writing (English) Math and some History and Geography	Reading and Writing (English), Math	Reading and Writing (English), Math and writing business letters

	CASP- Fredericton, NB	SARAW- Regina, SK	ACCESS TO LITERACY- Nepean, ON
Teching Tools Used	<p>Primarily textbooks such as the Challenger Series, Power English and Breaking Through to Math. Some learners may use SARAW but only for a short time.</p> <p><i>Use of the SARAW program is limited because the students in this program are at higher levels and lose interest quickly and a few of the learners expressed a lack of comfort using computers.</i></p>	<p>Primarily, Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW), Speech Assisted Math (SAM) and some print (flash cards and visual aids) or textbook resources to supplement specific areas.</p>	<p>Print and Textbook resources such as the Challenger Series, also limited use of SARAW and several software (CD-Rom) programs.</p>
Learner Histories- General	<p>Learners were referred by other community services or literacy programs, their school experiences were not positive so they left A couple of the learners took manual labour type jobs. Now, as a result of their injuries, they must look for different kinds of jobs. In order to qualify for these new jobs, they felt they needed to improve their literacy skills. Primarily, the learners want to improve their literacy skills to achieve their independence and increase their employment options.</p> <p><i>I was unable to interview one of the learners who joined the program after my visit in April.</i></p>	<p>Learners were referred by other community programs for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Most of the learners in this program were in special education classes or programs.</p> <p>Learners joined the program to increase their literacy skills, use computers and most came to the program to improve their opportunities for employment.</p>	<p>A high percentage of the learners in this program come with goals of improving their reading, writing and math skills because many (in fact almost all) of the learners realized that their special education classes left them lacking the necessary skills for living independently and without marketable skills to enter the labour force.</p> <p>Most of the learners in the program came to Neil Squire hoping to join the Creative Employment Options Program. They did not initially identify literacy as an issue, however, after testing they felt they could benefit from working with a tutor to improve their literacy skills.</p>

	CASP- Fredericton, NB	SARAW- Regina, SK	ACCESS TO LITERACY- Nepean, ON
Learners' Feedback on the Programs - General	<p>The learners have enjoyed their program and feel they have begun to reach their goals. They have been able to offer support and encourage one another in the classroom setting and their instructor encourages this spirit of cooperation and feels it has helped to increase the confidence and esteem of the learners. They feel very supported by their teacher and they are happy with the resources they use as well as the location of their lessons.</p> <p><i>A couple of learners expressed in an interest in learning about computers and perhaps moving on to Creative Employment Options.</i></p>	<p>The learners have enjoyed their program, they feel very comfortable and supported by their teachers and tutors. They are also very happy with their classroom setting. The learners are very focused on their individual learning so that they do not interact with one another a lot.</p> <p>These learners also expressed appreciation to their teachers and feel they are heading in the direction of their goals. They are very happy with both the SARAW and SAM programs. Several of the learners asked for more time and resources and a few would like their own tutors to work one on one.</p> <p>Interestingly, several of the students expressed a desire to do more math than writing and this is because they were doing well in Math and had trouble thinking of something to write about.</p>	<p>The learners with one to one tutoring were very happy with their tutor matches and felt things were going very well. They were very satisfied with their surroundings and the options available to them. They were happy with available resources, but requested more software programs and extended hours for the program. Both of these requests have been acted upon. The learner/tutor matches are content to work independently, without a lot of supervision, and are comfortable coming to staff with any issues or questions when the need arises. They are given the opportunity to meet with the program's coordinator(s) on a regular basis, just how often is decided upon by the learner and tutor.</p> <p>As previously mentioned several of the learners in this program came to us after attempting to get in to CEO and identifying areas which needed work. Their goals in the literacy program are to progress enough to be able to move to Creative Employment Options. While others want to be able to enter college upgrading classes and still others just want to find paid work.</p>

	CASP- Fredericton, NB	SARAW- Regina, SK	ACCESS TO LITERACY- Nepean, ON
Program Capacity	This program has had up to six learners at one time. The program runs five days a week from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Individual days and hours are flexible to the students'needs.	This program can accommodate 4 learners at most so a schedule is arranged to give learners the opportunity to come twice a week for a maximum total of 16 students. Sessions run from 9:30-11:30 am and then 2-4 pm, Monday through Thursday.	This program is offered Monday through Friday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm and on Saturday from 9:00 am to 1 pm. The day and time is agreed upon by the learner and tutor and each session runs from 1.5 to 2 hours per week.
Training	<p>Until this coming fall, the instructor of the program worked alone. She has a teaching background and through the Community Academic Services Program (CASP), she has attended Practitioner Training workshops.</p> <p>This fall, a new instructor/ volunteer tutor will assist in the running of a satellite class in Moncton and she will be trained and supervised by the program's instructor. Classes in Moncton will probably run 2 days a week.</p>	<p>This program has a SARAW Volunteer Training Manual for its tutors. The manual is very comprehensive and contains information on the Foundation, Instructor Job Descriptions and Program Policies as well as information on what makes a good teacher and suggestions for how to use SARAW. Disability specific information is also included. This manual was funded by the National Literacy Secretariat publication date January 1998.</p> <p>The program's instructors also have access to Practitioner Training workshops offered by other literacy organizations as well as a tutor training specifically for the SARAW and SAM programs. This tutor training is provided by the SARAW Director and Volunteer Coordinator.</p>	<p>This program has a tutor training program and manual. The training includes background on the Foundation, roles and responsibilities of staff, tutors and learners, Computer and Technical Aids and Assistive Devices Training, Review of the Resources available to the tutors and Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training.</p> <p>The manual contains information and statistics on literacy, learning disabilities, goal setting, learner profiles and progress reports as well as an article on computers and literacy. Additional information will be added to this manual before the end of the Pan-Canadian Project</p> <p>Additional tutor training is offered by both the program itself as the need arises as well as in Practitioner Training Workshops sponsored by Ottawa-Cadeton Coalition for Uteracy.</p>

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Appendix G

Profile of a Successful Tutor

Neil Squire Foundation

PROFILE OF A SUCCESSFUL TUTOR

The following profile was compiled primarily through feedback from the three field test sites in Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. Their experiences working with 31 volunteer tutors/instructors in their (one-on-one, group or classroom) literacy programs have been incorporated into this tutor profile. Some limited research, into existing documents which provide training and/or policies and procedures for programs working with volunteer tutors, was also conducted and included. One of the documents used was *Demystifying Adult Literacy for Volunteer Tutors (Chapter One)* from the Literacy Partners of Manitoba. This resource can be accessed on the Internet through the National Adult Literacy Database website. Other resources used include the *Frontier College Tutor Training Manual, A Policy Bulletin from Community Literacy of Ontario, the Volunteer Manual of the Neil Squire Foundation SARA W Program* (Regina) and *the People, Words and Change Literacy Handbook* (Ottawa).

The resources identified several necessary tutor qualities or characteristics and the programs concur with their findings. Some of these qualities are even more vital for tutors working with people with physical disabilities.

- It is extremely important for tutors to be reliable and punctual. Should a tutor consistently not show up for sessions (without cancelling or for no particular reason) they are sending a message to the learner that they are not important. They are also not providing a good example of appropriate behaviour to learners. By the same token, as an example to the learners, a tutor's appearance should be clean/tidy.
- Tutors need to be understanding and accepting (empathy not sympathy) of a learner and their disability and any outside factors affecting their learning or performance. Some factors may include transportation, attendant care, medication, lighting and positioning and finally most vital is the learner's self concept. Tutors must receive disability awareness training to better prepare them for working with people with disabilities. Most of the volunteer tutors in the three field test sites had never worked with people with physical disabilities before. For this reason, it is vital that they be trained (preferably by a person/learner with a physical disability) and offered the ongoing support of program staff.
- Tutors need a general orientation/training on the organization and program. They must also receive training on how to tutor (ie. how to give feedback etc), and plan lessons. Interestingly, in one site program, the tutor may not receive training until they have been working with their learner for a while. It has been found in two of the sites that depending on the topic this approach can work best because a tutor is then only given information that is relevant to their specific learner and they would have an opportunity to ask questions and identify problems.

- For many people with physical disabilities the act of writing or using a computer is very labourious and slow. Patience is most definitely a requirement. If a learner is rushed they will not learn.
- A tutor needs to be flexible and accommodating. If a learner arrives late to a session (due to transportation services) the tutor needs to be able to adapt and work with the time they have. Should a learner arrive with a concern that is relevant to their daily lives and they need the tutor's help, a tutor should accommodate this request particularly because literacy skills are no longer just the ability to read and write, but also to problem-solve.
- A tutor needs to establish a good interpersonal relationship with their learner. They need to be honest and open with one another so that they can share the learner's goals. A tutor has a role in helping the learner to set realistic goals and be tactful and straightforward when helping their learner to identify their weaknesses or unrealistic goals.
- A tutor needs to be able to use their imagination to keep the lessons interesting and fresh so that both they and learners do not lose interest.
- A tutor must be responsible for their actions and not make promises they are not able to keep. They must understand their role and responsibilities and fulfil their responsibilities to the administration of the program by participating in program evaluation, lesson planning and completing required progress reports or profiles.
- Tutors must be motivated to learn and teach and to stay committed to their learner/tutor match. If their learner is not a priority while they are together the learner will know. At the same time, it is important that a program not have too high expectations of their volunteer tutors with their time and/or responsibilities. A program will lose volunteers if they feel taken advantage of or unappreciated. Losing a tutor may also happen if learners are not expected or encouraged to follow the same "rules and regulations" as the tutor.
- One of the most important traits of a tutor is their willingness to learn. If they are too set in their ways and have preconceived, narrow-minded views of learning and teaching, they will not be open to new ideas, suggestions or constructive criticism. Their approach to teaching should not be "heavyhanded". Tutors must always keep in mind that they are working with adults and not children. Adults learn in different ways and for different reasons. Adults will not waste their time, if they don't feel they are making progress they will not continue with tutoring.
- Tutors need to enjoy working with others and be able to deal with conflict or difficulties immediately. There are many issues that can arise when working with people with disabilities. Some of them include inappropriate behaviours or attachments, expectations around providing physical assistance, or emotional difficulties. It is the role of the program staff to provide support and suggestions in these areas, however, tutors must feel comfortable to discuss any issue with staff. "They must be willing to be part of a team and likewise treated as a team member."

- Tutors must be trustworthy and expected to maintain confidentiality. Making the tutor aware of the policies and procedures around confidentiality is the program's responsibility. In many communities, the disabled community is relatively small, therefore, it would be easy for a person with a physical disability to be identified should their privacy be violated.
- A tutor needs to be respectful of the differences and difficulties faced by people with physical disabilities and how these issues can affect their self-esteem and belief in themselves. In order to be supportive and assist a learner with self-esteem, the tutor needs to have a positive self-image.
- Just as a tutor would expect to be treated with respect they should do the same. A learner comes to a literacy program to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills, but they come with a variety of experiences, knowledge and skills which should not be forgotten. A tutor can validate the learner and help them build on their strengths. It is also important to acknowledge that a tutor also brings with them other knowledge or experience and they should "be respected for the knowledge they bring to the "job" even though they are not being paid for it".
- A tutor should have a sense of humour and be able to laugh at themselves and help the learner to enjoy learning. A tutor should never laugh at a learner for this can be very demoralizing. Laughing with a learner, about a funny story or something the tutor did, will help to relieve stress.
- A tutor should display initiative by researching and planning lessons once they have been given necessary information and tools by their program. Initiative is also important when problem-solving. A tutor should always feel comfortable to offer suggestions to improve the provision of services.
- To ensure a successful match the tutor must follow a learner-centred approach, giving the learner the control over and input into their learning. The tutor needs to encourage the learner and find ways of acknowledging their successes.

For a tutor to be successful they need several things from their programs. Some of these have already been mentioned but they are important enough to mention again:

- support and feedback as well as access to on-going training (ie. workshops) offered by staff and other organizations (particularly related to disability such as learning disabilities or technology)
- full-time program staff and flexible program hours, this assures regular contact with learners and tutors and meets a variety of needs. If a program runs on part-time schedules then either tutor/learner support or program administration will suffer.
- opportunities for tutors to learn from one another (ie. regular meetings, bulletins or e-mail), interacting with one another allows for exchange of ideas and in a supportive environment (ie. a mentor)

- clear expectations and consequences for both the learner and tutor (ie. Policies and Procedures)
- easy access to resources through staff, a database or practitioner training programs
- to be shown appreciation, acknowledging their time and efforts and celebrating special occasions (ie. birthdays, anniversaries)

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Appendix H

Resources List

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SOFTWARE PROGRAMS USED BY LEARNERS AND TUTORS

Staple'96	Tutor Training Tool for Assessing and Teaching Reading and Writing - 30 hours
Staple Volume 1	Tutor Training Tool for Assessing and Teaching Reading and Writing - 30 hours - <i>updated version</i>
Staple Volume 2	Literacy and Math and Lesson Planning
Math Advantage	Grades 4, 5, 6 with a workbook
Language Arts	Grammar, Spelling, Vocabulary, Reading, Comprehension and Writing - includes puzzles and games Grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
Fractions Made Easy	For elementary, middle, or high school students, larger fonts on screen
Ultimate Word Attack	Vocabulary Building activities and games (ie. Crossword puzzles)
Math for the Real World	Fractions, Decimals, Percents, Time, Money, Weights and Measures, Charts, Logic Problems Grades 5 and up
English	Grammar (2), Vocabulary, Composition - for high school students
Oxford Study Shelf	Includes a school dictionary, thesaurus and instruction Manual
WordSearch Creator	Create word search puzzles, includes a instruction manual - for tutors
Precision Writing	Level A, Grade 5 - 12, Sentences, Tenses, Shift in Pronouns

Paragraph Power	Grades 6-10, organizing thoughts and details, writing paragraphs, editing paragraphs
Vocabulary Development	Includes Lesson Plans and Materials Binder Grades 3 - 9 eg. Practice exercises and the rules
Punctuation Rules	Includes Lesson Plans and Materials Binder Grades 3 - 9 eg. Writing a Letter etc.
Spelling Rules	Includes Lesson Plans and Materials Binder Grades 3 - 9 eg. Practice exercises and the rules

OTHER COMPUTER PROGRAMS USED

(SARAW) Speech Assisted Reading and Writing

This DOS program includes lessons for Grades 2-7 and uses a speech synthesizer (DEC Talk) to help students learn. The SARAW menu gives learners practice reading and writing and building their spelling and vocabulary skills using word or sentence Activities/"games".

(SAM) Speech Assisted Math

Another DOS based program to give learners an opportunity to practice adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. This program also incorporates math lessons that are "real life" situations such as making change, how to divide a restaurant bill or figuring out Ups.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND OTHER ASSISTIVE DEVICES USED BY LEARNERS

Learners in the programs had access to different technical aids or assistive devices in order to effectively use their computers. These included:

Mouse Devices:

Kensington Expert Mouse

Logitech Scrolling Mouse

MicroSpeed Trackball

customized mouse features (enlarged curser, black curser, curser trails)

Datalux Space Saver Keyboard

Other Technology:

There is currently no one using an on-screen keyboard, but we have in the past.

Non-Technical Devices:

A document holder mounted below the monitor to align the monitor, document and keyboard and thus, compensate for poor visual tracking.

A straight edged ruler or card placed on a paper document to underline the line being read and cover the letters yet to be read. This is also useful for visual tracking and to reduce distractions.