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40. Title: What Kind of Adult Literacy Policy will help all Adults Develop the English Language and Literacy Skills they Need to Participate Fully in American Life?

Organization: National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

Title: Information Literacy Report : The National Forum on Information Literacy

Organization: The American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy

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This entry is a summary of the report.

THE CHALLENGE

Today's information society transcends all political, social and economic boundaries. Within it, the abilities to access and effectively use information are crucial to both individual and national advancement. Moreover, the inherent dangers and opportunities of the information society are exacerbated by the global community in which the current and all future generations must exist and within which differences in cultural orientations and information systems make the management of information more complex and challenging.

THE PROBLEM

Despite these realities, the reform reports of the 1980's largely ignored issues relating to the superabundance of rapidly changing information, information technologies and libraries. To address these omissions, the American Library Association (ALE) convened a group of national leaders in education and librarianship. In January of 1989, the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy released its final report,* which states in its opening:

How our country deals with the realities of the Information Age will have enormous impact on our democratic way of life and on our nation's ability to compete internationally. Within America's information society, there also exists the potential of addressing many long-standing social and economic inequities. To reap such benefits, people--as individuals and as a nation--must be information literate. To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Producing such a citizenry will require that schools and colleges appreciate and integrate the concept of information literacy into their learning programs and that they play a leadership role in equipping individuals and institutions to take advantage of the opportunities inherent within the information society.

Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.

Acknowledging that the major obstacle to people becoming information literate citizens, who are prepared for lifelong learning, "is a lack of public awareness of the problems created by information illiteracy," the report recommends the formation of a coalition of national organizations to promote information literacy.

*Individual copies of the report can be obtained free of charge by writing to Information Literacy Report, American Literacy Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

THE RESPONSE

Within this environment and with seed money provided by ALA, the National Forum on Information Literacy has been established to focus national attention within the United States on the importance of information literacy to individuals, to the economy and to citizenship. Meeting for the first time in November of 1989, Forum members joined with the authors of the information literacy report in subscribing to information literacy as an essential ability for all people. The Forum is committed to fostering public awareness and support for the role of education in the development of information literate people. Forum activities will include:

1. identifying organizations whose purposes can be enhanced through the promotion of information literacy and encouraging their membership or affiliation in the Coalition;
2. encouraging member organizations and individuals to advocate appropriate actions to promote information literacy;
3. providing both a national forum for the exchange of ideas and programs so as to create public awareness of the need for information literacy, and specific examples of how information literacy may affect individual Americans;
4. developing a public awareness program using press releases, public service announcements, and other means, to alert citizens to the importance of information literacy;
5. monitoring emerging trends and patterns, encouraging research, and demonstrating projects;
6. promoting the establishment of a clearinghouse to gather and disseminate information on programs of information literacy and on efforts to promote information literacy;
7. pursuing such other activities as its membership may direct.

NATIONAL FORUM ON INFORMATION LITERACY MEMBERSHIP LIST

American Association for Adult Continuing Education
American Association of Community and Junior Colleges
American Association of Colleges for Teachers Education
Association of American Publishers
American Association of School Administrators
American Association of School Librarians
American Association of University Professors
Association for Educational Communications and Technology
Association for Library and Information Science Education
American Newspaper Publishers Association
Association of Public Data Users
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
Commission on Higher Education Middle States Associations
Council of Chief State School Offices
Council of Independent Colleges
Education Commission of the States
Friends of Libraries U.S.A.
Information Industry Association
National Alliance of Black School Educators
National Association of Counties
National Association of Partners in Education

National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education
National Community Education Association
National Consumers League
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Education Association
National Partners for Libraries and Literacy
National School Boards Association
National Science Teachers Association
U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U.S. National Commission on Libraries & Information Science

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Title: Laubach Literacy of Canada: Report Card,

November 1991

Organization: Laubach Literacy of Canada

Complete text:

Laubach analyzed its growth during the last three years and concluded:

1988	1991
1. 122 literacy councils	1. 152 literacy councils Of these 11 are native 1 prison 2 are youth 1 seniors 1 women's 1 workplace 1 university
2. 6,100 tutors 0 ESOL tutors	2. 12,626 tutors 9,672 active 2,954 others 36 ESOL tutors
3. 6 Provincial Organizations	3. 8 Provincial Organizations
4. Trainer number not known 10 Apprentice Tutor Trainers 17 Tutor Trainers 0 Apprentice Supervising Tutor Trainers 11 Supervising Tutor Trainers 0 Master Tutor Trainers 0 Apprentice Tutor Trainers - ESOL	4. 263 Trainers 158 Apprentice Tutor Trainers 47 Tutor Trainers 31 Apprentice Supervising Tutor Trainers 19 Supervising Tutor Trainers 6 Master Tutor Trainers 17 Apprentice Tutor Trainers - ESOL
5. (i) 3,000 students (ii) 312,000 tutoring hours	5. (i) 8,300 students (ii) 863,200 tutoring hours
6. 1 student attending a National Conference	6. 20 students attending a National Conference
7. 0 students on National Board	7. 1 student on National Board
8. 75 hours continuing literacy training in councils	8. 300 hours of continuing literacy training in councils
9. 1,000 hours of basic literacy training workshops	9. 2,640 hours of basic literacy training workshops
10. Newsletter: Literacy Connections Circulation: 6,100	10. Newsletter: Literacy Connections Circulation: 9,924

No. of pages: 8
Published: 3 times a year
11. 0 books published

12. 0 combined Executive and
Provincial Presidents' meetings
13. 2 Distributorship staff

No. of pages: 8
Published: 3 times a year
11. Books published
Winners
Winners (French)
Voices From Canada's Past
(Books 1 and 2) Canada
Our Country Literacy
Trainers Manual,
Canadian Edition
The Team That Tells the Tale
R.G. Educational Consulting
Booklets:
a) Health and Safety in the Workplace
b) Childcare - Newborn to Age 10
c) Taking the Mystique Out Of
Learning Disabilities:
A Practical Guide for Literacy Tutors
d) Making It Meaningful: A Whole
Language Handbook for Literacy
Tutors
e) Branching Out: A Tutor' Guide to
Puposeful and Creative Writing
f) Living With Your Teenager:
A Parent's Guide to Adolescence
g) A Guide to First Aid
h) A Mosaic of Spelling Exercises
i) Looking Ahead: A Tutor's Guide
to Lesson Planning
j) The Environment
k) Write On
l) Tutor's Guide for Write ON
12. 4 combined Executive and
Provincial Presidents' meetings
13. 3 Distributorship staff
4 Development Office staff
Fieldworkers:
British Columbia
Prairie Provinces
Maritime Provinces
Newfoundland
1 Workplace Literacy Coord.
1 Ontario Project Worker (part-time)

14. Projects: Industrial Tutoring
Youth Tutor

14. Projects
Youth Tutor
Peer Youth Tutor - 2 sites
- Nfld & NB

Nfld: 28 youth tutors

(summer '90)

33 youth tutors

(summer '91)

NB: 17 youth tutors

(winter '91)

3 youth tutors

(summer '91)

Workplace Skills Training

- 2 sites: Ontario and

Atlantic Provinces

15. No National data collection
system

15. National data base is
tracking tutor, trainer and
council membership

1988	1991
16. National fundraising revenue: \$37,000.00	16. National fundraising revenue: \$77,000.00
17. Research carried out by Brock University for the Industrial Tutoring Project	17. In July 1990 "A Survey of Learners & Tutors" done for LLC was published
18. No seed money for councils	18. \$500.00 book allotment for new councils. Thirteen new councils were inaugurated January to June 1991
19. Few centralized resources	19. Videos have been produced on the workplace, youth, council development and the LLC volunteer training program
20. Supplementary Workshops: .Challenger	20. Supplementary Workshops: .Student Recruitment .Lifeskills .Spelling .Workplace .Math .Challenger .Publicity
21. No resource guides	21. Resource guides: .Workplace Literacy .Student Recruitment .Peer Youth Tutor .Group to Group (Tri-County Literacy Council) .Parents-as-Partners-as-Learners (St. Francis Literacy Council) .Organizational Handbook .Publicity .Establishing Literacy Councils .You & Your Student: Building a Positive Relationship
22. International Literacy Day kit of a brochure, press release formats and activity ideas	22. (i) Expanded ILD kit consisted consists of brochure, poster(s), bookmark, new student publication (ii) As a recognition of International Literacy Year a grant of \$65,000.00 for tutoring materials was given

23. Training certification handled by two volunteer national trainers

24. Minimal dissemination of publicity material. One publicity brochure available

25. No writer trainers

26. Alberta to Nova Scotia literacy councils

27. n/a

to the Laubach councils

23. Semi-annual meetings of a national volunteer training & certification committee which reviews the applicants. Standards for certification are more precise

24. Wide dissemination of publicity material. Publicity kit contains program, brochures, posters and bookmark, catalogue and the annual report

25. 1 writer trainer

26. All Canadian provinces and the Northwest Territories have literacy councils

27. Sale of books through Distributorship increased by 50%

Title: Literacy Initiatives in Canadian Municipalities

Author: Patricia Nutter, Paragon Associates

Publication information: for the National Literacy Secretariat, August 31, 1993

Complete text:

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**LITERACY INITIATIVES IN CANADIAN
MUNICIPALITIES**

INTRODUCTION

The National Literacy Secretariat requested a report on the current status of workplace literacy initiatives in Canadian municipalities. A report was done by Lionel Feldman Consulting Limited in 1991 on eleven municipalities, examining their workplace literacy programmes. At that time only two had established formal literacy policies and programs, Calgary and Vancouver. Since that time, due for the most part to the "awareness raising" of the International Year of Literacy in 1990, several urban municipalities have undertaken literacy programs for their employees.

The terms of reference for this paper are:

- to examine literacy initiatives in Canadian municipalities
- to prepare case studies on several of the initiatives
- to examine the role of partnerships to support and deliver the literacy programs in the municipal workplace
- to make recommendations for future action

The information was obtained from telephone interviews with:

- the Executive Directors/Presidents of the Provincial /Territorial Municipal Associations (15)
- municipal administrators associations (3)
- municipal staff (20)
- literacy councils (10)
- the Executive Director of the Movement for Canadian Literacy
- ABC Canada
- members of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (1 from each region).

The interviews were conducted using a questionnaire as a guideline only. There was ample opportunity to explore other areas of information. Written reports were received from six municipalities on their efforts. NALD supplied a computer printout of workplace literacy programs. Additional information was obtained from Laubach Canada, the BEST program, the YMCA Employment Initiatives Program, United Way Canada and the Learning Centre in Orillia.

CURRENT STATUS OF MUNICIPAL WORKPLACE LITERACY INITIATIVES

Municipal governments are struggling to meet the challenges created by the changes in the workplace. These include new technology, more complex information systems and increased concentration on quality service to the public. The changes have resulted in the need to upgrade existing skills or learn new skills in the workplace. Workers at all levels of municipal corporations must have the necessary skills required for full participation in work life. In the past, a totally literate workforce has not been necessary. Blue collar workers, in particular, have not had to be able to read and write to function in their job because instructions were generally given orally. Today basic literacy skills are essential if they are to operate computers, read instructions and provide public services. In municipalities with large numbers of immigrants in the workforce, second language instruction is increasingly important.

Although the number of municipalities with direct involvement in the provision of literacy skills to employees is still small, it should not be construed as a low priority by municipal governments. In the past four years the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has received two resolutions on the need for funding of literacy programs for municipal workforces. These were debated at the annual conferences and referred to the appropriate agencies for study.

Research has shown that approximately eight now have or support a policy/program on literacy for their employees. Others are assessing the potential demand for basic skills training in their workplace and the resources required. The City of Victoria will be implementing a program for the Fall of 1993 with the Hastings Institute on workplace skills training. The City of Prince George, BC, after consultation with the Hastings Institute, has set up a Steering Committee with representatives from management, union and municipal politicians to look at workplace upgrading for their staff.

The municipalities that have literacy programs are "urban" with populations in excess of 40,000. These municipalities are major employers in the community, with separate human resource departments, unions, and part time/full time elected representatives.

REASONS FOR MUNICIPAL WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAMS

The impetus for workplace literacy programs comes from three sources: the municipal politicians, human resources personnel and the labour unions. A supportive partnership between politicians and municipal and union staff has resulted in proactive policies being developed related to personal development initiatives for staff. In the case of literacy proposals in municipalities, research indicates that the primary catalyst has been from the human resources departments.

With the gap widening between workplace requirements and workers' skill levels, and due to the awareness raising of the International Year for Literacy, municipalities have undertaken upgrading skills programs for some/all of the following reasons:

- Health and safety regulations are learned and understood
- Morale and efficiency is increased
- Flexibility and adaptability: Workers are more adaptable to change in routines and responsibility and in training for new technology
- Potential for promotion of employees is increased
- Communications skills are improved
- Plain Language can be promoted in written and verbal communications in the municipality
- Individual self-confidence is improved and enhanced

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS IN TODAY'S CLIMATE

Governments generally in Canada have been feeling the pinch of financial restraints and the recession. Municipal governments are in the difficult position of being on the receiving end of policy decisions by the federal and provincial governments without consultation. This "trickle down effect" or "downloading" has left them scrambling to come up with creative solutions to municipal concerns and their ability to continue to provide services.

Municipalities are accountable to the provincial governments through legislation. The provinces negotiate with the federal government on behalf of municipalities. Municipal governments receive funds through the property tax system, transfer payments and fees for services. They do not have other sources of taxation to acquire funds. As well, they must have a balanced budget at year end, unlike the federal and provincial governments. The onus then is to provide essential services with a limited tax base.

Municipal governments and their elected representatives undergo intense scrutiny by the public, primarily because they are the most accessible to them. New policies and programs are weighed carefully for public reaction to the expenditures, including those for staff development. They have managed to retain the respect of Canadians at a time when government and politicians generally are viewed with distrust, as polls have shown.

These financial and political realities have resulted in efforts to provide services to the public and their staff using other community resources. For literacy programs this has meant that some have made partnerships with unions, community colleges, school

boards, libraries and local organizations. They enable municipal governments to keep the costs low or non-existent for programs and services.

Municipal governments support local organizations that give skills training in a variety of ways. They give grants-in-lieu of property taxes and provide meeting space in municipal buildings. For example, the Learning Centre in Orillia, Ontario receives a portion of its property taxes back from the municipality. The Centre gives literacy courses to employees of local companies.

In recent years, groups such as the YMCA and the John Howard Society have been giving literacy courses as part of life skills education. There is no evidence of any partnerships with municipalities for the provision of workforce literacy programs. The United Way Canada has written a resource manual for community agencies on literacy. Research indicated that local United Ways have not been giving grants to municipalities or their partners for literacy training of municipal workforces.

CASE STUDIES OF MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE LITERACY INITIATIVES

Of the eight municipalities that have a policy or program on literacy for their staff, four are providing the training cooperatively with local partners and four finance the courses totally through the municipal budget. The Cities of Victoria and Prince George are still in the planning stages. Victoria has negotiated a partnership with the BC buildings Corporation to help finance literacy programs for both workforces.

For the most part, municipalities are using four methods for literacy training. They differ in student-teacher ratio, attainment level and orientation. The method used by the municipality is influenced by the costs involved, the initiators of the program and the desired results.

Those in use are:

Laubach Literacy of Canada:

The Workplace Skills Training is based on one-to-one peer tutoring on the work site. The program uses phonics with books and materials up to the Grade 10 level. The students progress at their own level with the commitment to confidentiality.

Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST):

BEST is a project of the Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliated unions. The programs are run on-site in groups of 6-12 students with a co-worker as the instructor. It assists workers in improving their skills in reading, writing, math, communication and second language programs.

Grade Equivalency Diploma (GED):

GED is a concentrated basic skills program which teaches literacy skills. It enables the student to attain a grade 12 equivalency upon completion. (Calgary also offers ABE, Adult Basic Education, for reading, English and math Grades 1-9, as well as GED.)

Vancouver Municipal Workplace Language Program (VMWLP):

This writing-based, learner-centred program is designed to be responsive to learners' backgrounds and personal and workplace needs. The student sets the pace and direction of the program. Reading, writing, listening and communication skills are taught. There is no prescribed curriculum.

The case studies are grouped by municipalities that established a literacy program totally financed by the municipality and those that sought community partners for delivery assistance. In cases where contracts were in force for the provision of literacy courses, it was not considered a cooperative venture or partnership. The depth of information was dependent upon the availability of written material and statistics, the interview and the partner. Since the Feldman report in 1991 dealt with the Vancouver and Calgary initiatives, this paper will provide an update only on those cities. They are well-established programs with continuing funding from the municipality.

It should be noted that in some cases there was a reluctance to provide statistics on the participants in workforce literacy programs due to the "confidentiality" aspect.

I. MUNICIPAL WORKPLACE LITERACY INITIATIVES WITHOUT PARTNERS

City of Kitchener, Ontario:

The City of Kitchener Training and Development Committee (part of the Human Resources Department) made workplace literacy a training objective to help its 600 employees meet workplace demands in 1990. The program has the support of City Council, senior management and the unions. With the assistance of Laubach Literacy of Canada, the committee formed a peer tutoring program in September 1990. The one-to-one tutoring is private and confidential. The program is time flexible to accommodate shift workers. Students work at their own pace and level to upgrade their reading, writing and math skills.

Tutors are recruited from across the corporation and given a 20 hour training course. It familiarizes them with teaching materials, methods of teaching adult students and simplifying workplace material for the students.

Recruitment of students is done by Laubach with the help of the union. Students are evaluated by Laubach and placed in a book level, rather than a grade level. Post-evaluations are done after 18 months with a report to the municipality. Two hundred workers were initially identified as needing literacy upgrading. Thirty students per year are in the program.

Kitchener chose to assign training by targeting sectors, rather than by need or employee application. The outside workers, generally labourers, were first, followed by transit workers. The utilities employees will be the next ones to receive training. To-date all participants have been male.

The municipality gives the students one hour of paid work time per week for the lessons, and the students donate one hour minimum of their own time. The tutors are given time off to teach by the corporation. Costs for books and materials are shared by two sources:

60% from the Ministry of Education

40% from the City of Kitchener

No statistics on student enrolment and levels were received after several requests. Plain Language training for municipal staff was not being offered. However, it was seen as something that they would consider in the future.

City of Calgary:

Calgary began its workforce literacy program in 1988. They contracted with the Alberta Vocational Centre to run the program. City funding for the initiative has been restored after being cut at the end of 1992. Intense lobbying by unions caused City politicians to reverse its decision. The program is available to approximately 12,000 employees. Thirty students are enrolled for each session.

During the Spring of 1993, the project was moved into the Calgary Training College. It offers convenient location and timetables for students. The program staff are negotiating with the City to buy 6 computer terminals. They want to offer a computer-assisted learning system called Plato. The system has proved successful in helping the students become comfortable with computers, while at the same time acquiring literacy skills.

Calgary's program is based on City payment for the instruction with student donation of time for the courses, approximately four hours per week. The Coordinator said that there was no evidence that attendance or student numbers were reduced because the City did not allow time off for the program.

1989-92 program statistics for participation in adult basic education skills are:

Total	1989	1990	1991	1992
452	145	105	65	137
Dropouts	26	26	5	
Males	78%	79%	77%	78%
Females	22%	21%	23%	22%

The reasons for enrolling in the program were, for the most part, job advancement and personal interest. The gender participation is similar to that of other programs with students being predominantly male. The average grade completed was grade 10.

City of Medicine Hat:

In 1990 during the International Year for Literacy, the Personnel Manager for the City of Medicine Hat approached Medicine Hat College about courses for its 400 full-time employees in basic literacy skills. The Adult Workforce Upgrading Project, similar in design to that of the Calgary program, followed the GED and ABE course guidelines with university trained tutors. Three main issues were the catalyst:

1. the City realized that it was important to equip employees with adequate academic skills and self-confidence to cope with the demands of the workplace
2. a number of employees became aware that in order to compete for internal promotions they must have the necessary educational skills
3. the City wanted to provide training for its blue collar workforce

A 1993 evaluation report estimated that 20% of the City workforce needs skills upgrading.

The program is totally financed by the City of Medicine Hat at a cost of approximately \$750.00 per student in 1993, for a total of 15 students. The cost per student has decreased from \$1820 Year 1 and \$1060 in Year 2. Due to changes in the program format and the skill level of participants, an instructor is only present one night a week

and an assistant for the other night, substantially reducing the cost of delivery. The City pays for the books, the tuition and a resource library. The workers attend literacy courses on their own time in the evening. A full course is 180 hours. Due to budget constraints the program will be downsized in 1994.

To-date approximately 50 Medicine Hat Employees have taken part in the program. There is no pressure for employees to take courses and confidentiality is assured. The unions set up informational meetings for staff with Medicine Hat College trainers. These recruitment sessions are done several times a year.

Statistics for the period 1990-92 are as follows:

Number completed GED	18
Number discontinued	7
Number continuing	1
Number waiting (have previously attended)	3
TOTAL NUMBER ATTENDED	29
Number of new waiting	2
Number interested but did not attend	7
TOTAL NUMBER INTERESTED	38

The workers who did not complete the course gave reasons such as, heavy workload, personal matters and inaccessible location. The male-female ratio was 70% male, 30% female.

City of Montreal:

Montreal established its workforce literacy project in 1990 during the International Year for Literacy for its 12,000 municipal employees. It is a comprehensive program which entails upgrading of skills, courses on awareness, a library collection of self-help and teaching materials and a policy on the use of Plain Language. The upgrading and awareness courses were recommended by the Human Resources Department to City Council and continue to be funded by the City. Local 301 assists with publicity on the programs and support for potential students. Participants are assured that the program results will be confidential.

The City of Montreal enlisted le Centre des ressources en education populaire to give the courses. Approximately 30 students per session are enrolled, with the City and the employee each donating two hours per week for two sessions of 45 hours each. As in the case of the City of Kitchener, Montreal targeted participants by City Department.

The sequence was:

Public Works

Supplies and Services

Real Estate

Recreation and Culture

Community Development

To-date, approximately, 150 municipal employees have participated.

Employees that deliver services to the public are given courses to help make them aware of the difficulties experienced by people who are illiterate. This has been particularly useful to police and social service staff.

The City of Montreal also enlisted the help of the Municipal Library to start a French language collection for use by people who want to upgrade their literacy skills and by trainers. This has been financed 50/50 by the municipal library budget and by the National Literacy Secretariat. The books are distributed between five municipal libraries and in educational libraries throughout the country.

Montreal has recently set up a policy on the use of Plain Language in its publications. The first project was the revision of social housing and building code documents.

II. MUNICIPAL WORKPLACE INITIATIVES WITH PARTNERSHIPS

City of Vancouver:

In 1989, the City of Vancouver established the Hastings Institute to deliver a worker education program that would be responsive to the learners' backgrounds and needs, as well as to the learners' workplace issues. The Institute's 8,000 member workforce is linguistically and culturally diverse, with employees from 35 different countries and with 40 different languages. The program has the support of the City, the unions and employees. Partners and sponsors of the Vancouver Municipal Workplace Language Training Program (VMWLP) are:

- .City of Vancouver
- .CUPE Local 1004
- .Vancouver School Board
- .Vancouver Municipal Regional Employees Union

VMWLP is also being implemented at a number of other work sites, such as crown corporations and logging, mining and transportation industries.

From 1990-1992, 190 students participated in the City's program. Five did not complete the training. Participation is given in percentage of the total by municipal department. The students were from:

- .Engineering: 60% male, 7% female
- .Finance: 9% male, 8% female
- .Health: 1% male, 9% female
- .Housing and Property: 20% male, 25% female
- .Permits and Licensing: 5% male
- .Human Resources: 2% female
- .Planning: 5% female
- .Parks Board: 24% male, 2% female
- .Library: 8% male, 5% female
- .City Clerk: 1% female

By ethnic background, the participants were Chinese, 24%; Italian, 13%; Portuguese, 9%; Philipino and Indo-Canadian, 7%; Canadian, 6%; Latin American, 5.5%; and Polish, 5%. Other ethnic groups were in the 1-2% range. Overall the gender participation has been:

- .male at 65.3%
- .female at 34.7%

It is interesting to note that female participation is significantly higher in Vancouver. This probably is due to the diversity of the workforce and encouragement by departments that employ larger numbers of females, such as Health and Housing.

City of Saint John:

In 1992-93 the City of Saint John initiated two pilot projects on skills development for its 600 employees: one time-shared and one private time, both paid for by the City. They are currently being reviewed by City staff. The Human Resources staff person indicated that basis skills development programs are likely to continue but with modifications, particularly in regard to time-sharing arrangements and the type of

learning model.

In 1992, the City conducted an awareness campaign among its outside workers. The "New Opportunities Program", a six month pilot project, began in November 1992 with 24 participants in the time-shared program. No numbers were available for the private time participants. The unions supported the programs and referred workers with assurances that participation would be voluntary and confidential.

Saint John contracted with the local community college to provide the course and to conduct the information sessions and the evaluations of students. The City paid for the books, the instructors and donated 50% of the time for the course. The employee had to commit to the other 50% on his/her own time. Upon completion of literacy courses, awards were presented to the participants by the Mayor and Council.

The New Opportunities Program plans to create partnerships with and receive contributions from local non-profit organizations, the educational systems and other levels of government. This will be a part of the next phase of the project.

OTTAWA

The City of Ottawa has approached the issue of literacy in a unique and perhaps more comprehensive manner than other municipalities surveyed. The political arm wanted the City to be a leader in the field and portray itself as an example to other municipalities. As well, the City's efforts were not aimed solely at its 4,000 member workforce. Rather it was a strategy that encompassed the City and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton and included extensive consultation with community organizations, businesses and professionals on the literacy question.

During 1990, the International Year for Literacy, the City of Ottawa set up a Mayor's Task Force on Literacy to address the problem. The report of the Task Force, titled "A Capital Challenge: The Ottawa Literacy Report", was presented in May 1991. The primary recommendation was that the City establish itself as the "champion for literacy". To accomplish this two organizations were recommended: the Council for Literacy and the Literacy Advocate. The Council for Literacy would coordinate all organizations involved in the literacy effort in Ottawa and develop a common strategy for the Ottawa-Carleton area. As the executive counterpart, the Literacy Advocate would spearhead the implementation of the strategy and would have the financial resources committed to do so.

These recommendations were passed by City Council in November 1991 with two provisos:

- discussions with other public bodies would be held to seek their support for the proposed structures and funds for the operation
- the City would become a "model employer" by implementing plain language policies and by further supporting the BEST program

In April 1992 the new Mayor in an attempt to keep the issue of literacy in the forefront during a time of fiscal restraint, established a Literacy Team to review again the recommendations of the Task Force. In particular, the group was asked to assess the level of support and services for literacy among other public bodies in the Region.

By this time the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy had been formed, challenging the need for a Council on Literacy. It became apparent that the literacy effort was lacking the financial resources for its mandate and not a structure. During the next several months the Mayor and the Literacy Team met with other local mayors to encourage their support for the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy and to request funds for it.

The Mayor continued to meet with the Coalition regularly to discuss the City's involvement in literacy. City Council agreed to provide space for literacy training, encourage City of Ottawa employees to participate in the Coalition's "train the trainer" program, continue to improve and expand basic skills and plain language training and sponsor an event on literacy on National Literacy Day in September to publicize the initiatives undertaken by the City.

Since 1988, the City of Ottawa and CUPE 503 have been collaborating on an upgrading program for its employees. Workers were enrolled in the BEST program (Basic Education Skills Training), which provides literacy and second language training to two groups of 30 students per year (approximate total of 300). Participants have been predominantly blue collar workers and male (Only one female has taken the course.)

from the Department of Engineering and Works.

The BEST program is funded by the Ontario Department of Education and Training and the Ontario Federation of Labour. Students are recruited by information sessions organized by the union with target groups. Participation is voluntary and confidential. A needs assessment is done by BEST staff to establish their personal goals. The City donates the space for the classes, two of the four hours for classes per week and the trainers' time.

BEST uses an approach similar to Laubach with co-workers providing the training. Rather than it being on a one-to-one basis, however, BEST classes have 15-20 members.

Two other initiatives occurred independently in Ottawa during 1992-93:

- The Ottawa Citizen made literacy its outreach function by setting up a Foundation for Literacy. It will be community-based and involve a broad spectrum of organizations concerned about literacy. The Foundation would raise funds, organize events and sponsor special projects. A working group is developing the concept.
- Algonquin College through its Multicultural Workplace Program conducted a needs assessment, "A Focus on the Impact of Basic Skills and Diversity Issues on Training and Orientation", in 1992 on the City workforce. The recommendations are now being studied by the Corporate Steering Committee. If implemented, they will establish a comprehensive methodology for developing literacy skills among City employees and create a guide for using Plain Language in communications with the public.

Winnipeg:

Information on the City of Winnipeg must be considered unofficial. Attempts to confirm the data have been unsuccessful. The Human Resources contact was unavailable and no one else seemed to know about the program.

For the past 3-4 years the City of Winnipeg has had an informal agreement that staff would be able to take literacy courses. The City arranged for the Winnipeg Volunteer Reading Aids group to accept its employees. They use the Laubach method with on-site tutoring and colleagues as the tutors. No City funds are given to the program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Municipal governments are beginning to tackle the question of necessary workplace skills of their workers, particularly blue collar males. The awareness of the issue seems to have stemmed from the International Year for Literacy in 1990 and from the leadership taken by other municipalities. While the number of municipal workforce literacy policies and programs is not large, it is significant that they emerged during a time of severe fiscal restraints. In 1991 there were two involved in literacy projects; two years later there are eight with at least two others in the planning stage. Municipal governments need to be given information on the municipalities that have literacy programs and the costs, the partnerships created and tangible success stories. The cities of Victoria and Prince George were impressed by the City of Vancouver initiative. Medicine Hat would not have a literacy program without the influence of the City of Calgary.

The municipalities that are funding literacy programs totally indicated that the programs may be terminated due to lack of funds unless other sources or partners are found. In the case of Calgary, the union lobbied effectively to have it reinstated. The Hastings Institute in Vancouver has sought crown corporations and local companies as partners.

Municipal unions have played a key role in the establishment of programs. They have encouraged employees and organized information sessions as well as delivering literacy programs. The National Literacy Secretariat should look at the role of the unions more closely.

While the unions have been instrumental in the implementation of municipal workforce projects, municipal politicians and human resources staff have also been key players. Generally, the thrust has come first from the human resources staff and then to the politicians for acceptance and formalization of the policy for the municipal workplace.

Plain Language policy is important to several municipalities. As they seek ways to serve the public more efficiently, communications, particularly written, are being studied more closely for ease of understanding. The City of Montreal, as well, gives its staff courses on how to serve and be sensitive to people that are illiterate, an initiative that should be encouraged for all municipalities.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. A survey of municipalities with populations over 40,000 be done to determine the awareness of literacy issues in their workforce (approximately 350 employees)
2. Literacy councils, organizations, and educational institutions be surveyed to determine the extent, if any, of involvement with municipal governments for the provision of workforce upgrading programs
3. Research be done to determine the extent of indirect support by municipal governments to community literacy, such as grants-in-lieu and provision of space

4. The results of 1-3 be part of a "How To" manual on municipal involvement (nationally and internationally) in workforce upgrading. This booklet would also include the following:

- A description of the benefits and the costs of workforce upgrading
- A list of the partnerships presently working towards worker literacy
- An explanation of the Plain Language strategy

The report could be distributed to politicians, municipal administrators and unions

5. Videos be done of municipal workforce literacy projects for use by municipal governments, unions, etc

6. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA) be asked to encourage their members to make workforce literacy a priority by articles in their publications and workshops at annual conferences **

7. FCM and CAMA be asked to plan workshops at their Annual Conferences on Plain Language usage and its potential, to further service the public and for the personal development of its employees

8. FCM and/or CAMA be approached to sponsor one pilot project per region (5 in total) in municipalities with no policies/programs on skill upgrading

9. A presentation be made to the Big City Mayors Caucus (municipalities with populations over 200,000) encouraging them to set examples for smaller municipalities by establishing policies/programs on literacy for its staff and on the benefits of Plain Language

10. The National Literacy Secretariat encourage unions to be more proactive in municipal workforce literacy

** The impetus for municipal workplace literacy initiatives has generally been from human resources employees. It is for this reason that an organization such as CAMA (Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators) should be considered as an avenue for future work in this area.

LITERACY INITIATIVES IN CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are the current initiatives being undertaken by municipal governments on literacy?
2. What were the reasons for the municipality becoming involved in literacy? i.e. population characteristics, new Canadians, personal development of employees, service to the public
3. What sector of municipal government employees exhibited the most need for increased literacy skills?
4. Who initiated the request for literacy training; i.e. politicians, unions, human resources personnel, employees?
5. Where is the funding for the training program coming from; i.e., municipality, union funds, grants, United Way, individual, etc.?
6. Is the employee expected to take the training on his personal time, work time or a combination?
7. Is the employee's job contingent on a successful literacy training or is it voluntary?
8. Has the municipality become partners with other community organizations to provide literacy training, such as the YMCA, John Howard Society, teachers group, community college, etc.?
9. Can your municipality give a grant to a local organization for literacy training? Under what category? Does this affect the provision of the training, such as confidentiality, frequency and numbers of participants?
10. Would your municipal staff benefit from courses in "Plain Language" to help them write and speak in a clearer, simpler fashion when dealing with the public?
11. IF A PROVINCIAL MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION, are there resolutions on literacy from its members?

CONTACTS ON MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE LITERACY PROGRAMS

City of Kitchener	Leanne Moses Human Resources Officer
City of Calgary	Conrad Murphy Chairman, Basic Education Alternate Delivery
City of Medicine Hat	Allen Vanden Berg Manager, Employment & Adult Development Programs Medicine Hat College
City of Montreal	Hubert Lebrun Training Coordinator
City of Vancouver	Gary Pharness Hastings Institute
City of Saint John	Peter Morgan Research and Information Coordinator
City of Ottawa	Michelle O'Brien Human Resources
City of Winnipeg	Sandra Harychuk Human Resources

Title: Literacy & Business: An Economic Challenge for the '90's
Canadian Business Review, vol.18, no. 1 (spring 1991) Author: The
National Literacy Secretariat
Complete text:

Several recent research studies emphasize the negative consequences that functional illiteracy is having on Canada's competitive position.

by the National Literacy Secretariat

Illiteracy has long been portrayed as a social and educational problem. In recent years, however, we have come to understand the economic consequences of the lack of literacy skills for Canada and for Canadian business.

In 1988, the Canadian Business Task Force on Literacy estimated that illiteracy costs business \$4 billion each year in lost productivity. A 1990 survey by The Conference Board of Canada with assistance from the National Literacy Secretariat found widespread concern about illiteracy among managers in establishments with more than 50 employees. Indeed the survey indicates that there are well over one million workers in Canada who are functionally illiterate. This lack of literacy and numeracy skills poses difficulties with strategic human resource, managements and operational objectives and goals. In a broader sense, the extent of these problems and the number of industries and sectors affected are cause for concern as organizations strive to improve competitiveness.

But Canadians don't seem to consider the economic impact of poor literacy skills to be as serious as its personal consequences. A survey by Decima Research for ABCanada, a private- sector foundation promoting literacy, found that 46 per cent of Canadians see illiteracy as primarily a social problem, 26 per cent consider it an educational issue, and only 10 per cent view it as an economic problem.

For International Literacy Year, 1990, Statistics Canada undertook a Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities, on behalf of the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. Researchers found that 38 per cent of Canadians lack the reading and writing skills necessary for everyday tasks. Sixty per cent of respondents in the Decima survey said that ensuring Canadians can read and write is an extremely important issue for the country. And 84 per cent believe that the problem is somewhat or very serious.

While 84 per cent also believe that illiteracy will damage our economy in the long run, when Canadians were asked why they believe poor literacy skills are an important problem in Canada today, few people cited specific economic reasons. Just over one in five people said that our inability to adapt to technological change is a problem. Only 15 per cent cited the difficulty of getting a job, and 2 per cent mentioned that poor literacy skills can weaken Canada's competitive advantage. Almost one in three Canadians considered individuals' inability to benefit from job retraining as the most important economic effect.

Employers Admit Literacy Problems

One in three Canadian managers report that illiteracy impedes their efforts to train workers, according to the Conference Board survey. Employers also admit that literacy problems have negative effects on their output and ability to adapt to technological change. Twenty-six per cent said that problems with workers' reading and writing skills have slowed down the introduction of new technology in their businesses. Forty per cent reported literacy-related errors in inputs and production processes, and almost one-third of the companies said that illiteracy was hurting their productivity. In fact, 70 per cent of the companies in the Conference Board survey said that functional illiteracy was a problem in some part of their organization! In the Decima survey, 82 per cent of respondents agreed that poor literacy skills in the workplace present somewhat or very serious problems.

Technology Demands Continuous Learning

Our perception that functional illiteracy is a serious workplace problem is borne out by studies on the effect of technological change on workers with various educational backgrounds. Research by the Economic Council of Canada shows that technological change has a negative impact on workers with less than a grade nine education. Although workers with at least a grade nine education fare somewhat better, it is workers with some post-secondary education who benefit from technological change.

As technology changes the way we work, we need higher levels of education and literacy to keep up. According to the Hudson Institute report *Workforce Literacy: An Economic Challenge for Canada*, Canadians have to be able to learn new skills throughout their working lives. Technological change now makes workers' specialized knowledge and skills obsolete in about 3 to 5 years. Just a decade ago, skills stayed current for 7 to 14 years.

Literacy In A Service Economy

Along with demands caused by technological change, Canadians will face new literacy challenges in the 1990s because of international competition and the Canadian economy's continuing shift from a resource and manufacturing base to a predominance of service industries that demand higher skills. Jobs with low literacy skill demands are disappearing. The Hudson Institute says that the absence of new "mill" jobs for workers without at least a high school education is one of the most important features of the new service-based economy.

Although low-skill jobs are disappearing, there are more opportunities opening up for people with high literacy and good educational backgrounds. The Institute looked at how Canada's occupational structure will change by the year 2000. Its estimates show that the fastest growing occupations will demand math skills, verbal and communication skills, and management ability. In contrast, jobs will be much harder to find in blue-collar areas, assembly work, fabricating, and in primary industries (except mining).

The skills required for the new jobs will mean that Canadians will need higher levels of education than ever before. Employment and Immigration Canada estimates that two-thirds of the new jobs created by the year 2000 will require more than 12 years of education. Nearly half of these new jobs will require more than 17 years of education.

Today's workplace already demands good literacy skills to handle new technologies, training, and work methods. According to the Conference Board survey, 40 per cent of Canadian employers are now screening new employees to determine reading and writing abilities.

Although improved literacy skills and higher levels of education are essential for jobs today and in the future, many Canadian young people continue to drop out of high school before graduating.

The Decima survey asked Canadians why they believe this is so. According to 28 per cent of respondents, it is because students don't see the value of a high school diploma. Other reasons suggested include "an interest in joining the workforce." While young people have economic reasons for leaving school, the workplace is demanding that they stay until they graduate with the literacy skills today's jobs require.

These young adults need to be encouraged to pursue their education, to refine their skills and to compete for the jobs of the future.

Business, government, educational institutions, and all who are interested in Canada's future, must recognize that improving literacy skills is critical to our livelihood, our standard of living and our economic well-being.

**Title :Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Workers' Education for Skills
Training: West Pilot**

Project Final Report

Organization: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

This entry is a summary of the final report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November of 1989 the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) began an assessment of the basic reading, writing and math skill needs of the membership of its affiliates. Our initial investigation, conducted through meetings and interviews with senior staff representatives, local executives and members from affiliated unions, revealed an overwhelming demand and support for a program designed to upgrade workers' basic literacy skills.

With the aim of finding a method for best meeting these needs a review of existing literacy programs was conducted. The results of this review led us to conclude that the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST program provided the most relevant and useful model for developing a program designed to meet the particular needs of the SFL's membership.

While BEST provided the most useful potential delivery model, certain modifications of the program would be required. In contrast to the Ontario Federation of Labour's large industrial membership, the majority of the SFL's members work in the service sector, or in resource extraction, with a large number of members employed in relatively small and/or geographically isolated workplaces. Furthermore Saskatchewan has particular English as a second language (ESL) needs not yet addressed by the Ontario Federation of Labour. English is not the first language of many aboriginal peoples, in particular for many aboriginal peoples living in Saskatchewan's northern communities. In order to operate effectively in Saskatchewan both the curriculum and delivery strategy of the BEST model would require modification.

To accomplish this task, the SFL embarked on the Workplace Skills Development Program Pilot project with the support and financial assistance of the Secretary of State. At the suggestion of our first class of Course Leaders, and with the approval of the SFL's Executive, the name of SFL's program was changed from the Workplace Skills Development Program to Workers' Education for Skills Training, or the WEST Program. It was agreed that the new name better expressed the philosophy and intent of the program, was much more "accessible", and provided a much more readily digestible acronym than did its predecessor.

Six Saskatchewan workplaces were targeted for pilot WEST Programs. These workplaces and their respective SFL member unions were as follows:

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool	Grain Services Union
Wascana Centre Authority	Saskatchewan Government Employees Union
Ipsco	United Steel Workers of America
Royal University Hospital	Service Employees International Union
Cameco's Key Lake Mine	United Steel Workers of America
Imperial 400 Motel	Retail Wholesale & Department Store Union

Thirteen workers, representing these six workplaces, were pulled from their jobs to participate in fourteen days of intensive residential training. Upon completion of their first eleven days, participants received certification from the SFL to go back to their workplaces to initiate programs. Once they had their classes up and running, the new Course Leaders were brought back to the residential setting for an additional three days of training.

Twelve programs, with the number of participants in each ranging from three to ten, were implemented: three full SEIU classes at the Royal University Hospital, one RWDSU class at the Imperial 400 Motel in Regina, one GSU class with a mobile construction crew (now based in Humboldt), one GSU class with a Wheat Pool construction/repair crew in Swift Current, one GSU class with a Wheat Pool repair crew in Yorkton, two USWA classes at IPSCO, two USWA classes at Cameco's Key Lake Mine, and one SGEU class at Wascana Centre Authority in Regina. Because of the relatively small size of the workplace and resulting small number of potential participants at Wascana Centre Authority, we also included a worker from the Department of Health in this class.

Including participants from other conveniently located union workplaces proved to be an invaluable model for delivering programs to workplace where there are not enough potential participants to justify independent programs. However, we still need to develop strategies for delivering programs in small workplaces located in rural workplaces where there may not be enough union members to justify independent programs.

A possible strategy here is to further develop our contacts with the network of Regional Colleges, share the WEST model with these organizations, and run cooperative programs including participants from union and non-union workplaces. The class could be facilitated by a team of two cooperative Course Leaders, one from the union and one from the community. This cooperative approach proved to be extremely successful for the GSU Course Leaders with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Program in Swift Current. Although both of the Course Leaders involved here were members of the Grain Services Union, this team approach did prove a successful one. Where this is not possible, we hope that the Regional Colleges can simply be encouraged to borrow our model and deliver programs independently. This may prove to be an effective strategy for extending the benefits of the SFL's model to non-union workers, the unemployed, reserve populations, or wherever those concerned believe it might be of benefit.

Although the successes of those workplaces involved in the Pilot Project resulted in a great demand for WEST programs throughout the province, they also brought several developmental and structural programs in program delivery to the attention of SFL.

With hindsight, we realize that a more rigorous, documented, academic evaluation of the effects of program implementation on both general awareness levels and participants' skill levels might better illustrate the importance of workplace literacy programming to both employers and to possible funding agencies. Accomplishing this exercise would, however, require surveying general awareness levels and skill levels both before and after program implementation. It is impossible to collect reliable data from workplaces where the program has already begun. The knowledge participants and other workers now possess about the WEST Programs, and the dimensions of the literacy issue in general, is bound to cloud their memory of their awareness and skill levels prior to hearing about the SFL's Program.

Our strategies and materials for promoting WEST programs in the targeted workplaces appear to have proven successful. It might be hypothesized that the negotiations with employers, the cooperative union/management/SFL workplace information meetings and the "public relations" work done prior to program commencement contributed significantly to the successes of the WEST Program. Yet, we have no evidence or data to verify this hypothesis. All thirteen Course Leaders trained were able to implement WEST Programs in their respective workplaces - a one hundred percent success rate. Only fifty to sixty percent of instructors trained by the OFL are able to implement BEST Programs in their workplaces. Our successes here might be attributed to our preparatory work or it might simply have been a statistical accident. Thirteen samples do not provide a large enough data base from which to draw any reliable conclusions. However, the successes of each of our Course Leaders are indisputable.

Over the course of the Pilot Project we made use of several strategies and different promotional materials in an attempt to address the social stigma attached to illiteracy head-on, and hopefully to reduce the shame and reticence potential participants might feel. Our strategies here appear to have been a success as we were able to attract enough workers to fill most of our classes, and to develop large waiting lists in a couple of workplaces. Unfortunately, this was not a universal phenomenon. We know that several individuals in one of our workplaces were in need of the opportunities WEST offers. These same individuals did not, however, initially feel comfortable enough to come forward and take part in the classes offered. In contrast, we do know that WEST has attracted many individuals who were, for many reasons, unwilling or unable to take part in other literacy programs.

Through the processes involved in training Course Leaders and implementing and delivering WEST programs the OFL's BEST model was substantially modified, both in content and strategy. Several new strategies for publicizing programs within workplace were attempted, with some proving less successful than others. This process could be made much easier for the SFL, and for other groups embarking on such endeavours, with the production of a manual outlining strategies for implementing workplace programs under a variety of different circumstances.

The OFL's BEST Training Manual was rewritten to better represent and reflect the needs of the SFL's membership, yet there is still a great need to develop and incorporate new materials that better reflect Saskatchewan's particular cross-cultural concerns. Furthermore, the OFL's manual, and now our own manual, are essentially useless without having gone through the training process. Unfortunately this makes the model extremely difficult to transfer to a new audience and makes it dependent on the involvement of particular individuals - those individuals who have previously gone through the training course. If the SFL's Program is to be a success in the long term, and if others are to learn from and be able to make use of our experience, there is a real need to write down and formalize the processes involved in facilitating literacy through empowerment. As of yet there exists no such manual or guide that proves useful or practical for the North American audience. This necessitates two activities - production of a Facilitator's Manual, and testing of the SFL's new Course Leaders' Manual.

The SFL's Program is based on curriculum materials that are created and developed by its participants in the course of their learning. All of our Pilot Project Course Leaders experienced considerable difficulty in directing their participants to take such an active approach to their own learning process. Most of us grew up within educational institutions where curriculum and learning directives were handed down - we were told what we would learn and how we would learn it. The transition to an actively participant centered, directed and controlled learning approach is not an easy one for any of the participants, including the Course Leader. We believe that a collection of workplace

based adult curriculum materials, that were created and used by previous participants, could greatly ease this transition. Just being able to see that others in the same predicament were able to rise to the task seems to act as a great motivator and self-confidence builder.

The fact that the transition to an actively participant centered learning system is a difficult one did not, however, lead us to question the whole approach. Rather, we have simply recognized the need to try and make the transition an easier one. Although the transition is not an easy one, it is a pivotal one, for once the transition is made, the results are amazing. Not only is the process in learning new skills hastened, but possibly even more importantly, participants' self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning in general are greatly heightened.

The general consensus was one of success for all involved in the SFL's WEST Pilot Project. The very real accomplishments and victories of both the Course Leaders and the participants are irrefutable. Although the lack of more concrete and readily quantifiable data makes the model somewhat difficult to evaluate, the positive consequences are still readily apparent. The lack of quantifiable data has forced us to evaluate the successes of the WEST Program in more qualitative, more human, and possibly more meaningful terms - the difference the WEST Program has made, and continues to make, in the lives of all its participants.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

As stated in our Pilot Project Proposal, "the central goal of the SFL's Pilot Project was to develop and ensure long-term commitment and support for a provincial Workplace Skills Development Program designed to meet the particular needs of its member unions." Accomplishing this goal required that we first address two main obstacles not yet faced by the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST Program. These two main obstacles were: the relatively small size of the majority of our provincial workplaces and the geographical isolation of some of these same workplaces and many others.

Three main strategies for overcoming these obstacles were developed in the WEST Pilot Project, two of which were actually put into practice. These strategies and their respective practical examples are as follows:

1. Including participants from other conveniently located union workplaces. Where necessary, participants may even be from different unions, however, the ideal is that they share a common union. This will at least provide some shared work experiences to provide an initial basis for developing common curriculum materials. The SGEU Program at the Wascana Centre Authority provides an example of this strategy.
1. Bringing participants who share a common work environment and/ or employer into a central location. In this situation employers would also be asked to contribute some portion of travel time and mileage to cover the additional expenses incurred by potential participants. The GSU Program with the Swift Current Wheat Pool provided a successful model for this strategy.
2. Develop our contacts within the Regional College network, share the WEST model with these organizations, and run cooperative community based programs. Where this is not possible Regional Colleges may simply borrow our model and deliver community programs. By way of an example, this may be the required course of action in rural communities where no potential union Course Leaders are available.

All three of these strategies will be discussed further in upcoming chapters.

In addition, the SFL planned to develop and test different strategies and promotional materials designed to address the social stigma attached to illiteracy head-on, and hopefully to reduce the shame and reticence potential participants might feel in coming forward to take part in a WEST Program. Our strategies here appear to have been a success, as we were able to attract enough workers to fill most of our classes, and to develop large waiting lists in a couple of the targeted workplaces. All thirteen Course Leaders trained in the Pilot Project were able to implement WEST Programs in their respective workplaces -- a one hundred percent success rate. This success rate appears to be as significant one because the initial success enjoyed by the SFL's Course Leaders is not an experience they share with their brothers and sisters in the OFL. Only fifty to sixty percent of instructors trained by the OFL are able to implement BEST Programs in their workplaces. Our successes here may well be attributed to our preparatory work, or conversely, they may simply have been a statistical fluke. Because of the overwhelming response we received in almost all of our targeted workplace, we would tend to conclude the former, although we have no verifiable evidence on which to base this

conclusion. Unfortunately, thirteen samples do not provide a large enough data base from which to draw statistically reliable conclusions. The details and specifics of these strategies and materials will be more fully discussed in upcoming chapters.

Accomplishing our goal of developing and ensuring long-term commitment to and support for the SFL's WEST Program necessitated three central tasks, or objectives. The three central tasks laid out for the SFL's Pilot Project were as follows:

1. Adapt the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST Program to the particular needs of the membership of the SFL's affiliates.
2. Develop and test strategies for reducing the social stigma attached to the social problem of illiteracy in this country.
3. Develop and consolidate a partnership between the SFL's member unions, the provincial government, and the business community in order to provide an ongoing commitment to and long term support for the SFL's WEST Program.

As has already been discussed, and will be further illustrated in subsequent chapters, the SFL successfully addressed these first two objectives. Unfortunately, however, we have been only partially successful in meeting our third and last objective.

The business community, in particular those organizations involved in the Pilot Project have been, and continue to be, extremely supportive of the WEST Program. Those business leaders involved in the Pilot Project have already begun to share the positive experiences they have enjoyed in WEST with other leaders of the business community. Several other major provincial employers have already expressed serious interest in the WEST Program. All of the SFL's affiliates, and a couple of unaffiliated labour organizations, have continued and strengthened their commitment to, and overwhelming support, WEST.

Unfortunately, the provincial government, with the notable exception of the Saskatchewan Department of Labour, has not shared in this enthusiastic support. We do, however, still hope that the results of this Pilot Project will provide the provincial government with a sound reason for reconsidering their previous decision.

Title: Workplace Skills Development Program Feasibility Study

- Final Report

Organization; Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

Ordering information: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 103-2709 12th Avenue,
Regina, SK S4T 1J3

Complete text:

In November of 1989 the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour began an assessment of the basic reading, writing and numeracy skill requirements of its member unions. In our initial application to the Secretary of State the stated need for this activity was "to determine the feasibility of implementing in Saskatchewan a program similar to the OFL BEST program given different geography, population, ethnic composition of members, and different types of workplaces." This feasibility study began on November 1, 1989 and concluded on March 31, 1990 for a total time period of five calendar months.

When the project began we were not sure what the specific skill requirements of our membership might be or if there would be significant support for workplace literacy programs among the membership of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's affiliated unions. However, given the experience of the Ontario Federation of Labour, the results of the Southam Study of Literacy in Canada, the preliminary results of the Conference Board of Canada Study, and the endorsement and support of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's Executive Council we knew that an examination of these issues was a necessity for any organization representing the interests of labour in Canada. As Ontario Federation of Labour Director of Education, James Turk, said

It is among us - the working class of Canada - that you will find the direct victims of so-called 'illiteracy' - social conditions and educational practices which leave millions without the skills they want and need to function fully in our society. We are not the only victims - but we are the principal ones.

As the principal victims of 'illiteracy' we must, therefore, be actively in the solution.

Labour And Literacy - Defining The Problem

Defining the problem of 'illiteracy' in Canada from a labour perspective presents its own problems. Too many definitions of 'the problem' focus on the individual's perceived lack of skills and lack of abilities for coping with the requirements of daily life. As labour representatives we believe a more constructive and honest definition of 'the problem' begins with the recognition that 'illiteracy' is not a problem of individual failure or individual lack of ability. We are not addressing an individual problem, we are addressing a systematic problem: the systematic failure of Canadian society to meet the needs of its members. The fact that so many of those individuals whose 'skill levels' might match textbook definitions of 'illiteracy' continue to function and survive in the workplace and the community testifies to this.

Illiteracy definitions imposed on individuals that focus on the person's so-called lack of skills add to the problem by placing greater stress on those already victimized and exacerbates the already detrimental social stigma our brothers and sisters feel. If we really wish to address the problem of illiteracy from a labour perspective, we must dispose of the notion of illiteracy altogether and focus on the self-defining needs of our members. Hopefully, by these means we will no longer be left searching for a 'definition of the problem' but will instead be defining a solution.

A labour initiated and worker controlled basic skills program must begin with the recognition of the strong learning skills each worker already possesses and utilize these learning strategies and skills in the development of stronger or new skills. The main focus and curriculum of such a skill development program must be on the individual worker's definition of his or her own skills, needs and goals. In other words a labour initiated and worker controlled basic skills program must be learner centered. However, it must also be much more than this.

Throughout all sectors of the Canadian economy many workers are experiencing dramatic changes in the skill requirements of both their working and personal lives. New technology is changing the workplace and the home, demanding that we strengthen old skills and develop new ones. Basic skills that were once adequate for success in daily life are, quite simply, no longer enough.

As workers we lose economically when employment opportunities are denied or unavailable. We lose politically when so much political debate and participation requires reasonable reading, writing, critical thinking and decision-making skills. We lose not only as individuals, but also as a collective. From a labour perspective literacy is not simply the attainment of basic reading and writing, and numeracy skills; rather, from a labour perspective literacy necessitates the development and strengthening of our skills as individuals and as a collective for critical thinking, decision-making, learning and educating. It is only through developing and strengthening all these skills that workers will no longer have to worry that they do not possess the necessary skills to act as shop stewards, to understand their contracts, to attend union educationals and workshops, to serve on local executives, to speak out in their workplaces and communities, and to take greater control of their own lives. As Jody Hanson explained in the April 1990 issue of Briarpatch:

Why aren't we teaching adult students who are on welfare to critically interpret the Welfare Act? How will learning to read the street signs in your neighbourhood help you deal with substandard housing? Can using a phone book address the problem of not enough jobs?

As labour representatives we must address these issues - we must address the issue of literacy in the context that it affects our lives as workers.

From a labour perspective, both the methods and curriculum of Workplace Skills Development Programs must be not only workplace and learner centered but also centered on the enhancement and strengthening of our critical thinking and decision making skills. From a self-critical perspective, this means labour initiated, worker controlled, critical literacy programs that must facilitate the empowerment of workers not only their homes, places of work and communities, but also in the workers' own organizations - their trade unions. Labour education is education for empowerment - the empowerment of the individual and the collective.

Assessment Results

In total one hundred and five (105) assessment interviews were conducted. The area breakdown on these completed interviews is as follows:

Swift Current	39
North Battleford	26
Yorkton	40

In all three centers, in addition to the expressed needs of reading, writing, numeracy, and comprehension skills, all workers interviewed expressed a need for computer preparation, computer and technological language skills. Many reported difficulties in dealing with new technology already in place and the increasing complexity of their jobs. With only a few exceptions, workers interviewed reported that they felt as though their education and training opportunities had not kept pace with the increasing and changing demands of their jobs. The majority of these exceptions occurred in North Battleford. The results of the interviews indicated that workers in North Battleford area had enjoyed greater access to existing educational programs.

The need for greater access to stress management programs was a need expressed by workers in all three of the areas and all types of workplaces. In addition, the need for public service and relation skills was expressed in all three areas and in all workplaces, with the general exceptions of the construction and maintenance crew. However, it must be added that even a few workers in the construction and repair crews expressed this need in the interests of training for a sales position or in moving up within their workplaces.

The last need that was reported by workers and management alike in all three areas was that of developing and strengthening their skills in report writing and in the preparation of company documents and official forms.

Since the focus of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour Workplace Skills Development Program has been on the individual worker's own definition and assessment of his or her skill needs our statistical groupings also reflect the individual's perception of his or her existing skills and skill needs and their subsequent effect on the quality of the individual worker's life. The skill groupings are as follows:

Group A -

those individuals experiencing great difficulty and stress in coping with the reading, writing and comprehension demands of their workplaces and their homes; the individuals' level of literacy skills is strongly inhibiting their abilities to control the circumstances of their lives

Group B -

those individuals while coping to some extent with the reading, writing and comprehension demands of their workplaces and their homes do not feel comfortable with their skill levels; the individual recognizes specific basic skill areas they believe require improvement

Group C -

those individuals that while experiencing no immediately obvious difficulties with reading, writing and comprehension skills, believe their technical reading and report writing skills require improvement

Thirteen of the 105 individuals interviewed, or 13%, identified themselves as belonging to Group A. Of these thirteen individuals identifying themselves as belonging to Group A, eleven also expressed a need for upgrading their basic math skills. Thirty-nine people, or 37% identified themselves as belonging to Group B. Nineteen of these individuals identifying themselves as belonging to Group B also expressed a need for upgrading their basic math skills. Both of the skill levels expressed by Groups A and B would probably qualify as functionally illiterate by standard defining criteria. The total number of individuals interviewed identifying themselves as belonging to either Group A or B is fifty-two, or 49.5%. A total of fifteen individuals, or 14%, identified themselves as belonging to Group C. Three of the individuals identifying themselves as belonging to Group C expressed a need for basic math programs. Three individuals interviewed, 3%, expressed a need for basic math skills upgrading only. Those individuals expressing a need for basic math skills could potentially also be included in Workplace Skills Development Programs modelled after the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST Program. These figures represent a potential program participant rate of between 52% and 67% depending on whether or not those individuals identifying themselves as belonging to Group C and not requiring basic math upgrading elected to participate.

The breakdown of needs assessment participants by type of workplace is as follows:

farm service centers	15	14%
livestock	15	14%
elevators	32	31%
repair/construction	42	40%
area manager	1	1%
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	105	100%

Conclusion

Given the need demonstrated in our workplace profile of the Grain Services Union and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour -- and the support of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's affiliated unions - our central goal must now become developing and ensuring long- term commitment and support for a provincial Workplace Skills Development Program designed to meet the particular needs of its member unions. Accomplishing this goal will require that the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour first address two obstacles not yet faced by the BEST program.

The two main obstacles not yet addressed by the Ontario Federation of Labour's delivery model are, namely, the relatively small size of the majority of our provincial workplaces and the geographical isolation of some of these same workplaces and many others. In addition we must develop a strategy for overcoming yet another main obstacle to province-wide implementation of Workplace Skills Development Programs -- namely that of the social stigma attached to the literacy issue in this country. At the same time we cannot lose sight of the real need to obtain long-term financial support for the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's Workplace Skills Development Programs.

Paulo Freire said that "people must learn to read their reality and write their own history". Right now, we have this potential opportunity.

Title: Needs Assessment for the Construction Industry in B.C. & the Yukon
Organization: BC Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council Complete
text:

Increasingly, the world of work is bearing the imprint of changing technology and increased competitiveness. Educational and technical standards which once served workers well now may be barely adequate to sustain present jobs and future employability. There is a growing realization by workers in all sectors of the economy that upgrading has become an essential part of life. Employers are demanding greater skills of new entrants to the job market and are seeking heightened skills of workers already in the workplace. Both employers and unions are addressing the challenge of training and retraining.

This need is particularly felt in the construction industry which has been affected by technological change in many ways. You have only to look at several areas of the industry to see how change is exemplified. Laser technology is affecting the work of the machinist, while elevator constructors are moving from conventional relay logic equipment to solid state equipment and microprocessors. Even the labourer, traditionally regarded as the incumbent of one of the lesser skill areas, is affected by new technology, as in the use of "total stationing units" to replace the old transit and level used in survey work. The "total stationing unit" shows information on a screen, and math is then used to chart and graph it and transfer it to a field book. Virtually no skill or trade area is untouched by change.

The collective agreements in the industry encourage technological change as a means of increasing economic efficiencies. Training and retraining programs are no strangers to the construction industry. Indeed, the construction industry has piloted the use of the training trust fund, jointly funded by business, labour and employees to deliver a wide range of technical and trades expertise to union members in the trades. Such training has, however, for the most part concentrated on the practical and technical aspects of jobs. Little attention has been paid to the basic skills of reading, writing, numeracy and oral communication which are fundamental to successful work and the base of effective training.

SkillPlan was established to look at this vital area of basic skills acquisition and enhancement. The identification of the skills which workers need and the skills which workers have will help to determine training requirements and priorities. In addition, the whole area of worker aspirations forms part and parcel of an effective approach to training.

Basic skills have often been looked upon as disembodied - as part of a general education obtained in or through the schools and quite foreign to the world of work. The analysis of skills which follows will be looking at basic skills from an entirely different perspective. Our view is that basic skills and trades skills are integrated parts of one whole, and that basic skills can no more be ignored in creating the whole worker than can the prized technical skills.

The SkillPlan agenda will rest on this view and will build upon the concept of lifelong learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The responses to the Basic Skills Needs Assessment questionnaire provide a snapshot of the industry. They reveal the range and scope of training initiatives in general, not just with regard to basic skills but in the fuller dynamics of training. They reveal as well a picture of an industry engulfed in changes - changes in technology, changes in systems, changes in approaches and directions.

While this analysis concentrates on "basic skills" aspects of the trades, it is impossible not to look at the broader picture revealed by the assessment. Indeed, it is the placing of the basic skills aspects within the context of the broader scene that allows us to draw conclusions as to how basic skills upgrading may contribute to a more positive and productive working environment.

Each of the 27 questions asked in the Needs Assessment Questionnaire has provided input to the conclusions and recommendations which follow.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that SkillPlan further research areas of commonality in function or processes across the trades in order to use this information in designing complementary basic skills training.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that SkillPlan look at how the network of some 100 instructors can be used to promote the acquisition and enhancement of basic skills within the context of trades training. It is further recommended that attention be given to how SkillPlan can reinforce the basic skills training efforts for those unions which have a very low allocation of human resources devoted to training.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that, after consultation with training coordinators and selected workers of selected trades, SkillPlan conduct a Literacy Task Analysis of a number of jobs within the trade area so that worker basic skills training may be targeted to real needs. Literacy Task Analysis is a process which examines the tasks within jobs with special emphasis on the reading, writing and numeracy components within those jobs. Unions chosen will be those which have indicated a wide choice of specialty areas for workers. The purpose of this initiative is to give workers more confidence in accessing new opportunities within their trade.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that SkillPlan obtain or prepare an inventory of facilities where ESL training is available throughout B.C. The inventory should be distributed to all training plan coordinators for dissemination to their members.

Further, SkillPlan could consider a specific ESL initiative for one or more of the unions exhibiting the highest number of ethnic members.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that SkillPlan in conjunction with the B.C. Construction Industry Health and Safety Council, facilitate both English language learning for immigrant members and acquisition of WHMIS information by preparing a multilingual approach to WHMIS documents (juxtaposition of English and other languages) so that the material may be used as an ESL bridging tool.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that SkillPlan:

- (a) design and provide a short course for apprenticeship candidates on exam taking strategies
- (b) encourage a review of the competency based exams presently being given either through training programs or institutions to assess the degree to which these exams offer an appropriate level of Clear Language and suitable format and content.

(c) prepare an inventory of all training done by employers and suppliers so that SkillPlan can liaise with them, as with the union training plans, on matters relating to Clear Language and other basic skills issues (e.g. - Hilti Gun courses, WHMIS, Bricklayers refractory and corrosion courses, Boilermakers courses.)

(d) liaise with trades training coordinators to establish whether there is a cross trade need for a course on powertools. Such a course would be particularly useful for cement masons. The conceptualization and design of such a new course would give SkillPlan the opportunity to work with trades trainers on the basic skills elements of such a new course. This could provide a pilot for integration of literacy into technical content.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that SkillPlan use the information of concentrations of target groups and average education and age levels of memberships in order to plan specific initiatives for target groups, such as:

- advising training plans of curriculum planning directions which would serve the needs of their membership (e.g. - a course where a large number of cement masons would be participating would have a high ESL approach, while a course with many Ironworkers would concentrate on visual and symbolic content to meld with native patterns of learning.)

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that SkillPlan conduct a more in depth study of the barriers to training opportunities with a view to determining an action plan to reduce those barriers which are within our mandate.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that SkillPlan work with the Trades Training Plans to prepare an inventory of the courses which are available through each training plan, with a view to having a complete picture of the opportunities which are available in each trade.

It is further recommended that SkillPlan work with Training Plans to examine methods of promoting course attendance and in particular that SkillPlan examine a variety of course material with a view to assessing the degree to which Clear Language and more diverse presentation of material may lead to increased interest in accessing the range of training opportunities which are available.

Recommendation 15

It is recommended that SkillPlan provide training plan coordinators and instructors with information on the various models of basic skills instruction, including the philosophy, methods and strengths of each model so that they can assess the model which will best fit their needs.

It is further recommended that SkillPlan provide one or more sessions on Basic Skills Strategies in which the subject will be more fully explored.

Recommendation 16

It is recommended that SkillPlan add Effective Oral Communications to the areas of its mandate and that the ways in which oral communications are used in the construction industry be used as a backdrop for determining approaches to reading, writing and math upgrading.

It is further recommended that the promotion of courses focus on "basic skills upgrading" and "communicating" and that the word "literacy" be downplayed in the presentation of training options. This approach is in keeping with removing the stigma which accompanies the word "literacy" and is also consistent with the concept of a skills continuum in which individuals display varying strengths demonstrating different skill levels in different endeavours.

Recommendation 17

It is recommended that SkillPlan design a course on How To Use Forms, such as application forms and forms for receipt of benefits, drawing from examples of real forms in use in the construction industry.

It is also recommended that SkillPlan prepare a document on Using Graphs And Charts. This document would focus on the basic skills required to effectively use charts and graphs and would be a resource for trainers.

Recommendation 18

It is recommended that SkillPlan offer a Clear Language Consultancy Service to trainers who wish advice on how documents in use could be better moulded to clarity of presentation.

A Glossaries Project would form part of this service. A major aim of the project will be to show how such documents can be used as a means of building skills and aiding in comprehension of complex workplace documents.

Recommendation 19

It is recommended that SkillPlan design a session for trainers on Reading Strategies and Learning Styles. The aim of the session is to sensitize trainers to the variety of basic skills needs among trainees and how to help trainees build effective reading and learning strategies.

Recommendation 20

It is recommended that SkillPlan prepare a course on Critical Thinking and Problem Solving aimed at a cross section of construction workers who would like to upgrade their skills. This course would serve as a pilot for future initiatives in this area.

The information received from the focus groups confirmed a number of key findings of Part 1 of the Basic Skills Needs Assessment and raised several new areas of discovery.

- Terminology presents a problem in the trades for both native speakers and ESL speakers. Publications are not always available in Clear Language.
- Reading with full comprehension is seen as a problem while basic reading is not. Oral communication and memory are important.
- Not having a good grasp of math can be embarrassing for many workers. Those who most need the upgrading are most unlikely to access it.
- Workers have good coping skills - if one can't read instructions, he will use the buddy system to try to get the job done.
- Electronics, computers and lasers have introduced new reading needs and new concerns.
- Tests and exams create anxiety. Tests are often not relevant, but even in practical areas they cannot always be avoided.
- Many barriers exist which prevent workers from accessing available training opportunities.
- Workers need encouragement to seek upgrading. This encouragement must come from employers, unions and educators. Including family members in training could make it more attractive.
- Weekends and early evenings are the best time for courses - also January to March or in the late fall.
- Personal contact and building on trust are essential elements of promotion of upgrading. Visible management support is essential.
- There are a variety of trade areas which would be more easily learned if they rested on a foundation of strong basic skills. These range from blueprint reading to preparing for a TQ.
- A preparation for pre-apprenticeship would be useful.
- Foremen have many reading/writing needs, and many tradesmen aspire to being a foreman.
- Often there is not diversity and flexibility in the jobs that members are assigned to within their trades.
- A mobile course delivered through the trades training plans is viewed as desirable.

What comes across particularly clearly in the focus groups is that workers would welcome management support and incentives in meeting their basic skills upgrading needs. Indeed the role of management is crucial in several ways. Workers want to know that if they aspire to be a foreman, this goal will be met with management respect and a willingness to provide the necessary training. They want to know that their needs as whole workers are being taken into account - that they will not be required to "drive nails" day after day with no opportunity for a more interesting and diverse work experience.

It was also evident that, as strong as the union based training plan is, workers want to know that management supports their training in a more than perfunctory way.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

SkillPlan investigate and promote "training recognition" plans or proposals which recognize workers who undertake and complete basic skills upgrading programs in a variety of areas including reading comprehension, writing, maths, ESL, communications, team building and problem solving.

It is also recommended that the unions or their training plans continue to keep careful records of members' relevant courses to underline the importance of these endeavours and to foster a learning culture.

MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

There is no one management perspective to basic skills and their place in the industry's well being and growth. Many companies see trades skills as critical but are not fully aware of the delicate balance which exists between a foundation of basic skills and the ability to acquire new trade skills. Companies who see training as an imperative are generally willing to explore the place which basic skills enhancement plays in the lives and productivity of workers. This is indeed positive for SkillPlan.

SkillPlan's interaction with several employers has led to the following observations.

1. Companies are concerned that mistakes are being made on the job that could have been avoided if workers had a higher level of basic skill competencies. Stories of confusion abound about the incorrect use of measuring tapes, and the inability to interpret drawings. Such mistakes lead to costly situations such as, for example, stair landings being set in the wrong place. This type of error can take or three person days to rectify, as in this example, or much longer in a more serious case.
2. There appears to be a desire on the part of management in some companies that a worker at the journeyman, non supervisory level have "enough" information but not "too much" information to do the job. This attitude leads to a conscious policy of not training most workers in a number of areas where they may benefit by gaining greater competence such as the use of blueprints. The attitude that "it's for the foreman to know" can have some unexpected downsides, since it keeps many workers in a static condition. It also may inhibit workers from aspiring to a foreman position since the context of a foreman's job remains a mystery.
3. There is an encouraging openness by some companies to reexamine the way they are going things. SkillPlan these questions from management. "Are we training our people properly?" "What is the problem with the way we're working?" "Are the skills of superintendents adequate?" In other cases there is simply a feeling that many of the workers come to the industry with inadequate skills and that the answer is to get rid of those who can't produce.
4. There is a great deal of teaching going on in the construction industry, although it may not be recognized as such. The role that foremen play in imparting knowledge to journeymen is quite striking. Often this involves a type of mentoring in which the foreman tests the journeyman's problem solving ability rather than simply giving directions. This same type of mentoring takes place between a journeyman and an apprentice. Recent Literacy Task Analyses carried out by the Skills Analyst and the Research director of SkillPlan provided useful information on the importance of this teaching role.

Recommendation

It is recommended that SkillPlan work with management and unions to facilitate methods of imparting to foremen information which may help them in the teaching/mentoring role.

SkillPlan's contribution of a basic skills component to existing foremen's courses could form part of this initiative. It is also recommended that SkillPlan establish a more formal link with apprenticeship courses in order to more fully understand the dynamics between apprentices and journeymen in the mentoring process so that sensitivity to this interaction can be built into training initiatives.

Recommendation

That SkillPlan

(a) enter into discussions with the BCYT Camp Committee, employers and owners to discuss logistics of placing a computer learning station at a construction camp, and

(b) that SkillPlan enter into further discussions with community colleges, including Yukon College, the Yukon Literacy Council, and the Whitehorse Building Trades Office to determine possible learning partnerships.

Recommendation

That SkillPlan continue to work closely with the B.C. Construction Industry Health and Safety Council on matters of mutual concern, including referrals of trainees to basic skills upgrading, advice on Clear Language approaches to materials development and on approaches to test making and test taking.

Recommendation

That SkillPlan do a short presentation to participants in each cycle of the Rehabilitation Plan's program to make them aware of what basic skills upgrading opportunities are available and to offer them an individualized learning plan after they have completed the residential portion of the program.

Recommendation

That SkillPlan examine options for extending both computer assisted and computer based basic skills upgrading programs appropriate for the geographic area of our mandate. These options will explore possible delivery linkages with the Open Learning Agency, colleges, and learning centres, and the suitability of offering programs in company and union locations.

LINKING TO OTHER RESEARCH ON TRAINING

In December, 1991, *Learning and Work, the Way Ahead for British Columbia* was issued. The report was based on the work of the British Columbia Task Force on Employment and Training which was announced on August 17, 1989 by the Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The Task Force Members represented business, labour and education.

The Task Force concluded "that skill requirements for jobs have changed and will continue to change. Individuals with good basic skills - literacy, numeracy and critical thinking - are most likely to adapt successfully to new labour market conditions. This implies that acquiring good basic skills should be promoted in the education system as well as among British Columbians already in the labour force. Another implication is that workers should be prepared to meet new skill requirements through periodic retraining and upgrading." (our emphasis)

The development of a training culture was seen by the Task Force as a key policy proposal.

They see it this way:

"There is general agreement in the literature that workplace training and human resource development should become integral parts of the way businesses operate in Canada. Integrating training as part of running a business, and as a normal part of employment, is generally referred to as a developing a training culture."

A sectoral approach to training is favoured by the Task Force.

Another view of education and training is provided in another study (yet to be released) which deals with the technological and human resource development capacities of various industries. In the chapter on Recent Developments in Selected Occupational and Training Areas, this statement appears.

"New tools and equipment have made construction work less physically demanding, but increased the mental requirements of some jobs. A British Columbia Building Trades survey of tradespeople and contractors found that construction workers were being required to use a wider range of skills, but used each skill less frequently. The study found fears of de-skilling in certain areas where prefabrication and simplified installation techniques are used."

The research done in these two reports is supportive of industry driven efforts to promote the acquisition and enhancement of basic skills - those parallel skills which, together with trades skills, make up the whole worker.

The Basic Skills Needs Assessment process has provided a wide array of perspectives on how various parts of the industry view training. There is management, with its diversity of philosophies about training. There are unions seeking to make their training plans more attractive and useful for their membership. There are individual workers with at times conflicting attitudes toward upgrading.

What is at the core of the matter is the acceptance by all partners of a training culture - a culture which says, not only that basic skills upgrading is "alright" and "acceptable" but that it is "expected" and "desirable". It is a culture as well which treats upgrading as an investment rather than a cost.

A training culture does not develop and expand overnight. Like the enhancement of basic skills, the development of a training culture which will actively foster that enhancement is on a continuum.

A large part of the SkillPlan mandate is to stimulate movement along that continuum so that the parallel skills which are so essential to company productivity and worker satisfaction will be able to grow and prosper.

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BACKGROUND

The unionized sector of the British Columbia Construction Industry is diverse. It is made up of over 1,000 contracting firms of varying size and 16 international trade unions. The trade unions represent specialty areas which include Carpenters, Operating engineers, Labourers, Teamsters, Plumbers/Pipefitters, Electrical Workers, Painters, Ironworkers, Boilermakers, Lathers, Bricklayers, Glaziers, Heat and Frost Insulators, Cement Masons, Plasterers, Drywallers, Elevator Constructors, Machinists, Millwrights, Floorlayers and Piledrivers. Culinary workers who serve the construction camps are also represented. The unionized construction sector includes over 45,000 bargaining unit workers and their supervisors.

The unions' trades training plans have, for many years, provided opportunities for the acquisition and enhancement of trade skills such as laying brick, operating a crane or framing a building. While the scope of the training plans differ, some such as Carpenters, Plumbers/Pipefitters and Electrical Workers have over 20 trades trainers either full or part time, while others such as Cement Masons and Culinary Workers have less than one full time position devoted to trades training. Most fall midway between these two extremes.

The construction industry has a proud tradition of trades training. Up until recently no serious thought was given to augmenting that training with basic skills upgrading. However, rapid technological change altered perceptions. Trades trainers, faced with imparting knowledge on new technology such as lasers, microprocessors, fibre optics, panelization, automatic welding and the use of new epoxies, soon discovered that there was one major impediment to passing along the newly acquired skills - All too often workers found it difficult to read the manuals which came with new equipment, unable to understand new safety procedures, unable to do the complex mathematical calculations required to carry out the new functions.

These basic skills of literacy, numeracy, advanced communication and problem solving did not fall directly within the purview of the training plan coordinators. These basic skills could be seen as integral to the trades skills which have been at the heart of the construction industry. Coming to grips with these skills required a new approach - one which entered the world of the adult educator, but one which was still strongly industry based and supported. SkillPlan - the British Columbia Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council, was born in March, 1991.

BUILDING SKILLPLAN

SkillPlan was established with start-up funding from both the federal and provincial government and the industry itself. The Executive Director chosen by the industry was well known in construction circles. A former Operating Engineer, business representative and Secretary Treasurer of the British Columbia and Yukon Territory Building Trades Council, Jim Lippert began the job of creating a basic skills training arm which would act as a support to the already established trades training plans and the B.C. Construction Industry Health and Safety Council.

A number of important decisions had to be made quickly. Among them:

(a) What definition of literacy and basic skills was to govern the mandate of SkillPlan - a narrow definition of basic skills geared to those in most pressing need of upgrading, or a broad definition which would encompass a greater range of clients and needs?

(b) What types of expertise would be sought in SkillPlan staff members?

(c) How would basic skills of industry members be assessed? Would there be a formalized testing program, using standardized or other instruments?

(d) What types of initiatives would be gathered under the SkillPlan umbrella? Would the focus be individual or group? Remedial or developmental? Single focused or multi-facetted?

The decisions made on these subjects were instrumental in building the philosophy and directions of SkillPlan, and can be seen as an essential aspect of SkillPlan as a model.

DEFINITION

The decision to choose a broad rather than narrow definition of basic skills was made on a pragmatic basis. If a narrow definition had been chosen, the services of SkillPlan would have been relevant for an extremely small portion of the construction workforce - perhaps as low as 2 per cent. The construction industry in B.C. is characterized by individuals generally having grades 8 to 12 as an entry point. While there are many workers for whom English is a second language, they are in a minority except in one or two trades such as Cement Masons and Labourers. By using a broad definition of basic skills, SkillPlan could be relevant to a much larger target group. It is important to note as well that the word "literacy" has for the most part been avoided to escape the stigma sometimes associated with the word. "Basic skills" is arguably a more neutral term and a more inclusive one.

EXPERTISE REQUIRED

A variety of expertise was deemed essential in making up the small SkillPlan team. In addition to the Executive Director and administrative support, three additional positions made up the

SkillPlan complement - a Skills Analyst who joined SkillPlan in October, 1991 and a Research Director and Adult Education Advisor who came aboard in January, 1992.

The work of SkillPlan could not have attained credibility without a thorough Needs Assessment. That was carried out by the Skills Analyst - a workforce literacy expert seconded from the federal government and made available to SkillPlan through the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL/CIO, Canadian Office. The Needs Assessment canvassed the views of management, local union leaders, training plan coordinators and individual workers, as well as the B.C. Construction Industry Health and Safety Council and the B.C. Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan. In addition to conducting the Needs Assessment, the Skills Analyst brought to SkillPlan the techniques and methodology of Literacy Task Analysis - a way of determining training paths for workers.

The Research Director came to SkillPlan with a family background in the construction industry. Among the main start up functions of the Research Director was establishing a data base entitled "Word Find". This data base is in fact a lexicon of construction terms, and, when complete, will contain each word in five languages, plus a definition in English. The lexicon is intended as a tool for trainers whose trainees may need assistance in understanding terminology. Another key role of the Research Director is to stay abreast of developments in workforce training and human resource management which may influence the construction industry.

The Adult Education Advisor brought to SkillPlan a solid base of adult education expertise gained in both college and community settings, and a sound capacity for counselling individuals and providing them with action plans for basic skills development. The important role of establishing links with educators and educational bodies is achieved through the Adult Education Advisor.

The particular mix of background and expertise just described has helped SkillPlan to branch out in a number of directions which are described later in this article.

ASSESSMENT

The question of whether and how to assess workers' basic skills emerged at an early point in the SkillPlan mandate. Would formalized assessments be used on a widespread basis, sparingly, or at all? Was there indeed a need for assessments, or would other approaches be preferable?

The decision made by the Executive Director with the whole hearted support of his staff was NOT to proceed with large scale assessments of basic skills. This decision was made for several reasons. Firstly, the majority of assessment instruments are grade related and rest on an academic base - an approach which usually is not relevant for meeting workforce needs. Secondly, such instruments cause concern and fear, especially among workers who have long been absent from a formalized educational milieu and for whom education may have been a somewhat sad experience.

The decision "not to test" was also made on a practical basis. A review of the approaches of some other industries which had started their basic skills mandate with large scale testing showed that tensions had built rapidly among workers - and SkillPlan wished to avoid such tensions. The avoidance of formalized and compulsory testing is built on a philosophic base which says that workers with basic skills training needs know instinctively that they require upgrading. They do not need a test to tell them that. Once they come forward and seek assistance through one or more of SkillPlan's programs an interview will assist in determining the need. The interview will be based largely on establishing the aspirations of the workers. Do they need training in order to do their present job better, or for a transfer or promotion? Training will be built around those aspirations rather than around time based and grade related criteria.

SKILLPLAN INITIATIVES

The initiatives gathered under the SkillPlan umbrella are diverse, intended to appeal to the broad range of potential users within the industry. Some initiatives are geared toward trades trainers - aiming to heighten their sensitivity to basic skills requirements among trainees. Others are aimed directly at workers, both in their occasional role in a training classroom and their more prevalent role "on the job".

In brief, here are some of the initiatives which have taken shape over the past year.

SkillPlan Basic Skills Upgrading Program - A SkillPlan/OLA Partnership

SkillPlan entered into a partnership with the Open Learning Agency to pilot a computer assisted learning program offered at the OLA training site in Burnaby, B.C. In the seven months of the pilot which lasted from December, 1991 to June, 1992, over 100 construction workers from various trades participated in this program in one or more of its three program strands: ESL, GED or Basic Upgrading. Response was extremely positive.

Writing For Work Workshop

A two and a half day Writing For Work Workshop was developed to provide opportunities for workers in the construction industry to review and practice the various types of writing required within the industry. This was deemed as particularly useful for workers who were assuming leadership positions within their company or their union and who were rusty on how to write reports, letter and memos.

WHMIS In Spanish:

This one day course is geared at helping Hispanic native speakers better understand hazards in the workplace. Legislation pertaining to the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System places an obligation on employers to ensure that all workers have completed a short course on workplace hazards. By placing English and Spanish information side by side and providing a bilingual instructor, this course creates a bridge to learning the English language, while at the same time fulfilling the legislative requirement.

Basic Skills Strategies Session (BSSS):

The Basic Skills Strategies Session was developed to give trades trainers the opportunity to be more aware of reading strategies and how to recognize and help trainees with literacy problems. Clear language was also a focus of this one day workshop.

Reading, Thinking, Problem Solving Course:

This course recognizes the fact that much communication and problem solving which construction workers do is oral. Building on this oral base, this course deals with oral problem solving and then branches out to add the dimensions of problem solving which occur when dealing with printed communications.

Other Courses And Services

Courses are being developed in the areas of Basics for Blueprints, Test Taking, and Test Making. A Clear Language Consultancy Service is also being offered by SkillPlan to trades training plans and to the B.C. Construction Industry Health and Safety Council. These courses and services flow directly out of the Basic Skills Needs Assessment.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

The initiatives described are oriented both to individuals and to groups. They are both remedial and developmental. Most are oriented toward fulfilling several goals at the same time. The Spanish WHMIS, for instance, aims to confer safety content at the same time as it builds a bridge to English language learning. The BSSS aims at sensitizing trades trainers to the basic skills needs of trainees while at the same time providing insight into reading strategies.

SkillPlan can be sent as a model which could be adapted by other industries. Its strength lies in its broad view of basic skills training - an approach which recognizes individual need and which includes everyone. Its strength is also based on its avoidance of full scale and widespread testing - an avenue which is guaranteed to create uneasiness among workers.

By providing content which relates to the industry and by avoiding duplication of basic skills programs already being offered through colleges and other education institutions and community groups. SkillPlan has chosen "relevance of training" as a key concept. As SkillPlan looks toward the end of its second year next March, it can truly say that basic skills have been integrated into the broader training picture.

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Title: The Relationship between Locus of Control and Academic Level and Sex of Secondary School Students

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Complete text:

The relationships among locus of control, academic program, and sex of grade 9 secondary school students were investigated. Two hundred sixty-seven high school students from advanced, general, and basic level programs were administered the modified forms of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children and the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire. As hypothesized, students in the advanced level program were more internally controlled than either general or basic level students. As well, advanced level students were more internally responsible for their intellectual-academic failures than general level students. Sex differences as they relate to specific expectancies in intellectual achievement situations are also discussed.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether academic level and sex of grade 9 secondary school students are related to generalized expectancies for locus of control of reinforcements. In addition the relationship of academic level and sex to specific expectancies in intellectual achievement situations was explored.

Locus of control is defined (Rotter, 1966) as a generalized expectancy of the extent to which a person perceives that events in one's life are consequences of one's behavior. People, described as "internal", believe that they exercise more control over events and outcomes affecting them. In contrast, "externals" tend to believe that they have little control over what happens to them. These expectancies are perceived to be the result of many past experiences.

Lefcourt (1980) suggests that some expectancies are very general, relating to most life events; other expectancies are quite specific and are related to very specific life events. Most instruments used to measure locus of control provide measures of a generalized expectancy. The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (IARQ) (Crandall, Katkovsky, & Crandall, 1965) does provide a measure of specific expectancies of responsibility for academic success and failure. The scale gives a score for internalized success (I+) and one for internalized failure.

In a literature review of the relationship between locus of control (generalized and specific expectancies) and achievement, Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) stated that 31 of 36 studies reviewed indicated a significant relationship between locus of control and academic achievement with internals having higher achievement than externals. McGhee and Crandall (1968) investigated specific expectancies and reported I+ as a predictor of male achievement and I- as a predictor of female achievement.

Nowicki and Strickland (1973) found that particularly for males an internal score on the Nowicki-Strickland Scale is related to academic competence and to social maturity and appears to be a correlate of independent, striving, and self-motivated behaviors.

Dweck and Licht (1980) maintain that girls and boys have different characteristic ways of coping with positive and negative outcomes. The two sexes interpret their successes and failures differently and have different views of the implications for their abilities. They differ in the persistence of their attempts to solve a difficult problem, in the quality of their performance after failure, and in their task choices after they encounter difficulty.

Lochel (1983) reviewed sex differences in achievement. She suggests that females are more inclined to take responsibility for failure. She views females as lacking in confidence in their abilities and not being prepared to cope with failure.

As Parsons (1981) has recently pointed out, the conclusion that males tend to attribute their failures to external or unstable causes while females tend to attribute their failures to internal causes appears to be an oversimplification. In a review of the attributional literature she cites several examples. Using the IARQ, Dweck and Reppucci (1973) reported no sex difference in general internality for failure but found boys to be slightly more likely to attribute their failures to lack of effort than girls. In contrast, Crandall et al. (1965) found girls to be more internal for their failures; Beck (1977) found no sex differences in either internality or lack of effort attributions; Diener and Dweck (1978) did not report a significant sex difference on either lack of effort or internality for failure; and Nicholls (1975) found no main effect sex difference in attributions of failure due to lack of effort. Similarly, inconsistent patterns emerge for the measures of attributions of failure to external causes (Dweck & Repucci, 1973; Nicholls, 1975; Parsons, 1978).

Ontario secondary school students take courses at one of three levels: advanced, general, and basic. Advanced level students are expected to continue their education at a university. General level students are prepared to continue education by taking technical or professional courses related to specific occupations or they may not continue studies. Basic level students follow vocational courses at high school and are generally not considered to be capable of succeeding at the general or advanced levels.

Students enrolling in basic level vocational programs are directed to these programs by elementary school staff. Typically, these students have a record of low achievement and many have specific learning problems. They have likely received special help throughout their elementary school experience.

Students with the advice of both elementary and secondary school staff choose to study either general or advanced level academic courses (biology, chemistry, English, geography, history, mathematics, physics). In making this choice past achievement is more likely a great determinant than aptitude. However, both achievement and aptitude would undoubtedly be lower for general level students.

Because of these past experiences which cause students to select or to be counselled into specific levels, it was hypothesized that advanced level students would be most internal and basic level students least internal for both generalized and specific locus of control measures.

On the basis of the literature reviewed, it was also hypothesized that females would take more responsibility for failure than males.

METHOD

Research Subjects

The research subjects were 267 grade 9 students from three secondary schools located in an affluent suburban community. One of the schools was a vocational school serving students from the entire district and included basic level students only. The other two schools (academic) had students at general and advanced levels and were considered to have students representative of those within the district. If students were taking two or more academic courses at the general level they were classified as general.

Measuring Instruments

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (NS) was used to measure generalized expectancies and the IARQ was used to measure specific expectancies (I+ and I-). Because of limited testing time a 21-item version of the NS (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) for grades 7-12 and a 20-item version of the IARQ (Crandall, 1968) for grades 6-12 were used. Crandall (1968) reported correlations of .89 for I+ and .88 for I- between the short form (grades 6-12) and the long form of the IARQ.

Data Collection

The measuring instruments were administered to students in grade 9 English classes by their teachers during a regular class period. Prior to test administration, a researcher met with the teachers or vice-principal to review administration procedures. Testing at two schools (the vocational school and one of the academic schools) was completed in December 1985. Data were collected from the other academic school in April 1986.

RESULTS

Reliabilities of the three measures were estimated using the * coefficient. They were .70 for the NS, .43 for I+, and .46 for I-. The reliabilities for I+ and I- were quite low; this could have increased the probability of type II error when data were analyzed.

Prior to testing the hypotheses, analyses of variance were used to test for differences between the two academic schools. No significant differences were found between schools.

To determine whether differences were as hypothesized, analyses of variance were used with level and sex as independent variables and NS, I+ and I- scores as dependent variables. Results are shown in Table 1.

Since sample sizes were not equal an unweighted means analysis was used. Significant differences were found only for level on both the Nowicki-Strickland and I-. Post hoc, the Tukey-Kramer modification of Tukey's WSD procedure was used to determine which groups differed significantly. For the NS, advanced level students were significantly more internal than either general or basic level students (See Table 2 for means).

These results were as expected. For I-, advanced level students were significantly more internal than general level students; basic level students did not differ significantly from either advanced or general level students.

Sex differences were not found for any of the dependent variables. It had been predicted

that females would have I- scores higher than those of males. Although not significant, the opposite was found. Males had an I- mean higher than that of females. Their mean for I+ minus I-, was used as a dependent variable. A significant sex difference was found. For males, the difference between I+ and I- scores was less ($M = .32$) than that for females ($M = .88$). To further explore, correlated t tests were used to determine whether males or females scored significantly higher on I+ as compared to I-. Females did score significantly higher on I+ than on I- ($t = 3.35$); there was no significant difference for males ($t = 1.68$). The results for sex were not consistent with what had been suggested in the literature. In examining the means for sex by groups it would appear that the sex differences are attributable to basic and general level students. At the advanced level the mean differences between I+ and I- were .46 for males and .31 for females, while at the general level differences were .26 for males and 1.43 for females; at the basic level males differed by .14 and females by 1.27. Thus for basic and general levels, females scored substantially more internal for academic success than for academic failure. It would be of interest to explore these relationships in future studies.

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that the generalized expectancy of reinforcement is related to level of academic program of Ontario grade 9 secondary school students. The student in the advanced level program is more internally controlled than either the general or basic level student. It is assumed that advanced level students achieve more than general level and basic level students. Although the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement has been found before, its occurrence in the present study further emphasizes the importance of a generalized expectancy of reinforcement in determining academic performance. The results of this investigation support the belief that the more internal the individual's orientation, the higher the individual's achievement.

The specific expectancies were also found to be related to the type of academic program of secondary school students. Advanced level students were more internally responsible for their intellectual-academic failures than general level students. Surprisingly, neither general nor advanced level students were more internally responsible for their intellectual-academic failures than the basic level students. It may well be that students in vocational schools function better as a separate student body rather than in an integrative stream. Students in a vocational school may have a culture and a set of beliefs about responsibility for academic school. Isolated from the advanced and general level students, the basic level student may feel more accepted and more likely to persist in the face of temporary failure. General level students educated in the same environment as the advanced level students undoubtedly receive messages from the environment which suggest that they are not as capable of determining their own reinforcements. As suggested above, this may also be a function of performing at lower levels throughout elementary school. In a further investigation with the three groups of students, the relationships of responsibility for intellectual-academic successes and failures to various personal factors and to different classroom instructional methods may be considered.

The results of the study also raise the issue of attribution retraining for low achievement students. As Dweck and Licht (1980) point out, the cognitions of mastery-oriented students (a motivational orientation) reflect their tendency to look toward the future, to emphasize the positive, and to invest their energies in actively pursuing solution-relevant strategies (p. 201). Given this, does it not seem like a reasonable strategy to teach helpless students to attribute their failures to variable factors such as personal effort? According to Dweck and Licht (1980) it would appear to be necessary to rid seriously helpless individuals of their maladaptive attributions by such a direct method before they can effectively employ the more adaptive self-instructions and self-monitoring of the mastery-oriented student.

This study also supports the notion that although locus of control seems related to academic level its relationship to sex is not consistent. The hypothesis regarding sex was not supported. However, females were more apt to take responsibility for success and less apt to accept responsibility for failure. The differences between I+ and I- scores showed that males ($M = .33$) had a difference significantly smaller than that of females ($M = .88$). In addition, females were significantly more internal for success than for failure. These differences seemed to be a result of a rather large difference between I+ and I- for basic and general level female students. These results are in contrast to those of Lochel (1983) who suggested that females are more inclined to take responsibility for failure than for success. Could it be that basic and general level female students have a greater need to take responsibility for success and to deny behavior, low achieving boys tend to receive much negative reinforcement. In addition, they receive negative

reinforcement for academic behaviors. Thus, they may not be as threatened by taking responsibility for failures since they may not differentiate between negative reinforcements for social behaviors and those for academic achievement.

The sex differences found in this study are interesting; however, it is recommended that additional research be completed to explore these relationships.

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