

Please browse, but do not remove

70034

Trent Valley Literacy Association Report

Includes:

**Proposed Student Intake Form
Final Report**

**By: Lindsay Moreau
Heather O'Neill**

Completed for: Trent Valley Literacy Association
Professor: Molly Westland, Trent University
Trent-Centre for Community-Based Education

Department: BSC Nursing

Course code:

Date of Project Completion: March 30, 2003

Project ID: 550

Call Number: (Peterborough Public Library will add when the project is catalogued)

370 Mor

Executive Summary

Literacy is an issue that affects many Canadians, as 22 percent of adults in Canada have serious problems dealing with any printed material. The purpose of this study was to determine the learners that come to Trent Valley Literacy Association (TVLA), the demographics identifying specific groups within this population, and recruitment and retention strategies. At TVLA the 25 to 44 year old age group had the greatest attendance. Within the Peterborough population of 71,445 there are 19.4 percent over the age of 65. Interestingly, individuals 65 and older had the least number of attendance at TVLA. This study includes various goals the individuals set for themselves, the different ways they were referred, and the emotional, situational, and program related factors that hinder participation. Appropriate contact agencies, recruiting participants, keeping the enrollment high, increasing the appeal of the program, and benefits in the workplace are all recruitment and retention strategies. After identifying that many people feel shame and embarrassment, which may decrease the likeliness of enrolling in the literacy program, it was concluded that TVLA should rename their literacy service. The limited funding provided to TVLA restricts the number of participants who can benefit from transportation and child care services. Currently, TVLA is unable to advertise these supports to the public. Thus, until the funding is increased TVLA will be unable to offer these supports to all who require them in order to receive literacy education. Furthermore, the funding needs to increase in order to implement the recruitment and retention strategies that have been identified for the necessary target populations, as well this will allow TVLA to handle the enrollment increase.

Trent Valley Literacy Association Report

Keywords: Literacy, TVA, Trent Valley, reading, adult learners, employment,

Introduction

Trent Valley Literacy Association (TVLA) is dedicated to helping adults improve their reading, writing, mathematical, and computer skills necessary to be successful in the home, work place, and community. This is accomplished using various learning techniques including one to one tutoring, small classroom instruction, and self directed computer training. This is a nonprofit organization who offers their services free to the public. TVLA relies heavily on volunteers from the Peterborough community.

Literacy is an issue that affects many Canadians, as 22 percent of adults in Canada have serious problems dealing with any printed material. An additional 24 percent of adult Canadians can only deal with simple reading tasks. Less than ten percent of Canadians who could benefit from programs, such as offered by TVLA, actually enroll. In Peterborough these statistics mean that over 20,000 of our neighbours need help with their literacy skills (Hartung, 2004). “Literacy is more than knowing how to read, write, or calculate. It involves understanding and being able to use the information required to function effectively” (Health Canada, 1997). In this report the following questions are addressed: 1. Who are the learners that come to TVLA? 2. What demographics identify specific groups within this population, and why is it they decide to come and not others needing TVLA’s services? 3. What suggestions will recruit more people to TVLA?

Who are the learners who attend TVLA?

Literacy levels range from one to five. “Level one are people who have difficulty with printed materials and identify themselves as unable to read; level two are people

who can use printed materials for limited purposes such as finding a familiar word in a simple text; level three are people who can use reading materials in a variety of situations providing it is simple, clearly laid out and the tasks involved are not too complex; level four and five are people who can use a wide range of reading materials and meet most every day reading demands” (ABC Canada, 1994). TVLA provides services to individuals ages 16 and above. After reviewing the enrollment statistics over the period of April 2003 to November 2003, we found that the 25 to 44 year old age group had the greatest attendance. The second greatest attendance was in the 45 to 64 age range, with 19 to 24 year olds following third. 16 to 18 year olds were the second lowest attendance rate, with individuals 65 and older having the least number of attendance. The majority of students are in literacy levels one and two. The entrance forms were reviewed and the various goals that people set for themselves which prompt them to attend literacy services at TVLA were identified:

- Assistance with reading, writing, and math
- English as a second language (ESL) education
- Preparation for general equivalency diploma (GED)
- Prepare to attend university or collage
- Increase competence when working with computers
- To gain employment
- Individuals with learning disabilities who would like to learn strategies to cope and live with it
- Further training
- Independence (TVLA records, 2004)

There are a number of different ways in which students may be referred to TVLA such as:

- Social worker
- Ontario works (OW)
- The Center for Individual Studies (CIS) – component of the KPERDSB school board
- Sir Sanford Fleming Collage (SSFC)
- Another literacy program
- New Canadian Centers
- Employment Planning and Counseling (EPC)
- Learning Disabilities Association of Peterborough (LDA)
- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
- First step, a program offered by HRDC
- Family and friends
- Sister Ruth Hennessey, Casa Maria
- Shelter
- Radio
- Phonebook (TVLA records, 2004)

This information gives us insight into individuals' goals when attending TVLA as well as the various methods of referral.

Demographics

It is important to understand the demographic variables of Canadians and the Peterborough community, in order to determine which specific populations should be targeted to increase enrollment at TVLA. An international literacy survey found that 19 percent of Canadians are within the lowest literacy level, half are over the age of 55 and immigrants are the second largest group within level one. Of these individuals, 47 percent lack skills to meet daily demands (Quill, 2003). It was further noted within this survey that people in Ontario who worked are more likely to have higher literacy levels than the unemployed as well as those in lower income jobs. The level of literacy one has will determine their job, economic success, and their ability to enhance work skills; therefore, it is necessary to assist target groups, such as those lacking formal education and with lower socio-economic status (Snapshot, 1994). One of the target groups with low levels of education are those 65 and older. Within the Peterborough population of 71 445, there are 19.4 percent over the age of 65 (Statistics Canada, 2001). Statistics Canada illustrated in 1996 that 61.5 percent of those over the age of 65 never finished high school, and of those 36.8 percent had less than a grade nine education. In Peterborough, 26.4 percent of the population within the age range of 45 to 64 have less than a high school education (Peterborough Health Unit, 2001). The following table provides an overview of the educational attainment for individuals 15 years and over living in Peterborough (Peterborough Health Unit, 2001).

Population 15 years and over	86,508 (Peterborough County-City)
Less than grade 9	6,616
Grade 9-13 w/o certificate	22,413
Grade 9-13 with certificate	13,010

Trades certificate/diploma	3,893
Non-univ. w/o certificate/diploma	5,937
Non-univ. with certificate/diploma	18,122
Univ. w/o degree	6,405
Univ. w/o degree/certificate	3,280
Univ. with certificate	3,125
University with degree	10,112

This information is relevant as the level of schooling correlates with level of literacy.

Furthermore, employment is also related to literacy. The unemployment rate for males is 7.0 percent and there is a 7.3 percent unemployment rate for females in Peterborough (Peterborough Health Unit, 2001). As was previously discussed the level of literacy determines the types of jobs people attain. Therefore, the unemployed population of Peterborough is a target group for literacy services. At 97.65 percent, the majority of residents in Peterborough speak English (Peterborough Health Unit, 2001). This indicates that there will not be a large number of students seeking ESL services from TVLA.

Nonparticipation

There are many factors that discourage participants from enrolling in literacy services. Some people feel satisfied with their level of literacy and others may feel it is too late for them to return to formal learning (ABC Canada, 2003). Emotional factors may also have a role such as:

- Expectations of self and others

- Self-esteem
- Level of family support
- Past educational experiences (Wonacott, 2001)
- Lack of self-evident success
- Pressures of work and home
- Problems with schedule
- Lack support of native culture for education (Brod, 1995)
- Feelings of nervousness about joining a program due to the stigma attached (ABC Canada, 2003)
- Shame and embarrassment may pose a psychological barrier to asking for help (Parikh, Parker, Nurss, Baker, & Williams, 1996)

Adults are affected by situational factors, such as:

- Childcare commitments
- Location of literacy service
- Conflict with employment
- Family commitments (ABC Canada, 2003)
- Health Status
- Financial difficulties
- Legal issues
- Personal or family problems (Wonacott, 2001)

Program related factors that hinder some people to participate, include:

- Lack appropriate materials for low level learners
- Lack opportunity to achieve success

- Lack flexibility in class scheduling
- Multilevel classes
- Lack peer support and reinforcement (Brod, 1995)
- Length of program
- Level of difficulty
- Relevance of program content
- The pace of the program (ABC Canada, 2003)
- Adults associate literacy education with school and choose not to participate as most programs resemble a school setting (Imel, 1996)

Therefore, all of these factors need to be taken into consideration when developing a program to ensure maximal enrollment.

Recruitment and Retention

To promote public awareness of literacy services is necessary to target social service agencies, which is a major source of student referrals. Agencies require information about TVLA, to help make them sensitive to possible reading problems in clients. Appropriate contact agencies have been included with the American name as well as the corresponding Ontario organization written in brackets:

- Department of labour office (Ontario Ministry of Labour)
 - However, this service in Ontario provides little direct service or human contact.
- Welfare agencies (Welfare = Ontario Works, welfare = broad social sector)
- Social security office (Human Resource Development Canada)
- Local offices of employment services

- Prenatal clinics
- Ministerial associations
- Local hospitals and doctor office's
- Local housing authority examples include: YWCA, Crossroads, and Brock Mission
- Head Start parent councils (School Councils)
- Public school teachers
- Personnel directors (Human Resources/Personnel Departments)
- Unemployment office (Woods, n.d.)

Woods further explains the importance of encouraging agency services to make the call to literacy programs with the individual present. The professional support in making the first contact increases their chances of enrolling in a literacy program. Another way to broaden the exposure of the program to many agencies is through holding an open house (Woods, n.d.).

There are various methods to recruiting participants from the community to literacy programs, which include:

- Word of mouth
- An annual recruitment campaign knocking on doors
- Radio spots
- Posters around the community
- Offering a variety of classes – pre-GED, GED, Read Better, etc.
- Putting fliers in paycheck envelopes
- Putting fliers in the bags of a market/grocery store

- Sending information home with school children
- Classroom presentations about the program and the importance of reading and writing
- Setting up booths at fairs or malls
- Brochures, from students' view points (Lankard, Nixon-Ponder, & Imel, 1995)
- Exhibits with the garden club or other civic, community, or social organizations
- Participate in free health screenings by testing for learning disabilities and reading level
- Television campaigns (Woods, n.d.)
- Neighbourhood churches
- Basic information that is directed at potential participants ex: it's fun, it's free, it's local, and there is assistance with childcare.
- Stress the non-school nature of programs (Wonacott, 2001).
- Inform workers at shelters and have posters and brochures available.
- Retirement homes, nursing homes, senior activity centers, and community centers.
 - Implement a reading group program ex: have volunteers perform group meetings or one on one reading sessions.
- Educate pharmacists for identification of low literacy.
- Criminal Justice System (ie. Elizabeth Fry Society and John Howard Society)

The implementation of these methods will assist in promoting community awareness of low literacy levels and opportunities for improvement.

There are many ways to keep the enrollment high in a literacy service program; here is a list of relevant suggestions:

- Immediate follow up after initial contact is crucial (Wonacott, 2001).
- Formal evaluation, includes individuals case history, complete skills assessment and place students quickly.
- Determine short and long term goals.
- Uncover barriers, such as childcare and transportation (Woods, n.d.).
- Do not assume everyone understands the benefits of education. Students need to understand reasoning for gaining knowledge and skills they do not find relevant to their lives.
- Teach students how increasing their education level will improve their quality of life.
- Ensure programs provide program purpose, goals, activities, responsibilities, and schedule.
- Early and continuous follow-ups and attention – immediate response to student needs (especially in the first three weeks) will sustain motivation, as adults may not request assistance (Wonacott, 2001).

Further suggestions for program structure to increase appeal to adults, include:

- Address the diversity of learners and reflect the context in which people use their skills in their daily lives.
- Pair students with volunteers who share similar goals, ex: volunteers with a keen interest in academic up grading (Imel, 1996).

- Social integration increases retention rates, as 84 percent of individuals who completed a GED program were part of class cliques, were as 70 percent of dropouts were socially isolated.
- Early detection of students at risk of withdrawing and follow up with those who have withdrawn.
- Opportunities to see an improvement no matter how small at every class meeting (Kerka, 1995).
- Question whether the classroom environment curriculum and materials reflect learners' histories, cultures, languages, and experiences.
- Instructional methods must share power and responsibility between volunteers and students (Corley, 2003).
- Potential for participation by families, ex: games such as bingo to help numeracy skills and to encourage participants to invite family members (ABC Canada, 2003).

Therefore, it is important to understand how program structures work to help or hinder the continuation of students' enrollment.

The enrollment in literacy programs has benefits in the work place. Employees had an overall increase in self-confidence by 97 percent, they were able to acquire new skills, and felt valued by their work place (ABC Canada, 2003). In the work place it was noted that:

- Productivity increased by 79%
- Health and safety increased by 82%
- Improved labour relations increased by 85%

- Increased quality of work by 84%
- Increased work effort by 72%
- Increased competence with technology by 87% (ABC Canada, 2003)

Employers identify the improvements within their employees and should further encourage employees and other employers to engage in learning services provided. By motivating all employees to take part in furthering their education, this may help decrease the stigma associated with literacy education.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the research we have gathered we became aware of the social stigma attached with literacy. It was revealed that many people feel shame and embarrassment.

Therefore, the organizations name may be a deterrent to their enrollment. As a result, we feel it would be beneficial to rename TVLA, removing literacy from the name. Some suggestions include: Learning Center, Everyone Wins Learning/Mentoring Program, Alternative Learning Center, Continuing Education, Adult Learning Network, Community Learning Center, Alternative and Continuing Education, Outreach, Learning Enrichment Foundation, and Reading Network.

After reviewing the student enrollment files we found that there were various intake forms used during the enrollment process. However, this information was inconsistent; which makes it difficult to analyze trends in the information provided. The 'Trent Valley Literacy Association Student Intake Form' is effective in that it has various options as well as a space for the 'other' option. However, for this to be useful it must be mandatory for all new students enrolling to fully complete. The information in the

student intake form should be reviewed annually or biannually to keep up to date on how students are being referred and which social service agencies to continue providing information too.

When presenting information in a poster board presentation here are some recommendations for literacy organizations. In order for those with literacy problems to make the most of the information, the presentation should include clear simple writing with minimal text, graphics, and colour to make the presentation appealing (see Appendix 3). When providing material to the public, up to date information of the organization should be available. Including a new telephone number, the new location and address, and current hours of operation. The information in handout materials should be as simplistic as the presentation board. It is essential to clearly separate who is being targeting with the materials. When presenting a poster exhibit and handout materials the information needs to be clear and simple. However, when providing information to social service agencies the material should be more in-depth.

After analyzing the TVLA participants' sources of referral we conclude the specific social service agencies, which require targeting, include:

- Ontario Ministry of Labour
- Prenatal clinics
- Local housing authority
- Human Resources/Personnel Departments
- Unemployment offices
- Local hospitals and doctor office's

Students identify the following agencies; therefore, they are successful sources of referral. Thus, TVLA should maintain their awareness of the literacy services provided.

- Welfare agencies (Welfare = Ontario Works, welfare = broad social sector)
- Human Resource Development Canada
- Local offices of employment services
- Ministerial associations
- School councils and public school teachers

We recommend for the time being that TVLA provide the social service agencies with the information that limited child care and transportation services are available. This will allow these agencies to inform the clients they know, who will benefit from the possibility of these support services and increase their chance of enrolling.

Two barriers that have been identified are lack of transportation to and from the literacy centers and lack of child care services. TVLA does offer assistance in these areas. However, the limited funding provided to TVLA restricts the number of participants who can benefit from these services. Therefore, TVLA is unable to advertise these supports to the public. Thus, until the funding is increased TVLA will be unable to offer these supports to those who require them in order to receive literacy education. Furthermore, the funding needs to increase in order to implement the recruitment and retention strategies that we have identified for the necessary target populations, as well this will allow TVLA to handle the enrollment increase.

Reference

- A Snapshot of Literacy in Canada - update. (1994).
www.nald.ca/nls/nlsild/fact3.htm
- ABC Canada. (1994, 2003). www.abc-canada.org
- Brod, S. (1995). ERIC Digest National Center for ESL Literacy Education.
www.cal.org/ncle/digests/BROD.HTM
- Corley, M.A. (2003). ACVE Poverty, racism, and literacy. ERIC digest no.243.
www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=digests&ID=129
- Hartung, P. (2004). Trent Valley Literacy Association. Peterborough, Ontario.
- Health Canada. (1997). National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- Imel, S. (1996). ACVE Adult literacy education: emerging direction in program development. ERIC digest no.179. www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=digests&ID=32
- Kerka, S. (1995). ACBE Adult learner retention revisited. ERIC digest no.166.
www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=archive&ID=A002
- Lankard, B., Nixon-Ponder, S., and Imel, S. (1995) Beyond Ourselves activities for implementing Ohio's indicators of adult basic and literacy education program quality. *Program quality indicator area: recruitment*. Center on Education and Training for Employment College of Education Ohio State University.
<http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/beyond/recruitment.html>
- Parikh, N.S., Parker, R.M., Nurss, J.R., Baker, D.W., & Williams, M.V. (1996). Shame and health literacy: the unspoken connection. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 27, 33-39.
- Peterborough County-City Health Unit (Health Region), Ontario. (2001). Education Statistics. *Community Profile: Demographics*.
www.gpaedc.on.ca/compro29.htm
- Quill Learning Network. Walkerton Ontario. (2003). www.quillnet.org/stats.html
- Statistics Canada (1996). Seniors and education attainment. www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppd/phdd/literacy/seniors_lit.html
- Statistics Canada. (2001). Population Statistics.
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/Details/details1pop.cfm?SEARCH=BEGINS&PSGC=35&SGC=3515014&A=&LANG=E&Province=35&PlaceName=peterborough&>

[CSDNAME=Peterborough&CMA=&SEARCH=BEGINS&DataType=1&TypeNameE=City%20%2D%20Cit%E9&ID=6762](#)

TVLA records. (2004).

Wonacott, M.E. (2001). Adult students recruitment and retention.
www.cete.org/acve/docgen.asp?tbl=pab&ID=108

Woods, N. (n.d.) Adult literacy action. Pennsylvania State University.
www.adultliteracy.org/balp6.html

Appendices

TRENT VALLEY LITERACY ASSOCIATION
STUDENT INTAKE FORM

(Please print)

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other _____

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apartment Number: _____

City or Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: () _____ Sex: Male Female

Alternate Phone Number: _____

Emergency Phone Number: _____ Contact Name: _____

Date of Birth: (month, day, year) _____ Age: _____

16-18 19-24 25-44 45-64 65+

* * * * *

Is it okay to identify ourselves as the Learning Centre when we call? Yes No

How did you find out about us?

OW HRDC ACL Self Family/friends Past student
 Student Advisor's Office Other literacy program College
 Other: _____

Why are you here? Employment Training/Education Independence

Long Term Goal: _____

Short Term Goal: _____

Completed by: (Signature) _____ Date: _____

List 3 jobs that you have had (volunteer or paid)

Type of Job	Skills Needed	Likes	Dislikes
1.			
2.			
3.			

What are your hobbies? What do you like doing in your free time?

Is there anything that will affect your attendance here?

- Child care
- Transportation
- Medication
- Chronic illnesses (for example, seizures)
- Pain
- Glasses
- Hearing problem
- Probation/parole appointments
- Counselling appointments
- Other, please describe _____

What is your source of income?

- Ontario Works
- Employment
- WSIB
- Other, please describe: _____
- Ontario Disability Support Program
- Employment Insurance
- Family Member

Educational Background:

What was the last grade you completed?

- up to grade 8
- grades 9, 10, 11, mostly basic, modified
- grade 9, 10, 11, mostly general or applied
- grades 9, 10, 11, mostly advanced/academic
- grade 12 certificate, basic or modified
- grade 12 certificate
- post secondary
- apprenticeship
- special interest
- other, please describe: _____

What year did you complete it? _____

Where did you complete it? (at what school?) _____

What special workshops or training have you taken?

- WHMIS (safety on the job training)
- Diversity
- SmartServe
- CPR/First aid
- Computer
- Superhost
- Food Handler's
- Other, please describe _____

Do you prefer a male female either tutor/instructor?

When can you meet with a tutor or go to class? Put an X beside ALL times that are possible.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning					
Afternoon					
Evening	Not open		Not open		Not open

- Are you interested in one-to-one tutoring? Yes No, not at this time
- Are you interested in small group work? Yes No, not at this time
- Are you interested in both? Yes No, not at this time

How often would you like to come? _____

LEARNING STYLES PREFERENCE

Place the numbers 1, 2 or 3 on the line after each sentence. We are trying to find out how you learn best. If the sentence describes the way you learn, place a "3" on the line. If it is how you learn sometimes, place a "2" on the line. If it is NOT how you learn at all, place a "1" on the line.

1. I can remember something best if I say it aloud. _____
2. I prefer to follow written instructions rather than spoken ones. _____
3. When studying, I like to chew gum, snack and/or play with something. _____
4. I remember things best when I see them written out. _____
5. I prefer to learn through games and/or role playing. _____
6. I enjoy learning by having someone explain things to me. _____
7. I learn best from pictures, diagrams and charts. _____
8. I enjoy working with my hands. _____
9. I enjoy reading and I read quickly. _____
10. I prefer to listen to the news on the radio rather than read it. _____
11. I enjoy being near others. (I enjoy hugs, handshakes, and touches). _____
12. I listen to the radio, tapes and CDs. _____
13. When asked to spell a word, I simply see it in my mind's eye. _____
14. When learning new material, I find myself drawing and doodling. _____
15. When I read silently, I say every word to myself. _____

Visual 2 4 7 9 13 Total _____

Auditory 1 6 10 12 15 Total _____

Kinesthetic 3 5 8 11 14 Total _____

My score indicates that my best learning style is: visual auditory kinesthetic

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS

I (please print name) _____ understand that any information from this interview can be given to the tutor/instructor, co-ordinator and assessor and will not be released to any other persons without my written permission.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I (please print name) _____ understand that as a student at Trent Valley Literacy Association, I will keep in strict confidence any information about the other people in the programs. Any information – spoken, written, or observed by me will be held in complete confidence.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I warrant that all information described above is, to the best of my knowledge, correct, and hereby consent to and authorize the release and disclosure of that information to the representatives of

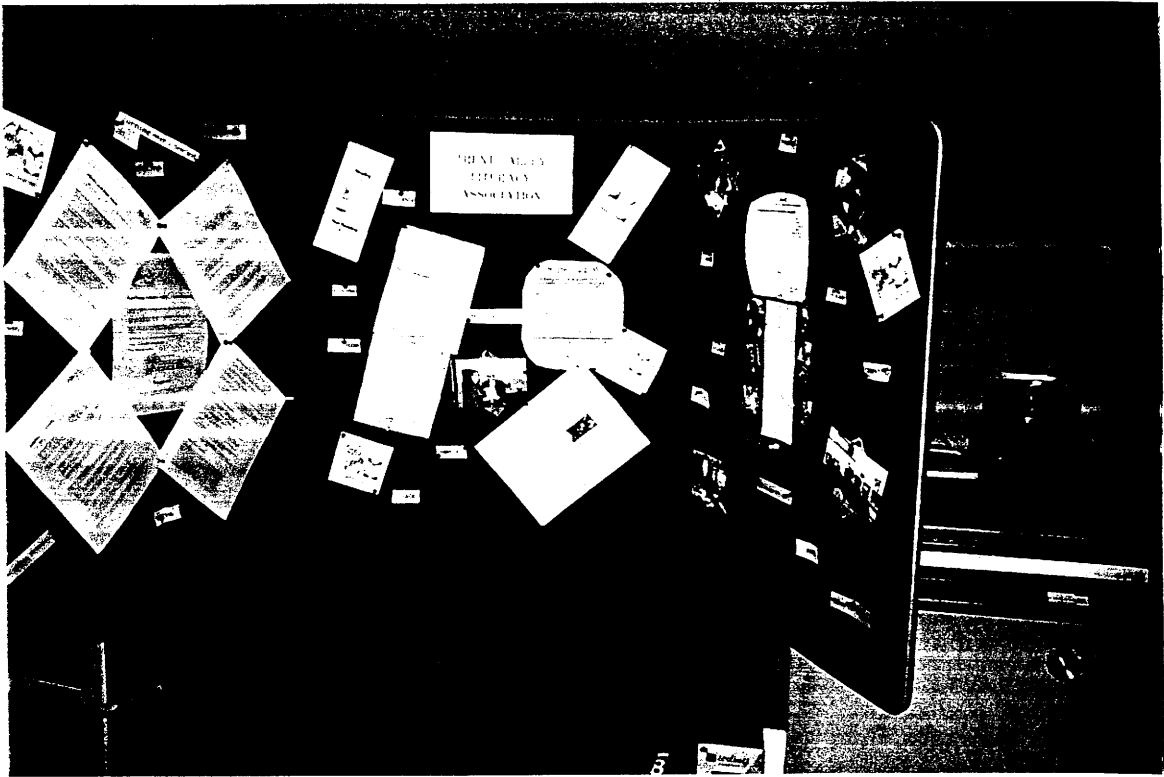
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for the purpose of administering the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program
- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
- Ontario Works (OW)
- Probation/Parole
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Association for Community Living
- Literacy Services Planning Providers
- Other, please name. _____

The information on this form is collected in order for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to administer the Literacy and Basic Skills Program. Information on this form is collected under the authority of the Ministry of Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2.

If you have any questions about the collection or use of this information, contact the Co-ordinator, Freedom of Information and Privacy, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Mowat Block, 18th floor, 900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2; telephone (416) 325-2626.

All of this information has been read and explained to me and I understand it.

Signature: _____ Date: _____





COFFEE CLUB



WEDNESDAY MORNINGS

DROP IN

9 - 12

Brush up on your reading skills

Meet new people

Enjoy TIM HORTONS coffee



*at the Trent Valley Literacy Association
139 Douro St.*



nrttech.com



IT'S FUN & IT'S FREE!!