

# Literacy Specialist Work: Building Community Capacity and Changing Approaches



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Literacy Specialists work with community agencies to ensure their services are accessible to their low-literate clients. Training workshops are provided on:

- 🍁 Literacy Awareness
- 🍁 Plain Language
- 🍁 Family Literacy Awareness
- 🍁 Clear Communication
- 🍁 Literacy Audit (coming soon)



# Workshops have been delivered to

- 🍁 Community Health Care Workers
- 🍁 Nurses
- 🍁 Health Regions
- 🍁 Nutritionists
- 🍁 Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

Participants develop an understanding of literacy in general and the challenges faced by low-literate Canadians. The goal is to impact their practice.



Joan, a community health worker, has explained to Maria, a diabetic immigrant from San Salvador, how to administer an insulin shot by getting her to practise with an orange. She sent her home with an information sheet. A week later Joan discovers that Maria is in the hospital, very ill because of a diabetic attack. She has been progressing nicely in the hospital with the help of insulin shots. After visiting Maria and discovering that she administered insulin exactly as instructed, (she injected the orange and then ate the orange instead of injecting herself), Joan recognizes that Maria's second language and literacy skills impede her ability to help Maria. How can a Literacy Specialist help Joan, who has limited time and resources, change her practice to assist Maria? (Based on an actual incident.)

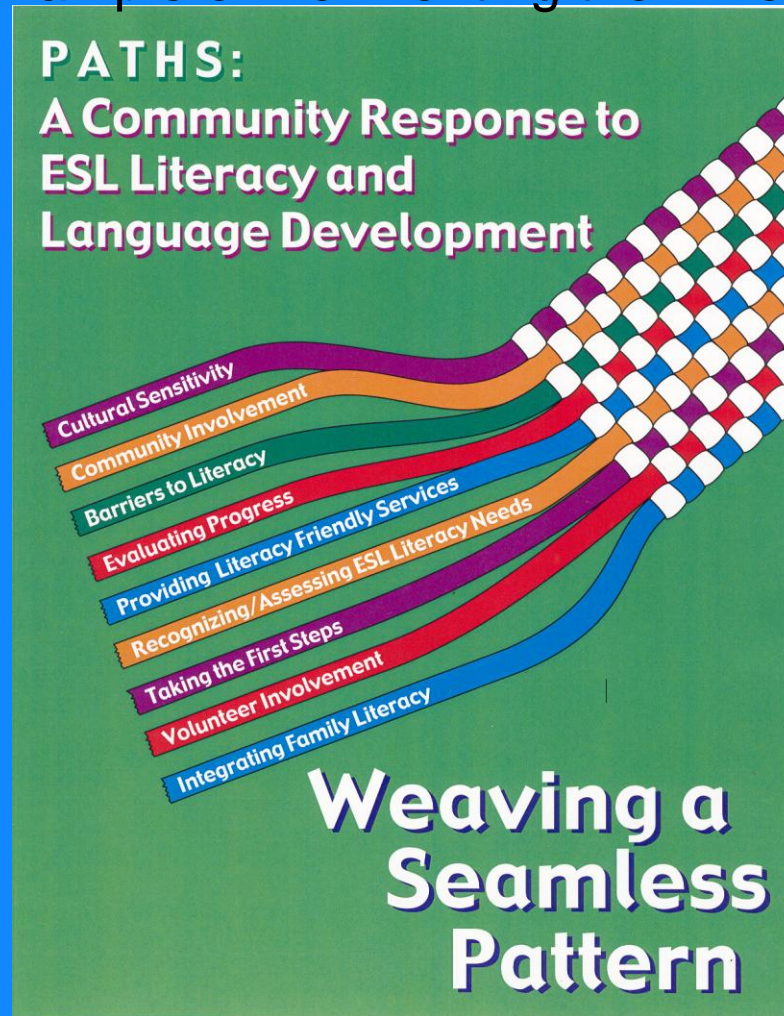


# Issues for Literacy Specialists:

1. Specialization within the health field.
2. On-going funding to support the work.
3. Creation of a promotional strategy for the services we provide.
4. Busy practitioners.
5. Reinventing of the wheel.



# Example of Reinventing the Wheel



- PATHS- A Community Response to ESL Literacy and Language Development

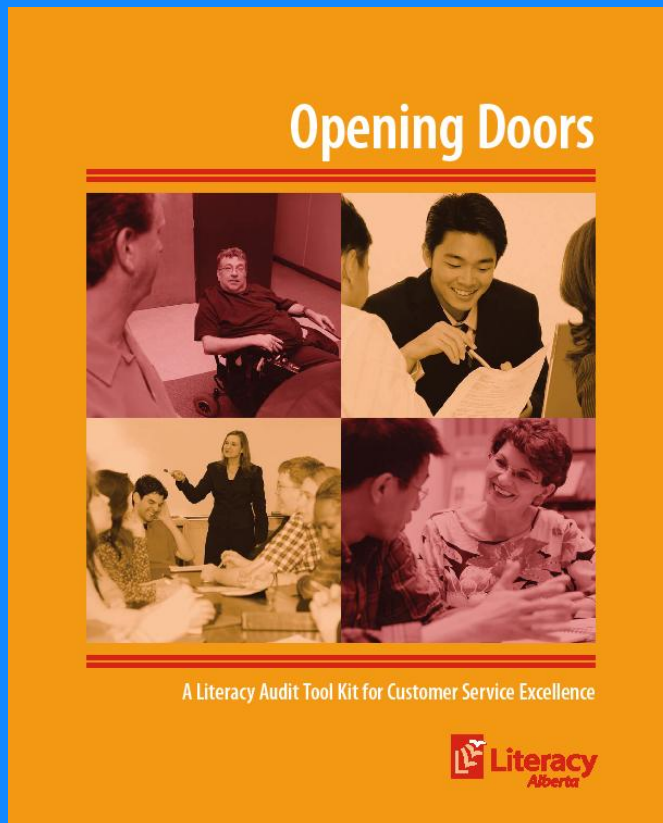


Example of Building on Past Success - Third or fourth Revision of the Audit to meet current needs

# Opening Doors: A Literacy Audit Tool Kit for Customer Service Excellence

What is in the manual?

1. Introduction
2. Facilitating the Audit
3. Literacy Audit Tool
4. Raising Literacy Awareness
5. Action Planning Templates
6. Plain Language Guide (verbal and written plain language)





# Literacy Audit:

## Audience:

- 🍁 Community and public service agencies
- 🍁 Social service agencies
- 🍁 Businesses
- 🍁 Government
- 🍁 Anyone who works with the general public

## Purposes:

- 🍁 Reaffirm the practices you already do well as an organization
- 🍁 Help you understand Canadian adults' struggles with literacy in their daily lives
- 🍁 Give suggestions for ways to improve customer service to the general public
- 🍁 Help you write and speak in plain or clear language





# Key Questions for Discussion:

1. Changing Approaches- How do we impact systematic change when working at a grassroots level? How do we attract middle and upper management to the discussion?
2. Overcoming Resistance- What do we do when the literacy statistics we present are challenged or healthcare workers indicate they are too busy to address the literacy challenges of their clients?.



3. Specialization-How do we as Literacy Specialists work within a field that is so specialized and understand how we can be of assistance?

4. How do we build partnerships across sectors?





# For More Information

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