



***Workplace/Workforce Literacy:
Building Linkages for Action***

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

May 31, 2005
Holiday Inn Yorkdale
Toronto, Ontario

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Purpose of the Report

This report summarizes the proceedings of Workplace/Workforce Literacy: Building Linkages for Action, a symposium hosted by the Ontario Literacy Coalition with financial support from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

The OLC planned the symposium with an advisory committee of partners from business, labour, the literacy community and other groups involved in workplace and workforce development.

Three documents were prepared in advance of the symposium. They are:

- *Reflections Paper*, by Sue Folinsbee
- *Selected Bibliography*, compiled by AlphaPlus Centre
- *Organizations with an Interest in Workforce/Workplace Literacy Working in Ontario*, prepared by Sue Folinsbee with support from Alan Cherwinski of AlphaPlus Centre

These documents, as well as this report, are available on the website of the Ontario Literacy Coalition at www.on.literacy.ca or from:

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The Workplace/Workforce Literacy Symposium

Background

In 2004, the Ontario Literacy Coalition engaged in a consultation with the Ontario Federation of Labour and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division. In their final report, entitled “Building Support and Developing Partnerships for Workplace Literacy in Ontario,” the partners recommended that they continue their dialogue and expand their aims to include:

- building support for workplace literacy development,
- exploring incentives and support for employers and unions,
- finding ways to make sustainable investments in workplace literacy,
- encouraging the development of educational tools and other resources for promoting and enhancing workplace literacy programming,
- co-operating with the public education system on areas of mutual interest.

As a next step, the Ontario Literacy Coalition, with funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada sponsored the Workplace/Workforce Literacy Symposium: Building Linkages for Action.

Objectives

The objectives of the symposium were to:

- stimulate a dialogue on the current situation in Ontario related to workplace and workforce literacy,
- better understand the positions, issues and concerns of the various stakeholders,
- form a plan of action, either collectively or within stakeholder groups, to advance the agenda regarding workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario.

Advisory Committee

The membership of the symposium’s advisory committee reflected the commitment made by business, labour, education and training, and the literacy community to work together. The committee included:

Patricia Ashie, Adult Learners Network of Ontario
Cheryl Conway, MidNorth Network for Adult Learners
Gay Douglas-Broerse, Literacy Link Niagara
Janice Gairey, Ontario Federation of Labour

Ian Howcroft, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division
Nancy Jackson, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
Lynn Johnston, Canadian Society for Training and Development
Stuart Johnston, Ontario Chamber of Commerce
Laurell Ritchie, Canadian Auto Workers

Project Team

This project was managed by Lesley Brown, director of program development at the Ontario Literacy Coalition. She was assisted by subject matter expert Brigid Hayes, Canadian Labour and Business Centre; Sue Folinsbee, Tri En Communications, author of the *Reflections Paper*; McDonnell Doane & Associates, co-ordinators of logistics for the symposium; Madeline Lunney, Lunney Consulting, project evaluator; and Glen Brown, Glen Brown & Associates, town hall moderator. Invaluable to this endeavour were OLC staff, including: Anette Chawla, executive director; Urszula Mazur, administrative co-ordinator; Patricia Brady, learners' co-ordinator; and Neressa Topping, office manager.

Delegates

Forty-eight individuals were selected to take part in the symposium on the basis of their interest in engaging in a discussion on workplace and workforce literacy education. Delegates were drawn from business, labour and the literacy community. A fourth group included representatives from other groups involved in workplace and workforce development including government, colleges and school boards, as well as trainers and academics. Also part of this group were delegates from provincial literacy coalitions who represent the Deaf, Native and Francophone communities.

Format

The symposium was planned to be a working session, where delegates would have opportunities to network while moving towards a common vision for workplace and workforce literacy.

Two key features of the symposium were roundtable discussions and town hall meetings.

Roundtable discussions were held at three points during the day. At the first set of roundtables, people sat together by sector: business, labour, literacy, and other stakeholders. The groups were mixed for the second set of roundtables, providing an opportunity for everyone to hear from other sectors. The third set of roundtables were organized in the original sector groups to allow delegates to develop action plans and other forms of commitment. These last roundtables reported to the full symposium.

At the town hall meetings, a moderator led three or four panelists in a lively and stimulating discussion about their opinions, experiences and positions. Audience participation was encouraged.

Outcomes

As a result of the symposium:

- workplace/workforce literacy stakeholders were provided with opportunities to develop new partnerships,
- stakeholder groups established action plans to move the agenda forward,
- stakeholders made a commitment to collaborate on seeking support and developing partnerships for workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario.

Welcome

Anette Chawla, executive director of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, opened the symposium:

Good morning and welcome to the Ontario Literacy Coalition's Workplace and Workforce Literacy symposium.

I am delighted that you have all decided to be part of the symposium and to contribute to the further development of workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario.

Literacy for work has gone through various life cycles in Ontario. Most recently, the government's focus has been on improving the ability of literacy programs to serve adult students who have employment goals. Yet literacy in the workplace has not received much concerted attention since the mid-1990s.

The Ontario Literacy Coalition sees this symposium as a new beginning. We want to build on the experiences from the 1990s, on current initiatives in workforce literacy and on the best approaches from other jurisdictions.

All of you hold a piece of what we believe is necessary to bring about renewed partnerships in Ontario for the betterment of workplace literacy and for literacy agencies to deliver top notch service to students.

To be successful, we all need to come together for the benefit of literacy learners, workers, businesses, unions and society. This is echoed in the results from the recent Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) put out by Statistics Canada.

ALL is a wake up call for all of us that too many Canadians don't have the literacy foundation they need to meet the demands of today's knowledge society. There is a lot at stake, for individuals, for employers and for Canada as a whole. It is time for action! We want to ensure that people can live full lives – at work, and also at home and in the community.

We have endeavoured to reflect the multi-faceted nature of workplace and workforce literacy by having the voices of business, labour, literacy, education, training, government and adult students at the table. You all

represent one of these stakeholder groups. And the contribution of your voices to the planning phase has made the symposium much richer.

I'd like to give a special welcome to Florence Guy of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and Yvette Souque of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS). Financial support from MTCU and the NLS have made it possible to bring us all together today.

I'd now like to introduce the chair of today's proceedings, Brigid Hayes. Brigid is director of labour at the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, where she has been since 2003. Before that, Brigid was the program manager for business and labour partnerships at the National Literacy Secretariat for 14 years. Brigid is a force to be reckoned with; she has a tremendous overview of workplace literacy in Canada. The OLC is pleased to be working with Brigid on the symposium. We couldn't be in better hands today.

I wish you all the best for a good, productive, informative and action-oriented day.

Session One: Reflections on Workplace and Workforce Literacy in Ontario – Sue Folinsbee

Sue Folinsbee presented an overview of the *Reflections Paper*, which she prepared for the symposium:

Good morning everyone. It is a pleasure to be here to reflect on workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario. It's a very important and historic moment to have business, labour, literacy, adult learners, training and education, and two levels of government in the room today. I cannot remember the last time that all these groups were together in such a forum to have a conversation about literacy.

I'd like to begin with a short story. A politician was invited to give a speech at the last minute. He phoned his Parliamentary Assistant and asked him to write the speech. When the PA asked how things had gone the morning after the speech, the politician replied, "Oh it was a disaster. Half the audience crept out before I was finished and the other half were snoring so loudly I couldn't hear myself. I asked you for a speech that was half an hour but you gave me a speech that was an hour long." "No I didn't," said the PA, "I gave you a half hour speech. I gave you two copies for safety reasons."

Now I know that all of you have read the *Reflections Paper*. For that reason, I will not repeat too much of what you have already read. Instead, I would like to reflect on what you have said in the paper. I would also like to consider our history and muse thoughtfully on what you have said as members of groups with particular interests, as well as on what I see as the common goodwill among all of you here today to explore workplace and workforce literacy. And I'd like to pose some questions to you throughout.

Many thanks to all of you who contributed to the paper. Through your contributions, you have laid the groundwork for beginning the conversation. I'd like to point out that the *Reflections Paper* is a starting point for discussion, not an end point.

Ontario's History

As you know, Ontario has a rich history of experience in workplace and workforce education that goes back to the early '70s. At least a few of you in the room will certainly remember those early days.

The late '80s and early '90s were a time of development and experimentation, a time of determining values and principles and what worked from the point of view of business, labour and educators, and government. It is phenomenal to think of the hundreds of workplace literacy programs across Ontario during that time. Is there anyone here who was involved in the first workplace education programs in the '70s? What about the workplace or literacy and labour adjustment programs in the '80s, '90s? Workforce and workplace programs over the last five years? Just think about the accumulated experience there is in the room. Together we have incredible wisdom.

We can never be in the same place twice, but let's not forget our history. Here is my first question to you: "How do we honour both the knowledge and experience of what worked in our past and the contributions of the present to begin to talk about and work towards a possible future—a future that respects the multiple voices that all of you represent?"

Understanding each other's different interests and perspectives is key to seeing if there is enough common agreement to work together. One of the steering committee members says in the paper, "I'd like other partners to get to know a little more about us." I would suggest that this statement holds true all the way around. For some, today will be a chance to get reacquainted. Others will be meeting for the first time.

Well . . . What are some of the different interests in literacy? Here are some of the things you said.

- Business interests are about responding to workplace change where literacy requirements are shifting and there is a need for additional skills on the part of employees.
- For labour, it is about empowering working people to have more control over their lives individually and collectively and building solidarity in their unions.
- For literacy organizations, it is about helping adult learners find employment, keep employment and get better jobs. There is an interest in ensuring that all Ontarians with literacy challenges can participate fully in society.

- For adult learners it is about getting training during working hours through their workplaces, because otherwise they couldn't do it.
- For some training and education communities, it is about employers seeing value in literacy as part of an overall learning strategy.
- For the provincial government, it is about recognizing that skilled people are needed for the province to be successful.

I have a second question for you, which is“What might the common intersection of these different interests look like?”

I would like to echo a key point made by Brigid Hayes in her article “Workplace Literacy Across Canada,” summarized in the *Reflections Paper*. She says, “The stakes are high at the workplace, where jobs can be gained or lost because of literacy.” She also emphasizes that considering one stakeholder’s interests over another will lead to problems later on. Her experience illustrates to us that the issue of power dynamics and risk must also be considered in any discussions about literacy.

As I put together the *Reflections Paper*, I was struck by what was similar and common in what you said but also by both the striking and nuanced differences.

It is clear that there is a common overall goal on the part of everyone here to have a conversation to see if there is a way to positively move workforce and workplace literacy forward in Ontario.

However, through talking to you there’s also the notion that although there are common themes, there are some very different perspectives within those themes. To quote something Mahatma Gandhi once said, “Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress.”

Terminology

As an example of different perspectives within a common theme, let’s think about the terminology used to talk about workforce and workplace literacy. It’s true that there are common elements in how you define and think about workforce and workplace literacy. Common ideas are that workforce literacy can include both

employed and unemployed workers, and that workplace literacy is sector or site specific. But there are some notable differences.

For example, I found out that not only does a term like “essential skills” have different meanings to various groups, it has different values. I discovered that where a business perspective might see “essential skills” as a broader, more comprehensive and possibly more effective term than “literacy,” a labour perspective might see the term “essential skills” as too narrow because of its focus on specific jobs, so some unions might not use the term. I also noted that adult learners may not distinguish between all these terms...they may see it all as literacy and find the multitude of different terms confusing. Or let’s consider the term “worker-centred learning,” which came up only with labour and some training and education responses.

An understanding of these differences needs to be made explicit. A third question then is, “What are the meanings that people hold behind their words?”

Priority Issues

Similarly, when we look at the priority issues for discussion that you identified, we can see common overall themes such as understanding the perspectives of the groups here, or finding the areas in common, to see what we might work on together. These sound fairly straightforward. However, other priority themes like how to support and fund accessible workforce and workplace programs might mean different things. Here are some of the things that you said about this issue:

- For adult learners, this can mean accessible, affordable programs they can attend at convenient times through their workplaces.
- For some literacy organizations, this means infrastructure funding support.
- For some employers, this means government funding for start-up costs.
- For labour, this can mean support and infrastructure supports for labour organizations from government, as well as funding from government and employers for delivery.
- For some training organizations, it means government funding for voluntary workplace literacy programs.

It is important to first find out what people's perspectives are on the topics discussed today in order to understand where there might be common ground.

Partnerships

Another priority issue identified across groups was how to foster partnerships among different groups for workforce and workplace literacy. My fourth question is a group of questions. "What are the different views on what a partnership means?" "What does each partner need in order to be in a partnership?" "What are the partnerships for?" "Who are the primary partners?" "How are decisions made?"

On the question of partnerships, we can learn from the experience of others. For example, let's look at the work of the steering committee of Workplace Education Manitoba as outlined in "What Makes a Successful Workplace Partnership?" and summarized in the *Reflections Paper*.

Formed in 1991, this provincial committee has two labour representatives, two business representatives and one full-time government employee. The business and labour members of the committee say that what makes the partnership work is 1) respect for, not agreement with, the other's principles, 2) the opportunity to work on issues of mutual concern, 3) trust, 4) commitment and 5) interest. The committee follows principles of good practice for program implementation. Principles include having a steering committee for workplace initiatives that includes an equal number of business and labour representatives, and using an asset- rather than a deficit-based approach that acknowledges the skills people have, ensuring programs are voluntary and are not testing workers. The make up of the steering committee has impacted positively on local projects. A fifth question is: What can the success of the Manitoba model and other such provincial partnerships contribute to our thinking about what might work here in Ontario? We are fortunate to have Rob Despina and Sandi Howell here with us today to share their ideas and insights with us about their work on the steering committee.

A Historic Moment of Goodwill

You have shown an enormous amount of goodwill by coming together today to talk about interests, find common ground and discuss the possibilities of working together in the future.

The 2004 report *Building Support and Partnerships for Workplace Literacy in Ontario* (a project of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, the Ontario Federation of Labour and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division) indicated that the ground was fertile for building communication, networks and partnerships among business, labour and the literacy field. You echoed these ideas in the consultations for the *Reflections Paper*.

Your ideas and visions for the future indicate an interest and hopefulness that there will be a positive outcome as a result of this symposium. At a minimum, you are looking forward to a better understanding of the different perspectives of groups here at the symposium and/or an agreement to meet again.

Many of you have a great interest in having a system for workforce and workplace literacy in Ontario. You have different ideas about how to get there.

You also have a desire across the board for quality workforce and workplace initiatives. This includes initiatives that exemplify respect, accessibility, co-ordination, and affordability, and that are meaningful to people in their whole lives.

I would like to end where I began. It is an exciting moment to see who's in the room today. That is success in itself.

Thank you.

Session Two: Town Hall – Stakeholder Views on Workplace and Workforce Literacy in Ontario

Brigid Hayes, symposium chair, introduced the panelists:

- Ian Howcroft, Vice President, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division
- Irene Harris, Executive Vice President, Ontario Federation of Labour
- Florence Guy, Acting Senior Manager, Literacy and Basic Skills, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- Dr. Nancy Jackson, Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Brigid then introduced the town hall moderator, Glen Brown, who led the panel in a lively discussion about their views on workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario.

Glen began by asking the panelists if we in Ontario were “stuck” in terms of workplace literacy and if so, what we could do about it. Irene agreed that we were stuck, especially since government funding had dried up. She noted that there is a demand for programs, yet there are no community-based programs.

Ian agreed but felt it was important to focus as a business community on literacy. He is encouraged that people are talking about literacy and that there is an appetite for dealing with literacy, but warned that there have been no major improvements over the past ten years. He pointed out that business and labour work through partnerships and felt we should use methodologies that let companies learn from each other’s successes. Links should be made among health, safety and literacy.

Nancy pointed out that Canada is not the only country dealing with this issue, and that a major shift in management strategy links learning to the idea of investment. This type of strategy should be applied to literacy skills. Unfortunately, literacy is regarded as a nuts and bolts skill and is seen by organizations as a cost rather than an investment.

Irene added that when a worker is confronted with new technology, literacy skills become a major issue. There must be a source of government funding to support literacy programs for older workers whose job requirements have changed.

Florence pointed out that there are some 300 community programs that do this. But the challenge lies in ensuring that the \$64 million spent per year on these programs reaches a greater percentage of the population. Irene felt that this number of programs was insufficient for a province as large as Ontario. One proposal put

forward by labour is to implement a training tax on employers; the funds raised by this tax would support literacy programs. Ian indicated that business would not be interested in such a tax; they are still considering how to best support literacy. In many cases, people are unaware that literacy is a problem until there is a change in the business. There are also issues related to political jurisdiction.

Irene responded to Glen's question about who should take the lead as follows: every community should have an organization for literacy development to deal with the problem of disunity; every workplace should have a program; there should be paid time off for people to be trained; and the unions should be involved.

Nancy challenged the group not to think about literacy as a stand-alone item. Literacy must be integrated with other learning, such as apprenticeship. She said we should stop talking about who will pay for these stand-alone programs, where literacy is taught in isolation, because they have never worked. Ian felt that there are more people focusing on literacy, and he agreed with Nancy that it cannot be isolated.

In response to a question from the audience, Florence indicated that the number of people in programs now cannot be compared with the number of people in programs before 1999, when government-funded workplace literacy programs ended. The method of keeping track of numbers is different today. She also emphasized that it is important to know not only who are in programs but also how long they stay in the programs.

Audience members stated that mandatory certification provides a great opportunity to connect literacy and government programs. They mentioned the need to value any and all learning at work. This led Nancy to remark on the expanded definition of literacy associated with the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) to include more than just reading and writing. As a result, literacy now includes a range of initiatives that are based on level of functioning. Ian called for flexible programs to meet these varying needs.

Another audience member brought the conversation back to the notion of responsibility, stating that government has to respond; otherwise, countries with developing economies such as China will surpass Canada. Nancy stated that the answer lies in examining needs and not just facilitating programs. She challenged the general statements contained in IALS publicity, stating that not everyone requires the same skill set. Florence informed the group that the government's education and training priorities are education of youth to age 18, apprenticeship and internationally trained workers.

Another audience member stated that a key issue is that employers don't train employees with low level basic skills because they are fearful of poaching. Another participant spoke about people not realizing that they need assistance, to which

Nancy replied that perhaps we were not correctly defining the problem; if we were, people would attend programs.

Session Three: Sector Roundtable Discussions

Delegates sat at their “sector” tables – business, labour, literacy and other workplace development groups. Led by a facilitator, they discussed the following questions:

- What is the nature of your involvement with workplace and workforce literacy?
- What are the challenges you face in addressing workplace and workforce literacy issues?
- What do you see as the desired outcomes for workplace and workforce literacy in Ontario (e.g., changes in skills, knowledge, conditions, attitudes, values, status, behaviours)?
- What is your vision for moving forward?

Highlights from the Roundtables

Business

- Many people cited challenges with an ageing and immigrant workforce, along with other workplace changes, as reasons for becoming involved in the issue. Some deliver programs directly while others facilitate training by assessing needs and referring employees to community providers. Other initiatives include learning centres, annual targets for training expenditures and tuition reimbursement.
- Defining and using the terms “ESL” and “literacy” and distinguishing between them poses difficulties. Some felt that the term “literacy” should be avoided in the context of a broad discussion, and suggested that the term “essential skills” be used in the workplace. Communication skills in general are key. The focus should be on workplace documents and whether the level at which they are written matches employees’ literacy levels. The involvement and buy-in of management and supervisors is key.
- The question of personal responsibility was raised; for example, how can young people be motivated to take an interest in their own improvement? How do you motivate people at the lower end of the skill spectrum to upgrade? At the organizational level, responding to small and medium business needs was noted.
- This symposium constitutes a move forward. Programs require sustainable funding and partnerships between training providers and employers are needed. Literacy programs are a patchwork; access to centralized information through a

Web portal would be helpful. If there is not to be a tax, then how will funding be organized? Public sector employers are not able to benefit from some of the existing tax incentives.

Labour

- Labour is involved with literacy in a number of ways. The Labour Education Centre is working in partnership with George Brown College to create a Passport to Learning, which integrates Return to Learn, the General Education Diploma (GED), Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), and basic skills. However, many delegates mentioned the numerous limitations as compared to provincial government funding for workplace literacy. Cash flow is needed to pay for instructors. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has an education fund and is developing a learning program. Yet, in general, there is not much happening in the province.
- Linking literacy to other issues such as language and equity is critical. Contracting out has also proven to be a challenge to creating a learning culture. Terminology also matters; some are using “upgrading” as it is more positive. The term “essential skills” is too narrow.
- There are challenges in approaching union leadership with the idea of literacy. Training typically focuses on traditional concerns such as health and safety, so making unions aware is critical.
- What works includes: learning while on the job and not after hours, confidentiality, and finding good facilitators. There is some interest in the notion of certifying instructors.
- In any discussion about employers, it is important to include public and not just private employers. In addition, many workers are not unionized, and these workers may need the most help. One concern is that some employers are screening at the point of recruitment.
- Three key ingredients for success are: government funding, union support, and organization and infrastructure to support the programs. We know what needs to be done but we lack the funding and infrastructure to do it. Programs exist in other provinces where these supports are in place. There is a need for a public system for literacy as part of a larger vision. A tax credit system such as the one in Quebec and a requirement for joint committees in the workplace would be great steps forward.

- Without a labour market partnership in the province to lobby for workplace literacy, we won't get a literacy program in every workplace. A model such as Nova Scotia Workplace Partners would help.

Literacy

- A wide range of activities is underway. People are working with call centres, hospitality, skilled trades, retail, personal support, landscaping and food processing. Many are doing employment preparation and upgrading. Math and computer skills are increasingly important. One community-based group is working with CUPE to develop a course in the area of water treatment. AlphaPlus was cited as a source of curriculum and other supports, including AlphaRoute.
- Selling to employers is a challenge. They expect subsidies for delivery, especially those with branches in other jurisdictions. Many community-based literacy groups are struggling to find partnerships for workplace literacy. There are few connections to employers.
- Several groups raised what they considered to be mixed messages from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) regarding their role in training. Other challenges include the fragmentation between ESL and literacy, and Adult Basic Education and the GED. Funding is also fragmented between MTCU and the Ministry of Education – funding is often based on who is delivering and not on what they are delivering. One Stop was to help with this.
- Many groups have been involved in marketing activities and practitioner training such as Train Ontario. Practitioners need ways to network and share.
- Challenges arise in small communities without infrastructure and for small and medium size businesses. Working with employers to have them become ambassadors in their own communities would help.
- Moving forward, delegates called for adequate funding and an integrated system. There was some concern that the word “literacy” might be hindering public awareness.

Other Workplace/Workforce Development Groups

- Government relies too much on measuring things; we don't know what these numbers mean. We need to push for alternative means of evaluation, e.g., not just having people get jobs, but doing better in their jobs and making progress in the workplace. Policy has to stop being produced in a vacuum.

- Various definitions of literacy do not necessarily reflect today's society (e.g., immigrants and Aboriginal peoples). Aboriginal youth are the up-and-coming workforce, but they often drop out of school. Zero tolerance policies in schools encourage dropouts, yet we shouldn't just blame the schools; it's everyone's problem.
- Employment Insurance (EI) rules prevent employed workers from accessing training; therefore, the Swedish model where employees can take a year off to upgrade their skills is not possible. Canada needs a "living wage." The federal government is stuck; the provincial government is more likely to move forward.
- Even when people receive training, there are often no jobs for them, especially for Aboriginal youth. A community development/economic development learning model might help. Unfortunately, with "drive-by funding," while a good program might be established, the funding inevitably dries up.
- Deaf learners, for whom the workplace can be isolating, face special challenges. Often, there are not enough Deaf learners in a workplace to establish a program. Explaining to employers why there should be accommodation for Deaf workers and convincing employers to provide programs for them is difficult.
- Other provinces do not distinguish between workplace and workforce literacy; this could be a way to look at multiple program opportunities. Many in literacy programs have no concept of what a workplace will be like.
- Integrating literacy into corporate and workplace issues is critical. This would result in some of a company's training dollars going towards literacy. The challenge is having programs and learning opportunities when and where you need them. Informal learning is important, along with understanding the changing nature of work.

Session Four: Cross-sector Roundtable Discussions

After lunch, delegates from each of the four sector groups sat at each table. During this session, these “mixed” groups discussed the following questions:

- What are the drivers that have led to active workplace literacy initiatives?
- What could be the role of . . . government? business? labour? the literacy community? . . . in these efforts.
- What are the ingredients of success?
- What are the challenges?

Highlights from the Roundtables

Drivers

- Workers asking for assistance as well as unions promoting increased training; an increased understanding by business of the connection between literacy and success; unemployed workers and others wanting to enter a highly competitive workforce
- Most recently, the lack of government leadership in the province, resulting in calls for a forum for business and labour; this symposium is a good start
- Globalization and increased competition; skills shortages and changing skills
- Changing demographics in Canadian society resulting from immigration, particularly in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA); also the need to work with the existing workforce
- A concern that many young people lack the skills to succeed in the workforce
- The increase in the number of workplace certifications and standards; an increasing level of education required for various jobs; the need for clear language

Roles

- Employers can collect information about essential skills and share it with others. They can also support programs by offering paid release time and providing facilities for training. Employers can support workers facing new technology or new regulations with training, including workplace literacy. Employers can bring in trainers, provide appropriate materials and ensure confidentiality. Employers can inform government of their needs.
- Labour can raise the issue and negotiate programs. Labour can act as an advocate for underrepresented groups and promote a worker centred approach based on union values. Labour is an equal partner from the beginning.
- Government can provide funding and infrastructure to contribute to a public education system. It can provide policy and vision. Government should not be a “gatekeeper” but rather a “gate-opener.”
- Literacy practitioners and other trainers can find creative ways to ensure that the literacy needs of workers are met. Literacy groups can market and promote workplace literacy.
- All parties have a role to play in raising awareness, marketing, developing standards, contracting practitioners and evaluating programs.

Ingredients of Success

- Clarity of purpose and results; connecting with learners
- Funding – not just project funding but core funding and funding for workplace delivery
- An integrated approach to upgrading and building partnerships; voluntary and confidential programs
- Government taking the leadership role and business and labour joining the partnership; champions promoting the issue
- Connecting with other issues (e.g., health and safety, clear language) and with other sectors; where unions are involved, for example, connecting with the notion of understanding employees’ rights as workers and as union members

- Moving away from an approach involving “testing” and towards one that meets individual needs

Challenges

- The need for funding; this is especially difficult given that Ontario once had a vibrant workplace literacy program and now there are no funds for delivery in workplaces
- The lack of government support for community-based groups to provide workplace training
- Obtaining commitment from all parties to skills upgrading
- Making literacy an issue for global success
- Finding a term that helps employees and employers participate in and invest in workplace literacy training
- The (artificial) division between ESL and literacy and other types of adult learning
- Varying expectations
- Need for a pool of trained practitioners
- An infrastructure for information and referral, marketing, processes and protocols
- Support for small and medium size business; currently, they cannot find programs for their workers

Session Five: Town Hall – Workplace Literacy Initiatives Outside Ontario

Brigid Hayes, symposium chair, introduced the panelists:

- Rob Despins, General Manager, Standard Aero Corporate University
- Tamara Levine, Coordinator, Workplace Literacy Project, Canadian Labour Congress
- Sandi Howell, Coordinator, Workplace Education and PLAR, Manitoba Ministry of Education and Advanced Education and Training

Glen Brown, town hall moderator, then led the group in discussion about what is happening outside Ontario in the area of workplace literacy and education.

Sandi Howell stated that since 1991, Manitoba has had a steering committee—Workplace Education Manitoba (WEM)—comprised of business and labour, which provides a successful model of how to approach workplace issues. A second partnership committee deals with prior learning assessment and recognition. Four groups within various government branches look at issues such as literacy and prior learning assessment. The steering committee forms partnerships that address adult learning issues while reflecting union needs, employer needs and worker needs.

Rob Despins, the founding business co-chair of WEM, commented that some of their success has been due to their recognition that they needed to develop champions as well as use the strength of employer associations and labour organizations. The key was developing relationships within the committee so that labour, business and government each had a role that was respected by the other committee members. The committee was also lucky in that the individual members of the group worked well together and operated under the radar screen. Rob felt that sometimes it is better to move forward with plans and then use their success to leverage continued approval.

Tamara Levine spoke about Ontario having been a model of workplace literacy programs from the late '80s on; other provinces used our practices to develop their own. Sadly, this is no longer the case. Manitoba provides a powerful model of a steering committee comprised of stakeholders at the provincial level. This committee has been in place since 1991. She hoped the group could draw some inspiration from that and perhaps establish a working group to put together something similar. Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are also using a partnership model. The North West Territories is looking at putting together a consortium such. Too many good

programs have died with a change of government or because the structure was not there to sustain them.

Glen asked how this structure could come together. What elements contribute to success? What should be avoided?

Rob highlighted the need to identify common ground. All three parties bring something to the table, and all three parties stand to benefit. Sandi said while it is possible to develop an overarching policy goal, it is much easier to work on a project basis. The successes of each partnership provide models for later projects and for the eventual development of an overarching policy goal. If you can show an employer where a need existed, a project partnership was formed, the plan was implemented and there was a positive result, then it is possible to get them to buy in. Sandi felt that labour had always understood the need for such programs.

Tamara disagreed; she found it was often a challenge to get unions on board. However, eventually they realized that this sort of program was beneficial not just for individual workers but also for the union as a whole. One of the important ingredients is that partners be clear about their agendas. There will be areas where agreement will not be reached. There is a need for a shared vision and understanding of the key ingredients; these include political will and resources.

Glen asked, since Ontario does not yet have a labour market development agreement, what did the panelists think of such agreements?

Sandi reported that the bulk of WEM's funding comes from the National Literacy Secretariat. The government of Manitoba provides only \$45,000 per year for direct delivery of workplace literacy programs. She has been able to double or triple that amount by leveraging funds from other government departments. These funds are not just run through employers, but also through unions. WEM brings partnership values to each project. All funding, whether federal or provincial, must be funnelled using a partnership model. When Howell receives a request for funding from an employer, her first call is to a representative from the labour federation. If there is a conflict at the site, and the labour groups would rather she not be involved, she stays away. There is a growing respect between the groups for the values they bring to the table.

An audience member raised the question of how to engage small business. Rob pointed out that all workplaces in Manitoba are small and that there are no fully transferable models for small workplaces. The successes in small workplaces (fewer than 20 employees) have depended on the engagement of especially passionate individuals. He added that it is often easier to get involvement in rural areas. Sandi added that Manitoba had had some success getting multiple employers to send employees to a common location for training.

Another audience member asked about the environment in Manitoba in 1991 and about the motivators that had brought government to the table. Rob provided some background: a provincial public servant who was passionate about workplace literacy managed to persuade representatives from business to get together. It was not until the IALS survey came out that businesses really began to address the issue of workplace literacy.

Glen asked about how labour could be strategically engaged. Tamara emphasized that programs should be voluntary, centred on workers' needs, and not pose a threat to workers' jobs. Testing should be avoided; there are other ways to evaluate. The aim is not to re-create school. Program participants must be involved in all decisions. Skills learned must be portable rather than needed only for an immediate and specific job.

Another participant pointed out that the models being promoted are all from small provinces. Rob felt smaller provinces seemed to buy in faster, and that it is easier in Manitoba where 60 percent of the population lives in Winnipeg. WEM was able to speak on a regular basis with the premier. Leverage is sometimes easier when there is little funding; one is forced to realize that more important than funding are the structure and identity of the initiative. In some cases, a small subsidy is enough to encourage buy-in by an employer.

Tamara added that leverage was crucial. Forty-five thousand dollars might be worth half a million in terms of paid time for learning, materials and support structures. The value of public money is increased by the amount of leverage it can buy. Incidentally, in Quebec employers are required to spend 1 percent of their payroll on training their own employees. Any unspent money is put into a common pot, which is administered by partners at the table.

Sandi found that the term "skilled labour force" was important in working with government. During the floodway expansion project, the Manitoba government found that workers did not have sufficient literacy skills to take the technical training and that traditional secondary school methods for improving workers' literacy skills were not effective.

An audience member asked about how companies or employers could be persuaded to share their successes. How do you find employers with this kind of expertise who are willing to share it?

Rob pointed out that it is not essential that such initiatives come from WEM. WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems) or ISO (International Standards Organization) training also provide a useful impetus for employee training in general. The best way into businesses is through the sector councils and the employer organizations. Sandi drew attention to globalization as a

driver. Change often places a new demand on the skills of the workplace. Increased regulation and certification are often drivers in business.

Session Six: Sector Roundtable Discussions – Developing an Action Plan

Following the break, the original sector roundtables reconvened to discuss next steps and to answer the following questions:

- Is there space for business, labour, the literacy community, government and other stakeholders to work together on the issue of workplace/workforce literacy?
- What are the points on which there seem to be common ground?
- What are the challenges to developing an agenda for action?

Highlights from the Roundtables

Business

- Awareness is a major issue, in terms of both employers and employees. Terminology needs to be looked at. We have to instil the notion in every person of working age that life-long learning is essential to economic survival.
- There is a willingness to act in partnership. However, we need to target activities to meet the needs of different regions; there can be no cookie cutter approach. Each region has different realities and costs.
- The government needs to act and not just make promises. Government plays a key role in developing a training culture. The government should articulate a vision on adult education that includes the workplace. Labour can help by incorporating literacy training into collective bargaining. Employers can connect literacy to job descriptions and evaluation. The connection between literacy and business issues was stressed. Recruiting and retaining employees are critical reasons to provide training.
- An infrastructure is needed to support training, particularly in the area of e-learning, which benefits smaller companies. Ontario has not invested in broad band or equitable access to the Internet across the province and this hinders the development of creative solutions to training challenges and widens the digital divide.

Labour

- Government involvement is critical to moving forward. The point of a partnership is not just to talk but to push the provincial government to act.
- Labour needs to work with literacy groups to help them understand workplace issues from a labour perspective. As well, some unions have not responded well to advances from literacy networks. We need to connect labour with local communities, for example by attending to the annual general meetings of local literacy groups. We can also look at blending program models, for example, co-facilitation with peers and literacy workers. The public system needs to be pushed to respond to workers' needs.
- Regional challenges to finding ways to respond to workers' needs were discussed. Some unions have developed tools that raise awareness of the issue. Labour councils can play a role at the regional level.
- Government funding is critical; we need to move towards a re-invigorated system. A stakeholder partnership is vital.

Literacy

- Collaboration on the issue of workplace literacy is needed. Parties must be clear about their role. There is much common ground, for example, development of the whole person, transportable skills, etc. A working group is needed to continue the dialogue and to move forward with the same message, which will be more powerful if it comes from multiple groups. Literacy networks are in a good position to help. The four literacy streams need to be brought together.
- There is also a need for funding and professional development since workplace delivery is very different from other types of programs. We need to figure out what financial incentives will work. Not all literacy groups feel comfortable working in this area. At the moment, workplace literacy training does not count for "contact hours," so there is no incentive to do it. Some literacy groups feel that they are not equal partners with business and labour unless they are involved from the beginning. Different approaches need to be looked at such as peer tutoring and the apprenticeship/journey person model.
- Challenges include the lack of a template or model for proceeding and lack of funding and infrastructure. The regional nature of the province will be challenging as will be dealing with small and medium size business. But we can capitalize on this by replicating the symposium within the regions.

Other Workplace/Workforce Development Groups

- More important than asking if there is space for people to work together would be to ask how this can happen. There is no question that a partnership is needed. There is also a need to work at the regional level. How we work with existing organizations and networks is important. The OLC is well positioned to work on partnerships at the provincial level. The symposium must result in concrete outcomes.
- Ontario's diversity influences how we can proceed; we shouldn't generalize about the state of literacy programs in the province. The issue has to be connected to the political agenda. One way of achieving this would be to get business to see its vested interest in literacy.
- Funding is critical to bringing the right people to the table. All parties need to be present. We must find innovative ways to bring people to the table; this cannot be done as an "add-on" for people who already have busy jobs. Approaches to business must be based on an understanding of its needs and wants.
- A model with longevity is needed. It must be sustainable following the implementation of a labour market agreement and in the event of a change in government.

Session Seven: Report Back from the Sectors and Discussion

Each of the sector groups reported their top action steps to the full symposium.

Business

1. A partnership on workforce and workplace literacy has to involve everybody; today has been a remarkable achievement.
2. We need to facilitate a culture of lifelong learning involving government, business and labour. Government has a role to educate and foster a culture of learning.
3. Exploit the linkages and awareness of what is happening in our communities; bring learning institutions together, and exploit opportunities in local communities.
4. Lobby government to strengthen its investment in learning and training, for example, broad based infrastructure in the North for e-learning.

Labour

1. Strengthen collaboration between the labour and literacy communities. The OLC can help to foster these relationships.
2. Promote free access to adult education.
3. Develop a cross-sectoral working group.
4. Lobby government for funding.
5. The Ontario Federation of Labour should give priority to literacy and ESL.
6. Need a literacy program in every workplace.
7. Need a meeting to pull together stakeholders.

The group also pointed out that it did not want a Labour Market Development Agreement for Ontario.

Literacy

1. As a first step, a working group will be formed by January 2006 to ensure further discussion and dialogue among all parties. The OLC will take the lead, contingent on funding.
2. Research and development, a strategic plan and an environmental scan will be completed by January 2007.
3. The OLC will continue to fill curriculum gaps and make curriculum relevant to each community.

Other Workplace/Workforce Development Groups

1. Model must be sustainable; too many programs change over time.
2. Involve all stakeholders; get them to buy in and take ownership of the issue.
3. Keep sight of the Labour Market Development Agreement and its impact.
4. The OLC should take a leadership role in helping employers identify needs, for example, market and skill changes.
5. The OLC should involve others in the collaborative work, i.e., other provinces as well as the Deaf, Native and Francophone and literacy communities.
6. Three principles:
 - a. Good models exist; they need to be adapted but we are not starting from scratch.
 - b. Sustainable solutions involve partnership.
 - c. Diversity requires flexibility.
7. We need a cross-sectoral steering committee to develop a strategy for a regional model for literacy in Ontario.

Discussion

The final discussion, led by Glen, indicated that sector groups shared a fairly consistent vision of next steps.

The OLC responded to proposals that it assume an ongoing role by stating that it had already submitted a proposal to the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) to hold a similar symposium in each of four provincial regions as well as an additional one in Toronto. Although several groups felt strongly about the need for a multi-party working group, the OLC stated it wanted to conduct more research before bringing all the stakeholders on board. In order to put forward the best case to the government, the OLC stated they need to clarify the vision and develop specific proposals that business and labour can sign on to.

The provincial government representative confirmed the government's recognition of the importance of literacy. They have worked with literacy deliverers to build workforce literacy capacity. However, any change in policy would have to originate at the political level.

Labour indicated they would like to see the symposium's advisory committee work on developing a common vision with which to lobby higher levels of government. They noted that some of the timelines seemed awfully long and called for an early meeting of the advisory committee.

The OLC congratulated the advisory committee and said that the committee would document today's proceedings. As the funding ends with the symposium, the OLC suggested that the committee could maintain contact via telephone calls and try to include others, but that substantial work will require funding. A number of delegates indicated their willingness to be involved, while others wanted to be kept in the loop via e-mail. Suggestions were made that the advisory committee be enhanced by inviting representation from the public and the non-profit sectors, as well as from other literacy coalitions and the ESL community. A regional approach might help manage the process.

Closing Remarks

Anette Chawla, executive director of the Ontario Literacy Coalition, closed the symposium:

I am very excited about the outcomes of today. I firmly believe that workplace and workforce literacy has been taken a solid step forward.

According to the dictionary, a symposium is “a conference to discuss a particular subject” or “a philosophical or other friendly discussion” or – the one I like the best – “a drinking party (although one for the ancient Greeks).” With the exception of the drinking party, we have accomplished that today.

Every major stakeholder has had a chance to bring forward their perspective and hear the perspectives of others. As we leave here today, workplace and workforce literacy stands stronger. There is still a lot for all of us to do, but we have now begun the necessary discussion to put workplace and workforce literacy back on the agenda.

One immediate action that we will be taking is to prepare a report summarizing what happened today, and we will be sharing that report with you.

I have enjoyed meeting all of you today. I have been impressed by your interest and tenacity in staying with the topic for the whole day. Thank you for contributing so much to the symposium.

Before we close the proceedings, I'd like to thank some of the people who have played a special role here today.

Thank you to the speakers and panel participants.

Thank you to all the many project consultants who have worked tirelessly with the OLC on this event.

Thanks also to the logistics team, headed up by Linda McLaughlin of MD&A.

And to the entire OLC team, especially to Lesley Brown, OLC's Director of Program Development. She has effortlessly pulled together all the key folks involved in the project and tirelessly guided all aspects of the symposium.

Thank you also to Florence Guy and Yvette Souque for taking part. I cannot tell you how much we appreciate the ongoing support that you and your government departments have provided to the OLC over the years.

Next, I'd like to thank the facilitators. You have been instrumental in facilitating the break out groups and in reporting back.

I'd also like to acknowledge two stellar people, who made sure we started on the right footing, stayed on track and achieved real, measurable outcomes – in other words, the people who provided the glue that has held us all together! Thank you to Glen Brown and Brigid Hayes.

Thank you for coming.

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. The Workplace/Workforce Literacy Symposium's advisory committee should be convened to review the outcomes of the symposium and provide advice to the OLC on next steps.
2. The OLC should proceed with its request to the National Literacy Secretariat for funding for regional roundtables that reproduce the provincial roundtable.
3. The OLC should take a lead role and consider requesting funds to support a provincial steering committee representing business, labour, literacy and workplace development practitioners to:
 - guide the regional activities,
 - provide a focal point for provincial activities,
 - develop a provincial action plan for presentation to government.
4. OLC should continue to find ways to include the Deaf, Native and Francophone literacy communities in its workplace and workforce literacy efforts.
5. Each of the participating sectors at the symposium should develop their own action plans that reflect their own context. Each of the four sectors have identified actions that they could take on their own, including:
 - **Business:** Lobby government to strengthen its investments in learning and training, for example, in broad based infrastructure for e-learning in the North.
 - **Labour:** Strengthen collaboration between the labour and literacy communities and have the OFL give priority to literacy and ESL.
 - **Literacy:** Undertake research and development, a strategic plan and an environmental scan, fill curriculum gaps and make curriculum relevant to each community.
 - **Other Workforce/Workplace Development Groups:** Promote and support a multi-party approach to workplace and workforce development at the regional and provincial level.
6. All activities should be undertaken in the spirit of partnership, recognizing the limited resources of the various parties and respecting their agendas, cultures and priorities.

Appendix A: Agenda

7:30 – 8:30	Registration
7:30 – 8:30	Continental Breakfast
8:30 – 8:35	Welcome Anette Chawla, Executive Director, Ontario Literacy Coalition
8:35 – 8:45	Overview of Symposium Brigid Hayes, Symposium Chair Director, Labour, Canadian Labour and Business Centre
8:45 – 9:15	Reflections on Workplace and Workforce Literacy in Ontario Sue Folinsbee, Tri En Communications
9:15 – 10:15	Town Hall: Stakeholder Views on Workplace and Workforce Literacy in Ontario Glen Brown, Town Hall Moderator Ian Howcroft, Vice President, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Ontario Division Irene Harris, Vice President, Ontario Federation of Labour Florence Guy, Acting Senior Manager, Literacy and Basic Skills, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Nancy Jackson, Associate Professor, Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:45	Sector Roundtable Discussions
11:45 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30	Cross-sector Roundtable Discussions

- 1:30 – 2:30** **Town Hall: Workplace Literacy Initiatives Outside Ontario**
- Glen Brown, Town Hall Moderator
- Rob Despins, General Manger, Standard Aero Corporate University
- Tamara Levine, Coordinator, Workplace Literacy Project, Canadian Labour Congress
- Sandi Howell, Coordinator, Workplace Education & PLAR, Manitoba Ministry of Education and Advanced Education and Training
- 2:30 – 2:45** **Break**
- 2:45 – 3:30** **Sector Roundtable Discussions: Developing an Action Plan**
- 3:30 – 4:30** **Report Back from Sectors**
- 4:30** **Symposium Closes**

Appendix B: Biographies of Town Hall Panelists

Glen Brown, Town Hall Moderator

Glen Brown is an independent consultant providing facilitation, organizational development and communication services to the not-for-profit sector. He has been involved in health and social justice issues for several decades as a volunteer, staff member, manager and board member. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, he has lived in Toronto since 1989.

Rob Despins

Rob Despins is the general manager of the Corporate University for Standard Aero, a Winnipeg-based corporation which operates seven aerospace companies, with 2500 employees world-wide. Mr. Despins has held management positions in human resources, operations, strategic projects and marketing during his 17-year tenure with Standard Aero.

Mr. Despins has been a member of the Manitoba Premiers Economic Advisory Committee, chairing the task group on Natural Resources as Economic Drivers. He is the past chair of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Manitoba Division. He also co-chairs WWestNet, a group dedicated to promoting the development of workplace essential skills in Western Canada.

He was granted the Human Resource Practitioner of the Year Award from the Canadian Human Resource Management Association in 1992.

Rob Despins graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Education degree. He also holds the Certified Human Resource Practitioner (CHRP) designation.

Sue Folinsbee

Sue Folinsbee has over 20 years' experience in collaborative adult education. Her consulting work focuses on research, communications, program evaluation, practitioner training and project management. Recently, she worked on projects for the Labour Education Centre (LEC) and served as co-executive director of the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC).

Ms Folinsbee is a co-author of the book *Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace*, published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates in 2003.

She holds a Master of Adult Education degree (focusing on literacy and work) from St. Francis Xavier University.

Florence Guy

Florence Guy has worked at the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) in the Literacy and Basic Skills Section since May 1998 as a field consultant, operations manager, project leader for the adult education review, and acting senior manager.

From 1995 to 1998, she was the provincial co-ordinator for the Ontario Workplace/Workforce Employment Basic Skills (WEBS) program. From 1989 to 1995, Ms Guy was the multicultural workplace co-ordinator at the Toronto Board of Education where she marketed workplace ESL and literacy programs.

From 1977 to 1989 she taught ESL and literacy in a variety of settings including a parent and preschool program, Humber College, a private school and a community-based employment preparation program for immigrant women where she wrote and produced a manual called *Working Skills for Immigrant Women*.

Irene Harris

Irene Harris was elected executive vice president of the Ontario Federation of Labour in 1997. She is responsible for apprenticeship, training, youth, literacy, education, arts and labour, social services, disability rights and health care.

As an executive assistant at the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, her work included women's issues, municipal programs, social services, co-op housing and literacy programs. She was part of the leadership team that developed Labour Community Services, a project of the Labour Council and the United Way of Greater Toronto, and became its first executive director.

Ms Harris was the first equal opportunities representative in the Ontario Region of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). As a CUPE national representative in Kingston, she worked with local unions on bargaining, grievances, arbitration and organizing. She represented CUPE on the Ontario Federation of Labour's (OFL) executive board for three terms.

Ms Harris serves as a director/member of the Ontario Press Council and co-chairs the Workers' Arts and Heritage Centre. In addition, she is a member of the board of directors of the United Way of Ontario.

Brigid Hayes, Symposium Chair

In November 2003, Brigid Hayes joined the Canadian Labour and Business Centre, a national centre for business-labour dialogue and consensus building, as a senior researcher and, in September 2004, she was named director of labour.

Previously, Ms Hayes was the program manager for business and labour partnerships with the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Human Resources Development Canada, a position she held from 1989 to 2003. Prior to joining the NLS, Ms Hayes was director of the Voluntary Action Directorate, Department of the Secretary of State.

Before entering the federal public service in 1984, Ms Hayes worked for several years as a consultant in program and policy development with clients from the criminal justice field, women's organizations, aboriginal organizations, aboriginal women's organizations and the voluntary sector.

Ms Hayes holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Western Ontario and a Master of Arts degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University.

Ian Howcroft

Ian Howcroft is vice president of the Ontario Division of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME). CME is a leading national employer association with a membership of small, medium and large companies from all sectors of manufacturing. Part of the organization's mandate is to develop educational materials and disseminate information to members. Mr. Howcroft is responsible for all aspects of CME Ontario Division, including membership, business development, policy and advocacy.

In addition, Mr. Howcroft serves on a variety of committees and boards including: Skills Canada – Ontario; Skills Canada; Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC); Ontario Exports Inc. (OEI); Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF); Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) Conference Advisory Board; and the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health & Safety.

Mr. Howcroft holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree from McMaster University and a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Western Ontario. He is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

Sandi Howell

Sandi Howell is the provincial coordinator of Prior Learning, Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) and Essential skills (ES) for Manitoba Advanced Education and Training. Ms Howell's background includes 18 years as a consultant developing workplace curricula and implementing workplace training with a focus on Essential Skills, ESL, training systems and PLAR-related projects. In her current position, Ms Howell co-ordinates industry-related PLAR and ES projects.

Prior to her current position, Ms Howell worked for the Department of National Defence developing training materials, including paper- and Web-based materials and multimedia and serving as both instructional designer and editor. She continues to provide editorial services on international educational projects and written materials.

Ms Howell holds a Master of Education degree in Curriculum from the University of Manitoba and is currently working on a degree in Fine Arts.

Nancy Jackson

Nancy Jackson is associate professor in adult education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She teaches in the workplace learning and change focus, including a course on workplace literacy. She has 20 years of research experience with many publications focussing on workplace knowledge and skill, including a recently co-authored book (with Sue Folinsbee) on workplace literacy entitled *Reading Work: Literacies in the New Workplace*, published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates in 2003. She spent five years in the early 1990s as co-managing director of the Auto Parts Sectoral Council, where she developed basic skills training for production workers in the auto industry.

Tamara Levine

Tamara Levine co-ordinates the Workplace Literacy Project at the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), raising awareness and building capacity around worker-centred literacy and clear language within the labour movement. She co-ordinates the CLC's Literacy Working Group and is responsible for the CLC's Learning in Solidarity series of resources.

Ms Levine came to the CLC in 1996 from her role as eastern Ontario co-ordinator of the Ontario Federation of Labour's BEST (Basic Education for Skills Training) program, a position she held from BEST's inception in 1988.

From 1974 to 1988, she worked in the federal government in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Women's Program and as part of the team that helped set up the National Literacy Secretariat. As a member of the Public Service Alliance of

Canada (PSAC), she was active in health and safety issues. Ms Levine graduated from York University and has a certificate in teaching English as a second language.

Appendix C: List of Symposium Delegates

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