

## **Moving Forward: A National Summit on Libraries and Literacy**

### **Summary from Tables: Morning Sessions**

**Wednesday, June 14, 2006**

**Table:** Promoting Reading

**Number of participants:** 35

#### **Participants' experience with theme area:**

Public Librarians (BC, NS, ON, NB, etc.)  
Academic Librarians  
Adult Literacy Database  
Golden Oaks Book Club  
Adult Learners

#### **Opportunities:**

**Publishers** – Partner with publishers to produce appropriate materials for adult learners. However, need to recognize Canada's publishing industry is precarious and therefore necessary to ensure a market for their products or get more buy-in from libraries to guarantee purchase of end products. Possibly provide tax incentives for publishers to encourage their participation.

**Authors** – Programs where local authors interact with readers, sharing their experience as a writer, share background information on writing the book (eg. their research).

**Research** – Make use of available research (eg. largely female school teachers choose books that are more of interest to girls than boys).

**Parents** – Involve parents in literacy programs. For children's programs, let parents take over from librarians as programs progress.

Convince larger community of the economic benefits of investing in literacy programs for underserved members of the community.

Correctional facilities – Literacy programs need to get in here as well. Also as a way to promote literacy for men.

## **Challenges:**

Funding – There is no continuous funding available. Once a project is funded, it gains progress and sees success, but then funding runs out and must start over from scratch.

Inappropriate materials vs. Desired materials – while promoting reading skills need to make sure there is desired and appropriate materials for children and adult learners (eg. lack of Do-it-yourself books that are easy to understand, material on topics such as trapping (Yukon); “good literature” vs. what children are interested in (popular culture items “Star Wars Visual Dictionary”, not found in libraries); Provincial selection criteria vs. readers’ criteria (need to make sure what people want to read is on the shelves).

Quality of Materials – Need good physical quality books (not photocopied, plastic-coil-bound volumes); well-written books with Canadian relevance.

Access – Difficulty of using the Dewey Decimal System. If library has materials, need to make them accessible for adult learners.

Gender – Lack of men, boys in reading clubs, literacy programs. Work with male role models in running programs. Bring in athletes, local Hockey teams to promote reading for children; Patrick Jones with street youth.

Getting Learner’s stories published – praised for quality but cannot be published because it “won’t sell”.

Computer literacy – Can be used as a tool to promote literacy

Online government services – Difficulty for many people. Sometimes get 50-60 year old clients coming into library, requiring 2 hours plus time of assistance.

School libraries – are disappointing, leading to a generation that is not accustomed to using the library and lack of information literacy in higher academic settings.

Getting learners into the library through tutors, going out to the community and engaging with people.

Biases & Assumptions – Promoting reading not just books or certain types of books; it’s okay to not finish a book, to just skim through it, or to return books without having read them.

## **Project or action ideas:**

Learner’s Stories – Publish and celebrate personal stories and accomplishments of learners.

Focus groups with learners to gather input for policy and programs or get them on advisory committee, boards.