"It gets in your brain..."

by Audrey Gardner

LaDS
Literacy and
Disabilities
Study

SARAW
Speech Assisted
Reading and Writing
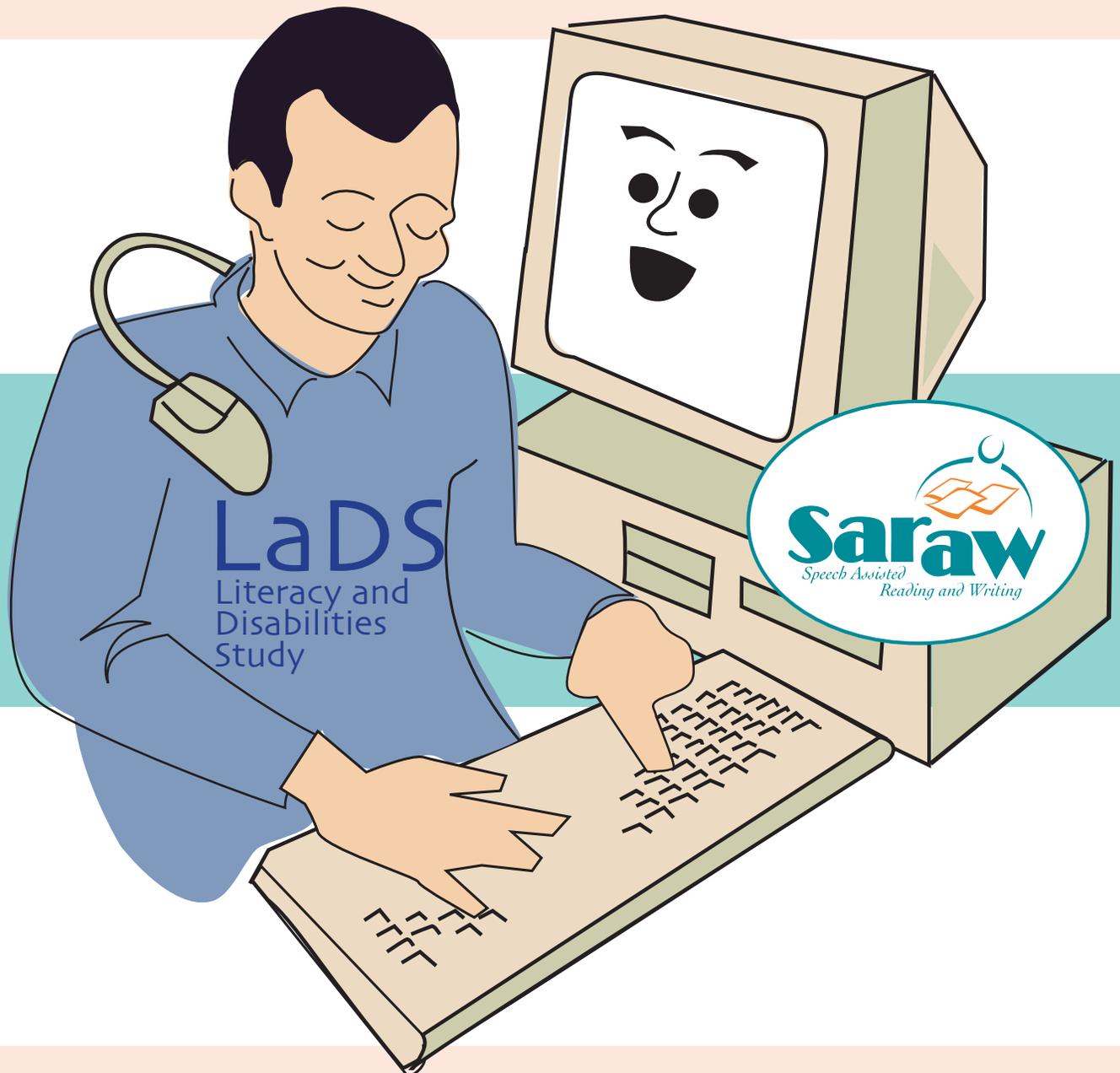
Effective Practices in Adult Literacy Using Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) with People with Disabilities

About the author

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"It gets in your brain, when I write the words here [on SARAW], I put them in my computer at home"

Francis Laybolt
Learner
Thames Valley District School Board Literacy Program
Woodstock District Development Services

For practitioners in literacy, disabilities and other community services, this guide presents effective teaching and learning practices to support adults with disabilities to strengthen and maintain their literacy skills.

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Participating Programs in the LaDS SARAW Survey

- College and University Preparatory Program, Lethbridge Community College, Taber, AB
- Foundations for Independent Living, Capilano College, Vancouver, BC
- Independent Support Program, Network South Enterprises Inc. Winnipeg, MN
- Literary and Basic Skills Program, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton, ON
- Literacy and Basic Skills Program, Thames Valley District School Board, Woodstock, ON
- Literacy Basic Skills: Access for Success, South Campus, Humber College, Toronto, ON
- Pincher Creek READ\WRITE Literacy Program, Pincer Creek, AB
- Rehabilitation Society of Calgary, Calgary, AB
- SARAW Program, Bow Valley College, Calgary, AB
- The Learning Centre, Rideau Regional Centre, Smith Falls, ON
- Tri County Literacy Council, Cornwall, ON

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How to Use the Guide

Like a tool kit or handbook the guide offers activities, resources, and suggestions to help you increase literacy learning opportunities for adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities. The guide is for:

- Instructors, tutors and coordinators in adult literacy programs

- Support workers and coordinators in disabilities and rehabilitation programs and organizations

By increasing your capacity to assist adults to strengthen their literacy skills, you are supporting individuals to communicate with others and participate in their communities.

1. You can read parts of the guide to learn more about the interconnections of adult literacy and disabilities. We hope you are encouraged to have conversations with your colleagues and clients about how you can reduce barriers in your programs.

    See sections: Introduction; Learner Stories; Program Stories; What are Effective Practices?; What is SARAW?; Effective Practices in Program Management; and, Literacy and Disabilities Fact Sheet.

2. You can go directly to the 'how to' sections on literacy skill building. We hope you will try some of the activities and approaches to facilitate learning and to integrate them into your current programs.

    See sections: Effective Practices in Facilitating Learning; Activites Tools and Materials; Effective Practices in Program Management; Information and Resources, and Appendices.

3. You can learn about SARAW and how to bring this talking computer into your program. As there are few computer programs specifically designed for literacy skill building for adults with a diverse range of disabilities we hope that you will consider incorporating SARAW software into your current programs.

    See sections: What is SARAW; Introducing SARAW into your Program; and Information and Resources.

Sections

Learner Stories

Four stories from the "LaDS Learner Stories" are included. The learner stories are interspersed between sections in the first half of the guide. Each learner's instructor, tutor or program coordinator introduces the stories.

What are Effective Practices?

Effective practices are strategies and ways of working that are useful, efficient, and valuable to those who are participating in the literacy learning activities. It is important to know if your practice is effective, you know if your practices are effective by what learners say and do.

What is SARAW?

This section describes what the SARAW talking computer program is. This computer software program was developed for adults with disabilities and low literacy to improve their reading, writing, spelling and phonetic skills.

Effective Practices in Facilitating Learning

The heart of this guide is based on the effective practices used by tutors, support workers and instructors. This section presents effective teaching and learning practices, as demonstrated by participants in the SARAW Survey.

Activities Tools and Materials

This section has many activities, tools and materials that you can use in your program.

Introducing SARAW to Your Program

Technology offers an opportunity to increase accessibility to learning for adults with disabilities. This section provides information on where to get SARAW, and how to introduce the SARAW computer to learners, tutors and instructor.

Program Stories

Two programs are profiled. The intent is to describe a typical day in a literacy program where learners use the SARAW computer. Both programs demonstrate exemplary practices of adult learning principles. These stories can be found in the last half of the guide.

Effective Practices in Program Management

Effective practices in program management include ensuring accommodations for disabilities, flexibility, affordability, and adequate support is built-in to your program. This section presents program features that increase accessibility for learners with disabilities to participate in literacy skill building activities.

Information and Resources

This section offers information on the SARAW manual and workbook, resources for teaching and learning, assessment, research papers, articles, and books. Also included are websites for organizations on literacy and disabilities, and information on LaDS publications.

Appendices

Please copy and use the appendices with your clients/learners, and your colleagues.

Introduction

In 2003 Belle Auld, Coordinator of the Speech Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) program at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta acted on the question she had been asking herself for several years.

> "How are other SARAW computer programs being used across Canada and can we learn what is working well for adult learners with disabilities?"

To find the answers to this question Belle initiated a national research project called LaDS Literacy and Disabilities Study (LaDS). The purpose of the LaDS project was to explore issues in adult literacy for people with disabilities as well as investigate how the SARAW computer is used in different settings and delivery models.

LaDS began with a wide lens to explore the connections between adult literacy and disabilities. We learned that people with disabilities make up a disproportionate amount of the 42% of Canadian adults who function at the two lowest literacy levels (Movement for Canadian Literacy, 2005). Studies on literacy and disabilities indicate that people with disabilities are disadvantaged when accessing programs to develop and strengthen their literacy skills (Carpenter, 2004; Yates, 2001; Macht, 2000. Kapsalis, 1999; Literacy Ontario, 1998; Roher, 1995). It Gets in Your Brain was developed because nearly 50% of adults with disabilities experience literacy barriers.[1]

> "Despite rapid advances in technology and learning tools, people with disabilities are still being left behind on their journey towards literacy." (Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, 2003)

> "Literacy training for many people with disabilities plays a critical role in helping them move from a place of marginalization towards the mainstream of society." (Carpenter & Readman, 2004)

We learned that when technology is effectively used for literacy skill building it makes programs more accessible for adults with disabilities (Carpenter, 2004; Tooke Lacey, 2002; Macht, 2000; Literacy Ontario, 1998). Using technology such as the SARAW computer and assistive technology devices[2] improves accessibility to literacy programs for people with disabilities.

Fact Sheet

We also learned that not many people know about the literacy needs of adults with disabilities. This led to LaDS producing a Fact Sheet for the Movement for Canadian Literacy which highlights social, education and economic barriers for adults with disabilities and low literacy (see Appendix A or http://www.literacy.ca/litand/3.htm.)

Book of Learner Stories

Along with increasing awareness about adult literacy and disabilities, another aim of the LaDS project was to support adult learners with disabilities to strengthen their voice. We did this by publishing writings by learners who use the SARAW computer. A collection of stories written by twenty adult learners from eight literacy and rehabilitation programs was produced. It is called "LaDS Learner Stories", and is available at www.nald.ca/fulltext/study/learner/stories.pdf.

SARAW Survey

The LaDS project conducted a national survey of programs that use the SARAW computer. Forty-four people from eleven programs across Canada participated in the survey and shared how they use SARAW along with other learning materials and strategies. The table below presents the number and type of participants in the SARAW Survey.

Learners	**20**
Tutors	**11**
Instructors	**7**
Coordinators	**6**
Total	**44**

While the survey was conducted primarily through face-to-face interviews, a few interviews were by phone. Other Survey methodology included observations of learners, tutors and instructors using SARAW and other learning material, as well as two case studies. From the forty-four participants we learned that SARAW is a very useful tool for adults with a wide range of physical and/or intellectual disabilities. Slightly more than half of the 20 learners interviewed had intellectual disabilities, and slightly less than half of the learners had physical disabilities. However, nearly half of the all the learners had both intellectual and physical disabilities. One learner had neither a physical or intellectual disability but used SARAW to help with learning English as a Second Language. Most learners had literacy skills at level one of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). [3]

SARAW is a very useful tool for adults with a wide range of physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

Most of the eleven programs were literacy programs for adults with disabilities and were located in community colleges, rehabilitation organizations, and community-based literacy organizations. Nearly half are community-based literacy (non-credit) programs.

Introduction

Many of the programs using SARAW, along with other materials and tools for developing literacy skills have partnerships with literacy/educational organizations (community literacy and colleges) and disabilities and rehabilitation organizations. The survey report is available at www.nald.ca/fulltext/study/final/report.pdf.

In 2000, Macht conducted a study, "Literacy and Disability" that examined barriers to employment and education, and made thirteen recommendations to improve accessibility and participation in literacy programs for adults with disabilities. While strides have been made to improve literacy programming for adults with disabilities, there remains a great need for action on these recommendations. It is our hope that this guide will help you take action. The LaDS project addresses four of the thirteen recommendations:

1. People with disabilities who are participants or potential participants in literacy programs should be consulted to determine their needs.

    The LaDS project was guided by the voices of learners. Twenty learners participated in the SARAW Survey, and an additional eleven learners contributed to the book of Learner Stories.

2. Efforts should be made to increase the use of computers in adult literacy programs.

    The intent of this guide is to inform program coordinators, instructors and support workers about the benefits of using SARAW in their programs, as well as how to set up the SARAW computer.

3. A best practice inventory of literacy programs for people with disabilities should be developed.

    This guide contributes to this effort by presenting proven effective practices, which can lead to the development of best practices in a broad range of programs that work with adults with disabilities.

4. To become more inclusive, literacy programs should make efforts to become more flexible in time lines and student expectation to allow for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

    More than half of the eleven programs in the SARAW Survey allow learners to remain in their program indefinitely. In the other programs learners can stay up to 5 years. Also, the learning pace was determined by each learner to best fit individual needs.

Taking Action

It is our hope that this guide will help you take action.

Introducing Nancy

Nancy lives in an apartment with her husband in Woodstock. Nancy loves the social part of her building, joining in the potlucks, the bingos, and euchres. One of Nancy's greatest loves is her computer. She is always bringing in new programs and has donated a large print dictionary to the program.

Nancy has just found out she has won an essay contest and has been interviewed by our local newspaper. The topic she wrote on was Perspectives and she talks about her boss at work and how easy he makes her job. Nancy's essay has also been judged at the provincial level and she was the winner and will be travelling to Toronto to accept her award and $300.00. Nancy is a delight to teach and her goals are further reading and math skills so she can do her own budgeting and continue on with her creative writing.

Nancy Tayor

Dianne Ward
Instructor
Thames Valley District
School Board
 Woodstock, Ontario

What are Effective Practices?

Effective Practices in Adult Learning:

- See the positives in people

- Foster respectful relationships and cooperation

- Value learning and different learning styles

- Honour dignity and independence

- Acknowledge and include personal experience and wisdom

- Practice adult learning principles

- Challenge inequality and prejudice

Effective practices in adult literacy for learners with disabilities include positive and respectful relationships between learner and tutor, instructor and coordinator that focus on learning. Thoughtful consideration about each learner's wants and needs is at the core of effective practices. Effective practices are based on adult learning principles[1]. Adult learning principles act as a guide for:

- Choosing teaching approaches which work well for the learner, are engaging and relevant to their learning goals

- Selecting materials and activities cooperatively among learner and tutor or instructor

- Assessing literacy skills upon entry and measuring progress while in the program

- Relationship building that is supportive, with respectful and professional boundaries

- Developing and providing instructor and tutor training on learner-centred approaches and practices

- Using small groups and/or one to one tutoring

Applying adult learning principles is demonstrated by involving learners in:

- Planning learning goals and activities together

- Acknowledging and incorporating learner's life experiences and competencies into learning activities

- Cultivating self directed learning by learners

- Creating a climate which supports and encourages learning

- Fostering a spirit of collaboration in the learning setting

Although effective practices are not best practices, effective practices are ways of working, ways of practicing that help learners achieve their goals. Best practices are practices that have been recorded, reviewed, reflected on, and refined for the purpose of identifying specific practices in the design and delivery of adult literacy programming as the best of all practices (Perry 2003). Effective practices, like best practices must be dynamic, not stagnant, which anticipates shifts in the practices through ongoing inquiry, learning and revision (Perry, 2003). Learning to identify effective practices in your program will lead to building best practices.

effective practices are ways of working, ways of practicing that help learners achieve their goals

What are Effective Practices?

Introducing Kylan

It is my privilege to have known Kylan Hunter for about eight years. I first met him when I was already a volunteer at ARBI (The Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured) in Calgary. On our first meeting I was told that he had suffered serious injuries in a car crash and at the time I met him he could speak, but with difficulty and physically, although he was in a wheelchair he could do little for himself except keep a determination to work to the best of his ability and restore as much as possible, his former wellbeing. He and I worked together through those years on his physiotherapy along with many professionals and volunteers who worked on other aspects of his recovery such as cognitive skills, music therapy, art therapy, speech and occupational therapy etc. and now a young man has emerged with more skills than we would have dared imagine and a sense of humour that sustained all of us at ARBI.

After our years at ARBI Kylan then secured a place at Bow Valley College in Calgary and is now re-learning long unused computer skills at a very steady pace. He had been a student of political science when misfortune struck and his language skills are strong so he is always able to clearly articulate whatever he is feeling or thinking. Friends and strangers alike are charmed by his lovely caring personality.

He has said that he wants to be involved in this project as an encouragement to other people, not only people who have suffered a brain injury but all people who think they have met an impossible challenge. He also feels it will help him to organize his thoughts properly and perhaps meet new friends.

Kylan still needs his wheelchair, thrives in the company of others, adores children and has been able to turn his life into a life of being interested in the world around him and wanting to make that world smile. He has succeeded, and what an accomplishment.
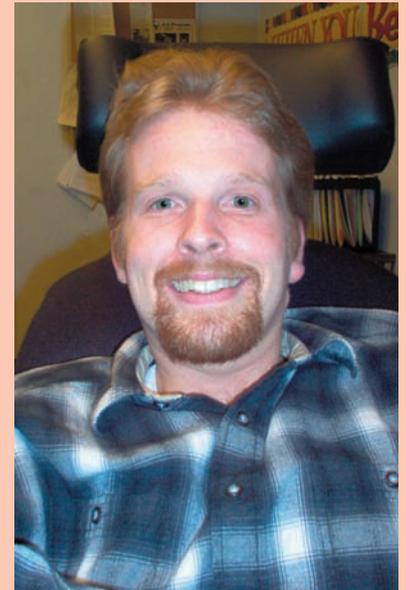
Fiona Fisher
Tutor
Bow Valley College
Calgary, Alberta

Kylan Hunter

Effective Practices in Facilitating Learning

Tutors and instructors facilitate learning when they provide instruction, activities, materials and tools for learners. They facilitate learning when they listen, encourage and engage the learner. They also facilitate learning when they appreciate that they are learning along with the learner. Effective practices in facilitating learning are organized into the following categories:

- Values and Assumptions
- Relationships in Teaching and Learning
- Learning Environment
- Approaches to Learning
- Assessment and Measuring Progress

Values and Assumptions

Inherent in effective practices is an awareness of your values and assumptions about adult literacy, disabilities, equality, and diversity. If learners are pushing themselves beyond their comfort level to strengthen and maintain their literacy skills, then tutors and instructors must also be willing to venture outside their comfort zone. As a tutor, instructor and program coordinator it is necessary to find ways to increase your awareness and understanding of literacy and disabilities.

> "There is a serious lack of public awareness about adult literacy and disabilities. Stereotyping and assumptions about the capacity of people with disabilities to learn and to work are harsh social barriers."
>
> *Movement for Canadian Literacy (2005)*
> *Fact Sheet on Literacy and Disabilities*

Reflecting on your values, assumptions and knowledge about disabilities and adult literacy will strengthen your capacity as an effective tutor, instructor or coordinator. Think about the following questions:

What do you know about adult literacy, and what do you want to know?

What do you know about disabilities and what do you want to know?

What do you value about your work?

Write your definitions of adult literacy and disabilities that reflect your values.

Atmosphere

- Create a safe and inviting learning environment
- Foster a climate of respect, cooperation and safety for learners to take risks
- Role model learning as joyful
- Assurance of learner confidentiality is essential
- Respect, dignity and independence is openly valued and supported
- Room décor reflects a learner-centred approach with learners' work displayed, and inclusive of diversity

Accessibility and Accommodations[1]

- The program should be in a location that is accessible for physical disabilities and other health needs, including getting into the building, room size and furnishing, and accessible washrooms
- Ensure the location has proper lighting for visual ease and noise control for hearing ease
- Privacy and security of location is preferable

Focus on Learning

- Decorate the walls with learning and inspirational material and art that is culturally diverse and highlights learning
- Foster a participatory approach where all are learning and teaching each other, used a shared assessment approach

Approaches to Learning

Effective relationships in teaching and learning among adults are built on adult learning principles and a learner-centred approach. Embedded in these are values about adult literacy and disabilities that convey:

- Respect and Dignity

- Independence and Assets

- Equality and Care

See Appendix B: Adult Education Principles; and Appendix E: Working with Adults with Intellectual Disabilities.

"Pictures of [learners] on the wall is great then [learners] can recognize each other, things on walls are written in plain language to make it easier to read by [learners]." (tutor)

Initial Assessment

The initial assessment can include a formal assessment tool such as the Common Assessment of Basic Skills (see Information and Resources). It can also include in-house tools developed by the instructor or coordinator, such as pages from assessment resources that best fit your program.

Along with the tools you use, how you do the assessment is very important. Programs that took part in the SARAW survey ensured that learners were supported and comfortable during the initial assessment. One instructor conducted the initial assessment using a conversational approach. The focus was on their conversation, not on the tools (alphabet and word lists, pictures of coins and dollar bills, etc.). Some examples of the questions in the conversations were:

- Can you spell your name (orally)
- Can you write your name?
- What schools have you gone to, and what did you like about them?
- What do you read (newspapers, street signs, public signs, etc.)?

The conversation included identifying and saying the letters of the alphabet, reading word lists, sentences and paragraphs, identifying and counting coins and dollar bills.

Another important question to ask is how learners like to learn. In the SARAW Survey learners said that they like to learn when it is fun and engaging, and by listening, watching, reading, and using the computer.

Assessment for support (accommodations) for an individual's disability should also be part of the initial assessment. Assessing mobility, communication and intellectual accommodations may require a support worker or support person, adaptive devices for communication, and room arrangement for mobility. Key in assessing how you can accommodate people with disabilities is to look at your program through the lens of:

- **Mobility:** Can people using wheelchairs, walkers or canes move with ease into the building and throughout the building?
- **Visibility:** Is the lighting appropriate and are the signs easy to read for people to find the program and use the materials and equipment?
- **Noise:** Are noise distractions kept to a minimum?
- **Communication:** Do people have support to communicate, such as a support person or communication devices?
- **Support:** Do people have a support worker or support person, such as a volunteer tutor?

Lesson Planning

Lesson planning must be flexible. "Lesson Plan" is a school term commonly used in education settings, however it is important to plan a lesson (a session really), using a learner-centred approach. This means that the plan will only be finalized by the learner with the tutor or instructor. Thus, the tutor or instructor can plan for possible options for the session, but not have the session planned without input from the learner. In some programs in the SARAW Survey, the instructor or tutor and learners would plan their next session or number of sessions ahead of time. Depending on the learner, lesson planning will vary. With some learners each session begins with the learner and tutor deciding together what they are going to do. See Appendix G: Sample Lesson Plan.

Measuring Progress

After learners have been in the program for some time it is good to talk about progress the learner is making. Assessment to measure a learner's progress uses a shared assessment approach between the learner and the tutor or instructor.

Shared Assessment Approach

A shared assessment approach is basically a conversation between the learner and tutor or instructor about how the learner is doing. This involves feedback, questions, encouragement, and looking at the learners' work. In the SARAW Survey many of the learners were very aware of their learning.

> "Sometimes I surprise myself and see a difference with harder reading."
> "I know letters now."
> "I am reading more things, reading the weather in the newspaper."
> "The more I write the more I learn how to spell. The more I think the less mistakes I make."
> "My writing is neat, getting better."

Self-confidence

Supporting learners to state how they know they are learning contributes to building their self-confidence. Self-confidence was the most significant outcome among learners in the SARAW Survey.

> "All of a sudden you can see the difference, it's not a struggle to figure out the little things any more." (tutor)
> "[Learners] know themselves that they are getting better, things are easier for them." (coordinator)

From the SARAW Survey, we learned that encouragement and praise were positive approaches to build self-awareness among learners about

Celebrate Learning

Celebrating progress was highly valued among the SARAW Survey participants. Celebrations such as class parties and ceremonies (e.g. achievement certificates), presentations of learner work to family and friends, year-end barbeques, festive potlucks, and going out for lunch or supper with the tutor, are some of the events learners enjoyed.

> "Certificate at the end of the year, [learner] has all of them on wall at home." (tutor)

> "Read stories to audience, read stories that I wrote about my brother." (learner)

> "Year-end party and Christmas party, its fun and [learners] meet each other." (coordinator)

> "Having a break from your normal work." (learner)

Celebrations are especially important in programs using tutors as they offer an opportunity for learners to spend social time together as a group. Celebrations pay tribute to learners' efforts and achievements and are a significant source of encouragement. We encourage you to highlight learning in your celebration activities.

What if learning does not progress?

From time to time some learners may experience a plateau in their learning. Plateau of learning progress is when there is no indication of further or continual learning. When this happens you can try different materials, activities, computer programs, or SARAW functions. Remember that at those times when there seems to be little or no progress it is helpful to consider factors that can influence a learner's progress. This may be the pace of learning, individual interest, or a personal life situation.

For some learners maintaining their literacy skills is the learning goal and plan. This does not mean that learning has plateaued. Literacy skills are like muscles that must be used so they stay strong. Learners can work to keep the literacy skills they have. One learner used the SARAW computer to type in interesting articles in the daily newspaper. While the subject was interesting, repetition of copying and typing was the way this learner maintained her or his literacy skills.

Activities Tools and Materials

Learning activities are what learners and the tutor or instructor do together and usually involve materials and tools. Depending on the learner, the activity can use different tools or materials. For example:

- A learner may want to work in the Read component of SARAW to strengthen reading and spelling skills
- A learner may want to use paper and pencil to practice spelling and reading
- A learner may want to use the SARAW writing component to practice spelling and reading
- A learner may choose a workbook such as "Laubach Way to Reading" for reading and spelling.

The choice of tools and materials for similar activities is really up to the learner in cooperation with the tutor or instructor. Below is a list of suggested activities that you can use for literacy learning on the SARAW computer and with other materials and tools.

Hands-on, experiential learning is most effective.

Activities

Writing and Reading
    Language Experience Approach
    Journaling
    Other Writing Exercises

Writing and Reading

Reading
    Reading material provided by the Learner
    Paired reading

Reading

Writing, Reading, Spelling and Phonics
    Exercises and Games
        Workbooks
        Worksheets
        Flash cards
        SARAW
        Other Computer programs
        Internet

Writing, Reading, Spelling and Phonics

Cooperation and Teamwork
    Group projects

Cooperation and Teamwork

Math
    SAM
    Math sheets and manipulatives
    Other math resources

Math

Learner:

- Pick a key

- Join the conversation

- Begin to write their answer to the question (tutor or instructor may have to help)

- Read your writing to tutor or other learner

Adapted from Writing Out Loud (1997)

The Writing Out Loud books also contain authentic learner writing, based on the exercises, so you can share these stories with learners as examples of what others have written.

SARAW and Writing Exercises

Depending on the learner's preference, she may choose to write their responses for "The Key" activity on SARAW. Any open writing that learners want to do can be done on SARAW. The benefit of writing on SARAW is that each word can be highlighted as it is being read, so the leaner receives visual and auditory cues. The computer can read the writing aloud word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence, and the learner can control when to have the computer read the next word or sentence. The learner can also choose to have the computer read the entire writing aloud.

Word Predict

Another feature in the SARAW Writing component is Word Predict, which can be turned on or off, and offer the learner a choice of words starting with the same first few letters. This is very helpful for adults who have physical disabilities that impede hand and finger dexterity.

Using Email

In some of the programs in the SARAW Survey, some learners were using email. In one program email was used between learner and tutor or instructor, with an emphasis on grammar skill development. In another program, learners were supported to write to family and friends. The content of the learners' email was determined by the learners. Learners liked learning how to use email and the computer as well as building their writing and reading skills.

Authentic Reading Materials

Reading material that is brought to the program by learners can be a wide variety of things. The importance of using authentic materials is that they are used by learners in their everyday lives. For example, in the Bow Valley College SARAW program learners are encouraged to bring in reading materials that interest them and are relevant to their lives:

- A learner wanted to be able to read the Bible, so she and her tutor worked with an easy to read Bible in class.

- A learner, who worked as a dishwasher, wanted to be able to read the dishwashing detergent box so he wouldn't have to ask the cook how much detergent to use, so we included words common to cleaning supplies.

See Appendix J for Teaching Sight Words handout (this is only one activity among many for reading).

SARAW and Reading

The Other People's Stories in the Read component of SARAW, has authentic stories written by adult literacy learners from across Canada. Some of the stories are by the very first SARAW learners. They are all experiences, thoughts and dreams of real people, most of whom have a disability. They are stories that adults with disabilities can relate to because they are authentic writing. It is rare to find reading material that speaks to the experiences of other adults with disabilities. The computer can read the story aloud word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence, and the learner can control when to have the computer read the next word or sentence. The learner can also chose to have the computer read the entire story aloud.

The SARAW Companion Exercise Work book contains Directed Reading and Thinking Activities (DRTA) for each story in "Other People's Stories" in the Read component of SARAW. For each story there is also "Background Information" that is directed to the tutor or instructor. The background information gives you ideas of how to base a lesson plan around the story. The Companion Exercise Workbook is provided in electronic format with the Windows version of SARAW.

Another way to use SARAW for reading is for learners to bring in their reading material and with the tutor's help, copy key words or sections into SARAW. For example in the Bow Valley College SARAW program:

- A learner wanted to learn to read better so she could take a WH-MIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) course at work. The coordinator found plain language WHMIS information, which the learner copied onto the computer and had the computer help her read it.

- A learner wanted to be a bartender, so he and his tutor wrote drink recipes on the computer.

SARAW and Reading

Activities Tools and Materials

Internet

Using the Internet to build reading skills is largely driven by the learner's interest. This also depends on having access to the Internet in your program. In one program in the SARAW Survey the Internet was used to read newspaper articles, and find websites of personal interest to the learner.

Newspapers and newsletters

Newspapers and local newsletters are a wonderful resource for teaching reading. There are many ideas on how to use newspapers for reading and writing activities in Chapter 3 of the SARAW Companion Exercise Workbook. You can also use Teaching Sight Words activity (see Appendix J) with newspapers and newsletters.

English Express is a newspaper developed by Alberta Advanced Education for English as a Second Language (ESL) and low literacy learners. It is produced every two months, and is written in plain language. It contains news items, learner writing, and a crossword puzzle or word search. It also comes with a teacher's activity booklet that has activities for each issue. It is available free of charge to educational institutions and non-profit organizations in Alberta.

Community print material (flyers, menus, store signs, food labels, etc.)

Not only can you include everyday materials such as flyers, menus, detergent boxes etc. into your literacy sessions, but reading and writing activities can be incorporated into daily life. Literacy learning does not have to happen only in a classroom or learning setting. Places like fast food outlets usually have large signs with large print and photos. You can create literacy activities out of many print materials you encounter in daily life. Having literacy moments in your daily work with adults with disabilities is very effective, as you are not only using authentic material (e.g. reading the price signs in the grocery story) you are also supporting adults to learn in authentic settings.

Paired Reading

Paired Reading is a technique to strengthen fluency in reading aloud. It involves learner and tutor reading out loud a short paragraph together. The reading selection must be of interest to the learner, and the reading level should be somewhat difficult for the learner.

Excerpt from Tutor Tools by Literacy Alberta on how to do Paired Reading:

> Select a short reading, which is just slightly above your student's ability. For example, a paragraph of a story from a Reading workbook, newspaper article, or the learners' reading material book. Sit beside each other and ask your student to read aloud with you as you move your finger beneath the lines. The objective of this activity is for the learner to read the selection fluently without awkward pauses at the end of words or phrases.
> Read through the entire passage together at a steady pace. Continue to read at a normal rate even if your student hesitates or falls behind, but stop if he stops completely. Over time it will become easier for your student to keep up as he acquires the habit of looking ahead at the coming words to keep from falling behind. Do not ask comprehension questions. The purpose of this exercise is to develop fluency and to overcome word-by-word reading. The technique is also known as "Neurological Impress," or "Echo Reading."

Exercises and Games

There are numerous exercises and games that are appropriate for adult literacy learning. Many can be found in Reading and Writing workbooks and worksheets. Exercises and games are popular among learners. Whether the exercise or game topic is relevant to the learner or not is decided by the learner. Sometimes it is just fun to try a crossword or word search with new words. The key to using exercises and games effectively is that the learner chooses to engage in the activity because it is fun or he wants to try something new, or the learner likes to use exercises and games as his or her way of learning.

Exercises and games that were found to be useful and enjoyable in the SARAW Survey are workbooks, worksheets, flash cards, games on SARAW, other computers and the Internet. Descriptions about how to use materials and tools are listed and then described.

Workbooks: Laubach Way to Reading Series

Reading for Today Series

Worksheets: Core Words

Spelling lists

Word search

Crosswords

Word family exercises (sell, fell, tell, well)

Grammar exercises

Exercises and games are popular among learners.

Activities Tools and Materials

Flash Cards

Alphabet flash cards can be purchased or made. If you choose to make them, you can involve the learner in this activity to decide what letters the learner wants to focus on and list some words beginning with those letters. You can also use pictures as clues for words beginning with the letters. Go through magazines together and chose pictures to go with each letter of the alphabet. Paste the photo on one side of the card, the letter on the other side.

You can also purchase or make word flash cards. Encourage your learner to look at the word and say it aloud three times. Words learned in this way become 'sight words'. No more than five new words should be introduced at one lesson.

Core Word Activity and Flash Cards (See Appendix K)

You and the learner can chose to practice spelling and reading core words by creating flash cards with the words on them. Flash cards can also be used to create sentences. Write one word per card

Excerpt from Tutor Tools by Literacy Alberta.

1. Ask your student to match a word card with the original in a Language Experience story.

2. Make a duplicate deck of word cards. You and your student can play "Fish" with the duplicate cards by shuffling both together, dealing a hand of seven cards to each player, and taking turns drawing a card from the deck. Pairs of identical words can be laid on the table face-up.

3. Play word card poker. Group cards in piles of nouns, verbs, adjectives, articles, and prepositions. Deal your student five to ten random words, and pretend he wins $10 for each of the words he can include in a good, single sentence. Tell him he can buy words from the various category piles for $10 each. He loses $10 for each of the random words that are not used or misused. Keep a running tally sheet as you play this game over a number of weeks.

4. Play Concentration. Make duplicates of the cards. Turn the cards face down on a table. Flip one card and lay it on the table, then flip another. If they match remove them from play. If they do not match turn them over again, and the next person flips two cards until all are matched. Don't forget to read each card as it is turned over.

How to use Flash Cards

Other Computer Programs

Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing

Some learners in the SARAW Survey enjoyed working on this computer program, which is readily available in stores and helps learners build their keyboarding skills. Not only is Mavis Beacon good for teaching touch typing for those learners who are interested in learning this, the newer versions of the program have some great games. For example, Penguin Crossing: a penguin floats down a river on an ice flow. The ice flow has letters on it and the learner has to type the letters on the ice flow before the penguin falls off.

Wheel of Fortune

This game was used in one program, and was enjoyed by some learners. Like Mystery Word it is a spelling game, and familiar as it is also a program on the television. It is readily available in stores.

Internet

If your program has access to the Internet, this may be a useful tool for some learners. Although learning to navigate the Internet may be challenging at first, it is important to support learners who want to learn how to use the Internet.

One website that has interesting activities is The Learning Edge http://thewclc.ca/edge/. Have a look to see if it would be of interest to people you work with.

One program in the SARAW Survey used the Internet to participate in a health project. A major magazine had a walking project, which invited Canadians to log in their weekly kilometres that they walked. A number of learners in one program began a 'Walking for your Health" club and joined in this project.

The Bow Valley College SARAW program has the older DOS version that includes SAM. The Bow Valley College program has compiled various worksheet exercises and other math resources for learners. In addition to basic math worksheets on adding, subtracting and multiplying, there is information and activities on:

- Time
- Temperature
- Banking
- Money

Other math resources include

- Multiplication table grid and instructions on how to use this with an "L" shaped piece of cardboard. See Appendix L Multiplication Table.

- Base 10 manipulatives – blocks in ones, tens, hundreds and thousands and a book to teach with these.

- "Menu Math" book from publisher Remedia with math exercises based on a menu

- Cards and dice – and math games based on these – from the book Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks

See Information and Resources section for

- Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks

- Remedia

See Information and Resources section for additional information, particularly:

- Companion to SARAW Exercise Workbook
- Tutor Tools
- Supplementary Tutor Handbook
- Writing Out Loud
- Laubach Way to Reading series
- English Express
- LITSTART
- NALD website
- Capilano college SARAW website
- SARAW Program at Bow Valley College

- Neil Squire Society

Program Story
Bow Valley College

The SARAW program is located in a small comfortable classroom at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Alberta. The classroom has two computers with SARAW. One has the original DOS version, and the other has Windows Premium version. SAM (Speech Assisted Math) is also on the computer with the DOS version of SARAW. The walls are decorated with information, picture posters, and one wall is designated as the learner wall. On this wall learners have their photos and a short introduction written by each learner. Another wall is called the communication wall and is used by the coordinator to keep in touch with tutors and learners. There are two tables and a few chairs for learners and tutors to work on other materials found on a well-stocked bookshelf of easy to read novels, workbooks, picture dictionaries, manuals and binders with work sheets on a range of daily living topics, math and currency tools, and learning games. The room is set up with plenty of space for wheelchairs.

The Bow Valley College SARAW program is a stand-alone community-based literacy program. It is a non-credit program that is offered 6 days a week year round, but follows the semester cycles of the College. It is closed on Sundays and statutory holidays. Managed by a part-time coordinator, the program is structured as a one-one tutor-learner program. Currently there are 20 tutors working with 28 learners.

A typical day in the SARAW program sees a number of learner-tutor pairs in the classroom for approximately 2 hours. Most learner-tutor matches are one-to-one, although there is one tutor working with up to three learners in the classroom at one time. Most learners come once a week, with a few able to come twice a week. At times the coordinator will visit the classroom just to say hello or to convey some particular information to a learner and tutor. The day might also include scheduled hands-on training with a rehabilitation literacy specialist who spends approximately one hour with learner and tutor to help with strategies to strengthen their efforts on literacy skills development.

Introducing SARAW
into your program

Check It Out

To help you decide if you would like to have the SARAW software in your program a good place to start is to visit the Neil Squire Society website where you can download the demonstration version. This will help you to see SARAW in action. To download the demonstration go to: http://www.saraw.net/downloads.php

You can download either the Windows Premium version or the Window Lite version. Participants in the SARAW survey preferred Windows Premium. If you need help with the download, you call contact the Neil Squire Society at:

Email: info@SARAW.net
Phone: 1-604-412-7599

Planning

Below are some questions that can help you plan to introduce SARAW into your program. Help in answering these questions can be found in the Effective Practices in Program Management section.

Learners

How many learners will be using the computer and what will be the amount of time each learner will have per week on SARAW?

> The minimum time that learners preferred to use SARAW is at least 2 hours per week

Will the learners need assistive technology or adaptive devices to use SARAW?

> Most learners in the SARAW Survey did not use assistive technology or adaptive technology. Among those who did a keyboard guard and rolling ball mouse was very useful. Contact the Neil Squire Society to determine the computer requirements you need:

Head Office & Western Regional Office
Neil Squire Society
Suite 220 - 2250 Boundary Road
Burnaby, BC, V5M 3Z3
Tel: (604) 473-9363
Fax: (604) 473-9364
E-mail: info@neilsquire.ca
Acting Western Regional Manager
Greg Pyc - gregp@neilsquire.ca

Planning

Learners

How much instructor time is needed to support learners while on the computer?

Compared to tutors who work mostly one-to-one with learners while on SARAW, instructors in the SARAW Survey tended to work with learners as needed. This also depended on the individual learner's ability to work independently. One option to increase support is to have more than one SARAW computer, where the instructor can support two learners working on SARAW simultaneously.

Purchase SARAW

How much will it cost to buy and set up the SARAW software program?

- The Windows Premier version is $300. Cdn.
- The Windows Lite versions is $149. Cdn
- The cost will depend on whether you have to purchase a computer. If you have a computer, you need to ensure it has the capacity requirements. Other things to consider are technical support for installation and maintenance, and if you will need adaptive devices or assistive technology.

To buy the version of SARAW software program contact Neil Squire Society at their SARAW website, or by phone, mail or fax.

Website: http://www.saraw.net/program.html
Phone: 1-604-412-7599
Mail: SARAW
    C/o Neil Squire Society
    Suite 220 – 2250 Boundary Road
    Burnaby, BC
    V5M 3Z3
Fax: 1-604-473-9364

The SARAW program includes the SARAW workbook and manual. You can also find the workbook on the Internet.

Workbook: http://www.nald.ca/CLR/saraw/cover.htm

You can also find another resource on the Internet:

Manitoba SARAW Resource Manual: http://www.nald.ca/CLR/sarawman/Saraw.pdf

Neil Squire Society Regional Offices:

Head Office & Western Regional Office
Neil Squire Society
Suite 220 - 2250 Boundary Road
Burnaby, BC
V5M 3Z3
Tel: (604) 473-9363
Fax: (604) 473-9364
E-mail: info@neilsquire.ca
Acting Western Regional Manager
Greg Pyc - gregp@neilsquire.ca

Central Regional Office
Suite 100 - 20 Colonnade Road
Nepean, ON   K2E 7M6
Tel: (613) 723-3575
Fax: (613) 723-3579
E-mail: on.info@neilsquire.ca
Acting Regional Manager
Cheryl Colmer - cherylc@neilsquire.ca

Prairies Regional Office
#100 - 2445 13th Avenue
Regina, SK   S4P 0W1
Tel: (306) 781-6023
Fax: (306) 522-9474
E-mail: sk.info@neilsquire.ca
Prairies Regional Manager
Rod Ashfield - roda@neilsquire.ca

Atlantic Regional Office
#104 - 440 Wilsey Road
Park Office Centre
Fredericton, NB E3B 7G5
Tel: (506) 450-7999
Fax: (506) 453-9681
E-mail: nb.info@neilsquire.ca
Atlantic Acting Regional Manager
Diana Hall - e-mail: dianah@neilsquire.ca

You can also contact the programs in the SARAW Survey to learn how they use the computer in their programs. See Information and Resources section.

A typical day in the literacy classroom begins at 9:00 am, with learners choosing an individual activity. For those learners working on SARAW, some will work together using a peer learning approach; or, if a tutor is available the tutor will work with a learner. The class chooses a different letter from the alphabet every day to build key words, sentences and stories from, and some learners use SARAW to help them find words beginning with the letter of the day, and then work on writing sentences with that word in it. Depending on individual learners, some will practice spelling those words and others will use the words to develop sentences. The instructor will write the letter and words on a flip chart and the learners will choose how they will incorporate the letter and words into their work.

The day is organized for both individual learning (with or without a tutor), and for group work. Most learners come to the program for the morning or afternoon, as many of the learners have jobs and spend only part of the day in the class. On average, learners are in the classroom 2-4 days per week, depending on their life and work schedule. Peer learning and relationships have a positive impact on learners. Although many learners work independently and with tutors, the predominance of supportive peer relationships contributes greatly to the learning environment. Some comments about the learning environment are:

"Can learn more on a personal basis in this room" (learner)

"The sense of community is what students like" (instructor)

This program involves a number of group activities led by the instructor. One project was the creation of a cookbook by learners. They also planned a launch celebration, which had all the dishes in the cookbook available for friends and visitors to test. They used this cookbook as a fundraiser for a local charity. Another project was an exercise activity. A group of learners participated in an initiative by a national magazine, which involved tracking the number of kilometres walked and entering them into the magazine website.

On the first day of the researcher's visit, there was a celebration of the learners' writing achievements. With the guidance of the instructor and support of tutors, most of the learners participated in a public presentation entitled "Someone who made a Difference in my Life".

Information and Resources

The information and resources are organized into the following categories:

SARAW Workbook and Manuals

Blevins, K. (1996). *The Companion to SARAW*: An Exercise Workbook. Neil Squire Foundation. Vancouver. http://www.nald.ca/CLR/saraw/cover.htm

> A resource with many literacy activities to use with and in addition to the SARAW computer. It also has helpful information for tutoring and instruction.

Bentley, D., Hodgson, P. (2000). *SARAW Manual*. Neil Squire Foundation. Burnaby. BC. http://www.neilsquire.ca/index.asp

> This manual comes with SARAW software. For information on the manual contact the Neil Squire Society.

Moar, T. (1996). *SARAW Resource Manual: Learning Strategies for Inclusion of People with Disabilities*. Society for Manitobans with Disabilities. Winnipeg http://www.nald.ca/CLR/sarawman/Saraw.pdf

> The Resource Manual explains how to use the SARAW program in detail.

Facilitating Learning

Alberta Advanced Education. *English Express* Newspaper. Box 38028 Capilano, Edmonton AB. T6A 3Y6. 1-877-440-3722 or subscriptions@englishexpress.ca

> A plain language newspaper for adults with low literacy and English as a Second Language, published by Alberta Advanced Education. They will send free copies to schools, libraries and agencies in Alberta, NWT, Nunavut and Yukon.

Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks. www.boxcarsandoneeyedjacks.com or 1-866-DICE FUN.

> Math games using cards and dice. A selection of different books and kits ranging from "Shuffling into Math" for K – 3, money kits, books and more advanced math materials.

Crichton, C. (1997). **Reader's Theatre for the Mentally Challenged.** PROJECT READ SOON, Mountain View Society B35030 - 50 Street Olds AB. T4H 1S1. 10403-556-3045.

> How to use Reader's Theatre as a literacy learning tool, includes sample scripts.

Menu Math for Beginners; Checkbook Math; Department Store Math for Beginners. Remedia Publications. www.rempub.com, phone 1-800-826-4740.

> Reading and math books for adult students reading below grade 4 level that focus on life skills.

Morgan, D. (1997) *Writing Out Loud*, and (2002) *More Writing Out Loud*. ISBN # 0-9681993-0-5 and 1-894593-17-0. #206, 4834 – 52A Street Camrose AB T4V 1W4. www.writingoutloud.ca

> A book of fun writing exercises, includes free writing, gratitude journals, response writing and more. The books also explore the process of teaching writing and the importance of creating a safe environment for writing.

Steck-Vaughn. *Reading for Today Series*. Harcourt Canada-Steck-Vaughn. 55 Horner Ave. Toronto. ON. M8Z 4X6. 1-800-387-7278. email: cs_Canada@harcourt.ca

> A series of adult learner reading workbooks.

Templin-Imel, G., Brod, S. (1996) *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary* Literacy Program, Oxford University Press. New York, NY. ISBN # 0-19-43457-4

> A binder with worksheets on Form Language, Life Skills, Listening, Reading, Handwriting, Dictionary Skills and more. To be used with The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary (although most of the activities work as stand-alone exercises). Also includes Teacher's Notes, General Teaching Procedures, Pre-literacy Activities and tests.

The Learning Edge Website developed by Wellington County Learning Centre.. 124-B George St.. P.O. Box 256, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0. 1-519-848-3462 OR 1-888-368-7889. EMAIL: literacy@thewclc.ca
> http://thewclc.ca/edge/

> An online learner newspaper with many interactive activities.

Piovesan, Carole. *Including People with Disabilities into Literacy Training*. MCL newsletter – Winter 2003, www.literacy.ca/public/litca/03/page18.htm

Rioux, M., Zubrow, E., Stutt Bunch, M., Miller, W. (2003). *Atlas of Literacy and Disability*. Canadian Abilities Foundation. Toronto. www.abilities.ca

Rioux, M., Zubrow, E., Furrie, A., Millar, A, Bunch, M. (2003) *Measure Of Change: Putting Literacy And Disability In Perspective*. Abilities Magazine, Issue 54. http://www.enablelink.org/atlas/article2.php

Sanders, M. (1991) *Meeting Challenges: A literacy project for adults with developmental disabilities*. Prospects Adult Literacy Association. Edmonton.

Organizations

Literacy for Independent Living - Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres.
> www.nald.ca/lil/english/litinfo.htm
> A comprehensive website on literacy and the broad range of disabilities, is kept up-to-date and has many useful links.

Neil Squire Society.
> http://www.neilsquire.ca/index.asp
> A national organization on technology for adults with disabilities. Home of the SARAW computer program. SARAW website: http://www.saraw.net/index.html

For phone, mail and email information see Introducing SARAW into your Program section.

Capilano College.
> http://merlin.capcollege.bc.ca/saraw/
> A website for learners, instructors and tutors. It has stories by learners and teaching strategies. Capilano College has one of the longest running SARAW programs in Canada.

Roeher Institute
> http://www.roeher.ca/comersus/title.htm
> Focus on policy research for people with intellectual disabilities, Roeher has produced at least 4 books on literacy and disabilities.

National Adult Literacy Database
> http://nald.ca
> A database for all adult literacy information. Good source for up to date learner stories and publications, articles on programs, current issues, and research on literacy and disabilities

Individual Support Program
Network South Enterprises Inc.
188 Goulet Street, Winnipeg, MN. R2H 0R8
204-474-1959

Pincher Creek READ\WRITE Literacy Program
Pincher Creek READ\WRITE
Box 1206, Pincher Creek, AB. T0K-1W0
403-627-4478

Literacy Program
Rehabilitation Society of Calgary
7 - 11th Street NE, Calgary, AB. T2E 4Z2
403-263-8341

The Learning Centre
Rideau Regional Centre
Ministry of Community & Family Services
Box 2000, Smith Falls, ON. K7A 4T7
613-284-0123

SARAW Program
Bow Valley College
332 – 6 Avenue, SE, Calgary, AB. T2G 4S6
403-410-1503

Literacy Basic Skills: Access for Success
Humber College
South Campus Room B1093199
Lakeshore Blvd. West Toronto ON. M8V 1K8
416-675-3111 ex. 3277

Literacy and Basic Skills Program,
Thames Valley District School Board
Woodstock and District Development Services
212 Bysham Park Drive, Woodstock, ON. N4T 1R2
519-539-7447 ex. 238

One-on-one Tutoring
Tri-County Literacy Council
101 Second Street West, Cornwall, ON. K6J 1G4
613-932-7161

Fact Sheet on Literacy and Disabilities

Literacy and Disabilities
Despite rapid advances in technology and learning tools, people with disabilities are still being left behind on their journey towards literacy.[i]

Literacy rates among people with disabilities in Canada
Statistics on the literacy rates among people with disabilities is limited. While there are some statistics on disabilities and some on adult literacy, there is a need for further research on literacy rates among people with disabilities.

- One in seven (3.4 million) Canadians aged 15 years and over has a disability.[ii] The rate is even higher among Aboriginal peoples. One in five (20%) Aboriginal peoples aged 15 years and older have a disability.[iii] Women are more likely to have a disability than men [iv].
- Approximately 50% of Canadian adults with disabilities experience literacy barriers.[iii] Literacy barriers can include print or verbal: unnecessary words, small or congested fonts, complicated or professional jargon, acronyms, and access to information or services only through websites.
- 20% of adults with disabilities have less than a grade 9 education, as compared to 8.1% of adults without a disability who have less than a grade 9 education.[iii]
- 50% of adults with disabilities have an annual income of less than $15,000.[iii] Nearly 50% of adults with limited literacy live in low-income households.[v] Only 56% of people with disabilities are employed, and most are working in low paying jobs.[vi]
- People with disabilities make up a disproportionate amount of the 42% of Canadian adults who function at the two lowest literacy levels.[vii]

Literacy needs among people with disabilities
The best way to understand the literacy needs of people with disabilities is to listen. Listening to individuals with disabilities, as well as organizations that represent them can help everyone to understand the relationship between literacy and disabilities. Here is what we currently know:

- All national surveys on either literacy or disabilities have identified that people with disabilities are disadvantaged when accessing education, employment, housing, and other community services.[iii]
- There is a wide range of disabilities (physical, intellectual, visual, hearing, psychiatric, and learning). The severity and type of disability has different degrees of impact on an individual's literacy.[vi]
- There is a serious lack of public awareness about adult literacy and disabilities.[vii] Stereotyping and assumptions about the capacity of people with disabilities to learn and to work are harsh social barriers.
- Many mainstream literacy programs do not have the skills or resources to accommodate people with disabilities[viii]
- Aboriginal people with disabilities are more likely to have low literacy and experience systemic racism, which impedes accessibility to community services including literacy programs.[iii ix]

Note: In this fact sheet, we refer to disabilities that are physical, intellectual, visual, psychiatric and/or hearing-related. Information on learning disabilities is contained in another MCL fact sheet.

What can be done?

To build a society that values inclusion it is important to challenge the assumption that literacy is only reading and writing on paper. There are multiple literacies and multiple ways of communicating. The disabilities communities define literacy from an inclusive perspective which includes sign language, Bliss symbols, Braille symbols, adaptive communication devises, gestures and sounds. Here are some ways to help make Canada a society that truly includes everyone:

- Support people with disabilities to voice their ideas and needs about literacy and life long learning. Individuals involved in disabilities organizations can initiate conversations with each other about local literacy or continuing education programs, and find out what courses or programs accommodate people with disabilities.
- Build and strengthen relationships and partnerships between literacy programs and community disabilities programs. Develop training for staff and volunteers to learn about current issues in literacy and disabilities and to develop strategies to reduce barriers.
- Community disabilities programs can increase their awareness of literacy and incorporate plain language strategies and literacy related activities into their programs and services. Some disabilities organizations have written their by-laws and policies in plain language.
- Adult literacy programs can increase their accommodations for people with disabilities. This includes staff and tutor training about disabilities, physical setting, assistive technologies and adaptive devices, inclusion of support person(s), flexible learning timelines, and appropriate assessment tools.
- Family literacy programs can provide accommodations for families with children and/or parents with disabilities that will improve accessibility and participation. Examples of programs that have an inclusive approach are Rhymes that Bind and Books for Babies.
- Challenge current practices and polices that perpetuate the myth of "train the best and leave the rest"[vi] way of thinking. While literacy is important for employment, improving one's reading and writing skills is also important for family and community participation. Literacy programs that accommodate students with developmental disabilities found that most students experienced increased self-confidence, willingness to take risks, and greater awareness of their own learning.[x]
- Develop knowledge to better understand the complex relationship between literacy and disabilities.
- Create funding and policies that include literacy and numeracy provision for people with disabilities as per recommendations 14, 15 and 16 in the 2003 *Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.*

Suggested *Literacy and Disabilities* Resources

• **EnableLink**. Online resource for disabilities communities by the Canadian Abilities Foundation. http://www.enablelink.org/

• **Literacy for Independent Living.** On-line resource for the literacy and disabilities communities, by the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC). http://www.nald.ca/ava/english/textonly/aboutTO.htm.

• **National Adult Literacy Database.** The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) has a growing collection of online resources and links for literacy and disabilities. http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/search/search_results.asp?oid =1&search_string =22&language_type=1&search_type=6

• **Neil Squire Society** provides education, technology and career development for people with physical disabilities, including programs such as Speech Assisted Reading and Writing, Access to Literacy, Computer Comfort and Educational Options. http://www.neilsquire.ca.

• **Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response.** Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 2003. http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfoComDoc/37/2/HUMA/Studies/Reports/humarp03-e.htm.

• **Roeher Institute** has resources and research on literacy and intellectual disabilities. http://www.roeher.ca.

• **Visunet** is the CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) networked library service for Canadians unable to read print. This includes an on-line library catalogue, internet and telephone access to daily newspapers in French and English, help centre for online resources, and a full text access to electronic and digital media materials. http://www.cnib.ca/eng/index.htm.

• **Working in Literacy with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Adults.** A report on the importance of making adult literacy programs accessible to deaf, deaf-blind and hearing-impaired people. Louise Ford and Cheryl Wilson-Lum, Literacy Programme, Capital Region Centre for the Hearing Impaired, 1993. http://www.ottawadeafcentre.org.

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i   Literacy for Independent Living-Canadian Association for Independent Living Centres, 2003. www.nald.ca/lil/english/litinfo.htm

ii   Statistics Canada (2003). Participant and Activity Limitation Survey: A profile of disability in Canada, 2001. The Daily. December 3, 2003. Ottawa. www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/021203/d021203a.htm

iii Rioux, M., Zubrow, E., Stutt Bunch, M., Miller, W. (2003). Atlas of Literacy and Disability. Canadian Abilities Foundation. Toronto. www.abilities.ca

iv Social Development Canada (2004). Advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Ottawa. http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion04/summary.pdf

v   Shalla, V. & Schellenberg, G. (1998). The Value of Words: Literacy and Economic Security in Canada. Ottawa, Ontario: Ministry of Industry. http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-552-MIE/89-552-MIE3.pdf

vi Macht, J. (2000). Literacy and Disability. Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, BC. www.nald.ca/fulltext/litdis/cover.htm

vii Kapsalis, C. (1999). The Effect of Disability on Literacy Skills. (Data Probe Economic Consulting Inc.) Nepean.

vii Sussman, S. (2003) Moving the Markers. New Perspectives on Adult Literacy Rates in Canada. Movement for Canadian Literacy. Ottawa. http://www.literacy.ca/public/moving/moving.pdf

ix St. Denis, V. and Hampton, E. (2002). Literature Review on Racism and the Effects on Aboriginal Education. Indian and Northern Affairs. Ottawa. http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/krw/rac_e.pdf

x   Sanders, M. (1991) Meeting Challenges: A literacy project for adults with developmental disabilities. Prospects Adult Literacy Association. Edmonton.

- **Relevancy**
  Learners need to understand the reason for learning something. Instructors need to collaboratively develop learning objectives with individual participants at the beginning of the course and be prepared to revise them as the course progresses. Such objectives used as a dynamic rather than static mechanism promotes relevancy of content and instruction and ensures accountability.

- **Practicality**
  The adult learning literature suggests that adults are frequently motivated to learn by the desire to achieve a specific task or acquire a skill that has a practical function in their lives. Learners need not necessarily be interested in knowledge for its own sake. As such, instructors need to explicitly demonstrate how the topic being taught will be useful to the learners.

- **Respect**
  Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experience that adult participants bring to the classroom. Learners must be regarded as equal partners in the educational process and be encouraged to freely express their opinions in class, one-on-one sessions and at key points during the program. Learners should also be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the instructor and see this input acted upon in revising and modifying course content and instructional strategies.

- **Self-Esteem / Confidence**
  Issues of self-esteem and confidence are deeply personal and sensitive, and, as such, can cause people to become defensive and embarrassed. It is therefore imperative that instructors are aware of the potential learning barriers that these issues represent and act appropriately. Being disillusioned with the education system and demoralized by the lack of constructive support can potentially prevent individuals from accessing appropriate services and claiming their right to support and assistance. The attitude of others may result in low expectations, teasing and rejection. It is critical that instructors are sensitive to these issues and work to build confidence and promote self-esteem.

Copied with permission from "Barriers to Participation in Literacy Activities Facing People with Physical Disabilities" by C. Carpenter and T. Readman.

Neil Squire Society, July 2004. Found at
http://www.neilsquire.ca/snapfiles/pdf%2Fliteracy_project_final_report.pdf

Tutor Checklist for a SARAW Session

1. Did I listen to the student's ideas and interests? Did I let the student pursue activities of interest to him/her, not me?

2. Did I let the student learn by making mistakes, but offer help when he/she was stuck?

3. Were my explanations clear? Did I look for signs that the student understood my explanations?

4. What was the most successful part of the session? What other things can I do that will be similar?

5. What was the least successful part of the session? How can these things be changed?

6. Is there some reading material I can type in that would be of interest to the student?

7. Did I give the student positive feedback for her/his successes?

Taken from SARAW manual

Working with adults with intellectual disabilities

Volunteer Training Guidelines
Used by Grimsby/Lincoln and District Association for Community Living

The following suggestions are made primarily for people working with individuals with a developmental handicap, but they are applicable to almost any group of people.

1. Take the positive rather than the negative approach. Look at the person in terms of what he/she can do, rather than concentration on what he/she can't do.

2. Expect enough of each person to make his/her learning experience stimulating, but not so much that he/she will be frustrated by constant failure. It requires time to understand each person's capabilities.

3. Since many people have short attention spans and are easily distracted, the volunteer should have plans for a variety of activities.

4. Establish short-term, realistic, obtainable goals; ones the person can understand. Many people can accomplish a lot, but it takes time.

5. Concentrate on doing, seeing, feeling. Be concrete, rather than abstract, avoid generalizations and a lot of "talking about".

6. Relate activities to the person's situation. We all learn best when what we are being taught makes sense to us in terms of our own experiences.

7. Give specific directions and give them one step at a time. Several directions, given in rapid succession, are confusing. Showing is often more effective than telling, or the two may be combined.

8. Having given instructions, check and make sure that the person really understands them.

9. Keep in mind that the person with the handicap must be taught many things that others learn by observation, deduction or simple explanation. Cause and effect are not always obvious.

10. Social skills are particularly important for the person with a handicap. Good grooming, social poise, good manners all go far toward helping the person to be accepted by others.

11. Remember, they are more like than different from "normal" individuals; they want to be liked, to be accepted, to belong to a group, to take part in social activities and to be successful in things they do. They often know that they don't "measure up", but don't always understand why.

12. Success as a group member depends in large part on ability to go along with people; a skill which is not necessarily dependent on one's IQ.

13. Remember three very important prerequisites:

    - PATIENCE

    - PERSISTENCE

    - PRAISE

From "Literacy Instruction for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities"
Paula Davies

Sample Lesson Plan

Here is an example of how you can structure your SARAW sessions. This is
intended as a guideline only. Please note that all 'lessons' do not have to
include all these activities, or be presented in this order.

- Objectives of lesson – keep in mind that we focus on the student's goals

- Review of last lesson – for confidence, and to connect to this week's

  lesson

- Warm up – something fun, to relax, to relate to/with student

- Modeling/demonstration of activity

- Joint activity – e.g. both tutor and student write (or do a paired reading

  activity)

- 'Scaffolding' – provide support, then withdraw the support

- Independent activity

- Feedback/evaluation

Language Experience Followup Activities

Any activity that uses the same words can be used as followup activities. Examples of followup activities include:

- Write a new story using the words on the word cards.
- Turn each sentence in the story into a question to be answered.
- Using the word cards, have the student sort them into: rhyming words/word families, compound words, words with the same suffixes or prefixes, by the number of syllables, etc.
- Using the word cards, create a scrambled language experience story (see handout on scrambled language experience story).
- Turn the language experience story into a CLOZE exercise. You do this by going into the story and deleting every 5th word, or every noun, or every verb. The student has to read and fill in the blank.
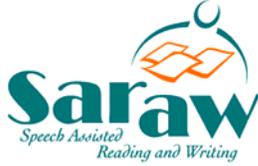
Supplementary Resources

Journals

Journals can be useful for many levels of writers. By giving students the opportunity to write in a "safe, protected" place, you make them more comfortable with the writing process. Students in the SARAW program can use the WRITE section to write their journal entries. For a more beginning writer, each entry can be saved as one document. A more experienced writer may want to save each day's journal entry as a separate document.

Treat the journal like a diary. Students should be encouraged to write anything they want in the journal without fear of correction or judgement on your part. Journals can also be private havens for students to express feelings and secrets. In no way should a journal be corrected, unless the student invites you to look at his/her work and assist in editing etc. But even this should be discouraged. The journal's focus should be on thoughts and emotions not spelling and grammar. The goal here is to get the student comfortable with the transfer of his/her thoughts onto the screen. Encourage the student to write in his/her journal often and to record the date with each entry.

Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals are a little different from journals because your participation is necessary for the exercise to work. A dialogue journal is a conversation on the computer. Both you and your student write questions and answers to each other on the WRITE program. Remember to write about topics that are relevant and meaningful to the student. Even here you do not want to edit the student's work, however, you can model a correct usage in your next message to the student.

Variation

A variation you can use to the dialogue journal is the story telling activity that most of us remember from childhood. One person begins telling a story. After a few sentences, the next person continues with the story and so on.. You can end up with an extremely entertaining story. This activity can be modified for the SARAW program. Both you and your student can write a story together. One of you starts by writing one or two sentences. The other person writes the next sentence and so on. This exercise can be fun for both instructor and student because you can be as creative and goofy as you like. For a more challenging variation, you can write a story together where the person writing the sentence has to use the last word of the previous sentence as the first word in his/her sentence.
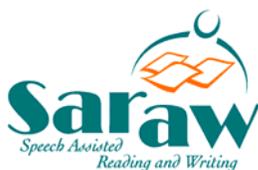
Supplementary Resources

Core Words

Here is a list of the 100 words used most often in writing. When you know how to spell these 100 words, you will know 59% of all the words you are likely to use in your writing.

the	got	can
and	go	two
I	like	after
a	day	house
to	were	dog
was	out	little
in	up	from
it	his	could
he	at	mother
my	him	people
we	her	into
of	be	just
is	get	over
you	would	see
they	home	now
on	not	or
that	some	school

went	like	their
when	saw	play
for	if	an
so	as	by
one	because	come
then	going	big
she	what	no
said	time	man
but	will	am
there	very	good
had	do	too
me	down	once
have	them	ran
with	about	name
are	back	know
all	our	took
came		

adapted by Bow Valley College