



# **Addressing Literacy in the Northwest Territories: Government Initiatives to Improve Staff Training in Community Libraries**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research project addresses concerns by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) related to low literacy levels in their jurisdiction. To develop a better understanding of the problem, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) in the GNWT recently held regional consultations to gather feedback on the problem and what direction the government should take (GNWT, “Historic signing”, n.d.). Those consulted saw a strong link between literacy and libraries yet there were concerns raised about the services and capacity of GNWT’s libraries to affect literacy levels. There were numerous initiatives that were developed after these consultations to make improvements based on concerns voiced by community members, and specifically to the literacy programming offered by libraries. Staff in ECE determined that further research was the first step that needed to be taken to meet the initiatives related to literacy programming.

The client for this research project is Janet Grinsted, the Director in ECE responsible for Public Library Services. In discussion with the client, and in support of these initiatives related to improving literacy levels through greater investment in the library system in GNWT, this project’s primary objective was to develop recommendations to improve training for library workers engaged or who want to be engaged in literacy programming. The research question that was addressed in this project is therefore, “How can training for library managers be changed to improve literacy programming in libraries in the Northwest Territories?” Further, given the high number of Aboriginal people living in GNWT and the preferences of the client, this project focused specifically on providing literacy services to young Aboriginal people at the same time recognizing that community libraries provide services to both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals of varying ages.

A qualitative research approach was deemed to be the most appropriate methodological approach given the small size of the population being researched and given that the project was interested in receiving interpretive information from each of the interview participants to develop a better understanding of training in each of the communities.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from public libraries to identify the similarities and differences amongst the participants. The interviews were augmented by a literature review, an environmental scan, and a literacy program analysis to compile information concerning literacy programming and training in public libraries. Aboriginal literacy issues were researched as part of the literature review and research into Canadian literacy in general was conducted to put it into context. The literature review also looked at training for literacy programming in rural and remote libraries. This search was widened to encompass all training in rural and remote libraries when the first search was unsuccessful.

The environmental scan, or what can be also be called a current state analysis, reviewed existing literacy programming in the NWT, to identify the current services being offered and to determine what lessons could be learned regarding what was working and what was not working specific to training and programming. Finally, the literacy program analysis

broadened this search to all of North America to see if anything could be learned from literacy programming and training in a wider geographic area.

To obtain feedback from public libraries, representatives from each library were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. The purpose of these interviews was to determine what kinds of literacy programming were being offered by public libraries and to gather information related to past and preferred future training. A total of fourteen interviews were conducted, two in person and twelve over the telephone. Thirteen of the participants were library managers, and one was a library staff member. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then organized according to questions. To ensure anonymity of participants, answers were compiled according to each question and not compared by interviewee or community and accordingly, all personal identifiers were removed in the analysis.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings in this report, the following six recommendations were developed to improve training for library managers to improve literacy training in the NWT and to provide recommendations for further research.

### *1. Monitor developments in Aboriginal literacy research and incorporate into training for literacy programming in libraries*

Developments in Aboriginal literacy research could have profound effects on literacy programming in Aboriginal communities. The research thus far demonstrates the importance of tailoring programming to the community and following traditional Aboriginal learning techniques where possible. Any training developed by PLS regarding literacy programming will have to take this into account. Based primarily on the results of the literature review and the experience of other jurisdictions, it is recommended that training integrated flexibility into program outlines and demonstrate how Aboriginal learning techniques can be incorporated.

These recommendations may change as the research in this area matures. It is recommended that NWT Public Library Services continue to follow the developments in this research and communicate them to public library managers on a regular basis through existing in-person workshops and library visits. When the research is further along, it will be important for NWT Public Library Services to communicate specific program ideas to library managers, include those ideas in training, and discuss policy and program development opportunities and challenges.

### *2. Develop effective evaluation practices, which can be used to assist librarians in future program developments.*

In this study, 23 distinct literacy programs in libraries were reported during interviews. The reported literacy programs included nine main categories: family literacy programs, afterschool programs, computer programs, author visits, food programs, movie programs, music programs, English as a Second or Other Language programs, and Family Literacy

day events. It is recommended that NWT Public Library Services conducts evaluations of these programs on a regular basis and uses this information to develop training for library managers on how to develop these literacy programs in areas where such programs do not exist. This assumes that a program will only be implemented if there is sufficient evidence that the goals or outcomes of the program are improving literacy rates for those who participate.

The current evaluations use informal output and outcome measures such as attendance and audience feedback to evaluate the success of programs. It is recommended that NWT Public Library Services develops training that includes other ways to evaluate programming so that library managers have more skills and information at their disposal to evaluate and then develop further evidence-based programming. For this training to be most effective, it is recommended that evaluation models be developed for each of the nine reported literacy programs to be communicated for library staff using a logic model.

*3. Develop training concerning materials designed for library users with varied literacy levels.*

The majority of interview respondents expressed that literacy programming is important in their communities, and several indicated that they felt this way due to low literacy levels in their community; however, most had difficulty identifying library resources designed for library users with differing literacy levels as well as methods to attract users to these resources.

Training should be developed to address this knowledge gap. This training should include information about what specialized resources are available, as well as how to introduce these resources to library customers. As well, it is recommended that any new literacy resources that are provided to public libraries are accompanied by appropriate training resources in the use and promotion of that material.

*4. Develop training materials designed for library users with varied literacy levels.*

The majority of interview respondents expressed that literacy programming is important in their communities, and several indicated that they felt this way due to low literacy levels in their community. While deemed to be important, most interviewees had difficulty identifying library resources designed for library users with different literacy levels and had little knowledge about the different methods that could be used to attract users to these resources. Training should be developed to address this knowledge gap. It is also recommended that new literacy resources that are provided to public libraries are accompanied by appropriate training in the use and promotion of literacy resources.

*4. Continue offering training opportunities that allow library managers to communicate their programming methods and ideas.*

According to those interviewed, some of the libraries are offering a great variety of literacy programming in the NWT and the methods they use are varied as well. Some include

refreshments as incentives, some apply for grants, and they use a variety of ways to develop new programming. Findings from the interviews indicated that there was interest in learning more about grant applications and discussing program ideas.

It is recommended that PLS investigates effective ways to facilitate information sharing between public libraries. This may include planning opportunities for library managers to discuss innovative and effective programming methods and ideas in future training sessions. Another method could be the development of a web-based communication tool such as a best practises portal to encourage this communication outside meetings.

##### *5. Develop remote introductory level training for library managers in their first year of employment.*

The majority of interviewed library workers had been in their position for less than one year and not surprisingly, respondents stated there was a need for introductory library training. Introductory training would include addressing such subjects as introduction to library work, to circulation systems, to general library operations, and to local library operations. Once library workers are comfortable with the basics of library operations, they will be able to focus on more difficult tasks such as improving literacy programming and support to their community.

Most respondents would prefer that this training takes place in person; however, the reality of the NWT geography may mean that some sort of remote training is more feasible as an immediate option for new staff. Interview results demonstrated that a form of remote training is a possible option in many locations, although not in all locations. In locations where staff do not have the time to work on remote training, training will have to occur during annual in-person workshops.

Given that the model for training currently followed by NWT Public Library Services is in-person workshops in two out of every three years, in addition to in-person training visits, this need for introductory training may not be being fulfilled as quickly as library managers would like, as demonstrated by one response that training would have been preferred closer to the person's hire date. The creation of some form of introductory remote training may help meet this need. Once library workers are able to perform the basic tasks of their position, they will be able to work on more complex undertakings such as literacy programming.

##### *6. Further research*

Further research in this area should examine the effectiveness of any training for literacy programming that is provided. This could include interviews as well as reports on what literacy programming is developed after training. Other research should look into the effectiveness of different types of literacy programming with relation to the Aboriginal communities that it is provided in.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a fundamental skill and one that affects all aspects of a society. According to Statistics Canada, the literacy skill of a population affects the economic health of a nation in numerous ways (2008, Why is literacy important?). Global competition, technological changes and the changing nature of the workplace in Canada means that employment requires a rising level of education and skill and the economic success of a nation depends on a population that is literate and educated (Statistics Canada, Why is literacy important?). Recent research has raised concern on whether the Canadian work force is adequately educated. For example, according to the Conference Board of Canada (2012), fully one quarter of Canada's work force is classified as marginally literate and is a significant concern to their employers (para. 12).

This research project addresses concerns by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) related to low literacy levels in their jurisdiction. In the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey reported in 2003, Statistics Canada (NWT Literacy Council, n.d., The International Adult, p.8) found that more than 4 out of 10 (42%) people between the ages of 16-65 in the Northwest Territories face literacy challenges in areas such as prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy and problem-solving . Aboriginal people who live in the Northwest Territories scored an even lower rate of literacy than the rest of the population, especially on the prose literacy scale, which was a rate of 69% (NWT Literacy Council, n.d., The International Adult, p.10).

To develop a better understanding of the problem, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) in the GNWT recently held regional consultations to gather feedback on the problem and what direction the government should take (GNWT, “Historic signing”, n.d.). Those consulted saw a strong link between literacy and libraries. This perceived link between literacy and libraries is supported by research demonstrating that access to reading materials as well as opportunity for reading are both necessary in order to improve literacy skills (Shannon, 2004, p.268) In the remote communities in the NWT, community libraries provide all community members with access to reading materials. There were numerous initiatives that were developed after these consultations to make improvements based on concerns voiced by community members, and specifically to the literacy programming offered by libraries. Staff in ECE determined that further research was the first step that needed to be taken to meet the initiatives related to literacy programming.

In support of these initiatives related to improving literacy levels through greater investment in the library system in GNWT, this project's primary objective is to develop recommendations to improve training for library workers engaged or who want to be engaged in literacy programming. Further, given the high number of Aboriginal people living in GNWT and the preferences of the client, this project focuses specifically on providing literacy services to young Aboriginal people at the same time recognizing that community libraries provide services to both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals of varying ages. The project will address the needs of both groups as related to library training needs.

## 1.1 Background

### *1.1.1 Public Libraries*

To develop a better understanding of the library system in the GNWT and the area of focus for this project, it is important to describe the different types of libraries that exist. There are four main types of libraries: public, academic, special and school libraries (American Library Association, 2012). These library types are distinguished by the clientele served: public libraries serve the general public; academic libraries serve a college or university community; special libraries serve specialized communities such as a business; while school libraries serve school communities. This research project is concerned with public libraries in the NWT, which are also referred to as community libraries.

Public libraries in the NWT are designated as such by the Minister of the Department of ECE in accordance with the Public Library Act of 2010 (Public Library Act, 2010). The library authorities in each community are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the library, which can be supported by the Minister or Minister's designate (Public Library Act, 2010, p.2). According to the Public Library Act, users of a public library are entitled to borrow library materials and use reference and information services at no cost (Public Library Act, 2010, p.2).

Public Library Services (PLS) is the unit in ECE designated to support public libraries. PLS supports public libraries through direct financial contributions, administration of an integrated library system, interlibrary loan management, new materials, and training and support for library staff (NWT PLS, 2011, p.2). As a part of ECE, PLS participates in a number of department initiatives. The key initiative related to this research project is the Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan (ASAP) discussed in more detail in Section 1.1.2.

When researching topics related to public libraries, it is important to recognize that public libraries fall into two main categories, those serving smaller rural or remote communities and those serving large urban populations. Urban public libraries consist of multiple branches run by trained staff, while rural libraries consist of single libraries and staff with little training (Crawford, 2011, pp. 54-56). Rural public libraries in Canada generally suffer from lower funding rates and higher costs than urban public libraries (Amirault, 2003, p.148). While urban public libraries serving populations greater than 100,000, have banded together in national organization called the Canadian Urban Libraries Council [CULC] (CULC, n.d.), and are working to increase public library research in Canada, rural public libraries do not have access to similar resources or associations.

Most of the public libraries in the NWT can be considered small rural libraries. Of the twenty public libraries in the NWT, seventeen serve populations of less than three thousand (NWT Public Library Services, n.d., Community Libraries in; ECE, "2011-12", n.d., p.25). All NWT communities could be considered remote, with the majority accessible primarily by air. These libraries are therefore considered rural or remote public libraries, similar to small libraries across Northern Canada and quite different than larger, urban libraries in terms of size, resources and services offered.

### *1.1.2 Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan*

As noted earlier, a primary area of focus for this project is to address the lower levels of literacy amongst the Aboriginal youth population, which is guided by earlier government initiatives to identify the barriers and solutions concerning literacy. For example, NWT statistics show a considerable educational achievement gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. A recent government study found that in grade 3, fifty-five percent of Aboriginal students achieve an acceptable standard on the English Alberta Achievement Tests, while seventy-five percent of non-Aboriginal students achieved that standard (GNWT, 2009, pp.1-2). In 2009, forty-four percent of Aboriginal students graduated high school while 70% of non-Aboriginal students graduated (ECE, "Community Literacy", n.d., p. 34).

The Minister of ECE decided that the bridging of the high school completion gap was a focus of ECE (ECE, Aug. 2011, p.7). The first step was to consult with NWT communities to evaluate the cause of the education gap and potential solutions. Over a period of two years, a series of regional consultation meetings were held. In 2010-2011, almost four hundred community members, educators and local leaders met with Ministry officials to discuss the problem and possible solutions (GNWT, "Historic signing", n.d.). The talks led to two documents, the ASAP, a departmental plan for the future, and the Education Partnership Declaration (EDP), a partnership agreement in principle between the GNWT and other Aboriginal organizations supporting the ASAP. The EDP has been agreed to and was signed in July 2011 by the National Dene Chief, the Dene Grand Chiefs, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Northwest Territories Métis Nation, the Chairs of all Education Authorities, Aurora College and Minister Jackson Lafferty (Cano, 2012, p.3). As this second document is an agreement in principle, it does not make specific recommendations related to literacy programming.

The first of these documents, the ASAP consists of four main priorities: Early Childhood Development and Child Care, Student and Family Support, Aboriginal Language Curriculum and Resource Development, and Literacy (ECE, Aug. 2011, p.17). Priority 4, which is Literacy, is made up of nine action items related to school-public libraries, based on a number of comments during consultations about the importance of libraries to literacy and education (ECE, Aug. 2011, p. 29). Specific to this project, the ASAP contains two action items relevant to community libraries, and it is the second of these action items that helped determine the focus of this research project. This action item is "Provide community libraries with the necessary resources to expand their literacy programming" (ECE, Aug. 2011, p.29).

According to the ASAP (ECE, Aug. 2011, p.7), bridging the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students could bring a total benefit of \$1.9 billion over twenty years to the economy of the NWT. This benefit includes both estimated increased tax revenue and decreased social services expenses expected with increased education. Even without this benefit, the GNWT seeks to improve education for Aboriginal students to ensure an educated and representative workforce in NWT communities. This is especially important because Aboriginal youth under the age of twenty-five comprise 61% of the

NWT population (ECE, Aug. 2011, p.4). The increased educational success of Aboriginal youth is essential to the economic and cultural future of the NWT.

## **1.2 Project Client, Objectives and Rationale**

The client for this research project is Janet Grinsted, the Director in ECE responsible for Public Library Services. It is this Director's responsibility to ensure that PLS meets the relevant action items of the ASAP. In discussion with the client, it was decided that this project will focus on the second action item, which is related to literacy programming. Improvements to literacy programming are expected to positively affect literacy rates in the NWT, which is why the client is interested in this action item. Although Aboriginal students are the focus of the ASAP, community libraries provide services to entire communities, not just Aboriginal students. It was therefore important to look at literacy programming in libraries in general in this project, and not just related to Aboriginal students; however, the client requested that the literature search include any research specifically related to Aboriginal literacy as well.

According to the client, PLS is expected to assist libraries with literacy programming without additional funding. This limited the ability of PLS to provide additional resources such as funding, books or craft materials that libraries could use to develop or improve literacy programming. During the initial discussion, the client determined that the most appropriate way to meet this action item was for PLS to provide improved literacy program training to the community libraries. Public Library Services currently provides onsite and regional training, but there is not any training on literacy programming. Due to the remote nature of communities and the costs of travel, training consists of a territorial meeting once every three years, a regional meeting once every three years and onsite visits at least once every three years.. The client determined that it would be beneficial to study how to improve training to better support literacy programming in communities. This became the objective of this research project. The expectation was that improved literacy training will cause improvements to the quality of literacy programming which will then positively affect literacy rates.

For the purposes of this project, literacy programming describes all programming designed to improve the literacy of program participants. This may include the following initiatives: early literacy, such as children's story times; family literacy, which includes materials for all ages such as a family cooking class; computer literacy, which demonstrates how to use computers; and adult literacy, which might include learning how to read. This would not include information literacy, which relates to teaching individuals how to locate and interpret information.

### **1.3 Organization of Report**

This remainder of this report is organized in the following way:

Section two outlines the methodology used in this research project.

Section three briefly outlines the conceptual and theoretical framework used in this research project and presents some of the basic assumptions in this report to provide context.

Section four is a literature review that focuses on providing a critical analysis of the literature written relevant to the topic of this paper. It is sub-divided into two sections with the first section addressing how literacy is studied, including research into Aboriginal literacy, and the other section examining research relevant to training in rural and remote libraries.

Section five includes an environmental scan and a literacy program analysis. The environmental scan looks specifically at existing literacy training in the NWT and related training for practitioners, while the literacy program analysis examines literacy programs offered by public libraries in other jurisdictions.

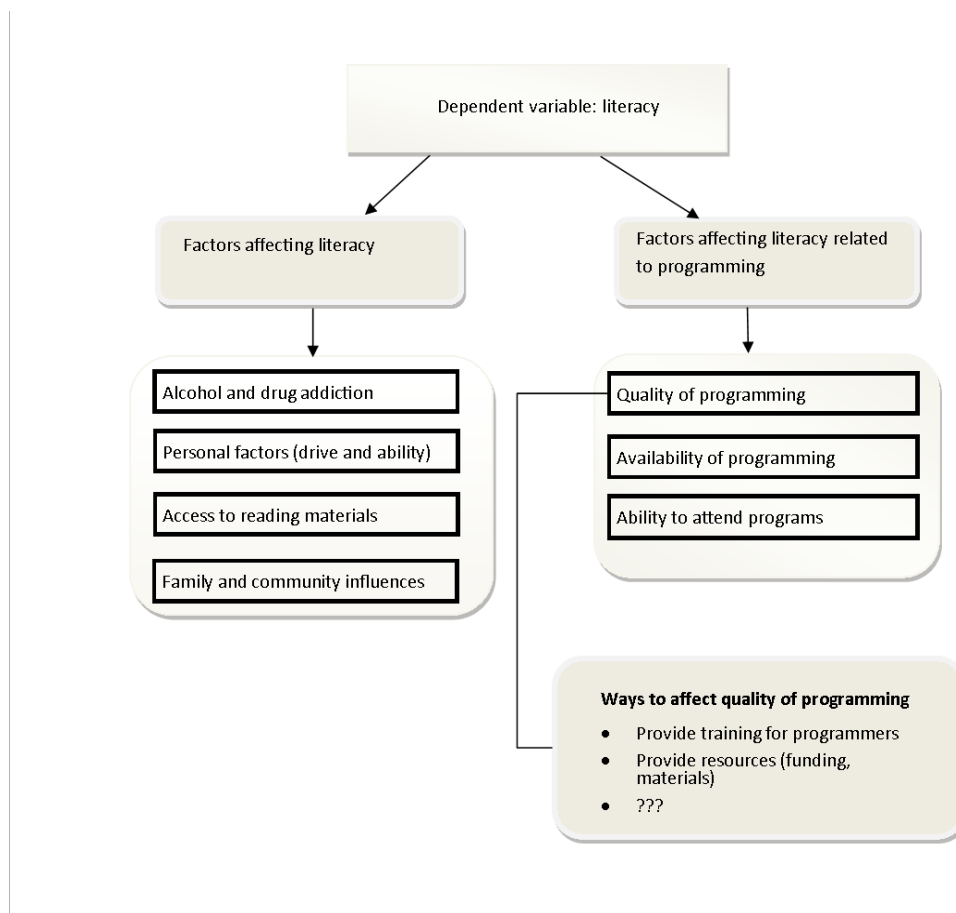
Section six presents a summary of results from interviews with fourteen public library representatives. The results are separated into four sections based on the interview questions and that also gives information about the interview participants, information about training experiences, information about capacity, and information about literacy.

Section seven is a discussion and analysis of the findings of the research conducted in this report. This includes an analysis and a synthesis of the findings in the literature review, the environmental scan, literacy program analysis, and the interview results. This section brings together these results and discusses them within the context of the research questions in this report.

Section eight builds on the previous sections and makes conclusions and recommendations related to ways in which the client may be able to improve training for library managers in the GNWT.

## 2.0 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this project, the client was interested in positively affecting literacy rates in the NWT. There are many factors that may affect literacy rates including family and community influence, drug and alcohol addiction, availability of and ability to attend programs (transport, other obligations), quality of literacy programming or education, personal drive and personal ability (MacLean, 2008, p.15) as well as access to reading materials (Shannon, 2004, p.268). The factors that are related to programming include quality of, availability of and ability to attend programming as shown by Figure 1. NWTPLS, as described earlier, funds and supports libraries and is able to best affect programming through affecting the quality of programming. As the client determined that there would be no additional resources provided, the best way to affect the quality of programming is through the provision of training. This project considered this option as well as the possibility that there were other ways to positively affect the quality of programming that could be determined through research. This is indicated by the “???” in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Literacy Factors**

Following the conceptual framework described in the previous paragraph, the methodology was designed to explore research on literacy including existing literacy and library

programming as well as training for both remote libraries and literacy programming. As described in the next section, this methodology includes a literature review, environmental scan, literacy program analysis and interviews.

This research project uses a theoretical framework shared by many library research studies. This framework theorizes that with increased training, public library managers will offer more frequent and better quality literacy programming, and that access to more frequent and better quality literacy programming will improve literacy in the general population of the NWT (Lai, 2011; “Libraries and Literacy”, 2012; Oliver, 2007). While training is one factor that may affect the ability of public library managers to provide literacy programming, other factors may include personal ability and motivation, support from supervisors, and opportunity to apply training (Allan, 2012, p.16). This project will look at identifying potential training improvements only.

The literature review identified that literacy programming within Aboriginal communities should be community and culturally specific to be most effective (Antone, Gamlin, & Provost-Turchetti., 2003, p.21). The research in this area is fairly recent, but important to consider given the population breakdown in the NWT. According to Mestre (2010), training for library workers in cultural competences is essential to ensure that library workers are able to interact and communicate with those from different cultural backgrounds (p.11). This framework assumes that there will be ways to alter traditional print-based literacy programs to be more effective within Aboriginal communities that will be developed as the research in this area continues.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

This research project investigates ways to advance literacy programming offered by NWT public libraries by improving the training that PLS provides to library workers. A qualitative research approach was deemed to be the most appropriate methodological approach given the small size of the population being researched and given that the project was interested in receiving interpretive information from each of the interview participants to develop a better understanding of training in each of the communities. This chapter provides an overview of the methods used to collect data in this project.

As described in Section 2.0, the methodology was designed to explore research on literacy including existing literacy and library programming as well as training for both remote libraries and literacy programming. The scope of this research was designed to determine how literacy training could be improved and if there were other ways to affect the quality of literacy programming. This methodology includes a literature review, environmental scan, literacy program analysis and interviews. The literature review examined research on literacy, including Aboriginal literacy issues, as well as training for library workers in remote and rural locations. The environmental scan looked at existing literacy programming and any related training in the NWT, while the literacy program analysis researched existing library literacy programs across Canada. The interviews completed the research by asking NWT library workers about training, literacy, literacy programming and capacity.

#### **3.1 Literature Review**

A literature review was conducted to provide a critical analysis of the literature written relevant to the topic of this paper and was divided into two parts. The first part examined themes in Canadian literacy research and their relationship to literacy programming and this analysis included identifying definitions of literacy, including Aboriginal literacies. This was used to ensure that the definitions of literacy used in this project are appropriate for the populations of the NWT, which include a high percentage of Aboriginal residents.

The NWT public libraries are rural and remote, meaning that literature relating to these kinds of libraries is the most relevant to research. Therefore, the second part of the literature review focused on training designed for rural and remote libraries. This literature review began by trying to locate information regarding training related to literacy programming in these types of libraries, but due to a lack of available information and research, the search was widened to include all types of training in rural and remote libraries. The literature review examined a variety of resources, including library literature databases available through the University of Victoria, professional literature located in the NWT Public Library Services [NWTPLS] professional library, Google and relevant grey literature. The NWTPLS professional library is small, and the researcher is familiar with it, so it was fairly efficient to locate potentially useful materials. This research helped identify



useful articles through the use of bibliographies as well as suggesting possible avenues of further research such as the area of Aboriginal literacy.

Specific to searching for articles in library literature databases, the first step was to search using keywords and/or known literature. Once appropriate articles were located, the hyperlinked subjects were then used to bring up all potentially relevant articles. For example, when searching the *H.W. Wilson Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* database, the keyword search "staff training" led to the discovery of relevant subject terms "Library employees -- training of", "Rural libraries", and "Librarians -- training of". Some subjects were more difficult to locate than others depending on the search terms that were used. For example, when searching under "literacy training" in the same database, numerous articles concerning information literacy come up. Finding the subject terms, "Literacy education", "Literacy education" and "Librarians -- training of" made it much easier to locate relevant documents. Literature obtained using those subject headings were examined for relevancy to the research paper.

Locating information relevant to Aboriginal literacies began with an examination of the work of the NWT Literacy Council through research articles linked on their website. Bibliographies from those articles were used to identify other relevant work. When articles identified other organizations involved in Aboriginal literacy, such as the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, searches were done on Google to further investigate and to locate their organizational websites. Other literacy organizations within Canada were similarly investigated using Google as the primary source of information. Google was also used to help locate full text versions of potentially relevant articles.

### **3.2 Environmental Scan of Literacy Services in NWT**

The secondary analysis continued with an environmental scan that examined existing literacy programming in the NWT. The purpose of this analysis was to identify what literacy programming exists in the NWT and to identify if there is a successful training component to any of this programming and if anything can be learned from these practises. This scan involved primarily the resources located in the NWTPLS professional library, including periodicals, print materials and files. Information was verified on organizational websites.

### **3.3 Literacy Program Analysis**

The final part of the secondary analysis was to widen the examination of literacy programming to include literacy programming that was taking place in North American public libraries. Program analysis was used to identify traditional literacy programs used in libraries as well as literacy programs developed specifically for Aboriginal populations elsewhere in Canada. The purpose of this analysis was to learn from what other public libraries have accomplished in this area. This search used materials located in the NWTPLS

professional library as well as library literature databases available through the University of Victoria library. The search strategy was to use keywords of specific programs until the relevant subject headings were identified. For example, "summer reading" was used as a keyword, and the subject heading was "summer reading programs." Result hitlists were sorted by descending date of publication to ensure that most recent research was viewed first.

### **3.4 Interviews**

Primary research was composed of semi-structured interviews of representatives of public libraries in GNWT. The purpose of these interviews was to determine what kinds of literacy programming were being offered by public libraries and to gather information related to past, present and future training. Of the 20 public libraries in the NWT, 14 library representatives were interviewed, for a response rate of seventy percent. Two were interviewed in person and 12 over the telephone. Thirteen of the participants were library managers, and one was a library staff member. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then organized according to questions. To ensure anonymity of participants, answers were compiled across all interview questions and not compared by interview subject or community and all personal identifiers were removed in the analysis. The responses to similar questions were tallied and the responses compared.

Since four of the public libraries are located in communities governed by Aboriginal governments, the first step, as required by the University of Victoria's Human Resources Ethics Board, was to notify these governments of the research. This notification was a courtesy and conducted out of respect to the Aboriginal governments. The two governments affected were sent letters describing the research project, which included all contact information related to the research project. This letter can be found in Appendix A. One Aboriginal government responded, indicating that the research would prove no difficulty and the other government did not respond. As the letters were a courtesy only, and the Aboriginal governments were encouraged to contact the researcher with any concerns in the letters, the interviews proceeded in both communities.

The second step was to contact potential participants in writing. These participants were identified as all public library managers in the NWT. Letters were sent to library managers in all twenty communities that have public libraries by either email or fax. The primary method used was email while faxes were used for any library managers whose email addresses were unknown. The list of the communities in which libraries are located can be found in Appendix B. Due to the researcher's existing relationship with library managers, the letter stressed the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were told that the project was academic in nature and not related to the researcher's government position, and that they could withdraw from the project at any time without any penalties or consequences. A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix C.

Five potential participants responded to the letter immediately by email. Four expressed interest in participating, while the fifth had been in her position for less than a month and

declined to participate due to lack of experience. One potential participant decided not to participate, explaining that she was not interested in being on the radio. She did not believe explanations that the interviews would not be broadcasted, and did not participate.

The third step was to follow up with a telephone call to those who did not respond to determine if individuals wish to be interviewed. If they were interested, a letter of consent was emailed or faxed to them, and an interview time was arranged. The letter of consent had to be signed by the potential participants prior to the interview taking place. The researcher followed up with 15 potential participants. Ten of these were interviewed, meaning that the total number of interviews was 14. One library could not be contacted by telephone during the two months that the researcher was scheduling interviews. The researcher tried telephoning several times as well as emailing the library manager, but received no response.

Following up required the researcher to be very culturally sensitive. In some Northern communities, it is very rude to refuse a request. Therefore, there was the possibility of some library managers agreeing to be interviewed when they did not want to be interviewed. In three cases, library managers agreed to be interviewed, two sent in letters of consent, and none of the three were there when the researcher called to conduct the interview. The researcher left messages for all three. Only one responded and the interview was rescheduled. The assumption is that the other two did not want to be interviewed, and made their preference known by not being available for a scheduled interview and by not calling to reschedule the interview.

The next step was to conduct the interviews as scheduled. The interviews were semi-structured, and followed along the lines of the draft interview questions (located in Appendix D), with deviations as seemed relevant given participants' responses. This follows the protocol for responsive interviewing as described by O'Sullivan, Rassel, and Berner (2008, p.193). Questions needed to be rephrased at times when participants did not seem to understand them, and some were redundant given responses to previous questions. Many participants were very nervous during the interview, and the interviewer attempted to be as non-threatening and encouraging as possible, using phrases like "great", "thanks", "I understand" in response to answers given by participants during the interviews. When participants expressed concern that their answers might not be right, the interviewer responded positively, indicating the answers were fine.

Three library managers expressed a great deal of nervousness once the interview was concluded and the recorder turned off. One was concerned about saying the right thing, while the other two were concerned about their job performance as seen through the interview. In these cases, the researcher attempted to explain using plain language that the interviews were for academic research only and not meant to judge their daily performance or their library. Later, the researcher tried to compensate for this possibility by beginning interviews by letting participants know that the interview was voluntary and could be ended at the participant's request at any time although this information was already communicated to them in the letter of consent, which they signed. These concerns may mean that some of those interviewed may have inflated the number of programs and/or attendance at

programs, or given other inaccurate information to impress the interviewer concerning their job performance. This kind of misreporting by participants cannot be measured or controlled for, although, as described above, attempts were made to encourage honesty of participants. This may mean that some of the data collected in the interviews is inaccurate. Since this is impossible to determine, the project assumes that the data is accurate.

The protocol described in this section was approved by the University of Victoria's Human Resources Ethics Board and is protocol 12-004.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

A total of 14 interviews were conducted, two in person and 12 over the telephone. Thirteen of the participants were library managers, and one was another library staff member. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then compiled and coded by using constant comparison/ grounded theory analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006, Chapter Twenty-Three – Additional Resources) and thematic analysis. This form of analysis was determined to be most appropriate to examine the quite varied results of the semi-structured interviews. Using this form of analysis, similarities and differences to interview questions could be best examined and discussed. To ensure anonymity of participants, answers were compiled according to interview questions and not compared by person or community.

## **4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review was conducted to examine existing research on literacy and training in rural and remote libraries. It is sub-divided into two sections with the first section examining themes in Canadian literacy research. This section also focuses on current research on Aboriginal literacy and how this area of research relates to library programming. Literacy research in Canada has undergone some major changes over the past decade including widening the definition of literacy and considering it from different cultural perspectives. The first part of the review also describes these changes and the implications for library programming. The second section examines research relevant to training in rural and remote libraries.

The literature demonstrates agreement and concern that not all library workers receive formal training and various authors provide examples of training that have been developed to meet this need. The literature contains examples of state or province-wide initiatives only; however, there is little evaluation of the success or failure of these initiatives in the current literature.

### **4.1 Literacy**

There are various ways to define and understand literacy. According to ABC Life Literacy Canada, literacy can be defined as "the ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community - to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (ABC Life Literacy Canada, 2012, para. 6). This broad definition encompasses a variety of literacies, including adult, family, workplace and financial literacies (ABC Life Literacy Canada, 2012, para. 6). According to Ahmed (2011), there has long been a tension in literacy education between this sort of broad definition and a more narrow text-based definition. However, the major Canadian literacy organizations, such as ABC Life Literacy Canada, the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, and the NWT Literacy Council, all currently use a broad-based definition of literacy on their websites. However, looking at Canadian literacy research over time, this sort of broad definition was not always the case.

An analysis of Canadian literacy research by Taylor, Quigley, Kajganich, and Kraglund-Gauthier (2011) demonstrated some interesting trends over time. They described how literacy research published between 1987 and 2001 could be described using three metaphors, seeing literacy as emancipation, as a commodity, and as a social practice (Taylor et al., 2011, p.50-51). The emancipation metaphor described literacy as a way of freeing oneself, while the commodity metaphor referred to literacy as something that could be acquired or delivered in a package of lessons (Taylor et al., 2011, p.50-51). The third metaphor, or social practice, was described by the authors as a glimpse, or as only seen for a short time, as only a few papers eluded to using life realities in literacy education ( Taylor et al., 2011, p. 52).

Research published after 2002 described for the first time the idea of a continuum of life-long literacy learning that may be formal or informal (Taylor et al., 2011, p.54). Another new concept that appeared after 2002 was the idea of literacy as a critical social practice (Taylor et al., 2011, p.52) In this last concept, the authors found research focuses more on the specific needs of subgroups of users and how educators can best meet these needs. Current research conducted by the NWT Literacy Council provides a good example of research focusing on specific needs of users and ways to meet their needs. In this case, the users are Aboriginal languages speakers, which is relevant to the research project described by this paper.

The NWT Literacy Council has existed since 1989, and provides literacy support to all eleven official NWT languages (Balanoff & Chambers, 2005, p.18). According to Balanoff and Chambers, after years working with Aboriginal groups, they began to question the traditional definition of literacy. For example, they worked with women who would be considered illiterate, and yet spoke more than one language, and possessed specialized skills. In a culture where knowledge is passed orally, the NWT Literacy Council began to question whether text-based definitions of literacy made sense, a concept that fits into the social practise metaphor (Balanoff & Chambers, 2005, p.18).

The NWT Literacy Council led a three year research project to explore literacy and text in a Ulukhaktok, an Inuit Community in a remote area of NWT (Balanoff & Chambers, 2005, p.19). Ulukhaktok was formerly named Holman, which is how it is referred to in this article. Ulukhaktok is a community of almost 500 residents located on Victoria Island, NWT and settled by four different cultural groups (Kudlak, Kaodloak, Ulukhaktok Elders, Chambers & Balanoff, n.d., p.39). The research project focused on the traditions of one of these groups, the Kangiryuarmit (Kudlak et al., n.d., p.39). According to Kudlak et al., (n.d.), literacy in the Kangiryuarmit culture can be defined by the many ways in which knowledge and meaning is shared, including way-finding, reading weather, singing, dancing, storytelling and building Inukhuit (p.43). These literacies involve lifelong learning and are very complex involving "a person's whole body and spirit, not just his or her mind" (Kudlak et al., p.44). Traditional literacies such as these are vital to their culture, but they are beginning to incorporate print literacies. For example, they speak of using "both a GPS and the stars" to navigate, merging both literacies (Kudlak et al, n.d., p.33).

Researchers concluded that the Aboriginal literacies they were studying were composed of two components, content and literacy processes, neither of which can be separated from the other (Balanoff, Chambers, Kaodloak, & Kudlak, 2006, p.8). This is very different from the predominant view of literacy that defines literacy as the ability to read and write, or decode and create (Balanoff et al, 2006, p.8). To be literate within the Kangiryuarmit culture, one not only has to be able to understand the content, but also has to be able to be involved in the literacy processes (Balanoff et al., 2006, p.10). Balanoff et al. identified a total of nine literacy processes and a number of knowledge domains (p.8). One literacy process, for example is relational (p.9). Balanoff et al. demonstrates this process using the example of storytelling, in which the relationship "between the narrator and his/his audience and the relationship between the narrator and his/his topic are significant aspects of each literacy event" (Balanoff et al, 2006, p. 9-10). Thus an oral storytelling cannot be recorded and

maintain the same meaning as it does when heard in person. Devoid of the context of relationships, the storytelling does not convey the same meaning. Balanoff et al. plan to do further research on the components and their interrelationships, with the goal of learning how to support these literacies in the future (2006, p.12).

The research into Aboriginal literacy by the NWT Literacy Council argues the starting point to study this area is that Aboriginal literacy as a cultural reality is different from other literacies, a concept that originates from research in Ontario. According to Antone (2003), in 1986, the Ontario Community Literacy grants resulted in the creation of an Ontario Native Literacy Coalition (p.10). This coalition brought together Aboriginal people in a discussion concerning literacy (p.10). Antone explains that the coalition developed their own concept of literacy, different from that supported by the Ontario government (2003, p.11). Instead of focusing on ways to incorporate Aboriginal individuals in mainstream society, as Antone describes the goal of the Ontario government, the coalition examined ways to provide literacy training that sustains and supports Aboriginal traditions (2003, p.11).

Even after a Program Reform by the Ontario government in 1997, literacy practitioners felt that the needs of Aboriginal communities could not be met within the government frameworks (George, 2001, p.3). A more holistic and appropriate framework was identified, called the Medicine Wheel model (2001, p.14). This model breaks learning into four steps (George, 2001, p.14). However, George explains, it was important to develop language and methodologies recognizable by potential funders (2001, p.15). In 1996, George developed the Rainbow Approach to Literacy, in which each colour of the rainbow describes a different Aboriginal literacy (2001, p.17).

This point of view has interesting repercussions on literacy programs designed for Aboriginal populations. Antone et al. (2003) recommends that literacy programs be developed taking into account Aboriginal literacies (p.8). Antone et al. articulates that successful Aboriginal literacy programs cannot be described using a best practices approach because effective programs must be customized to the participants' specific environment and culture (2003, p.21). Antone et al. focuses more on tailoring programs to the specific situation, making programming more holistic and more similar to traditional learning, incorporating traditional values than the earlier conceptions of learning and training (2003, p.21). For example, McKeough et al. (2008) recommends that early literacy programs for Aboriginal children include oral storytelling because it is similar to learning within their culture (2008, p.150). This type of approach to literacy programming is quite innovative and should inform literacy programming developed in the NWT. The NWT Literacy Council is still in the early stages of their research, and has not yet made recommendations related to programming in the NWT. It is, however, important to be aware of this work going forward and consider how it might be integrated into the programming being offered by NWT public libraries.

Another consideration for NWT public libraries is how libraries traditionally consider the concept of literacy. Within libraries, literacy is often discussed in terms of information literacy. As defined by the American Library Association (1989), to be considered

information literate "a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (para. 3). According to the American Library Association, libraries are uniquely positioned to assist individuals in learning how information is organized, and how to locate relevant information. This philosophy has led to a focus on bibliographic instruction, which teaches users how to use the library in a formal setting, and on reference assistance, which teaches users in an informal setting. Participants in a study by Lai (2011) in western Canada, all shared the belief that libraries must offer information literacy training both formally and informally (p.87).

With the development of the Internet, the emphasis on information literacy has shifted to encompass information technology. This is partly because the library catalogues are now online and access to library materials requires computer literacy, and partly due to concerns about the digital divide and the necessity of libraries to provide access to online information to those without access at home (Lai, 2011, p.81; Oliver, 2007, p.1). Most public libraries in Canada now offer access to computers as well as some sort of computer literacy instruction, whether it be formal or informal (Oliver, 2007, p.2-3).

#### **4.2 Existing Training for Library Workers in Rural and Remote Locations**

There has also been some research on the training provided to librarians and others who work in a library to further provide context to this project. Academic training for library workers are divided into two main categories: Masters' degrees and Technician degrees. A Master's degree is a university level program accredited by the American Library Association and graduates are called librarians. A Technician's degree is a college level program and graduates are called para-professionals or library technicians. Many library jobs require one of the two degrees. There are other library programs in academic institutions such as the "Library Operations Assistant Certificate" available through SAIT Polytechnic (n.d., Library Operations Assistant Certificate of Achievement).

Graduates of academic library programs have the opportunity to join a variety of library associations in Canada. An online site includes twenty-nine different Canadian library associations, divided into several types of associations such as Library Technicians and Special Libraries (Library Information Service, 2005). These library associations offer a variety of training, including conferences, workshops and online seminars.

However, not all library workers possess academic training, especially in rural and remote libraries. Library literature demonstrates concern that about this lack of training in both Canada and the USA. The Oklahoma Institute of Public Librarianship, for example, was developed to provide library education to library staff without library degrees (Rogers & St. Lifer, 1997, p.13). After identifying that the majority of the targeted staff resided in rural libraries, courses were designed to be offered at regional one-day workshops or independent study. Johnson (2001) describes five voluntary certification programs aimed at untrained library workers in the Midwestern United States developed from 1986 to 1997 (p.229). Steury (2004) indicates that more than thirty states have some form of certification



program, but only Minnesota has an educational program designed for untrained library workers (p.8).

In Canada, the Southern Ontario Library Service has developed similar programs called the EXCEL and Advanced EXCEL programs. These programs are offered by the Southern Ontario Library Service to people working or volunteering in public libraries without formal library education (Southern Ontario Library Service [SOLS], "Excel," n.d., Who should take EXCEL?). The EXCEL program offers twenty courses through distance education, involving telephone tutors, email communication and printed course materials. These courses include "Introduction to Public Libraries", "Collection Development for Children" and "Programming". Students can take a course to increase skills in a particular area, or work towards a "Certificate in managing a small public library". Two courses are offered in-person through a four day training session aimed at people working in First Nations Libraries (SOLS, "Excel in the," n.d.). There is no indication of how successful these courses are and courses are available only in Ontario.

Although rural and remote libraries in Ontario can access the EXCEL and Advanced EXCEL programs, rural and remote libraries in the rest of Canada do not have these resources and face a number of challenges providing library services (Amirault, 2003). Amirault explains that rural libraries tend to have higher costs and lower funding than libraries in larger communities, necessitating a more innovative approach to library services to be able to provide the same services as larger libraries (2003, p.148). Crawford (2011) also describes the innovation of smaller libraries, more specifically those who serve Ontario First Nations communities (p.53). Library workers in these communities often do not have academic library training and seek training from a variety of workshops and conferences offered by Ontario Library Service agencies (Crawford, 2011, p.54).

The challenges facing rural Canadian libraries are also shared by libraries in South Africa. For example, Nassimbeni and de Jager (2007) describe an information literacy campaign to provide training to library workers in rural sections of South Africa (p.313). The environment described has some similarities and some major differences to the environment of training in the NWT. This campaign involved the application of participants to the program, training and the measurement of the success of this training (2007, p.317). Some of the similarities to the NWT include that library workers have no academic library training, work in joint school/public libraries and that they work in remote locations in small communities with low literacy levels and an oral tradition (de Jager & Nassimbeni, 2007, p.315-316). Differences that de Jager and Nassimbeni describe include that there are many more libraries in South Africa than in the NWT and participants had to apply for the training, ensuring that participants were highly motivated and eager to learn about information literacy (2007, p.317). The actual training involved a two day workshop in which participants planned campaigns around information literacy to take back to their libraries, and a follow-up workshop where participants reported on the progress of their campaigns (2007, p.317-319). Examples of campaigns include providing information on drug abuse and teaching people how to grow vegetables (2007, p.319). The article indicates that the campaigns were successful, partly due to the enthusiasm shown by participants (2007, p.320). Although it is not overtly stated, it appears that another aspect of the success

is that participants developed campaigns that were specific to the needs and realities of their communities. They were given a framework to use and resources to assist in the development, but the campaign itself was specific to their communities.

There are a number of other articles related to library training, but they focus on practises by academic or large public libraries and are not relevant to smaller public libraries staffed primarily by library workers without academic training.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

From this literature review, it is clear that there are many ways to define and understand literacy, from those outlined in Canadian research and to the ways that libraries traditionally understand and apply literacy training and programming. The research with the most potential to affect literacy programming in the NWT is related to Aboriginal literacy currently being undertaken by the NWT Literacy Council. It is also interesting to note the specific ways that libraries have defined literacy in terms of providing programming and these categories may also be useful when thinking about how to improve training in the NWT.

The second part of this literature review, which examined research related to training in rural and remote libraries identified concerns that library workers in such locations do not receive formal training. As noted in the literature, there has been some state and province-wide initiatives to provide some training and research on this issue will continue to be monitored to identify any new developments.

The next section of this paper will look at what literacy programming is currently being provided in the NWT and identify any related training for those who deliver such programs. Given the specific ways that libraries define literacy, it will also look at some of the specific programs being offered by Canadian libraries.

## **5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND LITERACY PROGRAM ANALYSIS**

This section includes both an environmental scan and a program analysis. The environmental scan examined existing literacy programming in the NWT. Another key part of this scan was to identify existing training related to literacy programming in the public library system.

As the literature review made reference to the different ways that libraries define literacy in terms of programming and therefore, provided different programs and training opportunities, it was important to examine literacy programs in public libraries in other jurisdictions. The program analysis also looks at some literacy programs developed specifically for Aboriginal populations in other areas of Canada.

The purpose of this analysis was to determine if anything could be learned from existing literacy and training programs in the GNWT and in other jurisdictions to improve literacy programs and training opportunities in the NWT in the future.

### **5.1 Environmental Scan: Existing Literacy Programming in the NWT**

There is a variety of literacy programming and training offered in the NWT; however, there is no written documentation regarding programming at the public libraries. Therefore a current state analysis of literacy programming and training will occur in the interview section. This section will examine other organizations that provide literacy programming and training in the NWT and information about literacy programs offered by the public libraries will be examined in the interview results section of this report. This information demonstrates that there are numerous stakeholders in the NWT who are trying to address the literacy levels through programs and other services. The information was examined to determine if there was repetition in the programming being offered, if there were possible gaps in service, and if there were any resources available that could be utilized by community libraries.

Besides community libraries, several communities have local literacy committees that offer local programming, and both the NWT Literacy Council and Aurora College also provide some programming and training. Interestingly, although the ASAP focuses on Aboriginal students, most literacy programs in the NWT are open to all ethnicities of students. The predominant organization in the development of literacy programming is the NWT Literacy Council. As described in Section 2.1, the NWT Literacy Council has existed since 1989, and provides literacy support to all eleven official NWT languages (Balanoff & Chambers, 2005, p.18). According to their mission statement, two of their objectives are "developing teaching and learning materials" and "supporting literacy programs, projects and practitioners ("Mission," n.d., para. 2).

According to their 2011-12 Training Calendar (2011-12), the NWT Literacy Council offered four regional workshops as well five workshops in Yellowknife. Participants must

attend an introductory workshop called "Family Literacy Training Institute" before being able to attend other workshops. This institute runs for three days, and is described as being an introduction to family literacy as well as instruction on running several programs such as "1-2-3 Rhyme with me" and "Choosing Books". Workshops are designed to be hands on, and participants are expected to sing and create crafts as part of the instruction. Instructions include ways to be inclusive of all NWT residents including ways to celebrate Aboriginal Languages month (NWT Literacy Council, "Celebrate Aboriginal", n.d., p.1-2).

The NWT Literacy Council provides funding of up to \$3,000 for family literacy projects. To be eligible to apply, a member of the group applying must have taken one of the NWT Literacy Council's workshops ("Criteria", n.d., p.1). Funding can be used for a variety of projects, examples given in the Funding criteria document include "1-2-3 Rhyme with me" and developing a project around traditional Aboriginal approaches to family literacy. Recipients must provide a brief narrative of how the money was spent at the conclusion of the project.

The NWT Literacy Council provides a number of resources on their website. There are a number of "How to kits", which are detailed booklets that explain how to put on a specific program. Most include a list of steps to follow when putting on the program, a poster to fill out to advertise the program, and any song or craft instructions that may be needed. The *Family Literacy Resources* page (NWT Literacy Council, n.d., Family Literacy Resources), for example, includes forty-nine different kits, including ones for "Family Reading Night" and "Puppet Making". The NWT Literacy Council will mail hard copies of any of the documents free to any resident of the NWT (Resources, n.d., NWT Literacy Resources Catalogue). This includes program manuals, how to kits, and a number of program resources including Northern Nursery Rhymes and Literacy Fact Sheets.

Aurora College has three campuses and twenty-two adult learning centres. All provide assistance for adults in further education, whether they are trying to learn to read, graduate high school or seeking higher education. All of the adult learning centres offer Development Studies or Adult Basic Education (Aurora College, 2011). Students must be seventeen years old and complete placement tests that measure skills in English and Math before being placed in the program. Classes cover basic literacy all the way to grade twelve courses.

Several communities operate local literacy committees, such as Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, and Fort McPherson. These committees work on different projects, depending on their community. In Aklavik and Fort McPherson, for example, the committees operate the public library as well as hosting literacy programs. In Hay River, the local committee funds a Family Literacy program at the local library as well as creating Baby Bags containing materials for infants and parents, which are given to each new parent in town.

Another source of literacy programming comes from ECE funding. The Community Literacy Development Fund, available through ECE, supports projects related to adult literacy (ECE, "Community Literacy", n.d., p.2). Types of projects that could be funded, according to ECE, include Literacy outreach services and workplace literacy.

There are a number of literacy programs in the NWT as described above; however, evaluations of these programs are more difficult to locate, and when available, are not available to the public. The NWT Literacy Council does expect a narrative concerning funded programs, but this does not necessarily include an evaluation of the program. These narratives are considered private and are not accessible. ECE requires detailed financial reporting plus a narrative for projects funded through the Community Development Fund, but these reports are also not available to the public. It is therefore, challenging to determine which of these programs are successful.

The examination of current programming demonstrates no overlaps in literacy programming already provided. Aurora College's scope does indicate that there is adult literacy programming available in most communities. The NWT Literacy Council does provide funding and resources for all sorts of programming, which could be utilized by community libraries. Community libraries could also work with literacy committees to ensure no overlaps in services.

## **5.2 Program Analysis: Literacy Programs in Public Libraries**

Libraries are seen as an essential factor in literacy development by the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network that provide access to resources needed to improve literacy in Canada (2012, p.1). This includes providing programs for lifelong literacy as well as a variety of specialized programs to encourage both library use and recreational reading. Literacy programming offered by libraries include family literacy, summer reading clubs, book clubs, computer classes, adult literacy classes, music or film events and programs. In many cases, published articles focus on descriptions of programs offered; however, there is some analysis of such programs that will be further discussed in this section.

One of the more popular forms of literacy programming within libraries is early literacy programming. Early literacy programming, sometimes called family literacy, focuses on story times for preschool children (MacLean, 2008, p.7). Story times include reading of picture books plus other components such as crafts, songs, rhymes and fingerplays (MacLean, 2008, p.7). The purpose of these programs is to introduce children to reading and libraries as well as developing communication and social skills. MacLean completed a literature review seeking research on the effect of library story times. Although 3 out of 5 research studies found a positive effect on either children or caregivers, each cautioned on the difficulty of determining an effect because of the many potential impacts on a child's literacy development (MacLean, 2008, p.17).

Summer reading is another popular program. If children do not read during the summer break from school, their ability to read decreases (Lu, 2009, p.93-4). Summer reading clubs offered by libraries during the summer months are an attempt to keep children reading during the summer. Matthews (2010) examined how summer reading programs have been evaluated, and made recommendations for improvements (p.34). His survey of how public libraries were evaluating programs, found much room for improvement, recommending

performance measures to be tracked and periodic assessments, (2010, p.38-39). Actual research evaluating summer reading programs include an article entitled "Summer Reading: Analyzed" (2012) indicates that a local librarian and school media specialists completed a study linking summer reading programs to maintaining reading abilities over the summer (p.39). The 2009 study by Lu demonstrated similar results. This article was more detailed and the research study surveyed both teachers and students on to evaluate a specific summer reading program developed by a high school (2009, p.96).

Computer literacy is a relatively recent addition to library programming. This includes access to computers, reference assistance when using computers as well as computer instruction (Oliver, 2007, p.2). Oliver describes a Saskatchewan initiative that targeted rural residents without computer access (2007, p.3). The initiative, called the Internet Pilot's License Training Program, was a series of seven training modules introducing participants to different aspects of the Internet (2007, p.3). An evaluation of this initiative described by Oliver concluded that five factors contributed to the success of the initiative: accommodating multiple skill levels, accommodating learner needs with problem-based instruction that takes into account participant age, skilled instructors with experience working with adult learners, including opportunities for socialization, and intervention and follow-up training when appropriate (2007, p. 59-62).

The provision of library services to Aboriginal populations in much of Canada has been challenging. Much of the Aboriginal population lives on reserves which are under federal jurisdiction (Joseph, 1994, Library Services). Public libraries are under provincial jurisdiction, which means the Aboriginal residents who reside on reserves are often required to pay membership fees to access local libraries (Joseph, 1994). This was a problematic situation that often meant in most of Canada, Aboriginal residents were without public library services. The situation did not occur in the NWT, Nunavut and the Yukon Territory where the legalities differ due to the special circumstances of territories versus provinces. This has meant that it is challenging to locate library programs designed specifically for Aboriginal residents.

The situation has started to change within the past twenty years. In 1991, Saskatchewan Libraries started a committee to look at Aboriginal library services (2001-2012, Background). By 2004, this committee was promoting Aboriginal Storytelling week across the province (Saskatchewan Libraries, Public Outreach). In 1994, British Columbia passed a library act that allowed communities to enter into agreements with reserves for the provision of library services (Joseph, 1994). In Ontario, the First Nations Library Development Program assists First Nations libraries with funding and support, while in Manitoba, the provincial library services has recently hired an Aboriginal Library Consultant (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2012; Manitoba Library Association, 2000-2012). In Alberta, the Edmonton Public Library provides some specialized programming for Aboriginals including cultural programs, book clubs, and Aboriginal storytimes (Edmonton Public Library, n.d.). Even though the provinces have been focusing more on providing services to Aboriginal communities, there is little to study regarding programming developed for them. Instead, it is possible to look at some of the literacy programming developed for Aboriginals developed outside of libraries.

One example of a literacy program developed for Aboriginals is the Aboriginal Head Start program funded by Health Canada. This program was developed to meet the needs of Aboriginal preschool children in large urban areas and northern communities (Health Canada, 2011, Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve). The program aims to assist in school readiness while also teaching Aboriginal culture and language (Health Canada, 2011). Another organization that plans to provide a similar program is the Indigenous Literacy and Language Initiative. This organization is currently active in India and Rwanda, but intends to develop early language programs with First Nations groups in Ontario (Indigenous Literacy and Language Initiative, n.d.).

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The section was an environmental scan and literacy program analysis to determine if anything could be learned from existing literacy and training programs in the GNWT and in other jurisdictions to improve literacy programs and training opportunities in the NWT in the future. It was found that there are numerous stakeholders in the NWT who are trying to address poor literacy levels through programs and other services. The primary stakeholders who deliver such services across NWT are the NWT Literacy Council and Aurora College, while there are some communities who support local literacy committees. The NWT Literacy Council also provides training in the provision of literacy programming through workshops. If community libraries provide literacy programming, they should work with existing organizations such as Aurora College and local literacy committees to prevent overlapping services. Libraries can also utilize resources provided by the NWT Literacy Council when developing literacy programming.

This section looked at a number of library programs that address literacy including early literacy, summer reading and computer literacy. Research has demonstrated that all of these forms of programming have some positive impact on literacy, as well as giving some recommendations on how best to have that impact. Jurisdictional issues have meant that libraries have not traditionally focused on Aboriginal populations. This has changed in recent years, and perhaps with continued research into Aboriginal literacies, more programming will be developed. There are a number of existing literacy library programs which can be used to develop programming in the NWT. Given that the literature review showed that programming needed to be tailored to specific Aboriginal communities, these programs will have to be adapted to be relevant.

## 6.0 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

The literature review identified ways that libraries define literacy in terms of their programming while the literacy program analysis examined specific library programs; however, there is no literature regarding current literacy programming in the public libraries of the NWT. Therefore, it was decided to conduct interviews with representatives of all public libraries in the NWT to learn more about the current state of training and program delivery related to literacy in the NWT.

This section includes a summary of the interview findings and more detailed statistical results can be found in Appendix E. Fourteen out of 20 library representatives agreed to participate in this research project. To ensure anonymity of participants, information has been compiled by question and is not identified by the names of community or individual.

The purpose of these interviews was to determine what kinds of literacy programming were being offered by public libraries and to gather information related to past and future training.

Interview questions were divided into four areas:

- questions about participants' work background and education
- questions about training experience
- questions about capacity
- questions about literacy

### 6.1 Interview Participants

Of those who participated, the time in their library position ranged from two months to ten years. Eight (57%) had been in their position for less than one year, while 5 (36%) had been in their position for two or more years. The complete details of time in current position are included in Table 1.

**Table 1: Interview participants time in current position**

<b>Time in current position</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
less than 1 year	8
1 -2 years	1
more than 2 years	5

The level of education ranged from Grade 10 to a Master's degree. The majority (10) had a college or university degree, while three were high school graduates and one had completed Grade 10. Table 2 lists more details about the education level of participants.



**Table 2: Education level of participants**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
Some high school	1
High school graduate	3
College graduate	3
University graduate - Bachelor	4
University graduate - Masters	3

## 6.2 Training Experience

When asked about what types of training they have received, 10 identified they had received training from NWT Public Library Services including participating in training workshops, training by telephone and in-person training in their library. The workshop training was not described in detail. Training by telephone and in-person training was described by those who went into detail, as focused on basic library operations. Three said that they had attended training on literacy programming from the NWT Literacy Council. Other training included training by previous library managers on basic library operations and procedures online courses in management, children's literature and supervision and one person who had attended the Canadian Library Association Conference.

Respondents identified a number of benefits from attending training. The most commonly listed benefit was learning how to use manual or online circulation systems, the systems used by libraries to lend materials, which was identified by four respondents. Two respondents identified each of the following benefits: getting an introduction to the library, getting programming ideas, having questions answered, and learning what other libraries were doing. Other benefits identified by only one person included learning how to organize the library, learning local library operations, and learning how to do interlibrary loans.

Respondents listed a number of dislikes about training they had taken. Three people indicated that they had not received enough training at the NWTPLS workshops and that the sessions should have been longer. Other concerns were identified by only one person and included that training should have occurred closer to their hire date, that they had been unable to attend all of a training session due to flights grounded by inclement weather, that they would have liked two sessions closer together, that more time was needed to talk to other library managers and that training from outside the NWT did not relate to NWT library conditions.

Thirteen participants expressed interested in further training. Eleven participants would be interested in training related to literacy programming and eight people would be interested in training related to literacy materials. Seven respondents would prefer in-person training, one person would prefer a webinar, one person did not know and one individual said more any kind of training would be fine.

When asked to identify training needs, 13 different needs were identified although there were some similarities amongst the answers. The two most popular needs identified by three respondents were the need to be given basic training on how libraries run and secondly, how to apply for grants and write proposals. The other 11 needs were identified by different individuals and include such areas as: training on book selection and purchasing, general library training, circulation system training, managerial training, NWT Literacy Council training, programming, onsite training, conflict resolution, safety issues, library organization and public libraries as compared to school libraries.

### **6.3 Capacity**

Questions in this section related to the technology that participants have access to as well as the amount of time they might have during work hours to participate in training. This section was meant to identify if online or remote training sessions might be effective training options. Research identified in the literature review indicated that several jurisdictions offered library training through some sort of remote training and this seemed like a possible option for the NWT.

Most respondents (93%) used email daily, while one does not use email at all. Eleven have work email accounts, while the other three have personal email accounts. All have access to computers at work and ten (71%) can watch videos on that computers. Seven (50%) said that they would be able to watch training videos or do training exercises at work. Two said that they would not be able to do any training while at work because the library was too busy. The other five said that they might be able to watch training videos or do training exercises at work, if they had enough notice or if the training was flexible enough so that they can arrange their schedules accordingly.

### **6.4 Literacy**

This section includes questions related to the literacy programming being offered by participants at their libraries. The purpose of these questions was to learn more about what participants were already doing and planning related to literacy programming, if what they were doing was working, and if they felt it was important in their communities.

Ten (71%) indicated that other literacy programming is available in their community, while four (29%) said there is no other programming in their community.

Nine (64%) currently offer literacy programming to their communities, while one is planning to in the future. Two offer no literacy programming at all and have no plans to in the future because they feel they have no time to plan or organize such events.

Thirteen respondents agreed that literacy programming is important in their community. There were a number of reasons given for this belief. Three respondents gave the reason

that literacy programming was important because literacy levels were low in their community. Similar responses by respondents were that children were not achieving at their grade level, that most parents have not graduated high school, and that children cannot read or write well, even after graduating from high school.

Lifestyle seems to be a relevant factor. Other reasons given include that having a library means that people in the community have a place to access books, that parents are too busy to read at home, and that libraries can help Northern communities with fewer resources pool the resources that they do have. Other respondents indicated that literacy programming shows that reading can be fun, can be used to make libraries "cool," that they show the value of children reading, and that the programming make children more interested in reading.

#### *6.4.1 Library programs identified by respondents*

This section examines the library programs that respondents identified. This includes the type of program, attendance, and expected age group of program attendees. Any details that respondents shared are included in table format.

A total of 54 library programs were identified by respondents. The question asked specifically for respondents to identify literacy programs. Several were not sure what that meant, but when asked about specific programs that the interviewer was aware of, the participant then began to describe a number of programs they offered. Determining if a program can be described as a literacy program is difficult without more information than was gathered through these interviews. Most library programs have some literacy component, which may include a display of related books or something such as using a written pattern when making a craft. Therefore this section includes all the programs listed by respondents.

There are a variety of programs offered across the sample base. Listed in the order of number of similar programs, there are 11 family literacy programs, nine afterschool programs, five computer programs, four author visits, three food programs, three movie programs, three music programs, two English as a second or other language programs, and two Family Literacy Day events. There were eight more adult programs, four more children's programs, and two more family programs, including sewing and knitting clubs, and travel slide shows.

Attendance at programs varies tremendously and was reported as low as two at a program, to as high as forty-seven. The afterschool programs seemed to vary the most, with one library reporting attendance at anywhere between six and 45. Four of the libraries offer afterschool programs every school day, two offer them three nights a week, one offers the program twice a week and two offer the program once a week. The content of afterschool programs varies; four libraries offer programs for different age groups on different nights. Activities vary from night to night, one program consisting of reading and crafts, another offers activities such as painting, movies and games, and yet another offers snacks, reading and games. Table 3 summarizes program information related to afterschool programs. In all

the tables in this section, the program names and descriptions remain the same as those participants used in the interviews. The term unavailable indicates that the participant did not share the information.

**Table 3: Afterschool programs**

<b>Programming</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Details</b>
Afterschool programs	3 nights/wk	Up to 47	Each night is a different age group
Afterschool programming	3 nights/wk	unavailable	Each night is a different age group; one night is a book club
Afterschool program	Every school day	6-45	Homework help, reading club, crafts, games, puzzles
Afterschool program	Once/wk	unavailable	Snack, games, reading
Afterschool activities	Every school day	10-15	Different age each day; allow all in during cold weather
Afterschool program	Every school day	2-15	Different activity every day such as painting, movies, games
Afterschool program	Twice/wk	2-6	Reading and crafts
Read with me	Once/wk	4-11	Afterschool for all ages
One-on-one reading with children	After school	unavailable	unavailable

The most popular program offered was family literacy programs, which is called by a number of names in the libraries who were interviewed in this study. On that note, all programs that are aimed at parents and preschool children were included in this section. Seven libraries offer this type of program once a week, although one library does this only for a six week period. Two libraries offer the program once a month, while another library offers it one or two times a month whereas another library offers it twice a week. The details described for each program can be found in Table 4.

Not included in the table are Family Literacy Day events, which two libraries described having in place. One did a ‘turn your screen off’ event, in which participants who turned off their televisions and computers for the day were entered into a draw. The second initiative involved the entire school in the event, and included such activities as Read for 15, a colouring contest and literacy bingo. Read for 15 is an activity in which participants read for fifteen minutes during the day. The NWT Literacy Council compiles the number of participants territory-wide on Family Literacy Day, and competes with Nunavut to see who has the larger number of program participants. Literacy bingo is also sponsored by the NWT Literacy Council and involves a series of bingo cards that contain pictures and words on them, instead of numbers.

**Table 4: Family literacy programs**

<b>Programming</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Details</b>
0-6 yr old program	Once/wk	unavailable	Craft or story and movie or cooking decorating or scavenger hunt
Books in the home	Once/wk for 6 weeks	3-12	Book, story, related activities, craft
Children's storytime	Once/wk	15-30	Storytime, crafts, games
Evening literacy program	Once/wk		Crafts, reading
Family Literacy	Once/month	30	unavailable
Family Literacy nights	Once/week	10-15	Crafts, colouring, Wii
Family programs	2 nights/wk	3-4	One either game night or family reading night; other story and activities
Parents and Tots	Once/wk	6-12	unavailable
Parents and Tots	Once/wk	3-21	Story and related craft
Reading/ craft program	1-2/month		unavailable
Start your month out right	Once/month	6-12	unavailable

When asked about literacy programming, five respondents described computer programs. In three libraries, children were able to use computers in the library after school and library staff gave instruction as needed. In one library, children were expected to read for ten minutes prior to being allowed on the computers. The other two computer programs described involved adult instruction. Both were scheduled sessions, one specifically for seniors and one that involved instruction using Microsoft Word. The programs are listed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Computer programs**

<b>Programming</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Details</b>
Computers	every day	unavailable	unavailable
Computers for seniors	unavailable	unavailable	Computer instruction
Computer Literacy	unavailable	unavailable	One-on-one
Computer time	daily	unavailable	Only after 10 min of reading
MS Word	once	unavailable	Training session

Table 6 includes details of food, movie and music programs and there were three of each kind of program reported. Food programs were quite varied. One was based on a specific food, cupcakes, and audience members learned how to decorate them. Another recurring program involved a different style or type of cooking each time it was offered, while the final program was a six week program on food ethics.

The three movie programs were very similar, involving the showing of movies in the library. Two showed films from the National Film Board, who sends out the movies and related materials as requested, and one was classic movies. The National Film Board promotes Canadian documentaries, animated features and alternative features. Many of the documentaries highlight health or social issues in an accessible medium for those with lower literacy skills. Classic movies are not generally used as literacy programming, but can encourage the reading of classic novels if the movies are based on them. The interviews did not determine if this was the case. The three music programs involved customers playing music in the library, in a coffee house style. One was specifically fiddle instruction, while the other two were more general. Music literacy is an important alternative literacy, as learning to read music and scores can improve literacy in general. The fiddle instruction is more of a literacy program than the coffee houses, as it includes the participants learning to read music.

**Table 6: Food, movie and music programs**

<b>Programming</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Food programs</b>			
Cupcake challenge	unavailable	unavailable	Reading, tips on decorating cakes
Food nights	unavailable	unavailable	Cooking from different cultures and diets
Hungry for change	Once/wk for 6 weeks	unavailable	Read and discuss food, ethics and sustainability
<b>Movie programs</b>			
Classic cinema	unavailable	unavailable	Show classic movies
National Film Board Club	every other wk	8-22	Show NFB films
National Film Board Club	unavailable	unavailable	Show NFB films
<b>Music programs</b>			
Fiddle program	Once/week	unavailable	unavailable
Music Nights	Once/month	unavailable	unavailable
Music night	Once	unavailable	unavailable

The final table listing programs (Table 7) includes a variety of programming that did not fit into any categories. They include everything from a small group sewing circle, to a community wide genealogy project, from Australia Day to summer reading. There are two other types of programs that were mentioned that are not included in any of the tables. One is author programs, which involve authors visiting the libraries and reading from their books. Some of these programs are grant driven. The other type of program is ESOL or English as a second or other language. Two programs are offered using one on one instruction for attendees.

This section described the 54 programs identified by the respondents when asked what literacy programs were offered at their libraries. Although some respondents had difficulty determining what literacy program was and instead listed all of their programs, many of the programs listed are literacy programs. Family literacy, Family Literacy Day, author visits and ESOL programs are easily recognizable as literacy programs as their focus is on learning to read, reading, books, and language. Some of the other programs may have a literacy component, depending on how they are organized. A food program, for example, can include a display of cooking books and reading a recipe. Afterschool programs can include homework or reading assistance, while music programs can include learning how to read music or lyrics. Given that libraries are already providing a variety of programs, it may prove beneficial that any training in programming include a focus on how to plan programs so that even the simplest program includes a literacy component.

**Table 7: Other programs**

<b>Programming</b>	<b>How often</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Other Adult Programming</b>			
Bookclub, unbooked	Once/month	2	No specific book to read
Genealogy program	unavailable	unavailable	Speaking with Elders to gather information, creating community family trees
Health series	Once/month	15	Guests on different topics
Philosopher's Cafe	unavailable	unavailable	Discussion forum open to all customers on specified topics
Sewing night	Once/week	5-6	Talk and sew
Spanish circles	unavailable	8	Practise Spanish
TAILS	unavailable	unavailable	Read to a dog
Travel slide shows	unavailable	20-40	unavailable
<b>Other Children's Programming</b>			
Children's knitting group	Once/wk	unavailable	unavailable
Geographic day	Once	unavailable	Each class had a different activity about Australia; library staff cooked sausages and offered to local companies for lunch
School class visits	Once/month	unavailable	Storytime or library training session
TD Summer Reading Club	Once/wk for 6 weeks	unavailable	Theme with activities, books, crafts and puzzles
<b>Other Family Programming</b>			
Celebrating Canada week	Once/year	unavailable	unavailable
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre edukits	Once/month	unavailable	Package from NWT museum that includes activities and materials around a theme such as Northern games



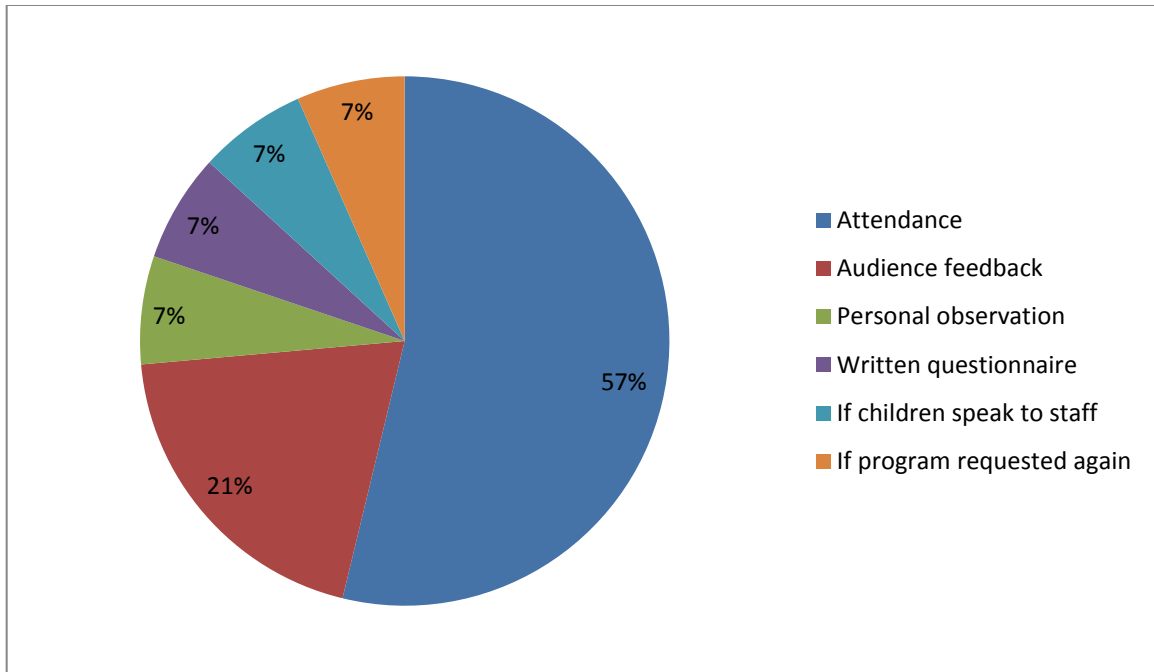
#### *6.4.2 Selection, planning and evaluating of library programs*

This section includes information on how respondents indicated that they select, plan and evaluate the library programs that they offer. Respondents use a variety of methods to determine what programs to offer. These methods include direct customer requests (21%), community needs (21%), personal interest (14%), ideas from other libraries (14%) and direction from the Library Board (7%).

Respondents listed a total of 15 different programs that they plan to or would like to offer. This includes "1-2-3 Rhyme with me"; a program developed by the NWT Literacy Council, Little Chefs, music programs and movie programs. These programs were at different stages of development. The 1-2-3 Rhyme with me program was discussed by two respondents who had recently attended a NWT Literacy Council training session on how to plan the program. Both were in the process of deciding when to offer the program, and one was waiting to start until after the winter school break when the school and library closes for two weeks. Three libraries were waiting for equipment to arrive from southern Canada before starting Karaoke, Wii and guitar programs. Another library was waiting to hear if a grant would be approved before starting a Little Chefs program. The respondent had plans to offer a modified program if funding was not approved. Another respondent was waiting for spring in order to offer a gardening program, while another library was working on a partnership arrangement with the local museum in order to offer a beading program. Some respondents were still in the planning stages and thinking about offering movie and music programs. These programs are the least likely to occur, as they were not clearly formulated and still more of a dream than a plan.

Libraries use a variety of methods to evaluate the programs that they offer. Most use program attendance as a way to evaluate the success of a program, and other evaluation methods used can be seen in Figure 2. As shown by this figure, only one library uses a written evaluation process. This written evaluation is used only for a couple of the many programs that they offer. Most participants demonstrated some confusion about how to evaluate programs and had to be prompted by queries about how they knew that people wanted the programs they offered.

Interestingly, one library uses children speaking to library staff as a measure of success. In this community, children are wary of the library staff and generally do not speak to them. After several programs, the children have been speaking to library staff who found this to be a great indicator that the program has been successful. In general, the respondents described using informal evaluation methods focusing on outputs.



**Figure 2: Program Evaluation**

#### 6.4.3 Other information about library programs

This section includes other information gathered during the interview process. This includes how programs are publicized, if participants used refreshments or other giveaways as an incentive to attend programs and if programs were funded through grants. Although not central to the main focus of this project, this is interesting additional information concerning how public libraries are managing programs.

Programs are predominantly advertised using community bulletin boards (71%). In Northern communities, most commercial enterprises and community offices contain community bulletin boards in their entranceways. Most communities only have one or two stores, plus the health centre and community government offices. Since only a few communities have weekly newspapers, these bulletin boards serve as popular ways to spread information.

Six respondents reported using some sort of Internet advertising, while five use community radio stations and three use community newspapers. Community television channels, flyers in the school, and the Town's electronic bulletin boards were used as advertising for two libraries each. Other advertising methods included putting a library calendar in every mailbox in town, using the local, school, or library newsletter, putting bookmarks in every book checked out, library brochures, word of mouth and sending letters to parents.

Refreshments were reported as being used for specific programs. Three respondents, for example, use refreshments as part of afterschool programs. Refreshments were also used for sewing and movie programs.

Book giveaways and draws were also mentioned as ways to get involvement. One library, for example, used a draw for Family Literacy Day.

Most programs are not funded through grants. Respondents who did use grants to fund programs reported using grants from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, NWT Literacy Council, Canadian Heritage, Canada Council and the community government.

#### *6.4.4 Literacy materials offered by libraries*

All respondents identified that their libraries offer materials for clients with lower levels of literacy. The majority (71%) identified that their libraries contained different levels of books for juvenile readers. Other sorts of materials that were listed include graphic novels, magazines, high interest-low reading level books for adults, large print books, and children's board books.

Respondents attract clients to these materials in a variety of ways including personal recommendations, promoting different materials during programs, and connecting books to movies that were based on the book.

#### *6.4.5 Alternate literacy programs and services*

During the interviews, respondents were asked if they offer any alternative literacy services or programs given the client's interest in current research on Aboriginal literacy. Alternative literacy in this sense refers to anything other than the traditional focus on reading and writing. Some examples include computer, music, or cultural literacy. Computer and music literacy programming focuses on improving skills related to computers or music, while cultural literacy refers to programming related to understanding one's own or another's culture.

Three respondents indicated that their library did not offer any alternative literacy programs or services in this area. Five participants stated that computer literacy training was offered. There were a variety of other responses of what alternate literacy services were offered. For example, two people said that their library programming involved cooking or food nights. Two participants mentioned cultural literacy, one mentioning a specific storytelling workshop and festival. Another person talked about sharing websites with other libraries and another described a CD with matching book and headphones.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This section described the interview findings, including information about the respondents, their training experience and capacity and literacy programming in their libraries and communities. The largest part of this section described existing literacy programming in their libraries. The next section in this paper attempts to answer the research question of this project using the research described in this paper, including the interviews.

## **7.0 DISCUSSION**

The research question in this project is “How can training for library managers be changed to improve literacy programming in libraries in the NWT”? As described in previous sections, the theoretical framework theorizes that with increased training, public library managers will offer more frequent and better quality programming. As well, access to this programming will then lead to an improvement in literacy in the NWT. The conceptual framework builds on the theoretical framework, but recognizes that other factors may affect literacy rates. This framework also assumes that there will be ways to alter traditional print-based literacy programs to be more effective within Aboriginal communities that will be developed as the research in this area continues.

The most interesting findings during this project are the great variation between community libraries. Some are providing no literacy programming, while others are providing daily programs. The difference in the level of experience of library workers is also startling as well as the variation in their self-identified training needs. It is interesting that most identified a desire for further training. These findings mean that planning training appropriate for all library workers in the NWT is going to be very challenging as discussed further in this section.

To answer the research question, several sub-questions have been identified to explore including: what can be learned from research into Aboriginal literacies; what can be learned from existing literacy programs in the NWT; what literacy training is currently available and how is it perceived; and how can training be improved? This section examines how the research completed as part of this project answers these questions.

### **7.1 Research into Aboriginal Literacies**

Examination of recent research concerning literacy from the point of view from Aboriginal cultures suggests that literacy programming in Aboriginal communities should take into account Aboriginal literacies. At this point, this appears to mean customizing programming to a particular community, instead of using the same program outline in different environments (Antone et al., 2003, p.21). An example recommends using similar teaching techniques to those within the Aboriginal culture, especially for children (McKeough et al., 2008, p.150). The reasoning behind this is that to learn from the context of another culture, the children first have to learn about the other culture. If the programming can be done from the context of a familiar culture, it is more likely to be successful (McKeough et al., 2008, p.151). In the NWT, where there are eleven official languages, and a number of different Aboriginal cultures, this may be particularly important to take into consideration when developing or improving current literacy initiatives.

Given that research on Aboriginal literacy is still in its early stages, research on the effectiveness of library literacy programs in general was examined. Some studies on early literacy programming and summer reading were located. The research did not break down

specific aspects of programs, so it becomes challenging to use this research when developing other programs. These studies generally found that the programming was effective, although there was some concern of the difficulty of isolating the effect of library programming, given all of the other factors that can affect literacy (MacLean, 2008, p.17).

## **7.2 Considerations from Explorations of Current NWT Literacy Programs**

There is a lot that can be learned from looking at what literacy programs are currently being offered in the NWT and specifically, in reference to this project, those being offered by public libraries. As demonstrated, a number of organizations offer literacy programs in the NWT. Ten participants in the interviews indicated that other literacy programming was available in their communities, while four indicated that there was no other literacy programming except what the library offered. Aurora College offers Adult Basic Education at three campuses and twenty-two adult learning centres spread across the territory (Aurora College, 2011, Delivery Location). Local literacy committees offer literacy programming funded through the NWT Literacy Council and ECE (ECE, “Community Literacy”, n.d., p.2; NWT Literacy Council, “Criteria”, n.d., p.2). No evaluations of the effectiveness of these programs were located.

This research demonstrates good coverage for adult literacy programs in the NWT, as most communities have either an Aurora College campus or adult learning centre. However, there are gaps in the provision of family literacy or literacy aimed at children and youth. Four out of the fourteen respondents indicated that there was no other literacy programming available in their communities, which also demonstrates a gap in services. It seems clear that the provision of literacy programming, especially that with a focus on families or youth, is an important gap that community libraries can fill. Libraries may also wish to partner with adult learning centers when planning adult literacy programs, to ensure that there is no duplication of services.

When it comes to the current offerings by libraries, nine participants currently offer literacy programming, while one respondent plans to offer such programming in the future. A total of fifty-four literacy programs were identified by the participants, including family literacy programs, after school programs, computer programs, food programs, movie programs and music programs. The focus in most libraries is to develop programs that will be popular and attract a large audience. When library managers determine which programs to offer, they consider similar factors such as customer requests, community needs, and personal interest of library workers. Participants use a variety of methods to evaluate programs such as attendance and audience feedback.

There are both positive and negative aspects to focusing on the size of the audience when planning and evaluating literacy programming. In many cases, the public libraries are very new to their communities, some less than one year old. These are located in remote northern communities where there may never have been library access before, and the idea of using a library is new. Since these libraries are so new, there needs to be a focus on attracting community members to the library, and this involves planning attractive

programming. Therefore, using the size of the audience to evaluate programming can be a positive, as attracting an increasingly larger audience to new programs demonstrates a measure of success.

The negative aspect to this form of planning and evaluating is that programs may not be developed to provide the most effective literacy programming. Some programs may be very successful in terms of improving literacy of the participants, even though the number of participants was low. This sort of push-and-pull should be communicated to library workers through training so that they are better able to make programming decisions and consider other options for program evaluation. Making a more conscious effort to evaluate programming may be all that can be done at this point. When analyzing the attendance of a program, the programmer could examine what segment of the population attended the program. For example, the programmer could consider if the audience is primarily children, adults or teenagers. If most programs are attended only by children, the programmer can attempt to design programming that would attract adults. Given current capacity of library staff, other options for program evaluation would have to be simple, but should still be considered as a way to improve programs.

Furthermore, sharing information between libraries about the kinds of programming being offered could help stimulate programming ideas. Better communication could, for instance, help librarians with library materials. Respondents had some difficulty responding to questions about library materials suitable to customers with different literacy levels. The majority were able to identify the existence of materials for juvenile readers, but had more difficulty identifying what was available for adult readers. All public libraries receive similar materials from NWT Public Library Services and have a selection that includes graphic novels, magazines, and high interest, low vocabulary materials for all ages. These were not identified by all respondents, indicating a possible training gap related to library materials. Respondents also had difficulty identifying how they would attract customers to these kinds of materials, indicating another possible training gap.

### **7.3 Current Literacy Training and Perceptions**

An examination of the literature looking at existing training for library workers in remote and rural locations identified formal training created in both Minnesota and Ontario to address the needs of library workers without an academic education in libraries (Steury, 2004, p.8-9; SOLS, *Excel*, n.d.). Both programs involve distance education and working towards some form of certificate. No information was found determining whether this form of training has been effective or not.

Other training of library workers in South Africa used a workshop model to teach library workers a framework that they could use to develop a campaign appropriate for their community (de Jager & Nassimbeni, 2007, p.317-318). This training was found by the researchers to be very effective, partly due to the enthusiasm of participants, and partly due to the ability to customize the work to their community.

Outside of what is offered by NWT Public Library Services to library workers, literacy training in the NWT primarily consists of workshops and resources supplied by the NWT Literacy Council. This organization offers regional workshops, day workshops in Yellowknife and provides a number of literacy resources at no cost to NWT residents.

When asked to identify training they had received, the participants in the interview identified training from NWT Public Library Services, from the NWT Literacy Council, previous library managers, online courses and conference attendance. There were some discrepancies concerning how the participants defined training. At least two who attended the NWT Public Library Services October workshop did not identify it as training, while the others who attended did. Some identified telephone or in person training from NWT Public Library Services as training, while others did not. These differences may mean that the information concerning likes and dislikes about training may be misleading if participants are referring to different definitions of training.

The benefits of attending training identified by respondents can be divided into introductory knowledge and more advanced instruction. Introductory knowledge includes getting an introduction to the library, learning local library operations, learning how to organize a library, learning how to do interlibrary loans and learning how to use circulation systems. More advanced instruction includes getting programming ideas, having questions answered and learning what other libraries are doing. Given that the majority of respondents have been in their position for less than one year, while thirty-six percent have been in their position for more than two years, this result is not surprising. These results indicate a strong need for introductory training within the first year of work, as well as some desire for more advanced training by a smaller percentage of respondents. Training needs identified by respondents demonstrated a similar result. The most popular needs were learning how libraries run and how to apply for grants and write proposals. One is an introductory need, while the other is relevant to a more knowledgeable library worker. Being able to apply for funding for literacy programming is would be very beneficial; given that PLS has no additional funding for it.

The reasons for disliking training focused on the training being too short in some way, not having enough training, and wanting training earlier in their employment. There is a strong desire for more training, as shown by this result and also the response that ninety-three percent of respondents are interested in more training. Half would prefer in-person training, while one person would prefer a webinar format.

#### **7.4 Recommended Changes to Training for Library Managers to Improve Literacy Programming in Libraries in the NWT**

The interviews demonstrate a wide range of both library experience and education. For example, fifty-seven percent of the respondents had been in their position for less than one year, while thirty-six percent respondents had been in their position for more than two years. This means that the training needs of library managers are also quite diverse. New

library managers require a very different level and content of training than do managers with more experience.

The diversity in education also provides a challenge. With managers ranging in education level from grade ten to a Master's degree, the familiarity and comfort with formal education is quite different. This underlines the need for flexible training that is relevant to all managers.

When asked to identify training needs, library managers identified thirteen different needs. This large range of needs makes it challenging to plan training. From the findings, it seems that new library managers are in need of basic library training in their first days on the job in order to be able to provide basic library services as well as to create a foundation that later training can build upon. Other training needs ranged from how apply for grants, to book selection and purchasing and to managerial training. These findings add to the challenges that need to be considered when planning training.

The overall preference is for onsite training tailored to their specific library. However, the reality of the cost of travel in the NWT may make this not feasible. Information gathered on the capacity of respondents suggests that some remote training options should be considered. Some caution should be used though, as not all libraries were represented in the interviews. It is possible that individuals with less capacity to use remote training opportunities would have found it more difficult to participate in the interviews. However, of those who participated, the vast majority do use email, although one does not use email at all. Half of the participants would have no difficulty working on training exercises or videos while at work, while another five think that they might be able to work on them with some notice. This suggests that there is some value to considering developing or getting access to some form of remote training that might be video or computer based. Although those interviewed did not bring up any issues with bandwidth, it is likely that there will be some problems with it. This may mean considering options that can be provided to participants (such as instructional DVDs), rather than live-streaming video.

## **7.5 Methodology and Recommendations for Further Research**

The methodology used in this research project included a literature review, environmental scan, a literacy program analysis and interviews. Major weaknesses of this methodology include the relative lack of research on training in rural and remote libraries as well as the possibility of misreporting by those interviewed. Despite extensive searching, very little research was located concerning training in rural and remote libraries. As explained earlier, this can be attributed to smaller libraries not having the resources to do research studies. This lack of information makes it more difficult to develop recommendations for successful training.

The second weakness identified is the possibility of misreporting by those interviewed. Responses could be inflated in a desire to impress, or be inaccurate due to not remembering information. Respondents may have misunderstood questions due to differing definitions of



programming or literacy, leading to inaccurate responses. Another possible area of inaccuracy involves reporting on training provided by NWTPLS. It is possible that respondents did not identify problems with this training because of a desire not to offend. These are all common issues that may occur with interviewing, and are difficult to avoid. However, it is important to identify these potential problems, although almost impossible to control for or evaluate any of them.

Both of these weaknesses lead to recommendations for further research. It is clear that more research is needed in the area of training for rural and remote libraries. As training is developed and then provided in the area of literacy programming, it would be valuable to follow up with questions concerning what programs are being offered to determine if there have been any changes that can be attributed to the training. Due to the potential issues with misreporting, these interviews could be supplemented with independent reporting of program provided, perhaps from another community source.

The recommendations provided above are very specific to this particular research project. It would also be valuable to widen the field of study away from the provision of training, and instead evaluate the effectiveness of different types of literacy programming. This could be combined with research into Aboriginal literacy, with attempts to understand which types of literacy programming are most appropriate within an Aboriginal population, and if this changes with different Aboriginal communities.

## **7.6 Discussion of Methodology**

This research paper uses several different methods in order to explore how to make improvements to the quality of literacy programming. These include a literature review, environmental scan, literacy program analysis and interviews with library staff. The purpose was to examine research in literacy, literacy programming, library programming, and related training to determine ways to positively affect literacy programming. The results of this research inform every aspect of the discussion.

The literature review examined research into literacy in Canada and within Aboriginal populations as well as looking at training for library workers in remote and rural locations. The results from this review inform Sections 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5. In 7.1, it is the research around Aboriginal literacy that is the main focus of the discussion, while in 7.3; the main focus is the research about training for library workers in remote and rural locations. In 7.4, the literature review indicated a number of locations use remote training for these kinds of libraries, and so it is recommended in this section, while it is the lack of much research on remote and rural libraries as well as some of the research on Aboriginal literacies, that suggests areas for further research.

The environmental scan examined existing literacy programming in the NWT while the literacy program analysis looked at literacy programs currently offered by public libraries. The results from this research inform Sections 7.2 and 7.3. In 7.2, the existing literacy programming is used to identify areas where there are service gaps as well as possible

partnerships. In 7.3, the existing training for literacy programming in the NWT is used in the discussion of possible training options.

The interviews gathered a considerable amount of information from library managers about current training, programming and capacity. This information informs Sections 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5. In 7.2, information about current programming in NWT libraries is discussed while in 7.3 the answers relating to training received by library managers is examined. In 7.4, the information concerning library managers experience and education informs the discussion, while the results of the interviews play a big part in the discussion in Section 7.5. Indeed, all the information gathered through the research methods used are incorporated into the discussion.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

This section explores how the research question was answered by the research completed as a part of this project. This research question is “How can training for library managers be changed to improve literacy programming in libraries in the NWT”? This section began by examining research into the study of Aboriginal literacies and the effectiveness of library literacy programs. This research demonstrates that library literacy programming is generally effective in affecting literacy in a positive manner. It also recommends that programs planned for communities with Aboriginal populations be customized to the local environment.

The next part of this section explored current NWT literacy programs. The research demonstrated good coverage for adult literacy programs but gaps in the provision of family literacy or literacy aimed at children and youth. Community libraries can help fill this gap with additional programming, and should work with Aurora College to ensure that there is no duplication of services.

The discussion then moved to an examination of current literacy training and perceptions of that training. Information from the respondents described interest in both introductory knowledge and more advanced instruction. The variety of training interests expressed highlights the differing needs of library staff depending on their years of experience working in a library. The final part of this section looked at ways that current training could be improved for literacy programming. The identified training needs were diverse, making planning difficult. Most respondents preferred in-person training, which is difficult and expensive in a large geographic area. Remote training is a possible alternative, although may not work for all libraries. A possible solution is to develop a training solution such as a workbook or instructional DVD that library staff could use at their own pace.

## **8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations have been developed using the information gathered in this research project. The primary research question is “How can training for library managers be changed to improve literacy programming in libraries in the NWT”? The recommendations, therefore, are centered on specific ways that training for library managers can be changed to meet the objective of improving literacy programming.

### **8.1 Recommendations**

#### **1. Monitor developments in Aboriginal literacy research and incorporate into training for literacy programming in libraries**

Developments in Aboriginal literacy research could have profound effects on literacy programming in Aboriginal communities. The research thus far demonstrates the importance of tailoring programming to the community and following traditional Aboriginal learning techniques where possible. Any training developed by PLS regarding literacy programming will have to take this into account, by instructing library workers on methods that will allow library workers to do this. Based primarily on the results of the literature review and the experience of other jurisdictions, it is recommended that training integrated flexibility into program outlines and demonstrate how Aboriginal learning techniques can be incorporated.

These recommendations may change as the research in this area matures. It is recommended that NWT Public Library Services continue to follow the developments in this research and communicate them to public library managers on a regular basis through existing in-person workshops and library visits. When the research is further along, it will be important for NWT Public Library Services to communicate specific program ideas to library managers, include those ideas in training, and discuss policy and program development opportunities and challenges.

#### **2. Develop effective evaluation practices, which can be used to assist librarians in future program developments.**

Twenty-three distinct literacy programs were reported during interviews. The reported literacy programs included nine main categories: family literacy programs, afterschool programs, computer programs, author visits, food programs, movie programs, music programs, English as a Second or Other Language programs, and Family Literacy Day events. It is recommended that NWT Public Library Services gathers current evaluations of these programs and uses this information to develop training for library managers on how to develop these literacy programs.

Respondents reported that they evaluate programs using informal input and output measures such as attendance and audience. These evaluations are informal and sporadic. It

is recommended that NWT Public Library Services develops training to formally evaluate programming so that library managers have appropriate skills at their disposal to evaluate and then based on the results, develop improved programming. For this training to be most effective, it is recommended that logic models be developed for each of the nine reported literacy programs to be communicated for library staff. This is one specific aspect that can be incorporated into literacy programming training in order to improve literacy programming.

Using the evaluation model described by Matthews (2004, p.2-3), library programs can be measured using input, outcome, and output measures, or a logic model. Input measures are primarily budget-related, in terms of the expenditure on materials and staff time to produce a program (Matthews, 2004, p. 194-195). Outcome measures try to determine the impact of programming on individuals and the community measuring client satisfaction, for example (Matthews, 2004, p.3). Output measures, as defined by Matthews, look more at the use of programming, measuring program attendance (2004, p.213). More ambitious evaluation models of programming have sought to evaluate the effect of programming on the participants' skill levels (Matthews, 2010, p.37; MacLean, 2008, p.17). Given the current evaluation methods used by library workers, it is recommended to develop a simple logic model based on easy to gather input and output measures for everyday usage, and devise a more complex evaluation model for less frequent usage. Programmers can use the information gathered to make improvements to their literacy programming. This change in evaluation should be incorporated into any training around literacy programming.

### **3. Develop training concerning materials designed for library users with varied literacy levels.**

The majority of interview respondents expressed that literacy programming is important in their communities, and several indicated that they felt this way due to low literacy levels in their community; however, most had difficulty identifying library resources designed for library users with differing literacy levels as well as methods to attract users to these resources.

Training should be developed to address this knowledge gap. This training should include information about what specialized resources are available, as well as how to introduce these resources to library customers. As well, it is recommended that any new literacy resources that are provided to public libraries are accompanied by appropriate training resources in the use and promotion of that material.

### **4. Continue offering training opportunities that allow library managers to communicate their programming methods and ideas.**

According to those interviewed, some of the libraries are offering a great variety of literacy programming in the NWT and the methods they use are varied as well. Some include refreshments as incentives, some apply for grants, and they use a variety of ways to develop new programming. Findings from the interviews indicated that there was interest in learning more about grant applications and discussing program ideas.

It is recommended that PLS investigates effective ways to facilitate information sharing between public libraries. This may include planning opportunities for library managers to discuss innovative and effective programming methods and ideas in future workshops. Another method could be the development of a web-based communication tool such as a best practises portal to encourage this communication outside meetings.

### **5. Develop remote introductory level training for library managers in their first year of employment.**

The majority of interviewed library workers had been in their position for less than one year and not surprisingly, respondents stated there was a need for introductory library training. Introductory training would include addressing such subjects as introduction to library work, to circulation systems, to general library operations, and to local library operations. Once library workers are comfortable with the basics of library operations, they will be able to focus on more difficult tasks such as improving literacy programming and support to their community. This assumption comes from the observation that those library employees with more experience were providing a greater amount of programming than those that did not.

Most respondents would prefer that this training takes place in person; however, the reality of the NWT geography may mean that some sort of remote training is more feasible as an immediate option for new staff. Interview results demonstrated that a form of remote training is a possible option in many locations, although not in all locations. In locations where staff do not have the time to work on remote training, training will have to occur during annual in-person workshops.

Given that the model for training currently followed by NWT Public Library Services is in-person workshops in two out of every three years, in addition to in-person training visits, this need for introductory training may not be being fulfilled as quickly as library managers would like, as demonstrated by one response that training would have been preferred closer to the person's hire date. The creation of some form of introductory remote training may help meet this need. Once library workers are able to perform the basic tasks of their position, they will be able to work on more complex undertakings such as literacy programming.

### **6. Further research**

Further research in this area should examine the effectiveness of any training for literacy programming that is provided. This could include interviews as well as reports on what literacy programming is developed after training. Other research should look into the effectiveness of different types of literacy programming with relation to the Aboriginal communities that it is provided in.

## 8.2 Conclusion

This paper began by examining ways to improve literacy in the NWT. After examining factors that influence literacy, the research was narrowed to those factors related to programming, such as quality and availability of programming. The focus of this paper became how to improve the quality of programming being offered in the NWT. Training for programmers was identified as one possible means, and the research focused on how to improve training for programmers as well as researching if there were any other ways to improve the quality of programming.

To explore these two areas, a methodology was developed that included a literature review, environmental scan, literacy program analysis and interviews of library staff. This methodology was designed to explore research in literacy including existing literacy and library programming as well as training for both remote libraries and literacy programming. This research indicated three ways to improve training for programmers, discussed in this section as recommendations two, three and four. These include providing training about how to evaluate programs, provide training on how to use and recommend specialized literacy resources and provide opportunities within training for library programmers to communicate their programming ideas.

The research led to three other recommendations related to how to improve programming. The first is to monitor developments in Aboriginal literacy research and eventually incorporate them into programming, the second is to ensure capacity of library programmers to be able to provide programming through the provision of introductory level training and the third relates to possible further research. Using these recommendations PLS should be able to improve the training they provide to public library staff in the NWT.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A: Letter to Aboriginal Governments Regarding Research Study Including a Person in their Community**

Dear [*Aboriginal government*]:

My name is Alison Hopkins, and I am a graduate student in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. I am employed as the Territorial Librarian from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories. I am conducting a research study to achieve a Master's of Public Administration.

This study is entitled **Addressing Literacy in the Northwest Territories: Government Initiatives to Improve Staff Training in Community Libraries** and involves interviewing community library managers. The information gathered for this study will be kept confidential and is expected to identify ways to improve training for community library staff with special focus on literacy services. The results of this research will be shared with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment of the Government of the Northwest Territories as well as local community governments.

Upon completion of this study, I would like to send the results to [*Aboriginal government*] for your information.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns at [Ahopkins@northwestel.net](mailto:Ahopkins@northwestel.net) or (867) 874-2426.

**Appendix B: Communities with Public Libraries**

(Communities whose library managers did not participate in the research are italicized)

<b>Community</b>	<b>Population (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2012)</b>
Aklavik	633
<i>Behchoko</i>	<i>1,926</i>
Deline	472
Fort Good Hope	515
Fort Liard	536
Fort McPherson	792
Fort Providence	734
Fort Simpson	1,238
Fort Smith	2,093
<i>Fort Resolution</i>	<i>474</i>
<i>Gameti</i>	<i>253</i>
Hay River	3,606
Hay River Reserve (K'atl'odeeche)	292
Inuvik	3,463
<i>Norman Wells</i>	<i>727</i>
Tuktoyaktuk	854
Tulita	478
<i>Ulukhaktok</i>	<i>402</i>
<i>Wha Ti</i>	<i>492</i>
Yellowknife	19,234

**Appendix C: Letter and/or email to Request Library Manager to be Involved in Research Study**

Dear \_insert name...

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Addressing Literacy in the Northwest Territories: Government Initiatives to Improve Staff Training in Community Libraries that is being conducted by Alison Hopkins.

You may be familiar with me as the Territorial Librarian of the Government of the Northwest Territories. This research study relates to work I am doing as a graduate student in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and I am doing this research to achieve a Master's of Public Administration.

The interview will take thirty minutes of your time and will involve answering questions over the telephone or in person related to your work and training you have received. The information gathered will be kept confidential and will be used in a university research project. The purpose of the project is to make recommendations for improved training. The results of this research will be shared with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment of the Government of the Northwest Territories and your local community government.

You will be asked to sign a consent form before being asked any questions and you can decide to withdraw from this study at any time with no ramifications.

I understand that because in my role as Territorial Librarian, I provide funding for your library, you may feel compelled to participate in this research. Please understand that this research is unrelated to our professional relationship and that there is no consequence to deciding not to be involved.

At your convenience, please respond to this email/ letter to let me know if you are interested in participating in this study. If I do not hear from you in one week (email)/ two weeks (letter), I will follow up with a telephone call to ask if you are interested in participating.

Thank you,

Alison Hopkins



## **Appendix D: Interview Questions**

### **Question about interview participant**

1. Months/years in library position
2. What is your level of education?

### **Questions about training received**

3. What types of training have you received to help you do your job?
4. Who provided the training?
5. Tell me about how the training helped you? Can you give examples?
6. What, if anything, did you not like about the training?
7. What would have improved the training?
8. What other training do you think you need?
9. What is the preferred method training?

### **Questions about capacity**

10. Do you have a computer with Internet access at work?
11. Can you watch videos on that computer (not filtered, bandwidth reasonable)?
12. Do you have a work email account? If yes, how often do you use it? Do you ever have trouble accessing your email account?
13. Do you have time at work to be able to watch training videos or do training exercises?

### **Questions about literacy**

14. What literacy programming does the library currently offer? (specific topics are given below if prompts are needed)
  - a. family literacy programming?
  - b. adult literacy?
  - c. programming for NWT Literacy week or Family Literacy Day?
  - d. storytimes?
  - e. any of the programs created and outlined by the NWT Literacy Council?
  - f. cultural literacy programs?
15. For each specific literacy program offered
  - a. how often do you run the program?
  - b. how many attend the program?
  - c. how do you prepare for the program?
  - d. what kind of advertising is used?
  - e. are prizes and/or refreshments used to encourage attendance?
  - f. are any programs funded through grants? If so, which grants?
  - g. what do you identify as the main benefit of the program? How do you evaluate the program?
16. How do you determine which programs to offer?
17. What other literacy programming is available in your community?

18. Is literacy programming important in your community? If so, why? For any specific age group?
19. What other sorts of programming would you like to offer? What prevents you from offering it now?
20. What kind of training do you think you would need in order to offer better or a greater variety of literacy programming?
21. Does your library contain materials suitable for clients with lower levels of literacy?
  - a. For what age group?
  - b. Graphic novels, hi-lo, magazines, etc. ?
  - c. How do you attract customers to these materials?
  - d. Do you need more materials of this nature?
  - e. Do you need training concerning this kind of material?
22. Are you familiar with alternative literacies such as computer literacy and cultural literacies? Do library programs involve these sorts of literacies?
23. Do you have any questions or any other information you would like to share before the interview ends?

## Appendix E: Summary of Interview Results

14 out of 20 Library Managers agreed to be interviewed.

Questions are reported in a different order than the list of interview questions. (Q) references the question number from the interview questions when different from the order in Appendix C.

### Interview Participants

#### 1) Amount of time in current library position

- ranged from 2 months to 10 years
- 57% (8) had been in their position for less than 1 year
- 36% (5) had been in their position for two or more years

Time in current position	Number of participants
2 months	1
5 months	2
6 months	3
7 months	1
11 months	1
14 months	1
2 years	1
3 years	1
5.5 years	1
8 years	1
10 years	1

#### 2) Level of education

- ranged from Grade 10 to Masters of Library and Information Science

Education level	Number of participants	Fields of study
Grade 10	1	
High school graduate	3	
College graduate	3	Associate Arts Fashion Merchandising Management
University graduate - Bachelor	4	Arts Arts and Social Work English Nursing
University graduate - Masters	2	Education Divinity
Masters of Library and Information Science	1	

### Questions about training received

3) Would participant like further training? (Q8)

- 93% (13) said yes
- 7% (1) said no

4) Would participant like training concerning literacy programming? (Q20)

- 79% (11) said yes
- 7% (1) said no
- 14% (2) were not asked this question

5) Would participant like training concerning literacy materials? (Q21)

- 57% (8) said yes
- 14% (2) said no
- 29% (4) were not asked this question

6) What types of training has the participant received in order to help them do their job?  
(Q3-4)

- NWTPLS workshop - 7
- NWT Literacy Council training session - 3
- training from previous library manager - 2
- by telephone with NWTPLS staff - 2
- library visit by NWTPLS staff - 1
- Aurora College leadership course - 1
- none - 1
- on the job learning - 1
- some SAIT courses on library management - 1
- attended Canadian Library Association Conference - 1
- training from supervisor - 1
- online course on supervision - 1
- online course on children's literature - 1

7) How did the training help? (Q5)

- learned manual and online circulation systems -4
- introduction to libraries - 2
- answered questions - 2
- gave programming ideas - 2
- more awareness of what other libraries are doing - 2
- learned how to organize library - 1
- learned local library operations - 1
- learned how to do interlibrary loans - 1

8) What did the participant not like about the training? What improvements? (Q6-7)

- not enough, would like longer - 3

- too brief, participant was weathered out of part of the training - 1
- would like two sessions close together so that learning could be incorporated better - 1
- SAIT courses were not specific enough to NWT reality - 1
- training offered closer to hire date - 1
- more interactive time to talk with other library representatives - 1

9) What other training does the participant want? (Q8)

- basic training on how libraries run - 3
- applying for grants, proposal writing - 3
- how to choose books to purchase - 1
- specific library training, not sure exactly - 1
- on-going training on online circulation system - 1
- managerial training - 1
- NWT Literacy Council training - 1
- programming - 1
- onsite training - 1
- conflict resolution and dealing with difficult people - 1
- safety issues - 1
- organizing the library - 1
- differences between public and school libraries - 1

10) What is the preferred method of training? (Q9)

- in person - 7
- webinar - 1
- not sure - 1
- any way - 1

### **Capacity for Training**

11) Access to a computer with Internet access at work? (Q10)

- 100% said yes

12) Ability to watch videos on work computer? (Q11)

- 71% (10) said that they could watch videos on their computer
- 29% (4) said that they could not or that some things were blocked

13) Does participant have a work email account? How often do they use the account? (Q12)

- 100% have an email account
- 79% (11) have a work account while the remainder use personal accounts
- 93% (13) use their email daily or every other day
- 7% (1) does not use email at all

14) Does participant have time during work to watch training videos or do training exercises? (Q13)

- 50% (7) said yes
- 36% (5) said maybe, depending if the training were flexible or enough notice was given to make arrangements
- 14% (2) said no

### Questions about literacy

15) Does the library provide literacy programming to the community? (Q14)

- 64% (9) said yes
- 14% (2) said no
- 7% (1) said no, but that programming was in the planning stages

16) If the library provides literacy programming, what is offered? How often do programs run? (Q14-15)

How many attend programs?

Each line below describes a different response from a library

Programming	Details	How often	Attendance
<b>Afterschool programming (9)</b>			
<b>Afterschool programs</b>	Each night is a different age group	3 nights/wk	Up to 47
<b>Afterschool programming</b>	Each night is a different age group; one night is a book club	3 nights/wk	
<b>Afterschool program</b>	Homework help, reading club, crafts, games, puzzles	Every school day	6-45
<b>Afterschool program</b>	Snack, games, reading	Once/wk	
<b>Afterschool activities</b>	Different age each day; allow all in during cold weather	Every school day	10-15
<b>Afterschool program</b>	Different activity every day such as painting, movies, games	Every school day	2-15
<b>Afterschool program</b>	Reading and crafts	Twice/wk	2-6
<b>Read with me</b>	Afterschool for all ages	Once/wk	4-11
<b>One-on-one reading with children</b>		After school	
<b>Author visits (4)</b>			
<b>Author visits</b>	Local or national authors		
<b>Author visits</b>			
<b>Author visits</b>	2-3/yr		
<b>Author visits</b>			

<b>Computer Programming(5)</b>			
<b>Computers</b>		every day	
<b>Computers for seniors</b>	Computer instruction		
<b>Computer Literacy</b>	One-on-one		
<b>Computer time</b>	Only after 10 min of reading	daily	
<b>MS Word</b>	Training session	once	
<b>ESOL (2)</b>			
<b>English as a 2nd language</b>			
<b>ESOL</b>	English as a second or other language sessions		19-20
<b>Family Literacy/ storytime and activities (11)</b>			
<b>0-6 yr old program</b>	Craft or story and movie or cooking decorating or scavenger hunt	Once/wk	
<b>Books in the home</b>	Book, story, related activities, craft	Once/wk for 6 weeks	3-12
<b>Children's storytime</b>	Storytime, crafts, games	Once/wk	15-30
<b>Evening literacy program</b>	Crafts, reading	Once/wk	
<b>Family Literacy</b>		Once/month	30
<b>Family Literacy nights</b>	Crafts, colouring, Wii	Once/week	10-15
<b>Family programs</b>	One either game night or family reading night; other story and activities	2 nights/wk	3-4
<b>Parents and Tots</b>		Once/wk	6-12
<b>Parents and Tots</b>	Story and related craft	Once/wk	3-21
<b>Reading/ craft program</b>		1-2/month	
<b>Start your month out right</b>		Once/month	6-12
<b>Family Literacy Day events (2)</b>			
<b>Family Literacy Day</b>	Turn your screen off		
<b>Family Literacy Day</b>	Read for 15 with draw; colouring contest for younger kids; literacy bingo	Once/year	Whole school
<b>Food programs (3)</b>			
<b>Cupcake challenge</b>	Reading, tips on decorating cakes		
<b>Food nights</b>	Cooking from different cultures and diets		

<b>Hungry for change</b>	Read and discuss food, ethics and sustainability	Once/wk for 6 weeks	
<b>Movie programs (3)</b>			
<b>Classic cinema</b>	Show classic movies		
<b>National Film Board Club</b>	Show NFB films	every other wk	8-22
<b>National Film Board Club</b>	Show NFB films		
<b>Music programs (3)</b>			
<b>Fiddle program</b>		Once/week	
<b>Music Nights</b>		Once/month	
<b>Music night</b>		Once	
<b>Other Adult Programming (8)</b>			
<b>Bookclub, unbooked</b>	No specific book to read	Once/month	2
<b>Genealogy program</b>	Speaking with Elders to gather information, creating community family tress		
<b>Health series</b>	Guests on different topics	Once/month	15
<b>Philosopher's Cafe</b>	Discussion forum open to all customers on specified topics		
<b>Sewing night</b>	Talk and sew	Once/week	5-6
<b>Spanish circles</b>	Practise Spanish		8
<b>TAILS</b>	Read to a dog		
<b>Travel slide shows</b>			20-40
<b>Other Children's Programming (4)</b>			
<b>Children's knitting group</b>		Once/wk	
<b>Geographic day</b>	Each class had a different activity about Australia; library staff cooked sausages and offered to local companies for lunch	Once	
<b>School class visits</b>	Storytime or library training session	Once/month	
<b>TD Summer Reading Club</b>	Theme with activities, books, crafts and puzzles	Once/wk for 6 weeks	
<b>Other Family programming (2)</b>			
<b>Celebrating Canada week</b>		Once/yr	
<b>PWNHC edukits</b>	Package from NWT	Once/month	



museum that includes activities and materials around a theme such as Northern games

18) What kind of advertising is used to promote literacy programming? (Q15d.)

- community bulletin boards - 10
- radio - 5
- Facebook, Internet or website - 6
- newspaper - 3
- community tv channel - 2
- flyers in school - 2
- town's electronic bulletin board - 2
- calendar in every mailbox in town - 1
- City newsletter - 1
- give out bookmarks with event info - 1
- library brochure available in library - 1
- monthly library newsletter - 1
- school's monthly newsletter - 1
- sent letters home to school children's parents - 1
- word of mouth - 1

19) Are prizes and/or refreshments used to encourage attendance? (Q15e.)

- refreshments - 3
- snack for homework hour - 3
- prizes for Family Literacy Day funded by Hamlet - 1
- Tea and cookies for Sewing night - 1
- refreshments during movie
- draw for Family Literacy Day
- book giveaways

20) Are programs funded through grants? (Q15f.)

- no - 2
- yes - ESOL and seniors' literacy program from ECE
- yes - Family literacy funding (ECE), NWT Literacy Council, Canadian Heritage, Canada Council grant
- yes - Band Office

21) How are programs evaluated? (Q15g.)

- attendance - 8
- what attendees say after program - 3
- if children speak to library staff - 1
- if program is requested again - 1

- personal observation by library staff - 1
- evaluations at the end of some programs - 1

22) Programs that participant is planning or would like to offer (Q19)

- 1-2-3 Rhyme with me - 2
- book club for adults
- International Film Festival
- Children's movie nights
- Wii
- Karaoke on PS Connect
- music program of some kind
- Learn to play guitar for teenagers
- Reading Buddies and Literacy
- homework help after school
- partner with local museum to offer arts courses like beading
- Little chefs with science fun
- Arts and Craft workshop
- Planting program where children plant and water a plant
- literacy games

23) How does participant decide on new programs? (Q16)

- customer requests - 3
- need in community - 3
- websites of other libraries, what other libraries do - 2
- personal interest of staff - 2
- direction of the Board - 1

24) Does the library provide materials suitable for clients with lower levels of literacy? (Q21)

- 100% (14) said yes

25) What sorts of materials are available for clients with lower levels of literacy? (Q21)

- books for different levels for juvenile readers - 10
- graphic novels - 6
- magazines - 3
- hi-lo books for adults - 3
- large print books - 2
- adult literacy section - 2
- balanced literacy room not in library - 1
- board books - 1

26) How does participant attract customers to these materials? (Q21c.)

- still trying to attract community to visit library
- recommend book if customer is checking out the movie book was based on

- recommend books similar to books customer enjoyed
- offering customer a variety of options
- advertise new books during class visits
- put a sticker in DVDs based on book, advising customer of that
- have books that popular shows or movies are based on
- make suggestions to people knowing their interests and being sensitive to their literacy level
- displays of new books
- mention in relevant programs (ie. ESOL) - 1
- promote in weekly newspaper article - 1

27) Does the library offer alternative literacies? (music, cultural, computer) (Q22)

- computers - 5
- no - 3
- family literacy programs involve cooking, food nights - 2
- CD recording with matching book and headphones - 1
- cultural with storytelling workshop and festival - 1
- share websites - 1
- Cultural literacy - 1

28) Is other literacy programming available in the community? (Q18)

- 64% (9) said yes
- 29% (4) said no or that they didn't know
- 7% (1) said yes, but not the same as what the library offers

## 29) Is literacy programming important in community? (Q18)

- Yes - 13
- No
- Literacy levels are low in community - 3
- community member says that libraries are not cool places, trying to alter perceptions and that reading is valuable
- library only place in community to get a book; community members don't realize how important reading is if they never see anyone reading at home
- literacy programming demonstrates that reading can be fun
- promoting literacy in all its forms, enhances and broadens lives
- people don't read as much as they should
- kids cannot read or write well as demonstrated by resumes
- busy lives means that parents don't have time to read stories in the home
- technology moves so fast and Northern communities have fewer resources for education, library can connect those who know with those who don't
- hard to get parents engaged
- make kids more interested in reading
- show parents the value of children reading
- parents think of library as a babysitting service
- most parents haven't graduated high school
- kids are behind grade level
- community wants to improve their education and their kids

## 30) Other comments

- would like to get ipads specifically for literacy
- parents appreciate afterschool program for kids under age of 5, as they are working and only other programs are sports related
- trying to reach preteens; find that age group is forgotten about
- fewer people attend if parents are required
- difficult as K-3 is Slavey immersion and all books have to be in Slavey
- don't have time to do programming
- not enough staff for more programming
- want computer lab