



Literacy in Action

LITERACY ALBERTA NEWS

Mark Your Calendar!

March 2008 Practitioner Edition

March 3 to 9, 2008

International Adult Learners' Week

April 14 to 16, 2008

Pan Canadian Literacy Forum &
Provincial Literacy Conference
Edmonton, AB

April 21, 2008

CAMA/CUPE Clear Language
Workshop
Spruce Grove, AB
613-264-0111

May 27, 2008

'Stepping Stones' Luncheon
Lougheed House
Calgary, AB

June 3 & 4, 2008

Literacy Alberta Casino
Calgary, AB

June 9-13, 2008

Pathways Program Spring Institute
"New Paths to Learning: Connect,
Engage, Reflect"
Edmonton, AB

June 26 to 28, 2008

Summer Institute 2008
ESL & Literacy
Montreal, QC
<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca>

Message from the Executive Director

What a hopeful time this is for literacy! First, there is the Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum and our provincial literacy conference April 14-16th. Three whole days to listen to keynote speakers from across the country, talk about literacy issues and solutions, learn something new, meet new friends and connect with old ones. Hope to see you there.

Second, the opportunity for us all to be part of the creation of the literacy framework for Alberta at the Forum. As you know, Literacy Alberta led a province-wide round-table to create the proposed literacy policy – *Literacy For a Life of Learning*. This proposed policy is providing the basis for the new framework, which could change the way literacy is viewed and funded in our province.

Third, we should be hearing this month about the results of our proposals into OLES (the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills). Many organizations across Alberta and the country are waiting to hear about the Fall proposals and if they will be funded. Our proposal, for a pilot Workplace Essential Skills Bus, would be a huge opportunity for us at Literacy Alberta. We hope to be able to tell you more soon.

Lastly, I recently attended a conference in Ottawa called The Tipping Point. Representatives from a variety of literacy stakeholders met to talk about getting our message out and creating a culture of learning in Canada. We were emphatic about the need to understand that learners take many different paths to literacy and start in their families and in their communities as well as their workplaces. I expect more to come from this initiative by the Canadian Council on Learning.

Hopefully yours,
Janet Lane



Literacy
Alberta

March Celebrations!

International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) March 3-9, 2008

Celebrated in over 40 countries, IALW showcases adult learners and promotes lifelong learning in all its forms. The celebration of IALW in 2008 will focus on the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the right to education and learning. "We believe that the week is a perfect opportunity to underscore the important connection between adult learning and building sustainable communities that value diversity and human rights." Says the Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, David A. Walden.

<http://www.unesco.ca/en/activity/education/AdultLearners.aspx>



Aboriginal Languages Month

March is Aboriginal Languages Month. Celebrate Aboriginal Language Month in your community. Check out the North West Territories Literacy Council's '*Culture and Traditions How to Kit*' for some fun ideas to celebrate Aboriginal language.

<http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/familit/howtokit/culture/cover.htm>

Recent News

LearningLinks Library

LearningLinks combines the resource collections of Literacy Alberta and the Calgary Learning Centre. Literacy Alberta's collection of resources covers the broad topic of literacy and was put together originally for the use of literacy workers and researchers in the province of Alberta. The Calgary Learning Centre's collection was built around the broad topic of learning difficulties, with a particular emphasis on learning disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). There are also materials for a wide range of professionals, families and learners themselves.

The merged collection consists of over 14,000 resources on literacy, learning disabilities, AD/HD and other learning difficulties. The live catalogue is now available online on the Literacy Alberta website at:

www.literacyalberta.ca/resources

LearningLinks is a resource centre working to link together other literacy, learning disabilities and AD/HD resources in the provincial community. Laura Godfrey, Learning Links Librarian, said, "We are not the only place to come to for resources, but we would like to be the place you come to, to find out where to get the resources you need."

LearningLinks is continuing the Literacy Alberta legacy of Travelling Trunks. All the Trunks have been revamped and contain new materials. For further info, please visit

www.literacyalberta.ca/resources



Literacy Helpline 1-800-767-3231 Radio Ad Campaign

The Helpline was recently featured in a promotional campaign on talk radio channels QR77 and CHED in Calgary and Edmonton. The 7-week campaign ran from late December 07 until the end of January 08. The ads were focused on a different literacy theme each week and featured those 'crunch moments' in life that help bring the need for literacy skills to the surface. The campaign was successful in increasing calls to the Helpline and generating additional referrals to programs around the province.

One success story was a caller phoning on behalf of his friend whose literacy skills were holding him back from passing his Apprenticeship Plumbing exam. He commented that his friend was gifted in using his hands to fix things, but admitted that he struggled with comprehending the technical information required to pass the exam and progress in his career. The caller heard one of the ads on QR77 in Calgary and called the Helpline to find out about support available. Program referral information was passed on. The caller was thrilled to find out that literacy programs were available to help his friend develop the literacy skills needed to progress with his education and career.



The ads are available on CD for you to use as public service announcements in your own community. If you are interested in receiving one, please contact the office at 403-410-6990.

Literacy Audit Kit

New revised Literacy Audit Kit coming in fall!

This is a tool kit which is meant to help community service agencies provide better customer service to low literacy and English as a second language adults. It will include a facilitation guide and information on speaking and writing using plain language. A 10-minute video on literacy awareness will accompany the kit. For more information on this please call Terri Peters, Project Manager, at 403-410-6775.

NALD@Work

The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) has launched a new website to support workplace learning. This site will benefit the workplace literacy and essential skills community in Canada.

[NALD@Work](http://www.naldatwork.ca/) is an Internet database of information and resources. It is a one-stop shopping site for program models and approaches, teaching, learning and research materials, news, events, contacts, websites, tools and support – all available in one central location. <http://www.naldatwork.ca/>

Literacy Alberta hosts Norquest Survey on ESL training and delivery

86 practitioners, ESL instructors and tutors responded to the ESL online survey. 11 of those were chosen for follow-up interviews. Thank you for your time, energy and very valuable input.

It was clear from the survey results that ESL is an important factor in most programs and further that you are committed to getting the training and tools you need.

We will all be interested in the outcome of this research. Thanks to Norquest for asking for our input.

Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum 'Literacy: Never too Early, Never too Late'

Including our Literacy & Learning Conference!

Please book these dates in your calendar:
April 14-16, 2008 at the Shaw Conference
Centre, Edmonton.

The conference program and registration
information will be posted on the Literacy
Alberta website shortly.

This conference is a unique opportunity to be a
part of a national discussion on literacy for all
ages.

Literacy Alberta and the Community Learning
Network are hosting the Tuesday evening
events, which include entertainment, a banquet
and the Awards ceremony. Wednesday's
program offers concurrent sessions of interest
to those involved with literacy training and
learning for all ages.

Awards of Excellence Nominations

The provincial Awards of Excellence,
established in 2003, recognize the outstanding
contributions in the advancement of literacy in
Alberta.

The aim of the Awards of Excellence is to
celebrate:

- Individuals who have achieved outstanding
results from their efforts to gain literacy
- Individuals and organizations who have
contributed to the promotion, advancement
and development of literacy in the province

The awards will be presented at our Literacy &
Learning Conference in April 2008.

The deadline for nominations is March 15,
2008.

For further info on the criteria and nomination
process, please visit our website.
<http://www.literacyalberta.ca/events.htm>

Literacy Alberta Board of Directors Election 2008

Literacy Alberta is seeking candidates for the
2008 election. Positions available are Vice
President, Director: Student, and Director:
Literacy Practitioner.

It is important to note the importance of the
Board of Directors for not for profit
organizations, such as Literacy Alberta. It is
the Board that sets the work mandate and
goals of Literacy Alberta.

For further information or to download the
nomination package, please visit our website
at: www.literacyalberta.ca

Deadline for nominations is March 14, 2008.

SHARE is There!

Remember to subscribe to SHARE for your up
to date discussions, training news, conference
information and regional discussions.

Posting your information on SHARE is an
excellent way to create an archive of important
questions, events, challenges and
opportunities.

When you can't find a resource, and you have
already asked LearningLinks, SHARE gives
you the chance to ask all the VTALS
coordinators around the province! You never
know what you might learn!!

Yvonne Stewart is our fearless and friendly
SHARE User Support person. She can be
reached at 1-866-410-5708.

Show her you care, use SHARE!!!

Regional News

This has been a busy year for training and professional development.

Thanks to the Resource People (RP) in each region for the work they do both in welcoming and orienting the new VTALS coordinators as well as organizing and hosting the regional meetings.

These regional meetings are very important. They create an opportunity for VTALS coordinators to network and share opportunities and challenges, while providing a venue for regional specific PD opportunities.

This year has seen more joint regional meetings (VTALS and CALC), which is a wonderful opportunity.

The list of RPs and upcoming regional meeting dates are:

Allie Spicer-Riess - Red Deer region	May 14, 2008
Lois Polege - Lloydminster region	May 7, 2008
Jodi Mantey – Whitecourt region	May 7/8/9, 2008 (joint meeting)
Wendy Rhodes – Edmonton region	March 7, 2008
Carol McCullough – Calgary region	March 3, 2008
Kathryn Ponomar – Lethbridge region	June 5, 2008
Vacant – Grande Prairie region	March 13, 2008 (joint meeting)

Did you know in 2007, 14 VTALS coordinators were also CALC coordinators?

New Coordinator Training (NCT) and New Coordinator Follow-up Training

This training is offered as needed.

In the fall of 2007, 8 new VTALS coordinators came to Calgary for NCT. In the spring of this year 10 names are on the list. This may seem like a lot of change but consider how many among you have been VTALS coordinators for 10 or more years!

We all have a role to play welcoming new coordinators and giving them the information and support they need to survive and succeed in this diverse role.

Pathways

Pathways has continued to provide relevant, affordable and 'close to home', where possible, professional development opportunities. This fall we offered Pathways credit opportunities in conjunction with 'The Impact of Violence on Learning' with Dr. Jenny Horseman, Cultural Competency 2 and with Best Practices 'Assessment and Instruction' with Dr. Pat Campbell.

Did you know 40 VTALS coordinators are registered for Pathways?

Call Literacy Alberta for more information.

Pathways Program Spring PD Institute

The Pathways Program is presenting a Spring PD Institute: "New Paths to Learning: Connect, Engage, Reflect" June 9-13, 2008 at the University of Alberta.

Take this opportunity to complete up to 4 Pathways modules (and catch up on any uncompleted assignments!) Registration materials will be available shortly on SHARE.

A limited number of travel bursaries are available for those registered in the Pathways program.

Literacy Specialists (LS)

In October 2007, a dozen literacy specialists came together to talk about how their LS training influenced their practice of being a VTALS coordinator. Out of this workshop, 5 LS/coordinators requested pilot project funding.

LS project information will be available at the spring conference in Edmonton. Thanks to all of them for making the time to take leadership with literacy in their communities once again.

The LS and their (very summarized) projects are:

Ginette Marcoux-Frigon (Jasper)

Increasing awareness brings change. 'Impact of Violence on Learning' is a community based project that invites educators & other stakeholders to learn about the relationship between Violence and Learning, and its implications for service and service delivery.

Jayne Clarke (Calgary)

Literacy Awareness and Plain Language workshops and presentations targeting specific service groups will be developed. These materials will be delivered at conferences where literacy has not traditionally been highlighted.

Bonnie Ireland (Stettler)

Develop materials and a workshop to help CALC/VTALS programs better understand what 'embed literacy skills' means to programming and practice.

Martha Urquhart (Slave Lake)

Building capacity within the community, working with Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre and the Elders Wisdom Circle. Interviewing and recording Elders stories.

Jodi Mantey (Edson)

Building capacity and increasing awareness by offering a Plain Language workshop, a 'Becoming a Literacy Friendly Organization' workshop to organizations in the Edson community.

Effective Marketing and Communication

The Effective Marketing and Communication CD/manual was the result of a collaborative effort to help make program promotion easier and more effective. This joint marketing initiative between the Community Learning Network and Literacy Alberta was funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, Community Programs Branch.

Last October the CD was mailed to the office of every CALC and VTALS in Alberta. It was also posted on SHARE on the Alberta News forum. Scroll down into the place where you can click on 'Older Discussions' and then scroll down to Myra's posting for October 9, 2007.

This resource manual is intended to assist you in:

- attracting more learners to your programs
- promoting literacy and lifelong learning as a significant issue
- building awareness in your communities of what you do and how you can help people
- recruiting volunteers
- informing the media about what you do
- raising your profile with government, businesses and other organizations who may be in a position to support you in your goals

The manual emphasizes the importance of the two fundamental touchstones of good communication and how to use them:

- consistent graphic elements
- effective messaging

It focuses on the importance of cultivating a working relationship with the media and engaging other allies in your community to help you better target your primary audiences with your message.

Literacy Alberta would like to know how you are using it and how you find it works as a resource and tool. Please contact Kari Cheyne at 403-410-6993 with your responses.