

A guide to learning disabilities resources
for adult literacy educators

Toward a “whole life” approach



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A guide to learning disabilities resources for adult literacy educators: Toward a “whole-life” approach

This reference guide is written for adult literacy educators looking for resources to support their practice in the area of learning disabilities. In the process of reading and selecting these resources, it became clear to us that a learning disability (LD) is not only a classroom-based concern. It is a “whole life” issue that shapes not only literacy and learning, but also people’s self-esteem, family and work life. While the resources we selected reflect a wide variety of strategies and philosophies related to learning disabilities, we also identified principles of good practice that transcend this diversity. Based on input from many educators and experts in BC and Canada, as well as our own background research, we identified six principles of practice in LD that support this “whole life” approach to working with people with people with learning disabilities in adult literacy settings. We have organized this review according to these principles:

1. Finding out about learning disabilities and how it shapes adult literacy work.
2. Building relationships of trust and dialogue through intake, screening and learning profiles.
3. Teaching to many minds: “LD-friendly” instructional strategies and supports inside and outside the classroom.
4. Taking care of the spirit: Addressing the issues that may “walk beside” LD such as fear, low self esteem, anxiety, experiences of violence, poverty and isolation.
5. Changing how the world thinks about LD: system advocacy, self advocacy and awareness raising.
6. Continuing the conversation: Self-directed professional development.

These six areas of practice are interconnected - we think of them as pieces of an inter-locking puzzle. In organizing this bibliography according to these principles, we hope to provide other busy educators with a filter and a starting place for navigating the vast

literature on this topic. We selected resources that were no/low cost or at least affordable, accessible, up-to-date, clearly written and appropriate for adult learners and educators in literacy settings. Several of the resources fit under more than one topic; these are cited where they first come up, and then cross-referenced thereafter. Resources under each topic are listed in alphabetic order. We know we have unintentionally missed some good resources and would welcome feedback, so we can continue to build this reference. You can keep up to date on new resources, and follow your paths of interest by checking the following sources regularly:

- Literacy BC Resource Centre <http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/catalogue/>
- The adult literacy and LD databases attached to all the provincial literacy coalitions
- Grassroots Press: <http://www.literacyservices.com/>
- LD online www.ldonline.org
- LDAC (Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (www.ldac.ca) and the learning disability associations in each province.
- NALD www.nald.ca

I. Finding out about learning disabilities in adult literacy settings

“Whenever we teach adults with reasonable intelligence, who in spite of their intelligence had enormous difficulties with conventionally presented information in their schooling, we can suspect that a learning disability has played a part” (Goldstein, 2000, p. 9).

Learning disabilities are relatively common – up to 20% of Canadians are believed to have a learning disability (LDAC, 2006) – and according to the Movement for Canadian Literacy (see below) between 30% – 75% of adults in ABE and literacy classes are believed to have learning disabilities (MCL, 2006). The resources included in this section provide “formal” definitions of LD, as well as descriptions of what learning disabilities may look like in the context of adult learning and everyday life. These definitions are helpful in clarifying what is, and what is not considered a learning disability, and how LD may shape the lives of the adults we work with. Please note that many of the resources listed in Sections 2 and 3 of this guide also contain definitions and descriptions of LD in the adult literacy context.

Centre of literacy and disability studies

Organization

<http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/>

This U.S.-based site is unique in its focus on the links between learning disabilities and literacy – most organizations discuss LD in the context of broader learning issues.

The site features links to latest research, resources and training opportunities for addressing the literacy needs of adults with learning disabilities. According to the website, “The Center’s mission is to promote literacy and communication for individuals of all ages with disabilities. It is the belief of the CLDS that disabilities are only one of

many factors that influence an individual's ability to learn to read and write and to use print throughout their life and across their living environments. All individuals, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have the right to an opportunity to learn to read and write in order to increase and enhance their educational opportunities, vocational success, communicative competence, self-empowerment capabilities, and independence."

Goldstein, R. (2000).

Taking the mystique out of learning disabilities. A practical guide for literacy tutors.

Ottawa: Laubach Literacy of Canada.

Book

This book is available through most resource centres and libraries; this is a practical guide to defining, identifying and addressing learning disabilities in adult literacy settings. It offers a bit more background information and research data than most handbooks, and includes a section on de-stigmatizing LD, noting the "rich and famous people" who have learning disabilities. But there are fewer "hands-on" tools, and so this makes it a good accompaniment to the practitioner guides recommended in Sections 2 and 3.

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

Website and Organization

<http://www.ldac-taac.ca/adult-e.asp>

This Canadian national organization, through its local offices and its website, provides ongoing education, training, resources and information to people with learning disabilities, parents and educators. The site includes a commonly agreed-upon definition of learning disabilities and detailed information for adults in a question-answer format.

See the "publications" link for information on LDAC's published research, practitioner handbooks and resources for educators, parents and adult learners, including advocacy and legal information.

LD Online

<http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/adults>

This US-based site is geared toward parents and teachers of children with LD. However, there are useful definitions and descriptions of learning disabilities, and information specific to literacy and LD for adults, including how to be one's own self-advocate, adaptive technologies for work and the classroom, and so on. The site is particularly valuable for its' online database of research materials on adult literacy and LD, and its guide to screening tools and instructional resources (see also Section 4 of this guide). Note that the literacy-related resources ceased to up-dated as of October 2006, so some resources may be too old or too specific to the US context.

Movement for Canadian Literacy

Website and organization

<http://www.literacy.ca/litand/7.htm>

MCL's one-pager "Literacy and Learning Disabilities" presents statistics on the prevalence of learning disabilities in adult literacy settings in Canada. Some suggestions are included for system-wide best practice principles for meeting the learning needs of adults with learning disabilities.

The following link provides one-page fact sheets that describe common signs and characteristics of learning disabilities.

<http://www.literacy.ca/public/litca/spring01/page4.htm>

Specific learning disabilities and related conditions

There are a number of conditions that are not learning disabilities but often accompany LD, such as FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and ADD/ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder). It is important to note that while the diagnosis for these disabilities and disorders may be different, the recommended strategies for remediation and support are often very similar to those recommended for learning disabilities.

Nunavut Literacy Council

Website

<http://www.nunavutliteracy.ca/english/resource/resource.htm>

The Nunavut Literacy council has published one-page fact sheets on learning disabilities in general on specific learning disabilities such as dyscalculia, (numeracy-based learning disability), dysgraphia (handwriting) dyslexia (most common language-based learning disability). There is also information on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and ADD/ADHD.

See also NLC'S Learning Disabilities Guide, described in section 2 and available for download as a PDF at <http://www.nunavutliteracy.ca/english/resource/ld/guide/ldguide-en.pdf>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Cowichan Valley FAS Action Team Society

Website

www.cvfasd.org

This community-based organization offers advocacy-oriented participatory education and support for people with FAS/D, their families and supporters. They offer training courses (see Section Six), publish easy to read and informative flyers, booklets and pocket reference guides on topics such as living with FAS/D, understanding FAS/D in education settings, youth and FAS/D, caring for children, being a friend and supporter, and so on. These resources are sensitive to First Nations' cultures and contexts.

FASD Connections

Website

<http://www.fasdconnections.ca/id82.htm>

This website is geared toward K-12 educators but includes links to online resources for adult educators working with people with FASD, as well as information for parents and community workers.

**Raymond, M., & Belanger, J. (2000).
Literacy-based supports for young adults with FAE/FAS.
NLS/BC Ministry of Advanced Education.**

Full text available on NALD

<http://www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/lbsupprt/Doc1.pdf>

Available to borrow via Literacy BC resource centre

This report describes the impacts of three literacy- based supports (support circles, cognitive compensatory tools, and cognitive enhancement tools) on the lives of five young adults with FAE/FAS (Fetal Alcohol Effect/Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). According to the report: "Each of these support systems was designed to help the young adults cope with daily living challenges such as everyday memory failure, disorganization, and social isolation." The report includes a discussion of the causes, identification and remediation of FAE along with descriptive learning histories of five people living and learning with FAE/FAS.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention Deficit Disorder Resources

Website

http://www.addresources.org/library_titles_adult.php

A US National Non-Profit that helps people with AD/HD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) achieve their full potential through education, support and networking opportunities. Resources include strategies for living with AD/HD, complete with resources available for order and for adults with ADHD and their friends, families and teachers.

"One ADD Place"

Website

<http://www.oneaddplace.com/addcheck.htm>

This website includes a screen for people who think they may have AD/HD. It is not a

diagnostic tool and adults who think they may have AD/HD should consult a doctor or medical professional.

**Parkland Regional College (2000).
Adults Managing, Surviving, Celebrating AD/HD.
Parkland Regional College: Yorkton, Saskatchewan.**

Handbook-Available via Literacy BC Resource Library

This guide is designed for adult learners and educators in literacy settings, and is a psychological and academic perspective on AD/HD in adults. It includes ideas for leading group discussions and designing learning interventions for people who may have AD/HD. The manual assumes many commonalities among people with AD/HD that may not play out in practice. Perhaps most useful is the section on "Celebration" which outlines the "gifts" associated with AD/HD, including life stories written by people with AD/HD.

*See also resources by Pat Hatt that deal in particular with FAE/FAS and ADHD cited in Sections Two and Three.

2. Building relationships of trust and dialogue through intake, screening and learning profiles.

It may take time to figure out if someone has a learning disability and in the end you may never be sure. Sometimes participants in adult literacy classes may already know they have a learning disability and can explain it to you. It may also be possible to get a formal assessment within your institution or pay to take a formal test (up to \$2 500 in British Columbia). Most often, finding out if participants have a learning disability is a process of putting pieces of a puzzle together. In this section we have selected resources that can support this process through the intake interview, informal and formal screening processes, and the development of a learning profile or learning history. As Pat Hatt (see below) suggests, as you go through these processes, you want to pay attention to discrepancies in people's lives: someone who is a wonderful musician and active in their communities but struggles to get things down in writing; someone who puts lots of effort into learning but with little success in relation to that effort. Here are some resources that guide you through this process.

LDAC Screening for Success

Website

<http://www.ldac-taac.ca/Projects/screening-e.asp>

Screening for Success is a video and a print screening tool available in most literacy resource centres and through the LDAC. It was developed by neuropsychologists, psychologists and literacy educators. The screening tool is designed to collect information about learners' education, health, employment and social background to find out whether a learner is at-risk for a learning disability. The intention is that if the results of the screen show that a learner may be at risk for a learning disability, educators, learners and program administrators can make informed instructional decisions.

Screening for Success was developed into a training course for adult educators. (See Section Six: Continuing the Conversation).

**Nunavut Literacy Council (2004).
Learning Disabilities: A guide for educators who work with adult learners.
Cambridge Bay: NLC**

Download as PDF at

<http://www.nunavutliteracy.ca/english/resource/resource.htm>

Based on workshops and research by educator and learning disabilities specialist Pat Hatt, this is a clear language, detailed guide to learning disabilities for use in adult literacy settings. The guide provides indicators and informal screening checklists for organizational, auditory and visual learning disabilities. Teaching strategies and accommodations for each type of disability, including ADHD and FASD are included. Of particular value are detailed case studies of learners with auditory, visual or organizational learning disabilities and hands-on examples of the screening process, developing a learning plan and setting up accommodations. Accommodations refer to any form of assistance that enables learners to participate successfully in a learning setting. Another strength of this resource is the emphasis on “skills integrity”: supporting learners to understand the accommodations used in the classroom so they can adapt these effectively to other areas of their lives.

Learning histories

Working with learners to gather and analyse their life/learning history can provide insights into whether a learning disability may be present, and offer clues to promising learning and teaching strategies. Regardless of the screening tool you adopt or develop, of importance is adequate time to gather the learning history (it needn't be in one sitting), careful listening, sensitive questions and attention to the key learning events and patterns in people's lives.

3. Teaching to many minds: “LD-friendly” instructional strategies and supports inside and outside the classroom

The principle underpinning the creation of an “LD-friendly environment” is that making accommodations in classrooms for adults with learning disabilities can benefit everyone. Accommodations may be thought of as modifications to instruction that remove barriers to learning. They may include using a mix of visual and auditory teaching strategies as well as movement, art and music to tap into diverse learning styles, as well as individual supports such as providing note takers for those with difficulties writing, using colour screens for those with visual difficulties, offering alternative testing arrangements, extending time allowed for assignments, minimizing distractions, and asking learners what accommodations they need.

Indeed, these practices affirm inclusive and reflective practices that are already part of adult literacy work in many settings. This section presents a selection of materials and resources that reflect inclusive teaching practices that benefit all adult learners, as well as packaged curricula designed for one-to-one instruction with adults with specific learning disabilities.

Campbell, P. (2002).
Teaching Reading to Adults: A Balanced Approach.
Edmonton: Grassroots Press.

For ordering information
www.literacyservices.com

This is a theoretically rich, user-friendly resource to support reading instruction for diverse adult learners. The author situates “balance” not only within the context of methodology, but also within the broader context of reading the word and the world.

While not specific to learning disabilities, many of the strategies are effective in an “LD friendly” environment. The resource is accompanied by videos that demonstrate one-to-one instruction on word recognition and reading comprehension.

Centre for Alternative Learning

Website

<http://www.learningdifferences.com>

This University of Pennsylvania website has a range of materials for students who learn differently, including a couple of different math series: Alternative Math: When Nothing else Seems to Work and Tic, Tac, Toe Math. It also has tools like rulers with the numbers under the lines instead of beside them. On the language side, it has mnemonic clues and compound word lists. See also the online course available for audit (Section Six: Continuing the Conversation). This site has a lot of fun things for students to try. The focus is on strategies and not on diagnosis.

Destination Literacy: Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities (1999).

Toronto: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada.

Online instructional resource

http://www.ldac-taac.ca/Projects/destination_literacy-e.asp

Cost: \$50.00 + GST + postage and handling

This is a follow-up to the 1992 publication Literacy Within Reach: Identifying Adults with Learning Disabilities. This screening and teaching resource does not focus on the “diagnosis” of a specific learning disability but rather aims to communicate instructional strategies that may help adult who may have learning disabilities. Topics include developing attentional, organisational and study skills, self-advocacy, accommodations and adaptations and disclosure. The use of technological tools and devices are explored, along with teaching strategies, lesson plan ideas and the development of learner profiles. Includes a resource section. (See also: Screening Tools, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada).

Hatt, P. (2002).

Supporting and Sharing: Best Practices in Learning Disabilities Practitioner Training.

The philosophy underpinning this resource, some of which is included in the Learning Disabilities Guide described above, is that learning disabilities can be addressed in group and one-to-one learning that attend to a range of learning styles, incorporate multi-sensory teaching strategies and promote awareness and discussion of personal learning styles and preferences. The guide provides resources and case studies that detail how this can be accomplished, complete with descriptive case studies.

Hatt, P. (2003).

**Literacy demonstrations accommodations for adults with learning disabilities: Balancing accommodation with skills integrity.
Toronto: Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.**

Website

http://ldao.ca/resources/education/literacy/Literacy_Manual.pdf

The title says it all. This is a variation of the above resource, with more examples (up to sixty) of accommodations that may be helpful for learners with various kinds of learning disabilities, couched in case studies and demonstration lessons with diverse adult learners.

Hunt, J. (2005).

**Learning tools that work.
Toronto: ActionRead. (National Literacy Secretariat/HRDC)**

Website

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/lttw/lttw.pdf>

This is a guide to adaptive and assistive technologies for use in adult literacy and learning environments where there are people with a range of learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. Adaptive technologies are defined as computer software programs that “help students maximize their abilities at school, at work and in daily life”. Assistive technologies are those that help people negotiate physical barriers. The guide contains detailed, objective appraisal of reading, writing and voice-to-text software packages as well as tips and links to other assistive technologies. Clearly written and budget conscious, with no jargon! Don’t miss the web-links and the case studies at the end.

For more information on assistive and adaptive technologies visit LD Online and the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (see above) and SARAW (Speech Assisted Reading and Writing) resources at <http://www.neilsquire.ca/section.asp?catid=123&subid=137&pageid=31>

LDAO (Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario). Job Fit: Books One, Two and Facilitators Guide.
ON: LDAO.

Website

<http://www.ldao.ca/soar/jobfit.php>

Also available at the Literacy BC resource centre

<http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/catalogue/>

This curriculum is designed for one-to-one or group learning led by a facilitator. The goal of Job Fit is to help people with LD to find a job, and develop strategies to retain their jobs through accommodations that promote time management, organizational skills, self-advocacy and self-awareness. The emphasis is on supporting people with LD to be aware of their own learning strengths, challenges and preferred styles and to find work that matches these. See the website for ordering information.

Literacy for Independent Living

Website

<http://www.nald.ca/ava/english/litinfo/ld.htm>

Literacy for Independent Living (LIL) is an online project of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC) that supports literacy educators and other community groups to work with people with disabilities, including learning disabilities. According to the LIL website: "If you are a literacy practitioner, LIL has information for you on disability awareness, assistive devices, best practices, tools, and many other topics that will facilitate the literacy process for adult learners with disabilities".

NIFL (National Institute for Literacy) (2005). Bridges to Practice: A Research-based Guide for Literacy Practitioners Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities. Washington: National Institute for Literacy

Free online

<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/bridges/materials/materials.html>

US-based. Includes four online manuals, each with a detailed, searchable table of contents. This resource can be ordered for \$150.00 US or downloaded as a PDF (it's very long!) The value of this resource is its comprehensive, careful and detailed discussion of LD in adulthood and in adult literacy settings, and the emphasis on involving learners in decisions about their learning. However, its "firm" instructional approach may not work for all adults, and indeed phonics-based approaches are not usually helpful for adults with auditory processing disabilities. Guidebook 5 is the accompanying facilitators' manual and is not available online.

**Lamb, T., Mark, R., Murphy, P. and Soroke, B (2006).
Literacy, equality and creativity: Resource guide for adult learners.
Belfast: Queen's University of Belfast.**

This is a collection of non-text based tools and resources designed to help adult learners and educators explore issues of power and equality. The three strands of the project, literacy, equality and creativity, are woven together in a process that can be adapted to help people with learning disabilities identify the sources and forms of discrimination they experience, and ways to respond to it. Integrating art, movement, music, theatre and storytelling into teaching and learning can itself promote equality by providing alternatives to the text-based learning that many learners struggle with. This resource comes with a CD Rom with examples and background information on the model and strategies. Available through the Literacy BC Resource Centre

Structured programs for one-to-one and "LD only" small group instruction

In addition to resources offering general strategies and principles for "LD friendly" practice, there are a number of programs on the market that are designed specifically for one-to-one tutoring with adults with LD. These programs typically feature "MTA" (Multi-sensory Teaching Approaches) which involve auditory, visual and kinesthetic sensory pathways, in a systematic, sequential and structured format. There is normally

a strong focus on phonology and word segments (sound-letter relationships). These programs have met with considerable success, though they may not work with all learners and can be too expensive and specialized for use in community-based literacy projects. MTA programs, and indeed any structured program are most successful when complimented by other elements of good practice in LD. The following are programs commonly used across Canada. Most require that staff attend a training program and materials and curricula are available for purchase.

Lebeau, M. (2004).

Vision: Seeing the possibilities beyond. Exploring the use of structure of intellect (SOI) and sensori-motor integration exercise within literacy programs. Final report.

Available through Literacy BC resource centre

This report documents the efficacy of SOI (see below) from the perspective of adult literacy educators and learners based in British Columbia. From the report introduction: "This report evaluates the application of structure of intellect, sensori-motor, and other tools in a literacy project. The project explores and documents how these tools impact learning disabilities, measures the impacts on 26 learning abilities, and identifies other factors that affect learning."

Orton-Gillingham

Curriculum and Instruction

<http://www.ortonacademy.org/>

Developed in 1935 by a neuropsychologist (Orton) and a psychologist (Gillingham), who noticed children who had chronic, unexplained language process difficulties associated with what we now call dyslexia.

Hallmarks of the approach is that it is "language-based, multi-sensory, structured, sequential, cumulative, cognitive, and flexible. Its breadth, perspective, and flexibility prompt use of the term approach instead of method" (Orton-Gillingham Academy, 2007). Visit this link to their academy for more information or explore other programs inspired by this approach.

Power Path

Curriculum and Instruction

<http://powerpath.com/pages/ordering.htm>

This website lists many screening and accommodation tools. While the kits are expensive, it gives you an idea of what is available and in use.

There are 23 items in this kit. Topics included are: Adults with ADD/ADHD; Adults with Learning Disabilities; Reading the Colors by Helen Irlen; Brain Gym Book – Teacher’s Edition; Video Tape of the Power Path process.

Having screening tools matched with accommodations would open up a way to engage the student in figuring out what works for them and gives them tools to manage their own learning. Many of the products in these kits already exist in multi-sensory classrooms, but the screening provides a reason to use them both for the teacher and the student. You can try their materials for 15 days and if you return them in a salable condition with receipt within 30 days you can get a full refund.

Structure of Intellect (SOI)

Website

<http://www.soisystems.com/model.html>

This is not based on Orton-Gillingham approach, but rather a “theory of human intelligence” developed by JJ Guildford in the 1960s. The main tenet of this theory is that there are 150 different components of intelligence, which are not fixed, and can be developed through instruction and practice. The method includes a diagnostic of these intellectual abilities, followed by remediation. SOI , along with other multi-sensory literacy approaches has been adapted for use in the ABE programs at the Capilano College Squamish Campus. For more information on this research and development, see the citation below.

We All Can Read

Curriculum and Instruction

<http://www.weallcanread.com/>

According to the website, We All Can Read Program is a research-based, multi-sensory

phonics program designed to help students, regardless of their age or background, who require remedial reading instruction. This direct, systematic, and sequential synthetic phonics program is used by parents and adult students in their homes and by teachers in both mainstream and special education classes in schools. We All Can Read is solidly grounded in Orton-Gillingham principles. Videos and online instruction is available. Comment: This system seemed more possible for adults with a basic vocabulary and who are not ESL students, only nonsense words should be used. This forces them to associate the letters with the sounds and eliminates asking them to labour over sounding out words they can sight-read.

4. Taking care of the spirit: Addressing the issues that may “walk beside” LD

People who have struggled to learn all their lives have most likely faced ridicule, bullying, and attacks on their self-esteem and self worth. If people have left school early, found it difficult to find work, lived in poverty or on the streets, they have also most likely experienced physical and/or emotional violence. This experience of violence can make learning very difficult, but if we recognize that it is there, new kinds of learning can happen. Moreover, naming and valuing non-academic outcomes can help us to see progress and improvement that may be invisible otherwise. What does it mean when for the first time since joining your program someone gains the courage to volunteer to make the coffee for the group, or to speak in front of a group? The following resources support educators and learners to pay attention to learning in our everyday lives.

Learning and Violence

Website

<http://www.learningandviolence.net/>

This is the most comprehensive website you will find on violence and learning, particularly in the context of adult literacy practice. Based on the work of feminist researcher Jenny Horsman, this animated, multi-modal site draws on published research, stories, anecdotes, poetry and visual art work to educate educators on the impacts of many kinds of violence on learning, strategies for addressing it in the context of adult literacy practice, self-care, sources of support and so on. Click on “helping others learn” for a visual tour on creating inclusive and safe learning environments. There are plenty of links to more resources on violence and learning.

Morgan, D. (1997).
Writing Out Loud and Morgan, D. (2002). More Writing Out Loud.
Edmonton: Grassroots Press.

Website

<http://writingoutloud.ca/default.html>

or order through Grassroots Press:

<http://www.literacyservices.com/>

The writing process that Deborah Morgan outlines provides a context for safe discussion and exploration of significant themes and events in people's lives, and how they may approach writing about them. The scaffolding embedded in the process (drawing on arts-based, multi-sensory learning strategies) is suitable for people with learning disabilities and the advice on group dynamics and facilitation of the writing process is also helpful. See the website for more information on training in Writing out Loud.

Norton, M. (2004).
Violence and learning: Taking action.
Calgary: Literacy Alberta.

Website

www.nald.ca/fulltext/valta/02.htm

Written by adult literacy educators as part of a research project on violence and learning, each chapter provides practical examples on creating safe learning environments, using the arts in learning, the writing process and other ideas for "rebuilding the spirit".

Nonesuch, K. (2006).
New beginnings: Writings by Vancouver Island Women.
Duncan: Malaspina UNiversity-College

Website

http://www.learningandviolence.net/changing/new_beginning.pdf

"I have followed the path that has brought me back to myself. I am sure you know the feeling even if your path is different than mine" (Marian, 2006, p. 7). These short pieces are powerful; anyone who has lived through depths of despair, incredible joy, hope, fear and love, will identify with these stories...they are an invitation to deeper discussion, writing, and to making connections with others.

Valuing non-academic outcomes

Battell, E. (2001).
Naming the Magic.
Ottawa: National Literacy Secretariat/HRDC.

Website

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/magic/magic.pdf>

This clearly written report describes the process adopted to develop techniques to measure non-academic outcomes (NAOs) in adult literacy settings. These techniques include journaling, anecdotal reporting, end-of-year reports, learner goal-setting and guiding questions for developing an awareness of non-academic outcomes. Integrated into any adult literacy setting, these techniques help to foreground positive change in people's lives that often don't show up in more traditional assessments.

LDAC (see Section One)

The LDAC's recent project, "Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities" (PACFOLD, 2007) attempts to demystify and de-stigmatize LD with personal stories of LD from people of different ages and backgrounds. There is a comprehensive section on self-advocacy for adult learners, including disclosing a learning disability to an employer and other workplace tips, coping with learning disabilities in day-to-day life, and transitioning to new phases of life.

Niks, M., Allen, D., Davies, P., McRae, D. & Nonesuch, K. (2003).
Dancing in the dark.
Vancouver: RiPAL-BC.

Website

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/dark/dark.pdf>

This collaborative, research-in-practice process led to several insights relevant to creating a safe adult learning environment and "re-building the spirit". The authors advocate for teaching approaches that promote learner agency in its various forms, and provide examples of what this looks like in their own practice. They also describe how emotions can be recognized and brought into the learning process as a powerful resource.

Skills integrity: Applying learning skills to everyday life

'Skills integrity' relates to the need to ensure that even if we provide a learner with accommodations, the learner is independently able to use that skill and or to use it to learn a more complex skill" (Hatt, 2003). One vital aspect of literacy practice is to ensure that learners know and understand the teaching strategies and accommodations that work for them in the classroom, so they can use them outside of the classroom – at the bank, in the grocery store, at work, in the family. You will find material on skills integrity in the resources by Pat Hatt listed in previous sections.

5. Changing how the world thinks about LD: system advocacy, self-advocacy and awareness-raising

This area of practice is about self-advocacy, system advocacy and community awareness. Unfortunately there are stigmas and myths that surround learning disabilities that have their origins in “pathologizing” difference; in other words seeing disabilities as a “deviation from the normal” rather than as differences that can offer the world new ways of doing and seeing things, when the right supports and strategies are in place. Supporting learners to advocate for their rights as learners in the classroom, the workplace and in everyday life is an important part of literacy work. Addressing the myths and stigmas about LD that circulate in the wider community is another component of this practice.

Independent Living Resource Centre (NWT)

Website

<http://library.nald.ca/learning/item/4969>

This resource provides information and strategies for literacy educators working with people with disabilities (that include learning disabilities) to help people make their own choices and advocate for themselves. The book features strategies and guidelines for planning and facilitating workshops on disabilities for literacy educators.

See the work of Mel Levine (year) *All kinds of minds* and *The gift of dyslexia* for more in-depth discussion about the positive aspects of LD and how society and learning environments, can be transformed to welcome “all kinds of minds”.

Lavoie, R. (1996). FAT City: How Difficult Can This Be?

Video

<http://www.ricklavoie.com>

CBAL (Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy) and other groups have successfully used this video (FAT is Frustration, Anxiety, Tension), to raise awareness of learning disabilities and to reduce the stigma often attached to LD. They found that use of this video was most effective when followed by a panel discussion comprised of people with learning disabilities who share their experiences with educators and other community workers. This video is available in most local libraries or order it through Rick Lavoie's website, where you will also find other information on LD.

LD Pride Online

Website

www.ldpride.net/

Designed for people with learning disabilities (referred to as "invisible disabilities") to take self-assessments, learning style inventories, read about the latest research on LD and post comments and share ideas on the online bulletin board.

North Saskatchewan Independent Living Centre (1999). Change is inevitable, but growth is optional: A self-advocacy manual. Saskatoon: NSILC. <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/change/cover.htm>

Disabilities are broadly defined. The strength of this manual is its focus on the advocacy process, collective organizing and self-advocacy, and the legal and political aspects of advocacy. Facilitation tips are included if people choose to use this in a group learning format

6. Continuing the conversation: Professional development opportunities

Centre for Alternative Learning

On-line audit course for ABE and literacy educators:

http://www.learningdifferences.com/online_courses/course_description.htm

On-line free course available to Canadians for audit only entitled "Characteristics of individuals who learn differently". Provided by the state of Pennsylvania for adult literacy educators and others working in adult education, this course "provides a solid base of knowledge about how learning and perceptual differences affect adults' learning."

"Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Community Practitioner Certificate Program" non-credit Certificate Course.

Organization: Malaspina University-College, Cowichan Campus Continuing Education, Duncan, BC.

Other locations possible

Website:

<http://www.cc.mala.bc.ca/td/fasd.htm>

Course description: The aim of the course is to increase knowledge and skills required by educators and community workers to support people living with FASD. The course includes an Aboriginal perspective on learning, recognizing and building on the strengths of people living with FASD. 78 hours part-time divided into 5 short courses. Cost: \$565 Dates: Continuing Education will customize this course for a group

Learning Disabilities Trainer's Guide Pro-literacy America

Website

<http://novel.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/bridges/training/training.html>

This trainers' guide is based on Bridges to Practice: A Research-based Guide for Literacy Practitioners Serving Adults with Learning Disabilities (see section three). This is a 289 page guide designed to take literacy educators through a series of workshops based on the four downloadable Bridges manuals. It is complete with lesson plans, resources and transparencies, group activities, and discussion questions based on the 4 downloadable Bridges manuals. Adaptations would need to be made to the Canadian context and facilitators would need to have extensive knowledge of learning contexts and communities in Canada to make the information relevant.

Literacy Link South Central (2003). Learning Disabilities Training: A New Approach. Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the National Literacy Secretariat (HRDC).

Training manual available online:

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/ldtrain/cover.htm>

Accessible on line as a searchable PDF document, this manual is the product of a field scan on adult literacy educator training needs in the area of LD. The manual is appropriate for use in a group training format (you would need a knowledgeable facilitator) or for independent, self-paced study. This is a comprehensive tour through common LD topics, including the adaptation and development of screening tools, the creation of learning profiles and other learner-centred resources and accommodations, transitional learning plans and advocacy. See below for Phase II of the training that focuses on employment.

Literacy Link South Central (2004). Learning Disabilities Training: Phase II: Screening Tools, Strategies, and Employment.

Available to download as PDF:

<http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/ldtrain/tools/complete.pdf>

This second phase of LD training goes into more depth and hopes to provide adult educators with more screening tools, with a greater emphasis on supporting learners entering into employment. Free, self-paced, or for use in group training settings with a knowledgeable facilitator.

Deeper reading about LD

The following is a selection of book-length research, in-depth studies and more specific and detailed information about LD-related issues.

- Hallowell, R. (1994).
Driven to distraction: Recognizing and coping with ADD from childhood through adulthood.
New York, NY: Touchstone.

- Haddon, M. (2003).
The curious incident of the dog in the night.
NY: Doubleday.

- A fascinating, compassionate and very readable account of autism in the life of a young man and his family.

- Levine, M (1993)
All kinds of minds.
New York: Educators Publishing Service.

Focuses on children but carries insights for adult literacy practice, particularly in the areas of screening, "diagnosis" and advocacy. See his other titles too, including: The myth of laziness, Ready or not: here comes life; Educational care.