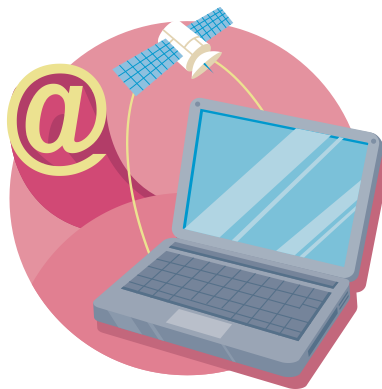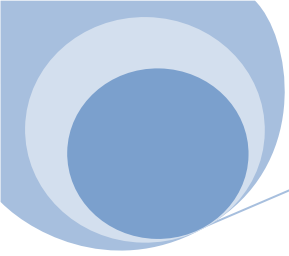**NWT Literacy Council**

Reframing Literacy and Training Support in the NWT Using New Technologies

Research Report

August 2009

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the family literacy providers and community literacy providers who, as front line workers, provided important input into this research project.

The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization that supports literacy development in all the official languages of the NWT. Please contact the NWT Literacy Council for more information on literacy, or for copies of this research report.

NWT Literacy Council
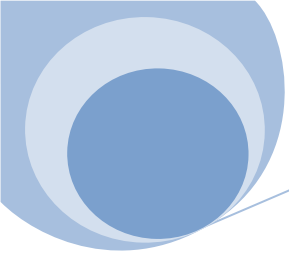Box 761, 5122 48th St.
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6
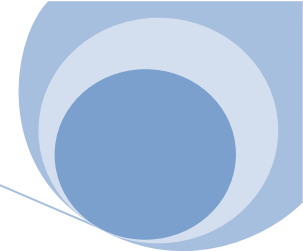Phone: (867) 873 9262
Phone Toll Free in the NWT: 1-866-599-6758
Fax: (867) 873 2176
Email: nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca
Website: www.nwt.literacy.ca

The NWT Literacy Council

The NWT Literacy Council was established in 1990. It is a territorial, not-for-profit organization with a mandate to promote and support literacy development in all eleven official languages of the NWT. We do this through training, research, information sharing, resource development and public awareness activities. A large part of our work involves providing training, as well as information, resources and support to family and community literacy providers[1], teachers, librarians, early childhood educators and other community resource people. Our current services to the literacy field include:

- Resource development in family and community-based literacy
- Training workshops on community and family literacy; literacy, language and culture; instructional techniques and curriculum support; plain language writing; program planning, proposal writing, and evaluation
- Research on literacy in the NWT generally, and in Aboriginal literacy more specifically
- A resource lending library
- A web site – www.nwt.literacy.ca
- Regularly published newsletters distributed widely throughout the NWT and southern Canada
- A weekly e-news distributed widely throughout the NWT and southern Canada
- Literacy promotion through International Literacy Day, Adult Learners' Week, NWT Literacy Week, PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy, National Family Literacy Day, and Aboriginal Languages Month
- Monitoring and responding to literacy policy on a territorial and national level

The NWT Literacy Council works directly with a variety of groups and individuals to promote and support literacy development in the NWT: family literacy providers, community literacy providers, adult learners, Aurora College, the Government of the

---

[1] In this document, we are using "community literacy providers" as a collective term to refer to adult educators and instructors in the NWT's community learning centres and on-campus Adult Literacy and Basic Education programs.
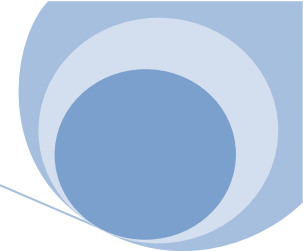
NWT, not-for-profit organizations, family resource programs, early childhood programs, libraries, Divisional Boards of Education, schools, Aboriginal organizations and other agencies with an interest in literacy development.

Background to the project

For over ten years, the NWT Literacy Council (NWTLC) has played a significant role in providing resources, training and support to family and community literacy providers in the NWT.

Since 1999, with financial support from the Governments of Canada (HRSDC) and the Northwest Territories (GNWT), we have developed several NWT-specific family literacy programs and trained more than 400 people from every community in the NWT in family literacy. This training has enabled many community members to plan, develop and deliver family literacy programs appropriate for their communities. As well, we have developed many instructional resources, and conducted yearly training sessions for community literacy providers, to support the delivery of effective, quality adult literacy and basic education programs, supported by HRSDC, the GNWT, and Aurora College.

During that time, we have conducted both formative and summative evaluations of these activities. Evaluations and evidence on the ground, such as numbers of programs, numbers of families participating in family literacy programs, as well as numbers of resources that family and community literacy providers use, show that we are very successful in engaging providers, and in supporting good practice through training and outreach (see NWT Literacy Council, 2003, 2005, 2006). While people are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the current services we offer, the most compelling, ongoing feedback we receive is the need to lessen the isolation that NWT family and community literacy providers feel, and to respond as effectively as possible to their need for on-going training and support so as to enhance their skills and improve their practice.

While family and community literacy providers consider face-to-face training the most desirable, that approach to training is costly in this northern environment. Bourassa, a northern adult educator, conducted a research-in-practice study in 2003 on the role technology could play in the professional development of community literacy providers in the NWT. Her report (2003) emphasizes the sense of isolation that community literacy providers in remote NWT communities feel, and concludes that information and communication technologies could play a significant role in reducing that sense of isolation. Those findings support the feedback that the NWTLC receives. Together, they reinforce the need for us to examine in more detail how using these new technologies could help us create a more flexible and equitable system of training and support that responds to the expressed needs of our partners who deliver literacy programs and services.

As early as 2001, with support from the GNWT's Literacy Strategy funding, we began to explore ways in which new technologies could support and complement our delivery of training and information to the field. This work, which was supported by the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD), resulted in the development of an award-winning web site (www.nwt.literacy.ca). This tool provided NWT family and community literacy providers with improved access to all our resources and to current literacy information. The website is extremely successful, receiving approximately 72,000 hits each month and around 7,500 visits (Webtrends, August, 2009). A number of our online resources regularly appear in NALD's Top Twenty Downloads.

Our continued success with our website has led to ongoing funding from the GNWT and ongoing support from NALD to continue our website work. This success has also given us credibility in our ability to employ new technologies effectively, and has helped raise awareness among family and community literacy providers, and others, of the efficacy of new technologies. At the same time, despite such success, we are aware that family literacy providers, in particular, are much less likely to use the website than community literacy providers, for example. While we believed we knew the reasons why, we felt it was important to gather information on their usage in a more formal way, so that we had documented evidence.
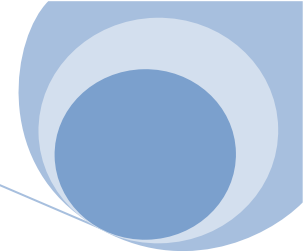
We have also been successful in the development of one particular online tool for adult learners, an online newspaper, *The Northern Edge*. *The Northern Edge* is a northern-based learning tool that encompasses stories and information that is relevant to learners in the NWT. Community literacy providers report that they use the resource extensively. They tell us they like *The Northern Edge* because it is easy to navigate, well-designed, uses current topics, but, most importantly, it has relevant and meaningful content for northern learners. We have produced six editions of the newspaper, along with a Study Guide with extended learning activities for each edition. We also produced one special edition about elections in 2007.

More recently, we have developed an electronic newsletter. Initially, this was a monthly publication. However, as a result of positive feedback, and continuous requests for more, we now publish it on a weekly basis and distribute it to more than 400 people. More recipients are added regularly to our distribution list. The newsletter includes up-to-date items related to literacy and essential skills and learning, links to research articles, current events and new resources. Anecdotal feedback rates the e-news as "excellent".

Over the last five years, we have also participated (somewhat less successfully) in a number of distance learning and networking pilot projects initiated by other jurisdictions. In those projects, we linked NWT literacy providers to other literacy providers through electronic conferencing systems such as the Hub (BC); e-Lit (AB) and AlphaRoute (ON). The GNWT's electronic conferencing and networking system (North of 60), with First Class as its platform, provided access to those other conferencing systems, and enabled the NWT to participate in these initiatives. At the same time, the NWT Literacy Council also offered two e-conferences for community literacy providers: Reading with Adults with Dr. Pat Campbell, and Best Practices in Adult Literacy and Basic Education Programs.

Those projects provided interesting training opportunities, but raise more questions than provide solutions for us. The e-conference with the most sustained participation

was the one that Dr. Pat Campbell facilitated, following a face-to-face training event with her. Evaluations show while interest is generally high, participation rates tend to be low. Some of the reasons that we heard for low participation included: a lack of high speed internet, and technological difficulties; limited time for community literacy providers to participate; discomfort with learning on line; and limited computer and technological skills on the part of participants. For the most part, however, we have only a superficial sense of why those initiatives did not lead to ongoing use or an expansion of service in the NWT. Thus we felt we needed to examine the reasons in more depth by consulting with family and community literacy providers before developing a new approach to training and support. We saw this consultation as a means to allow us to assess the current and future needs of NWT literacy providers to ensure any NWTLC initiatives would respond to their needs.

Project goal and objectives

This project was intended to build on the achievements of the NWT Literacy Council in providing training and support to family and community literacy providers. It aimed to reframe our approach to training and support in the Northwest Territories by examining the feasibility of creating an online learning environment using new technologies, in particular a Web 2.0 platform. This platform allows interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration using the World Wide Web. A Web 2.0 site allows for the following components:

- Keyword Search
- Links
- Authoring
- Tags to facilitate searching
- Signals, such as the use of RSS technology, to notify end users of content changes.

The overall goal of our project was to have the information we needed to enable us to move forward in creating a more flexible system of training and support that ensures literacy providers in the NWT have equitable access to and opportunities for ongoing literacy training and support. Effective professional development for family and

community literacy providers supports good literacy practice, ultimately benefiting learners through improved programs and services.
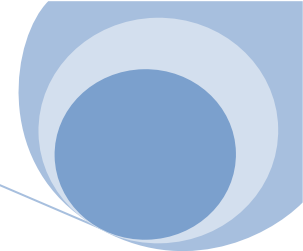
Our objectives for this 14-month project were:

1. Research and identify effective practices for online learning for family and community literacy providers, with particular emphasis on Aboriginal literacy providers

2. Conduct an assessment that identifies barriers to, interests in, and needs of NWT family and community literacy providers in online learning through the use of new technologies

3. Develop a plan based on our findings that will enable us to move forward in delivering distance learning and support in the NWT

Objectives 1 and 2 focused on research. Those objectives were intended to help build our knowledge base. To support Objective 1, we reviewed the literature on online learning, and examined the experiences of other jurisdictions and, in particular, what they have learned. To support Objective 2, we explored the current status of our services to family and community literacy providers in the NWT, and identified the gaps in current services in the NWT. To achieve Objectives 2 and 3, we involved family and community literacy providers throughout the NWT to determine how new technologies can improve the delivery of training and, at the same time, create a network of support for themselves. Also to support Objective 3, we determined how best to use what we had learned, and how we could fill the gap that exists. This research project has the potential to help build the capacity of family and community literacy providers to deliver quality literacy programs to learners. It also has the potential to redirect the work of the NWT Literacy Council (and that of other northern or remote jurisdictions) for many years in the future.

Research Methodology

The research was divided into seven different parts:

- A review of the literature related to online learning
- A review of the models other jurisdictions have developed and their experiences
- A gap analysis of the training and support services provided to family and community literacy providers in the NWT
- Data analysis from the research
- Development of sample materials to facilitate online learning
- Review of findings through focus groups/ workshops with family and community literacy providers in the NWT
- Development of a plan to move forward

As the first step in this project, we had intended to establish a working group that would guide the project. However, due to staff turnover, the group was not set up until later in the project. The group was composed of the staff person in the GNWT responsible for Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE), the GNWT staff person responsible for family literacy, the staff person from Aurora College responsible for ALBE, and a representative from the Nunavut Literacy Council. A Terms of Reference was developed for the group (Appendix A). The working group met twice during the project. The group reviewed the process and progress of the project.

The second step was to conduct a comprehensive review of the literature on the development and delivery of online learning. This work helped us understand some of the challenges, as well as what worked well. The review also confirmed some of our own experiences. It also provided us with an overview of best practices related to online learning that would improve the likelihood of success in developing and delivering training and support through an online learning environment. At the same time, we reviewed models from other jurisdictions that we were familiar with, and then identified other models that we should examine. The intent was to see what we might be able to adopt, or adapt, from those organizations that had more experience than we had. We undertook an initial literature review and review of other models at the beginning of the project. However, we continued to monitor new literature and new models throughout the project. We were particularly interested in challenges and
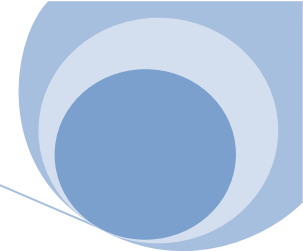
solutions, plus any advice from others who had already gone down this road. (See References for bibliography.)

We then prepared to conduct an NWT gap analysis. We sent out a letter to all family and community literacy providers to introduce them to the project (Appendix B). For this phase, we developed and tested a quantitative and qualitative survey instrument. We distributed the revised survey to all family and community literacy providers in the NWT (Appendix C) by two means: by mail, and also face-to-face, when we conducted focus groups/workshops. We also developed interview protocols to use in semi-structured interviews among a representative sample of family and community literacy providers in the NWT, as well as with other literacy organizations involved in the delivery of distance and online learning for providers. We used the protocols in the focus groups/ workshops we subsequently held.

In all, we distributed 100 surveys to current family and community literacy providers, to librarians and to schools. We received 40 written responses (40%). Respondents were asked to note which role(s) applied to them. Many chose multiple roles. For example, several community literacy providers also chose teacher and family literacy provider. Early childhood workers also chose family literacy provider, toy lending librarian, and family resource worker. Respondents identified the following rolesfor themselves:

- 23 community literacy providers (adult educators), some of whom also delivered family literacy programs
- 3 librarians(also identified themselves as family literacy providers)
- 1 teacher(a literacy coach)
- 8 early childhood workers (also identified themselves as family literacy providers), and
- 5 family literacy providers (identified this as their only role)

In all, 20 respondents were family literacy providers. After collecting all the data, we summarized and analyzed the data. (See P. 23 for a review of the findings.)

At the same time, we reviewed the capacity of the NWT Literacy Council to effectively design, deliver and support distance and online training. To increase our somewhat limited capacity, one staff member attended workshops on information and communication technology in southern Canada.

Part of the project was to develop prototype materials that we could use as samples in the focus groups/ workshops that we would hold at a later date. Since many of the survey respondents had requested videos they could show to parents, or training videos for themselves, we hired a contractor to train staff from the NWT Literacy Council to run a video camera, shoot appropriate footage, transfer the footage to an editing software program, and edit the footage. Staff also learned to prepare the video material to upload on to a web-based environment.

After the training, our next step was to identify and develop the sample materials to show literacy providers what might be possible. Since family literacy providers were those who had requested videos the most, we developed a series of training videos for them in different sizes, namely small, medium and large, that we could put on our website. The videos included: Tips for Reading to Your Child; Making books – Introduction; Making a Quick Book; Folding Books. (See www.nwt.literacy.ca.) As we uploaded the videos, we were able to test upload and download speeds in three selected communities (Ottawa – a large urban centre in southern Canada; Yellowknife – the largest centre in the NWT; and Ulukhaktok – a small remote community in the NWT).

The development of the materials coincided with the opening of a museum exhibit on living literacies – an examination of traditional indigenous literacies that are still in evidence today. This was a joint project of the NWT Literacy Council, the University of Lethbridge, the community of Ulukhaktok, the Inuvialuit Cultural Centre and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Following the opening event, we developed three slide shows with an audio component related to the exhibit: Celebrating the Opening of the Exhibit**;** Learning New Skills**;** and,A Virtual Tour of the Exhibit, and

uploaded those to our website. (See www.nwt.literacy.ca.) Again, we tested the download speed for the slide shows in the different communities.

Because many respondents to the survey expressed a desire to have better access to our resource library, we worked with a contractor to create an online resource page that focused on northern and Aboriginal resources. The biggest challenge for this work was the ability to use Dene fonts (which are not yet available in Unicode) for Aboriginal language books. In addition, we researched various websites that we thought might be useful to community literacy providers (Appendix D), and family literacy providers We then used all these resources in the focus group/workshops that we developed for the two groups of literacy providers.
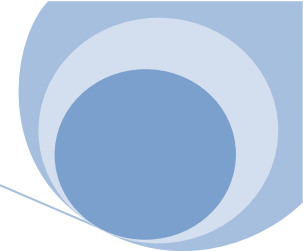
We held one focus group/workshop with 12 experienced family literacy providers in Yellowknife at the Advanced Family Literacy Training Institute (Appendix E). The workshop included information and demonstrations of the following:

- Introduction to the Internet
- How to find literacy information on the Internet
- How to use the information for your program
- Blogs
- Examples of literacy websites, and Internet searches
- Online videos

Since a number of workshop participants had already completed a resource survey, we asked them for oral feedback on our resources, our training and their future needs, in an effort to gather more detailed information on their responses.

Forty eight community literacy providers (adult educators) attended the three focus groups/workshops in Yellowknife, Hay River and Inuvik. The agenda included information/ and demonstrations of the following:

- Computer-based learning sites
- Literacy blogs
- Peer-to-peer networking
- Online videos

- Social bookmarking sites, e.g. Delicious
- Social networking sites, e.g. FaceBook, MySpace, YouTube etc.
- Podcasts
- Twitter

The community literacy providers discussed what they saw, and in particular the relevance to their context. They were very pleased to have an opportunity to explore different technologies, websites and blogs. Evaluations showed that this was the kind of information many found useful, although many rarely took the time to do this themselves on a day-to-day basis. (Some community literacy providers were highly skills users of the technologies, and were online often.) Again, the community literacy providers discussed the responses to the survey in more detail.

The findings from the NWT literacy services gap analysis served as the basis for our plan to implement online learning and support throughout the Northwest Territories.

Learning from the literature

Since our early forays into online learning, we have followed the literature and monitored other online learning environment initiatives.

What is online learning?

In the past, distance learning often included only print-based materials, and, if learners were lucky, they had tutorial assistance to support their learning. With the advent of technology, distance learning has a much broader meaning, and includes online learning. "Distance learning covers a whole spectrum of teaching and learning modalities," (Porter and Strum, 2006, p.10). Today distance learning can take many forms: video, online learning, home tutoring, independent study, and more. Often it involves more than one of these modalities. Online learning refers to learning that is facilitated electronically. The benefits, disadvantages and challenges related to online learning and support are well-documented, along with ways to address the challenges.
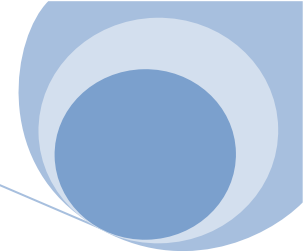
The benefits of online learning

Most researchers agree major benefits accrue for both instructors and learners from developing and delivering online learning (e.g. ABC Canada, 2005; Bourassa, 2003; CANARIE, 2002).

- Online learning is a cost effective way to deliver programs, and is generally considered to be cheaper than face-to-face learning. However, Porter & Sturm (2006) concluded that there were no cost savings with distance learning, but that other benefits outweighed the cost issue.

- Online learning provides increased access to education, particularly in rural and remote areas.

- Online learning allows for greater opportunities for individualized instruction. Participants in online learning can often choose topics they are interested in, have a means to correct their own work, and proceed at their own speed.

- Online learning enables instructors to target skills and knowledge development, and build instruction around those skills.

- Online learning is often multimodal and thus is able to accommodate diverse learning styles.

- Online learning with a networking component reduces feelings of isolation among participants.

In addition, several researchers contend that online learning can produce improved learning outcomes. ABC Canada (2005), for example, notes that there is evidence of higher productivity and more positive attitudes amongst learners from the use of online learning. The CANARIE (2002) discussion paper on a vision for e-learning in Canada argues "there is growing evidence that carefully designed e-learning implementations can improve learning outcomes" (p.9). The paper cites examples of improvements in math outcomes in some provinces that have experimented with online multimedia materials.

The challenges of online learning

Despite the efficacy of online learning, however, researchers and those experienced in using this approach agree that the challenges can be daunting. Much of the literature on online learning shows that one of the main barriers to the effectiveness of this approach is the technology, rather than the design of materials. This includes access to computers and to the Internet, connection speed, and the ability to use the various technologies. May (1994) argues that facilitators of online learning need to recognize and accommodate technological difficulties. Access issues are major challenges for many individuals and communities in the NWT.

In terms of access to the Internet – the principal means to transfer information electronically – McKeown, Noce and Czerny (2008) report that an urban-rural digital divide exists: rural residents are one and a half times less likely to use the Internet than urban residents. According to these authors, factors that impact people's use of the Internet include:

- **Geography:** Residents in more remote communities use the Internet less than those in urban areas.

- **Level of education:** People with no post-secondary education are considerably less likely to access the Internet than those with higher levels of education.

- **Age:** Younger people are more likely to use the Internet than older people.

- **Income:** Lower income earners use the Internet approximately 50% less than higher income earners.

- **Broadband availability**: Where Internet access is slow, people use the Internet less.

All these factors are particularly relevant to the NWT, where we have many remote communities, a large number of people with low levels of literacy which affects their employment opportunities and income levels, as well as limited broadband access. What may mitigate some of these challenges is the age of the NWT population: we have a much younger population overall than jurisdictions in southern Canada.

Other obstacles that may negatively affect the success of online learning include:

- **Lack of time:** This is often cited as a major barrier to participation in professional development, including online learning.

- **Lack of personal contact:** This can be a challenge for people who perform better in situations where learning is a social event. (Ramsey, n.d.)

- **Copyright restrictions** (Canadian Consortium of Technology, 2008): These may limit what can be uploaded to different sites.

- **Limited facilitation skills on the part of moderators:** The role of the instructor changes in online learning. Paloff and Pratt (2001) suggest that therefore not all instructors make good moderators.
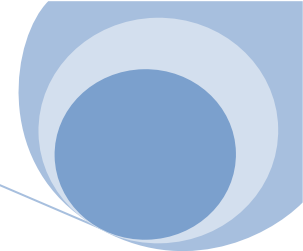
The NWT Literacy Council has encountered all of those obstacles at tis preliminary efforts to provide online training and support.

Because online learning, particularly in a Web 2.0 environment, is still fairly new the Canadian Consortium of Technology (2008) notes the need for further research and evaluation in this area.

How to create and deliver successful online learning

People who have developed and delivered training and offered support using an online learning environment provide a number of pointers that they believe will facilitate successful online learning experiences for all involved. Some general advice includes:

Be familiar with the technologies: McKimm, Jollie and Cantillon (2003) note that learners need basic computer skills to get the best out of learning. Without these skills, learners can quickly become frustrated. Carr-Chellman, Dyer and Breman (2000) suggest that audio or face-to-face preparation is necessary for computer-based training, prior to an online course. This may be particularly important for family literacy providers in the NWT, many of whom lack basic computer skills. However, not only

learners need to be familiar with the technologies. Facilitators and developers, too, need to know their delivery software, how it functions and its capabilities.

Make sure people have good Internet access: Many features of online learning require broadband access to be effective. This is still an issue in the NWT, where some communities have switched from dial-up connections only in the last two years.

Be aware of the constraints on people's time: When delivering online learning, it can be in either synchronous mode (i.e. all learners have to be online at a specific time) or asynchronous (that is, timing is flexible and learners can go online at times that are convenient for them). It is important for facilitators to know which mode participants prefer. In the survey we did with literacy providers, the asynchronous mode was easily the preferred mode.

Ensure the facilitator has good facilitation skills: A number of researchers comment on the importance of the quality of moderation for online learning and emphasize the importance of instructor training to make the online moderator effective (Paloff and Pratt, 2001). This includes welcoming participants (Salmon, 2000; Ramsey (n.d.), as well as stimulating, focusing and summarizing discussions. Trottier (2000) refers to online facilitation as "the critical link" (p.20) that makes the experience come alive and distinguishes it from print-based learning. These comments bear out our own experience with facilitation.

Support both learners and facilitators: All researchers agree that support for both learners and facilitators is key. Learners need help to navigate the site, and to understand what is required of them. Centre AlphaPlus (2002) emphasizes the importance of onsite facilitators or mentors as a means to deal with learner difficulties and provide support to them. Facilitators too need support, more specifically for the technological side. When the technology does not work well, it can be frustrating for both learners and facilitators.

Take care when selecting instructional software and designing programs: Khan's E-Learning Framework (2007) provides a broad overview of eight dimensions that are important when designing an online learning environment:
- Pedagogical (content, goals, design approach, methods)
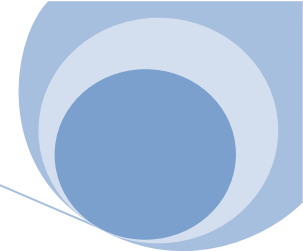- Technological (infrastructure planning, hardware and software)

- Interface design (page and site design, content design, navigation, usability)
- Evaluation (of learners and the learning environment)
- Management (maintenance of the learning environment and distribution of information)
- Resource support (online resources and support)
- Ethical (bias, diversity, legal issues, etc.), and
- Institutional (administrative affairs and support)

Middleton (2003), from Literacy BC, believes the following are desired features in instructional software:

- Authoring capabilities
- An adult orientation
- Student control
- Appropriate reading level
- Collaboration and interaction possibilities
- Canadian content
- Voice-activated software, audio components, feedback, evaluations of quality assurance, and affordability

A number of researchers (see Moore & Kearsley, 1996) believe that multiple media are more appropriate media for online learning. Ramsey (n.d.) suggests, for example, that visual learners usually do well in an online environment. This is important in the context of the NWT because it reflects characteristics of indigenous literacies that we have become aware of through our indigenous literacies research project (see Balanoff, Chambers, Kaodloak & Kudlak, 2009). However, Trottier (2000) cautions that "the bells and whistles" of video, audio, live chat are not a substitute for poor content.

Workshops the Wired Way (Trottier, 2000), an initiative of Community Literacy of Ontario, presents a comprehensive overview of what is involved in developing and delivering online workshops, in their case for practitioners. The report provides detailed descriptions of how staff recruited participants, how they developed modules for online delivery, how they facilitated the sessions in ways that kept people engaged,

and how they provided support to participants, some of the key elements identified by other researchers.

Charles Ramsey (n.d.), from the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD), has some specific suggestions based on his own experience, on how to encourage more participation in electronic conferences, an area the NWT Literacy Council has been less successful in:

- Pre-plan
- Promote
- Introduce
- Consider the time factor
- Be prepared
- Evaluate

Models from other jurisdictions we may be able to adopt or adapt

We looked at a variety of models that we thought might offer us a model or a program that we could adopt as it was, or adapt to our situation and context. It should be noted that this is usually the first step in any program development we do. Many of our models, programs and resources (for example, *The Northern Edge*) are adapted from models, programs and resources from other jurisdictions.

AlphaRoute, a web-based application in Ontario, began in 1996. AlphaRoute offers "anytime-anywhere" access to learning. Research on the effectiveness and challenges of AlphaRoute found the following features were important in a web-based environment (Porter & Sturm, 2006) – some of which are similar to those discussed in the literature above:
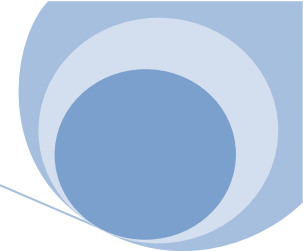
- The design of the learning environment: the ideal online learning environment lets learners choose among audio, pictures, text, videos, and authentic project work.

- Onsite support for learners: this includes self-correcting activities, online mentor support, live facilitator support, on-line peer support, and live peer support (Centre AlphaPlus, 2002).

- Technical and human help for learners and mentors: for example, navigational issues often required onsite facilitation.

- Features to support interaction with other learners, such as Web logs, discussion boards, chats, and user-generated content were found to be important.

Several staff from the NWT Literacy Council and several community literacy providers received training so that communities in the NWT could be pilot-test sites for AlphaRoute. Pilot testing took place a few years ago. On the whole, the pilot was not successful, because broadband access and technological difficulties caused considerable frustration, and several sites gave up because of the technological difficulties. The program itself had many positive features that both facilitators and learners liked, and that we have used.

The Essential Skills Portfolio Occupational Readiness Training, or ESPORT, is a basic skills assessment and planning tool to help people prepare for entry level occupations. ESPORT, along with PLATO Essential Skills Online, offers a supported learning program tailored to the occupation participants might choose. Since we are interested in providing literacy and essential skills resources relevant to the NWT, in early 2009, two staff members from the NWT Literacy Council participated in a Webinar with staff from the GNWT Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment staff, and ESPORT staff. While NWT participants thought parts of the tool could be useful, concern was expressed that there was not enough relevant northern content. Earlier versions of PLATO have been used in the NWT in some community learning centres with mixed success. While some community literacy providers endorsed and used it, others did not feel it was useful for their learners.

We also explored **HRSDC's website on Essential Skills**, since many providers are interested in having more tools related to Essential Skills. The website has an extensive range of material that is being constantly added to. We have distributed information on

this website extensively throughout the NWT, and will continue to use it as a resource to support our work in this area.

Putting IT in Adult Literacy – After extensive consultation with the literacy community in Nova Scotia, a forum for discussion, training, and sharing was designed by Literacy Nova Scotia for adult literacy practitioners, learners and coordinators in adult learning programs. One of the products from that project is a handbook to help learners gain basic technical skills. We see that as a useful document that we could use to support learners in the NWT, particularly family literacy providers, who often have lower levels of literacy. Literacy Nova Scotia has also developed workshops for learners, as well as for facilitators and coordinators. We see that we would be able to use some of these materials as they are. This would form the basis for further computer and Internet training.

The Learning Edge is a model that we have used in the past, and has perhaps acted as our most significant model in terms of online resources. Our online newspaper, *The Northern Edge*, was modeled after *The Learning Edge*. In the resource survey we conducted with family and community literacy providers, *The Northern Edge* was identified as one of our most popular tools. We believe that we could continue to use this model, and enhance it to maximize the use of the Web 2.0 platform.

Two staff from the NWT Literacy Council participated in a Webinar when the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) introduced their new assessment tool, **Echo online**, for adult learners. The staff also later reviewed and tested the tool, and provided feedback to CCL. As well, a number of community literacy providers from the NWT participated in workshops on the assessment tool. While assessment tools are already available in the NWT, people were generally pleased to have access to such an online assessment tool.

ELMO is Literacy BC's online review website. We were particularly interested in this website and format because providers in the NWT expressed an interest in having more

access to information on northern and Aboriginal resources, and this seemed to be a good model for us to adapt.
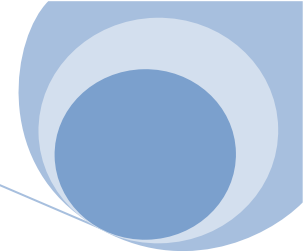
More recently, two new northern online initiatives have begun. The Pan-Arctic E-learning Project, *Together at a Distance,* is a three-year project led by the Nunavut Department of Education. It is intended for all northerners. The developers believe it will provide the foundation and supports for healthy and sustainable e-learning across the Canadian Arctic. So far they have developed several e-learning workshops for both adult learners and teachers available at http://ndlp.ca:

- What is e-learning?
- How to take an e-course?
- How to facilitate an e-course?
- How to teach an e-course?
- How to adapt an e-course?
- How to design an e-course?

Two people from the NWT are on the advisory group – a representative from the Schools Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, and more recently a representative from the NWT Literacy Council. The platform that they are using for the advisory group is *Elluminate Live*. *Elluminate Live* features high-quality voice over the Internet, robust interactive functionality, and unique *No User Left Behind™* technology that supports multiple platforms and low-bandwidth connectivity. This platform could be particularly useful for us in the Northwest Territories, and we intend to explore it further.

While the stated intention of the project is to include some NWT pilot sites, to date this has not happened. We believe some of the more general components, such as the e-learning course, may be suitable for use in the NWT, but our experience in the past is that instructional materials developed in Nunavut are not transferrable to the NWT. Nunavut materials usually focus on Inuit language and culture and these e-learning workshops are no exception. Most of the graphics and scenarios are Inuit-based. In the NWT, the majority of Aboriginal people belong to the Dene and Algonquin (First

Nations) groups, so instructional materials need to reflect those different groups. In addition, based on our review of the literature and our own experiences, introductory workshops may be more effective delivered face-to-face, before the e-learning course begins.

The Nunavut Community Access Program is working on a project to identify best practices in informal (i.e. non-classroom) settings. Staff from the project are collecting information on best practices on adult learning in informal settings through first a pan-Territorial, and then national contest. Although the contest is described as pan-territorial, we could not find a Community Access Program in the NWT that had heard of the contest. The closing date for the pan-territorial component has now been extended to October 2009. While some materials from informal settings may be useful as resources, strictly speaking they do not conform to the carefully designed instructional materials (see Middleton, 2003 and Khan, 2007) that providers are looking for and that support improved learner outcomes. The materials, however, may be useful as supplementary resources for curriculum in classroom settings.

North of 60 is the GNWT's electronic conference and networking system, with First Class as its platform. We used this platform to enable NWT community literacy providers to participate in electronic conferences. North of 60, however, is mainly used by the school system as the basis for an extensive networking system among school staff. We have been less successful in using it to network community literacy providers. The system is useful, however, as a link to e-conferences hosted by other jurisdictions.

NWT gap analysis
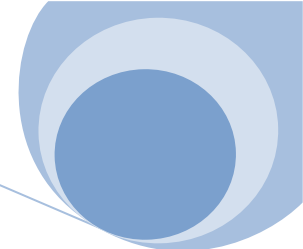
While we can learn from projects in other jurisdictions, the NWT has specific characteristics that present major challenges for developing an online learning environment, as well as specific needs. Our program delivery and support mechanisms must take these unique attributes and challenges into account. Some of these are not addressed through current initiatives in other jurisdictions.

The NWT context

Geographic area and remote communities: The huge geographic area—with virtually no road system—makes delivering face-to-face training logistically challenging and prohibitively expensive, particularly in the face of shrinking budgets in recent years. In addition, the remoteness of the communities and the relatively low numbers of family and community literacy providers throughout the NWT mean family and community literacy providers are relatively isolated, with limited opportunities to network with, and learn from, colleagues.

Cultural issues: The NWT has eleven official languages and cultures. The territory's extensive support for Aboriginal languages and culture makes it unique in Canada (Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly, 2003). As a result, literacy work in the NWT is extremely complex. Our experience of working in the literacy field in the NWT since 1990 has increased the Council's awareness and sensitivities to the needs of Aboriginal literacy providers, learners and families. Recent research by the NWT Literacy Council into Aboriginal literacies in the NWT suggests that people with Aboriginal literacies benefit from a multimodal (audio, visual, oral, aural, kinesthetic) approach (Balanoff, Chambers, Kaodloak, Kudlak, 2007). Thus face-to-face training is the ideal. New technologies, however, also enable a multimodal approach that could be successful too, once we address ways to overcome the initial challenges.

Increasing demands for literacy services: Full employment, plus a heightened awareness of the importance of literacy created a demand for more literacy services. This has continued to increase with the recent economic downturn. The GNWT's public policy and funding commitment to literacy is reflected through the two NWT Literacy Strategies (Northwest Territories Education, Culture & Employment, 2001, 2008). An evaluation of the first strategy (NRE, Nella Consulting & J. Carey Consulting, 2007) indicates that, as program delivery grows, the need for ongoing professional development opportunities for literacy providers also grows to enable them to effectively meet the literacy needs of the learners they serve. While the NWT Literacy Council has been very successful at delivering quality training, given the recent growth in demand for community literacy programs and services, and given our capacity as an

organization, we will be unable to continue to meet this demand, if we do not change the way we do things.

Literacy levels and capacity building: The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) (Statistics Canada, 2005) shows that the literacy levels of the Aboriginal population are considerably lower than those of the non-Aboriginal population in the NWT: 31% as compared to 69%. This gap is reflected in the English literacy levels of many family literacy providers here. As a result, they require more training and support than people with higher levels of literacy, thus one-off training does not meet their needs. In the past, we have been able to offer further training on only a limited basis. We continue to provide extensive outreach support through phone, fax, emails and on-site visits. Online learning for family literacy providers could have a secondary benefit. The 2003 IALSS findings show that literacy proficiency increases with use of computers for task-oriented purposes. Thus a potential outcome from an online learning environment approach is that literacy providers will have another avenue to improve their own literacy levels.

Broadband support: As use of new technologies expanded elsewhere in Canada, many of the NWT's smaller communities lacked broadband technology and continued to have access to the Internet only though dial-up until very recently. This limited their access to programs and services that required broadband support. Earlier attempts to use technology for learning were impacted by this slow connectivity, as well as by people's lack of skills with the technology. Recently, however, connectivity has improved, and most communities now have broadband access. One would assume that this would increase the potential to use new technologies for program delivery and support. However, as part of this project, we measured the upload and download speeds in selected communities, and found connectivity was still much slower than in southern Canada. Here is a comparison:

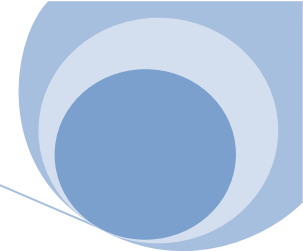| Community	Download speed	Upload speed
Ottawa	6834 kbps	469 kbps
Yellowknife	1939 kbps	163 kbps
Ulukhaktok	320 kbps	44 kbps

These much slower download speeds limit what we can do online that remote communities will be able to access.

The capacity of the NWT Literacy Council: Finally, the NWT Literacy Council is a small organization with limited capacity and limited skills in this area. We need to improve our understanding of delivery approaches that use new technologies. We also need to assess our own skills to be able to move forward.

The NWT Literacy Services Gap Analysis

We wanted to learn about the status of the services we currently offer to family and community literacy providers, and we wanted to know the needs of literacy providers in this jurisdiction, both at the present and in the future. To that end, in 2008, we developed a survey to enable us to identify:

- Which NWT Literacy Council resources family literacy providers and community literacy providers currently use.

- How they use the resources.

- How useful they are to literacy providers and community literacy providers.

- Where they currently get our resources from.

- What types of new resources providers would like to see the NWT Literacy Council develop.

- What access family and community literacy providers have to computers and high-speed Internet.

- The numbers of literacy providers that use the NWT Literacy Council website, and how regularly.

- The kinds of online materials that would improve NWT Literacy Council programs and services and make them more accessible to the literacy field.

- Ways in which we could use new technologies to support the work of literacy providers and improve their practice.

The questionnaire contained 15 questions. Some questions asked the responder to check off an answer, while others asked for written comments.

Limited access to computers and limited technological skills

The most significant finding among family literacy providers was their limited access to computers and the Internet. Not surprisingly, given the low access rate, several family literacy providers reported not being able to use computers at all. In this respect, the survey confirmed what we suspected. Consequently, family literacy providers identified computer training, as well as improved access to computers as a priority for them.

Meanwhile all community literacy providers had access to computers and the Internet, although, because broadband speed varied from community to community, this limited what people actually accessed.

Use of resources

All respondents were familiar with the resources we had developed and used those that were most relevant to their role (Fig. 1). Thus, for example, family literacy providers used the family literacy resources. Seventy seven percent of family literacy providers reported using both *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me* and *Books in the Home*. Family literacy providers listed *1-2-3 Rhyme with Me* and the *How-to-Kits* as the most useful resources.

Community literacy providers overwhelmingly identified the resources that supported the English curriculum as those they found most useful. Eighty seven per cent of those surveyed said they used the English 130 curriculum. All but one used at least one of the English Curriculum Resources (110,120,130). Some community literacy providers who ran family literacy programs also used the family literacy resources. Seventy three per cent of community literacy providers used *both The Northern Edge*, our online newspaper, *and* the Northern Edge Study Guide. The other 27% used *either* the online newspaper *or* the study guide. These two types of resources were the ones that community literacy providers found the most useful by far.
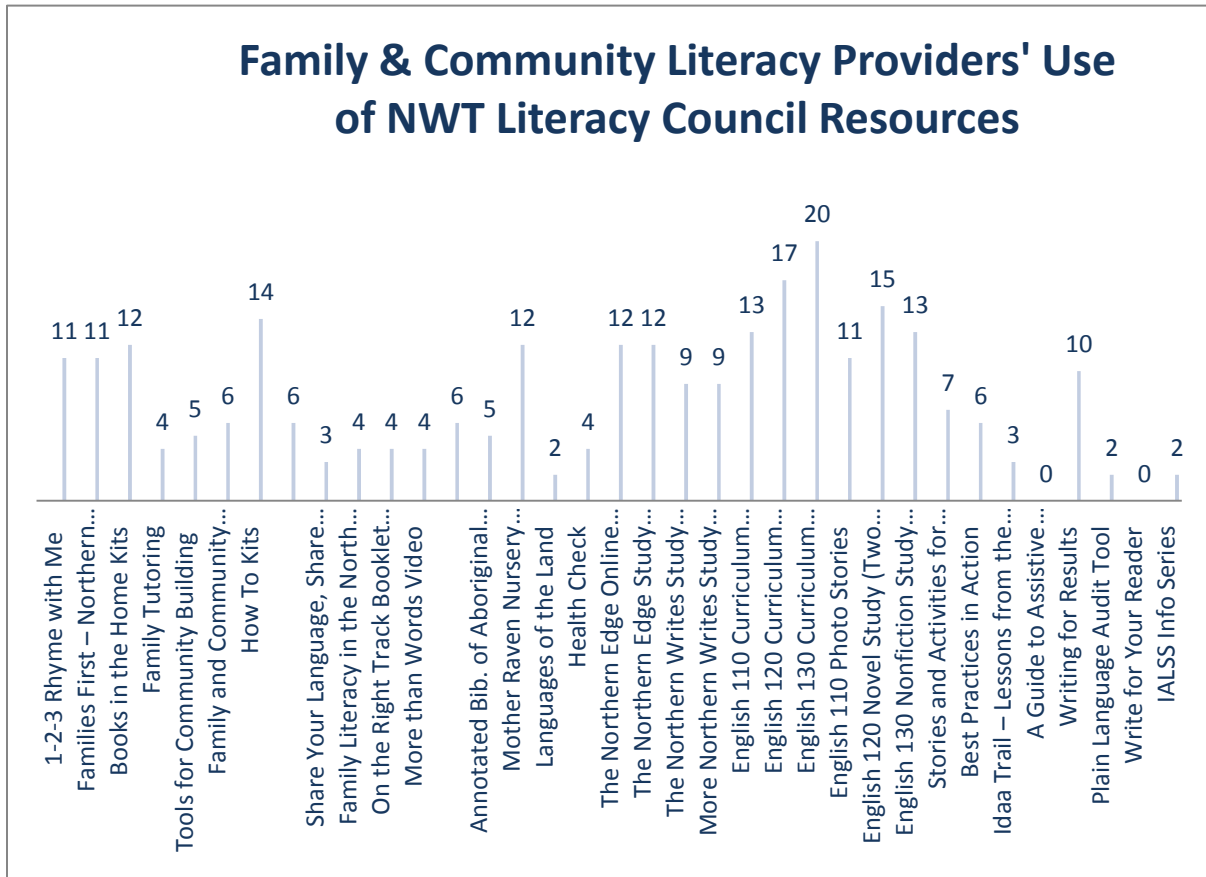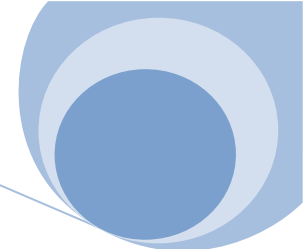
Family & Community Literacy Providers' Use of NWT Literacy Council Resources

The chart shows the following values for each resource:

Resource	Value
1-2-3 Rhyme with Me	11
Families First – Northern…	11
Books in the Home Kits	12
Family Tutoring	4
Tools for Community Building	5
Family and Community…	6
How To Kits	14
Share Your Language, Share…	6
Family Literacy in the North…	3
On the Right Track Booklet…	4
More than Words Video	4
Annotated Bib. of Aboriginal…	4
Mother Raven Nursery…	6
Languages of the Land	5
Health Check	2
The Northern Edge Online…	4
The Northern Edge Study…	12
The Northern Writes Study…	12
More Northern Writes Study…	9
English 110 Curriculum…	9
English 120 Curriculum…	13
English 130 Curriculum…	17
English 110 Photo Stories	20
English 120 Novel Study (Two…	11
English 130 Nonfiction Study…	15
Stories and Activities for…	13
Best Practices in Action	7
Idaa Trail – Lessons from the…	6
A Guide to Assistive…	3
Writing for Results	0
Plain Language Audit Tool	10
Write for Your Reader	2
IALSS Info Series	0
(last)	2

Figure 1

How providers obtained NWTLC resources

Literacy providers were asked how they obtained their resources at present. Most indicated they received them when they attended NWT Literacy Council training. They were also asked what format (online, DVD, print) was the most useful to them. Most still preferred to receive print-based copies, with materials on CD or DVD a close second. All preferred to receive them in a format, such as MS Word, that would allow them to make changes to suit their own situation. Only a few community literacy providers downloaded them from our website. No family literacy providers downloaded resources from the website.

Use of the NWT Literacy Council website

Very few family literacy providers used the NWT Literacy Council website. Some indicated they did not know it existed – despite including it in training. Others did not have access to a computer and printer, did not have the skills to use a computer and/or the Internet, did not have the time, or preferred to have the resources in print, so they could photocopy them. One hundred per cent of community literacy providers reported using the website. The most popular pages that community literacy providers accessed were Adult Literacy, *The Northern Edge* online newspaper and the resources page.

Priorities for the future

All literacy providers were asked to identify what they saw as priorities for future development – training, resources or networking opportunities – and what form these should take to be useful to them.

Priorities for the Future

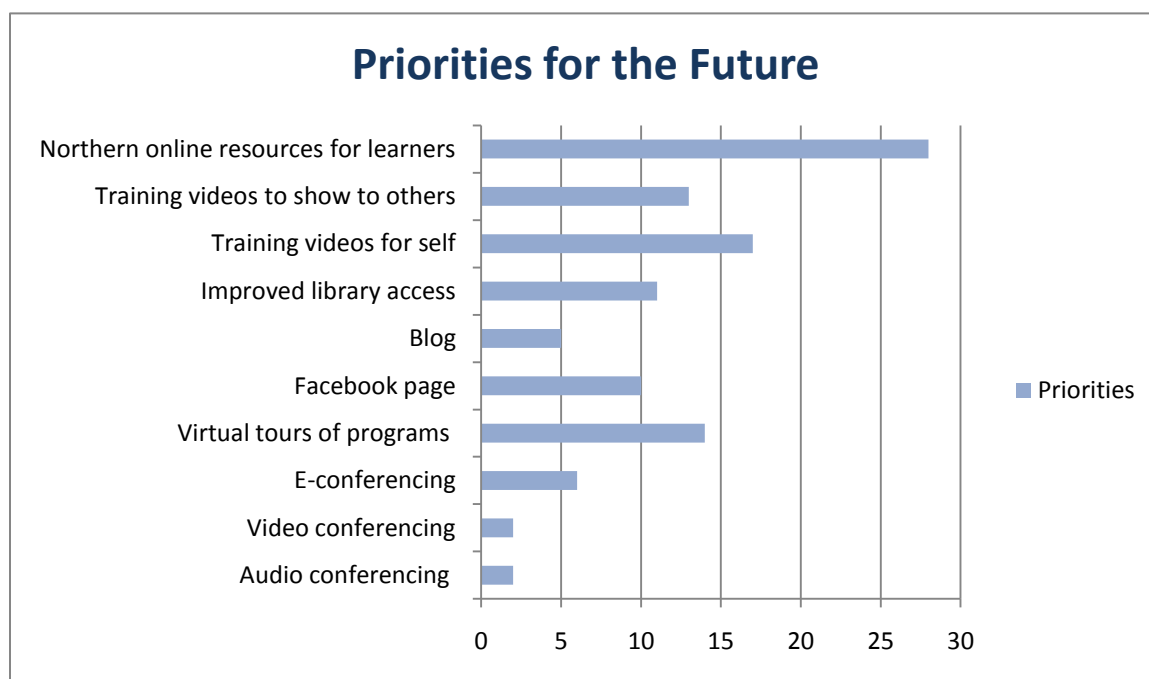| Category	Value
Northern online resources for learners	28
Training videos to show to others	13
Training videos for self	17
Improved library access	11
Blog	5
Facebook page	10
Virtual tours of programs	14
E-conferencing	6
Video conferencing	2
Audio conferencing	2

■ Priorities

Figure 2

Family literacy providers requested the following resources most often:
- Virtual tours of family literacy programs in the NWT

- Videos to show to parents, and other parental information relevant to northern parents
- More kits for family literacy programs
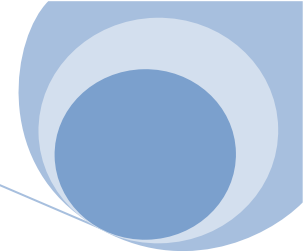- A Facebook page

The top priorities for family literacy providers in terms of training were computer training and more face-to-face training. Without exception, they were not interested in participating in online training or conferences, citing difficulties with technology. We also suspect that some family literacy providers are afraid of technology.

Overwhelmingly, community literacy providers requested more supporting resources for the curriculum, as well as more interactive online tools for adult learners. They suggested that we should extend the interactive nature of those tools. They complained about having to use resources developed in southern Canada, claiming they were too often irrelevant for northern learners, or not culturally appropriate. They also requested training videos for themselves, improved access to the NWT Literacy Council online library, a Facebook page and blog, and resources for learners with low levels of literacy. Few expressed any desire for online training or e-conferences. When asked why, they cited difficulties with technology: this was borne out at the focus groups/ workshops when we had difficulty accessing some of the online materials we had prepared. In some cases, for example, computers did not have Quicktime installed on them. Many also said they had "no time", preferring face-to-face professional development. They advised that they were more like to participate in online training if the sessions were available in asynchronous mode.

Implementation plan for using new technologies

We can learn from what others have told us and from examining other online learning models. However, we also have to listen to the people in the NWT who use our services. There is no doubt that literacy providers in the NWT have three main priorities.
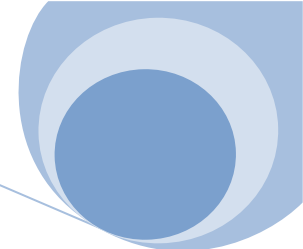
1) Providers want resources that are relevant and meaningful for people in the NWT. This has long been seen as a gap, and continues to be seen as the biggest gap, both for family literacy providers and community literacy providers. In the case of community literacy providers, they want more support for the curriculum and more interactive online tools for learners. In the case of family literacy providers, they want more hands-on resources, as well as resources for parents.

2) Providers want a variety of training videos for professional development, for learners and for parents.

3) Providers want to be able to network with their colleagues, to share information and talk to others with similar interests in an effort to reduce the feelings of isolation.

It was clear that online training for providers was not seen as a priority. We believe, however, that we need to move in that direction, but it is obvious that we need to do so cautiously and in measured steps. As people have successful experiences in working in an online environment, and as they see the benefits, such as reduced isolation, they may embrace this approach more fully. However, the challenges are not solely related to the technologies. Many providers talked about how difficult it was for them to find the time to participate in online training, networking and support. Clearly, that is an issue that we have to address.

Our plan to move forward reflects a cautious and measured approach. It reflects our northern realities, as well as the realities for the NWT Literacy Council. The Literacy Council is funded on a project-by-project basis, and our plan reflects this. We can be more specific about activities that can be integrated into already funded projects. However, we can paint only with broad strokes for work that requires new funding, since new initiatives have to conform to proposal criteria.

As you will see, we have addressed the needs of family literacy providers and community literacy providers separately. Although some of the needs of the two groups are similar, there are a number of differences that we need to address.

We will continue to monitor how providers use our services, and update this plan as necessary, or as we receive funding for new initiatives.
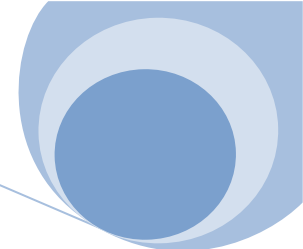
Community literacy providers: Resources

Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Resources	• Increase the interactive online tools with northern content available for adult learners • Enhance their interactive nature	Seek funding to develop new tools (We did develop a proposal to do this, but the proposal was not funded.)	As soon as funding is available
	• Continue to keep the web pages for community literacy providers up-to-date and user friendly	Reorganize information and use icons and photos on the adult literacy pages as part of our ongoing web work	October 2009, and ongoing
	• Expand the information on our resource webpage • Add specialized lists of resources, such as high interest/ low vocabulary	Continue as part of our ongoing work	Ongoing
	• Continue to provide resources in print, CD and DVD format as well as online • Encourage providers to download resources from the webpage	Continue as part of our ongoing work	Ongoing

Community literacy providers: Training

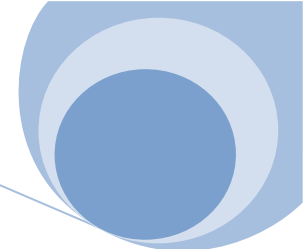| Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Training	• Provide further training for NWTLC staff in the new technologies	As part of professional development activities	2009-2010
	• Develop training videos for community literacy providers	Integrate into 2010-2011 work plan	Beginning in 2010
	• Upload videos to NWTLC website	Integrate into 2010-2011 work plan	Beginning in 2010
	• Finalize design of YouTube page, and also upload to YouTube		In process
	• Revisit e-conferencing	Integrate into Violence and Learning work with Dr. Jenny Horseman	2010
	• Test Elluminate with NWTLC board and community literacy providers	Integrate into workplan	2009-2010

Community literacy providers: Networking

Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Networking	• Develop a blog for community literacy providers	Integrate into our ongoing work	2009-2010
	• Create a FaceBook page for community literacy providers	Integrate into our ongoing work	In process
	• Test Twitter as a networking tool	Integrate into our ongoing work	In process
	• Link community literacy providers to a social book marking site such as Delicious	Integrate into our ongoing work	In process

Family literacy providers: Resources

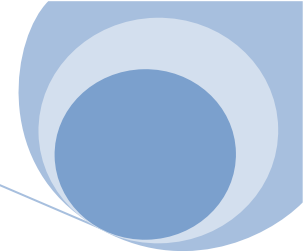| Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Resources	• Increase the information available for parents on our website	Already in this year's work plan	In process
	• Continue to keep the web pages for family literacy providers up-to-date and user friendly	We recently reorganized information and used icons and photos as part of our ongoing web work	Ongoing
	• Expand the information on our resource webpage for family literacy providers • Continue to add to specialized lists of resources, such as Aboriginal and northern	Continue as part of our ongoing work	Ongoing
	• Continue to provide resources in print, CD and DVD format as well as online • Encourage providers to download resources from the webpage	Continue as part of our ongoing work	Ongoing

Family literacy providers: Training

Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Training	• Provide basic computer training, plus accompanying manuals in easy to follow language	Integrate into family literacy training	2010
	• Assist family literacy providers to access computers	Contact programs such as Computers for Schools	2009-2010
	• Continue to develop training videos for family literacy providers	Already in this year's work plan	Ongoing
	• Upload videos to NWTLC website		Ongoing
	• Finalize design of YouTube page, and also upload to YouTube	Some family literacy videos are already on YouTube	In process
	• Create virtual tour of one family literacy program and test it on the website	Integrate into this year's work plan	2010

Family literacy providers: Networking

| Priority Area	Activity	Strategy	Timeline
Networking	• Develop a blog for family literacy providers	Integrate into our ongoing work	2009-2010
	• Create a family literacy FaceBook page	Integrate into our ongoing work	Beginning in 2010
	• Test Twitter as a networking tool		Beginning in 2010

References

ABC Canada Literacy Foundation. (2005). *Linking adult literacy and eLearning: Summary of findings from an ABC Canada research study on the use of eLearning tools in adult literacy programs.* Toronto, ON: Author.

Balanoff, H., Chambers, C., Kaodloak, A., & Kudlak, E. (2006). *"This is the way we were told": Multiple literacies in Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories.* Paper presented at 15th Inuit Studies Conference, Paris, October 2006.

Borassa, E. (2003). *Creating a virtual community: An action research study on reducing northern educator isolation*. A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the resquirements for the degree Masters of Adult Education, Saint Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

CNIE. (2008). *Canadian Consortium of Technology Support Providers for Adult Basic Education*. Panel discussion.

CANARIE Inc. (2002). *An e-learning vision: Towards a pan-Canadian strategy and action plan: CANARIE Discussion Paper*. Author.

Carr-Chellman, A., Dyer, D., & Breman, J. (2000). Burrowing through the network wires: Does distance detract from collaborative authentic learning *Journal of Distance Education,* 15 (1).

Centre AlphaPlus Centre. (2003). *What difference does it make? Literacy learner perspectives on Web-based learning with AlphaRoute*. Author as publisher.

Flinders, D.J. (1988). Teacher isolation and the new reform. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 4(1), pp.17-29.

Khan, B.J. *A framework for e-learning*. Downloaded from http://asianvu.com/booksstoread/framework on October 23, 2007.

McKeown, L., Noce, A., & Czerny, P. (2007). Factors associated with Internet use: Does rurality matter? *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin*, 7(3). Statistics Canada.

McKimm, J., Jollie, C. & Cantillon, P. (2003). *ABC of learning and teaching: Web-based learning.* Downloaded from http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/326/7394/870 on October 23, 2007.

May, S. (1994). Women's experiences as distance learners: Access and technology. *Journal of Distance Education* 9(1), 81-98.

Reframing Literacy Training and Support in the NWT

Middleton, S. (2003). *Literacy and technology*. Vancouver: Literacy BC. Available at http://www.nald.ca/Province/Bc/LBC/About/tech.cover.htm.

Northwest Territories Education, Culture & Employment. (2001). *Towards literacy: A strategy framework 2001-2005*. Yellowknife, NT: Author.

Northwest Territories Legislative Assembly. (2003). *Final report: One land, many voices: Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act.* Yellowknife, NT: Author.

NRE, Nella Consulting & J. Carey Consulting. (2007) *NWT Literacy Strategy summative evaluation: Technical Report.* Yellowknife, NT: Dept. of Education, Culture & Employment.

NWT Literacy Council. (2003). *Final report to Dept. of Education, Culture & Employment Early Childhood Development Framework for Action, 2001-2003.* Unpublished document.

NWT Literacy Council. (2005). *On the right track: Building community capacity for family literacy, evaluation of family literacy programming in the NWT*. Yellowknife, NT: Author.

NWT Literacy Council. (2006). *Final report to Dept. of Education, Culture & Employment Early Childhood Development Framework for Action, 2004-2006.* Unpublished document.

Paloff, R. & Pratt, K. (2001). *Lessons from the cyberspace classroom: The realities of online teaching.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Porter, P. & Sturm, M. (2006) *Crossing the great divides: Distance learning and flexible delivery in adult basic education*. Centre AlphaPlus Centre.

Ramsey, C. (n.d.) *Electronic conferencing.* Downloaded from …………..

Salmon, G. (2000). E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online. London: Kogan Page.

Statistics Canada (2005). *Building on our competencies: Canadian results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey 2003*. November 2005. Catalogue no. 89-617-X1E. Ottawa.

Trottier, V. (2000). *Workshops the wired way: More tips and tools for developing and delivering an online workshop.* Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario.
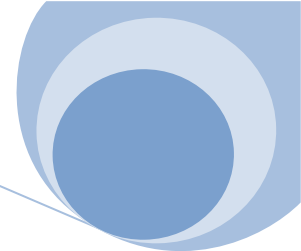
Webtrends. (2009). NWTLC Monthly Report. Downloaded from
http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/webtrends/aug09 on September 15th 2009.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Working Group - Reframing Literacy Training and Support in the Northwest Territories using New Technologies

Background

In response to the October 2007 Call for Proposals from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, the NWT Literacy Council submitted a project proposing to reframe our approach to literacy training and support for literacy providers in all NWT communities. The proposed project would look at ways in which technology could provide support and training to community literacy providers and practitioners. In March 2008, the project was approved for 14 months from April 1, 2008 to May 30, 2009

The objectives of the project are:

- To research and identify effective practices for distance learning for literacy providers, with particular emphasis on Aboriginal literacy providers
- To conduct an assessment that identifies barriers to, interests in, and needs of NWT literacy providers in distance learning through the use of new technologies
- To develop a plan based on our findings that will enable us to move forward in delivering distance learning and support in the NWT

Mandate of the Working Group

The working group:

- Provides feedback and expertise on products produced as part of the research.
- Supports the development of an implementation plan based on findings.
- Reviews and endorses the project's final report.

Members

- Heather McCagg-Nystrom, Chair of Community Programs, Aurora College,
- Barbara Miron, Coordinator, Adult Literacy and Basic Education, Department of Education, Culture and Employment, GNWT
- Kim Crockatt, Executive Director, Nunavut Literacy Council
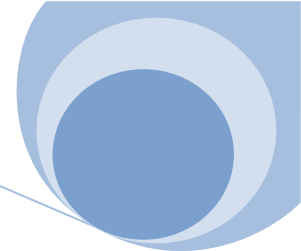
- Gillian Moir, Coordinator, Early Childhood & School Services, GNWT
- Mandie Abrams/ Helen Balanoff, Executive Director, NWT Literacy Council

# Appendix B: Reframing Literacy Training and Support in the Northwest Territories using New Technologies

The NWT Literacy Council has a new research project. We are researching ways to provide better and more accessible training and support to community literacy providers and community literacy providers through the use of technology. These technologies include: video streaming, video and e-conferencing, Internet, social networking, and CD/DVDs, for example. We hope this will help us to broaden the ways we provide training opportunities and support to people in the literacy field.

We will be conducting interviews, holding focus groups and sending out surveys to literacy providers. We will be asking about the resources we currently have and which are most useful to you. We will also be asking you to look to the future to identify what would help you over the next few years.

We will be sending out surveys and interviews starting in November 2008. We hope that you will provide us with feedback by completing the surveys and/or participating in the interviews and focus groups. We will be arranging focus groups at various training sessions throughout the NWT in the fall and winter of 2008. These include the ALBE regional PD sessions and the Family Literacy Training Institutes. We will be providing examples of the kinds of resources and training approaches we can develop using new technologies.

By better understanding your needs, the NWT Literacy Council will be better able to provide you with up-to-date, relevant resources for your work. As well, we will be able to offer you more training using new technologies.
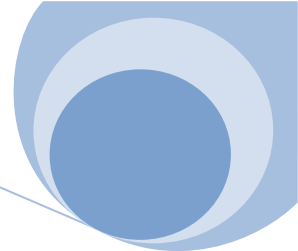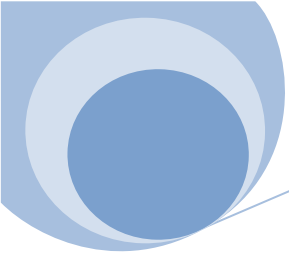
Appendix C: NWT Literacy Council

Resources Questionnaire

Please put a check mark (✓) beside all the roles that apply to you.

What role(s) do you play in the community?

Adult educator	___	Family literacy provider	___
Teacher	___	Daycare/ Early learning worker	___
Family resource worker	___	Librarian	___

Other (Describe) _____

Which of the following NWTLC resources do you currently use, or have used in the past? (Please check all that apply ✓.)

1-2-3 Rhyme with Me	___
Families First – Northern Parenting and Learning	___
Books in the Home Kits	___

 Which ones? (Please list)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
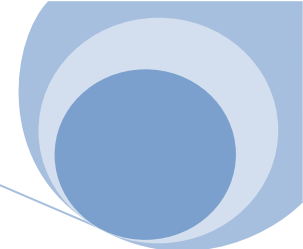
_____

_____

Family Tutoring	___
Tools for Community Building	___
Family and Community Literacy Toolkit	___

How To Kits	___

 Which ones? (Please list)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Building Aboriginal Language Skills	___
Share Your Language, Share Your Culture Flip Book	___
Family Literacy in the North Booklet	___
On the Right Track Booklet for Parents	___
More than Words Video	___
Annotated Bibliography of Aboriginal Books	
Volume 1	___
Volume 2	___
Mother Raven Nursery Rhymes	___
Languages of the Land	___
Health Check	___
The Northern Edge Online Newspaper	___
The Northern Edge Study Guide	___
The Northern Writes Study Guide	___
More Northern Writes Study Guide	___
English 110 Curriculum Resource Manual	___
English 120 Curriculum Resource Manual	___
English 130 Curriculum Resource Manual	___
English 110 Photo Stories	___
English 120 Novel Study (Two Old Women)	___
English 130 Nonfiction Study (Raising Ourselves)	___
Stories and Activities for English 110 & 120	___
Best Practices in Action	___
Idaa Trail – Lessons from the Land	___
A Guide to Assistive Technology	___
Writing for Results	___
Plain Language Audit Tool	___
Write for Your Reader	___
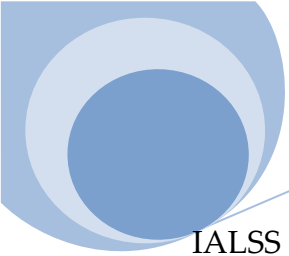
IALSS Info Series   ___

How do you use these resources? (Please check all that apply ✓.) Do you:

Use them as a resource for yourself?   ___
Photocopy them to hand out to people?   ___
Use them exactly as they are?   ___
Adapt them to your own situation?   ___
Other (please describe)   _____

Where do you get our resources from? (Please check all that apply ✓.) Do you:

      Receive them as part of an NWTLC mailout?   ___
      Download them from our website?   ___
      Receive during training?   ___
      Receive by request?   ___

List the three NWTLC resources you find the most useful. What makes them useful to you?

_____

_____

_____

What other types of resources would help you in your work e.g. numeracy resources? For what area (e.g. family literacy, adult literacy)? (Please try to be specific.)
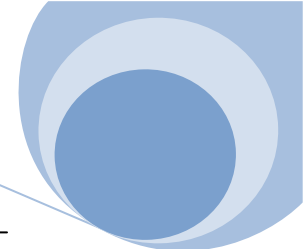
_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for new resources that the NWTLC might develop?
(Please try to be specific.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you have access to a computer . . . (Please check ✓.)

At home?   Yes ____   No ____
At work?   Yes ____   No ____
In the community somewhere?   Yes ____   No ____

Do you have access to high speed internet?   (Please check ✓.)

    Yes   ___   No   ___

Do you ever go on to the NWTLC website?   (Please check ✓.)

    Yes   ___   No   ___

If so, which pages do you find the most useful there? (Please check all that apply ✓.)
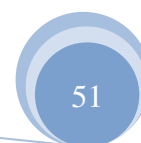Information on:

    Family literacy   ___
    Adult literacy   ___
    Aboriginal languages   ___
    Community development   ___

Research   ___

Resources   ___

Resource Catalogue   ___

Plain language   ___

PGI Golf Tournament   ___

Northern Edge Online Newspaper   ___

Links   ___

If not, why not?

Didn't know there was one   ___

No computer   ___

Can't use a computer   ___

Don't have high speed internet   ___

Don't have time   ___

Other (please describe)

_____

The NWTLC is exploring the use of technology to improve its programs and services and make them more accessible. Please check the areas (✓) that would be most useful for your work:

Training videos for yourself   ___

Videos you can show to other people e.g. parents   ___

Improved online access to our library collection   ___

An NWTLC blog   ___

A Facebook page for literacy providers in the NWT   ___

Virtual tours of programs   ___

E-conferencing (using e-mail or Internet)   ___

Video conferencing (using computers & video cameras)___

Audio conferencing   ___

What formats are the most useful for you? (Please check all that apply ✓.)

Print (hard copy)   ___

CD   ___

DVD   ___
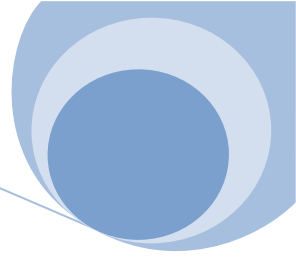
Ones you can download from the Internet   ___

       In PDF format (you can't make changes)   ___

       In MS Word format (you can make changes)   ___

What other ways could the NWTLC use technology to assist you to delivery literacy programs?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What advice do you have for the NWTLC as it moves forward in this area?

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments: Please feel free add any more comments you have for us.

Thank you for helping us to improve our services to you.

Appendix D: Adult Literacy Websites & Blogs

NWT Literacy Council
http://www.nwt.literacy.ca

23 Things: Learning 2.0
http://plcmcl2-things.blogspot.com/

Rubert's leap in reading
http://www.rubertsleapinreading.com/Home_Page.php

Literacies café: adult literacy blog
http://literaciescafe.blogspot.com/

Wendell's blog on reflective practice in adult and community literacy
http://wendell-communitylit.blogspot.com/

Literacy teach: Adult literacy and technology
http://www.literacytech.org/

Learning outside the lines: AlphaPlus' blog
http://blog.alphaplus.ca/

Durham Literacy Centre (NC)
http://www.yesh.com/blog/2007/06/29/adult-literacy-blog/

Literacy blog: Yukon Literacy coalition
http://www.yukonliteracy.ca

ACTEW blog
http://actew.org/blog/index.html

Forest Talk
http://foresttalk.com/index.php/2007/09/

McGee's Musings
http://www.mcgeesmusings.net/2007/02/07/a-nice-substitute-for-plant-tours

Ontario Literacy Coalition
http://ontarioliteracycoalition.com/

ELMO Reviews: Exemplary Literacy Materials Online: Adult & Family Literacy Resources
https://www.elmoreviews.ca/

BC Literacy Coalition
http://www2.literacy.bc.ca/