



**Toward Creation of a National Table  
for Aboriginal Literacy  
and Essential Skills (NTALES)**

Report on Meeting of  
May 27, 2014

**June 20, 2014**

# Toward Creation of a National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills (NTALES)

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## I. Meeting Purpose and Participants

The Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN), in partnership with Aboriginal community leaders and literacy experts, is leading an initiative to create a National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills (NTALES). A potential role of the National Table will be to represent First Nation, Metis and Inuit literacy and essential skills (LES) needs and priorities in Canada. The partnership would seek to build on existing competencies, knowledge, and networks within the Aboriginal community. The resulting NTALES structure will help eliminate duplication of services and resources, facilitate cross-regional sharing, and assist in creating a highly representative field of practice within Aboriginal LES.

The NTALES overview document sent to meeting participants appears in **Appendix A**.

### *Meeting Purpose*

A half-day meeting to gauge interest in creating a NTALES was held on May 27, 2014. The meeting took place in Ottawa, with some participants attending in person and others teleconferencing or videoconferencing in across the country. The meeting was hosted by the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN). Ted Norris of Norris Consulting facilitated it. Jodi Bruhn of Stratéjuste Canada took notes and drafted the meeting report.

Expected immediate outcomes of the meeting were:

- Agreement from consultation participants to move forward with a NTALES
- Establishment of an interim advisory group to participate in initial discussions of the purpose and structure of the NTALES
- A list of resources required to get started, with ideas on how to access them

The meeting agenda can be found in **Appendix B**.

## *Participants*

Participants had been identified by the facilitator together with CCLN. Collectively, the participants brought to the table a vast experience in LES, Aboriginal LES, and Aboriginal employment as well as a balanced representation of regions. **Appendix C** records participants as well as their mode of attendance (in-person, via videoconference or teleconference). **Appendix D** provides participant biographies.

## **II. Opening, Welcome and Roll Call**

### *Elder Opening*

Elder Annie Smith St. Georges opened the meeting with a prayer. She prefaced her prayer with a comment that this area is very personal for her. Many Aboriginal children

“It’s very important to look at the real issues of what we are dealing with on a daily basis. Like incarceration: how can we get private industry to hire somebody who has been incarcerated? We have to reflect on these areas.”

- *Elder Annie Smith St. Georges*

are discouraged and drop out of school because they have been labelled. She herself had been labelled. She had been identified as having a learning problem and had had to battle her way through the workforce with few supports. Annie saw it as essential to encourage children and youth, especially if they have dropped out or joined gangs or been incarcerated. She recalled the young Aboriginal man sitting outside the office building in Ottawa on the day of the meeting. She urged the group to keep sight of him as the reason why they were there.

### *CLLN Welcome*

Lindsay Kennedy, President and Chief Executive Officer, welcomed participants on behalf of CCLN. She had been honoured to meet Annie and reflect on her words. Since she began this work in the 1980s, she has understood that literacy and essential skills are important for employment – and that their impact goes far beyond labour force attachment. Those who have gained the skills early often do not realize the strength it takes for people to make this fundamental change in their lives.

Lindsay stressed that CCLN is honoured to serve as a convenor and would be pleased to facilitate the work of a NTALES in the future, without assuming ownership of it. But she also had some bad news to share. The Network will be downsizing significantly after

June 30, 2014, due to a loss of its funding. Its ability fully to support the initiative will be limited as a result – but it will do what it can.

### *Roll Call*

The facilitator, Ted Norris, introduced himself and proceeded to a roll call.

Participants introduced themselves and their organizations. Some participants had difficulties in taking part due to technical difficulties with the videoconferencing and speaker systems. Despite the difficulties in hearing, some key points arose in the roll call:

- There was a shared sense that literacy and essential skills are the bedrock of good, long-term employment for Aboriginal people.
- Participants expressed a broad interest in creating a national level forum, with a key role of sharing best practices and learning from others across the country.
- A number of participants expressed concern to ensure that the focus stays on the Aboriginal learner.

After a brief agenda check, the group agreed to move on to the facilitated discussion. The written responses to the question forwarded in advance of the meeting – “Why do you think NTALES is important?” – are included in **Appendix E**.

### **III. Facilitated Discussion**

The facilitator then reviewed nine questions that could potentially guide the discussion for the remainder of the afternoon. They are included as part of Appendix A below. The following broad themes emerged from the discussion itself:

1. Issues faced by Aboriginal LES learners
2. Potential role(s) of a national table
3. Potential resources for a national table
4. Desire for Aboriginal representation and control

“Those of us who read and write and have long done so don’t realize what strength it takes for people to make this fundamental change in their lives.”

- *Lindsay Kennedy, CLLN*

## 1. Issues Faced by Aboriginal LES learners

One theme participants addressed were the specific issues faced by their Aboriginal clients and means they had enlisted to address them. Beyond those facing other adult learners, some specific issues facing Aboriginal learners are government policies that have prevented them from learning effectively in the past – and that still make themselves felt today. Historical factors like residential schools continue to impact Aboriginal people in their experiences in public education systems. Access to services and lack of physical infrastructure remain issues, especially in northern and remote communities. Aboriginal learners often also need to cope with the transition from communities to cities and vice versa. Literacy and numeracy also remain issues within urban communities. In Winnipeg, for example, there have been moves toward creating indigenous school division for K to 12 education because past outcomes have been so poor for learners in the inner city.

Some participants noted a need to work with Aboriginal youth in high schools and elementary schools, to help them see themselves in a positive light. One participant

“We are going to deliver and be in control of the courses, instruction. If we don’t take time as administrators to deliver things properly and culturally appropriately, then our clients will be even worse off.”

- Jimmy Arnold, JEDI – New Brunswick

stressed the importance of “real, genuine cultural components” to the delivery of LES programming – for example, for deliverers to bring in elders as well Aboriginal business leaders to encourage their clients. By contrast, it is not effective to herd clients into training in a particular area simply because industry or business has identified a need.

Participants from New Brunswick, British Columbia/Yukon, Manitoba, and Alberta shared information on the work they had undertaken in in their specific regions.

## 2. Potential Role(s) of a National Table

All participants saw a national forum as a potential venue for sharing experiences, promising practices and knowledge of LES initiatives throughout the country. Such a forum would help practitioners gain a sense of what is and is not working. It could also serve as a venue to share existing tools and inventories. One participant pointed to an inventory that had just been developed by the national First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations that had led to twelve markers of promising practice in the skills and

employment area (<http://www.fimesip.ca>). A national table could seek to share and build on some of the good work that has been done already. When canvassed by the facilitator, participants registered their shared interest in taking part in a national forum for the purpose of *knowledge sharing and exchange*.

“The idea of having a national LES network is an excellent one.”

- Maria Wilson, ITK

There was also discussion of whether a national table should seek to serve as an *advocate* or *national voice* on behalf of Aboriginal LES. On this question, some participants tempered their support with caution. Before establishing an advocacy role, it would be necessary to establish *what* the table would be voicing and on *whose* behalf. It would be important to have youth themselves at such a table and likely also elders. One participant expressed her concern to ensure any national space for a conversation would not force content onto it. Some participants suggested that the question of a developing a national voice should be pursued in conversation with grassroots communities.

### 3. Possible Resources

Tied up with the discussion of possible roles for a NTALES were possible funding sources. Should they seek funding for a national body? Would resources be required at least to bring people together to discuss best practices and issues? CLLN would continue to exist as an organization after June 30, but with limited resources. And the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) is not currently funding this type of work.

“What we do is come together and talk about common issues that we’re facing and share tools, try to come together to take a coordinated approach. We’ve done that on our own dime through the ASETS funding. That’s one of the key issues as well.”

- Colleen Yamamoto, Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team

A number of participants mentioned the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) as the most promising potential source of federal government funding. The ASETS deals with exactly the kind of initiatives the Table would seek to consider. Organizations holding ASETS agreements in the Yukon and British Columbia already convene to discuss common issues, share tools, and coordinate their approaches. At present, this occurs “on their own dime” through their ASETS funding. This, the project coordinator

for the BC/Yukon region noted, is another key issue they face.

Regarding the ASETS, the participant from the Assembly of First Nations stressed that the timing for a national discussion of literacy and essential skills may be perfect. In six months, the ASETS is up for renewal. The Treasury Board will be considering it in the fall. One possible strategy would be for CLLN and Assembly of First Nations to write mutual letters of support for funding in the context of a renewed ASETS.

#### 4. *Aboriginal Community Representation and Control*

A fourth key theme that emerged from the meeting was *who* should be part of a NTALES and guide its work. One participant noted her real concern that the Aboriginal

“I am quite insistent that Aboriginal control be part of the equation. Aboriginal community control needs to be in place.”

- Sylvia Maracle, OFIFC

community should control any national forum. Whether through principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) or another mechanism, Aboriginal control would need to be in place. Other participants stressed the need to involve Aboriginal learners directly at any national table. Aboriginal community partners had also been doing some very

successful work in the area and had important insights to share. Some participants suggested taking back the meeting’s questions and outcomes to their community partners, to see whether their efforts gain support from the bottom up.

### IV. Recommendation and Next Steps

Due to ongoing technical difficulties with the audio and visual equipment, the facilitator concluded the meeting with a request for broad direction from the assembled group at this stage.

Participants attending both in-person and on the telephone registered their general ***desire to create a national forum***. Some desirable characteristics of a potential national venue also emerged:

- That it place Aboriginal learners at the centre of concern and take care to bring their voices to the table

- That it facilitate sharing of promising practices, expertise and models in the LES area (including funding models)
- That it provide a space for a national-level conversation without directing that conversation.

“I’m really excited about some of the comments today and would love to move forward. In the work we’re doing in the BC/Yukon area, we have to remind ourselves not to come to the table with expectations but to have an open mind.”

- *Brandon Stiles, First Nations Employment Society*

To bring forward the work of creating a national table, participants agreed to the following **next steps**:

1. To share the day’s discussions with community and client partners, seeking their feedback on potential roles, resourcing and representation for a NTALES.
2. To hold another teleconference aimed at addressing questions such as:
  - Who will comprise membership for a NTALES steering committee;
  - Do we need additional members – ie: a learner representative;
  - What will the Mandate / Values / Mission of the NTALES look like;
  - What supports can members contribute to the initial work of NTALES.

Additional questions and/or issues will be brought forward by participating members at the next teleconference call meeting (Date – TBD)

Participants who were unable to hear the conversation looked forward to receiving the report and would provide their comments online.

## Conclusion

The facilitator concluded the meeting, noting that there would be a meeting report, which would be shared with all participants for their validation. CLLN requires the final report by June 20, 2014.

CLLN’s representative thanked all those who attended. Elder Annie Smith St. Georges closed the meeting with a prayer.





## **Appendix A: Original NTALES Overview**

### **National Table for Aboriginal Literacy & Essential Skills (NTALES) Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN)**

#### **Overview:**

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN), in partnership with Aboriginal community leaders and literacy experts, is leading an initiative to create a National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills that represents First Nation, Métis and Inuit literacy and essential skills (LES) needs and priorities in Canada.

This partnership will build on existing competencies, knowledge and networks within the Aboriginal community. The resulting NTALES structure would help eliminate duplication of services and resources, and would assist in the creation of what might be a highly representative field of practice within Aboriginal LES.

With its long history of providing leadership on a national basis, CLLN is uniquely positioned to bring together Aboriginal community leaders and literacy specialists to discuss the current Aboriginal literacy and essential skills situation and the role a National Table could play in supporting improvements in the LES area. CLLN also brings a broad strata of partners and networks to the Table which will help further the long term goals of this initiative. CLLN would support members of the Table, learn from their knowledge, expertise and experience, and facilitate the next steps.

The need for a national voice for literacy and essential skills development in First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities has been around for many years. We honour the efforts made by various governments and individuals over the years to create the structures for a national voice. Currently, however, no dedicated mechanism exists that will promote and speak for LES in the Aboriginal context.

We know from recent studies and examinations that Aboriginal literacy and numeracy levels on and off reserve, in our towns and cities and in the remote areas of our country are not keeping pace with the non-Aboriginal Canadian population and in some cases, continues to decline.

CLLN believes it is time to rekindle the flame for the establishment of a national table which is truly representative of First Nation, Metis and Inuit literacy and essential skills in Canada.

### Approach:

Excluding CLLN staff and contractors, we expect 20 individuals, representative of linguistic, cultural and geographic diversity to participate in the initial discussions on Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

Expected immediate outcomes from this May 27, 2014 consultation include:

- Agreement from consultation participants to move forward with a NTALES
- Establishment of an Interim Advisory group to participate in initial discussion re purpose and structure of the NTALES
- List of resources required to get started with ideas on how to access them

A meeting report will be drafted immediately following the meeting. It will capture the main discussion themes and will propose recommendations based on the discussion.

### Potential future outcomes - for consideration:

- Further develop NTALES rationale / mission.
- Develop goals for the national Table with timelines to be incorporated into a workplan for years 1 to 3.
- Finalize terms of reference based on principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access and possession).
- Identify key partnership opportunities.
- Source funding supports for the establishment of the NTALES and for on-going operations.
- Increased access to critical information required for the successful implementation of LES policy and service delivery among Aboriginal populations across Canada.
- Consistent and coordinated support for employers, researchers, service providers, policy makers, community leaders and other stakeholders working within the field of Aboriginal LES.

### Thematic questions raised at meeting – for participant consideration:

- What has worked in the past, and why has it worked?
- What are some current or on-going successes, and why have they succeeded?
- Key or crucial needs in L/ES?
- Key geographical, cultural and demographic needs?
- Challenges for moving forward with NTALES.
- Our strengths for moving forward with NTALES.
- Ongoing support (financial and organizational)
- Key Partners
- Next steps and timelines

## Appendix B: Agenda

### National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills – NTALES

**AGENDA** - Tuesday, May 27, 2014 – 12:30 pm EST (Ottawa Time)

Teleconference call in # **1-866-261-6767** & Participant ID Code **943911**

Videoconferencing instructions: (*To be confirmed closer to the date*)

Meeting room location in Ottawa – 251 Bank Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, The Blue Room

The 25One Community office space is at the corner of Bank and Cooper streets.

TIME	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE
12:30 pm	Traditional elder opening	Annie Smith St. Georges
12:45 approx. following Elder's opening remarks	Facilitator Overview and Agenda check	Ted Norris
12:50	Roll Call	All
1:00	Welcoming remarks from CLLN	Lindsay Kennedy
1:10	Synopsis of feedback from the question, "Why do you think NTALES is important?"	
1:15	Facilitated Discussion	Ted N / All
2:45	Review of outstanding / parking lot items	Ted N / Jodi Bruhn
2:55	Wrap up comments and thank you	Lindsay Kennedy
3:00 pm	Elder Closing prayer	Annie Smith St. Georges

Light refreshments & snacks will be available for the meeting.

## Appendix C: Participant List

### National Table for Aboriginal Literacy & Essential Skills (NTALES) Participant List for May 27, 2014 Teleconference call

Name	Affiliation	Other
Annie Smith St Georges	Elder <a href="mailto:arstgeorges@hotmail.com">arstgeorges@hotmail.com</a> 819-770-6243	Attended in person, w. Natasha Bertrand
Lindsay Kennedy	President & CEO – Canadian Literacy and Learning Network <a href="mailto:lkennedy@literacy.ca">lkennedy@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464 ext 222	Attended in person
Kory Wilson	Director, Aboriginal Education & Community Engagement – Vancouver Community College <a href="mailto:kowilson@vcc.ca">kowilson@vcc.ca</a> 604-307-5478	Regrets – but please keep in the loop
Colleen Yamamoto	Project Coordinator - Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team <a href="mailto:Essentialskills.guidingteam@gmail.com">Essentialskills.guidingteam@gmail.com</a> 250-681-1855	Attended via videoconference
Francesca Debastiani	Service Canada – Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team <a href="mailto:Francesca.debastiani@servicecanada.gc.ca">Francesca.debastiani@servicecanada.gc.ca</a> 604-666-2267	Regrets – but please keep in the loop
Brandon Stiles	First Nations Employment Society <a href="mailto:brandons@fnes.ca">brandons@fnes.ca</a> 604-605-8901 ext 13	Attended via teleconference
Cori Thunderchild	Aboriginal Community Career Employment Services Society (ACCESS) <a href="mailto:cthunderchild@accessfutures.com">cthunderchild@accessfutures.com</a> 604-521-5929	Regrets but please keep in the loop
Leanne Joe	Community Engagement Specialist, Interior Salish Employment & Training Society <a href="mailto:community@isets.ca">community@isets.ca</a> 250-378-4235	Regrets – but please keep in the loop
William Phang	AGTC Manager – Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association (PGNAETA) <a href="mailto:williamp@pgnaeta.bc.ca">williamp@pgnaeta.bc.ca</a> 250-561-1199	Unable to attend – but please keep in loop
Samantha Moise	Customer Care Team Leader – Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Assoc (PGNAETA) <a href="mailto:SamanthaM@pgnaeta.bc.ca">SamanthaM@pgnaeta.bc.ca</a> 250-561-1199	Unable to attend – but please keep in loop

Lisa Studer	Employment Assistance Services Coordinator – North East Native Advancing Society <a href="mailto:lstuder@nenas.org">lstuder@nenas.org</a> 250-785-0887	Regrets – but please keep in loop
Elaine Cairns	Co-Executive Director - Further Education Society <a href="mailto:ecairns@furthered.ca">ecairns@furthered.ca</a> 403-259-5034	Attended in person
Sue Phillips	Co-Executive Director - Further Education Society <a href="mailto:sphillips@furthered.ca">sphillips@furthered.ca</a> 403-259-5034	Attended in person
Priscilla Settee	Dept of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan <a href="mailto:Priscilla.settee@usask.ca">Priscilla.settee@usask.ca</a> 306-966-5556	Attended via teleconference for first part – please keep in the loop
Sharon Redsky	Manager, Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, University of Winnipeg <a href="mailto:S.redsky@uwinnipeg.ca">S.redsky@uwinnipeg.ca</a> 204-789-1454	Regrets – but please keep in loop
Jennifer Rattray Cc: Kathy Rogozik – <a href="mailto:k.rogozik@uwinnipeg.ca">k.rogozik@uwinnipeg.ca</a>	Associate Vice-President, Indigenous, Government & Community Affairs - University of Winnipeg <a href="mailto:j.rattray@uwinnipeg.ca">j.rattray@uwinnipeg.ca</a> 204-786-9865	Attended via teleconference
Michelle Davis	Executive Director, Ontario Native Literacy Coalition <a href="mailto:onlc@outlook.com">onlc@outlook.com</a> 519-668-6652	Regrets at last minute but please keep in the loop
Conrad Saulis	Policy Director, National Association of Friendship Centres <a href="mailto:csaulis@nafc.ca">csaulis@nafc.ca</a> 613-563-4844 ext 323	Replaced by Sonia Howard, attending in person
Sylvia Maracle	Executive Director, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres <a href="mailto:smaracle@ofifc.org">smaracle@ofifc.org</a> 416-956-7575	Attended via videoconference
Maria Wilson	Senior Policy Advisor, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami <a href="mailto:wilson@itk.ca">wilson@itk.ca</a> 613-238-8181 ext 267	Attended via teleconference
Bryan Hendry	Senior Policy Advisor, Assembly of First Nations <a href="mailto:bhendry@afn.ca">bhendry@afn.ca</a> 613-241-6789 ext 229	Attended in person
Ken Kerr	Executive Director, Kivalliq Mining Training Society <a href="mailto:ed@kivalliqmts.ca">ed@kivalliqmts.ca</a> 867-645-2588	Attended via teleconference for first part – please keep in the loop
Jimmy Arnold	Aboriginal Adult Learning and Apprenticeship Coordinator - JEDI – New Brunswick: Joint Education Development Initiative <a href="mailto:jimmy.arnold@jedinb.ca">jimmy.arnold@jedinb.ca</a> 506-444-3412	Attended via teleconference

Chris Harwood	Manager of Field Development – CLLN <a href="mailto:charwood@literacy.ca">charwood@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464 ext 224	Attended in person
Nilambri Ghai	Field Development Liaison – CLLN <a href="mailto:nghai@literacy.ca">nghai@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464 ext 225	Attended in person
Annette Hegel	Manager of Communications & Marketing – CLLN <a href="mailto:ahegel@literacy.ca">ahegel@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464 ext 223	Attended in person
Pat Sample	Administrative Assistant – CLLN <a href="mailto:psample@literacy.ca">psample@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464	Attended in person
Ted Norris	Meeting Facilitator – Norris Consultants <a href="mailto:Ted.norris@bell.blackberry.net">Ted.norris@bell.blackberry.net</a> 613-715-1954	Attended in person
Jodi Bruhn	Meeting Scribe – Stratéjuste Consulting <a href="mailto:jbruhn@stratejuste.ca">jbruhn@stratejuste.ca</a>	Attended in person

## Appendix D: Participant Biographies

### NTALES – National Table for Aboriginal Literacy & Essential Skills Canadian Literacy and Learning Network - CLLN

Participant Biographies / Organizational Information for May 27, 2014 meeting		
NAME	BIOGRAPHY	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION / WEBSITE
Lindsay Kennedy, President & CEO, CLLN	Lindsay Kennedy has worked in the field of adult learning and adult literacy in a variety of capacities since 1990. Currently, she is the President and CEO of Canadian Literacy and Learning Network. Since the mid-seventies, CLLN (formerly Movement for Canadian Literacy) has been at the forefront of family literacy, community literacy, financial literacy and workplace literacy and essential skills. As the national catalyst for adult literacy, CLLN has successfully partnered with community groups, and has well-grounded knowledge on best practice guidelines and delivery models that work well. It has been successfully creating a community of practice through providing access to resources, hosting national meetings, and undertaking research to inform policy and decision-making. Lindsay has been a guiding force with CLLN since 2007.	<a href="http://www.literacy.ca">www.literacy.ca</a>
Colleen Yamamoto Project Coordinator - Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team (on behalf of the AESGT)	<p><b>OUR PRIMARY GOAL:</b> <i>To work together to increase our capacity to deliver quality Essential Skills programming within our service areas, and to freely share any models, materials and resources that result from our efforts.</i></p> <p><b>WHO WE ARE:</b> <i>We are a group of individuals who work within the Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy in partnership with Service Canada and are passionate about literacy and learning.</i></p> <p><b>OUR MANDATE:</b> <i>To increase over all awareness around the concept of Essential Skills.</i></p>	<p>AESGT BACKGROUND:</p> <p>In 2006, prior to the restructuring of the current Aboriginal Skills &amp; Employment Training Agreements, the BC/Yukon region formed the Essential Skills Guiding team (ESGT) with representation and participation from each of the 14 AHRDAs' (Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy Agreement) at the time.</p> <p>The <b>current</b> members of the <b>Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team</b> (AESGT) are individuals who are</p>

	<p><i>OUR VISION: To work with all like-minded individuals and organizations who seek to support Essential Skills building for all.</i></p> <p><i>OUR VALUES: Collaboration, sharing, honest conversation, willingness to support each other, participation, communication to the wider circle, openness.</i></p> <p><i>WHO WE REPORT TO: our Managers, fellow co-workers, communities and clients.</i></p>	<p>passionate about Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) in workplace training. The team’s primary goals are to share ideas freely, program models, materials and resources, best practices and successes for the good of communities, and to look at ways to embed LES into current employment and training programming. The team works together to promote LES awareness within and outside of BC/Yukon by delivering short and longer-term training sessions, participating in and/or presenting at conferences, researching what others are doing, and by supporting each other with individual ASET programs.</p> <p>The AESGT has served as an advisory body for many projects such as the DVD series called ‘Essential Skills Investigation – ESI’, and the 2 day Essential Skills introduction workshop called ‘An Aboriginal Essential Skills Journey; Planting the Seeds for Growth’ as well as its French companion called ‘Itinéraire autochtone en compétences essentielles: Faire pousser l’arbre de la croissance’. Indirectly, the AESGT has affected the capacity of individual ASET organizations to assist their clients through enhanced Essential Skills training, and sharing of information/best practices across organizations and regions.</p> <p>Participation with the CLLN as part of the National Table for Aboriginal Literacy &amp; Essential Skills (NTALES) supports our vision and mandate and we are thrilled to be invited to participate.</p>
<p>Brandon Stiles, Project Manager, FNES</p>	<p>Project Manager for the First Nations Employment Society is an Ojibway from the Chippewas of Georgina Island and Rama First Nations in south-central Ontario. He has a background in human resources, employment</p>	<p>The following Essential Skills Enhancement program is coordinated for the 10 membership First Nations of FNES (including urban areas).</p>



services and Aboriginal social development and has been working in Aboriginal social services since 1998. He has been a successful proposal writer, program coordinator and event planner and is a certified Career Development Practitioner, Essential Skills Practitioner and Job Club Coach.



**First Nations**  
Employment Society

This is an employment program that provides Aboriginal job seekers with job specific training using the nine essential skills (Reading Text, Document Use, Numeracy, Writing, Computer Use, Working with Others, Oral Communication, Thinking skills, and Continuous Learning).

This six week program helps clients to prepare for and bridge into more advanced occupational training and employment. Clients identify their job target and are assessed for their ES levels. Their ES levels are compared to ES occupational profiles matching their job target. This is used as the basis to develop their Learning Plan. Individual learning plans and ES upgrading are tailored to each participant based on their skill level and identified job target skill demand.

The program uses authentic workplace documents and embeds essential skills to customize training related to an industry's work environment. Employment resources include: resume development, cover letter development, references, cold calls, networking, interview skills, calling card development and essential skill enhancement related to their job target. Other supports include: employment maintenance certificates Essential Skills Portfolio and PLATO Learning Software and a driver's license.

During the program, clients can access support programs and job search/skill development opportunities through assisted Internet access, faxing, free phone, online resources, group workshops, community announcements/postings board and

		<p>referrals to agencies that meet the specific needs of the individual. The program concludes with the option to participate in a four week work experience volunteer placement.</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.fnes.ca">www.fnes.ca</a></p>
William Phang, Manager, AGTC	<p>Aboriginal Gateway Training Centre Manager. William works with Industry to get the partnerships to operate Trades classes, and Customer Care Classes, which as a Training Centre is registered with PCTIA. Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment &amp; Training Association is registered with IALA.</p> <p>Furthermore the AGTC develops curriculum and teaches adult education programs that are in preparation of entrance exams for post-secondary</p>	<a href="http://www.pgnaeta.bc.ca">www.pgnaeta.bc.ca</a>
Samantha Moise, Team Lead, Customer Care Program	As Team Lead, Samantha coordinates the Customer Care Program, and teaches Lifeskills and Essential Skills, along with Trish Naziel, Team Lead for Trades.	<a href="http://www.pgnaeta.bc.ca">www.pgnaeta.bc.ca</a>
Leanne Joe, Community Engagement Specialist, ISETS	<p>My name is Sxwpilemaat Siyam, also known as Chief Leanne Joe, of the Squamish Nation, North Vancouver, BC. I am one of 16 hereditary chiefs of my community. However, I have lived away from community for the past seven years. I reside in Merritt, BC with my husband and son. I serve with Aboriginal people of the Nicola Valley as the Community Engagement Specialist for the Interior Salish Employment &amp; Training Society (ISETS). ISETS is a sub-agreement holder to the ASETS agreement (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council in Kamloops, BC). I work with the local First Nation communities, agencies and organizations to bridge relationships and capacities, to ensure our members have access to employment and training requirements. Fore more info: Through ISETS, I also represent our 16 First Nation communities at the Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team in BC. I also am a volunteer director with the Literacy Merritt &amp; Nicola Valley Society.</p>	<a href="http://www.isets.ca">www.isets.ca</a>

<p>Sue Phillips, Co-Executive Director, FESA</p>	<p>Sue Phillips has over thirty years' experience in education and literacy, including nine years with the Further Education Society (FESA), where she currently serves as Co-Executive Director. FESA is a recipient of the Canada Post award for contributions to Community Leadership in Literacy, and in 2013, was awarded the Council of the Federation Literacy Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice, and excellence in literacy. Sue has lengthy experience setting up cutting-edge programs and leading community development initiatives that bring together Aboriginal community, mainstream organizations, educational programs and businesses. These projects have resulted in the design and implementation of innovative new practices focussed on the needs and interests of low-literate Aboriginal learners who are moving forward with education and essential skills.</p> <p>Sue's focus on community collaboration and program development initiatives has provided her with broad experience developing Aboriginal programs, and leading projects that require creative community partnerships, curriculum development, and training. Sue recently led the Aboriginal Adult Learning Project, which brought together six very different organizations from different sectors, together with a wide variety of community partners. This project brought the expertise of Aboriginal learners and communities, together with those who mission it is to connect with and serve Aboriginal people who are building their essential skills and taking first steps in employment and career development.</p>	<p>The Further Education Society (FESA) is a registered charity established in 1996. FESA has a unique approach to building the education of low-literate adult learners. This approach is based on adult learning theory, research, best practice, and years of experience assisting thousands of people from diverse communities across Canada. FESA programs target vulnerable low-literate learners from a variety of backgrounds. FESA's work has four important facets: educational program delivery, research and curricula design, facilitator training, and community development.</p> <p>FESA has been working collaboratively with Aboriginal groups for over 18 years after being invited into their communities to assist with the challenges faced by vulnerable families and a lack of parent education materials that were appropriate, culturally sensitive and relevant for aboriginal learners. Our philosophy is to develop meaningful educational materials, and then train community workers to facilitate our programs, teaching them how to adapt it to meet regional needs, always building community capacity to address their learning needs.</p>
<p>Elaine Cairns, Co-Executive Director, FESA</p>	<p>Elaine Cairns has over twenty years of experience in the field of literacy. She is a certified Literacy Specialist who delivers presentations and workshops across Canada, and was awarded Literacy Alberta's Lifetime Achievement award for her outstanding contributions to the field of literacy. Elaine is currently Co-Executive Director of the Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA), which she co-founded in 1995. FESA is a recipient of the Canada Post award for contributions to Community</p>	<p>As above – what Sue said! <a href="http://www.furthered.ca">www.furthered.ca</a></p>

	<p>Leadership in Literacy, and in 2013, was awarded the Council of the Federation Literacy Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement, innovative practice, and excellence in literacy.</p> <p>With over 18 years of experience working with Aboriginal communities, Elaine has developed expertise in working with grassroots Aboriginal serving agencies, curriculum development for Aboriginal learners, as well as in working with isolated communities to offer facilitator training and mentoring of Aboriginal trainers/community workers. Training hundreds of workers across Canada in FESA's programs, has given Elaine the knowledge and ability to understand the needs of grassroots agencies and their programming, allowing FESA to make positive changes within the Aboriginal communities that we serve.</p> <p>Elaine's curriculum development work has been around learner centred programs that are culturally competent and meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. She is the co-author of FESA's Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (A-LAPS) curriculum, which is designed for use with low-literate Aboriginal learners who face multiple barriers such as poverty, isolation, and lack of education, as well as the Aboriginal Workplace Learning Circles (AWLC) curriculum developed to build basic workplace and essential skills. More recently, Elaine co-authored Aboriginal Parenting After Violence (A-PAV), which provides parenting and literacy strategies to shelter clients, focused on helping families move forward after experiencing violence.</p>	
<p>Priscilla Settee, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, U of Saskatchewan</p>	<p>Priscilla Settee is an award winning Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and a member of Cumberland House Cree First Nations from northern Saskatchewan.</p> <p>She works in Saskatchewan and the globe in a number of capacities including serving as a board member of the Cultural Conservancy(California). She served as a board member of Oskayak High School, Saskatoon's only Aboriginal High School from 1996-2013. Her 3rd</p>	<p><a href="http://www.usask.ca/nativestudies">www.usask.ca/nativestudies</a></p>

	<p>book(John Charlton Publishing) is called Pimatisiwin, Global Indigenous Knowledge Systems (2013) . In 2008 Settee was awarded a Global Citizen’s award by Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation and was twice nominated for a teaching excellence award by her students. In 2012 Settee received the University of Saskatchewan’s Provost award for Teaching Excellence in Aboriginal Education. In 2013 she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee award for contributions to Canada. As part of her work in Indigenous Food Sovereignty Settee directed and co-produced a video on Indigenous Food Sovereignty with local film maker Marcel Petit in 2013.</p>	
<p>Jennifer Rattray, Associate V-P, Indigenous, Government and Community Affairs, U of Winnipeg</p>	<p>Jennifer is The University of Winnipeg’s first Associate Vice-President of Indigenous, Government, and Community Affairs and a member of Peepeekisis First Nation with roots in northern Manitoba. As Associate Vice-President, she is responsible for leading interaction between the University and Indigenous governments and communities, as well as federal, provincial and municipal governments and the community-at-large.</p> <p>In the 2013/14 academic year, the number of Aboriginal students at The University of Winnipeg is more than 12%, and Jennifer and a team of professors, staff and administrators want to ensure every student feels welcome and has the supports to succeed. She is fortunate to work closely with Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor, honorary member of Sagkeeng First Nation, pipe carrier, and Canada’s foreign affairs minister from 1996 to 2000, to achieve these goals. Jennifer also works with partners in government and in the public and private sectors to assist in funding the University’s strategic capital and programming initiatives.</p> <p>Jennifer earned a joint Masters of Public Administration (MPA) with distinction from The University of Winnipeg and The University of Manitoba with a focus on Indigenous education, organizational structure and policy, and a specialization in Business and Government Relations from the Asper School of Business. She also recognizes the knowledge she has gained by listening to Elders, leaders, youth, and the community.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.indigenous.uwinnipeg.ca">www.indigenous.uwinnipeg.ca</a></p>

	<p>Prior to joining the University in 2004, Jennifer spent 15 years as an award-winning journalist and one of the initial First Nations women to anchor the news in Canada. During her career she anchored the CBC news in Manitoba and produced documentaries for The National, anchored the news in the United States, and anchored, reported, and produced for WTN in Toronto and CTV in Winnipeg. She was recognized with a <i>Manitoba Motion Picture Blizzard Award</i> and two <i>Gracie Allen Awards</i> presented by the Foundation of American Women in Radio and Television in New York City, as well as Radio and Television News Directors Association and Can-Pro awards.</p> <p>Jennifer is actively involved in the community, volunteering her time on the executive of Ka Ni Kanichihk Council, as Winnipeg Chair of the Canadian Women's Foundation Move for Hope 2013 and 2014 campaigns to end violence against women, and on the executive committee of the DOTC First Nations Folklorama pavilion. She also sits as a member of the Premier's Advisory Council on Education, Poverty and Citizenship, and as a board member of the Winnipeg Airports Authority, the Lieutenant Governor's Youth Experience Program, Villa Rosa, the Manitoba Museum and the Manitoba Museum Foundation. She is active as an emcee, keynote, moderator and panelist, speaking nationally on Indigenous education as she works to make the learning experience better for her son and the generations that follow.</p> <p>In 2012, Jennifer was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in education and the community.</p>	
<p>Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director, OFIFC</p>	<p>Sylvia Maracle is a Mohawk from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territorites and a member of the Wolf Clan. She attended Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (now Ryerson University) School of Journalism. Ms. Maracle has been the Executive Director of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres for thirty-five years. She has been involved in all aspects of Aboriginal life from advising on the Canada Act, human resource development, cultural based management and program design. She has received the National Achievement Award for Public Service, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and a Doctor of Laws (Hon.) from the University</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ofifc.org">www.ofifc.org</a></p>

	of Guelph in recognition of her work in management and business. She assisted the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition to undertake strategic planning and organizational structure work earlier in her career.	
Bryan Hendry, Senior Policy Advisor, AFN	Bryan Hendry has been a senior policy advisor at the Assembly of First Nations since 2002, working in the areas of health, economic development, and labour force development. He is currently working in the Safe, Secure and Sustainable Communities Secretariat.	<a href="http://www.afn.ca">www.afn.ca</a>
Conrad Saulis, Policy Director, NAFC	Conrad Saulis grew up on the Maliseet (Wolastoqewiyik) First Nation community Tobique in New Brunswick. Conrad has a BA (1975) in Sociology from St. Thomas University in Fredericton, NB. His work for Aboriginal peoples since the early 1980's has primarily focussed on the health and social well-being of Aboriginal people living on reserve and in urban areas in Canada. He has worked with most of the National Aboriginal Organizations in Ottawa and back home in Tobique as supervisor of the child and family services agency. He joined the NAFC in 2009 as the Policy Director following 10 years of work with the Aboriginal Head Start On Reserve program at the FNIHB, Health Canada offices in Ottawa. Conrad lives in the Ottawa area with his wife Tammy, an Anishnawbe woman from the Nipissing First Nation in Ontario, they have two adult age children, a daughter and a son (they have been married for 30 years). Woliwon (Thank you)	<a href="http://www.nafc.ca">www.nafc.ca</a>
Maria Wilson, Senior Policy Advisor, ITK	Maria Wilson, M.A., Senior Policy Advisor at the Department of Health and Social Development, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, national Inuit organization. Maria has worked on education and lifelong learning and Inuit human resources development. Through her work she is well aware of the importance of literacy and essential skills in developing and advancing the Aboriginal workforce.	<a href="http://www.itk.ca">www.itk.ca</a>
Ken Kerr, Executive Director, Kivalliq Mine Training Society	Ken Kerr is the Executive Director of the Kivalliq Mine Training Society since the Society became active again in 2013. His role has been to shepherd funding proposals through to the conclusion of agreements	<a href="http://www.kivalliqmts.ca">www.kivalliqmts.ca</a>

	<p>with Employment and Social Development Canada and with Economic Development and Transportation, oversee the renewal of KMTS and lead the design and implementation of KMTS programming since April 1 2013.</p> <p>Ken's previous career experience was with the federal government at Employment and Social Development where he had several senior positions in the area of labour market programming. A highpoint in Ken's career was negotiating the agreement to ensure Aboriginal employment at the Voisey's Bay Mine. This work became the proto-type for the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnerships program. Ken began his career in government working to deliver Community Futures and other employment programs. He moved to headquarters to work on the policy design for Community Futures and Self-employment Programs.</p>	
<p>Chris Harwood, Manager Research and Field Development, CLLN</p>	<p>Chris Harwood is the Manager of Research and Field Development at the Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, CLLN. Her extensive knowledge has been gained over twenty years as an adult literacy consultant and literacy and essential skills educator. Her experience includes: developing curriculum; creating resources; coordinating programs; project research and management; and promoting the use of clear language and design. She has developed and delivered training sessions and workshops to managers, teachers, administrators, employer associations, literacy professionals, learners, locally, provincially and internationally. She has worked with local settlement agencies, their staff, volunteers and clients to develop and deliver workshops to help parents understand the school system and get involved in their children's education. Chris recently researched and authored the <i>State of the Literacy and Essential Skills Field</i> which can be found on the CLLN website.</p> <p>Chris also coordinated the Management of Volunteer Management Certificate Program at Algonquin College and taught Effective Communication Skills and Interviewing to managers of volunteer resources.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.literacy.ca">www.literacy.ca</a></p>



	<p>Throughout her career Chris has worked with people from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, including people with disabilities, newcomers, immigrants and Deaf learners and instructors. Chris strongly believes in collaborative processes for all of the work she does and is committed to working with Aboriginal communities to support them in their desire to have a strong national table to support their work.</p>	
<p>Nilambri Ghai, Liaison Coordinator, CLLN</p>	<p>Nilambri Ghai has worked within the field of education in diverse environments: in India, as an undergraduate teacher of English Literature; at the Kahnawake Survival School as a grade 7 instructor; at the Commission Scolaire Seault Saint-Louis (Montreal) as a literacy instructor; at the YMCA/YWCA as a communications/employment counsellor; at the Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy as an outreach/referral coordinator; at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) as a senior program analyst within Policy and Programs; at Health Canada’s Regional Office for Nunavut, NWT and Yukon (First Nations and Inuit Health Branch – FNIHB) and at the National Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative as a senior program officer; and at Canadian Literacy and Learning Network as a liaison coordinator. Within Health Canada, Nilambri was responsible for the Canadian Post-Natal Nutrition Program (CPNP) and the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) for communities across Nunavut. She has extensive experience with literacy and essential skills, and is dedicated and committed to making a difference, especially where it is most needed.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.literacy.ca">www.literacy.ca</a></p>

## Appendix E: Why Do You Think NTALES Is Important?

### NTALES – National Table for Aboriginal Literacy & Essential Skills Canadian Literacy and Learning Network - CLLN

NAME / ORGANIZATION	Question: “Why do you think NTALES is important?”
Colleen Yamamoto – on behalf of the Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team	<p>The AESGT sees the NTALES approach as a reflection of what we are ready for and believe in with zeal and compassion.</p> <p>The Essential Skills Guiding Team came together in 2006 at a time where there was no funding attached to the delivery of Essential Skills programming. In a sense, this was a good thing as the team came together simply because they have a passion for literacy and learning. The BC/Yukon Aboriginal Program Unit management at Service Canada at this time as well as the subsequent BC/Alberta/Territories Region saw the benefit of supporting such a group financially to meet to create and explore what a coordinated approach to Essential Skills awareness building within the AHRDA network could look like.</p> <p>The AESGT has continued to support each other and maintain a cohesive tight-knit group over the past 8 years tenaciously advancing the awareness of Essential Skills and the positive effect of embedding these skills into employment programming. We believe that successful programs have emerged because of this here in BC.</p> <p>Just like our team here in BC, the NTALES is important to provide a face for Aboriginal Essential Skills nationally. We see our community, the AESGT, participating and sharing with other community institutions, learning centers, and good intentioned leaders co-creating with an Aboriginal Essential Skills national committee who practice together in environments of interaction and learning with the idea of advancement and expansion of the LES society and technology for the benefit of all.</p> <p>As you will note from the keen participation of our team members, our enthusiasm has not waived and our individual team members have specialized knowledge of the communities we serve as well as expertise in responding to needs such as skill enhancement and employment development. Aboriginals for Aboriginals can share this knowledge nationally.</p>

<p><b>Leanne Joe</b></p>	<p>As a representative of both rural and remote First Nations communities throughout the Thompson area of BC (many of which are small), resources and capacity at all levels can be limiting. Thus, Literacy and Essential skills development cannot meet its full potential without the support and guidance of a voice such as the NTALES. Having a specific entity dedicated to Aboriginal specific literacy and ES needs and demands will be very beneficial to organizations such as ISETS who represent these small FN communities and work collaboratively with them to design, deliver and increase capacities for members in these areas. In short, NTALES will provide us the opportunity to benefit from many successful programs and services Nationally as we would not know about them otherwise.</p>
<p><b>Sylvia Maracle</b></p>	<p>In terms of a few thoughts on why I think that the NTALES is important I would offer that basic literacy and numeracy is an important and often lacking skill set in our community. We need our children and youth to dream and reading sets the stage for that mental and emotional "flight". As the fastest growing population it is in everyone's best interest to ensure that literacy and basic skills are provided as a foundation for education and employment. It is also important to recognize that the majority of us live in urban areas throughout the country. This unique situation is often not addressed in program design and outreach.</p> <p>Having said this I would also offer that I am not sure that the best approach is to partner so closely with a non-Aboriginal organization. My experience is a two streams approach - one is we become the bridge for their growth and development or that we languish off to the side without the approach resources and structure to define and more importantly address our needs from a cultural perspective. I am open to participating in the discussion and making sure there is a planned process to ensure that neither stream is the one we travel. The relationship is very transitory in my mind.</p>
<p><b>Conrad Saulis</b></p>	<p>As stated in the overview the need for national unified efforts and voice for Aboriginal literacy is long overdue. There have been various national or regional efforts made up of people who worked very hard to make their projects successful. This means that there is a base of reasonably knowledgeable people that have worked in this area for a long period of time. Bringing these people together is a worthwhile endeavour especially since one of the keys to success in either obtaining higher levels of education or acquiring skills and experience for employment requires good literacy levels. Unfortunately and as we know literacy rates for Aboriginal peoples throughout Canada remain low and coordinated national and regional efforts are needed to improve these rates and to improve opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. The efforts under NTALES are necessary and commitments for it are essential.</p>

<p>Bryan Hendry</p>	<p>The AFN – specifically the First Nation Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy (ASETS) network – advocates for more recognition and more support for essential skills and literacy programming. We recently participated in the establishment of a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Essential Skills Inventory Project (FIMESIP) <a href="http://www.fimesip.ca">www.fimesip.ca</a> which was spearheaded by the Canadian Career Development Foundation in partnership with Employment and Social Development Canada’s Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. The result is a comprehensive inventory of Essential Skills initiatives aimed at First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The AFN also partnered several years ago with the Mining Industry Human Resource (MiHR) sector council on developing a <i>Mining Essentials</i> training program which focuses on the essential skills required for entry level employment in the mining industry. There is currently a Mining Essentials Steering Committee which oversees the various training sites while also continuously seeking to improve the delivery of the program. Our First Nations ASETS Technical Working Group and other presenters have told the Parliamentary HUMA Committee in recent months that there is a critical need for more essential skills and literacy programming. This past December, the TWG held a workshop on ASETS Program Renewal in 2015. More resources for essential skills and literacy was identified as a top priority. Any advancements offered by a <b>National Table for Aboriginal Literacy &amp; Essential Skills</b> would be greatly appreciated.</p>
<p>Responses as of May 26, 2014</p>	