

# **Environmental Scan of Literacy Services in Peterborough**

**Contains:**  
**Final report**  
**Online Survey Template**  
**Focus Group Script**  
**Interview Script**  
**Resource Guide to Literacy Services**  
**in the City of Peterborough**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In this paper, we present the gaps and the challenges faced by literacy programs, services and organizations in Peterborough. This research found that the lack of funding for literacy services was a major gap faced by the majority of the participants. The funding gap was also found to overlap and contribute to the enhancement of all the other gaps. Other gaps consisted of resource gaps, locations gaps, time gaps, delivery gaps, and public awareness gaps. Research participants also identified that there needs for better networking that includes an exchange of resources and improvement of referrals, clientele advocacy and lobbying, and volunteer training*

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## INTRODUCTION

This project was developed as part of an International Development Studies course “Assessment of Development Projects”-IDST 422. In the first semester, we learned the necessary skills to evaluation and research methods. We applied those skills during the second semester when we began working on this project. It was conducted from December 2008 through April 2009.

The project proposal was submitted to the Trent Centre for Community Based Education by Frontier College and Literacy Ontario Central South (LOCS). LOCS is a government funding organization in the City of Peterborough that facilitates literacy community planning, acts as a central information centre for regional issues, resources and Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU Initiatives), co-ordinates and manages literacy development projects, promotes public education and awareness and is an acting partner with Employment Ontario.

The purpose of this project is to conduct an environmental scan of all the different organizations in Peterborough that provide programs and services related to literacy. As well as, to create a comprehensive manual that outlines these and the groups of people that they work with. Based on the outcomes of this research, we have been able to make recommendations of what literacy programs and services are missing, and which groups of people are in need of more support.

This research was carried out through an online and phone surveys, two focus groups and one semi structured interview. The objectives of this research are to create a catalogue of existing literacy programs in the region, including details of location, classes and participation in classes, and to investigate the gaps and challenges faced by literacy programs in Peterborough. By completing this environmental scan we intent to advice literacy programs in Peterborough to develop partnerships with one another and learn about what other programs and services are provided in the area. This will allow them to increase their ability to effectively serve the larger community. Ideally this can serve as a springboard to share resources, tools, and effective models of teaching literacy skills. Further, it intends to help the host to gain a greater understanding of the direction in which current programs and services need to be expanded.

This research is informed by a literature review of the Essential Skills approach to literacy, as well as the Rubenson and Xu's (1997) analysis of literacy participation barriers. The gaps faced by literacy

services in Peterborough are placed within Rubenson and Xu's (1997) institutional, dispositional and structural barriers. The gaps are divided in to the following categories: Funding, Resources, Location, Delivery, Clientele, Time and Public awareness.

This report is organized into 4 main sections. The literature review consists of defining literacy, the essential skills approach, alternative approaches to literacy and environmental scan. The methodology includes a description of the evaluation design, methods and data strategies, methods of analysis and research limitations. The data section presents our research results. The analysis section consists of interpretations of the research data. We end this report with recommendations to guide future research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *What is Literacy?*

This research project is influenced by Literacy Ontario Central South (LOCS) definition of literacy. LOCS's view on literacy is a multidimensional one that defines it to be "...not just reading and writing but it is the ability to function as a contributing member of a community" (Literacy Ontario Central South). Literacy in this framework is seen as a collective asset of skills, which might vary between one person and another. Skills may include reading, writing, thinking, math, and inter-personal skills (Literacy Ontario Central South). LOCS' view on literacy is also advised by the Essential Skills approach, which will be explored further in this report. Another useful description of literacy is provided by Krahn and Lowe, who define it as: "...the ability to understand and use written information to function in society, to achieve goals, and to develop knowledge and potential" (1998, p. 2). Krahn and Lowe's measures of analysis are based on prose literacy, document literacy, and quantitative literacy (1998). Prose literacy is: "The ability to understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction" (Krahn & Lowe, 1998, p. 2); document literacy includes "The ability to locate and use information from documents such as job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphs" (p. 2); and quantitative literacy is "The ability to perform arithmetic functions such as balancing a chequebook, calculating a tip, or completing an order form" (p. 2). McGaw and Murray (2005) expand literacy type measures to include numeracy and problem solving as newer assessment domains to their construct-centered approach to adult literacy and life skill measures. Numeric abilities include "the knowledge and skills required to effectively manage the mathematical demands of diverse situations" (McGaw & Murray, 2005, p. 16), and problem solving involves "...goals-directed thinking and action in situations for which no routine solution procedure is available...The understanding of the problem situation and its step-by-step transformation, based on planning and reasoning, constitute the process of problem solving" (p. 16). Literacy is also described to be

[f]undamental to citizenship and democracy- to inform decision making, to personal empowerment, and to active and positive participation in the local and global social community. Literacy is an essential skill for work and participation in the economy and is a foundation for basic education and lifelong learning (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2000, p. 3).

### *What is an Essential Skills approach to literacy?*

This study draws on diverse definitions and approaches to literacy. According to the Human Resources and Social Development Report (2008) *What Are Essential Skills*, the Essential Skills approach to literacy provides the foundational skills required to successfully participate in the Canadian labor market. Essential Skills are defined to be "...the skills that people need for work, learning and life" (Human Resources and Social Development, 2008). These include the ability to read and analyze a text, the ability to work with documents such as tables and forms, numeric abilities, writing abilities, oral communication abilities, the ability to work with others, thinking skills, computer use skills, and involvement in continuous learning (2008). The Essential Skills approach to literacy is a functional one, which comes to deconstruct and challenge other traditional approaches such as those that solely focus on the ability to read and write. It proposes a shift of the understanding of literacy; from a skill that is nice to have to one that is necessary to have, in order for people to attain personal and economic goals such as obtaining a job. While the ability to read, write, and use numbers are vital for individuals' success in the Canadian labor market. Krahn & Lowe (1998) examine the connections between literacy requirements of Canadian jobs and the literacy skills of Canadian labor. Krahn's and Lowe's examination is based on the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey definition of literacy "...as the ability to understand and use written information to function in society, to achieve goals, and to develop knowledge and potential" (1998, p. 2). Based on their definition of literacy, Krahn and Lowe (1998) conclude that 74% of Canadian workers have jobs where their skills hardly match their job requirements. Those with a "skill surplus" (Krahn & Lowe, 1998, p. 7) outnumbered workers with a "skill deficit" by two to one ratio (p. 7); a phenomenon that requires a re-examination of the term "job-skills gaps" (p. 8). Their analysis also supports that hypothesis of counter literacy effects that are created by jobs which do not require literacy skills; what they call "use it or lose it" (Krahn & Lowe, 1998, p. 8). While they recognize that other skills influence success in a workplace, such as social and communication skills, Krahn and Lowe (1998) believe that prose, document, and quantitative literacy are central to labor market success. An important component to examining the connection between worker skills and their job requirements requires an exploration of what is meant by skills, and how are they related to literacy in the context of the Essential Skills approach.

McGaw and Murray (2005) present a comprehensive study exploring the interrelationships among skill domains and their links to the outcomes, such as "...the quantity and quality of initial education and skill's impact on employability, wages, and health" (p. 3). In doing so, McGaw and Murray (2005)

advice educators, workers, and decision workers on how to remove skills deficit in order to generate economic growth, how to limit and reserve social exclusion and income inequality, and how to improve the quality of public services in order to progress quality of life in general. McGaw and Murray's study provides a useful framework for policy advising and making. Canada; one of the countries included in the survey, is found to have "[t]he footprint of good policy..." (2005, p. 4) in terms of fair distribution of skills in the market. McGaw's and Murray's international comparative study is useful to this research project as it provides multidimensional definitions to skills, providing a helpful connection to the Essential Skills approach to literacy. Skills in this contexts are defined to be "...along a continuum of proficiency" (McGaw & Murray, 2005, p. 15), meaning there is no uninformed distinction between adults who have and those who lack skills. By de-constructing a dominant distinction between "literate" and "illiterate" persons by a majority of literacy studies, McGaw and Murray's view on literacy as continuum proficiency allows to locate individuals according to their ability to use information for a sustainable functioning in society and economy. As in Krahn & Lowe (1998), prose and document literacy are part of the measures used by McGaw and Murray (2005), however, numeracy and problem-solving domains are two new frameworks used to develop literacy type measures. Although the Essential Skills approach informs this research project's definition of literacy, other approaches such as the post-structuralist Freirean approach provide a helpful analytical framework; also useful in informing this research paper.

### *A post-structuralist approach to literacy*

A post-structuralist Freirean approach provides means to deconstruct the textual definitions of literacy. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005), Freire explores the alienation processes within mainstream educational systems. Freire outlines that "Education is suffering from narration sickness" (2005, p. 71), where educators or the "narrator subjects" (p. 71) conduct narration contents in structured, motionless ways which are detached from reality. This process of narrative education systemizes students memorize and record the content "mechanically" (p. 72), leaving little room for providing significance to the material they absorb. Freire conceptualizes this dominant educational narration process to describe it as a "banking system of education" (p. 72), where information get deposited as opposed to communicated with the student. This phenomenon, furthermore, produces education and knowledge as ideologies of "oppression" (p. 72), negating any processes of inquiry. This Freirean approach advises this research paper on the assessment and recommendations of the "cliental

gap” and “teaching methods gap” secessions. His approach emphasizes importance of communication through education: “yet only through communication can human life hold meaning” (Freire, 2005, p. 77). Cliental and teaching methods gaps are found to be best overcome through enhancing more positive communication as well encouraging authentic thinking. Authentic thinking implies: “... thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication...[b]ecause banking education begins with a false understanding of men and women as objects, it cannot promote the development of [free connection to the world]” (p. 77).

A generative approach to literacy is influenced by a Freirian one and is found to set an alternative to the structural outline such as that offered by the functional approach to literacy. In this light, The Weaving Literacy Project adopts a generative approach to literacy projects, supporting principles of integrated approaches to literacy (Smythe, 2005). The main goals of the Weaving Literacy Project is to build and expand on collaborative practices of different literacy projects in Canada, and extend them to new communities in order to sustain integrated community and community-building approaches to literacy (Smythe, 2005). The focus of the generative literacy initiatives taken by the Weaving Project are developed at local levels and in settings that serve a variety of community and family needs are well placed to support and build upon family and community literacy (Smythe, 2005, p. 4). The initiative took its inspiration from other projects and organizations who have also adopted a collaborative, community-building approach to literacy. Such groups are the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut Literacy Councils, Parenting for a Literate Community, among others (Smythe, 2005, p. 3). These organizations believe that literacy organizations and family support groups have natural connections because “...they share an ethos of respect for the knowledge and skills of community members and use these as resources for further learning. They also share a commitment to positive social change and link their education work to this goal” (Smythe, 2005, p. 4). Literacy learning in this context allows people to integrate their literacy skills in meaningful and everyday texts; a way where people were found to learn best (Smythe, 2005). The community-building approach to literacy is a holistic one that allows people to link what they learn with community issues. The de-constructive approach to literacy projects adopted by The Weaving Literacy Project informs the methodology of this paper that investigates ways in which literacy programs and organizations in Peterborough can further network and share resources in order to better serve a wider community.

### *What is an environmental scan?*

An environmental scan in terms of organizations and strategic planning involves “...considering the factors that will influence the direction and goals of your organization. And, it includes consideration of both present and future factors that might affect the organization” (Strategic and Business Planning Free Resource Center).

### *Literacy participation barriers*

The development of an environmental scan of literacy services in Peterborough will be based on an analysis of six gaps (funding, location, time, clientele, and resources). Based on available literature on the topic, this research paper relies on Rubenson and Xu (1997) barrier analysis, which are found the causes of the gaps. The barriers include: (1997, p. 84):

- *Situational barriers*: those arising from one's situation in life, e.g. lack of time, because of work, family responsibilities, etc.
- *Institutional barriers*: practices and procedures hindering participation, e.g. fees, lack of money, absence of evening courses, entrance requirements, limited courses offerings, etc.
- *Dispositional barriers*: motivation, attitudes and dispositions towards adult education and learning

While the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada report (2000), *Adult Literacy: policies, programs and Practices: Lessons Learned*, explores the challenges of adult literacy in Canada focusing solely on individual “problems” of those who receive literacy services, this research paper explores challenges that are faced by the organizations and programs that deliver the services. The Human Resources and Skills Development Canada report (2000) presents that according to the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey “...about 18% of working-age Canadians have extreme difficulty reading and another 26% have the most limited skills” (2000, p. 3). The rigorous literacy gap in Canada is due to various reasons including personal, economic, social, and political hardships. Nevertheless, the high number of Canadians who face skills difficulties may also be due to gaps that exist within the general system, which correspondingly affect organizations and programs that deliver literacy and skills services.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research question*

In order to assist the Literacy Ontario Central South efforts to support literacy programs in the City of Peterborough, our research will carry out two tasks:

- 1) It will catalogue existing literacy programs in the region, including details of location, classes and participation in classes, and
- 2) It will investigate the gaps faced by literacy programs in Peterborough

### *Evaluation design*

This research project used a combination of quantitative (ie. phone and online surveys) and qualitative evaluation approaches (ie. focus groups and semi-structured interviews). The use of quantitative approaches was necessary to develop the initial stage of the research, as they offer an overview of demographics (ie. number of annual clients, number of staff, volunteers, address, etc). Quantitative methods were necessary in order to answer the question on challenges and gaps faced by literacy organizations and programs. The design of focus groups and interviews allowed this research to reach a deep and detailed analysis.

### *Methods and Data collection Strategies*

The initial stage of this project focused on collecting contact information of literacy programs/organizations funded by the Ministry of Education and Training. The list of initial contacts became the starting point for a snow ball survey strategy. A search of the web and local telephone books revealed additional literacy programs and services available in the region. Advertising of this research project was done through two newspaper ads in Peterborough This Week and numerous free classified postings in the following local websites: quidnovis, cogeco, Peterborough reuses, freecycle and craig's list (See Appendix 3.0). Unfortunately, there was no response to either the newspaper or classified ads.

Initially, there was an intention to also distribute some posters in the Peterborough Library and other

public places, as well as, through LOCS and Trent Central Community Base Education (TCCBE) emailing list. A small blurb on the nature and goals of this project was distributed through the LOCS emailing list. However, time constraint prevented the posting of ads in public venues.

The list of contacts grew to include 109 organizations (See Appendix 6.0). The range of service that these organizations offer was broad, including: academic upgrading, skills training, vocational training, employment counselling, parenting skills, tutoring, mentorships, family literacy, youth, children and adult literacy. Thus, the second stage of research involved conducting a short phone survey with each of the 109 organizations identified. Since this research project narrowed down its focus to include only those organizations whose service were free of charge, the phone interviews served as a screening mechanism. During the phone interviews we asked for information about the nature and cost of the organizations' services and the geographical area they serve. Furthermore, we used the informal phone interviews to describe this research project and ask for their participation in completing an email survey. Additional contact information was requested from those organizations whose information was not available in any of our written sources. After the phone interviews the list of contacts was cut down to 30 organizations working in literacy related issues. A total of nine organizations completed the online survey.

A focus group was conducted as a second research method to validate the information collected to this point. The invitation to participate in the focus group was sent to all 30 organizations. A total of eight organizations attended the focus group. It was decided that in order to collect detail rich information the participants were to be divided into two focus groups. Both focus groups were planned to be 1 hour long. Due to the interest of the focus groups participants an extra half an hour was used. The focus groups were planned to encourage conversation answer two main questions: (See Appendix 2.1)

- 1) What are your top 3 challenges as an organization working on literacy issues?
- 2) What is the role of networking for community organizations involved in literacy?

The focus groups participants self-selected the group they wanted to join. It must be noted that even though both focus groups followed a similar format and facilitation, participants of focus group 1 discussions focused heavily on question 1, while focus group 2 discussion centred around the second question. The diversity of answers and discussions fleshed out important challenges, as well as, provided suggestions for co-operation between organizations.

A one-to-one interview was conducted as the final part of data collection. The participant who agreed to be interviewed was questioned on its perception of gaps and the stability of literacy services in the community. (See Appendix 4.1)

### *Methods of analysis*

Our research method of analysis is intended to capture information about the following six categories of gaps which are informed by Rubenson and Xu's analysis of barriers to literacy program participation in Canada:

**Funding gaps:** it is important to note that the funding of literacy programs in Peterborough is a provincial matter, which tends to depend on specific administrations in office, affecting the long term stability of funding those programs. Funding gaps are an example of institutional barriers. Currently, there are three main sources of funding for literacy programs in Ontario. At the Provincial level, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Literacy and Basic Skills Investment Branch (LBS); Federally, the Human Resources and Skills Development, National Literacy Secretariat (NLS); and the third source are various foundations and community groups (George: 4) To this day, however, the major funder of literacy programs in Ontario is the MTCU, through their LBS Branch. According to Pricilla George's article, *First Nations Literacy in Ontario*, “the focus of the LBS program is to provide students and trainees with the knowledge and skills essential to succeed in the global economy. In practice, the focus is on preparing adult learners for the workplace/workforce.” (6) One of the challenges documented in the emergence of alternative literacy groups in Ontario has been the fact that funding decisions are based on policy desires and limited by constraints which may not be compatible with local realities (Smythe, 2005). Furthermore, a few number of problems for participants are created by strict funding guidelines and/or time limitations (*Adult Literacy: Policies, Programs and Practices: Lessons learned*, 2000) For instance, literacy projects attempting to follow a holistic approach to literacy (ie. Weaving Literacy Project), often face the limitations given that literacy groups are funded to promote family literacy or adult literacy programming, never both (Smythe, 2005).

**Location gaps:** focusing on the setting of Peterborough programs (urban, rural, neighborhoods

mobility). Location gaps are considered to be institutional and dispositional barriers. According to the most recent study put out by the Canadian Council on Learning, the shorter the commuting distance from a participant's home or workplaces to the literacy center, the more likely a person is to remain in a program. This report also mentions the importance of conducting programs in spaces such “colleges (through basic adult education programs), vocational training institutes, at private and public companies (through partnerships with human resources departments) and community centres.” (2008: 49)

**Time gaps:** considering the hours of program operations as well as beneficiaries' own time restrictions. Time gaps are part of institutional barriers.

**Clientèle gaps:** groups diversities of the beneficiaries (ie. Age groups, ethnic groups, racial groups, age, gender, class and physical and mental abilities). Clientele gaps can be considered a result of an interrelated overlap of the the three main barriers. The 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) has provided detailed information about the characteristics of adult literacy problems in general and specific populations as youth, seniors, working and unemployed adults, and social assistance recipients. Thus, it is now possible to characterize those who have, or are likely to have, literacy problems as older people, female, francophone, urban dwellers, New Canadians whose first language is English or French, the unemployed, people with learning disabilities and indigenous people (ABC Canada, 1997). Furthermore, the IALS survey results also documented a significant gap in socio-economic status, employment options and other activities between those people with high literacy skills and those with lower skills. (Human Resources Development Canada, 1996). Research funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and Statistics Canada have further the understanding of clientèle gap by investigating literacy in the workplace (Krahn & Lowe, 1998), literacy and seniors (Roberts & Fawcett, 1998), literacy and socioeconomic status (Tuijnman, 2001), and literacy and youth (Willms & Sloat, 1997).

**Delivery gaps:** constitute the models of teaching curriculum, settings of classrooms and delivery methods. Teaching methods gaps are an example of dispositional barriers. A report published by Human Resources Development Canada, department of Evaluation and Data Development define common elements that comprise good practice among adult literacy programs. Among them are: “...trained instructors; non-threatening learning environment; adult-oriented materials and approaches

to teaching and evaluation; and individualized instruction” (*Adult Literacy: Policies, Programs and Practices* 2000: 11). It is also argued in the report that issues of access, childcare, transportation, community and cultural orientation, and personal meaningfulness are considered part of effective literacy programs (2000). This can immediately lead to a resource gap.

**Resource gaps:** those which constitute of the number of staff, number of volunteers and program material resources-such as transportation devices. Resource gaps are considered to be part of the institutional barriers.

**Public awareness gap:** We found throughout the research that the use of term “literacy” entails negative connotations. Due to the stigmatization of those who lack literacy skills, using different language such as “essential Skills”, “Academic Upgrading”, and “Vocational Skills” were deemed more appropriate and effective terms to use.

### *Research Limitations*

This research was able to collect an important amount of information, however, some limitations still prevailed. We were informed by the focus groups participants that they require at least one month notice to be able to plan for their involvement in any of the stages of this project. This resulted in a low response rate. Due to the extensive nature of the research questions, four months of research time was a limitation. Initially we intended to design comparative maps of literacy clients postal codes and the location of literacy services. Collecting literacy client's postal codes was not accessible. Given the nature of this study, participation was limited to literacy services' staff. No literacy clients were involved, which resulted in limiting the analysis of certain gaps (i.e. Clientele, Location and Time gaps). Some of the research limitations were related to the design of the online survey questions. For instance, it would have been helpful to ask about the percentage of the services that are literacy related within each organization.

## DATA

### *Funding gaps*

<p><b>Lack of funding (in general)</b></p>	<p>“Funding...there is no week that goes by, that I can relax and not think about where the next project is going to come from and whether we will get the money.”</p>	<p>“[Need for] budget support for programs and services.”</p>	<p>“No budget increased for over 10 years”</p>
<p><b>Mandate and Funding Conditionality</b></p>	<p>“Funding only for limited subsection of clients, but requests for services come from all client groups.”</p> <p>“Our funding is very limited as vocational supports and literacy training are a secondary priority next to funding for residential services for the people we support.”</p>	<p>“Finding the appropriate funder is another challenge. It is [also about] what are you will be allow to do with that money.”</p>	<p>“Some members of [our] team are looking at ways to support literacy in other ways (since it isn't truly a part of our mandate, but is important for our clients who are almost universally left behind with regards to literacy).”</p>
<p><b>Funding Sustainability</b> (ability to maintained funding at a satisfactory level)</p>	<p>“the sustainability of funding is a challenge within funding. It's not just the amount of money[...]it is about what it means to the participants when the rug is pulled out.”</p>		
<p><b>Funding Consistency</b> (achievement of a satisfactory level of funding that does not vary greatly in quality over time)</p>	<p>“Lack of consistent funding for [literacy] assessments”</p>		

### *Resource gaps*

Resource gaps are complex and closely linked to the funding gaps experienced by organizations working on literacy issues. It is important to clarify the several meaning that the word resource can take depending on the context in which it is used. During the second focus group it was established that the word resources was used to mean at least four different things.

- **Human resources:** staff and volunteers
- **Physical Resources:** educational material, physical infrastructure, technology (eg. Faxes, computers, phones, internet access, etc).
- **Networking:** networking with other community organization within Peterborough, allows

organizations to use each other to provide additional resources for their clients, through partnerships, referrals, resource sharing, etc.

- **Public support systems:** refers to resources such: the transit system, childcare, , etc.

<b>Human resources (Staff and Volunteers)</b>	“Recruiting volunteers”	Recruiting, training, supervising and maintaining volunteers is time consuming for a one-person organization.	“[Need for] front-line staffing for delivering programs.”
<b>Networking</b>	Being able to build partnerships with other organizations takes years. There is no funding allocated for networking. Thus, networking is done in a causal way which is mostly a result of staff's personal interest, personalities. It is hard to have continuity given staff changes, focus and priorities of organizations.	Difficult to network with organizations who don't have the same mandate: “Networking among organization who share mandate and funders is easier given commonalities and the availability of shared resources, such as websites, newsletters, symposiums, etc.”	“Difficult to homogenize the knowledge that staff members have of community resources available for our clients. It is in a sense an information management problem.”
<b>Physical Resources</b>	“most of our existing material assumes a higher literacy level - extra support required to keep low literacy clients in our work experience program.”	“[need to] keep up with being able to offer materials in the format that people want eg. downloadable MP3 format audiobooks”	“In some centres in Toronto, they still have a classroom and teachers as part of their centres. We used to have one but now we don't...the funding was cut.”
<b>Public support systems</b>	Need for a better public transit system.	Affordable and accessible childcare	

### *Clientele gaps*

<b>Eligibility criteria</b>	Eligibility criteria limits the 'type' of people who can access a particular literacy program.	“We are trying to develop a partnership with Alternatives in order to transition our clients into a world beyond our centre because after they turned 19 we are longer a place that can assist them given our mandate and funder's eligibility criteria.”	
<b>Structural/Institutional Challenges</b>	“Clients unable to attend due to work, childcare, transportation, personal and family issues”	Violence, abuse, unstable family environment	
<b>Lack of incentives</b>	“Students are not funded to be in literacy. Ontario Works gives them a bus pass and their books, but it is kind of their job. They are working really hard and I think they should be paid a stipend.”	“Once clients find a job, they stop attending literacy training ...after that there is really no incentives for them to come back[...]	“achieving a smooth transition from literacy to work is a challenge ”

*Time gaps*

<b>Hours of operation</b>	Literacy programs and services are offered during office hours (8-5pm).	
<b>Characteristics of literacy programs</b>	Continuos intake	Availability of programs all year long Wait listing

*Public awareness gaps*

<b>Marketing of literacy services</b>	“People don't like the term literacy.”	Need to get people to use the services and know what literacy services encompass and what literacy skills mean for people's lives.
<b>Civil servant' awareness of the importance of literacy training</b>	“Networking with organization who focus on different issues and population is hard...a large part of networking gets spend in explaining what it is that we do and how we do it an din trying to find the ways in which our 2 organizations' overlap or could strengthen one another. And time is a huge challenge for this.”	
<b>Dominant discourse around literacy</b>		Government funding is not consistent

## ANALYSIS

### PART I: GAPS

**Funding gaps:** it is important to note that the funding of literacy programs in Peterborough is a provincial matter, which tends to depend on specific administrations in office, affecting the long term stability of funding those programs. Funding gaps are an example of institutional barriers.

According to Pricilla George (2003), “the focus of the LBS program is to provide students and trainees with the knowledge and skills essential to succeed in the global economy. In practice, the focus is on

preparing adult learners for the workplace/workforce” (p. 6). One of the challenges documented in the emergence of alternative literacy groups in Ontario has been the fact that funding decisions are based on policy desires and limited by constraints which may not be compatible with local realities (Smythe, 2005). Furthermore, a few number of problems for participants are created by strict funding guidelines and/or time limitations (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2000) For instance, literacy projects attempting to follow a holistic approach to literacy (i.e. Weaving Literacy Project), often face the limitations given that literacy groups are funded to promote family literacy or adult literacy programming, but never both (Smythe, 2005). In the context of aboriginal literacy programs, George (2005) recommends that provincial governments should develop an Aboriginal Literacy Strategy that: “...incorporates a holistic approach; respects Aboriginal languages, traditions and values; and is funded at a level commensurate with the seriousness of the problem of low literacy among Aboriginal peoples” (p. 28). Providing funding to literacy and skills programs that adopt a holistic approach to literacy can contribute to serving a wider diverse group of people. As this research paper is concerned with the gaps faced by institution that deliver literacy services, it also explores the affects of literacy delivery gaps on the hidden population (i.e. immigrants, non-Anglophones, aboriginal peoples etc.).

### *Government Policy on Literacy Funding*

Up until January 2007, there were two levels of government (federal and provincial) delivering training and employment programs in Ontario. Both provincial and federal government argued that this situation resulted in inefficiencies in the use of resources due to duplications and overlaps of services in some regions and entire gaps of services in other areas (NALD.ca). Thus, the merging of federal and provincial programs under Employment Ontario came into effect in 2007. Employment Ontario became a province-wide “integrated training and employment network” (ibib). In the Employment Ontario system, Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Academic Upgrading are considered areas of ‘skills enhancement’ and ‘on-the-job training/workplace skills’( [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/adultlearning](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/tcu/adultlearning)).

In 2008, the merge began by introducing a new service delivery framework for programs offering employment services in the Employment Ontario network. In 2009 its focus is on service integration of Literacy and Basic Skills and other Employment Ontario training programs (NALD.ca). Consistently, in March 26, 2009, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan announce an additional \$90 million over the next

two years for literacy and basic skills programming in the Ontario. This additional funding officially ended a decade of static funding for literacy work and comes to re-introduce an emphasis on workplace literacy. (<http://ontarioliteracycoalition.com/2009/03/27/new-funding-for-literacy-programs/>) The full integration of Employment Ontario programs and services is expected to be in place by July 2010 (NALD.ca).

Lack of funding was found to be a common issue that was shared dominantly by all the participants in one of the two focus groups conducted in this project. The participants have expressed that funding for literacy services is significantly low in Peterborough, especially for libraries. Funding problem was defined as provincial and a national funding development issue. In order for literacy services in Peterborough to be able to meet surrounding developments and technological advances, there needs to be long terms funding plans, as opposed to short terms ones. Participants also exposed the socio-economic structure of the city of Peterborough. They expressed that class structure is a large barrier that is reflected in the ability of certain groups to benefit from literacy services, while others do not. Providing literacy services as part of a wider free public education is one of the most apparent solution to this problem.

#### *Mandate/ Funding Conditionality*

Participants of one of the focus groups identified organizations' mandate to be one of the challenges literacy organizations face. Mandate restrictions, they illustrated, confine employees' capacity to expand on their job descriptions, resulting in limited capacity for collaborating with other literacy agencies and programs. Some participants expressed that they have to work around specific mandates adopted by their organizations. One of the mandate restrictions faced by one of the participants was the language used in provided material. Considering that the vast majority of literacy services and material are provided only in English language prevents non-English speakers, namely immigrants, from participation. Translation of material or acquiring translators requires alterations of programs' mandates as well as provision of resources. Mandate restrictions was explained to be affecting a small minority of organization, however, it falls down under a bigger funding challenge. Expanding mandates will require expanding the resources of the organizations, which require larger funding. Balancing the relationship between a successful labor-based workplace literacy programs for workers and their inputs require "...appropriate time-tabling; evaluation tools and process guided by labor goals; good instructors; committed participants; committed management and effective support for participants and

instructors; a wide variety of learning materials; and effective organizational links” (HDRC, 2000, p. 13). In balancing between the staff and their job descriptions, workers need to be involved in all phases of program development (HDRC, 2000). A non-hierarchical structure of workers in literacy programs requires all stakeholders (from workers to administrators) to “...buy in to the goals and methods...Key advice to educators is to act as “consultants” and guide rather than direct; and to find the right combination to unlock the particular organization, but not compromise on what it takes to run a quality program” (HDRC, 2000, p. 14)

**Resource gaps:** those which constitute of the number of staff, number of volunteers and program material resources-such as transportation devices. Resource gaps are considered to be part of the institutional barriers. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (2000) provides that literacy skills teaching programs typically “...use paid and volunteer staff in community and/or institutional settings with various approaches and results” (p. 6). Literacy skills programs are usually offered as part of the public educational system as well as by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community agencies. Human Resources and Social Development Canada (2000) report adds that “[a]s an educational and training issues, literacy is the responsibility of the provinces and territories; and little research is available about the effectiveness of provincial/territorial literacy education programs” (p. 6). While interventions of development projects and strategies to remediate and reduce literacy demands have been successful, the number of adult-Canadians with literacy related problems has not been reduced and literacy-related gaps persist (HDRC, 2000). Federal government initiative like the plain language initiative have been successful in providing a wide range of resource material on clear language and have had positive effects in reducing literacy difficulties among certain targeted audience like “offenders, families employed and unemployed workers, adult upgrading students, adults with learning disabilities, and others” (HDRC, 2000, p. 7)). These resources have been used in legal, health-related and government documents.

Low participation rates in literacy programs reflect that many adults with low literacy skill levels do not consider that have a problem, and many of the most needy for literacy skills programs do not attend (HDRC, 2000). The estimated ratio of enrollment in literacy programs in Canada ranges between 6% and 10 % of those who should or need to be enrolled (HDRC, 200, p.17). one reason for such low participation is due to barriers in “...access and accommodation in teaching/learning programs combined with the associated problems of unemployment, poverty and disenfranchisement” (HDRC,

2000, p. 17). Resource barriers also constitute of lack of fiscal resource, lack of support system such as child care and transportation, inadequate housing and health care, violence, abuse and addiction, need for eye and hearing aid, discrimination based on race, class, gender and ability levels (HDRC, 2000). In order to reach targeted populations that face those barriers and in order to overcome such resource, significant policy ratification as well as new funding will be required (HDRC, 2000). The HDRC (2000) report states that while individual volunteers continue to come forward to volunteer as tutors and literacy advocates, the support does not extend to influencing other policy alternatives like increased spending on adult education. The implications of such phenomenon assert that "... considerable amounts of adult literacy resources got to research and public education, but few dedicated resources have been directed at modifying the current education and training system to accommodate adult literacy in a meaningful way" (HDRC, 2000, p. 11). The resources gap is closely interlinked with the funding gap. The low capacity for recruiting staff and volunteers within literacy programs is correlated to the poor funding available to literacy programs. This was reflected in the focus group that was conducted as part of this research .

### *Physical Resources*

Curriculum challenges was expressed to be part of a resource gap faced by literacy services in Peterborough. One of the participants expressed that in order to meet the needs of a wide range of clients (i.e. disabled persons) organizations are ought to be equipped with materials and technological devices required to meeting those needs. Technological devices include computers, information resource system, devices for people who suffer from hearing and speech disabilities, etc.

### *Public Support Systems*

Considering the geographic spread of client base in Peterborough, outreach was defined as a major challenge faced by participants in one of the focus groups. As most of the literacy services are delivered in centre city Peterborough, reaching communities that live in the outskirts was identified as a resource gap. Participants proposed that one solution to this problem requires a county transportation plan that will allow individuals to reach the literacy services conveniently and visa versa.

Some of the findings of the Human Development and Resources (2000) report suggest that some conditions do not always allow the designing and delivery for quality adult literacy programs. Some of the basic elements that comprise good practice in adult literacy programs include "...trained instructors; non-threatening learning environment; adult-oriented materials and approaches to teaching and evaluation; and individualized instruction" (HDRC, 2000, p. 11). Effective programs take in consideration issues of accessibility, child care, transportation, "community and cultural orientation, and personal meaningfulness" (HDRC, 2000, p. 11).

Many of the challenges and gaps identified by participants in the focus groups are echoed in the HDRC 2000 report. Considerable problems including unstable funding and limited accountability, are national challenges that face literacy programs in Canada as a whole (HDRC, 2000). Suggestions for improving such barriers made by staff and researchers include "...the need to increase program funding, hire more staff, expand learner participation in guiding the program, arrange for good child care, and improve the assessment and documentation of learners' progress" (HDRC, 2000, p. 18). Suggestions made by funding agencies and donors on the other hand, include "...a pressing need to demonstrate accountability through evaluation" (HDRC, 200, p. 18). Paid and volunteer teaching/tutoring staff also have continuous learning needs require adequate technological supplies and effective training in information and technology use (HDRC, 2000).

**Clientele Gaps:** This section will focus on the institutional, dispositional and structural causes of clientele gaps as perceived by the staff delivering literacy services. The following four overarching issues were identified as the underlying causes of Clientele gaps experienced by literacy services in the City of Peterborough.

### *Eligibility criteria*

The issue concerned with eligibility criteria have been brought forward several time through this report. Its relevance as a cause for Clientele gaps lays on its ability to indirectly or directly influencing the gender, class, kind of people and of which ability levels get access to specific literacy services and programs. As expressed by research participants not all clients are eligible given their mandate and organizations' funding criteria. While some literacy and social workers act as advocates for the clients who do not meet the eligibility criteria, this is not always possible due to limited staff and time.

### *Structural/Institutional Challenges*

This research found that from the perspective of literacy workers, literacy learner in the City of Peterborough experience similar challenges to those presented in the HRDC study on 'Adult Literacy: Policies, Programs and Practices.' In 2000, the final report of the aforementioned study argued that learner participation was affected by structural and institutional problems that include:

- lack of appropriate, accessible education and training programs;
- lack of financial resources;
- lack of support systems, including child care and transportation;
- unsuitable living conditions, including poor health and nutrition, and inadequate housing;
- personal circumstances and attributes, including stress and low-self esteem;
- issues of violence, abuse and addictions;
- need for eyeglasses or hearing aids; and
- discrimination based on race, class, gender and ability levels.

In specific, the participants of both focused groups and one-to-one interviews identified issues of transportation, childcare, family situation, violence, class discrimination, lack of financial resources and personal circumstance to contribute to the existence of Clientele gaps in literacy programs and services in Peterborough.

### *Lack of incentives*

While literacy learners face numerous barriers to participation, those who choose to enrol in literacy training have little incentives to continue on the program. Many literacy and social workers interviewed during this research saw the lack of incentives for participants as a significant challenge for enrolment, completion and success of literacy training. Thus, literacy is often seen as means to an end (empowerment, independence, employment, education, etc). Due to the provincial emphasis on employment literacy an increasing number of literacy learners enrol in literacy training with the goal of obtaining employment counselling and/or vocational training. Literacy learners are often recipients of

social assistance under Ontario Works or ODSP. For literacy workers in Peterborough the lack of monetary incentives for learners who face a difficult financial situation, is a crucial barrier for learner participation.

Furthermore, the lack of financial incentives to participate in literacy training are compounded with an uneasy transition out of literacy training. As explained by several research participants, “literacy training does not guarantee a smooth transition from literacy training to work.” In 1992 the Literacy workers interview for the National Anti-Poverty Organization study “did not hold much hope for economic improvement among their learners” (Haley & Davidson, 2000 p.137).

**Time gaps:** these gaps are part of institutional barriers. This report identifies hours of operation and character of literacy services as challenges contributing to time gaps.

#### *Hours of operation*

The frequently mentioned lack of support systems such affordable and accessible child care and an efficient transportation system tend to influence issues which influence whether learners can attend literacy training (HDRC, 2000, p.17). These structural problems along with location gaps play a big role on the time restrictions facing literacy learners. This research found that few of the surveyed organizations explicitly offer learners the option to schedule lessons outside their given office hours. Further research on the existence of time gaps is needed. Such research should focus on literacy learners and potential literacy learners opinions.

#### *Characteristics of literacy services*

Literacy and social workers whose opinions inform this report agreed that issues related with the availability of literacy programming throughout the entire year, an organization's ability to offer continuous intake affect the number and type of clients they can serve. Also, the resources gaps faced by literacy programs and services make the use of wait list necessary. Yet, long wait list discouraged potential learners from enrolling (Who Wants to Learn?, 2001).

**Delivery gaps:** Literacy services and programs in the City of Peterborough were found to use family sessions, one-to-one tutoring, small group, classroom setting and on-the job training as their most

common styles in the delivery of literacy services. Not being able to include the beneficiaries of literacy services in this research curtailed our ability to further explore the gaps and issues relevant to Teaching/ Delivery methods. The information collected during this project points to the fact that the choice of delivery style depends on the specific organization's funding criteria, availability of resources, availability of, staff,volunteers, space and learning resources, as well as, learners' personal goals and time availability.

In fact, several studies have identified barriers to access and accommodation in teaching/learning programs, combined with the associated problems of unemployment, poverty and disenfranchisement (NIL, 1995; NLS, 1995; Smith, 1997), as a reason for low participation rates. Previous studies of literacy programs and practices have also found that the learner perceptions on instructional approaches, settings and facilities, testing procedures, teaching materials, and/or time frames are aspects that influence a person decision to participate and complete literacy training (HDRC, 2000).

More research is necessary in order to determine the ways in which delivery methods influence and are influenced by the existence of all other gaps identified in this report. In order to understand the relevance of this gap in the literacy programs and services in the City of Peterborough, it would be necessary to conduct research within a Utilization-Focused framework. A research design which follows a Utilization-Focused Evaluation framework is centred around the utility needs of its intended users, while giving due importance to the processes at work within project and program delivery (Patton, 1994).

**Location Gaps:** This section explores issues of Proximity of literacy programs. The word proximity is used to imply proximity of program to clients home, work, and bus stop or other public transit sites. Literacy learners rank money/conflict with paid employment and the distant location of the program offered as the most important set of concerns about taking literacy training (Non-Participation in Literacy and Upgrading Programs, ABC CANADA, 2002).

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## **PART I: NETWORKING**

Part I of this report has thoroughly discussed the challenges faced by literacy programs and services in the City of Peterborough. The second part of this research is concerned with understanding the potential that networking has for enhancing the literacy work being done in the City of Peterborough. In previous report on literacy programs is been argued that successful literacy programs are those who “provide support services and linkages to other service providers, while issues of access, child care, transportation, community and cultural orientation, and personal meaningfulness are considered” (HDRC, 2000. p.11). It is then important to explore the networking by looking a three of its components: its role in enhancing literacy services performance, the challenges faced and finally proposed recommendations for improvement of networking.

### *The role of networking for literacy programs and services*

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Networking is seen as a key factor for the success of workplace literacy management. HDRC (2000) identifies a successful networking plan to include:

- Labor partnership
  - Junction of particular goals and expectations
  - Assigning clear roles and responsibilities
  - “true collaboration in activities such as task analysis” (p. 14)
  - Written policies and procedures
  - Efficient administration;
  - Clear job descriptions
  - Orientation for instructors
  - “Ongoing data collection and program evaluation” (p. 14)
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In light of the realities faced by literacy programs and services providers networking has the potential to ease up some of the challenges faced by literacy programs and services. Specifically, participants of this research project see a role for networking in the following areas:

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*Improving referrals:* making adequate referrals greatly depends on being aware of the resources and services available for clients. Networking can create more awareness of the available resources for different client pools.

*Volunteer training:* combining human and physical resources to provide volunteer training could offer smaller organizations the opportunity to take in more volunteers.

*Lobbying:* Support for initiatives that seek to enhance support systems such better transportation system and adequate childcare is a task that can be achieved through better networking.

*Client Advocacy:* engaging in advocacy is a time consuming task for most literacy workers. Furthermore, advocacy can be more substantial when several community organizations join their voices and resources. Some of the research participants brought up the example of a collective effort by community agencies to provide itinerary services for the residents of Peterborough county.

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### *The challenges of networking*

**Lack of funding:** A significant challenge with networking is the lack of funding. Incorporating networking meeting, endeavours and activities within job task is difficult. While building meaningful networks among community organizations is time consuming and can take years, participants agreed that these networks are not very strong. The lack of funding, the changing needs and focus of organizations and staff within organizations are associated with the lack of continuity of such partnerships and networks. Thus, the communication between partners can be as frequent as once a week and as sporadic as once a year.

**Information management issues:** Participants also referred to the the impossibility to force staff members to network. Furthermore, harmonizing the knowledge of available community resources that staff members have is hard to achieve. In a sense, this problem was described as an “information management problem.”

**Staff personality and disposition for networking:** Research participants defined networking as “a

process always in development,” mostly, a casual and informal process. Participants agreed that establishing networks between community organization relations is heavily influenced by personal relations and thus, staff personalities and personal interest and commitment to networking. Building personal connexions with other organizations' staff was said to be an easier and more efficient way to network than trying to network with an organization as an entity.

*Recommendations to enhanced networking opportunities*

- Networking among organization who share mandate and funders is easier given commonalities and shared resources available, such as websites, newsletters, symposiums, etc.
- There should be more awareness among civil servants and the general public regarding what community services have to offer.

*Ideal format for a networking meeting:*

- Small meeting setting (4-5 people)
- Short Meetings (2 hours maximum)
- Having a clear topic for the meeting, the more specific the better
- Having an experienced facilitator for the meeting, such facilitator should not act as participant of the meeting. The facilitator should moderate the conversation and ensure that all agenda items are address.

*Other tools for networking:*

- A manual with extension numbers and the name of a contact, personal email addresses. This manual should be user-friendly and frequently updated. It should not be a data base but a clear representation of literacy services available in the City of Peterborough.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have presented the gaps and the challenges faced by some literacy programs, services and organizations in Peterborough. We have attempted to explore the ways in which those gaps overlap and the role of networking between literacy services in the community of Peterborough. We were able to use qualitative research evaluation methods in order to classify the different gaps into a wider barriers framework. This research found that the lack of funding for literacy services was a major gap faced by the majority of the participants. The funding gap was also found to overlap and contribute to the enhancement of all the other gaps. Other gaps consisted of resource gaps, locations gaps, time gaps, delivery gaps, and public awareness gaps.

Research participants identified that there needs for better networking that includes an exchange of resources and improvement of referrals, clientele advocacy and lobbying, and volunteer training. Our research host, Literacy Ontario Central South requested the compilation a manual of available literacy services in Peterborough. This manual acts as an initial step to implementing a networking strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

For future improvements and buildings on the research results, we propose the following recommendations:

- Dedicating longer time limit to conduct the research;
- Using a user-focused approach to evaluation through including literacy clients in the research;
- Researching the challenges and barriers faced by literacy clients including those who fall amongst the hidden populations (i.e. New comers, single mothers, people with mental and physical disabilities, etc.)

# **APPENDICES**

## **1.0 Invitation to complete online survey**

To whom it may concern,

We, Yazmin Hernandez and Yafa Jarrar, would like to invite your organization to be part of a research project which will assist Literacy Ontario Central South (LOCS) efforts to support literacy programs in the city of Peterborough. We are two Trent students working in this project with LOCS and the Trent Centre for Community Based Education (TCCBE). Our research will carry on an environmental scan of literacy programs in the community which will consist of two tasks:

1) It will catalogue existing literacy programs in the region, including details of location, classes and participation in classes.

2) It will investigate the more challenging question of gaps in available programs.

Our research will involve an email survey, phone interviews, focus groups and one-to-one interviews with community organizations working in literacy issues. We are asking for your cooperation in order to successfully complete this project. The final report will be sent to all participants of this project, once the research is completed.

We have decided to contact you because we are interested in hearing more about your services and how your organization deals with the literacy needs that you clients may have. Please take a few minutes to follow the link and complete the online survey.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wNJxJLGNJ9wrB\\_2bEsq4nv1Q\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wNJxJLGNJ9wrB_2bEsq4nv1Q_3d_3d)

Thank you for your time and effort.

If you have further questions or concerns, or know of other organizations which should be included in this research project, please feel free to contact us at [tccbetrent@gmail.com](mailto:tccbetrent@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Yazmin Hernandez and Yafa Jarrar

# 1.1: Online Survey

## Environmental Scan of Literacy Programs in Peterborough

### 1. First section

In an attempt to improve networking and communication between literacy organizations and programs in Peterborough, Literacy Ontario Central South is hosting a research project to map out the literacy needs of the Peterborough community. Please, take a few minutes to complete.

NOTE: You will have until February 27th, 2009 to complete this survey.

#### \* 1. Please, provide the general information about your organization/agency.

Your name:   
Name of Organization:   
Address of Organization:   
Hours of Operation:   
City/Town:   
Province:   
ZIP/Postal Code:   
Website:   
Email Address:   
Phone Number:

#### \* 2. Does your organization offer any literacy programs/ services to your clients?

- YES  
 NO

Other (please specify)

#### \* 3. Are your literacy programs/services free for the participants?

- YES  
 NO

Other (please specify)

## Environmental Scan of Literacy Programs in Peterborough

**\* 4. What literacy programs and services does your organization offer?**

**\* 5. What is the eligibility criteria for your clients to access the literacy services you offer?(Specify age range, gender, employment status, etc)**

**\* 6. What is the approximate percentage of males and females who use your literacy programs/services?**

Males

Females

**\* 7. How are your services delivered? (E.g. classroom setting, tutoring, computer program, on-the-job training, etc)**

### 2. Second section

**\* 1. How many literacy clients does your organization/program serve annually?**

## Environmental Scan of Literacy Programs in Peterborough

**\* 6. How do most of your clients hear about your literacy programs/services? Please, check all that apply.**

Newspapers/advertisements

Radio or TV

Referral basis

Brochures

Walk-in Consultations

Other (please specify)

**\* 7. What do you view as the top three challenges facing your literacy programs/services?**

### 3. End of survey

Thank you for your time and support.

## **2.0 Invitation to participate in focus group**

To whom it may concern,

We, Yazmin Hernandez and Yafa Jarrar, would like to invite your organization to be part of a research project which will assist Literacy Ontario Central South (LOCS) efforts to support literacy programs in the city of Peterborough. We are two Trent students working in this project with LOCS and the Trent Centre for Community Based Education (TCCBE). Our research will carry on an environmental scan of literacy programs in the community which will consist of two tasks:

- 1) It will catalogue existing literacy programs in the region, including details of location, classes and participation in classes.
- 2) It will investigate the more challenging question of gaps in available programs.

Our research will involve an email survey, phone interviews, focus groups and one-to-one interviews with community organizations working in literacy issues. The final report will be sent to all participants of this project, once the research is completed.

We are asking for your participation in a focus group which will explore new networking opportunities for community organizations working with clients who may have some literacy needs. The focus group will take place on February 27th, 2009 at Best Western Otonabee Inn from 9:30-11:00 am.

Furthermore, we would like to hear more about the services offered by the Canadian Hearing Society, and how your organization deals with the literacy needs that you clients may have. Please take a few minutes to follow the link and complete the online survey.

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wNJxJLGNJ9wrB\\_2bEsq4nv1Q\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=wNJxJLGNJ9wrB_2bEsq4nv1Q_3d_3d)

Your cooperation and contribution is important to this research and we are hoping to meet with you in person. If you decide to join us for the focus group, please, RSVP to [tccbetrent@gmail.com](mailto:tccbetrent@gmail.com) by February 23rd 2009.

If you have further questions or concerns, or know of other organizations which should be included in this research project, please feel free to contact us at [tccbetrent@gmail.com](mailto:tccbetrent@gmail.com) or LOCS 705-749-0675.

Sincerely,

Yazmin Hernandez and Yafa Jarrar

### **3.0 Newspaper advertisement of research project**

#### Literacy programs and Organizations in Peterborough

The Trent Centre for Community Based Education and Literacy Ontario Central South are conducting a research project on literacy programs in Peterborough. To better benefit the community; enhance networking opportunities and sharing of resources. If you are or know of any agencies that deliver literacy and basic skills services call (705)749-0675 or email [tccbentrent@gmail.com](mailto:tccbentrent@gmail.com).

### **4.0 Request for one-to-one interviews**

Good morning!

Thank you for your reply and interest in this research. The focus group scheduled for Feb. 27th, was a complete success. We have collected invaluable opinions and information about the literacy needs of the community.

We are currently, scheduling one-to-one interviews with community groups who could not attend the focus group. Given the time constrains we are facing, we are scheduling interviews for the following three weeks of March (March 9th -March 27th). The interview should not take more than 30 minutes, and either Yafa or myself would conduct the interview in the interviewee's work place.

We are very interested in hearing from you and collecting opinions which were not represented in the focus group discussions. If you can spare 30 minutes within the following three weeks, please let us know.

Please,find a draft of the interview script below.

Thank you in advance,

Yazmin Hernandez

## 4.1 Script for one-to-one interviews

- 1- Annual number of clients:
- 2- Criteria for eligibility of clients to receive Literacy skills services
- 3- Which areas (in city of Peterborough) do your clients come from?
- 4- What resources do you offer you clients?
- 5- How do you deliver your literacy services?
- 6- How many staff do you have? Volunteers?
- 7- Do you rely on funding for the sustainability of your literacy services?
- 8- How reliable or steady are your sources of funding?
- 9- How long has your organization been working on literacy issues in the city of Peterborough?
- 10- Have your literacy services and or programs change over time?
- 11- What are the challenges that are most pressing?
- 12- Do you have partnerships with other organizations in town?
- 13- How do you see your organization fit within the needs of the people living in the City of Peterborough?
- 14- How often do you get clients who come to you, seeking services that you don't offer?
- 14 (b) How often do you get clients who come to you seeking services that they are not eligible for?