

This Week in Literacy

October 24th, 2008

The NWT Literacy Council is a non-profit, non-government agency dedicated to supporting the development of literacy in all official languages of the NWT.

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Literacy Dates

National Family Literacy Day	January 27, 2009
Aboriginal Languages Month	March 2009
International Children's Book Day	April 2, 2009
World Book Day	April 23, 2009

Community Events and Information

Family Tutoring, Yellowknife, Dec. 3 & 4, 2008

Family Tutoring is a program that supports parents to help their school-age children with reading and writing. The training provides participants with an overview of the program, ideas for starting a program in your community and facilitation tips. This is a great program for schools and communities. To register call the NWT Literacy Council (867-873-9262).

Book Sale at the Yellowknife Public Library

Friday, October 24	noon – 8 pm (no admission fee)
Saturday, October 25	10 am – 5 pm (no admission fee)

Book Launch

The Yellowknife Book Cellar invites you to celebrate Michael Kusugak's new picture book called *The Littlest Sled Dog*. Come and meet Michael Kusugak and check out his new book.

When: Thursday, October 30th

Time: 5:00 pm

Where: Yellowknife Book Cellar (4923 49th Street)

SkillPlan Online Courses

Reading at Work

All sessions are on Wednesdays at 1 PM (PST).

Approximate time per session is 60 to 90 mins.

Course 03 – Oct. 22, 29 & Nov. 12

Course 04 – Nov. 19, Dec. 3 & Dec. 10

Course 05 – Jan. 14, 21 & Feb 4

Thinking Strategies for Numeracy

All sessions are on Tuesdays at 1 PM (PST).

Approximate time per session is 90 to 120 mins.

Course 02 – Nov. 18 & Dec. 2

Course 03 – Jan. 13 & 20

Numeracy at Work

All sessions are on Thursdays at 2 PM (PST).

Approximate time per session is 90 to 120 mins.

Course 01 – Jan 15 and Jan 29

Course 02 – February dates to be announced

For registration information, see Events at www.skillplan.ca

Call for Knowledge Exchange Projects

Deadline: November 28th, 2008

The Adult Learning Knowledge Centre is pleased to announce its 7th national Call for Knowledge Exchange Projects, aimed at groups, organizations, and institutes across Canada involved in adult learning activities. The maximum funding for each project is \$5,000. Please note: The funds are provided upon completion of the project only. The 7th Call for Knowledge Exchange Projects is offered in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The October 2008 Call is intended to foster projects in six areas:

- ✓ literacy
- ✓ seniors learning
- ✓ arts and culture
- ✓ prior learning assessment and recognition
- ✓ late-entry learning
- ✓ International Adult Learners Week (Please note: The projects involving International Adult Learners Week are supported by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. These projects should focus specifically on building public awareness of adult literacy and lifelong learning during International Adult Learners' Week.)

For more information contact:

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New Horizons for Seniors

Deadline: November 14, 2008

Through funding to non-profit organizations, New Horizons for Seniors helps to ensure that seniors can benefit from, and contribute to, the quality of life in their communities. There are three kinds of funding: Community Participation and Leadership, Capital Assistance, and Elder Abuse Awareness. Presently the **Capital Assistance Funding** is available for grants of up to \$25,000 for upgrading community facilities and equipment related to existing programs and activities for seniors. For more information go to:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/community_partnerships/seniors/index.shtml

In the News

Aboriginal Literacy not a problem in a vacuum

Thursday Elsie Hambrook: A WOMAN'S VIEW – Thursday, October 16, 2008

Education ministers from across the country met in Fredericton last month, and when meetings broke, the ministers had set their sights on improving literacy levels, particularly among Aboriginal Canadians. The inadequate job being done in First Nations education has persisted for too long and we must encourage the education ministers to lead the charge finally. But not alone. This issue does not exist in a vacuum, unaffected by other social factors. Too often Aboriginal peoples are talked about as if they were one people. This segment of the Canadian population is hugely varied along cultural, social, geographical, and economic lines.

Too often any differences in outcome between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons are attributed to cultural differences. That comes dangerously close to victim blaming. And too often, the very different experience of women and men, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, is not ever considered -- only bad conclusions can come out of bad information. Aboriginals aged 18-20 have a 43 per cent likelihood of not having a high school diploma, compared to 24 per cent for the general population in the same age group. Might we then conclude that the fault lies either with Aboriginal culture, or with the school system and how it responds to Aboriginal students? To read more go to <http://timestranscript.canadaeast.com/search/article/449874>

Decoding words, sentences and paragraphs

By Tom Sticht

Much discussion of teaching using alphabets (phonemics and phonics) aims at learning to decode written words. Of course, this is necessary for reading. But beyond the words are the sentence and paragraph. Fluent reading may depend to some extent on how well people can construct sentences and compile them into paragraphs. The question arises: do more skilled readers develop a greater ability to construct sentences and compile them into paragraphs? Ordinarily word, sentence and paragraph construction is aided by the use of spaces between words. Sentences are marked by punctuation and paragraphs are separated by spaces and sometimes indentation of the first sentence in the paragraph. But how well can low and high-

ability readers identify words, sentences and paragraphs when there is no spacing or punctuation to mark beginnings and ends of these aspects of written language?

To find out, in an exploratory study, colleagues and I worked with 16 low-reading young adults with reading skills from 3.5 to 7.7 grade levels, and an average score of 5.5 grade level reading. We also worked with 18 college students as high-ability readers. To read more about this research go to <http://www.nald.ca/info/whatnew/headline/2008/sticht-oct21.htm>

Poor literacy levels a safety hazard for Canadian workers

OTTAWA, Oct. 20 /CNW Telbec

Canadian organizations invest heavily in occupational health and safety training and new equipment to protect employees, yet they spend little on upgrading the basic skills and literacy of their workers, according to a new Conference Board report examining literacy's impact on workplace health and safety. Conference Board survey data has shown that employers spent 10 per cent of their training budgets on occupational health and safety training. But respondents said they spent just two per cent of the budget for organizational training, learning and development on literacy and basic skills upgrading.

"Low literacy skills in the workplace do more than just threaten an organization's productivity and competitiveness - they also put workers' health and safety at risk," said Alison Campbell, Senior Research Associate, Organizational Effectiveness and Learning. "If workers can't understand health and safety regulations provided to them, or if they can't understand their rights to a safe workplace, there is an increased risk of incidents and injury." International survey results show that more than four in 10 Canadians in the working-age population do not have the literacy skills needed to perform most jobs well. To read more go to <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/October2008/20/c7471.html>

Resources and Websites

Screen Reader

The AIR Foundation is now offering free use of a screen reader. The screen reader is called SA To Go and is powered by software which provides immediate text to speech, magnified visual, and Braille access to digital information presented through the Web or other means, while the user is directly connected to the Internet. The software does not remain on the user's computer when the connection to the Internet is interrupted or terminated. Users can obtain access to the free software by going to AIR's website at: www.AccessibilityIsaRight.org.

Lesson Plans and Teaching Materials

Idealist.org has some excellent teaching resources that will help you to introduce young people to the nonprofit sector and give them the resources they need to get involved in their community. These resources will introduce your students to the work that nonprofits do all

over the world. There are also units that elementary, middle, and high school educators can use to explain the importance of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, and career opportunities available within the nonprofit sector. To find free online resources created to help you introduce issues such as environmental conservation, human rights, and artistic expression to your students, go to: <http://www.idealists.org/teachers/index.html>

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices

This guide presents strategies that classroom teachers and specialists can use to increase the reading ability of adolescent students. The recommendations aim to help students gain more from their reading tasks, improve their motivation for and engagement in the learning process, and assist struggling readers who may need intensive and individualized attention.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/adlit_pg_082608.pdf