Literacy across the curriculum

including **Media FOCUS** THE CENTRE FOR LITERACY

Connecting literacy in the schools, community and workplace

Health & literacy

A nurse at a Montreal hospital working on a longitudinal study of premature babies recalls filling out an information form with a teenage mother. When the nurse asked what brand of formula the baby was taking, the young woman replied, "Teddy Bear formula." The nurse was bemused. There is no such brand. When questioned further, the mother, in a rather agitated voice, said, "You know, you know the one with the teddy bear on the label!" The nurse realized at that point that the 15-year-old could not read. After years of problems in school, the girl had dropped out without having learned to read.

An article in the fall 1994 issue of *Daedalus* entitled "The Determinants of Health from a Historical Perspective" traced the strong correlation between health and wealth over the last 1000 years. Those of higher economic status and privilege who
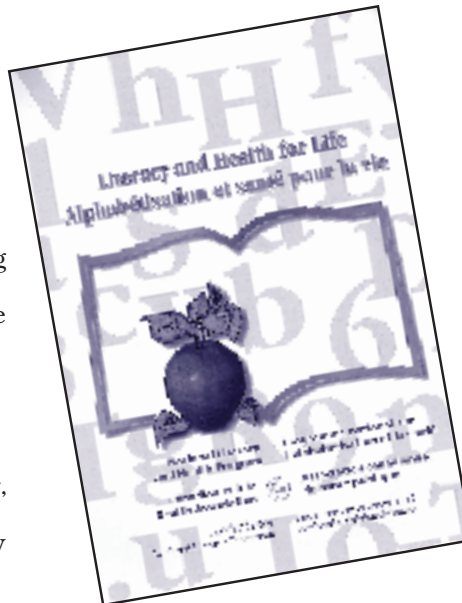
perceived themselves to have greater self-control over destiny were consistently healthier.

Only recently has awareness grown that literacy is one of those factors of privilege which affects health. In the U.K., cohort population studies have been tracking these connections for several decades. In June of 1995, World Education, in conjunction with other American organizations, gathered 300

people at Tufts University in Boston for the first conference ever held on the topic. Among health care professionals in Canada, the link between literacy and health is being highlighted by a national awareness program from the Canadian Public Health Association [see BOX 1]

Sensitizing the professional

The campaign is sensitizing health professionals to be aware that an inability to understand, read or write the two official languages can interfere with
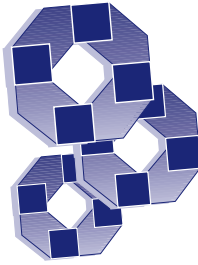
INSIDE

The Centre for Literacy   Montreal, Quebec

Literacy for the 21st century
Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. In a technological society, the concept of literacy is expanding to include the media and electronic text, in addition to alphabetic and number systems. These abilities vary in different social and cultural contexts according to need and demand. Individuals must be given life-long learning opportunities to move along a continuum that includes the reading and writing, critical understanding, and decision-making abilities they need in their community.

patients explaining their needs, understanding their diagnoses, following instructions after hospital visits or stays, and taking medications correctly. They suggest concrete actions — writing in plain language, checking the physical setting for signs and information, using alternative means of communication — video, images— and talking to make sure patients understand.

Seniors, health and communication

There is evidence that seniors may have more difficulties than other groups because the level of education among older Canadians is lower, and because many seniors came from other countries and speak a mother-tongue other than English or French. In addition, seniors often have other health problems, such as hearing or sight impairment, which interfere further with the ability to hear or read. (See Resources p.14)
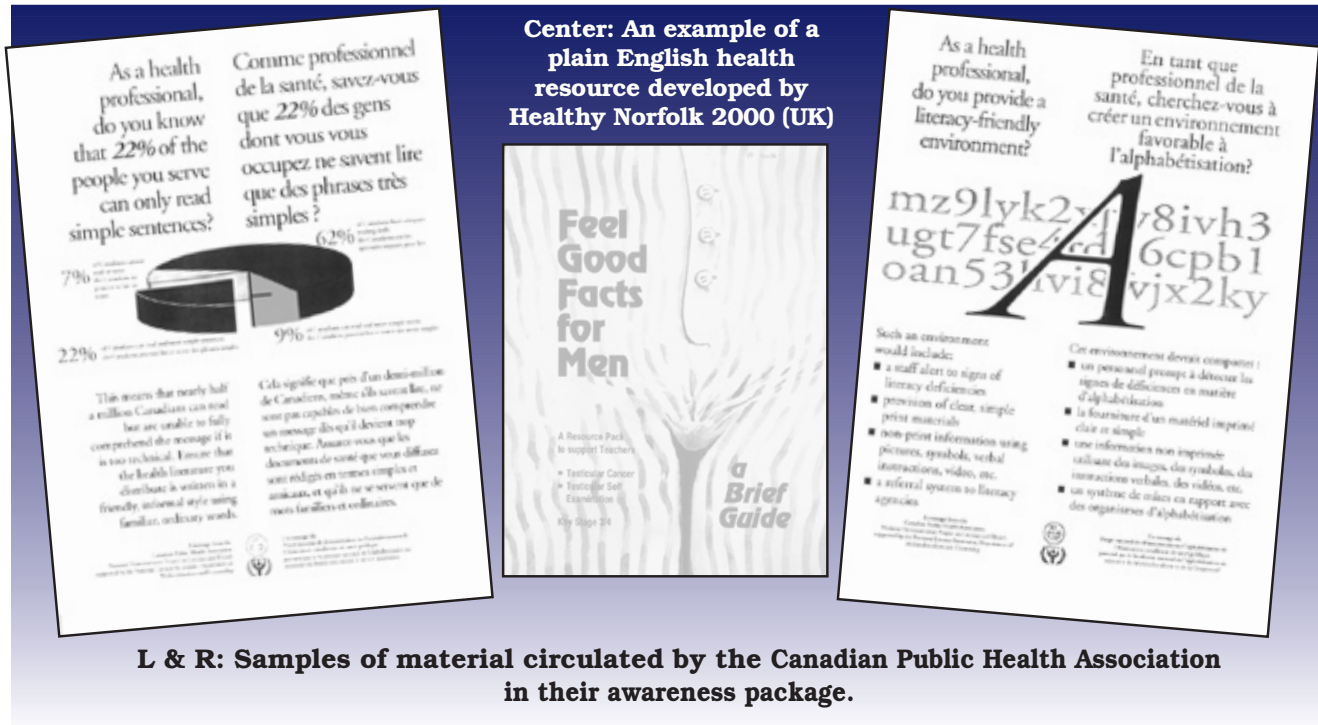
The Centre for Literacy, using Health and Literacy as one of its themes for 1995, initiated a local project in Montreal to discover how communications helps or hinders seniors in accessing services from a hospital. Two other organizations, a seniors agency and a large urban hospital, collaborated, fitting this issue into broader agendas of their own. The Centre for Literacy conducted and taped a series of focus groups with seniors and is analysing the transcripts.

The seniors organization is interested in improving seniors' access to quality health care. If

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BOX 1

History of health and literacy initiatives by the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA)

- Following national surveys in the late 1980s which identified 38% of adult Canadians as having some problems in reading and writing, the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) completed the first phase of a project which documented the relationship between literacy and health.

- Also in the late 1980's, national health associations began to express their concerns about the readability of health information for Canadians with low literacy.

- In 1992, the Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA), with suppport from the National Literacy Secretariat, began a Demonstration Project on Literacy and Health to raise awareness among health professionals about the link between poor health and poor reading skills.

- Ten national health associations were invited to participate. Over 100,000 health professionals across Canada received information.

- In July 1993, CPHA approached NLS with a proposal to build long-term, self-sustaining commitments to the literacy agenda among its national partners and extend the partnership to twenty national health associations.

- In January 1994, the National Literacy and Health Program began

- By March 1995, 20 national organizations were involved.

Center: An example of a plain English health resource developed by Healthy Norfolk 2000 (UK)

L & R: Samples of material circulated by the Canadian Public Health Association in their awareness package.

the project turns up evidence of need, the organization will consider designing appropriate programs for their clients, i.e. providing information, helping clients communicate their health needs more effectively.

Strengths & weaknesses
The hospital has been conducting research into its services with the intention of identifying strengths and weaknesses. It hopes to use the data to highlight the positive and to make recommendations for possible change in particular areas where problems are identified. This project will add data to the information pool and could be used as the basis for sensitization and staff development.

Outcomes will be published later this fall in a report and shared at an open forum in early November The Centre has also produced an annotated bibliography on health and literacy, expanding on one that was circulated at the Tufts conference in June.

Although health costs related to literacy have never been calculated, they are probably far larger than most people believe. In a society that is examining health care costs and looking for ways to reduce expenses without cutting service, this is unexplored territory. [LS]

Health & literacy:
How do they connect?
A panel

Date: Thursday, November 9, 1995
Time: 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Panelists:

Deborah Gordon, Canadian Public Health Association, Ottawa

Margaret LeBrun, The Golden Age Association

Linda Shohet, The Centre for Literacy

R.S.V.P. 931-8731, local 1415 by Tuesday, November 7

1 On talking machines

The lack of electronic communication among appliances results in, among other things, very primitive and peculiar interfaces in each. For example, as speech becomes the dominant mode of interaction between people and machines, small accessories will also need to talk and listen. However, each one of them cannot be expected to have the full means of producing and understanding spoken language. They must communicate and share such resources.

A centralist model for such sharing is tempting, and some people have suggested information "furnaces" in our basements — a central computer in the home that manages all input and output. I suspect it will not go that way, and the function will be much more distributed among a network of appliances, including one that is a champion at speech recognition and production. If both your refrigerator and your cupboard keep track of your food by reading universal product codes, only one of them needs to know how to interpret them.

Nicholas Negroponte, *Being Digital*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York 1995, p. 214.

2 On guidelines and intuition

Guidelines, however, are two-edged: they can help or they can hinder, encourage or discourage a student. They must be well thought out yet open-ended, for if they are too logically organized they stifle intuition, the faculty we most need for comprehending grand abstracts truths.

Grace Knoche, "Prefatory Note," *An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine*, by H.P. Blavatsky, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena, CA, 1988, p.vi.

3 On browsing the Internet

Shopping by modem? Hey - sounds convenient and efficient.   Online catalogs, complete with color images, will let me browse from my computer. I can negotiate directly with merchants rather than driving into town.

I'd expect the fast interactions and wide customer base of networks to provide a perfect place to sell goods, especially software, computers, and high-tech toys.
....
About the only business actually making money over the Internet is the Electronic Newsstand. You can get excerpts from several hundred magazines and, for a few dollars a month, subscribe to a magazine, to be delivered over the net.

Yet even they don't sell many subscriptions: fewer than a dozen per day. Some magazines simply get no subscribers.

Other merchants aren't having such an easy time either - The Economist reports that most generate one or two sales per day.

Counting all online businesses, that's around twenty-five thousand dollars in sales every day. My neighborhood Safeway does more business in an afternoon.

Why so little business over the network?

Shopping over the net denies us the experience of visiting the business. There's a bookstore in Dundas, Ontario, in an old house with a water garden in the front and three resident felines. Like all real bookstores, you can browse for free and the staff won't complain. This store's atmosphere isnt available over the Internet.

Clifford Stoll, *Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway*, Doubleday, New York,1995, p.18.

Positioning Literacy – the U.K. experience

In March of 1995, the National Literacy Secretariat, with support from the British Council, sent four Canadians to the U.K. to visit sites and bring back an overview of current practice in literacy and basic skills. Linda Shohet was one of the visitors. In the last issue of *LAC*, she reported on some of the meetings. The reports in this issue were follow-ups to the March tour. A report of the NLS tour is now available from the Secretariat.

Investing in People

It was only after two managers and a union steward had mentioned that their companies were "investors in people," that I realized this was something more than a British catch-phrase.

Shortly after that, I saw an enormous billboard beside the British rail tracks just outside London with a picture of Sir John Harvey Jones, tv guru and commentator on business and training, proclaiming "I wouldn't invest in a company that didn't invest in people." At the bottom of the billboard was the title **Investors in People,** their logo and the name of the London training and enterprise council (Kilntec) sponsoring the ad.

What is Investors in People?
It is a brilliant concept for convincing employers of their responsibility and self-interest in investing in and sustaining a trained workforce. It integrates human resource development with long-term business planning as part of a national strategy to retrain the British workforce. Investors has developed four key principles [see BOX , p. 6] and 24 indicators as the basis of its standard. Organizations wishing to be recognized must undertake a formal assessment process, commit themselves to action on
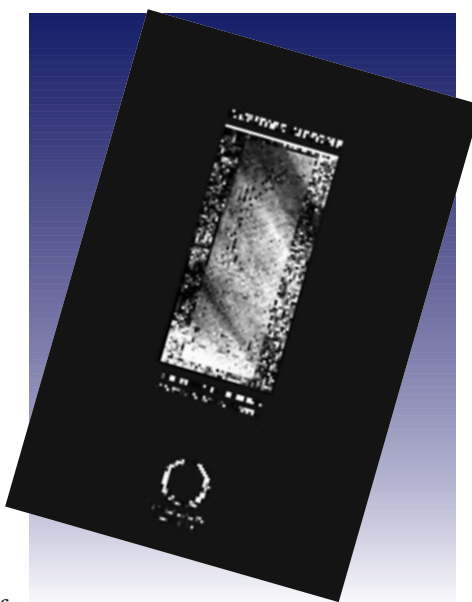
the findings and be reassessed at three-year intervals to maintain their recognition. Investors in People has developed a detailed set of guidelines and trained assessors across the UK to support organizations.

Project manager Sarah Pearce says that, as of summer 1995 after only four years in existence, 1800 organizations have been awarded an Investors standard. Another 16,000 have made a written commitment to engage in the asssessment process. This is a formidable achievement touching a significant proportion of the British workforce.

Chairman of the board Sir Brian Wolfson calls it is a win-win-win formula. Employers, employees and the economy all benefit from what seems on the surface a common-sense approach to training. But its simplicity is deceptive. Sir Brian talks about the political support required for a scheme like this to be effective. As a former member of a national taskforce on training in 1989, Sir Brian was one of the architects of **Investors in People** which was originally funded by the

Becoming an Investor in People

The key steps:
- understanding the Standard and its strategic implications for your organization and its plans
- diagnosing the gaps between current practice and the requirements of the Standard
- making the commitment to meet the Standard, and communicating that commitment

- planning and taking action, to bring about change
- bringing together the evidence for assessment against the Standard
- assessment
- recognition as an Investor in People
- working to keep the culture of continuous improvement alive

Positioning Literacy – the U.K. experience

Department of Employment; a good relationship with members of all parties helped smooth the way for the non-partisan support it currently enjoys.

Since last year, Investors has been privatized, although most of its funding still comes through the Department of Employment. Its board members of employers and educators are intended to represent the quality of commitment and practice that Investors promotes.

How this relate to basic skills

Investors in People connects indirectly to basic skills, in part by making a commitment to all employees; those at the bottom are automatically included without being stigmatized in any way. It also insists that all employee groups, unionized or not, be involved in the process. These features excite people like Frances Graham at WORKBASE (p.8).

The standard is also connected to other standards such as national vocational qualifications (NVQs) creating links wherever possible, so investors can achieve several goals simultaneously.

Tom Farmer, an IIP board member and CEO of Kwik-Fit, a company of 600 muffler shops with 5500 employees, analogous to Mr. Muffler, chuckles when he talks about the IIP assessment at Kwik-Fit. He says, "We thought we were pretty good [at training]" and expected that the assessment

The Investors in People Standard — Four key principles

1. An Investor in People makes a public commitment from the top to develop all employees to achieve its business objectives.

- Every employee should have a written but flexible plan which sets out business goals and targets, considers how employees will contribute to achieving the plan and specifies how development needs in particular will be assessed and met.

- Management should develop and communicate to all employees a vision of where the organization is going and the contribution employees will make to its success, involving employee representatives as appropriate.

2. An Investor in People regularly reviews the training and development needs of all employees.

- The resources for training and developing employees should be clearly identified in the business plan.

- Managers should be responsible for regularly agreeing training and development needs with each employee in the context of business objectives. Targets should be set and national standards should be linked, where appropriate ...

3. An Investor in People takes action to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout their employment.

- Action should focus on the training needs of all new recruits and on continuously developing and improving the skills of existing employees.

- All employees should be encouraged to contribute to identifying and meeting their own job-related development needs.

4. An Investor in People evaluates the investment in training and development to assess achievement and improve future effectiveness.

- The investment, the competence and commitment of employees, and the use made of skills learned should be reviewed at all levels against business goals and targets.

- The effectiveness of training and development should be reviewed at the top level and lead to renewed commitment and target setting.

The four key principles are divided into 24 indicators and it is against these that organizations produce evidence for assessment.

Positioning Literacy – the U.K. experience

would simply validate the company perception. They were rather shocked when it identified gaps and needs, including the fact that a number of employees did not clearly understand either the company or their role in it. Mr. Farmer notes that although the IIP standards focus on work-related goals, Kwik-Fit also provides opportunities for personal development which benefits the company as much as the employee.

Entreprises of every size and structure are included. The largest is Boots Chemists with 54,000 employees; the smallest, a plumbing firm of 7. If organizations are too small to do it alone, the local training and enterprise councils form consortia of similar employers. Schools and colleges are among the organizations awarded and seeking IIP accreditation, another aspect which makes the concept unique.

In 1995, Investors has begun pilot-projects in Australia and the Netherlands. They believe the concept is exportable and adaptable; however, wanting to maintain control of the quality standards and accredition process, they have copyrighted the idea and the indicators. Any country wanting to pilot the concept must work with Investors in People UK plc. [LS]
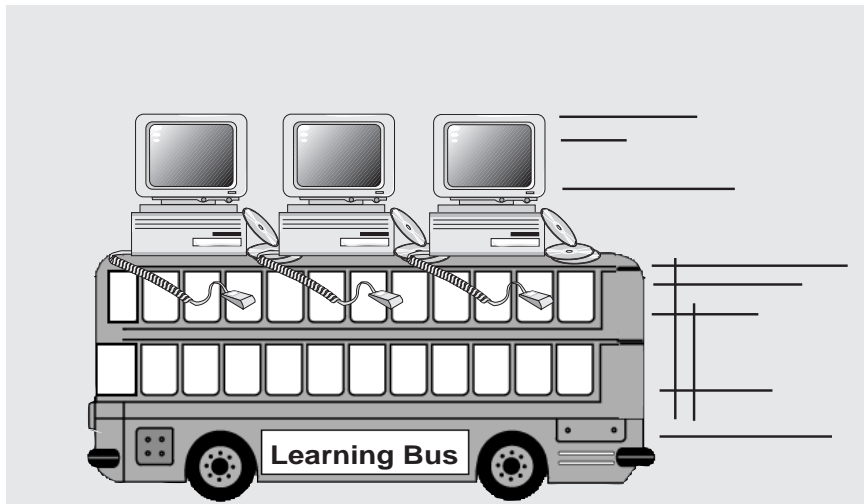
Open learning bus

A novel way of taking technology to the people, a community education group in Lewisham has outfitted a double-decker bus with 15 computers. Four tutors travel to estates (housing developments) primarily visiting women who want to learn. There are no formal classes; learners walk on and off as they wish.

The dangers of literacy

Tara MacArthur runs a storefront literacy centre in an alternative bookstore in Deptford, a deprived area of South London. The bookstore funds part of the operation. Visiting Canada this summer on a Churchill Fellowship, Tara talked about the skinheads who have been visiting the store regularly whenever a new shipment of anti-racist books arrives.

They have not threatened anyone (their presence is enough); they simply take the books off the shelf and buy them. But, a few months ago, Scotland Yard informed the store that the centre's name was found on a list kept by one of the local skinhead groups and they were advised to install alarms and take a series of precautions to protect themselves from possible attack, especially firebombs.

Tara's colleague has become ill from the stress, and Tara herself wonders how long she can sustain the pressure. This is a far remove from the stresses of literacy work most of us know in Canada.

Positioning Literacy – the U.K. experience

Since shortly after arriving in England from South Africa, Frances Graham, the exuberant Executive-Director of Workbase Training, has devoted herself to creating a model of workforce education. Workbase, a national, not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to the training and development of non-managerial employees.

Originally funded by ALBSU for 10 years of development, Workbase has been on its own since 1990. Supported by the Confederation of British Industry, the Local Government Management Board, the Trades Union Congress and other unions, Workbase Training funds itself through British and European Community grants and through direct contract work with employers. Since 1980, they have worked with over 20,000 people in more than 100 organizations.

Graham points with pride to National and Regional Training awards and to the Investors in People (IIP) Standard which they gained in 1994. Formally accredited as trainers for IIP, Workbase now works with other clients to enable them to attain this standard. As in North America, less is spent on training non-managerial workers in the U.K. than on any other group. Graham is a strong supporter of Investors in People because it is the only scheme she has ever come across that includes all workers, from basic skills level up to CEO, in its training plan.

Workbase Training Mission
- To provide exemplars, standards and available expertise to support employers and other organizations.
- To raise national awareness of the widespread problems caused by communication skills difficulties in workplaces.
- To promote a partnership approach for the development of employees.

Workbase Training Philosophy
- Working in partnership with management, trades unions and external bodies such as TEC's (Training and Entreprise Councils), and colleges.
- Customizing the approach to provide exactly what any organization and its individual employees need.
- Promoting the idea that every individual worker, no matter what job they do, has a basic right to training and development to improve their confidence at work, their skill levels and their ability to progress within the organization.

Workbase Training provides:
- a consultancy service to provide strategic advice and guidance on communications skills at work.
- an Investor in People consultancy service to provide support to organizations seeking to achieve the Investor in People Standard.
- a research and training needs analysis service to identify, measure and evaluate communication skills needs within an organization or area.
- a training service to meet the needs of employees. All training takes place on the organization's premises, at the most appropriate time and place, to fit in with shift patterns and the location of individuals.
- a support service for managers, supervisors and others to ensure that improvements in the basic skills of the workforce bring real and lasting benefits.

Open learning centres/customization

Workbase has pioneered a flexible and open access approach to reduce barriers to learning such as shift work or problems of releasing staff. They have also developed the WORKBASE TOOLKIT designed for managers and human resources staff to introduce a strategy for staff training and development.

Proposal writing and materials development have taken so much of Graham's and her staff's time that they have not published their materials for a larger market. But the care and research accorded to each client is apparent from flipping through the customized binders in their resource room. Aeronautics is the focus of a binder prepared for one client in the aerospace industry; kosher food preparation is at the core of another designed for a Jewish care facility. All the materials can lead to accreditation for workers who want or need it.

Positioning Literacy – the U.K. experience

The New Reading Disc

A highlight of my spring visit to the U.K. was finding *The New Reading Disc*, the most exciting piece of adult literacy software I have seen developed anywhere. Cambridge Training and Development advertises it as "a multimedia training resource for language and literacy designed to help adults learn to read through writing." Its most outstanding feature is the respect it accords teachers and students.

It works from the premise that beginning readers are not beginning thinkers, that people with reading difficulties are often expert language users when they are talking or listening, but have a specific problem with written language.

Developed in the UK with funding from the UK Employment Department, the original *Reading Disc* won the Award for Best Educational CD at the 1991 European Multimedia Event. *The New Reading Disc* has added new features including the power to customize the content to individual needs.

The Disc allows learners to create their own text by selecting words and sentences (with the support of audio) and to choose subjects of interest (with the support of pictures and video). They can print their work and practice reading the piece they have created.

The disc has three sets of activities and exercises. Learners can create arguments, write articles or letters. The exercises can be used on the computer or printed out and used as worksheets. Built on the database of words and sentences already in the the system, the generic exercises include sentence completion, cloze procedure, dictation, map reading, alphabetic sorting and comprehension.

Highlight: the Author

For anyone outside the U.K., perhaps the most pertinent feature of *The New Reading Disc* is the author tool that allows teachers to customize material to their own place and situation by adding new sections, exercises, sound, pictures and video on any subject.

North American debut

This summer the disc was introduced in North America. In June, Martin Good, one of the developers, attended the Summer Institute on Literacy Learning and New Technology at The Centre in Montreal. The reaction was spontaneous and overwhelming. Participants were smitten by the possibilities of this software. In August, Martin elicited a similar response at the Adult Literacy and Technology conference in Philadelphia. To a field hungry for thoughtful teaching materials, this disc epitomized the best of what technology might offer. However, as Martin kept reminding listeners, it is finally not the technology or the software, but still the teacher who determines how learning happens.

Now it's for the field to respond. [LS]

Seeking Canadian Test-sites for *The New Reading Disc*
A multi-media resource for language and literacy

The Centre for Literacy is coordinating a Canadian evaluation of *The New Reading Disc*. We are looking for test sites across Canada, about three per province/territory— in community-based literacy programs, in formal programs, in community college developmental programs and in workplace upgrading programs.

What we want to know
- Can instructors effectively integrate a resource like *The New Reading Disc* into their teaching environment?
- How do teachers and learners at various levels and in various learning environments respond to the disc?
- Is there interest in training Canadian teachers/trainers to use the Author tool to create culturally appropriate materials for various regions and settings?

Testers will complete a 3-4 page evaluation form.

For information on requirements to become a test site, call **514-931-8731, local 1415.**


Computer Technology Survey of Ontario Adult Literacy Programs

Background

Following the January 1995 policy conversation on new technology hosted by the National Literacy Secretariat and The Centre for Literacy in Montreal, the three Ontario participants realized that they did not know the current status of computer technology in Ontario programs.

To begin provincial planning and to respond to federal initiatives, the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board's (OTAB), Literacy Section decided to gather reliable information from the field on the extent to which computers are presently used, as well as on possible future uses of technology. First, many key issues were identified through an electronic focus group called 'newtech' on AlphaCom which took place over a three-week period before the Montreal meetings (see *LAC* Winter 1995, p. 4). Second, in June and July of 1995, a computer technology survey was sent to all French and English literacy programs in Ontario.

The final report of this survey will be available in early October. Preliminary survey results are presented below, as summarized by Mike Kelly of Ottawa, based on responses from 137 English literacy programs. Data from Francophone literacy organizations is currently being compiled. The final report expects to include data on an additional 60 organizations.
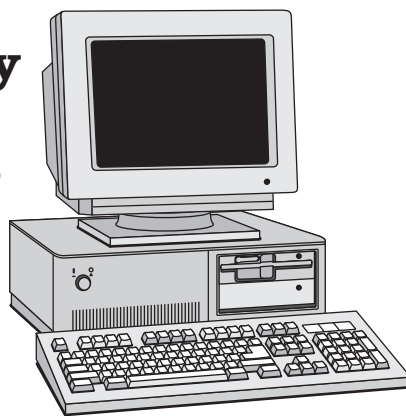
The major findings indicate that technology is used widely in literacy programs in Ontario and that there is both willingness to learn new technologies as well as a need for more resources.

Preliminary highlights

- **Obstacles inhibiting the expansion of computer technology use**

  Lack of financial support to purchase computers is seen as the strongest and most common obstacle followed by lack of time for staff to learn how to use computers. Respondents did not think that staff/instructor resistance to using computers was a significant obstacle.

Advantages to use of computers include:

- providing greater incentives for learners
- allowing learners to move at their own pace
- increasing learner control over the learning experience
- providing students with non-threatening feedback

Extent of student access to computer technology

- 37% offer one or fewer hours of computer-based instruction per week.
- 50% offer between one and five hours.
- 8% offer between five and 10 hours.
- 5% offer more than 10 hours.

Use of electronic communications for staff and students.

- 74% of respondents use AlphaCom (CoSy) for mail and electronic conferencing.
- 13% connect electronically to Alpha Ontario.
- 12% are connected to the Internet.
- 5 % use Telnet.
- 5 % use Gopher.
- 5 % use the World Wide Web.
- 2% connect to NALD.

Future development

The most important future computer technology development for the field of literacy was relevant software.

A copy of the final report will be available in early October from The Literacy Section, Employment Preparation Branch, OTAB, 625 Church Street, 3rd floor, Toronto, On, M4Y 2E8,

Attention Nafees Sayeed, Tel: (416) 326-5474 Fax: (416) 326-5505.

DAVID BUCKINGHAM ON MEDIA LITERACY

As the body of research into media education grows, it takes on fascinating dimensions which have already altered perceptions of communication, information and learning. David Buckingham of the Institute of Education, London, England has been an important influence in media education and curriculum development. In Montreal in 1994, the author interviewed him for her graduate research. What follows are some of Buckingham's thoughts on media education as expressed in that interview.

Media and its place in the curriculum

When most elementary and secondary schools began addressing media education, the English curriculum seemed the appropriate place to situate it. However, as the discussion evolves, new questions arise. When asked to comment, Buckingham prefers to discuss a revised version of English which would negate both the current notion of literacy as well as distinctions between books, print and other media. He stresses that the impact of the new technologies makes that notion of media studies quite arcane and argues for a subject at the core of the curriculum concerned with literacy and culture in their broadest sense.

While the English curriculum in Canada has traditionally upheld established canons, British experience seems to differ. Buckingham describes a system where a number of different versions of English co-exist, and individual teachers incorporate these versions in their practice in contention or harmony. He identifies two distinct versions of English; the first, progressive—a kind of personal growth version from the 60s. The second—more typical of the 70s—a somewhat radical notion of English as empowering working class people by giving them radical knowledge. The two versions deal with both skills and cultural heritage. Buckongham prefers to see them as *continuities,* because, for him, the cultural heritage version underlies both so that even the self-professed radical teacher will often have the same suspicion of media as the more progressive teacher, albeit for different reasons.

The discussion, he says, ought to consider what English and media education do effectively and where they fall short. For Buckingham, English does not have a problem with production, but media education does. In English, there is "space" built into the program for students to write and to talk about subjective investments; here, feeling and pleasure have a place, whereas in media, providing space to produce is often problematic.

English, however, does not allow for a reflective mood. It is about reading and writing, not about asking students to reflect on these processes as they engage in them. That, to Buckingham, is the crux of media education for it actually asks students to revel in that moment of stepping back and reflecting on what

they have produced. Media education attempts to draw on the model of learning that asks students to link practice and theory and to see things in social terms. English tends to work with individualistic notions of reading and writing—reading is personal response and writing is personal expression.

Why talk about literacy?

Buckingham is enthusiastic about the possibility of expanding media education and English together. That must involve developing both a critique and a theoretical base of English, as well as some reflection on the limitations of media education. For him, this ongoing argument brings the discussion to the topic of literacy which is, in fact, the discussion he prefers to be having because English is so centrally concerned with big issues related to language and culture.

To talk about English as something separate and on its own, Buckhingham said, is not only an impoverished kind of argument but is also out of step with the experiences of young people. Pointing to a growing body of work on literacy that says we need to see it in social terms, he cites Shirley Brice Heath and Brian Street and refers to the traditional

Literacy for the 21st century
Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. In a technological society, the concept of literacy is expanding to include the media and electronic text, in addition to alphabetic and number systems. These abilities vary in different social and cultural contexts according to need and demand. Individuals must be given life-long learning opportunities to move along a continuum that includes the reading and writing, critical understanding, and decision-making abilities they need in their community.

psychological research on tv literacy which looks at how kids understand the meaning of formal features of television. The problem he sees here is that it abstracts questions about meaning and presents a "bottom-up notion about literacy" which suggests that you acquire basic skills and from that, construct meaning. He likens this to a "kind of phonics approach to tv literacy."

Redefining media literacy
Although Buckingham considers the term"media literacy" problematic, he goes on using it because it is polemical. It makes a claim that some-thing high status, namely literacy, should be associ-ated with something low status, namely media. The term also assures that discussion of media edu-cation will reach English teachers which is critical since this discussion is really about revising notions of how we teach about culture or literacy.

The term also focuses attention on what students know and what they bring rather than on what they should be taught. However, Buckingham is quick to warn about practical and theoretical problems in extending notions of literacy from print to media. He cautions against locating media on the level of basic skills, stressing that very different skills are required for decoding print as opposed to decoding tv. Most youngsters, he says, know how to decode tv by the age of three, whereas many will have great difficulty in decoding print.

The role of the teacher
The British experience over the last ten years has been on institutionalizing media education. As a result of successful lobbying, it has gotten *in there* in the curriculum. Buckingham sees this as a victory, however fears that it can lead to a kind of compla-cency. For him, having media education in curriculum documents is no good whatsoever unless there is training and support for teachers. One of the problems he sees is that many are nearly or totally illiterate in the area of computers and new technologies.

He points also to the reluctance of some teachers to bring computers and the media into the classroom as study objects because they are objects with which the students are more familiar than their teachers are. That, he says, poses problems in terms of the teacher's role. The English literature class is largely an enterprise about teachers giving students access to something presumed to be difficult; almost anything teachers do with literature is assumed to be valid. That, he goes on, seems not to be the case with media because it is assumed to be so familiar. However, Buckingham would argue that there are some texts in media that students do find difficult and he would want to find a place for these in the curriculum.

This may well be a power issue, and Buckingham is not comfortable with the assumption that, when it comes to the media, students are the experts and what we need to do is to reverse the power relations in the classroom. This, he feels, is not now, and never will be, a realistic portrait of the classroom. Further, he notes, even teachers who are not experts in the media can ask questions and set up activities for their students that *will* make a difference to how they read the texts. He is careful not to suggest that he is identifying the teacher as the fount of knowledge; however nor does he want to reinforce the assumption that all students are experts at the same thing.

What is so inspiring about Buckingham's work is that he continues to question and debate issues. Perhaps because he favours a kind of evolution of ideas, he argues that theory can be built by teachers from the bottom up and the accepted version of what media education is needs to be constantly revised in light of people's experiences rather than as a set of stone tablets. [J.B.]

Buckingham's analogy
Higher order skills - a potential transfer between the competencies children develop through watching tv and those they develop in terms of print.

The higher order skills of tv literacy relate to how children
• learn to make sense of narratives;
• make judgements about the relation between tv and reality;
• categorize the range of texts they come across;
• and hypothese about motivations of producers.

Spain 1995: International Conference on media education
A report and personal reflections

By Winston G. Emery

The fourth International Conference on the Pedagogics of Representation, held from July 3 - 8, 1995, at the Universidade Da Coruna, Spain, was a conference of media educators and professionals, mostly from Spanish-speaking countries, organized by the Nova Escola Galega and the Escola de Imaxe e Son de Galicia. Each year this group meets for almost a week. This year, a series of meetings of media educ-ators from around the world was organized by Jose Maria Aguilera Carrasco (Galicia), Roberto Aparici (Spain) and Robyn Quin (Australia) to run concurrent with the conference. The meetings allowed media educators from over twenty countries to focus on issues of media education research, pedagogy, curriculum and best practice.

I was impressed with the wealth of information and expertise available in media education. Confer-ences such as this give media educators valuable opportunities to contact their world colleagues. I have begun to understand how others proceed in media education outside of the Anglo-American context, and I now

The Mayor's Palace at Da Coruna University in Spain was one of the many sites where conference receptions were held.

understand more of the historical context and current social influences on media education in Europe, South and Central America.

From the contributions of my Central and South American colleagues, I was intrigued by the extent to which media education is located in popular, adult education. I sensed, too, the power of ideology as a vital concept used to help people develop their critical abilities in order to effect political change. I found this to be a refreshing difference from the Anglo-American mode in which being critical seems much more of an academic pursuit than a socially committed one.

It is also my impression that there is a need for media education to develop a larger body of research to inform and generate appropriate educational practice, and ascertain its richness. An interesting example of this type of research is the Models of

The purposes of the conference were to:

- develop teachers' awareness of the need to include media education and the use of audiovisual technology into the curriculum.

- contribute to teacher training in media education and the uses of audiovisual media in education.

- provide opportunities for media educators from different countries to present and share their experiences in media education and the use of audiovisual technology.

- showcase professional-,teacher-, and student-produced audiovisual projects created for teaching purposes or as a result of particular teaching methodologies.

- present state-of-the-art technology in audiovisual teaching.

The world meetings provided a much-needed view of the state of media education around the world. Common concerns included:

- where to locate media education;
- the role of the media professional in media education;
- the basic elements of media education;
- and the need for better and systematic research to inform theory and practice.

Winston Emery (third row, third from left) and his workshop.

International Conference logo

Media Education project directed by Andrew Hart. The project, which began in the region surrounding Southhampton, England, addressed the questions of how English teachers in the UK taught media, the media's relative merit as a study in its own right, theories that informed their practices, their own teaching goals and methods. The researchers used the methodologies of the structured interview with teachers and systematic observation of classroom teaching.

More such empirical studies are necessary if we are to understand the "state-of-the-art" of media teaching and find direction. Also needed are in-depth investigations of how teachers' attitudes, values and life experiences influence their pedagogy. Bob Morgan of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education provided us with a model approach to such research. Adequate theoretical frameworks need to be developed in order to evaluate media education approaches and curricula. Jose Martinez provided an interesting example of "paper research" as he developed a set of descriptors of teaching methodologies used in media education classrooms.

Like many participants, I felt a need to maintain and develop the contact with media educators that was established there. At the world meetings, the assembled group attempted to find ways to establish an international network of media educators. Several participants volunteered to investigate the possibility of an e-mail network for communication; other possibilities include a clearinghouse for information on media education and research, a vehicle of publication, and future conferences.

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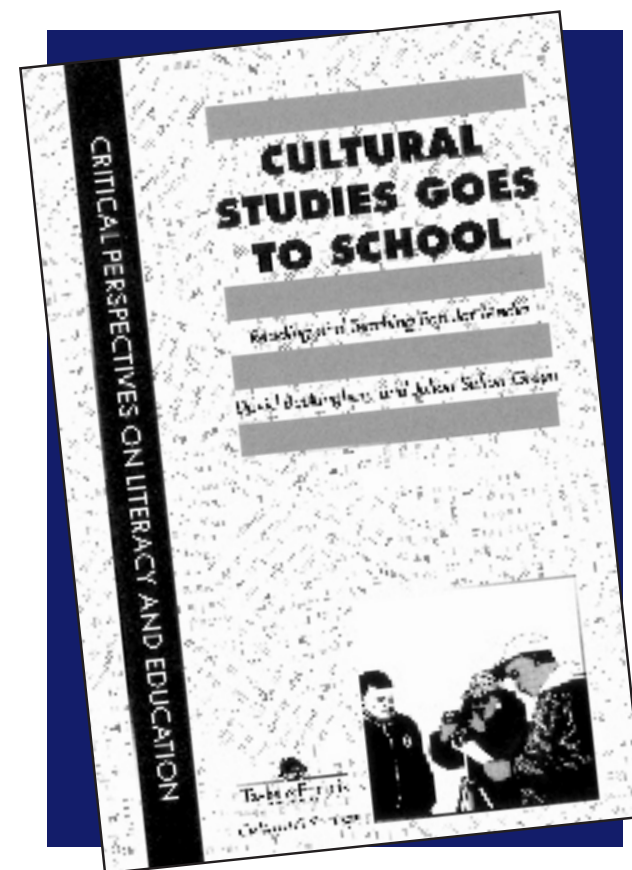
Reviews
Cultural Studies Goes to School

By David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green . Taylor and Francis. (London, England, 1995) 217 pp.
reviewed by Winston G. Emery

"Ultimately what lies at the heart of our investigation is a deep skepticism about the role of academic theory, and its claim to serve as the privileged means of social change. Academics in Cultural Studies have often been keen to carve out dramatic political roles for them-selves — yet they have rarely shown more than a token interest in the processes by which their students might learn theory, or make sense of it in terms of their own lived experiences." (p. 208)

Cultural Studies Goes to School is an attempt by its authors to assume a Cultural Studies stance while avoiding its excessive "theoreticism" by considering the relationships between theories and lived experiences with regard both to the students they taught and to themselves as teachers.

With, at times, their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks, and, assuming the critical stance that a media education is supposed to engender, Buckingham and Sefton-Green give us a fascinating account of a group of young people from an ethnically diverse, working-class secondary school in North East London, as they read and wrote popular culture in school.

The book describes the students' experiences of media education within the formal school curriculum and connects these experiences to the adolescents' involvement in popular culture outside school, revealing the complexity of their interaction with it.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one expands notions of reading and writing to include other media products — as texts appropriate for students in classrooms. It also reconsiders what it means to "read" and "write." Part two explores theories that underlie both the nature of media education and appropriate pedagogical practices for the study of culture in classrooms.

The introductory chapter situates the study in terms of its purpose, its context and the variety of forms of information from which to describe teacher and student behaviour [See BOX]. In chapter two, "Making sense of the media: from reading to culture," the authors discuss some of the major theoretical considerations which form the basis of the media education curricula they implemented and which influenced the stance they took in describing its effects on the students they studied. Essentially, they offer an account of reading which considers that making sense of the media is a process in which both individual and collective identities are defined and negotiated.

On the basis of an extensive survey of students' media use and of interviews with students about what they "read," Buckingham and Sefton-Green present interesting findings about the social circulation of meaning. What they discovered was

that the students (and we, too, for that matter), in making meaning, and in establishing their own tastes and preferences, were defining the meanings of their own social lives and positions. This process of reading is characterized by considerable diversity and complexity.

The diversity and complexity are explored in the next three chapters. Chapter 3, "A boy's own story: writing masculine genres" is an analysis of a 6000-word story written by a Year 10 student who calls himself "Poneyboy" (after the hero in the S.E. Hinton novel, *The*

Outsiders). Chapter 4, "Hardcore rappin': popular music, identity and critical discourse" examines the social functions served by texts produced by students in response to units they were studying on popular music. The texts included videos to accompany a song; album and cassette covers based on a selection of music; and music magazines and radio program excerpts, each aimed at particular target audiences. Chapter 5, "The 'me' in the picture is not me: photography as writing" discusses how two photography assignments allowed students to explore the relationships between the subjective and the social.

Part one concludes with a reconceptualization of the students as both an audience of popular culture and as researchers into their own activities as producers of, and audiences for, popular culture texts (Chapter 6). It examines students' awareness of audience on the basis of their having conducted surveys of audience tastes, use of media and consumption of media products.

In part two, the authors explore curriculum and pedagogical theory inherent in the approaches they used in the media studies classroom. Chapter 7 elaborates and problematizes the similarities and differences between English and Media studies using interviews with students about their perceptions of these two school subjects to highlight the discussion. Chapter 8 looks at the process of evaluation in media education in the light of Vygotskyan learning theory. The authors adopt a stance toward evaluation which encourages (teachers and) students to make explicit,

An example from Chapter 5, using photography to explore the differences between the subjective and the social.

to reformulate and to question, not only new knowledge ("scientific concepts'), but also the knowledge they already possess ("spontaneous concepts").

Chapter 9, "Going critical," studies the critical development of a student as revealed in his essays in English and Media Studies over a period of three years. It raises the question of what it means for students to acquire a critical perspective and explores how this critical behaviour is manifested, and shaped by, the discourse community in which it occurs. Chapter 10 extends the argument begun in the previous chapter: that being critical ought to be considered, perhaps, as both a state of mind and as a social practice. It may not be a simple process that can be deduced from an outward form of critical writing; but

may also be found in the variety of forms of practical work students produce.

Being literate in a postmodern world

The final chapter of the book is a consideration of what it means to be literate in a post-modern society. Buckingham and Sefton-Green argue for the need to reconceptualize not only traditional notions of culture and literacy, but also approaches to teaching about them. Teachers must begin by recognizing that students bring considerable and complex cultural experiences and competencies which are, by and large, neglected at school.

This is important work in several ways. For teacher-researchers, it serves as a model of useful research practice in studying the implementation of media education in classrooms by validating several forms of

data that have only recently become of interest to researchers: teachers' descriptions of what they do; student productions; and students' reflections about their learning and work. It also shows us how a cultural studies stance may be brought to bear on the description of what students do in media education classes. The book provides rich speculation about the complex behaviour engendered by production and analysis of media texts.

For media teachers, the book provides models of good teaching practice and, through the vignettes of student behaviour and talk, gives some idea of the nature of student responses to the activities. The authors also present the problems teachers typically face in implementing such practices. In grounding their theoretical discussion in the reality of the school, the authors effectively establish their credibility with a teacher audience.

For cultural studies types, the book goes a considerable way toward showing how a cultural studies perspective, were it grounded in the reality of schools, could be of real use to educators, enabling them to provide rich descriptions not only of the complex web of experiences that students bring to schools, but also of what they learn and what they bring to bear on that learning. At the same time, the authors show how cultural studies might extricate itself from its excessive theoreticism and its intensely self-reflexive pre-occupation.

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Prime Time Parent Media Literacy Workshop Kit

The Alliance for Children and Television, 1995 Videos and print materials

As the media become a more familiar context for learning, it becomes increasingly evident that the home is a significant environment for this learning to take place. Few Canadian homes are without at least one tv, and more often than not, a VCR. With tv playing such a key role in family life, many parents and caregivers feel ill-equipped to participate in children's relationships with tv and the other mass media.

The Alliance for Children and Television (ACT) wants to help parents and caregivers make their children's experience with tv positive. ACT's first initiative was a print guide for parents entitled *Minding the Set!* (See Reviews, *Media Focus,* Vol. 4 No.3) produced in conjunction with Rogers Cablesystems. ACT's newest initiative is a much-needed workshop kit designed especially for use by parents and caregivers of young children in their own environments. Traditionally, the school or some other institution has presented"expert"infor-mation for parents. This kit encourages them to exploit their own expertise and become the presenters.

Prime Time Parent comprises easy-to-use video and print materials for the neophyte facilitator. Workshop materials address nine issues related to tv, as well as tips on Warm-ups and Pro-Action, and although the kit is especially appropriate for elementary-aged children, activities can be easily adapted for older

viewers.[See BOX]

Producers have been sensitive to the fact that most parents have never been workshop leaders and are probably apprehensive about taking the plunge. They have also recognized that workshop participants like to leave with some-thing in their hands, and that preparing handouts is a tedious task even for the seasoned facilitator. They

include handouts to photocopy and distribute. ACT has taken a ground-breaking approach in recognizing the importance of the new technologies as they relate to the media. Few other media education materials make this connection

Another striking feature is that the video clips use almost exclusively Canadian programs, which

many faciliitators will welcome. Others, however, may miss some of the American content our children watch so frequently.

All the components have been carefully designed to complement one another, making it extremely user-friendly. The attractive and convenient package adds to the appeal. The kit, also available in French under the title *Chère télé,* will be distributed to school boards and resource centres across the country and available for loan to interest groups. Concerned parents, caregivers and teachers are encouraged to take advantage of a Canadian resource of which we can all be proud. [JB]

The kit is now available for loan free of charge in both English and French at The Centre for Literacy The Centre will be offering an informal workshop and information session to familiarize parents, caregivers and community workers with Prime Time Parent. See News and Notes p. 6.

Quick guide to *Prime-Time Parent*

• **Print materials**
Three easy-to -consult print guides are uniformin design, but distinct in purpose:

The **Training Manual** begins with an explanation of the kit and an intro-duction, followed by a step-by-step approach to facilitating a workshop. Screens, lists and graphics make this information quite accessible.

The **Backgrounder** provides a series of two-page overviews to accompany each of the nine modules in the kit: Child Development, TV and Families,Television Violence, Advertising, Values, Stereo-typing, Television production, New tech-nology and Television Programming.

30 Activity Cards, colour coded, again address the nine modules. The front of each indicates the estimated time of activity will take, the goal and materials needed. The reverse side provides a step-

by-step approach.
• **Video materials**
There are two videos:

Training, an 18-minute video offers visual recreation of information outlined in the Training Manual including how to conduct a workshop and how to deal with potential difficulties. Although at times slightly exaggerated, it can be helpful.

Clips Video, intended for use with the Activity Cards, is the portion of the kit which will require the most preparation; while the Activity Cards are numbered, workshop leaders will note that this numerical code does not correspond to the on-screen numbers on the video clips. This is somewhat misleading at first, but the correct procedure will quickly become clear if facilitators read instructions on the Activity Cards carefully.

News & Notes

Workshops:
An Informal Introduction to *Prime Time Parent*

Television has both positive and negative influences on children, and parents need non-judgmental, fact-based information in order to guide their children's viewing.

Animator: Judy Brandeis
Date: Wed. October 11, 1995
Time: 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Place: Dawson College,

This session will introduce parents and teachers to a new media literacy resource put out by the Alliance for Children and Television to provide basic information and promote discussion.
Information: The Centre for Literacy,
Tel: (514) 931-8731, local 1415

The National Media Literacy Conference

September 22 - 24, 1995
Broyhill Centre, Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina
Information: Dr. David Considine, National Media Literacy Conference, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC 28608 Phone: (704) 262-2270; Fax: (704) 262-2686

• Robert Kubey, Associate Professor of Communication at Rutgers University has been named Research Director of the Media Education Laboratory in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Rutgers, Newark. He will be spending the 1995-96 academic year on sabbatical in the Department of Communication at Stanford.

Screening images Chris Worsnop Turns Theory to Practice

Saturday, November 4, 1995
Cost: $85.00
(includes lunch and materials)

The Centre for Literacy
4001 de Maisonneuve Blvd.
Information: The Centre for Literacy
Tel: (514) 931-8731 local 1415

• David Buckingham will be Visiting Scholar at the Annenberg School for Communications in Philadelphia from September 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996.

• *Media Education in 1990's Europe A teacher's guide* by Len Mastermen and François Mariet is now available at The Centre for Literacy.

Letter to the editor

The following is an excerpt of an e-mail message posted by Pat Kipping of the Literacy Section, Nova Scotia Department of Education, in response to "Turned off, tuned out - left out" (Media Focus, Spring 1995,Vol. 5, No. 1) The message has been edited for length.

Ms. Kipping writes:
I just read your article and I'm afraid I have to disagree with your strong reaction against TV Free America's initiative and your description of what it means.

I think TV Free America's approach is extreme if they are hoping people will actually STOP watching tv altogether. We are all in this mass together and have been well trained by numerous sources including the mass media to see things in dualistic, oppositional terms. We don't need to. I think TV Free America is a sharp thin edge of the wedge. The rest of us are somewhere farther back at the wider parts but we are all pushing in the same direction to make an opening and shed some light on this major, complex area of tv and its role in our lives.

I don't like the tv-as drug metaphor any more than you do, but sometimes you've got to start with the metaphor that is on the mind of those you are trying to reach. My favourite metaphor, though, is of a RETREAT. A TV RETREAT. Many people use retreats not as a way to get rid of something bad in their lives, but to get a new perspective, to reflect on and renew their relationship with their everyday lives. People who go on retreats don't think of their lives as "bad". They just know that when you get too immersed in something you can lose perspective—critical perspective and enjoyment.

I agree with you that parents and children should watch more tv together, but together is the operative word. I like to focus of the London initiative in creating "stay at home family viewing", but I find the family sponsorship and tie in with eating junk food to be appalling.

I think there is no better way to understand the mass media culture we swim in everyday than to remove ourselves from it occasionally. Balance, perspective, reflection, renewed commitment and enjoyment– that's what we seek when we go on a retreat. It's possible to do with tv and still advocate critical media literacy education and practices.

An article by Pat Kipping will appear in the next issue of **Media Focus**.

Policy conversation on new technologies and literacy

In January 1995, the National Literacy Secretariat held a policy conversation on literacy and new technologies with 25 participants from across Canada. The background to this exchange appeared in the Winter 1995 issue of *LAC*. The purpose of the meeting was to identify and react to issues and problems related to the use of technology in literacy work. While the group was not developing policy at that time and was not asked to reach consensus, the outcomes of the discussions are being fed into the current process of developing an NLS policy on technology support.

The meeting did agree on a number of guiding principles which it beleived should underly future Canadian policy. These are summarized below.

1. Learner needs are central
Learner needs must be central to whatever policy is developed. Learner needs are also inextricably linked to equity of access and opportunity.

2. Practitioners need support
We must ensure that practioners have the kinds of training, the types of material support, and the research into best methods they need to deal with the possibilities offered by the diverse existing and emerging technologies.

3. Technology is simply a tool...
Technology is simply a tool to be used for human learning ends.. It's very easy to become a captive of the technology, fascinated by the elegance of the machines and the creative software that accompanies a given platform. Commentators talk about the new invisible hand of technology

shaping late 20th century societies, an updating of Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market at the beginning of the industrial revolution. The new technological invisible hand influences learning and culture.

... but there is a range of tools
In considering the implications of technology for literacy there is a need to recognize the range of technological instruments available to us. We should not simply become fascinated by the so-called "new technologies" that are currently in the public eye. Traditional ways of doing things that are important and valuable need not be rejected in favour of the new. There are "traditional technologies" in the process of being transformed in ways we never imagined. The telephone and the television are being reinvented. The key is that we use whatever tools we choose appropriately.

4. We must invest wisely...
We have to take care not to waste scarce resources, not to chase phantom solutions but to consider carefully what we want and need. The value of reflecting on best practice is essential. Research is an important guide in identifying needs, opportunities, best practice, and the selection of appropriate technologies.

5. Training is a key element...
Training is a key element in the succesful use of technology. There was a suggestion that future projects supported by the NLS should have a training element, ensured either in the way we elicit proposals or in terms of our funding requirement.

6. Literacy is a spectrum of diverse needs...
It is important to think about literacy in broad terms, as a spectrum of needs and abilities, as more than purely reading and writing, to encompass thinking skills, problem-solving, and communications abilities.

7. Link literacy to a range of related areas of public policy
In addition to the policy areas we have discussed there are challenges in terms of social, cultural and citizenship policies, health care, and administration of justice and penal reform.

8. Stable funding is important...
The effective use of technology for literacy purposes is linked to stable funding of literacy organizations and projects.

Technology, family literacy and ESL

Lighting Up Literacy: Demonstrating the compatability of technology with Famly Literacy and ESL

by Virginia Tardaewether, Family Literacy Instructor, Salem OR

Virginia Tardaewether teaches in a family literacy program in Salem Oregon. Working with colleague, Lucy Tribble MacDonald, affectionately known in electronic circles as "litlucy," Virginia has integrated computer use into many aspects of the program from the parent's time learning alone to the parent-child time together (PACT). She and Lucy presented on August 5 at the Adult Literacy and Technology conference in Philadelphia. The classrom activities below are a sampler. A book-length publication is due out this fall. [L.S.]

These are a series of actual asignments given during adult basic skills class for parent support time class. Each assignment has a different purpose and a different time line. Becoming familiar with and comfortable using a computer is one goal for these ESL and ABE parents.

ASSIGNMENT 1

CHILDREN'S COMPUTER SOFTWARE EXERCISE
Work with a partner (this partner can be your child) and EACH OF YOU (if your partner is an adult) complete the following:

A. Monsters & Make Believe
1. Create a "monster" (Save as onto your disk)
2. Write a short story about your monster. (Save)
3. Print out your monster and story. (Turn in)

B. Amanda Stories—Indigo
1. Select an Indigo story. Follow the buttons through the story.
2. Using word processor, write a story about Indigo's actions.
3. Save onto your disk, print, turn in.

C. Rainy Day Games
1. Open Rainy Day Games and Select a game Concentration, Old Maid, Go Fish
2. With your partner, play EACH game long enough to understand how it works.
3. Using word processor, describe what your child will learn from each game.
4. Save onto your disk, print, turn in.

D. Software of Your Choice
1. Let your child pick another software to play with you. Playroom, Kid Pix, etc.
2. Play for awhile. Have fun!
3. Write down the kinds of things you talked about while you were playing together.

ASSIGNMENT 2

DRAW DRAW DRAW
1. Find a partner.
2. Draw a picture using MacPaint and/or the Draw On and Draw Off function.
3. Do a pattern in one or more sections of the figure you draw.
4. Print your final project.
5. Due: The end of the day today.

ASSIGNMENT 3

CLASS BOOK
Select a favorite song, chant, nursery rhyme, story, etc. Using the computer and scanner, write the words and illustrate the item of your choice. Use one page for your selection and we will create a class book for you to take home and share with your family. Your children could choose the drawings and the item to be included.

We will need to cooperate as a class so that the same item is not printed up more than once. You may decide to do more than one item if you have more than one favorite that no one else has selected.

ASSIGNMENT 4

PACT PIE CHART
Keep track of your PACT (Parent and Child Together) activities for the entire month. Using spreadsheet, make a chart of activities. List each type of activity and the number of times you and your child did that activity. Fill in the formula on the spreadsheet (make sure you include days you were absent in your total and as one activity.

Example:

Read	5
Puzzles	2
Blocks	4
Absent	1
Total	12

After you have completed your data entry, written your formula (Sum = a+b+c+d). Save this chart onto your disk. Label it: PACT Plans for (Month). Print a copy for your family portfolio.

ASSIGNMENT 5

JOURNAL AND HYPERCARD
How to get a picture from Hypercard to a word proessing page.

1. Open Hypercard.
2. Open idea stacks.
3. Open art ideas.
4. Find the picture you would like to have on your scrapbook. (This is the picture you want to have on your paper. This picture could have something to do with you and your life right now.)
5. Go to the tools menu and choose the lasso (like a cattle roper).
6. Circle the picture you want by clicking the mouse button and holding it down as you draw around it. Be sure that the line circles the picture completely...it will "dance" when you have completed the circle around it.
7. Go to the edit menu again and choose Paste picture.
8. Close the scrapbook.
9. Quit Hypercard.
10. Open Microsoft Works and the word processor (or Word).
11. When you are looking at the page you will be writing on, go to the scrap book and find your picture.
12. Under the edit menu, choose copy.
13. Close the scrapbook.
14. Under the edit menu (again) choose paste and there you have it! You can change the size and location of the picture on the page. Then use the return key to place the cursor at the spot you want to begin typing your journal.
15. This journal entry can be about how it feels to use a computer, how it feels to be back in school or what is going on in your family. Who do you spend most of your time with? Who would you like to be spending more time with? Draw an image of who you are today using words and pictures.

Today I am ...

ASSIGNMENT 6

CREATE A BOOK FOR YOUR CHILD

Create a book to take home for your child. You may use a folk tale, fairy tale, make up a story, etc. DO NOT use a story that is copyrighted. You may also make a color, shape, picture, number, etc. book. There are ideas for ways to make books—pop up books, big books, felt or fabric book, etc. Look on the shelf in the adult room (parent resource room, public library) for ideas. You will have some class time to prepare this book. You have about three weeks.

BOOK DUE

ASSIGNMENT 7

SELF HELP TIPS
(Sent on-line from Indianapolis Public Even Start Family literacy Program)

Activity 1:
1. At the end of the week format two sheets of paper.
   a. On the first one list all of the things that bugged you this week.
   b. On the second page write down all the things that you can brag about this week. (Include writing this on a computer.)
   Print them both.
   c. On your way out the door, tear up your bug sheet and put it in the trash.
2. Take your brag sheet home and extra paper, if you need it.
3. Put your brag sheet on the refridgerator or place of prominence.
4. Repeat a, b, c with family members.
5. Ask family members to add their brags to the list.
6. If you have school-age children, or other adults in the home, you might ask them to share their bugs with you. This might help you to better understand their needs.

Have a good week-end! On Monday, brag about the good time you had doing this together.

Adult literacy software evaluation criteria
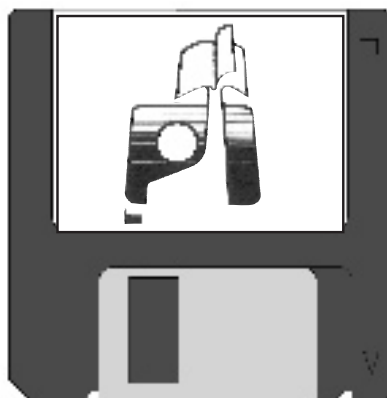
[*Teachers who are not experienced with computers face a challenge when they have to order software for their students. A number of instruments have been developed to help evaluate software for literacy. They provide a framework reminding teachers of all the aspects they should consider. The one below, clear and comprehensive, was developed at the National Center for Adult Literacy (NCAL) by Hopey, Rethemeyer and Songar. It is reprinted with permission It was shared in a workshop facilitated by Chris Hopey on August 4, 1995 at the Adult Literacy and Technology(ALT) conference, Philadelphia*]

The following questions are designed to help the practitioner consider a variety of relevant issues in order to evaluate and make decisions about the best possible instructional software to use in particular educational situations. Each section features a different aspect of using software with the adult learner.

I. Learner/computer interaction
1. Exercises are appropriate?
2. Exercise frequency is adequate?
3. Directions and instructions are clear?
4. Type and place of requested response is clear?
5. Feedback after response is helpful?
6. Final evaluation of learner's performance is provided?
7. Software is easy to operate?

II. Learner control
1. Options, menus, and choices are available?
2. Display time is under learner's control?
3. Mouse exercise directions are adequate?
4. Movement within software is easy?
5. Obvious exits are available at all times?

III. Sequencing of instructional events
1. Goals and objectives are specified explicitly?
2. Instruction is organized from general to specific?
3. Adequate exercises and examples are provided to explain concepts?
4. Major concepts are easily identified through visual cues?
5. Different opportunities are provided for different ability levels?

IV. Screen design
1. Screen layout is pleasing?
2. Instructions are provided in areas separate from text?
3. Color is used effectively?
4. Exercises with the mouse require dexterity appropriate to student's ability?

V. Multimedia features
1. Digital audio is available?
2. Audio is used appropriately given the reading level of the student?
3. Appropriate graphics, photos, or video enhance the instruction?
4. Student progress is not slowed by unnecessary multimedia effects?
5. Student can choose to access audio and visuals on an as needed basis?

VI. Readability
1. Screens contain an amount of text appropriate to student's ability?
2. Content is relevant to adults?
3. Reading level is appropriate to learner's reading level?
4. Software teaches important reading comprehension skills?

VII. Administration
1. Accessing the course on the computer is easy?
2. Procedures for enrolling new students is clear and easy?
3. Student progress is easily tracked?

Reports & materials for the Adult Literacy and Technology Conference are available at The Centre For Literacy.

Resources are catalogued and may be borrowed in person or by mail (postage covered by the borrower). Documents should be requested by number. Documents can be consulted in The Centre from Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

In addition to the materials listed in the catalogue, we have directories of program and services, bibliographies on many subjects, international periodicals and newsletters, catalogues of learning materials, tapes/videos, and hanging files. We are connected to the National Adult Literacy

Database and Internet. Printouts on specific subject headings can be requested at cost.

Information: Peg Killeen
(514) 931-8731, local 1415;
literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca.

•180.031
National Institutes of Health. *Clear & Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers*. National Institutes of Health.

•510.001
Philips, Maxine. *Getting Health Care*. New York: New Readers Press, 1980.

•510.002
Raines-Day, Nancy. *Help Yourself to Health*. Syracuse, NY: New Readers Press,1980.

•510.004
Ontario Public Health Association. *Partners in Practice: The Literacy and Health Project. Phase Two*. August 1990- October 1992. Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Health. Secretary of State, National Literacy Secretariat. Health and Welfare Canada, 1993

•510.006
Read, Bob. *Health and Safety Workpack: For Training Courses Leading to the Basic Health and Safety Certificate*.Norwich, England: Norfolk County Council, 1994.

•510.007
Ontario Public Health Association. *Literacy and Health Project: Making the World Healthier and Safer for People Who Can't Read - Research Report*. Toronto, ON: Frontier College. Ontario Public Health Association, 1990.

•510.009
Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Healthy Families: Your Community Health Kit*. The Hants Shore Community Health Clinic. Nova Scotia: Department of Education, Literacy Section.

RESOURCES
Sample bibliography: Health and literacy

Title: **Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine: A Shortened Screening Instrument**

Source: <u>Family Medicine</u>
25(6): 391-5 June 1993

Summary:
Due to increased awareness of the link between literacy and health, tests have been developed to assess the literacy level of patients in order to determine their needs in terms of health care information. An analysis of 'REALM,' a quick, efficient, and easy-to-administer literacy test is provided within this paper. 'REALM' was found to be a valid and reliable instrument with practical value as a rapid estimate of patient literacy and as an additional tool to address the health care needs of low-literacy patients.

Title: **Fotoplatica: An Innovative Teaching Method For Families With Low Literacy and High Stress**

Source: <u>Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing</u>
1993, vol. 10, no.3: 112-4

Summary:
An overview of Fotoplatica which is, in this case, pictorial posters used to explain procedures and pain experienced during cancer treatment. The target group for this experiment was illiterate Latino families whose children have cancer. The method was found to be extremely effective in creating a higher level of understanding and in decreasing anxiety.

Title: **Effects of Literacy on Health Care of the Aged: Implications for Health Professionals**

Source: <u>Educational Gerontology</u>
v19. n4 p311-16,
June 1993

Summary:
Levels of literacy have an impact on the quality of life of the elderly patient. Those elderly patients who cannot understand the health information provided have difficulty being active participants in their health care. This article explores the effects of low literacy on health as well as providing a multitude of programs suitable for elderly persons with low literacy.

Title: **The Determinants of Health from a Historical Perspective**

Source: <u>Daedalus</u>. Health and Wealth. Fall 1994. Vol.123, N0. 4

Summary:
This article offers a historical overview of factors relating to health and health care. Of most interest is the correlation between health status and economic status. For example, those of higher economic status and privilege in terms of perceived self control over destiny are consistently healthier than those of lower economic status. This fact has not altered over the last 1000 years.

Chronological Conference Listing

Local

PAPT-PACT Teachers Convention
November 16 - 17, 1995
Montreal, QC
Information: Donal Irving, 252-7946

National/International

Canadian Association for Comunity Living/Roeher Institute
"Beyond Words: The Power of Inclusion"
A Weekend Focusing on Literacy for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities
September 15 -17, 1995
Winnipeg, MN
Information: Tel: (204) 947-1118;
Fax: (204) 949-1464.

1995 International Association for Continuing Education and Training
"Bridging the Centuries: Visions, Values, and Validations"
September 27 - 30, 1995
San Francisco, CA
Information: IACET, Tel: (202) 857-1122; Fax: (202) 223-4579.

An Evening with Len Masterman
OISE
October 5, 1995
Information: (416) 488-7280

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada Tenth National Conference
"Bridges to a Brighter Future: Cooperate, Plan, Implement"
October 18 - 21, 1995
Saskatoon, SK
Information: Conference Office, Tel: (306) 652-4114: Fax: (306) 652-3220.

Learning Communities and Collaboration Delta College Regional Conference
October 19 - 21, 1995
Frankenmuth, MI
Information: Roz Weedman,
Tel: (517) 686-9534.

Coalitions for Learning and Growth: An international celebration of language culture and communication
October 19 - 22, 1995
Toronto, ON
Information: Ian Waldron, Conference Co-chair, 1336 Pape Avenue, Toronto, ON, Canada, M4K 3X2, Fax: (416) 425-5873 or (519) 622-7008.

National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment
"Crediting the Past—Investing in the Fututre"
October 23 - 25, 1995
Ottawa, ON
Information: National Forum on PLA Secretariat, 350 Albert Street, 5th floor, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0S5,
Tel: (613) 993-0615; Fax: (613) 991-3469; e-mail: cce@borg.ca

The Assocation for Business Communication 60th Annual Convention
November 1 - 4, 1995
Orlando, FL
Information: Sherry B. Scott, 747 Fieldstone Drive, NE, #304, Leesburg, VA 22075, Tel./fax: (703) 779-0844,
E-mail:
71233.1664@compuserve.com

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)
"Fast Forward to the Future: Technology, Assessment and Professionalism"
November 1 - 4, 1995
Kansas City, MO
Information: AAACE, (202) 429-5131

Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking
Ethical Education: Learning Values, Teaching Practices
November 3 - 4, 1995
Annandale-on Hudson, NY
Information: Paul Connolly or Theresa Vilardi, Tel: (914) 758-7431,7432.

20th Annual Conference Association for Community Based Education
"Celebrating the Past and Building Communities for the Future"
November 16 - 18, 1995
Washington, D.C.
Information: ACBE, (202)462-6333.

The Third Spilman Symposium on Issues in Teaching Writing
"Evaluating Student Writing: The Consequences of our Goals and Pedagogies"
November 18, 1995
Lexington, VA
Information: Robert L. McDonald, Department of English and Fine Arts, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA, Tel: (703) 464-7240,
E-mail:
mcdonaldrl%english%ovmi@ist.vmi.edu

MLA 1995
December 26 - 30, 1995
Chicago, Il
Guidelines: September 1994 issue of *PMLA* (pp 556-67)

CCCC Winter Workshop on Teaching Composition to Undergraduates
"Curricular Changes: Writing Across the Curriculum, Technology and Writing,
Assessment and Writing"
January 3 - 6, 1996
Clearwater Beach, FL

International Reading Association Adolescent/Adult Literacy: Making a Difference
February 2 - 4, 1996
Washington, D.C.
Information: Adolescent/Adult Literacy Program Committee, IRA, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE, USA 19714-8139, Tel: (302) 731-1600, ext 226; Fax: (302) 731-1057.

Technology and Learning
February 23 - 24, 1996
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Information: Lance Rivers, Department of English, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, IL 62901.

World Conference on Literacy
"Improving Literacy, Changing Lives: Inniovations and Interconnections for Development"
March 12 -15, 1996
Philadelphia, PA
Information: World Conference on Literacy , University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111, Tel: (215) 898-2100; Fax: (215) 898-9804.

College Composition and Communication (4Cs)
March 27 - 30, 1996
Milwaukee, WI

6th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women
April 22 -26, 1996
Adelaide Australia
Information: Festival City Conventions, P.O. Box 986, Kent Town, South Australia 5071, Tel: 61-8 363 1307; Fax: 61-8 363 1604.

95/96 THE CENTRE FOR LITERACY & DAWSON COLLEGE
WORKSHOPS
SEMINARS

1 Literacy and action: Building community through writing groups

Leader: Hal Adams, University of Illinois at Chicago
Date: Friday, Oct. 27,1995
Time: 9:00 to 4:00 p.m

2 Media education isn't hard to teach

Leader: Chris Worsnop, Media educator
Date: Saturday, Nov. 4, 1995
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

3 Health and literacy: How do they connect? A panel

Panelists: **Deborah Gordon**, Canadian Public Health Association, Ottawa **Margaret LeBrun**, The Golden Age Association **Linda Shohet**, The Centre for Literacy
Date: Thursday, Nov. 9, 1995
Time: 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

4 Assessing adults and adolescents with study skills deficits:Two workshops

Leader: Uri Shafrir, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto
Dates: Thursday, Nov. 16, 1995 Friday, Nov. 17, 1995
Time: 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.

5 Homeless women, literacy and technology

Leader: Ludo Sheffer, University of Pennsylvania
Date: Monday, Jan. 22, 1996
Time: 6:00 - 9:30 p.m.

6 Verbal and visual literacy: Words and icons

Leader: Gunther Kress, University of London
Date: Thursday, Feb. 4, 1996
Time: 5:30 - 9:00 p.m.

7 Women, literacy and social change
(in collaboration with Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) celebrating International Women's Day)

Leaders: Jane Hugo, Laubach Literacy America Peggy Maguire, Germantown Women's Educational Project
Date: Thursday, March 7, 1996
Time: 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

8 Relations between critical thinking and writing in all disciplines.

Leader: Lynn Quitman Troyka, City University of New York (CUNY)
Date: Friday, April 12, 1996
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

World Conference on Literacy: Call for Papers

"Improving Literacy, Changing Lives: Innovations and Interconnections for Development"sponsored by the International Literacy Institute (ILI), UNESCO, University of Pennsylvania, and other organizations
March 12 -15, 1996
Philadelphia, PA

The 1996 World Conference on Literacy will bring together experts in the field to address a host of issues related to the improvement of global literacy efforts amid dramatice political, economic, and cultural change, and to explore innovations and interconnections in literacy for development.

Topics will include professional development, planning and policy development, curriculum development, language and gender issues, family and intergenerational literacy, R&D networks, evaluation and assessment, cooperation and mobilization, distance eductaion, and technology.

Participants: Policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and other specialists in literacy and basic education.
Deadline: October 15, 1995
Information: World Conference on Literacy, International Literacy Institute, University of Pennsylvania, 3910 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111, Tel: (215) 898-2100, Fax: (215) 898-9804.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Peer tutoring in adult literacy education

A video and handbook are being produced by The Learning Centre of Edmonton, and they are looking for feedback from the field. There may be a distribution cost for the set.
Information: The Learning Centre, P.O. Box 1262, Edmonton, AB, Canada T5J 0M8, Fax: (403) 425-2205.

Workplace Literacy Report

"Workplace Basic Skills: A Study of 10 Canadian Programs" is a 1995 report funded by the National Literacy Secretariat which looks at different types of workplace literacy programs across Canada. Presented in case study format, the report describes how employers and employees have developed and sustained workplace training. In the analysis of the programs, the document highlights innovative program features, barriers encountered in the implementation stage and advice to others planning similar programs.
Copies can be obtained in English or French after October 1, 1995 by contacting the National Literacy Secretariat, 15 Eddy Street, RM 10 E 10, Hull, Quebec K1A 1K5. TEL: (819) 953-5280, FAX (819) 953- 8076.

Balancing Act

(March 1995) a report on how adult basic education programs are affecting the lives of 556 new ABE students in British Columbia, is the result of a 1993-94 thirteen-month pilot-study at three B.C. colleges, The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Student Outcomes Project.
Copies can be obtained from The Advanced Education Council, #950-409 Granville Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 1T2, Tel: (604) 895-5080, Fax: (604) 895- 5088.

Internet Directory of Literacy and Adult Education Resources

2nd edition, compiled and edited by Thomas W. Eland, June 1995.
Information: Minnesota Literacy resource Cnter, University of St. Thomas, Mail #5019, 2115 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105, Tel: (612) 962-5570, or e-mail: Tom Eland, tweland@stthomas.edu, or Ginny Heinrich, vmheinrich@stthomas.edu

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CALL FOR AUTHORS
A New Workplace Literacy Reader

This fall work will begin on up-dating the 1991 "Basic Skills for the Workplace" book. Over the past five years a wealth of information has accumulated that can help advance the field of basic skills training. Drawing from this Canadian experience, the reader will be made up of approximately 20 chapters centred around the most important workplace learning themes and issues facing our practice.

An advisory committee will be meeting to select authors and chapter titles in late October 1995. If you would like to be considered for this manuscript project, please send a 150 - 200 word abstract outlining the general theme of the chapter and a title. Some writing experience would be helpful.

The abstract should be sent to Maurice Taylor, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education, 145 Jean Jacques Lussier, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 (FAX 613-562-5146) before October 15, 1995.

NEW IN 1996

Feminist Landscapes: Essays on Gender and Technology in the Writing Classroom

– a collection of articles on topics related to women and technology to be published in 1996. Computer technologies are becoming more central and important to writing theory and instruction. Among the cited benefits to users are a democratizing potential, an increased awareness of multiple perspectives through networking, and an increased distribution of power and authority. But how do theories of gender and feminism complicate these issues of power, authority and voice? How do these potentials meet the material realities of women?

Information: Kristine Blair, Texas A & M, Corpus Christi, Division of Arts and Humanitites, 6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412, kblair@falcon.tamucc.edu, fax: (512)994-5884 or Pamela Takayoshi, University of Louisville, Department of English, Louisville, KY 40292, pdtaka01@homer.louisville.edu

"Women's Studies and Information Technology: Reports from the Field,"

– a special issue of *Feminist Collections, A Quartery of Women's Studies Resources* will be published in Winter 1996

Information: Editors, *Feminist Collections,* 430 Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. or e-mail: WISWSL@DOIT.WISC.EDU

CALL FOR PAPERS

International Award for Literacy Research

Co-sponsored by the UNESCO Institute for Education and Human Resources Development, Canada

Field of Research:
The possible field of research includes any of the following aspects: the problems of illiteracy; approaches to and methodologies of literacy; process and contents of training, post-literacy and adult education; analysis of policies and strategies; evaluation; school and illiteracy; economic or cultural dimensions of such provision.

Technical Requirements:
The manuscripts have to: be original and unpublished (copyright of the winning manuscript will pass to UIE); be written in English, French or Spanish; have a minimum of 100 pages and a maximum of 150 pages (between 30,000 and 50,000 words) excluding the annexes; be accompanied by a summary not exceeding 6 pages (1800 words) and a curriculum vitae.
The winning research will be announced in June 1996, and the author given US$ 10,000. The work will be published in English, French and Spanish.

Deadline for submission: November 30, 1995

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LITERACY LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY

The Promise & THE PERIL

CASE STUDIES
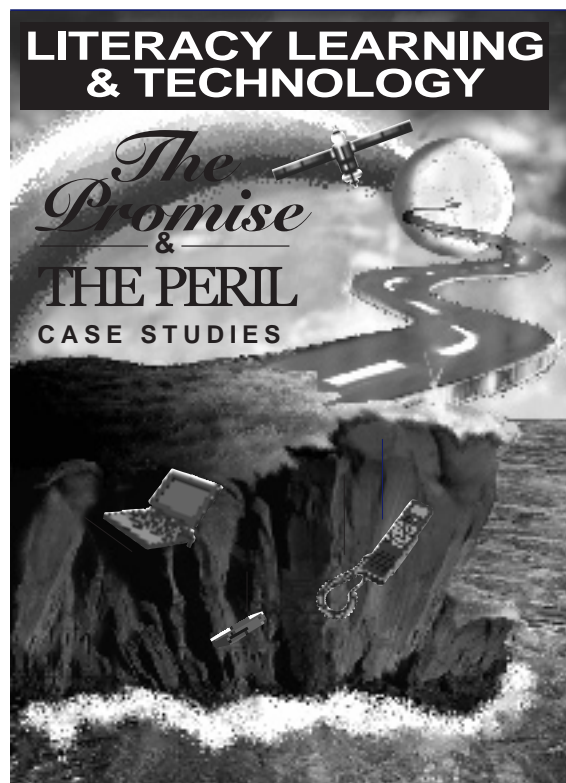
Summer Institute 1995

An overview of the institute and short articles on various applications of technology in adult literacy focusing on the promise and the peril. Includes Ontario Literacy Communications Project, STAPLE, Georgia Tech Satellite Literacy Project, New Reading Disc and more.

Publication will be available in December 1995. Cost: $10 plus $3 postage and handling, includes GST. Make cheques payable to: The Centre for Literacy, 3040 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, QC, Canada, H3Z1A4.

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Literacy & health: an annotated bibliography

This list of articles from the past five years contains access information and full summaries. Available for $5 to cover printing and mailing.

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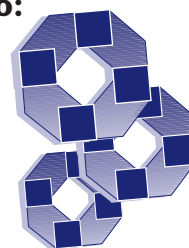
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