

Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

Submission to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's
Department of Education

Strategic Adult Literacy Plan

Submitted by: Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador

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Who We Are

Literacy NL is a charitable network of individuals and organizations within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to advancing literacy and lifelong learning. Literacy NL was formed under the direction of a grassroots gathering of the provincial literacy community at the *Be The Change* governance conference of December 2005. We work with our members and partners to promote literacy and learning in the following program areas:

- 1) Enhancing communication and networking among community-based organizations that promote literacy and lifelong learning;
- 2) Providing opportunities for community-based collaboration and capacity building;
- 3) Increasing public awareness and support for literacy in all sectors;
- 4) Building partnerships with diverse individuals and organizations.
- 5) Promoting community-based programs for literacy and lifelong learning.
- 6) Developing a research base to inform our work.
- 7) Providing opportunities for learner support within the community.¹

The Need for a Strategic Adult Literacy Plan

“The connection between education and economic growth is well established. However, many continue to face hurdles because of problems with literacy. My Government this year will enhance the Strategic Adult Literacy Plan, providing direction at the community, regional and provincial level, respecting community and cultural differences, and ensuring multiple points of entry for adults to access the support they need to master reading and writing skills.”²

In the 2007 budget of the provincial government, an investment of \$140,000 was allocated to update the provincial Strategic Literacy Plan. The intent of this submission is to provide direction from community which can speak to the foundations for a long term strategy for literacy and learning in this province.

Scope of the Current State of Literacy in the province

Literacy NL offers the following results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey as a background piece to its submission.

¹ Programs and Information for Literacy Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador, Charities Listing, Canada Revenue Agency, www.cra.gc.ca

² His Honour, the Honourable Edward Roberts, ONL, QC, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, Speech from the April 24, 2007 <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/exec/0424n03.htm>

The 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) showed that close to half of the Canadian adult population, aged 16 and over, performed below Level 3 on the prose literacy and numeracy scales. The expectation was that the next survey would show improvements to the literacy profile. However, results from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) do not show any marked improvement in the overall literacy performance of Canadian adults since 1994.

The results of IALSS raise concern because the ability to use and understand information is fundamental to daily life at work, at home, and in the community. The issues surrounding low literacy are compounded when combined with other factors that affect day-to-day well-being. “Lifelong learning is associated with a wide range of economic and non-economic benefits. It has the potential to maximize the talents and skills of individuals, and contribute to higher productivity, improved health, longer lives and a greater likelihood of community and civic engagement.”³

The belief that strong literacy proficiency is the foundation for building and maintaining competencies throughout the life cycle is widely held. Those with low literacy proficiency are most at risk of being excluded from lifelong learning opportunities.

What did we learn from IALSS?

The survey measured literacy levels in four domains: prose, document, numeracy and problem solving. Proficiency was established on a scale where Level 1 is the lowest and Level 5 is the highest. Level 3 is considered the minimum level needed to function in terms of literacy in today’s society. .

In Newfoundland and Labrador

- 54% of the respondents were at Levels 1 and 2 for all four domains.
- This represents 70,000 people at Level 1 and 119,000 people at Level 2.

With 54 percent of the population at Levels 1 and 2 in the prose literacy domain, and higher proportions in the other domains, Newfoundland and Labrador *clearly has a significant proportion of their population aged 16 and over at risk of not being able to fully reach their social and economic potential.*⁴

What does this mean in real numbers?

In Newfoundland and Labrador, 50% of the population (189,000 people), aged 16-65, had average prose literacy proficiency below level 3 and 61% of the population (208,000 people), aged 16-65 had average numeric proficiency below level 3.

³ *State of Learning in Canada: Toward a Learning Future*, 2008 Canadian Council on Learning, P.4

⁴ *Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey*, 2003, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

What are the impacts for youth?

In Newfoundland and Labrador, close to 60% of youth ages 16 -25 had prose literacy proficiency at Level 3 or above, while 40% were below Level 3. Low literacy could impact adversely on youth in terms of participation in postsecondary education and success in the labour market.

What are the impacts for Seniors?

85% of seniors (ages 65+) are below Level 3; 25% are at Level 2; and the remaining 60% are at Level 1. The majority of seniors have relatively low literacy, which may impact their quality of life by increasing their dependency, and posing health and safety risks.

What are the implications of the IALLS data?

- Lower literacy and numeracy proficiencies impact quality of life over a range of outcomes, including employability, wages, physical health, social engagement, and access to lifelong learning opportunities;
- There was no notable change in literacy performance in Canada between 1994 (IALS) and 2003 (IALSS). This has created interest in how the literacy skills of adults might be improved;
- Labour market prospects, and the life chances of the people with low literacy who are not in the labour force, can be greatly enhanced if literacy levels could be improved.
- Literacy is a key competence in a world where information, whether print or digital, is everywhere.⁵

All of the findings in the IALSS contribute to our understanding of the skills development needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They also give us a measure against which to judge our progress in skills attainment.

Response to the Consultation Process

Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador (LNL) appreciates the opportunity to take part in the consultation process for the development of a Strategic Adult Literacy Plan by the Department of Education in 2008. LNL was pleased to receive the Discussion Paper on the new plan from the Department's Adult Learning and Literacy Division, and has distributed it widely among its membership. Invitations were extended by the Division to LNL and to some of its affiliate community groups to attend a meeting on June 26 and 27 to consider the Discussion Paper. On July 4, key board and committee members, and staff of Literacy NL met to further address the content of the Paper. Our considered response to the discussion paper and process of consultation are outlined below.

⁵ Literacy NL compilation of findings from the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS) and other relevant research sources. <http://www.literacynl.com/images/pdfs/literacynlresearch2.ppt>

*Also, on August 11, community members met with Division staff in a Literacy NL-hosted teleconference to clarify the process surrounding the current consultation (see Appendix A).

The 13-page Discussion Paper provided some background on the current initiative and considered the overall situation under seven topics: program delivery and access; literacy in the workplace; public awareness and recruitment; funding for literacy programs; evaluation and assessment; professional development and support; and intergenerational context. Each topic was discussed in a mixture of information on: previous actions and programs in the province; research and models of practice; data on outcomes and other factors; a set of questions relating to each topic; and so on.

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive but thorough response, we have divided our comments below by: context; concepts and scope; and processes of consultation.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the comments of the LNL members, as outlined under the sections context; concepts and scope; and processes of consultation be given full consideration in the deliberations leading to the writing of a Strategic Adult Literacy Plan.

Context

The Discussion Paper has been created to support the development of a new Strategic Adult Literacy Plan. The previous Department of Education position on literacy was published in 2000 and included literacy issues for children as well as adults.⁶

- What indicators did the Department use to track the implementation of the 2000 plan? There is no comment in the current Discussion Paper on how that previous plan and the events from its implementation up to now have influenced choices for the new plan. The Discussion Paper states, “With the objectives of that 2000 plan now implemented, a new provincial Strategic Literacy Plan is due”⁷ Where is the research or other evidence of its results and how has the intervening experience led to the focus of the present plan?
- To give full context to the discussion paper, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that, since 2000, the overall structure and governance of provincial literacy stakeholders have changed substantially. How has the creation of a new central provincial organization, Literacy NL, impacted the literacy landscape? What might be inferred from the current context on future significant effects?
- Another area that drew comment focused on the choice of questions for each section. Some of these questions are too broad to be answerable.
- Other questions in the document have been addressed, at least to some extent, in formal

⁶ Words to Live By: A Strategic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000 Government of NL, P. 1

⁷ *Strategic Adult Literacy Plan: A Discussion Paper*, June 2008, Department of Education, P. 1

research or reports on practice, and yet no apparent data is offered from these sources. Relevant national organizations, such as the Movement for Canadian Literacy, the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment, the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre, and the National Adult Literacy Database have been contributing since 2000 to our knowledge of issues and solutions. At the local level, by way of example, pertinent research has been conducted by the Adult Learning and Literacy Division as part of the ABE pilot project evaluation; current quantitative data, or lack thereof, on the ABE program should be considered; data gathered by Literacy NL and its predecessors should also feed into this document.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That rationales are developed for the key features of the new Plan, which are based on relevant research and experience since 2000.

Concepts and Scope

The organization of the Discussion Paper suggests that the topics listed are the most important for the next Plan. This choice of topics narrows the scope of the discussion. However, it is not clear to us how these were chosen.

The following are points raised by various LNL stakeholders:

- The topics tend to force a focus on programming, curriculum, institutions, teachers/instructors, the public, employers' needs and the like rather than on learners - their characteristics, their needs for childcare or transportation, their goals, potential barriers/suggested solutions to participation, etc.
- There is no discussion about the scope of "literacy" in the Plan, so many crucial factors - the full definition of family in literacy learning; the role of literacy in lifelong learning; health literacy; learning for work; and so - on are ignored or relegated to brief mention.
- The focus seems to be on Adult Basic Education rather than on adult literacy and adult learning.
- The matter of funding for literacy programs was addressed in a somewhat neutral way as a topic, but it also appears throughout the document as a limiting factor in choices about programming.⁸ The latter gives the impression that those responsible for implementing the new Plan have concerns as to the availability of funds. What accounting was done on the money spent on the previous Plan, which might give an indication of costs, outcomes, and better ways to spend money?
- We believe that it is crucial to have an open discussion about funding for: professional development of all instructors; support services for learners similar to those for children in K-12 schooling; support for immigrants, rural residents, learners with disabilities, Aboriginal learners, and so on; core funding for proven programs and services; pay structures, and the disparity in the pay structures for instructors, coordinators, volunteers,

⁸ Ibid, P. 4; Ibid P. 9

supports for volunteer services, and so on; research with employers about needs for worker skills; programs to support learner leadership; study of the debilitating role of inadequate funding on program offerings and student retention; support for alternative models of learning and communities of learning; and study of the possibility of contracting out some of the support services (testing, psychological assessment, professional development, etc.) for literacy programs.

- There is a need to develop a funding process that is open, transparent and equitable in its approach and application.
- Consideration of the needs of learners with special characteristics should crosscut all other discussions, with in-depth plans for action through consultation with them. An approach to learners with specific characteristics, such as immigrants, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, people living in rural or isolated areas, youth who have dropped out of school, older adults, and so on, needs to be explored.
- Literacy in the workplace was discussed, but not literacy for the workplace.
- The possibilities of expanding and enriching adult literacy initiatives through collaboration with various parties such as industry have not been mentioned except in passing. One possibility is that efforts made in public awareness could include getting certain bodies, including government agencies, NGO's and others, to undertake literacy-related work at their own expense.
- Only literacy stakeholders involved in Adult Basic Education and community literacy programs were mentioned. What about interested parties at Memorial University, the health care system, public housing authorities, and other stakeholders?
- Discussion of evaluation and assessment covers some formal testing and the evaluation of instructors, but does not mention on-going assessment of learners' progress by instructors, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), and other learner-oriented practices. Current assessment practices of Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic, the trades and professions, etc. need to be considered.
- There is a need for more involvement of all stakeholders in choosing appropriate resources and government supports in the areas of policy development, administration and research for literacy and learning.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That there be more stakeholder involvement in selecting the topics which will essentially guide the new Plan, and that these topics are expressed in such terms that LNL can see and contribute to the scope and definition of their content.

Process of Consultation

The Adult Learning and Literacy Division has identified a consultation process which is to gather the views of stakeholders, and apply this feedback to a new Plan. The Division is conducting consultation in three ways: a by-invitation two-day videoconference; an interview process with select stakeholders; and a written/call-in submission process for the general public, and other stakeholders not directly consulted by the Division.

June 26 – 27 Videoconference

The members of LNL who commented on the Discussion Paper and the consultation by invitation carried out by the Department included the following points. Of necessity, some areas overlap in some ways with the points made in the previous sections.

- There should be an agenda for meetings, and minutes distributed afterwards to those who attended.
- There should have been more meetings of a face-to-face nature, so that stakeholders around the province could better provide in-depth feedback.
- The process of coordinating meetings to respond to the Discussion Paper should have been at least two months long so that people could arrange to take part.
- The meetings would be more effective if they were not held in the summer. Summer meetings meant the loss of participants in the process. Learner participation was particularly impacted.
- Learners, employers, and other potential collaborators should be included in meetings to get feedback from them.
- There was no input into the choice of topics for the Discussion Paper and thus the consultation. The questions were not chosen to be answerable in the kind of meeting held.
- Implications (at least) for an action plan should have been drafted in the Discussion Paper.
- Some indication of the funding scope and parameters for expenditures should have been given.
- Various exercises to gauge priorities on various issues with various stakeholders should have been carried out.

Interview process with select stakeholders

Since Literacy NL was not directly involved with this process, we can offer no comment. We would appreciate knowing whether the stakeholders were chosen based on their specific area of interest, and if so, what were the criteria used in identifying them. We are also interested in the questions covered in these interviews, and whether the structure of the interview deviates from the Discussion paper to address areas of specific interest or concerns of the particular group.

Invitation to craft a written or verbal response

In addition to holding a by-invitation consultation process, the Division is inviting responses by email or by phone. This invitation is posted on the Division's web site, and again may be followed up in-house by Division staff in one-on-one consultation with select groups.

- Literacy NL has several concerns with this form of information gathering. There has been no publicity on this process by the Division, therefore the amount and type of data gathered is greatly limited.
- Again, the timing for participation is awkward; less than two months has been allotted; this consultation is to take place over the summer.
- Literacy NL has provided encouragement and publicity on the consultations to its members and affiliated organizations through a repeated Call to Participate on its electronic network database: through its e-bulletin; through community Public Service Announcements; and through hosting a Division-led teleconference to inform on the consultation process.

Literacy NL Recommendation

A renewed process of ongoing consultation that has all of the following features:

- **clarity of purpose and objectives;**
- **realistic opportunities to influence decisions;**
- **inclusive, representative processes;**
- **opportunities to learn and hear diverse views;**
- **neutral, respectful design and professional facilitation;**
- **adequate resources and realistic timeframes;**
- **transparency and feedback.⁹**

Identified Areas for Action

Literacy NL would have preferred to have been invited in to a process which allowed for all affected stakeholders to have been given space to give their views. We are not comfortable with a process that requires us to speak for community without full consultation.

Despite the shortcomings, and the current challenges inherent in the consultation process, Literacy NL recognizes that the Adult Learning and Literacy Division is interested in gaining a community perspective on the state of literacy. This perspective is to inform relevant current recommendations from the Division to government on actions that can be immediately undertaken and priorities areas that can contribute to an action plan for the next five years.

⁹ Mary Pat MacKinnon "Engaging Citizens... Building Public Trust", IPAC Panel Presentation, August 2007, Canadian Policy Research Networks <http://www.cprn.org/doc.cfm?doc=1790&l=en>

Literacy NL is therefore noting for immediate action and policy development the following 11 (eleven) Sections. Sections entitled *Regional Literacy Field Workers* and *Matching funds for Projects* refer directly or indirectly to Literacy NL. Formal recommendations close out each section. Clarification on any of these items is available through contact with our office.

Section 1 Regional Literacy Field Workers

In the formation of Literacy NL as a regionally representative coalition, the literacy sector identified that the primary purpose of the coalition was to facilitate regional network formation, so as to facilitate and share ideas and best practices among voluntary community groups. An identified primary purpose was to “Make presence known in remote and local communities so people will know what the new network can do for/with them”¹⁰

Literacy NL’s reach in providing grassroots level support is challenged by the size and diversity of this province; the limitations inherent in utilizing a volunteer staffing model; the limitations of distance technologies; and the physical reach of localized provincial office staff. Given these factors, it is a significant challenge to build strong regional networks without investments in the lead priority for Literacy NL identified at the governance conference: the establishment of regional workers.¹¹

Regional Literacy Field Workers can coordinate the networking of core literacy sector organizations at the regional level - practitioners and learners, voluntary agencies, colleges and institutions – with regional economic development agencies, businesses, and social service sector agencies. The focus is to build capacity across the province for community agencies in support of language and literacy development for adults and families within their own programs.

Differences in literacy and essential skills exert a profound influence on a range of social, educational and economic outcomes. The capacity of the community-based sector to address these differences has been challenged by an absence of identified local resources dedicated to developmental and capacity building work in the area of adult and family literacy.

There is a range of services available through various community and government agencies about which community groups may not be aware. Regional Literacy Field Workers can identify and highlight provincial and regional services to interested community groups, network these groups together, and encourage partnership development.

In addition to these “on the ground” activities, Field Workers will provide Literacy NL with a knowledge perspective on the state of literacy in the province by providing continued opportunities to gather data from the field. The value of Field Workers extends beyond the immediate deliverables, and speaks to long term, sustained gains in literacy.

Goals and objectives for these Field Workers would include the following:

¹⁰ Summary report from ‘be the change...: Provincial Literacy Conference 2005’. . Page 29

¹¹ Ibid. Page 13

1. To strengthen and expand existing networks at the regional level, by building awareness about literacy within community agencies and organizations, and engaging with sectors impacted by literacy and essentials skills issues.
2. To promote active partnerships, by providing consultation, information and outreach support to literacy practitioners, community agencies, business and government agencies.
3. To lead individuals and organizations in the recognition and integration of literacy and essential skills in, and for, the family, the community, and the workplace by coordinating regional professional development training for literacy practitioners, community agencies, business and government agencies.
4. To document local and regional information on the state of literacy and essential skills in the province, and to identify specific needs in each of the four regions.

Delivering on these goals will meet the regional needs of the literacy and learning community; will serve the mandate of Literacy NL; and will inform government and community on the state of literacy in the province.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the Department of Education provide a stable multi-year funding model for the establishment of four regional offices for Literacy NL.

Section 2 Matching Funds for Projects

When Literacy NL was first established, it applied for charitable status as an organization. This was done to help secure fiscal investments for literacy in this province. Funds realized for its charitable purposes support the programs of the organization (see page 1 of our submission).

Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador will announce its first provincial Call for Submissions to the *Opportunities Program* on August 31st, 2008. The *Opportunities Program* is a new initiative of Literacy NL. In keeping with the organizations mandate, this program specifically targets the following charitable program areas:

- 5) Promoting community-based programs for literacy and lifelong learning,
- 7) Providing opportunities for learner support within the community¹²

The Opportunities Program provides a vehicle for Literacy NL to partner with local community groups, providing the resources needed to support local action. These projects are intended to foster, encourage and support community initiatives related to adult and family learning. These initiatives will help build partnerships at the community level, and will assist in building capacity at the regional level.

Matched funds for this program will be sought from other corporate and government partners, which would mean that Literacy NL would be able to deliver exponential support in its charitable model of community programming.¹³

¹² Programs and Information for Literacy Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador, Charities Listing, Canada Revenue Agency, www.cra.gc.ca

¹³ See Appendix A: Opportunities Program Call for Submissions

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador participate in programs *such as the Opportunities Program*, by providing matching funds.

Section 3 Reading *the Literacy Landscape*

The fall 2007 institute hosted by Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador, *Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice*, was a milestone initiative for literacy in this province. It was the first time in over a decade that a provincial literacy coalition was able to gather a body of practitioners together for the purpose of professional development and effective networking. Across the board feedback on this initiative was very positive as people from various programs and organizations gathered to share elements of their practice with colleagues and friends.

A total of eighty-eight practitioners from across the spectrum - university, college and community-based instructors and researchers, volunteer literacy tutors, program administrators, adult learners, national partners - came together in a spirit of sharing and learning. Colleagues from the fields of English as a Second Language and Aboriginal Learning shared insights into their areas of practice. Government agencies and the business sectors also participated, sharing insights into the impact of agency programs and workplace initiatives on the province's literacy landscape.

Findings from this conference are shared here in an effort to inform government on the current literacy landscape of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Section 3.1 Community Assets & Regionally Voiced Priorities

At the closing session of the institute, regional caucuses undertook to identify the local and regional assets currently in play in the four regions of the province: Eastern, Central, Western, Labrador. Under the headings of Gaps/Needs/Wants, the following priorities were identified by the eighty-eight practitioners in attendance. (Although all items were voiced in separate regional caucus, some are here grouped together, as they were identified in more than one caucus meeting, and are seen as having application for all regions.)¹⁴

All regions:

- The need for a town hall meeting, with meaningful community involvement. The need to draw the Department of Education into the conversation, and to ask the hard questions.
- Serious discussion with the Department of Education's K-12, highlighting a real need for reading supports and skill development as a preventative measure.

¹⁴ Proceedings of the Literacy NL: *Reading the Literacy Landscape 2007* draft

- Greater funding for literacy. More resources are needed; human (both volunteer and paid; equitable pay for instructors of similar programs); financial; professional development; learning resources for the ‘classroom’; learning supports for special needs; research; child care; transportation; assistive devices for disabled (learning disabled, as well as other forms of disability); more accommodation for the visually impaired and physically challenged.
- More programs and increased availability of programs that address needs of communities.
- Recognition of the need for alternate models of programming for rural areas. Identify/recognize alternatives to attending formal education.
- Programs (ABE and others) readily available to all learners; realistic timelines for adult learners; long term support of agencies that will invest in the future of students.
- Development of learner leadership and speaking/presentation skills.
- Uniform access to transitional support for learners moving from one program to another. Support for transition to employment /career choices
- Support for development of community-based partnerships, partnerships with institutions, and other sectors.
- Communication and networking at local level - stakeholders need to share knowledge and resources that fit one program and can be used for another
- Creation of a Directory of Services: listing of organizations providing the necessary training for needed skills (*Literacy NL has since developed an up to date listing (August 2008), detailing programming and contact information, and, location by electronic mapping. This resource is now available on <http://www.literacynl.com/map/>, however it will require continuing support to keep it current, and to have it offered in alternative formats.*)
- More and alternative forms of promotion for Literacy and Learning (i.e. literacy fair); targeted promotion to specific groups of stakeholders (i.e. newsletters to churches).

Eastern Regions

- Local level – Proximity of programs among Literacy and ABE stakeholders provides opportunities to share knowledge and resources.

Labrador Region

- Transportation and access around Labrador is a key factor in literacy skills access.
- Accessible communication tools are needed in this region for networking.

Central Region

- Transportation in the Central Region is a key factor in accessing good networking opportunities.

Western Region

- Inequitable funding structures for ABE 1 has led to competition between community – based and institutionally based programs for practitioners.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That each of the regionally voiced priority areas identified by the practitioners at the *Reading the Landscape* institute be given full consideration in the deliberations leading to the writing of the Strategic Adult Literacy Plan.

Section 3.2 Reflections on the Landscape by Individual Voices

The following is a collection of thoughts and reflections of the participants at the Reading the Landscape institute, as recorded in response to the opening keynote session and entitled *What do you see on the landscape?*

Participants were invited to use this reflective tool to record their thoughts around the province's literacy landscape. A large piece of newsprint remained posted throughout the institute proceedings, and as participants felt moved to add their reflections they availed of the opportunity to write these on the paper: some directly on the newsprint; others on scraps of pasted notepaper; others hidden within envelopes or behind paper "doors".

Recognising that not everyone will feel comfortable directing a personally identified response to government, we have included all of these "anonymous" comments here, so as to give government a better understanding of the thoughts and sentiments currently being expressed by those who practice in the literacy field.

Older people need help accessing health care benefits (i.e.) drug program changes plus re: training in an economy that badly needs seniors' expertise.

Learners get lost in a system where their supports are not in place for transitions-expected in complete in three yrs what everyone else completes in 12.

Closed doors at the Department of Education. (Written behind a drawing of a closed door.)

Found within a sealed envelope I think LNL needs to become more proactive and outspoken on federal and provincial government policies and programs (or lack thereof) that impact literacy in NL. Clearly the landscape (as described by the Minister) seems quite different from the one portrayed by Helen, with hers being the truer reality. I think LNL needs to be challenging and questioning government policy and programs. It needs to be articulating (for all to hear) the realities and views of the people (learners & practitioners) who are "doing" literacy, especially in rural NL.

There should not be two versions of ABE- community and college

Forced to fit programs to proposals as opposed to proposals to programs

I see government and policy makers increasingly exercising control over my community...God love them but how can bureaucrats in Ottawa or St. John's know what is vital for the survival of my community?...do they live here? Do they even visit? We are not people who need taking care of. We do have knowledge about where we want to go. We need support, open dialogue and the freedom to speak. We need to tell government to back off, we are taking control. We need to make government answerable to us, not the other way around. Why do we always give them control? Why are we always afraid to speak? DITTO K.K.

Students in ABE programs are generally not good readers yet there seem to be no strategies aimed at improving their reading levels. Many times they drop out or are discontinued due to this. Something needs to be put in place to help them improve their reading while they work towards their goals.

To extend on the above comment, as an instructor of ABE English I teach reading strategies through the "actual read" (modeling); however time is a huge deterrent in allowing these engagements. The high student-teacher ratio (1:18) allows very little time and opportunity.

As Diana Twiss stated: "Compete among ourselves for limited drive by funding dollars." I see LNL taking over NLLLC.

Rural NF is becoming more isolated. We need to bring our communities together to make a strong voice. Literacy practitioners are as a group more approachable than the "suits" and we may need to consider this new role.

Hopefully more sharing of ideas on different levels for basic skills in reading...more materials too.

Our volunteers are aging. We need to engage youth or disappear in the next 15 years.

A federal government hell bent on tax relief and debt reduction and little or no interest in social programs. In fact, this agenda is really anti-community and anti-social programs.

Everything seems to be about younger people! What about older ones? People who have contributed so much to communities, particularly rural areas-what about them? Shouldn't they receive some support should they decide to be gainfully employed at a point in their lives?

More collaboration between province and territories. Ideas should be shared, not kept in a safe. All players should be encouraged to give feedback-learners, practitioners, administrators, researchers, government, etc.

There should be more collaboration between all stakeholders in the education system. Many of the problems experienced in adult literacy programs are the same concerns we have in the K-12 system. There is strength in numbers, and we need to strengthen those partnerships with all stakeholders.

A movement away from community...the richness of contexts for learning in community being dismissed and a totally economic agenda being advanced.

Tutoring: one on one. Programs especially for rural areas needed. Lack of funding at community level.

Fear of not meeting funding criteria each year. Circumstances out of control re: number required.

What about the older adult over 30 who would like to get back in the workforce?
We need these workers.

I see amalgamation of some literacy providers. We need to share and combine our talents and resources rather than compete for them. Also we need to be more tolerant of others' ideas. There is a rich literacy community in this province that we should value.

With the increased out migration of workers, the province will be short of skilled workers and will depend on "older people" (50 plus) to return to work. There should be funding made available for these people (some of whom have taken time off from jobs/careers to raise a family and/or volunteer in various capacities in their communities) to become re-skilled or obtain marketable skills in today's workplace. Not everyone fits into the category of "youth" or "EI eligible." Wake up politicians, one of your most valuable resources is under your noses!

Adulthood goes well beyond 30 (for funding)

Narrow vision

People leaving

I had two conversations today...one with a community literacy worker and one with a college ABE instructor. I got a clear sense that there is a culture of silence in this province. Collectively we complain about lack of resources, lack of control, loss of community and grassroots voice. Yet for some reason people seem unable to speak out publically. "Well I have to protect my organization...my job." We talk so much about literacy development enabling adults to participate and have a voice and at the same time here we are with no voice. We are literate, aren't we? Then where is our voice? We bitch and complain but feel unable to speak. Perhaps this literacy for democracy and literacy for civic engagement is a crock! I find we allow ourselves to be silenced and I truly wish we could find our voice. If we can't, then why are we trying to sell this literacy stuff to the adults in our communities?

Lots of communications between everyone - Department of Education, School Boards, teachers, parents, adult literacy programs

The poem "Numbers"¹⁵

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the individual voices of participating practitioners attending the *Reading the Landscape* institute, those shared here and those proffered through the consultation process, be given full consideration in the deliberations leading to the writing of a Strategic Adult Literacy Plan.

Section 3.3 Professional Development

The institute's steering committee felt that a full- practice approach would highlight elements of promising practices from across disciplines, and the theme of *Reading the Landscape: Excellence in Adult Literacy Practice* was developed. Guest speakers offered sessions on effective partnerships, assessment, workplace literacy, essentials skills, curriculum development and cultural/other language literacy.

The participation of guest presenters from both within and outside the province allowed practitioners to share an understanding of not only their own backyard, but their neighbour's as well. Feedback from participants on this approach was very positive, and deemed to be of significant value, offering meaningful opportunities to identify and share promising practices in adult education from across Canada. Feedback on the institute proceedings overall was very positive, and practitioners spoke of the need for more such events.

Section 4.....and Research in Practice

¹⁵ Proceedings of the Literacy NL: *Reading the Literacy Landscape 2007* draft

Local practitioners fed into a process of Research in Practice during 2006, as part of a national inquiry with participation by the Literacy Network Ad Hoc Group and Literacy NL. Respondents to this inquiry spoke both to specific areas of concern in this province (see Appendix B), as well as areas of concern from across Canada that were broadly applicable.

“Perhaps research in practice could flourish in the province if literacy programs were more permanent, more supported and more funded. A necessary component for developing a framework to support research in practice in Newfoundland and Labrador would be to have vibrant, supported literacy programs throughout the province”.¹⁶

"We can all work together to make research in practice matter. In every part of the country, adult students face similar struggles. Literacy practitioners across Canada need to be able to share their research and ideas, as they did in this study." ¹⁷

“In most provinces and territories practitioners spoke of learning about literacy work from their peers and from students. Few said that reading research reports was an effective way to learn; many more spoke of the value of meeting face-to-face. Particularly in provinces and territories where RiP is just beginning, researchers were clear that RiP needed to begin first as opportunities to reflect on practice with other practitioners and that such opportunities needed to be integrated into meetings, conferences and networks.”¹⁸

“Governments, funders, administrators and institutional providers need to recognize:

- a. the complexity of literacy work
- b. the knowledge literacy workers hold
- c. the value of reflective practice
- d. the value of RiP and the amount of time required to carry it out
- e. the supports needed to develop better recognition of the complexity of literacy work, the knowledge workers hold, and the value of reflective practice and other types of RiP
- f. the need for cross-sector collaboration”¹⁹

Literacy NL Recommendation

That support for professional development opportunities for practitioners is given a priority standing in a new Strategic Adult Literacy Plan. This support can be felt in several ways: through financial support for practitioner participation at events and professional development opportunities within and outside of the province; through the support of

¹⁶ Ibid, P 52

¹⁷ Anita Abbott - Rabbittown Learners Program, NFLD and Labrador, taken from Jenny Horsman and Helen Woodrow, editors, *Focused on Practice : a framework for adult literacy research in Canada*, Harrish Press, 2007

¹⁸ Ibid P 16

¹⁹ Ibid P 18

regional and provincial professional development events; through the financial support of local networking initiatives; through the support of quality formal and experiential literacy practices.

That government undertakes to thoroughly document and disseminate its own program and research initiatives in the area of adult literacy.

That government undertakes to consult with community on the implications of the findings of government-led research and community-led research.

Section 5 Long Term Planning and Adult Learning Program Models

An ad hoc system is defined as “done or set up solely in response to a specific situation or problem, without considering wider or longer-term issues”²⁰

Government led support of literacy and adult learning programs has been haphazard through the past two decades. College based Adult Basic Education, which offered Adult Basic education through to completion, had its funding cut in the mid-90’s to a user-pay system, delivering a reduced program of ABE levels 2 & 3. Level one and basic literacy fell to the volunteer community, with no identified policy for funding support.

This situation persisted until 2000, when the current programming model was introduced. This program had many features, among them that it remain a volunteer-based initiative; that it support a defined number of learners; that it remain a user pay, with seats funded through ‘available’ provincial Social Services and federal Employment Insurance dollars; that it did not provide sufficient dollars to fully fund the program (requiring community groups to look elsewhere for of funds for administration, space, resources, heat and light, etc).

The results of this type of programming are as ad hoc as the program itself. Learners do not have equal access to programs. Programs do not exist in whole regions of the province. Where programs do exist, only those learners fitting restrictive criteria are given access. Supports for adult learners attending programs also vary from individual circumstance, and by region. Supports are not provided to programs to support those with physical or learning disabilities, or for learners who may require additional time for completion.

No other programming model has been given open consideration for funding. ABE remains largely available only in the daytime, and to those who can commit to full time participation. No other initiatives have been led by the Division.

Formal education for adults is only one component of a range of educational resources available to the lifelong learner. Learning is not confined to formal settings and classrooms; it also occurs at the workplace, in the community and in the home. Studies show that informal learning – also

²⁰ Encarta Dictionary, English North America

referred to by some as ‘experiential learning – comprises the bulk of all adult learning²¹, yet is wholly unrecognized in this province. “The recognition of non-formal and informal learning must be an element of future economic, social, and educational growth strategies.”²²

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the Division, in consultation with community, create a governing document which clearly identifies its own vision, values and mission with respect to adult literacy and learning.

That the Division recognize the importance of experiential learning in its governing document.

That the Division use a learner-centred approach in the development of programs.

That the Division respect the needs of the various regions of this province and take a long term approach to the development of programs.

That the Division immediately remove existing deficits in its present programming model, and in its adult learner support model.

Section 6 Current Adult Basic Education

In June of 2005 the Literacy Network Ad Hoc Group (LNAG) held a *Literacy Matters* teleconference on the Adult Basic Education (ABE) level 1 Pilot evaluation.

Participants at the teleconference were forthcoming on highlighting best practices in community based literacy programming, on the particulars found in the evaluation of the ABE level 1 pilot, and on the potential of the evaluation to speak to improvements in ABE level 1 programming. A number of ABE sites were represented at the teleconference, and were recognized for their significant contribution in providing this needed educational service.

The pilot evaluation did outline many successes of the program: some positive aspects included a focus on learning needs, a dedicated and qualified staff, and a positive reaction to the program by students. Success rates for learners were also considered as positive. One of the positive comments from the sites was an appreciation of collective professional development (PD) time to connect with one another, and to share common interests and concerns.

The evaluation did, however, highlight a number of concerns. These concerns included, but were not limited to: recruitment of learners, monetary resources for programs, appropriate learning

²¹ D.W. Livingstone, *Exploring the Icebergs of Adult Learning: Findings of the First Canadian Survey of Informal Learning Practices* (Toronto, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 2000)

²² **OECD Activity**

Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RNFIL), Report on Provincial/Territorial Activities and Pan-Canadian Overview, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) November 2007

resources and evaluative tools, professional development, and effectiveness of the 12:1 student-teacher ratio.

Following the teleconference, LNAG offered a submission to the Division, in an effort to engage their attention to both those areas of success, and identified areas of concern. Neither LNAG nor its successor, Literacy NL, received a response from the Division with respect to this submission. Since this time, there has been no change in policy with respect to recruitment of learners, appropriate learning resources and evaluative tools, professional development, and effectiveness of the 12:1 student-teacher ratio. Programs have either continued to operate under policies that do not serve their clients, or have been forced to close. In cases of closures, rural programming has seen the greatest decline in service.

Based on consultation with the Department of Education, Literacy NL understands that the estimates on registration numbers for Adult Basic Education courses stand at approximately 2000 individuals for 2007, with approximately 150 additional adult learners supported through local volunteer tutor agencies.²³ . Of this number, there is not a clear understanding of whether individuals have been counted more than once in transitioning between programs. With 50% of the population experiencing low levels of literacy, there is room for more work to be undertaken at the community level to address individual remediation.²⁴

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the Government provide continuing meaningful consultation with ABE providers to identify and address areas of concern.

That accurate data collection on the population of adult learners served by the ABE program is maintained.

That the Government, in consultation with community and with ABE providers, enact measures to address known areas of concern as outlined in this document with respect to quality ABE programming.

Section 7 Government Funding for Adult Learning and Literacy

Funding support for literacy programs in Newfoundland and Labrador has historically been delivered through a funding process devised by the ministry of *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada* and administered provincially by a joint committee of federal and provincial officers. This *Strategic Literacy Funding Committee* was able to administer the funding process and provide some support to the community sector through the submission process.

In September of 2005, federal funding for literacy was cut. The noted rationale from the federal finance department, of taking funding from "...programs that are not effective, do not achieve

²³ Literacy NL consultation with NL Department of Education's Adult Learning Division, July 2007

²⁴ Slide 21, HRSD Learning Policy Directorate , NFLD Labrador PowerPoint. Source IALSS 2003

results..."²⁵ identified and promoted to the country the negative mindset that literacy programs were not working. Literacy programs and those working in this sector were devalued (at the national level), undermining the successes that had been achieved and challenging the capacity of the sector.

Subsequent restoration of funds through a renewed Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) has resulted in a net loss of funding to literacy programs in the province. No funding was awarded in 2006; funding for the year 2007 was not up to historic provincial allocations, and to date in 2008 the outlook does not appear promising: "Of the eight (8) NL projects submitted to OLES in the October 2007 Call for Proposals, we can report the following: five (5) have been unsuccessful in their applications and two (2) are still pending notification"²⁶ with only one group announcing project funding (of \$71,000.00) up to July of 2008.

One result of these changes is that significant numbers of groups are not participating in current and recent OLES Call for Proposals (CFPs). Feedback from community stakeholders has identified numerous challenges with an application process now administered by distance. There is growing evidence that capacity in the sector - never historically supported through direct program or core funding by either level of government - is diminished.

Provincial government funding for adult literacy has been very low over the past decade when viewed in light of overall department expenditures. In the government's budget of 2005, dedicated dollars for adult literacy programs, \$530,000²⁷ amounted to 0.01 % of the Department of Education's \$873 million dollar budget.²⁸ These dollars are devoted almost exclusively to Adult Basic Education Level 1 programs.

More recent increases to ABE funding have restored Level 1 programming at the College level, with a welcome addition of programs and services for adult learners. Unfortunately, this increase has created a two-tier style of programming, with resultant pressures being increasingly felt at the community level.

The continuing concern of the literacy community and Literacy NL is that the level of provincial commitment to adult learning and literacy is reflected in the insignificant allocation of program funding for the community sector.

Literacy NL Recommendation

²⁵ Backgrounder, Canada's Finance Department, Canada's New Government cuts wasteful programs, refocuses spending on priorities, achieves major debt reduction as promised <http://www.fin.gc.ca/news06/06-047e.html>

²⁶ Literacy NL E-Bulletin Thursday July 31 2008 <http://www.literacynl.com/images/pdfs/enews-07-31-08.pdf>

²⁷ Government of Newfoundland Budget 2005 <http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2005/highlights.htm>

²⁸ Government of Newfoundland Budget 2005 <http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2005/pdf/SummaryofGrossGovernmentExpendituresCapitalCurrent.pdf>

That the Government of NL establish a funding regime with significant, dedicated provincial funds for programming support in this province.

In the development of a new funding regime, special consideration should be given to the need to develop a funding process that is open, transparent, equitable and accountable in its approach and application.

Section 8 Serving Diverse Populations

When Literacy NL was first envisioned, community was consulted on what were the vision and values to be considered in its formation. It was deemed of first importance that in any consultation, we would be inclusive of diverse participation, representing all levels of literacy and learning backgrounds, thus *mirroring the reality of literacy* within our province.

In a report on *How Canada Performs*, the Conference Board of Canada highlighted adult literacy rates as a major concern, noting the need for investment and moving beyond the “one size fits all policy in education.”²⁹

In the development of any strategically devised plan for literacy, consideration of the needs of diverse learners should crosscut all other discussions. A learner-centred approach needs to be taken, acknowledging learners with specific characteristics.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the Division of Adult Learning and Literacy undertake a consultation process with learners in diverse populations to identify the strengths and learning opportunities specific to these populations.

That the Division support the development of models of instruction that address the unique characteristics of these populations.

That the Department of Education allocate resources to support programming for diverse populations. Examples of such resources would include the following: program dollars; capital expenditures; learning resources; human resources and professional development.

Section 9 Addressing Cross Sector Concerns

Changes to the community demographic in NL, which show an aging populace and rural depopulation, bring specific stresses to the health literacy of the province. Additional analysis of the IALSS data reveals, “The differences in health status associated with differences in health literacy are large enough to imply that significant improvements in overall levels of population health might be realized if a way could be found to raise adult health-literacy.”³⁰ Interventions to

²⁹ *How Canada Performs*, the Conference Board of Canada, June 30, 2008
<http://sso.conferenceboard.ca/HCP/overview/default.aspx>

³⁰ Health LITERACY in Canada: INITIAL RESULTS from the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey 2007, Canadian Council on Learning (Ottawa 2007). Page 6

support greater literacy levels among the aging population could reduce current levels of social inequality in health outcomes,³¹ while at the same time help to manage the rapid growth of costs in the health care system.

Workplace skills are the core skills that employees need to do their jobs successfully, and another area of potential intervention. The promotion of workplace literacy programs to prospective employers is recommended by government agencies and sector councils.³² “This could include providing information about current funding and available resources and disseminating that information among employers in different sectors and regions”.³³

Family Literacy is an area which holds continuing potential for gains in literacy learning. Adults will often identify family learning as a prime motivation for their entry into adult learning programs. Studies have shown that parent involvement can build a student’s positive attitude toward reading.³⁴ Students who believe they can do well have a greater chance to succeed than those who do not believe.”³⁵ Family literacy programs support the lifelong learning needs of the full family, across a continuum of programs.

The preceding is not an exclusive list of the sectors impacted, but is offered as examples. Government should undertake to fully explore these and other sectors impacted by literacy.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the plan recognize and identify for action the cross sector nature of literacy, and its multiple impacts on society.

That government undertakes to fully explore the impacts of literacy across sectors, through community consultation and through intergovernmental consultation.

Section 10 Addressing the Learning Needs of Young Adults

In establishing the definition of what constitutes an adult learner, most definitions are “essentially administrative, and designed to specify eligibility for particular programs....or to assign individuals to specific education levels and systems.”³⁶

In this context, it is important to note that there exists no policy supports for those who do not fall within certain definitions of adult learner. Those who have left the formal school system and do not meet either the age criterion or a combination of age and skill level criteria are currently not eligible to participate in adult learning programs in this province.

³¹ Ibid. Page 6

³² http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/LessonsInLearning/LinL20070315_improving_workplace_learning.htm

³³ Lynette Plett. Canadian Council on Social Development. Programs in the workplace: Executive Summary. Page 6

³⁴ O’Sullivan, Julia. Reading Beliefs and Reading Achievement: A Development Study of Students for Low Income Families.

³⁵ Fagan, William T. Understanding Literacy Development: A Support System Model. Memorial University of NL, St. John’s: 1992 Page 74

³⁶ Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD), *Thematic Review on Adult Learning*, Canada

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the plan refers to adults as those who have completed or left their initial training and education.

Section 11 Timelines and benchmarks

Strategic planning determines where an organization is going over the next year or more, how it will get there and how it will know if it got there or not. The development of a strategic plan greatly helps to clarify actions and ensure that those responsible are all "on the same page". Good planning has its foundations in the process of development, and can be measured by the establishment of specific benchmarks.

Literacy NL Recommendation

That the strategic plan attaches timelines and a reporting process to its specific actions, so that those responsible, and the community, can better gauge the effectiveness of implementation.

Summation to Submission

Literacy NL concurs with the vision offered by the former Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Honourable Edward Roberts in his identification of the need for a new Strategic Plan.

That the plan provide “direction at the community, regional and provincial level, respecting community and cultural differences, and ensuring multiple points of entry for adults to access the support they need to master reading and writing skills.”³⁷

³⁷ His Honour, the Honourable Edward Roberts, ONL, QC, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador, Speech from the Throne April 24, 2007 <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2007/exec/0424n03.htm>

Appendix A

Teleconference Notes

**Topic: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Adult Literacy Plan
August 11, 2008**

Presenters:

Candice Ennis-Williams – Director Adult Learning and Literacy Division, Department of Education

Pamela Dawe – Division Consultant working with the Plan, Department of Education

Participant list

Eastern Participants:

Caroline Vaughan – executive director, Literacy NL

Ed Brown – co-chair, Literacy NL

Penney Cofield – Community Youth Network (Choices for Youth)

Ed Wade – Seniors Resource Centre; board member Literacy NL

Heather Churchill – Learning Disabilities Association

Central Participants:

Christine Cole – Corona College; board member-elect Literacy NL

April Skinner – Community Youth Network

Joan Pynn – Corona College

Labrador Participants:

Maureen Careen – executive director, Labrador West Status of Women

Theresa Barry – Labrador West Status of Women

Georgia Davis – Labrador Legal Services; board member-elect Literacy NL

Janet Skinner – Lake Melville Literacy Council, LLIAN, Lichen Goup

Patti Fleming – Labrador Friendship Centre

Kathleen Moriarty – adult learning coordinator Vale Inco; board member-elect Literacy NL

Western Participants:

Sharon Fifield: Employment Preparation Centre

Ruth Doyle: Bay St. George Literacy Council

Notes from Session:

Presenters:

- Opportunity to look ahead for next 5-10 yrs
- Last plan done in 2000
- Needs to be an intention on adult learners in particular
- Government/stakeholder groups must support literacy initiatives in the province
- Looking forward in terms of economy and opportunities ahead
- Literacy is a foundational skill.....if you don't have it, it affects everything in your life. If someone cannot read or write, or do numbers, it affects everything.
- Encourage people to share ideas, thoughts, strategic plan is trying to find solutions.
- Looking for new innovative ideas to put forward; How do you define success?
- Contacting community, the experts to find out the issues/share solutions
- Call put out for written submissions
- Consultation process started back in mid June
- Submission deadline of August 15th extended to August 31st (please advise if you have something pending)
- Start writing in September
- formal written submission must be completed in October by the Department, to be presented to cabinet in November.
- Now we are focused only on adults
- 11 objectives were met in the last plan (K-12)
- Youth is defined by some as up to age 29. We are concerned with those who fall through the system. We are trying to move a system philosophically, and to build healthy communities; develop skills for the workplace and for life.
- Cannot speak to specific numbers, however, ABE was dealt with in the plan.
- ABE as it currently exists is meeting some goals well but we can still evolve. ABE is not what everyone is looking for; some people want to get involved in the community and are not interested in obtaining credentials.
We want to focus on the adult learner this time.
- Work with Literacy NL in September (information sharing)
- Debate will occur in terms of approach but it shows a level of respect in that we have listened and you have listened as well
- Current proposed hiring of an aboriginal development consultant (advertise just to aboriginals) which will enhance and support better services in terms of aboriginal learning
- Current 'connecting' conversations within department
- ABE is adapted as a pilot program on high school in coastal Labrador
- Skills Task Force report consistently referenced literacy; cabinet has supported 52 actions
- Adults will engage in learning that is fundamental to them
- Range and continuum of services/programs is needed to get them engaged
- Paradigm shift; will not happen over night
- How do we build that value? We must promote and provide opportunity.
- We need to build awareness of what's there in terms of programs

- In the Skills Task Force consultation process literacy was rated top concern by educators and employers
- Dictionary of language/legal terms in Inuktitut was developed in partnership with Labrador Legal Services
- We need to find out, for planning purposes, what are some of the key resources required to support literacy? Role of Libraries? Municipal governments? Literacy support to the most remote part of the province.
- Discussion paper is only a jump start for discussion. The discussion paper is only a beginning; the length of pieces was not significant in terms of importance.
- Workplace is very important
- We can't tell employers what to do we just need to give them the message that literacy in the workplace is important
- Vale Inco – best practice in terms of methods
- Plan should support an evolving process
- We need annual objectives
- We need the groups to tell us what we need
- We need to create a system that is responsive at all times
- We need a working document; living document
- Multi-disciplinary approach
- Minister wants it integrated with other polices
- Department of Justice and several other areas, poverty, health etc. are all related to the plan. Low literacy skills impact all areas.
- Plan should offer consultation, reflection, evaluation, measurable results.
- Funding methods have created silos (competition with program 10 miles away from you)
- How can we ensure that groups are able to get funding
- We can't create "us and them" type competition
- Shared clientele
- Scandinavian countries: after a student drops out, a series of individuals contact the student to talk about options
- Individuals may not realize that they have skill sets to meet employers needs
- Opportunity to provide people with programs to increase skills to apply on jobs, for example, is important
- Literacy can not be spoken about in a vacuum
- Intent is to build awareness and create dialogue
- We must build other relationships
- We must continue our dialogue formally and informally
- If you have ideas you can call us (729-1738), email, written submission can be formal or informal
- If a written submission is not going to work for you let us know. We want to make it work however best for you.
- Deadline for submission can be extended to August 31.
- If you have further ideas please contact us throughout the process
- Vision is constantly evolving
- Document should include key assumptions, philosophy, beliefs
- If anyone has ideas for the vision please pass them along
-

Participants:

- Plan for adults only is a very good move.
- What is the biggest difference between 2000 and now?
- Age Definition for Adults?
- How many of the 11 objectives in 2000 were related to adult literacy?
- How can we match the mission and values of the Seniors Resource Centre with the plan
- Look at national initiatives
- Disagree with the measurement of success with last plan.
- Integration is necessary with all learners: K-12 and adult.
- It would be great if to know how the information we discuss today will be shared before writing process begins.
- We should look at what's going on in Nunavut and Northwest Territories (models/planning)
- How do we attract adults who have learning/literacy disabilities? We are not getting the adults that we need to on board.
- Workplace literacy is necessary and needs a bigger emphasis. There was not as much in the discussion paper here as on other topics.
- Vale Inco? Can Kathleen comment on what they are doing?
- Kathleen will be in shortly (arriving from airport).
- Vale Inco – learning centre on site. Provides employees the opportunity (after hours) to work toward their GED/ABE. Library and resources on site.
- Kathleen's work recognizes the need to link to what the employees do on site back to the community
- IOC hiring today is much different than 30-35 yrs ago.
- Great opportunity for something like Vale Inco on various work sites.
- if we don't look at the point of view of the learner and consider it in our approach and in how we are delivering, then we will fail again
- What do the programs look like that are not ABE?
- Individualized programs are necessary
- one size doesn't fit all
- Encouraging that this process promises to move some of the blocks from the system
- Literacy NL can help disseminate information
- We hope to share with community any draft that might be available in September
- We hope to have regional conversations/activities, opportunities for discussion, so that we can provide collective feedback to the Department on their draft planning document, and on implications for innovative solutions
- Déjà vu – similar to the year 2000
- What wasn't in that plan and what should be
- We should look back; we want to see reflection – is there an opportunity to discuss?
- Living document point (made by Candice) should be stressed
- Multi-departmental approach – social services
- Reading and writing skills was the focus of the plan in 2000. We need broader definition of literacy.
- We are trying to foster a province of learners
- Making the programs fit the people that you are working with is important
- Small group instruction

- Extra supports
- There has to be an investment
- When you are no longer in another education system, this plan should be able to fit your needs
- Prevent people from falling through the cracks with no options
- Vale Inco's 3rd year
- Focus entirely on what the employees want (12 hr shift and upgrading in own time)
- Employees advocate for themselves (may take some time)
- Vale Inco offers any opportunities that can make your life easier
- Computer basics is often the start
- Young man – never knew how to read map so worked on mapping skills (for example)
- Life skills for home and life skills for work
- Whatever type of learning you want to become to involved in, Vale Inco will support it.
- People involved in training know that you can't train everyone in the same way
- Low self esteem and psychological barriers
- Once they have a feeling of empowerment, they move quickly
- Kathleen's model: (work place education is not on the job training) is great because many employers get the two confused
- IALLS identified specific sectors of workplace learning with low level skills (i.e. health)
- Government departments could champion and take leadership roles to say this is what we are offering to address sector skills development
- Is it possible to share some of the notes/ideas being submitted here? New learnings from intergovernmental departments? Can Candice share and Caroline post to web?
- Perhaps a vision is necessary
- LNL will be posting the draft submission to the web along with notes from this conference for your information, as to provide a context of what has been submitted and to inform community on whether their thoughts have been reflected.
- If you don't see your ideas here, please submit individually.
- Time constraints did not allow for a full community consultation.
- Draft document of Literacy NL came out of information from Be the Change, *Reading the Landscape, local research initiatives*, discussions from research committee, board members.
- - Please submit your comments on the plan to Literacy NL as well, so that we have an understanding of what community is looking for. We are here to support your voice.

Appendix B

Snapshots of Our Reality Chapter 4 51-52 Jenny Horsman and Helen Woodrow, editors, Focused on Practice : a framework for adult literacy research in Canada, Harrish Press, 2007

Newfoundland and Labrador Snapshot by Pamela Bennett

The context for literacy work in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador is a province that has a vast geography, five languages (English, French, Mi'kmaq, Innu Aimun and Inuktituk), a scattered, rural population and few resources or infrastructure to deliver literacy programs. Despite all of that, people are keen to be more educated, to read and write better and to be on par, in terms of literacy, with other Canadians.

Literacy in Newfoundland and Labrador is a very timely issue. This “have-not” province seems to continuously reel under the issues of employment and education. Everyone tries to obtain and maintain jobs within the province, but the dictates of a mostly rural economy often mean that people leave the province for financial opportunities that beckon in other parts of the country and across the world. Those who remain struggle to secure jobs with the minimal levels of education they have or struggle to become more educated. Thus the cycle of out-migration continues.

Literacy provision in Newfoundland and Labrador

According to the recent IALSS data, Newfoundland and Labrador is facing a literacy crisis. In fact, the study results show that this province is well below the national average in terms of basic literacy performance and individuals' ability to obtain employment in a modern workforce. While this public statement of our literacy issues has brought many to debate the validity of the statistics, few literacy providers in the province would disagree that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador face barriers because of their lower levels of literacy and numeracy.

Literacy programs in Newfoundland and Labrador are offered in a few ways. Formal educational institutions offer some Adult Basic Education programs and continuing education programs, both part-time and full-time. The bulk of literacy programs are provided by community-based organizations that may or may not receive funding for the literacy work they do. These programs are often run by volunteers and some have a minimal core staff person who is paid far less than their professionally recognized counterparts at colleges and school boards. According to the Department of Education, a total of 1,621 full-time and part-time students attended ABE programs offered by the public and private colleges and correctional centres in 2004-2005. One hundred and sixty-four adults participated in the ABE Level I community programs in 2005-2006. The Newfoundland and Labrador Laubach Literacy Council and Teachers on Wheels estimate that 125 people are currently matched with volunteer tutors.

The face of literacy within the province needs to mutate, change and develop if the literacy problem is going to be addressed. Practitioners need to be able to earn a decent wage, have benefits, build pension plans, and find some level of job security. Government needs to realize that given the geography, weather, employment patterns and such like, flexible educational opportunities need to be made available in all parts of the province. Funds need to be made available not only for educated and experienced staff, but also for adequate space for programs to be delivered in, for resources such as books and computers, and for programs to become more than just temporary solutions to a long term literacy problem. Monies need to be made available to ensure that literacy programs continue in rural communities. Longer term funding would allow individual learners to believe that there is benefit in getting involved with a literacy program, because they would know that the program will be there in the future.

Research in practice in Newfoundland and Labrador

Formal research in practice has been limited in the province. Literacy practitioners deliver programs to learners in spite of all the barriers they face in doing so. For the most part, they have little time or support to participate in formal research in practice activities.

In 2003 the third national research in practice gathering, *Adult Literacy Research: Extending our Practice and Building Networks*, was held in St. John's. Organizers hoped it would help build and strengthen literacy practitioners' ability to take on research, and would build links between people involved in research in practice across the country. They hoped the institute would particularly help to expand these networks in Atlantic Canada.

Fifteen of the 80 participants at the institute were literacy practitioners from Newfoundland and Labrador. The institute piqued their interest and changed how they thought about research. As one person said, *"I never thought of myself as a researcher before. But I realize I always have questions, and I'm always searching for answers. Now I see that as research."*

In addition, practitioners in the province were actively involved in a thorough research process during 2005-2006 which resulted in the founding of the first grassroots provincial coalition. A previous provincial body, the Literacy Development Council, was a government initiative which was established in 1994 and evaluated in 2003. The main recommendation of the evaluation was that the Literacy Development Council be replaced with a community-based organization.

Funding from the National Literacy Secretariat allowed a one-year process of extensive community consultations. This research process led to the creation of Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador. Practitioners have little time to focus on initiatives that are not central to keeping the program doors open and the program running. Perhaps research in practice could flourish in the province if literacy programs were more permanent, more supported and more funded. A necessary component for developing a framework to support research in practice in Newfoundland and Labrador would be to have vibrant, supported literacy programs throughout the province.

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