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Literacy, Life and Employment
An Analysis of Canadian
International Adult Literacy
Survey (IALS) Microdata

EDUCATION AND LEARNING



Literacy, Life and Employment: An Analysis of Canadian International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) Microdata
by *Alison Campbell* and *Natalie Gagnon*

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Preface

This report is one in a series of publications produced as a part of the Securing Literacy's Potential project—a two-year research initiative funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

Based on a detailed analysis of the Canadian microdata from the International Adult Literacy Survey, this report presents research findings related to the patterns of labour market behaviour of working-age Canadians with marginal literacy skills. It explores the socio-economic, literacy, employment and learning characteristics of this group and uses the results to identify best practices and criteria for designing successful literacy skills enhancement initiatives. This report also reinforces our understanding of the importance of addressing this group's literacy needs to support individual, organizational and national success and prosperity.

Visit www.conferenceboard.ca/education to download a free copy of this report and the other publications associated with the project, including the final research report, *Profiting from Literacy: Creating a Sustainable Workplace Literacy Program*; a brochure; best practice case studies; and mini case studies.

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Literacy, Life and Employment

An Analysis of Canadian International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) Microdata

Marginal literacy skills impede individual choice and success in the labour market, impair businesses' ability to compete and hinder Canada's position in the global marketplace. *Literacy, Life and Employment* presents research findings related to the patterns of literacy and labour market behaviour of working-age Canadians with marginal literacy skills. Based on a detailed analysis of the Canadian microdata from the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), this report explores the socio-economic, literacy, employment and learning characteristics of this group. It uses the results of this analysis to identify solutions and strategies that will support Canadian employers, government policy-makers, unions, communities and other learning partners in creating and designing programs to enhance the skills of marginally literate employees.

This report explores the socio-economic, literacy, employment and learning characteristics of working-age Canadians with marginal literacy skills.

WHY FOCUS ON THE MARGINALLY LITERATE?

The primary goal of this research is to help employers raise the literacy skills of their IALS level 2 and low level 3 employees up to the equivalent of a solid IALS level 3. IALS level 3 is the minimum level at which employees can be expected to perform their jobs well.

Workplace literacy programs often target individuals at the lowest literacy level (IALS level 1). However, there are a large number of Canadians—approximately 4.7 million—with upper level 2 and low level 3 scores whose limited literacy skills pose a significant challenge to their workplace performance and success. These individuals form the Target Group for this study; improving the literacy skills of this group would have a significant impact on productivity, innovation, quality, labour market outcomes, income and lifelong learning.

THE TARGET GROUP

Our original analysis of the Canadian microdata from the IALS allows us to compare the Target Group (Canadian IALS respondents with scores between 226 and 300) with the Higher Literacy Group (Canadian IALS respondents scoring greater than 300) across several variables. This comparison reveals specific similarities and differences that help build a profile of the demographic, economic, employment and learning characteristics of the Target Group.

Respondents in the Target Group, when compared with respondents in the Higher Literacy Group:

- are older;
- have fewer years of formal education;
- are more likely to be unemployed or retired;
- if employed, are just as likely to work full time;
- are more likely to work for a small organization (with fewer than 20 employees); and
- receive less training and education while employed.

Canadian IALS respondents in the Target Group are generally overly confident about their literacy skills and unaware of reasons for upgrading their skills. When compared with respondents in the Higher Literacy Group on daily literacy activities, they:

- participate with similar frequency in reading newspapers;
- have approximately the same amount of reading materials in their households;
- participate less often in reading books, writing and using the public library; and
- spend more time watching TV or videos.

Canadian IALS respondents in the Target Group are generally overly confident about their literacy skills and unaware of reasons for upgrading their skills.

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

The results of our analysis suggest several potentially successful strategies that would help employers move their marginally literate employees well into the “job standard” level 3 category of IALS literacy scores. Employers, governments and their learning partners can play a significant role in enhancing the

literacy skills of this critical group of Canadian employees. They can:

- Improve access to training through workplace and community learning programs.
- Take a holistic view, targeting training to develop the whole person rather than just a segmented set of skills.
- Adapt jobs and workplace tasks to increase the use of literacy skills.
- Focus on the “nearly there”—those employees already close to the “job standard” level who may require only modest targeted interventions to raise their literacy levels over the 300 mark.
- Encourage individuals to stay in school.

While literacy training may not be the first line of business for most organizations, employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of literacy skills in a competitive global economy. In the coming years, literacy training is likely to become a more important facet of the Canadian workplace, as literacy will become ever more critical to success in the burgeoning information age.

A full text version of this report, and other publications associated with The Conference Board of Canada’s Securing Literacy’s Potential project, may be downloaded for free at www.conferenceboard/education.

Research That Helps Employers

Literacy is vital to employment, productivity, self-esteem and a high standard of living.¹ Since brains, not brawn, will power Canada’s knowledge-based economy, low literacy skills can only hinder Canada’s prosperity. Yet too many Canadians have limited literacy skills. (See box, “What is Literacy?”)

According to the world-benchmark International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)², and its follow-up, Learning a Living: First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL),³ approximately 17 per cent of all Canadians aged 16 to 65 score at the lowest literacy level—level 1 on the five-level IALS scale. (See box, “Literacy Levels.”) Additionally, about 26 per cent of all Canadians aged 16 to 65 attain marginally better level 2 scores, and 35 per cent reach level 3.⁴

Most literacy intervention programs target individuals at the lowest literacy level. Their low literacy skills present obvious obstacles to performance and personal success in the workplace. However, there are also a

significant number of Canadians achieving slightly higher scores (level 2)—26 percent of the population, or approximately 4.5 million people—whose marginal literacy skills also have a large impact on their success in the workplace. Compared with those at higher literacy levels (levels 3, 4 and 5), these individuals show lower rates of labour market participation, and have lower incomes and more restricted job choices.

What Is Literacy?

This report uses the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) definition of literacy, based on competency across three broad domains:¹

Prose Literacy

The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals.

Document Literacy

The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts.

Quantitative Literacy

The knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000), p. x.

Literacy Levels

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) measures literacy on a five-level scale, where level 1 is the lowest and level 5 is the highest. Descriptions of typical competencies and the percentage of Canadians (aged 16 to 65) at each level on the prose scale illustrate the differences between the five levels.¹

IALS Prose Literacy Levels

Level 1	16.6 per cent of Canadians At this level, respondents show very poor prose literacy skills. Individuals may, for example, be unable to determine the correct amount of medicine to give a child from information printed on a package.
Level 2	25.6 per cent of Canadians RESEARCH TARGET GROUP At this level, respondents can deal only with material that is simple, and clearly laid out. A level 2 score denotes a weak level of skill, but more hidden than level 1. It identifies people who can read, but test poorly. They may have developed coping skills to manage everyday literacy demands, but their low level of proficiency makes it difficult for them to face novel demands, such as learning new job skills.
Level 3	35.1 per cent of Canadians At this level, respondents demonstrate a suitable minimum for coping with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society. A level 3 score approximates the skill level required for successful secondary school completion and college entry. As with the higher levels, it requires the ability to integrate several sources of information and solve more complex problems.
Levels 4 and 5	22.7 per cent of Canadians At these levels, respondents demonstrate command of higher-order information-processing skills.

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000), pp. xi, 136.

Additionally, there are a number of Canadians with low level 3 scores who, because of their limited literacy skills, also face significant challenges to workplace performance and success. The results of the IALS study show that approximately 4.7 million Canadians would fall in the upper level 2 and lower level 3 score ranges.⁵ These individuals form the target group for this report's comparison and analysis of the Canadian microdata from the IALS study.⁶

WHY FOCUS ON THE MARGINALLY LITERATE?

Despite the increasing use of literacy programs by the private sector, some groups of employees have been underserved. The largest group with significant literacy and basic skills development needs is made up of marginally skilled employees, who score at IALS level 2.⁷ Improving the literacy skills of this group could have a significant impact on productivity, innovation, quality, labour market outcomes, income and lifelong learning for two reasons.

The largest group with significant literacy and basic skills development needs accounts for one-quarter of all workers in the Canadian labour force.

Firstly, this group accounts for fully one-quarter of all workers within the Canadian labour force. Its sheer size guarantees that any increase in literacy skills (such as moving workers from literacy level 2 to level 3) would have a huge impact on this group's work performance, earnings and quality of life. The resulting performance and productivity gains would also improve bottom-line results for employers.

Secondly, marginally skilled level 2 employees have already achieved a very basic level of literacy. Moving this group of employees from their current level up to a solid level 3 would be less expensive and involve fewer resources, *per capita*, than moving the group of employees with extremely rudimentary level 1 literacy skills up to a similarly proficient level of literacy. For this reason, efforts to improve literacy among level 2s are likely to be far more cost-effective.

Quick Literacy Facts

Literacy Outcomes

- One in four Canadians in the labour market (aged 16 to 65) has literacy skills at level 2 on the IALS five-level scale, where level 5 is the highest.¹

Labour Market Participation and Literacy Outcomes

- Only 66 per cent of working-age Canadians at IALS levels 1 and 2 participate in the labour market, as opposed to 83 per cent of working-age Canadians at levels 4 and 5.²
- Almost 84 per cent of working-age Canadians at IALS level 2 believe their reading skills are “not at all limiting” to their opportunities at work.³

Participation in Adult Education and Training

- Only 29 per cent of IALS level 2 Canadians participate in adult education and training as opposed to 40 per cent of level 3 Canadians and 60 per cent of those at levels 4 and 5. The total Canadian adult education and training participation rate is 38 per cent.⁴

Income and Earnings

- Out of six predictor variables to determine earnings variance, respondents' literacy proficiency is the most significant.⁵

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000), pp. 136–137.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 151.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 153.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 175. The other five predictor variables were gender, parents' education, native versus foreign language, respondent's education, and experience.

Arguably, literacy levels—not participation rates in lifelong learning or education credentials attained—have the greatest impact on personal achievement, corporate success and even national prosperity. However, there is still much work to be done to improve the literacy skills of Canadian workers who are currently operating at level 2. (See box, “Quick Literacy Facts.”)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This report is based on the analysis of the IALS microdata—which was used to determine how to construct workplace literacy programs that provide the greatest possible benefit for employees currently at literacy level 2. For the purposes of this report, we have focused on the data relating to level 2 and lower level 3 Canadians. This analysis expands and reinforces our

understanding of the benefits—especially for small and medium-sized enterprises—of targeting this specific population for literacy skills enhancement initiatives.

The specific objectives for this report are to:

- profile the demographic, economic and employment characteristics of IALS level 2 and low level 3 employees;
 - identify the learning issues specific to level 2 and low level 3 learners;
 - demonstrate how stand-alone, integrated and other learning delivery methods can be used to increase the literacy skills of level 2 and low level 3 employees to a mid-range level 3 or higher;
 - identify best practices and successful models for delivering workplace literacy training;
- predict where training efforts would make the most difference;
 - devise criteria for organizations to use when designing or implementing their own literacy programs;
 - communicate and promote the potential of using classroom, e-learning and blended learning programs for literacy upgrading;
 - validate previous research on the benefits of workplace literacy programs;
 - help employers raise the literacy skills of their level 2 and low level 3 employees up to the equivalent of a solid level 3; and
 - support the business case for using literacy training to improve employee and organizational outcomes—especially for IALS level 2 learners.

1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000). Available online at www.oecd.org/publications/e-book/8100051e.pdf. IALS represents a first attempt at undertaking a large-scale household-based assessment of adult literacy skills at the international level. It incorporated an open-ended literacy test conducted in different languages and across different cultures. It employed a sophisticated methodology developed and applied by the Educational Testing Service to measure literacy proficiency for each domain on a scale ranging from 0 to 500 points. Literacy ability in each domain is expressed by a score, defined as the point at which a person has an 80 per cent chance of successful performance from among the set of tasks of varying difficulty included in the assessment.

2 Ibid., p. 136.

3 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Learning a Living, First Results of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2005), p. 50. Available online at www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-603-XIE/89-603-XIE2005001.htm.

4 OECD and Statistics Canada, *Learning a Living*. The first report from the follow-up study (ALL) to IALS was published in May 2005. Our analysis and this report focus on the microdata that was published from the IALS study.

At the time of this report's publication, the ALL microdata set for Canada was not yet available. When compared to this analysis of the IALS Canadian microdata, a future similar analysis of the ALL Canadian microdata may reveal patterns of literacy skills development (and/or loss) and yield information on where strategic investments by governments, employers and leaders will make the most impacts.

5 IALS data are based on scores for three separate literacy domains—prose, document and quantitative. For the purposes of this research, the IALS data for the three separate domains are often combined to create distinct groups at each general literacy level. Level 1 includes those scoring between 0–225 across all three domains. Level 2s score between 226–275, level 3s between 276–325, level 4s score between 326–375 and level 5s score between 376–500.

6 This report summarizes the results of Phase 2 of The Conference Board of Canada's research project Securing Literacy's Potential, which profiles how classroom, e-learning and blended learning programs can improve employee literacy and basic skills for marginally skilled employees.

7 The term "marginally skilled" refers to low to middle skilled workers, in accordance with literature on literacy skills, including the recent report by Susan Crompton, *The Marginally Literate Workforce* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1996).

An Analysis of the IALS Microdata File for Canada

The findings from our detailed analyses of the Canadian IALS microdata file give us a clear picture of the range of literacy skills in Canada’s working-age population. Our presentation and discussion of the analyses includes:

- an overview of the sample group;
- definitions of the two comparator groups—Target and Higher Literacy; and
- comparisons of these two groups across variables, such as age and education.

OVERVIEW OF THE SAMPLE GROUP

In Canada, the total number of respondents to the International Adult Literacy Survey was 4,500. Tables 1 and 2 show the distribution of respondents and the estimated number of Canadians for each skill level and literacy type.¹

The respondents’ average scores on each of the three literacy domains are fairly consistent. For instance, the prose average is 278.8, the document average is 279.3 and the quantitative average is 281.0. (See Chart 1.) These averages approach the 300 level—the minimum level at which employees can be expected to perform their jobs well. Performing one’s job well means, at a

minimum, being able to read and use the documents and information needed to complete job tasks, being able to understand and follow required health and safety procedures, and being able to communicate effectively with co-workers, supervisors and customers.

The distribution of literacy skills on each of the three literacy domains is consistently large.² The range of scores from the 5th to 95th percentile is 219 points on the prose scale, 244 points on the document scale, and 221 points on the quantitative scale. These results suggest that education and training efforts to develop literacy skills have, so far, produced the same rate of progress across all three domains.

DEFINING THE COMPARATOR GROUPS

This report focuses on providing data, analyses and strategies to support organizations in moving Canadian working-age adults with level 2 and lower level 3 literacy skills (those scoring between 226 and 300 on all three IALS literacy domains) to the middle of the level 3 range (a score of greater than 300 on all three domains).

Table 1
Distribution of Canadian International Adult Literacy Survey Respondents by Literacy Level and Domain

	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Level 1	830	933	839
Level 2	1,283	1,236	1,322
Level 3	1,605	1,424	1,612
Level 4/5	782	907	727
	4,500	4,500	4,500

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, International Adult Literacy Survey, 2000.

Table 2
Estimated Number of Adult Canadians (aged 16 to 65) in Each Literacy Group* by Literacy Level and Domain

	Prose	Document	Quantitative
Level 1	3,068,012	3,350,498	3,119,563
Level 2	4,726,936	4,562,745	4,814,340
Level 3	6,470,008	5,914,011	6,427,338
Level 4/5	4,185,301	4,623,003	4,089,016
	18,450,257	18,450,257	18,450,257

*These estimates are weighted. Since IALS uses a modelling and weighting methodology for determining point estimates, the data were re-weighted to generate reliable estimates. These survey weights account for the fact that the population had a non-equal probability of being selected.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents who score between 226 and 300 for each literacy type. It also shows that the estimated total number of Canadian adults who score between 226 and 300 on each literacy domain ranges between 7.3 and 8.2 million.³

This report provides strategies to support organizations in advancing an underserved group of Canadians from one level of literacy to another.

For comparison purposes then, the Target Group consists of those IALS respondents who scored *between* 226 and 300 on all three literacy domains—prose, document and quantitative. The Higher Literacy Group consists of those respondents who scored *greater* than 300 on all three literacy domains. Based on these parameters, there are 1,300 respondents who fall in the Target Group (or a weighted estimate of 4.7 million Canadians) and 1,038 respondents who fall in the Higher Literacy Group (or a weighted estimate of 5.4 million Canadians). The purpose of this study is to compare these similarly sized groups to determine areas of difference that may inform employers and their learning partners in their efforts to improve literacy in the Target Group.

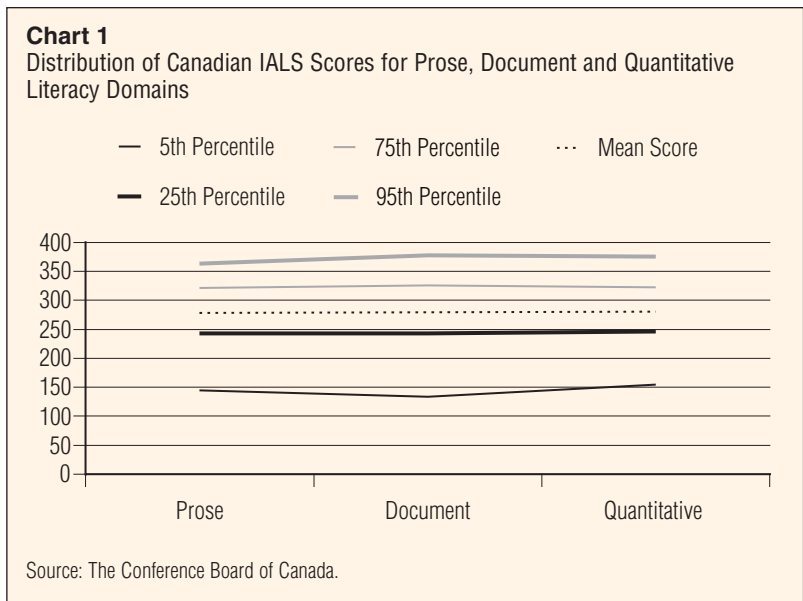


Table 3
Target Group Profile: Canadian Respondents Scoring Between 226 and 300 on the IALS Literacy Scales (IALS level 2 to lower level 3)

Literacy domain	Number of respondents	Percentage of n (4,500)	Average score	Number of Canadian adults*
Prose	2,151	47%	267.57	8,188,597
Document	1,954	43%	267.38	7,267,635
Quantitative	2,179	48%	269.34	7,919,620

*These estimates are weighted. Since IALS uses a modelling and weighting methodology for determining point estimates, the data was re-weighted to generate reliable estimates. These survey weights account for the fact that the population had a non-equal probability of being selected.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada

1 In estimating the numbers of Canadians, survey weights have been applied to account for the fact that the population had a non-equal probability of being selected.
2 Relative to the scores for other countries involved in the IALS study. See OECD and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age*, pp. 135–136.

3 IALS uses a modelling and weighting methodology for determining point estimates. In certain portions of our analyses for this report, the data had to be re-weighted to generate reliable estimates. These survey weights account for the fact that the population had a non-equal probability of being selected.

Comparison of Target and Higher Literacy Groups

A comparison of the Target Group with the Higher Literacy Group across several variables highlights specific similarities and differences. The results of this comparative analysis can guide policy makers and other stakeholders in taking action to improve the literacy skills of the Target Group. If individuals in the Target Group show similar social, educational or labour market profiles, then policy makers and program designers could use the profile information to construct appropriately targeted literacy interventions. The areas chosen for comparison include social and language background, age, education, employment, learning by doing, motivation to improve literacy skills and literacy outside of work. These variables are used to describe the respondents’ demographic backgrounds, labour market status and general use of literacy skills in everyday life.

DEMOGRAPHICS

SOCIAL AND LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

There is little difference between the Target and Higher Literacy groups with respect to language background. (See Table 4.) Both tend to possess literacy skills that allow them to function adequately within their existing circumstances. For this reason, neither group is likely to take language upgrading for its own sake.

However, there is an interesting link between parents’ education and literacy outcomes. Respondents in the Higher Literacy Group were more than twice as likely to indicate that their parents had received some post-secondary schooling. (See Table 4.) No other aspect of social or language background reveals a difference between the two groups.

AGE

The Target Group is somewhat older, on average, than the Higher Literacy Group. (See Chart 2.) Seventy-two per cent of the Target population is aged 16 to 45, compared with 87 per cent of the Higher Literacy Group. However, the percentage of respondents in the Target Group falling into the “older worker” category (aged 56 to 65) is much higher than in the Higher Literacy Group (12.6 per cent versus 4.1 per cent, respectively.)

This youth-higher literacy link may reflect the higher levels of education and base literacy in the younger respondents, the degradation in literacy skills over time, or both. According to the IALS study, young adults have the greater benefit of more recent schooling and extended formal education, especially when compared with older adults. Moreover, recent data on formal workplace training in Canada indicate that younger employees spend more hours in training in a 12-month period, on average, than older workers (248 hours per participant in the 25- to 34-year-old age group versus 88 hours for the oldest workers).¹

In addition, this difference in age might be contributing to the differences in the proportion of respondents who reported having parents who acquired some post-secondary education. (See Table 4.) The Target Group is generally older than the Higher Literacy Group. Their parents are also older—on average—than the parents of those in the Higher Literacy Group, and older parents are less likely to have had advanced formal schooling.

Table 4
Social and Language Background, Target versus Higher Literacy Group (per cent)

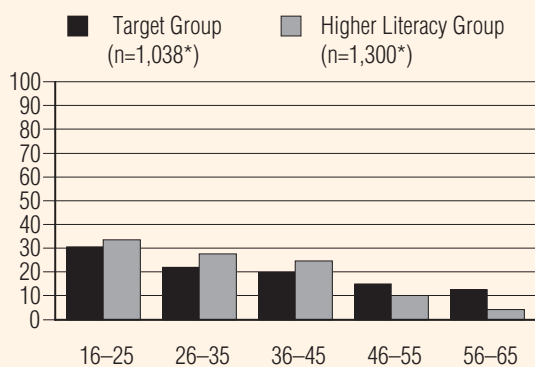
	Target Group*	Higher Literacy Group*
Born in Canada	93.0	92.0
As a child, spoke same language as test	86.0	90.7
Have taken post-school language upgrading	10.1	9.9
Speak the interview language at home	90.3	93.0
Feel comfortable expressing themselves in the test language	89.3	93.0
Father attended some post-secondary	11.2	27.0
Mother attended some post-secondary	10.7	23.6

*Excludes non-respondents.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Chart 2

Age Distribution, Target versus Higher Literacy Group (per cent)

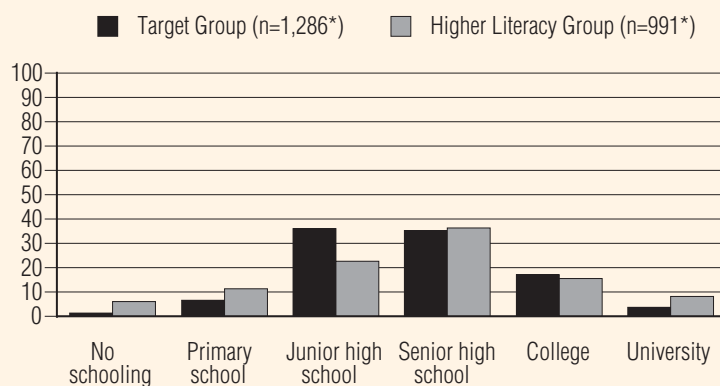


*Excludes non-respondents.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Chart 3

Amount of Schooling, Target versus Higher Literacy Group (per cent)



*Excludes non-respondents.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

EDUCATION

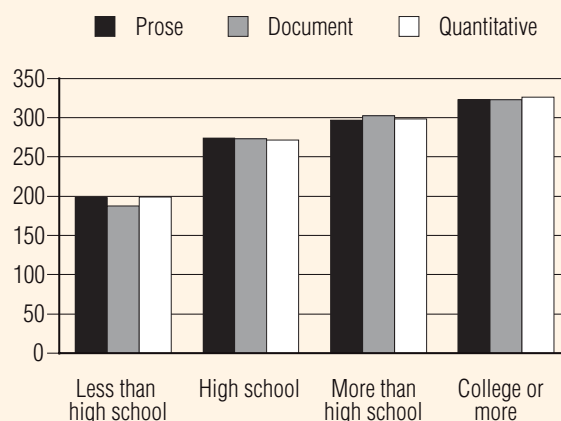
A strong connection between educational attainment and literacy outcomes is also evident. The Target Group's average educational attainment is lower than the Higher Literacy Group's (11.5 years compared with 14.4 years of formal education). Notably, over 50 per cent of the respondents in the Higher Literacy Group have completed a college or university program, compared with only 21 per cent of the respondents in the Target Group. Against this, 44 per cent of the Target Group, but only 10 per cent of the Higher Literacy Group, have not completed high school. (See Chart 3.)

The results show that an individual's level of education affects their literacy score—higher levels of educational attainment correlate strongly with higher literacy scores. (See Chart 4.) Chart 4 also shows that improving literacy for individuals who are currently in the level 2 to low level 3 range will require that they are provided with educational opportunities beyond high school. In fact, even individuals with more than a high school education (but less than a college diploma or university degree) score, on average, under 300 on the prose and quantitative literacy domains. An alternative would be to improve the current school system so that it develops individuals' literacy skills in fewer years.

These results indicate the importance of both finishing high school and continuing with a post-secondary education. Once individuals have completed their formal education and entered the workforce, a lack of programs and financial support make it difficult to take advantage of opportunities for continuing education and literacy development.

Chart 4

Average Canadian IALS Scores for Each Literacy Domain by Level of Education (IALS scores on a scale of 0 to 500, n=4,500)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

However, in addition to education level, other factors do affect literacy skills. The IALS study shows that some countries with large numbers of adults with low levels of education still achieve high levels of literacy. This is most evident in Sweden and Germany.² Further study is needed to see whether the education systems in these countries are more effective in developing individual literacy skills, or if these countries reach their adult population outside of the school environment to improve literacy skills.

LABOUR MARKET STATUS

EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND

Individuals in the Higher Literacy Group are more likely to be employed than those in the Target Group. (See Table 5.) This higher rate of employment means that they are more likely to have access to workplace literacy training opportunities and to benefit from daily workplace activities that help maintain or improve literacy skills—including reading and writing. In addition, the Higher Literacy Group is less likely to be unemployed (4 per cent unemployed, compared with 10 per cent for the Target Group).

One of the larger challenges in providing literacy improvement opportunities lies in reaching individuals who are neither employed nor in school.

The biggest percentage difference in employment status between the two groups is in the retirement category. The Target Group is three times more likely to be retired—not a surprising figure given that this group is older, on average, than the Higher Literacy Group. (See Chart 2.) For example, the percentage of respondents between 56 and 65 years of age is 13 per cent for the Target Group but only 4 per cent for the Higher Literacy Group.

The other employment category of interest is “homemaker.” Although the actual number of individuals in this category is fairly low, it still represents the second largest employment category for the Target

Group. The IALS results show that homemakers are 2.5 times more likely to be in the Target Group than in the Higher Literacy Group.

One of the larger challenges in providing literacy improvement opportunities lies in reaching individuals who are neither employed nor in school. Taken as a group, unemployed and out-of-school individuals represent 34 per cent of the Target Group, but only 12 per cent of the Higher Literacy Group. These results underscore the importance of expanding access to educational opportunities beyond the workplace for adults with marginal literacy skills. Since this group does not have access to literacy training opportunities provided by employers, literacy educators must reach out to the unemployed and out-of-school members of the community through other means.

SMALL AND LARGE EMPLOYERS

Job profiles and job tasks involving the use of literacy skills often differ between organizations of different sizes. Literacy scores, job profiles and literacy-related job tasks were compared for possible literacy patterns. Analysis of the literacy scores for individuals from very small (less than 20 employees) and very large organizations (500 or more employees) against other variables provides additional insight into the characteristics of the Target and Higher Literacy groups.

The two groups show similar job profiles in areas such as self-employment and supervisory responsibilities. (See Chart 5.) However, although the two groups show an equal proportion of self-employed individuals (about 25 per cent), the Target Group has a greater absolute number of self-employed individuals. The

Table 5
Employment Status, Target versus Higher Literacy Group

Type of Employment	Target Group		Higher Literacy Group	
	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total
Employed	691	53	740	71
Retired	91	7	24	2
Unemployed/Looking for work	133	10	41	4
Student (including work programs)	160	12	164	16
Homemaker	169	13	55	5
Other	56	4	14	1
Total respondents	1,300	99*	1,038	99*

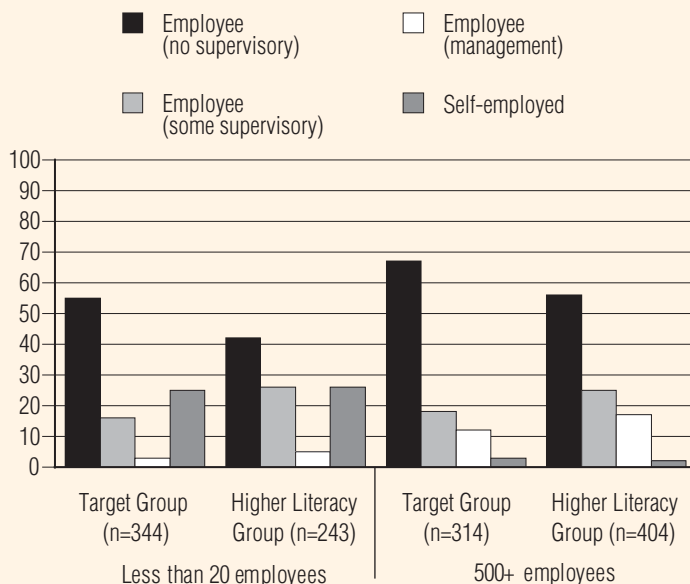
*Percentages add up to 99 per cent because they were rounded to the closest full percentage point, which in most cases involved rounding down.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

similarity between the two groups in the self-employment category is the result of a higher proportion of individuals in the Target Group working in small firms.

In both the Target and Higher Literacy groups, most people are not supervisors or managers. However, more individuals in the Higher Literacy Group have supervisory and management responsibilities than in the Target Group.

Among employed respondents, individuals in the Target Group are just as likely to be employed full time as those in the Higher Literacy Group. (See Table 6.) The two groups, however, differ substantially on the size of the organization where they work. Target Group members are more likely to be employed by companies with fewer than 20 employees. (See Table 7.) Since smaller companies tend to have less money and fewer resources for employee training, the implication is that the Target Group is less likely to have access to literacy training through the workplace.

Chart 5
Job Profiles of Employees, Target versus Higher Literacy Group by Size of Organization (per cent)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Table 6
Type of Employment, Target versus Higher Literacy Group (employed respondents only)

Employment Status	Target Group		Higher Literacy Group	
	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total
Full time	678	74	702	76
Part time	236	26	223	24
Total respondents	914	100	925	100

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Table 7
Size of Employer, Target versus Higher Literacy Group (employed respondents only)

Size of Employer	Target Group		Higher Literacy Group	
	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total	Number of respondents	Percentage of group total
Less than 20	344	40	243	27
20-99	120	14	114	13
100-199	45	5	51	6
200-499	46	5	74	8
500+	314	36	404	46
Total respondents	869*	100	886*	100

*Excludes non-respondents.

Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Analysis of firm size and source of financial support for education and training shows that there are three primary sources of financial assistance—the individual themselves or a family member, the employer and the government—and that the type of financial assistance available differs according to firm size. (See Chart 6.) The results confirm other research findings—that small firms are less inclined to support workplace training.³ For individuals employed in small firms, they or a family member are the most likely source of financial support for training, followed closely by the government and their employer. In large firms, sources of financial support for individual employees are (from greatest likelihood to least) employers, individuals or their family, and government.

Individuals in the Higher Literacy Group receive more training and education in both the very small and large firms. (See Chart 7.) Individuals in these firms show an equal spread in the amount of training for both groups. The Higher Literacy Group receives training 27 per cent more often than the Target Group, regardless of firm size. An interesting point to note is the proportion of respondents in the Higher Literacy Group who receive training or education while working in a very small firm. This proportion (65 per cent) is higher than that of individuals from the Target Group working

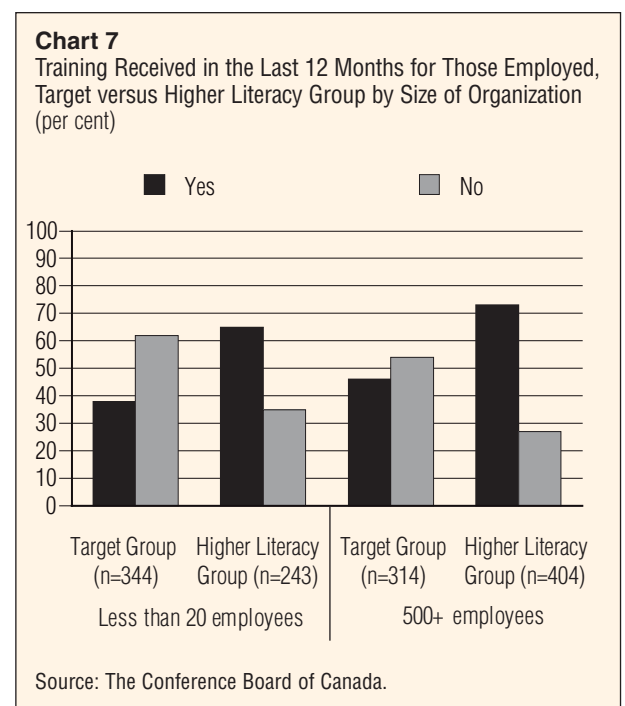
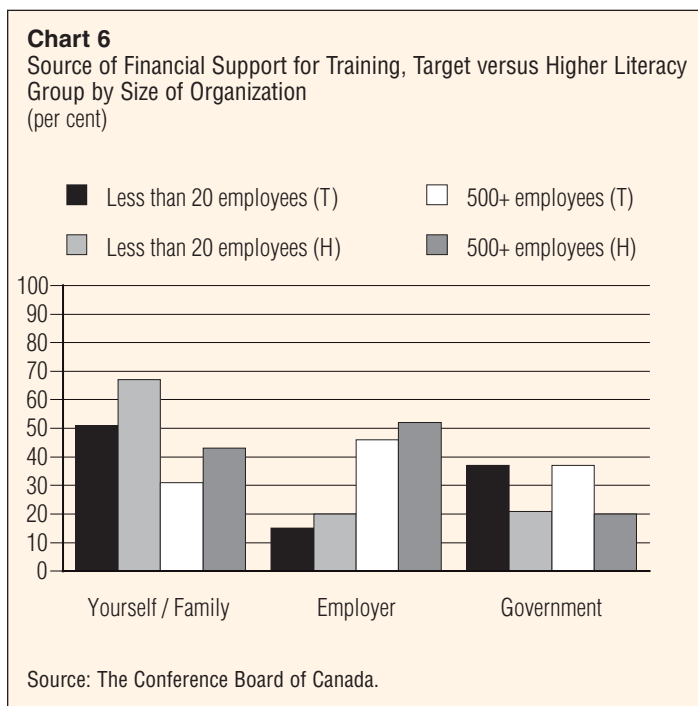
in large firms (46 per cent). However, these results do not indicate who actually pays for the training—higher-literacy individuals in small firms may pay for their own training.

Comparing the two literacy groups within the context of small and large firms, the Target Group receives more financial support from the government, less support from employers and is less inclined to pay out-of-pocket for training.

GENERAL USE OF LITERACY SKILLS

LEARNING BY DOING

Learning by doing in the workplace, even for those with at least a senior high school level of education, can contribute to higher literacy skills. (See Table 8.) The data in these tables show that individuals who perform daily work that includes related literacy activities achieve literacy scores that are higher than the group average. The implication is clear—employers can help raise the literacy skills of their workforce by creating or altering jobs to include the daily use of literacy skills. Employers would then benefit from this increased use of the newly acquired skills on the job, which would lead to improved communications, increased employee self-confidence and enhanced problem-solving abilities within the organization.⁴



MOTIVATION TO IMPROVE LITERACY SKILLS

Understanding the drivers and barriers that influence an individual's decision to improve their literacy skills is important for policy makers, practitioners and their learning partners. Individuals' self-assessments of their own literacy skills provide a benchmark of their attitudes and beliefs toward their own abilities. Their reasons for taking part in continuing education or training form another piece of the training puzzle. Knowing what motivates people to learn can assist decision makers in providing relevant, attractive learning opportunities.

Self-Assessment

Canadian IALS respondents belonging to the Target Group are generally overly confident about their literacy skills and unconcerned about the possibility that their literacy skills may affect their job or job opportunities. Thus, the majority of Target Group respondents (over 80 per cent) rate their literacy skills as good or excellent for their main job. (See Table 9.) In addition, over 80 per cent of the Target Group respondents indicate that their reading, writing and math skills do not limit their job opportunities. (See Table 10.) Individuals in the Target Group tend not to be aware of reasons to upgrade their skills. Previous research on the economic returns to workplace education emphasizes the importance of making individuals with low levels of literacy aware of the benefits of improving and upgrading skills.⁵

Table 9

Target Group: Self-rating of Literacy Skills
(How would you rate your literacy skills in your main job as it pertains to ... ?)

	Reading skills	Writing skills	Mathematics skills
Excellent	405	328	320
Good	391	391	415
Moderate	68	115	99
Poor	7	26	19
Total respondents	871*	860*	853*

*Excludes non-respondents.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Table 8

Learning by Doing: Impact of Daily Job-Related Literacy Activities on Mean Literacy Scores
(for respondents with at least a senior high school education, n=107)

	Mean IALS score for those who performed literacy tasks every day
How often do you use information from each of the following as part of your main job?	
Prose Literacy (group mean=277)	
Letters or memos	294
Reports, articles, magazines or journals	298
Manuals or reference books, including catalogues	287
Document Literacy (group mean=278)	
Diagrams or schematics	310*
Directions or instructions for medicines, recipes or other products	285*
Quantitative Literacy (group mean=290)	
Bills, invoices, spreadsheets or budget tables	295
How often do you write or fill out each of the following as part of your main job?	
Prose Literacy (group mean=277)	
Letters or memos	299
Reports or articles	293
Document Literacy (group mean=278)	
Forms or things such as bills, invoices and budgets	294
How often do you use quantitative skills in your main job?	
Quantitative Literacy (group mean=290)	
Estimates of technical specifications	305*
Measure or estimate the size and weight of objects	291
Calculate prices, costs and budgets	296

*Results are based on a sample size of less than 30 and should be interpreted with caution as they may not be representative of the actual population.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Table 10

Target Group: Self-rating on Literacy Limitations
(To what extent are these skills a limitation to your job opportunities?)

	Reading skills	Writing skills	Mathematics skills
Greatly limiting	13	21	14
Somewhat limiting	96	129	128
Not at all limiting	801	760	768
Total respondents	910*	910*	910*

*Excludes non-respondents.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Motivation to Learn

The Higher Literacy Group was nearly twice as likely as the Target Group to have participated in continuing education and training opportunities in the previous 12 months. (See Table 11.) This may be partly because 40 per cent of the Target Group work for very small organizations (less than 20 employees) that train less. This finding matches previous research, which shows that people with higher skills and higher levels of formal education tend to participate in education and training opportunities more often.⁶ Also, individuals in the Higher Literacy Group may be employed in organizations that offer more education and training opportunities.

Although fewer Target Group respondents take part in education or training, about 27 per cent wanted to take career or job-related training but did not. (See Table 11.) This percentage is lower than that for the Higher Literacy Group (at 37 per cent), but shows that

Table 11
Participation in Training, Target versus Higher Literacy Group
(In the past 12 months, have you taken any continuing education and training?)

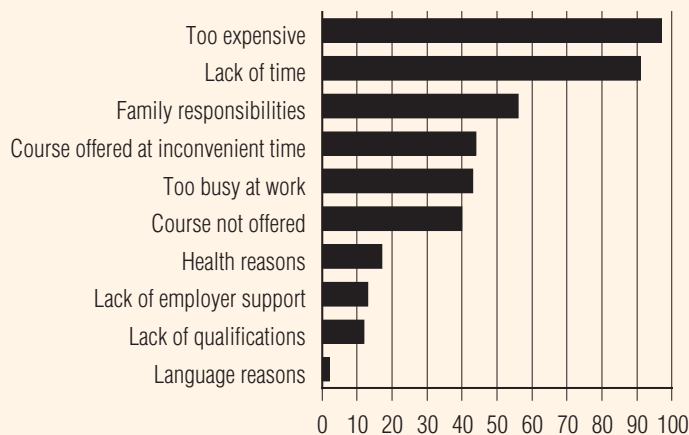
	Target Group	Higher Literacy Group
Yes	502	706
No	798	332
Total respondents	1,559*	1,072*

*Excludes non-respondents.
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

many individuals in the Target Group have a real interest in improving their literacy and job-related skills. Interestingly, results of the Conference Board's *Learning and Development Outlook Survey* (2005) indicate that virtually all of the responding organizations (97 per cent) offered training to full-time staff.⁷ Increased awareness and understanding of the reasons why individuals do not take part in available training opportunities would help employers refine their training investments and maximize participation rates.

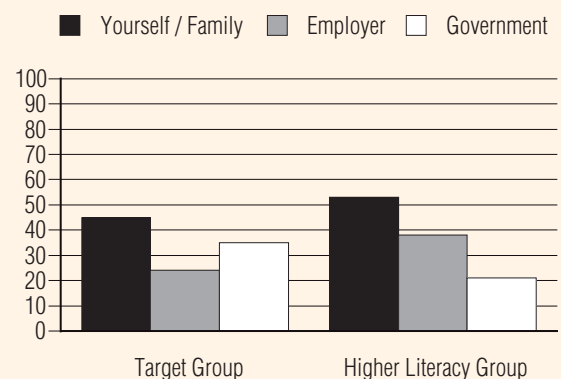
Financial considerations topped the list of respondents' reasons for not taking part in available job-related training. (See Chart 8.) However, the data does not indicate whether the financial concerns were on the part of the company or the individual. Organizations, rather than individuals, may have found the costs of providing education and training prohibitive. Chart 9 shows the breakdown of financial support for those who took training. The chart looks at the three most common sources of financial support—individuals or family, employers and government. The Higher Literacy Group is more likely than the Target Group to pay for training themselves or to have their employers pay for their training; the Target Group is more likely to receive financial support from the government for their training. Of note, however, is that individuals in the Higher Literacy Group are more likely to be in the top 60 per cent of earners than those in the Target Literacy Group. This suggests that individuals in the Higher Literacy Group are more likely to be able to pay for training themselves.⁸

Chart 8
Target Group's Top Reasons for Not Taking Part in Literacy Training
(per cent, n= 349)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Chart 9
Source of Financial Support for Training, Target versus Higher Literacy Group
(per cent)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

The other major reason cited by individuals in the Target Group for not taking job-related training was a lack of time (91 per cent of Target Group respondents). One might conclude that lack of time might be due to family responsibilities or being too busy at work, as these reasons were selected by a large proportion of Target Group respondents (56 per cent and 43 per cent respectively). It is interesting to note, however, that almost 50 per cent of the Target Group respondents reported spending more than two hours per day watching television. (See Chart 11.)

LITERACY OUTSIDE OF WORK

Daily life activities, such as reading a book or writing a letter to a family member, can improve literacy skills. The everyday life activities of respondents were analyzed in this research study using a limited set of measures from a broad range of possibilities. They included reading, writing, watching television and the incidence of

literacy materials in the household. In general, the Higher Literacy Group reads and writes more often and watches television less often than the Target Group.

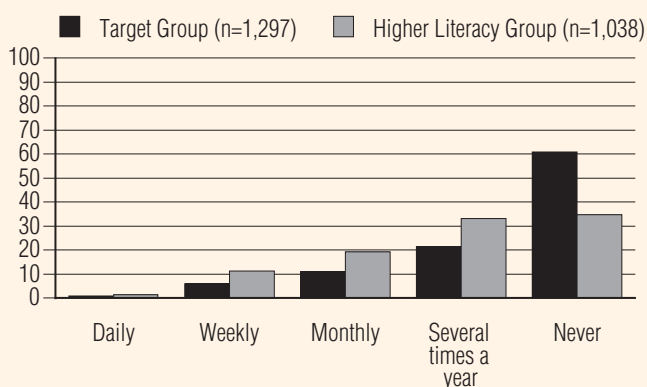
Reading

Daily literacy activities, such as reading the newspaper, are important to maintaining and developing literacy skills, and may ameliorate lower levels of formal education. Chart 10 show the frequency with which respondents engage in daily activities—reading books, reading newspapers, writing and using the public library—that could improve literacy skills.

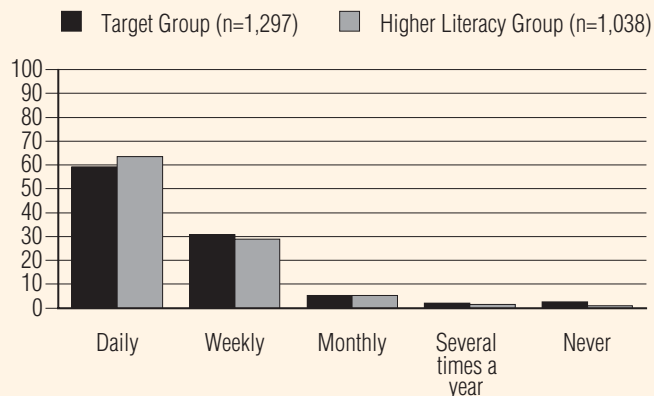
Reading newspapers is the only activity where the two groups show similar results. In the remaining three activities, the Target Group participates less often than the Higher Literacy Group. As well, “never” was the top choice for the Target Group when asked how often

Chart 10
Frequency of Literate Behaviours, Target versus Higher Literacy Group
(per cent)

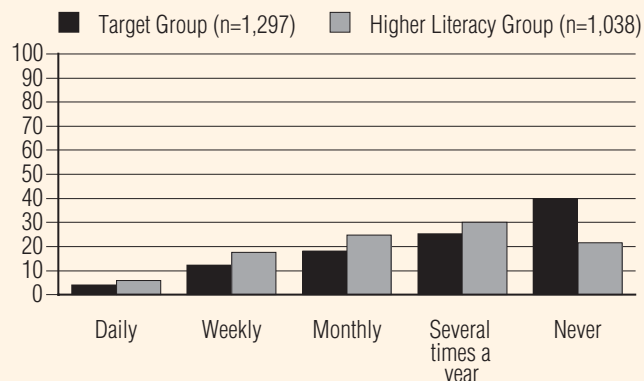
Use of Public Library



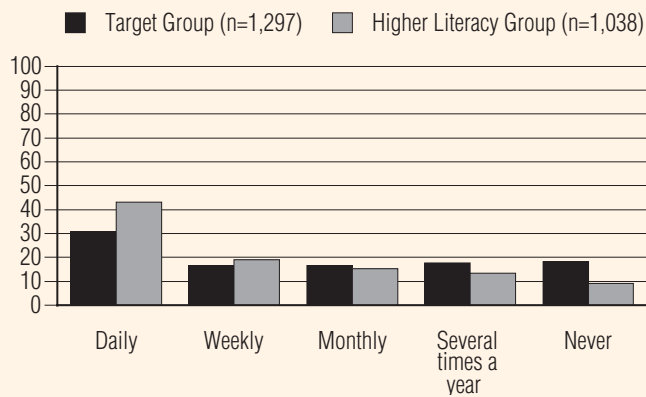
Reading Newspapers



Writing Something Greater than One Page

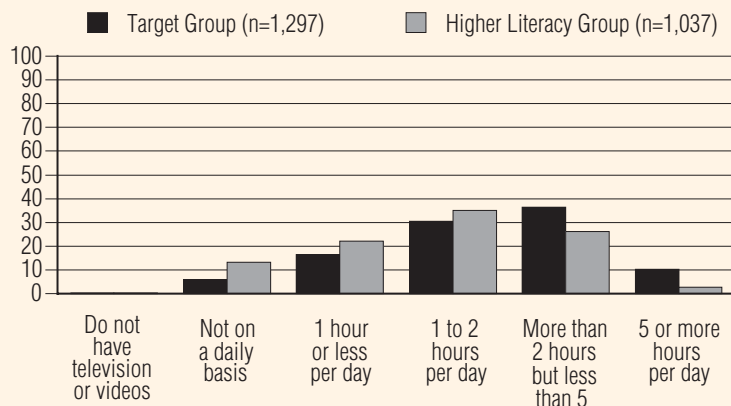


Reading Books



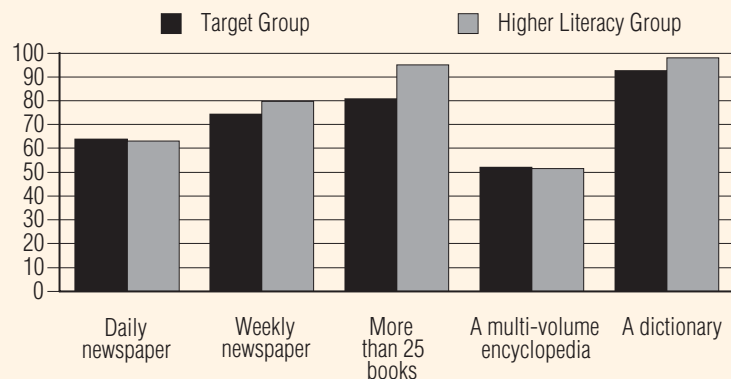
Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Chart 11
TV and Video Viewing Habits, Target versus Higher Literacy Group
(per cent)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

Chart 12
Presence of Literacy Items in Household, Target versus Higher Literacy Group
(per cent)



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.

they use the public library (61 per cent) or write something greater than one page (40 per cent). This low level of participation in daily literacy-related activities may reinforce the effects of lower levels of education.

Time Spent Watching Television and Videos

Television is common in almost all households surveyed: less than 0.6 per cent of both groups indicated that they do not have a television or videos. However, the time spent watching television or videos varies greatly between the Target and Higher Literacy groups. (See Chart 11.) In fact, 47 per cent of the Target Group spends more than two hours per day in front of the TV, compared with 29 per cent of the Higher Literacy Group. The biggest percentage difference is in the “five or more hours per day” category. The Target Group is 4.6 times more likely to watch TV or videos five or more hours a day than the Higher Literacy Group.

To combat the erosion of literacy skills resulting from daily activities that do not support literacy development, perhaps literacy skills could be more strongly incorporated into television programming. Programming that actively engages viewers by requiring them to digest written information and interact would be especially beneficial. Encouraging individuals to watch video books and educational shows or to take courses offered on television may help to provide convenient, interesting educational opportunities.

Literacy Items in the Household

There is little difference between the two groups on the incidence of reading materials found in the household. (See Chart 12.) The largest variation is for books, which are more likely to exist in volumes of greater than 25 in the Higher Literacy Group. However, the presence of reading or literacy items in households does not necessarily indicate how often they are used and actually read.

- 1 Valerie Peters, *Working and Training: First Results of the 2003 Adult Education and Training Survey* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada and Human Resources and Skills Development, 2004), p. 12.
- 2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000), p. 138.
- 3 Peters, *Working and Training*, p. 15.
- 4 Michael Bloom, Brenda Laffleur, Marie Burrows and Robert Squires, *The Economic Benefits of Improving Literacy Skills in the Workplace* (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 1997), pp. 13–15; Michael Bloom and Brenda Laffleur, *Turning Skills into Profit* (New York: The Conference Board, 1999), p. 11.

- 5 Bloom and Laffleur, *Turning Skills into Profit*.
- 6 Peters, *Working and Training*, p. 9; Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, *Benchmarking Adult Literacy in North America: An International Comparative Study* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, 2001), p. 27.
- 7 R. Owen Parker and Janice Cooney, *Learning and Development Outlook 2005: Moving Beyond the Plateau—Time to Leverage Learning Investment* (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 2005), p. 12.
- 8 OECD and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age*, pp. 173–174.

Solutions and Ideas for Action

The results of the analysis of the Target Group data suggest several strategies for taking action to help move these Canadians beyond the 300 level and well into the level 3 category of IALS literacy scores. IALS level 3 is considered a suitable minimum for coping with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society.¹ This level of competency is equivalent to a “job standard” of literacy skills. Employers may consider adopting one or more of the strategies explored below to help employees improve their literacy skills.²

STRATEGY ONE: IMPROVE ACCESS TO TRAINING

Improving access is a key to raising participation levels in literacy training programs. The best programs offered through the workplace are convenient for employees and are often at least partially sponsored by the employer. An effective alternative is a community-based learning program offered through a local literacy agency, a community learning organization, the continuing education department of a public school board or community college, or any other local learning institution.

WORKPLACE LITERACY PROGRAMS

Many employers offer programs that target literacy skills upgrading for employees. Since individuals in the Target Group do not generally see themselves as needing literacy upgrading, they are unlikely to seek out these programs on their own. However, employers can present workplace literacy initiatives as programs designed to build essential workplace skills, such as communication and teamwork. This marketing strategy can make literacy programs appear more germane to employees who might otherwise consider them irrelevant to their needs and abilities. By making constructive use of the Target Group’s existing literacy skills, programs that integrate literacy skills upgrading with other work-related issues are attractive to potential participants and highly effective.³

Individuals in the Target Group tend to work for very small organizations that generally do not offer workplace training. They also participate less often in continuing education and workplace training programs than individuals in the Higher Literacy Group. They are less likely to be in jobs that demand a high use of literacy skills and are therefore less likely to have the opportunity to practise and refresh their existing literacy skills. Their job situation also limits their opportunities for exploring the value of becoming more literate and discovering their own personal literacy shortcomings. While large organizations have access to training budgets and in-house training specialists, small businesses need to explore partnerships with external training providers and program designers to provide literacy upgrading opportunities for their employees.⁴

Employers can present workplace literacy initiatives as programs designed to build essential workplace skills, such as communication and teamwork.

COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Another key source of literacy training is community-based learning programs. Skills upgrading programs offered through community agencies and organizations are an important resource for unemployed individuals and for those whose employers do not offer literacy upgrading programs through the workplace. Community learning programs may be offered through various local institutions. Some may be dedicated literacy agencies such as adult continuing education programs, while others may be more informal and offered through a local library, church or community centre. Their convenience encourages participation.

For employees in remote or rural locations, community-based programs offer an alternative or enhancement to workplace learning programs. Employees who work seasonally, or in locations that are remote from their

home communities, can supplement their workplace training efforts with community learning programs and instructors. Linking workplace and community learning programs allows individuals who face the demands of frequent travel to continue their literacy skills enhancement without interruption.

Community-based programs can provide literacy training for people who are unemployed, live in rural or remote areas, or don't have programs at work.

STRATEGY TWO: TAKE A HOLISTIC VIEW

Another strategy for raising literacy skills is to take a holistic approach—using training to develop the “whole person” rather than just a segmented set of skills. “Learner-centredness in which content is relevant to program participants’ goals and learning styles . . . [is] a key principle [of good learning practice].”⁵ Both employers and community learning program providers can increase individuals’ interest in participating in skills training by encouraging overall self-improvement. They can also provide a powerful incentive by clearly articulating the message that skills upgrading and training increase personal and career success.⁶

STRATEGY THREE: CREATE JOBS THAT USE LITERACY SKILLS

Just like muscles, skills need to be used to be retained. Employers can help their employees maintain and upgrade their literacy skills by creating jobs that require them to use the skills they already have. A big part of a full-time employee’s day is spent at work; hence, “. . . the workplace is a factor in literacy acquisition and maintenance . . . Often these two aspects of workplace literacy reinforce each other: Skills learned in schools facilitate engaging more frequently in more complex activities in the workplace that in turn build skills.”⁷ Many existing jobs involve tasks that could be adapted to include the use of literacy skills, such as using a calendar to track maintenance schedules in a production operation. Integrating literacy skills into daily job-related tasks helps employees improve their literacy skills and their self-confidence. They become comfortable making decisions. They increase their problem-solving abilities and their capacity to engage successfully in more advanced training.⁸

STRATEGY FOUR: FOCUS ON THE “NEARLY THERE”

The IALS data show that a large proportion of Target Group respondents score just under 300 for each type of literacy. Table 9 shows the estimated number of Canadians who fall between 280 and 300 for each type of literacy.

These individuals are already so close to the “job standard” level that they may require only modest targeted interventions to raise their literacy levels over the 300 mark. For employers who are looking to gain the most “bang for their training buck,” focusing literacy training investments on these individuals would likely result in the greatest improvements in the shortest time. Although this makes clear sense on a national scale, developing a practical strategy to help employers and governments identify and target these individuals remains a challenge.

Integrating literacy skills into daily job-related tasks helps employees improve their literacy skills and their self-confidence.

STRATEGY FIVE: ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS TO STAY IN SCHOOL

The majority of individuals with average literacy scores of more than 300 have some post-secondary education. In addition, senior high school graduates score fairly close to the desired “job standard” level. Governments, in particular, have a leadership role to play in stepping up efforts (such as the Stay-in-School government initiative launched in the early 1990s) to encourage early school leavers to stay and complete high school. The data indicate that increasing the number of individuals who complete secondary education also increases the number of individuals reaching level 3 and the overall literacy level of the population. Since graduation rates in Ontario and elsewhere appear to be declining, initiatives to keep students in school are becoming more important once again. Employers could play a supporting role by continuing to collaborate with schools in business-education partnerships, marketing the value of trades training and maintaining recruitment standards that include a minimum educational requirement.

- 1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey* (Paris and Ottawa: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000), p. ix.
- 2 A number of strategies are explored, giving employers a range of options that they can tailor to fit their industry sector, competitive environment, available resources and geographic location.
- 3 For examples of how these strategies have been successfully integrated into Canadian workplaces, please see The Conference Board of Canada's published case studies at www.conferenceboard.ca/education/best-practices/default.htm.
- 4 For examples of Canadian business-education partnerships, please see The Conference Board of Canada's published case studies at www.conferenceboard.ca/education/best-practices/default.htm.
- 5 Sue Folinsbee, *Literacy and the Canadian Workforce* (Ottawa: Movement for Canadian Literacy, 2001).
- 6 Michael Bloom and Brenda Lafleur, *Turning Skills into Profit: Economic Benefits of Workplace Education Programs* (New York: The Conference Board, 1999).
- 7 Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, *Benchmarking Adult Literacy in North America: An International Comparative Study* (Statistics Canada and HRDC, 2001), p. 27.
- 8 Michael Bloom, Brenda Lafleur, Marie Burrows and Robert Squires, *The Economic Benefits of Improving Literacy Skills in the Workplace* (Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 1997), pp. 13–15.

Conclusion

NEXT STEPS

It is clear that efforts to improve employees' literacy and basic skills result in a range of hard and soft benefits for the individuals who take part in training, their employers, unions and the community at large. Programs deliver dividends to the economic, psychological, social and cultural environments in which employees live and work. Not only are improved literacy skills beneficial to all parties, but they are also critical for business success. While literacy training for employees may not be the first line of business for most organizations, employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of literacy skills to survival in a competitive global economy. In the coming years, literacy training is likely to become a more important facet of the Canadian workplace, as literacy will become ever more critical to success in the burgeoning information age.

Employers are increasingly recognizing the importance of literacy skills to survival in a competitive global economy.

Raising employers' awareness of the benefits of improving literacy skills will create a demand for information, expert advice and training resources. A clear business case for literacy will be an important factor in promoting employee literacy skills upgrading to employers. Addressing literacy skills training in a businesslike

fashion—with goals, measurement methods and a commitment to success—will allow employers to maximize the return on their training investment. In order for Canada to remain globally competitive, employers and governments must understand that committing resources to developing the literacy skills of the Canadian workforce is an investment, not just an expense.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

This report assists employers and their learning partners target employees with marginal literacy skills as excellent potential candidates for literacy training. Additional publications from this research project, *Securing Literacy's Potential*, include best practice models of literacy training in the workplace. Presented as case studies, these models profile success stories from a range of organizations representing a variety of sectors of the Canadian economy. A final summary report of the research, *Profiting from Literacy: Creating a Sustainable Workplace Literacy Program*, presents a list of key success factors that will help employers and their learning partners design, develop, operate and evaluate their workplace literacy programs. In addition, the final report offers ideas for action on each of the key success factors for employers operating small, medium-sized and large organizations.

Visit www.conferenceboard.ca/education to download free copies of all reports from the Securing Literacy's Potential research project.

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