

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

**TO: MINISTRY OF TRAINING, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
NATIONAL LITERACY SECRETARIAT**

PROJECT TITLE: PROVINCE-WIDE RESEARCH TRAINING
DATE: APRIL, 2007
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Introduction

This report documents the results of the evaluation of the Festival of Literacies project titled **Province-wide Research Training**, hereafter referred to as the project.

Goal of the evaluation

The goal of this evaluation is to report on the effectiveness of the main project activities implemented during the one-year project period, February 2006 to February 2007.

About the Province-wide Research Training project:

The *Festival of Literacies* office received funding from MTCU/NLS for a one-year period to conduct the activities of the Province-wide Research Training project. The project began its activities in February 2006.

The project builds upon the 2004-05 Festival of Literacies funded project that developed and piloted a research training program for Ontario literacy practitioners that consisted of six workshops of research awareness and skill development activities.

With this project funding, the main activities were to refine and adapt the research awareness workshop activities, deliver training workshops, extend partnerships province-wide, and maintain a limited schedule of educational events and research mentoring.

Project Goal:

The goal of the project was to promote interest in research and enhance the capacity for small-scale practitioner-based research and inquiry in Ontario as a means of practitioner development and improvement of literacy services.

Project Objectives:

1. Design and deliver 12 to 15 research training workshops, blending face-to-face and on-line delivery, to practitioners across Ontario
 - a) Market the workshops to a wide range of regions, networks and agencies across Ontario
 - b) Make components of the training adaptable to suit the range of background knowledge and needs of participants
 - c) Make adjustments as necessary to achieve sustainable levels of staffing, activity and costs
 - d) Use electronic technology in practitioner research training in ways that promote comfort levels and skills with on-line learning
 - e) Maintain mutually beneficial working partnerships with AlphaPlus and the Ontario Literacy Coalition; involve at least two other Ontario universities in promotion, support and delivery of the program
2. Begin preliminary discussions across jurisdictions about the desirability and feasibility of expanding the research training program to a national level
3. Maintain a modest schedule of other Festival of Literacies ongoing activities such as non-credit courses, speaker events, research mentoring and support and service on advisory bodies, as needs arise

Project Deliverables:

1. Promote, schedule and deliver 12-15 research training workshops
2. Train and mentor additional facilitators for this program and enlist at least two other Ontario universities in support and delivery of this program
3. A final report and external evaluator's report
4. A modest number of educational events and mentoring support to the field

Summary of Project Activities (February 2006 – February 2007):

Initial Project Outreach

The project implemented a comprehensive promotion strategy that used project partners, a cross-network/sectoral meeting, e-mail, website, and newsletter forums to inform and invite stakeholders from Ontario regional and sectoral literacy networks in all four streams to discuss possible partnerships in delivering training workshops.

This initial outreach generated expressions of interest by several organizations and resulted in partnerships between the Festival of Literacies office and CESBA, Literacy Northwest Network, the Labour Education Centre, and Literacy Link South Central.

Partnership Collaboration

There was extensive collaboration with project partners and workshop host organizations in the design, delivery and promotion of workshops. This collaboration began with the makeup of the advisory committee, which included individuals who could represent Centre AlphaPlus, the ONLC (Ontario Native Literacy Coalition) and the OLC (Ontario Literacy Coalition), as well as individuals from literacy programs representing four different regional literacy networks. The most significant partner collaboration included:

- **AlphaPlus**, which provided in-kind promotion (direct e-mail to all Anglophone LBS agencies in Ontario), technical support, registration support, and assistance in the design, scheduling and use of Centra software for seven research training workshops delivered online.
- **Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC)**, which provided support in promoting the workshops province-wide. This support resulted in participation in the round-table network of networks meeting, an on-going column in the OLC newsletter and on-going updates in the OLC twice-monthly e-bulletins.
- **Workshop hosting organizations**, some of which hosted workshops as part of regional or sectoral planned conferences. This enabled the project to make use of event infrastructure (meeting space, registration procedures, promotion material, outreach mechanisms, support to participants) and attract participants from the target audience to workshops. For example, by partnering with Literacy Northwest to offer a workshop at its annual general meeting, 16 regional LBS agencies spanning a region including Thunder Bay, Kenora and Rainy River were invited. As a result, that workshop drew 14 participants from nine regional agencies.

Workshops, Participants and Facilitators

A total of thirteen workshops were delivered to participants representing a wide geographical range in Ontario. Seven workshops were delivered online, and six were delivered face-to-face. A total of 122 people participated in the workshops. A total of 14 people participated in facilitating the workshops.

Face-to-face workshops

Of the six face-to-face workshops, three were delivered as part of a planned event. Two as part of regional professional development conferences, the other as part of a CESBA-sponsored event.

The remaining three face-to-face workshops were delivered as stand-alone events: one through the *Festival of Literacies* office in Toronto, one offered in partnership with Literacy Link South Central in London, and one offered in partnership with the Labour Education Centre in Toronto.

Although three training workshops were delivered in Toronto, one of the workshops was marketed province-wide with travel support offered. Of the 20 workshop participants who participated in that workshop, 18 travelled from outside Toronto, from areas including Kenora, Smith Falls, Pembroke, London, Thunder Bay, Picton and Parry Sound.

In addition to the research training workshops, the *Festival of Literacies* office offered ten other educational events at OISE during the project term (see page 21 for a list).

Online workshops

The online workshops featured live online person-to-person discussion blended with pre-workshop print materials, online visuals (agenda, diagrams, presentation slides), live text messaging, and ongoing listserv and e-mail contact. Three online workshop series were delivered, totalling seven individual workshops. Workshops were marketed province-wide. Of the 40 different online workshop participants, ten were from Toronto. The remaining 30 were from a range of locations including cities such as London, Ottawa and Kingston, and more remote locations such as Kenora, Quinte, Thunder Bay and Red Lake.

About the Workshops

For each workshop, the research training workshops developed and piloted during the 2004-05 Festival of Literacies funded project were refined and adapted to suit participant circumstances and mode of delivery (online or face-to-face).

Face-to-Face workshops

For the face-to-face workshops, pre-workshop planning discussions were held with workshop stakeholders (hosting organizations, executive directors, etc.) to determine the needs of workshop participants. Then, workshop materials and activities were adapted to suit the discussed needs. In addition, relevant guest speakers were invited to present portions of the workshops. Where appropriate, face-to-face workshops were blended with e-learning components, such as listserv and e-mail contact to continue workshop discussions and explorations.

Focus and goals of workshops

Although each workshop was adapted to meet the needs of participants, all 13 workshops shared the project goal of enhancing capacity for small-scale practitioner inquiry as a means of practitioner development and improvement of literacy services.

The main activity in each workshop was to engage participants in a facilitated process of identifying and exploring their learning and their questions related to literacy work; engaging practitioners in the inquiry process. Most workshops also featured the experience of at least one practitioner-researcher. The aim was that these workshop activities would spark interest in and awareness of the inquiry process among practitioners and that this interest would spur other inquiry activities, thereby enhancing research capacity. Further, that the increased engagement in inquiry activities would lead to practitioner development, which would in turn lead to an improvement in literacy services delivered by these practitioners.

The Evaluation Process

Prior to my hire, the project team developed draft terms of reference for the evaluation and preliminary indicators of effectiveness for each of the project objectives. A procedure was planned and enacted to review and revise the indicators of effectiveness with the evaluator and collaborate in finalizing the design of evaluation tools and the evaluation plan.

To understand the nature and intent of the research training workshops, the evaluator took part in an advisory committee meeting, a face-to-face research training workshop, and listened to the recording of an online workshop.

Indicators of Effectiveness

This evaluation reports on the effectiveness of the project activities during the period February 2006 to February 2007. Twelve indicators of effectiveness are used to assess project objectives. The indicators are listed on pages 8-11.

Sources of Information and Methodology

- Meetings with core project team
Discussions were held between core project team members and the evaluator to collaborate on the indicators of effectiveness and the design of evaluation tools.
- Review of participant evaluation comments from research training workshops
In each research training workshop, participants were given the opportunity to make evaluative comments. In some workshops, an evaluation survey form was used. In others, participants were invited to write comments on cards. Every evaluative comment was reviewed. Responses to Likert- scale questions were summarized (see page 16). Written comments were closely read, compiled and compared. Similar comments were grouped together and themes were drawn from these groupings. For a description of themes, see page 17 .
- Data on workshop promotion
Workshop marketing processes and materials, such as flyers, e-mail notifications, promotion on website, and use of newsletters were reviewed.
- Data on participant backgrounds
Workshop participant lists were reviewed to determine whether the workshop marketing was effective in drawing participants from a range of locations Ontario-wide.

- Telephone interviews with project team members
Approximately half-way through the project, telephone interviews were conducted with the core team members to better understand the nature of the research training workshops, determine outreach and marketing methods, determine processes for adapting workshops to the needs of workshop participants.
- Telephone interview with one advisory committee member and AlphaPlus contact
Half-way through the project, one advisory committee member (and AlphaPlus contact) was interviewed to determine the nature of the partnership and the sustainability of continued support (to the end of the project term).
- Survey of core workshop facilitators
Five core workshop facilitators were surveyed to determine their comfort level and perceptions of effectiveness of online workshop facilitation. Evaluation forms from two other online facilitators were reviewed.
- Review of: delivery plans of online workshops; delivery materials from face-to-face workshops; recording of one online research training workshop; transcript of listserv discussions resulting from workshops
- Review of project documents, including workshop materials, minutes and notes of advisory committee and team meetings, and the interim report
- Participation in one advisory committee meeting and in one face-to-face workshop
- Final evaluation survey
A final evaluation e-mail survey was designed and administered to participants at least three months after participation in a workshop. It was designed to assess whether the workshops contributed to the project goal of promoting interest in research and enhancing the capacity for small-scale practitioner-based research and inquiry. . Responses were entered in single form (see page 20) and summarized.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

Eleven indicators of effectiveness were used to evaluate the project objectives. Evidence supporting the indicators of effectiveness was collected from a close review of the data sources listed on page 6 and 7. The main objective and related objectives evaluated are:

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Implementation Objectives</u>	<u>Related Indicators of Effectiveness</u> (see table below)
1. Design and deliver 12 –15 research training workshops, blending face-to-face and on-line delivery to practitioners across Ontario	a) Promote the program to a wide range of agencies across Ontario	2
	b) Adapt the program to suit local needs	1, 3
	c) Use e-technology in training in ways that promote comfort and skill	5, 6
	d) Train and mentor additional facilitators for the program	7
	e) Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with partnerships	8, 9
2. Maintain a modest schedule of other ongoing activities such as non-credit courses, speaker events, research mentoring and support		10
Project goal: To promote interest in research and enhance the capacity for small scale practitioner inquiry and research as a means of practitioner development and improvement of literacy services.		1, 3, 4 11

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

1. Majority of participant responses indicate a positive experience with workshops

RESULT

Likert-scale responses:

Evaluation surveys from the first seven workshops included Likert-scale questions (summarized on page 16). In the first two workshops, 100% of participant Likert-scale responses were positive (determined as a selection of a 4 or 5, where 1 represents poor and 5 represents excellent) in rating the presentation. In the next five workshops, about 90% of respondents rate the workshops “useful” or “very useful” in assisting in exploring and talking about questions about literacy work.

Open-ended question responses:

Responses to open-ended questions were overwhelmingly positive. Almost all comments included expressions of one of the following: an appreciation for sharing questions and concerns related to literacy work, a sense of affirmation, a need and desire for more reflection, a realization that practitioners share common concerns, an increased awareness of the value of inquiry and its connection to improved practice. Overall, the most common comments were expressions of appreciation for the sharing of concerns and questions about literacy work. See page 17 to 20 for a summary of themes drawn from participant comments.

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVENESS

RESULT

2. Research training workshops are tailored to suit local needs

For each workshop, exploratory discussion phone calls or face-to-face meetings were held with hosting organizations to determine target audience and participant needs and guest presenters. This resulted in the workshop content being tailored to the needs of participants. For example, the Labour Education Centre workshop was tailored to support the LEC's upcoming strategic planning process, and the third online workshop series was developed in response to the need for an increased exploration of the research process.

3. A range of agencies and individuals from a range of locations show interest in the research training

Two regional networks (Literacy Northwest in Thunder Bay and Literacy Link South Central in London), one sectoral network (CESBA in Toronto) and an agency (Labour Education Centre in Toronto) partnered to host workshops; AlphaPlus Centre partnered to assist in the promotion, design and delivery of seven online workshops.

Online workshops

Seven online workshops were promoted province-wide. The first two workshop series were full shortly after promotional e-mails and flyers were distributed. Participants registered from a range of locations (southeast, southwest, south central, near north and northwest Ontario) and sectors (community organizations, school board and community colleges). Of the 40 individuals who participated in the seven online workshops, ten were from Toronto. The remaining 30 were from a range of locations including cities such as London, Ottawa and Kingston, and more remote locations such as Kenora, Quinte, Thunder Bay and Red Lake.

Face-to-face workshops

Six face-to-face workshops were delivered: two in Thunder Bay, one in London, and three in Toronto. One of the Toronto workshops was promoted province-wide, with travel support offered. Of the 20 workshop participants in that workshop, 18 travelled from outside Toronto, from areas including Kenora, Smith Falls, Pembroke, London, Thunder Bay, Picton and Parry Sound.

A total of 122 individuals with a range of literacy backgrounds from locations across Ontario participated in the 13 workshops delivered.

4. Reports of discussions about research or inquiry starting to take place as a result of workshops

Some participants participated in e-mail and listserv communications with each other to further explore concerns and questions that emerged during workshop discussions. Some workshop participants enrolled in other workshops, indicating an interest in further inquiry.

5. Participants are interested in and participate in online components of workshops

Many participants in face to face workshops indicated an interest in participating in listserv discussions to continue reflection and exploration of questions and concerns related to literacy work.

Online Workshop Participants

First Series: drew registrants to the capacity limit of 20 within one week of promotion, with 10 additional registrants placed on a waiting list. Actual participation rate of 90% of registrants in session 1, and a 72% rate of returned participants in session 2 exceeded facilitator expectations.

Second Series: drew registrants to the capacity limit shortly after promotion, with 75% of session 1 participants returning for session 2.

Third Series: drew registrants to 50% of capacity limit.

Online workshop participants participated in a listserv between sessions to continue discussion and exploration of questions raised in online sessions.

6. Majority of participants report satisfaction with use of e-technology on evaluation forms

On evaluation forms, the majority of participants reported positive experiences with online workshops.

In the first two online series of workshops, 90% of respondents report that the workshop was “useful” or “very useful” in beginning to explore questions about literacy work.

An analysis of written comments revealed that comments from online workshops were very similar to comments from face-to-face workshops: an appreciation for the sharing of questions and concerns, discovery that concerns were similar to others, an appreciation for exploring questions arising from literacy work and hearing about the experience of practitioner-researchers. This demonstrates that the aim of the workshops – facilitating the process of practitioner inquiry - was realized and not impeded by the online mode of delivery.

Online workshop evaluation included questions about what did not work well and what could be improved. The majority of responses to these questions were not negative in nature (i.e. they indicated things worked well, they were blank, or they focused on aspects unrelated to the workshop such as distractions at home or feeling tired). Only 24% of the comments indicated something that did not go well or could be improved. Most of these comments related to either technical aspects (sound or resolution) or other participants (some were monopolizing discussion, suggesting there were too many participants).

The project team solved these problems by reducing the capacity limit for the second and third online workshop series, and by receiving additional training on the technical aspects of online facilitation.

**INDICATORS OF
EFFECTIVENESS**

RESULT

7. Trainee facilitators report greater research training facilitation skills

A total of seven individuals facilitated the workshops, and an additional seven practitioner-researchers presented their experience with research as part of a workshop. Facilitators reported an interest in continuing conversations about literacy work online as an effective way to connect literacy workers province or nation-wide.

Five facilitators were surveyed about their experience. All five reported positive experiences and increased research training facilitation skills. In general, comments indicated facilitators felt positive about their experience facilitating the research training workshops, challenged by the technical complexities involved in facilitating research workshops online, satisfied with the knowledge, training and experience they gained through facilitating online, and interested and excited by the potential this mode of facilitation has in connecting practitioners province-wide.

8. Partners assist in promotion and delivery of project

The Ontario Literacy Coalition provided the project with access and exposure to stakeholders from all Ontario regional and sectoral networks through the OLC newsletter and the OLC network advisory roundtable meeting. The project wrote articles for the newsletter and attended the roundtable meeting to inform and invite stakeholders to discuss partnering possibilities for research training.

CESBA, Literacy Network Northwest, the Labour Education Centre and Literacy Link South Central partnered to host and promote literacy training workshops.

AlphaPlus provided in-kind assistance in design, promotion, registration, technical assistance, delivery, scheduling and use of Centra software to assist in the delivery of the online research training workshops.

9. Workload is appropriate for project partners

In terms of workload, the most significant project partner was AlphaPlus. The AlphaPlus Information Resource staff person for software reported that the assistance given to the project was mutually beneficial and closely aligned to the goals of the AlphaPlus funded projects at that time: providing key communication services, supporting e-learning culture within the literacy field, and developing a research culture in Ontario.

10. Speaker events are held at OISE

In addition to the 13 research training workshops delivered, 10 educational speaker events were held during the project evaluation period of February 2006 to February 2007 (see page 21 for a list of speaker events).

11. Participants report they are more interested in reflective practice as a result of the workshop.

In an e-mail survey to workshop participants conducted at least three months after they attended a workshop, 86% of respondents reported that as a result of the workshop, they are more interested in reflecting on their work.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION

Research Workshop Project: Goal and objectives

Goal

Promote interest in research and enhance the capacity for small-scale practitioner-based research and inquiry in Ontario, as a means of practitioner development and improvement of literacy services.

Objectives

1. Design and deliver 12 –15 research training workshops, blending face-to-face and on-line delivery to practitioners across Ontario

2. Maintain a modest schedule of other ongoing activities

Implementation Objectives

- a) Promote the program to a wide range of agencies across Ontario
- b) Adapt the program to suit local needs
- c) Use e-technology in training in ways that promote comfort and skill
- d) Train and mentor additional facilitators for the program
- e) Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with partnerships

Did the project fulfil its objectives according to planned budget and timeline?

The project met its primary objective of designing and delivering 12-15 research training workshops. A total of 13 research training workshops were delivered, blending face-to-face and online delivery (7 online workshops and 6 face-to-face workshops) within the planned one-year span. In addition to the workshops, the Festival of Literacies office maintained a modest schedule of activities, including ten speaker events (see page 21).

Did the project fulfil its implementation objectives (a to e above)?

a) Promote the program to a wide range of agencies across Ontario

Outreach and promotion activities were successful in generating interest from stakeholders, resulting in networks and organizations partnering to host workshops and workshop registrants from a range of locations in Ontario.

b) Adapt the program to suit local needs

For each workshop, discussions were held between workshop facilitators and hosting organizations to determine local needs. Workshop focus and material was adapted in response to these needs. Positive comments on workshop evaluation forms indicate the project successfully adapted the workshops to the needs of participants.

c) Use e-technology in training in ways that promote comfort and skill

Seven of the 13 research training workshops were delivered online. Participant workshop evaluation comments indicate that although some challenges associated with online delivery were noticed (pace, sound and microphone difficulties among a few participants), overall participants indicated appreciation for sharing concerns and posing and exploring questions related to their literacy work. Facilitators indicated interest, excitement and increased comfort with online facilitation.

d) Train and mentor additional facilitators for the program

Seven individuals facilitated research workshops. In addition, seven other individuals presented their experience as practitioner-researchers during a portion of a workshop.

e) Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with partnerships

Effectively utilizing partnerships was a key element in the project activities, resulting in partnering with host organizations to offer workshops at planned conferences, receiving advice, assistance and access to stakeholders in outreach and promotion, and receiving in-kind assistance and expertise in the design and delivery of online workshops.

Evidence indicates the partnerships were mutually beneficial. For example, the executive director at the Labour Education Centre (one of the organizations that partnered to host a workshop) reported that the workshop was relevant to their planning and critical analysis process. AlphaPlus reported that the goals of the research training workshops were closely aligned to the goals of their current aims: to provide key communication services, support e-learning culture within the literacy field, and develop a research culture in Ontario.

How effective were the workshops in contributing toward the project goal?

Participant responses on evaluation forms in face-to-face and online workshops indicate a strong positive response to the central workshop activity - a facilitated exploration of questions and concerns related to literacy work. Responses also indicate that the workshops have contributed to an increased interest in reflective practice and an increased awareness of its value and connection to improved practice. This was partly indicated in the responses to an e-mail survey administered at least three months after most of the workshops, in which the majority of respondents reported that as a result of the workshop, they felt an increased interest in reflective practice and in reading or hearing about the research of others. It was also indicated in some of the comments written by participants in workshops, which revealed that many participants:

- Have felt alone with their concerns and questions arising from literacy work
- Felt appreciation for sharing concerns, experiences, ideas and questions
- Realized they shared similar questions and concerns
- Felt a sense of affirmation and renewed energy as a result of the workshop
- Want more opportunities for reflection with other practitioners

Participant comments indicate that facilitated discussions about concerns arising from literacy work are rare, are needed and are highly appreciated. The facilitated discussions were positively received by participants, some of whom used words like “nurtured”, “affirmed”, “validated” and “energized” to describe how the discussions made them feel. It is also significant that some wrote of feeling alone in their programs and in their challenges as literacy practitioners, and connected sharing common concerns (as in the workshops) with feeling validated and less alone. These feelings further impacted how they felt about their work, as expressed in these two participant comments:

“I came here feeling somewhat overwhelmed and anxious about myself and the program. After today, I will go home knowing I am not alone and that in itself will provide me with the power to keep on-keeping on”.

“Reflection provides tremendous opportunities to share, affirm, discuss, resolve issues we all share”

Recommendations:

Evidence described in this evaluation report suggests that the research workshops were very effective in facilitating the sharing of common concerns and the exploration of questions related to literacy work. During workshops, participants were clearly being engaged in the process of reflective practice. Overall, participant comments indicated an appreciation and a need for this process.

This report strongly recommends building on this interest in inquiry and on the specific discussions generated in workshops by developing on-going mechanisms that would support continued practitioner reflection, discussion and systematic inquiry. In particular:

- **Continue to provide opportunities for facilitated practitioner inquiry**

Participant comments indicated that currently opportunities for facilitated practitioner inquiry are rare. After the workshops, most participants' comments included expressions of appreciation for the opportunity to share experiences, concerns and questions with other practitioners.

- **Build on the partnerships and expertise developed**

Partnerships have been developed between the *Festival of Literacies* (FoL) office and literacy networks. Connections have been made between the FoL office and the practitioners who participated in workshops, and amongst the practitioners. Over 120 practitioners Ontario-wide participated in the workshops and 14 individuals participated in facilitating the workshops. Dozens of other Ontario literacy practitioners and stakeholders received ongoing updates, notifications, invitations and descriptions of research in practice activities.

Through the project activities (such as the workshops, the website, the outreach and promotion of workshops and the workshops) the *FoL* office offered itself to the adult literacy field as a resource for information and facilitated reflection. Expertise has been developed in facilitating group online and face-to-face reflection. Lessons have been learned about technical issues related to online delivery, optimal number of participants, potential for ongoing practitioner dialogue, and partnering with host organizations. Refinements to the research training workshop materials, methods and activities have been made, and facilitation skills have been developed in the facilitators. This report recommends that the FoL office utilize this expertise by continuing to offer itself to the literacy field as a resource for mentorship, facilitated reflection, and information sharing amongst practitioners and researchers.

Appendix

List of Research Training Workshops delivered (Feb. 2006 – Feb. 2007)

Date	Participants	Workshop title	Description	Host organization, location
1) May 15, 06	20	Ideas into Action	A one-hour workshop offered as part of a CESBA-sponsored full-day event featuring a presentation on research proposal writing.	CESBA, Toronto
2) May 26, 06	14	Hearing Yourself Think, Hearing Each Other Think	A two-hour workshop offered as part of a two-day regional professional development conference hosted by the Literacy Northwest Regional network.	Literacy Northwest Network, Thunder Bay
ONLINE				
3) June 7, 06	18	Reflecting About Literacy	A two-part workshop series delivered on-line utilizing Centra software.	AlphaPlus provided use of Centra software, on-line from Toronto
4) June 14, 06	13	Work (two-part workshop)		
5) July 19, 06	12	Hearing Yourself Think, Hearing Each Other Think	A three-hour workshop focused on the literacy work of the Labour Education Centre.	Labour Education Centre, Toronto
ONLINE				
6) Sept. 14, 06	16	Reflecting About Literacy	A two-part workshop series delivered on-line utilizing Centra software.	AlphaPlus provided use of Centra software, on-line from Toronto
7) Sept. 21, 06	12	Work (two-part workshop)		
8) Nov. 15, 06	11	Looking In and Looking Out, Making Time for Reflection	A three-hour workshop designed to reflect on what has been learned through literacy practice.	Literacy Link South Central, London
9) Nov. 24, 06	20	Nurturing Learning within Ourselves	A day-long workshop focused on reflecting on learning process in literacy practice.	OISE, Festival of Literacies office, Toronto
10) Dec. 9, 06	5	From Reflection to Action	The second workshop (first held May 26) held as part of a two-day regional conference hosted by Literacy Northwest.	Literacy Northwest Network, Thunder Bay
ONLINE				
11) Feb. 14, 07	5	Yes, I can do this	A three-part workshop series delivered online utilizing Centra software, designed to explore literacy questions.	AlphaPlus provided use of Centra software,
12) Feb. 21, 07	5			
13) Feb 28, 07	5			
Summary Information:				
Total number of workshops: 13			Workshop facilitators: 7	
Total participants: 122			Additional guest presenters: 7	

Appendix

Likert-scale Participant Evaluation Responses

Below is a summary of Likert-scale responses on workshop evaluation forms. The first seven workshops included Likert-scale type evaluation questions (the last 6 workshops did not). Responses are summarized below.

Workshop Title/date:		Percent of respondents who select 4 or 5 on 5-point scale where 5 is excellent
Workshop 1 (May 15)	Rating Clarity, organization, relevance of presentation	100%
Workshop 2 (May 26)	Thought presenters did a good job	100%
	Liked the workshop	100%
		Percent of respondents who select "useful" or "very useful" on 4-point scale
Workshop 3 (July 19)	Usefulness in helping you think and talk about your work and learning	91%
Online workshops:		
Workshop 4, 5 (June 7, 14)	Usefulness of workshop in beginning to explore questions about literacy work	90%
	Usefulness of workshop in exploring how to create space for reflection in our work	70%
Workshop 6, 7 (Sept. 14, 21)	Usefulness of workshop in beginning to explore questions about literacy work	91%
	Usefulness of workshop in exploring how to create space for reflection in our work	45%

Appendix

Summary of Participant Comments, by theme

Themes drawn from participant written comments on evaluation forms are summarized below. A theme constituted 15 or more related comments.

Comments from participants were almost all positive, with expressions of appreciation in most comments.

Themes drawn from participant comments:

1. Appreciation for the sharing
2. Recognition of the value of inquiry and its connection to improving their practice
3. A feeling of community
4. Recognition that other have similar questions and challenges
5. Renewed energy and affirmation
6. A need for more reflection

1. Appreciation for sharing questions and concerns about literacy work

Many participants expressed appreciation for the sharing of questions, concerns and learning from literacy work. Many comments were similar to each other. They expressed an appreciation for hearing and sharing concerns, experiences, opinions and suggestions to solving problems. For example:

“There is much to learn from each other! Thanks for allowing us time to look beyond ourselves”,

“The best part...was discovering that some of my concerns were similar to others”,

“I really enjoyed the chance to think out loud with others in the field”,

“Thanks for coming to our city to share with us”,

“I am grateful for the opportunity to have spent an afternoon sharing thoughts, feelings and concerns with others about their jobs in the literacy field”,

“thanks for hearing us”

2. The Value of Inquiry and its connection to practice

Many participants comments indicated that workshops helped participants recognize the value of posing and reflecting on questions and its connection to improving the work they do. For example:

“What are our assumptions? How do they affect delivery?”,

“this workshop has helped me to articulate some questions and begin a discussion”,

“the best part was...going through some of the questions to deepen the process”,

“...the exercise of allowing the mind to rest on the question and come up with further related questions is brilliant for encouraging reflection”,

“...formulating questions about my concerns was practical...I will probably continue that practice”,

“Workshop was helpful... to reflect on my practice as an instructor; what I’m delivering and why”,

“I will see how I can incorporate these things further in my practice”,

“I would like to...see what changes we can make at our centre to improve our effectiveness and the community’s awareness of our services”,

“It (workshop) reminded me that to be a good teacher, I have to periodically reflect on what is happening ...sometimes it gives me a chance to make some changes, and sometimes it gives me a chance to pat myself on the back”,

“I feel I have an enriched outlook to go back to class with”,

“we investigated assumptions - so critical to our work”

3. Feeling of Community

Several participants wrote that as a result of the workshop, they didn’t feel so alone in their challenges. Their comments suggest that the workshop helped them feel part of a community. For example:

“After today, I will go home knowing I am not alone and that in itself will provide me with the power to keep on –keeping on”,

“I truly enjoyed learning that the concerns are similar regardless of the type of program”,

‘knowing we all have similar problems in our programs and because of that we should be able to come up with some solution”,

“my faith and joy in being apart of this community of instructor/learners was renewed”,

“perhaps the sharing that happened in this workshop gave me a renewed sense of belonging in this marvellous career”

4. Recognition that others have similar concerns

Many participants, as a result of the workshop, commented that the questions and challenges expressed by practitioners are similar. For several participants, this was the best part of the workshop. For example:

Best part...

“seeing how we all seem to have similar questions about our work”,

“realizing that others face the same questions and difficulties as I do”,

“It’s good to know I’m not alone”,

‘just hearing similar challenges”,

“knowing we all have similar problems in our programs”

5. Renewed Energy and affirmation

Many participants reported a sense of renewed energy and feelings of validation as a result of the workshop. This was expressed in a variety of ways, for example:

“I appreciate the time we make for ourselves to validate our teaching process...we felt good about ourselves”,

“It was good to hear that others are sometimes overwhelmed and confused and self doubting”,

“ the issues that we discussed today have validated what I’ve been experiencing as a practitioner during the past two years”,

“What a great day! I really feel encouraged and re-energized about pursuing project proposals”,

“the exciting part...a sense of community has been struck and I look forward to participating”,

“It’s wonderful to know I am on the right track, that what I have been thinking and feeling and experiencing are validated”,

“we were nourished physically and intellectually”,

“a real rejuvenation for me to listen to the passions and commitment and dedication of these practitioners here today”,

“As a practitioner it’s easy to get stale and chatting with all of you gave me so much energy”.

6. Need for more

Many participants expressed the desire to further explore particular ideas or questions from the workshops; Others expressed the need, hope and desire for more similar workshops opportunities.

“want to discuss equity and access issues”,

“I want to know more about .. portfolio process...learning circle”,

“we need more research, but we also need more opportunity to share our findings and to talk to each other, to get lost in the conversations”,

“I wish that we had more time to reflect and discuss what was presented today”,

“we need more workshops like this”,

“It would be nice to see something like this offered on a regular basis”,

“I hope that there will be more of these opportunities to dialogue together”,

“we need more workshops like this”,

“I would like to continue the sharing”.

Final Evaluation Survey

Surveys e-mailed: 94

Survey Responses: 21 (22.3% response rate)

The final evaluation survey was designed to collect data about the impact the workshops had on participants. The responses are summarized below.

1. a) Do you think the workshop made you more interested in reflecting on your work?

Yes..... 18

Already interested..... 1

No 1

- b) Are you making more time now for this reflection on your work?

Yes or I try..... 12

No time or no 6

2. a) Do you think as a result of the workshop, you are more interested in reading about research or hearing about the experience of other practitioners?

More interested..... 15

Already interested..... 4

- b) If yes, are you making more time for this?

Yes..... 7

Try or not yet..... 5

No 1

3. Would you like to add any other thoughts about what you took away from the workshop?

Note: several respondents added comments. They were included, compared and analyzed with the other participant comments on workshop evaluation forms and comment cards.

Festival of Literacies

Speaker Series/Events (February 2006 – February 28, 2007)

The list below does not include the 13 research training workshops

Date	Event Name	Presenters / Location
Feb. 28, 06	Launch of adult literacy magazine: "People and Progress"	Group of practitioners involved in a funded research project, from Toronto and Guelph, Ontario
Mar. 10, 06	Talk with a visiting Professor	Yoko Arai
Apr. 18, 06	Process of doing research	Same presenters as Feb. 28
May 29, 06	Research and Practice: Meeting Researchers	Paula Davies, Marina Niks, Suzanne Smythe, Anneke van Enk, Janice Brant, Arthur Bull, Guy Ewing, Susan Lefebvre, Mary Brehaut
May 31, 06	Part One: Equity and Diversity workshop	Jay Pitter
June 7, 06	Part Two: Equity and Diversity workshop	Jay Pitter
Sep. 28, 06	Our Own Knowledges: Reflections on Adult Literacy	Sue Folinsbee, Sheila Stewart
Nov. 24, 06	Book Release: Cultural Philosophy and Curriculum Design	Janice Brant
Feb. 2, 07	Moving Research about Violence and Learning into Practice: A research in practice workshop day	Evelyn Battell, Shayna Hornstein, Jenny Horsman, Christiana Jones, Judy Murphy, Kate Nonesuch, Mary Norton, Sheila Stewart
Feb. 16, 07	Making Our Own Books: a workshop	Heather Hicks, Sheila Stewart