

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

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

**Wednesday, June 14, 2006**

**Table:** Staff training

**Number of participants:** (approximate number) 32

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

- Development of manual for literacy instructors (Ottawa)
- Literacy department staffed by adult educator volunteers (Regina)
  - Provides tutoring services to that attracts learners to the library
  - Provides learning software
  - Staff interacts with volunteers
  - Partnerships with other organization
- Staff member on board of local literacy organization (Nova Scotia)

#### **Opportunities:**

- Developing partnerships with literacy programs
  - Library staff involved with adult literacy groups/organizations
  - Literacy staff volunteering at the library
  - Partnering with disability associations
  - Representatives from community groups providing training for library staff about community needs
- Developing distinct collections for different user groups
- Promotion of programs and services
- Developing a model for staff training that can be applied on a national level
- Involving learners in policy and service development
- Involving the community in planning for policy and service development (consultation/collaboration)
- Training package for using the library
  - i.e. Choosing a good book
  - Exposing users to library prior to visit
- Focus on changing/customizing library services to eliminate/reduce barriers
- Making staff aware of community services available (conduct community analyses)
- Review the range of professional development models available (i.e. online modules)
- Look to the community for training models (podcasting)
- Share service models/professional development initiatives amongst libraries
- Improve library outreach to make services known

- Build expertise throughout the system, not just at specific levels of the organization
- Facilitate interaction between learners and librarians
- Staff have varying levels of people skills
- Perception of library staff who are not directly involved with literacy
- Professional development initiatives that consider the needs of various learners (i.e. ESL)
- Training about how the reference interview differs in these contexts
- Providing library staff with information about the information needs of first nations communities
- Training library students as well as library staff
- Training all levels of library staff (technician, assistants, librarians)
- Redirecting funding to support literacy initiatives in libraries
- Advocating literacy to library boards
- Promote/support positive work being done in libraries
- Focusing on the development of family literacy initiatives
- Improving signage
  - Conducting an audit of signage
- Training/encouraging staff to step out from behind the desk and interact with staff

### **Challenges:**

- Limited resources dependent on library system
  - Money
  - Staff
- Lack of coordinated approaches
  - Provincial
  - National
- Library staff are information focused rather than education focused
- Staffing structures (various levels)
- Identifying what staff need/want to know
- Lack of time
  - Staff hours
  - Competing interests for training
  - Reference transactions are more time consuming
- Students don't use the library
  - They don't see themselves as belonging
- Libraries are set up/laid out for librarians, not consumers (i.e. classification)
- Variety of needs
  - Computer related
- Finding knowledgeable instructor to perform training
- Lack of knowledge about how libraries can connect with community organizations
- One day training increases awareness but is not sufficient, needs to be ongoing
- Information can be overwhelming for users
  - Gradual exposure to library and library services

- Use of terminology (i.e. jargon vs. plain language)
  - Clear, direct oral communication
- Multicultural differences effecting learner styles/learning objectives/information needs
- Differentiating the needs of various learners (i.e. ESL, literacy)
- Literacy is not a priority in some libraries
- Family literacy is not well funded in Ontario
- Library staff learning to be responsive and flexible to user needs
  - Being sensitive to literacy issues

**Project of action ideas:**

**Other comments or Parking Lot Issues:**