

Facts about the Nova Scotia - Action Research Movement

Want to learn more about action research?

Visit Literacy Nova Scotia at www.ns.literacy.ca/nsarmove/resrchmv.htm.

You can also visit the Pennsylvania Action Research Network (PAARN):

www.pde.state.pa.us/able/cwp/view.asp?A=215&Q=110085

This and other important links can be found at www.ns.literacy.ca/nsarmove/links.htm.

How do I get involved?

- Explore what others are researching.
- Join our web forum.
- Start your own action research project.
- Contact LNS at **1-800-255-5203** to find out more.

What is action research?

Literacy and adult education research used to be done mostly by academics, but the idea that only professors can do research has changed. Today, the term “practitioner-researchers” refers to the hundreds of teachers, tutors and administrators doing action research or research-in-practice in their own work places.

What is the Nova Scotia Action Research Movement?

In March 2006, fifty adult literacy and basic education practitioners launched the Nova Scotia Action Research Movement (NS-ARM) when they gathered at Debert for *Posing Problems/Solving Problems: Using Action Research to Address Issues of Retention, Recruitment and Effective Teaching in Literacy*, a workshop led by Allan Quigley, Professor of Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University.

Nine separate action research projects designed by the teachers, tutors and administrators were put into motion. Several of these studies will focus on student dropout issues, some will focus on recruitment, others on participation. In all cases, real questions arising from everyday issues are being addressed through systematic action research. The data collection techniques are as rigorous as in any university or institute setting, and the results are already being shared on the new NS-ARM section of the Literacy Nova Scotia website at www.ns.literacy.ca/nsarmove/resrchmv.htm.

What are the next steps?

Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) has since received funding from the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre (ALKC) for *Maintaining the Momentum*. This project will help us include action research content in our newsletter and e-news, the new NS-ARM section of our website, this fact sheet, and a web discussion forum. LNS will also include action research training opportunities in our next professional development series (pending funding from the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program of HRSDC). LNS is pleased to have the opportunity to support the important work happening in the literacy field here at home.



Literacy... more than words on paper.

Literacy Nova Scotia



What is literacy?

Literacy is the ability to use printed information to function in society, at work and in the family. It is the combination of thinking and social skills we need to analyze and use information to control our lives, achieve our goals and develop our knowledge and potential.

Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) supports the literacy community in Nova Scotia. Our mission is to ensure that every Nova Scotian has equal access to quality literacy education.

How to reach us...



Literacy Nova Scotia
NSCC Truro Campus
Room 125, Forrester Hall
36 Arthur Street
Truro, Nova Scotia



PO Box 1516
Truro, NS B2N 5V2



902-897-2444
Learn Line 1-800-255-5203



902-897-4020



literacyns@nscc.ca



www.ns.literacy.ca

Literacy Nova Scotia acknowledges with gratitude the financial support of the Canadian Council on Learning's Adult Learning Knowledge Centre.

Why action research?

The school system has participated in various forms of action research for decades. Today, adult literacy and basic education teachers are conducting their own research in Australia, the USA, the UK and across Canada. In most cases, these initiatives are supported by governments. In some cases, they are being supported by university academics and the research community. In Canada, the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program has been firmly behind research-in-practice, and the new Adult Learning Knowledge Centre at the University of New Brunswick has recently helped fund various initiatives including one here in Nova Scotia.

What does the future hold? G.J. Whitehurst, with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences, says that evidence-based education is "the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction" (cited in *Comings*, 2003, p. 2). In Canada, this is happening today through practice-based research in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and now Nova Scotia.

Today, practitioners, policy-makers and researchers can search many websites for findings on common literacy problems. We can communicate with practitioner-researchers through a web forum at www.ns.literacy.ca/nsarmove/resrchmv.htm, raise new issues and questions in the NS-ARM webspace and, for the first time, we can truly learn from one another. We no longer need to re-invent the literacy wheel on dropout, recruitment, teaching and a host of other common issues because rigorous practice-based research, typically funded by government sponsors around the world, is emerging to guide literacy practitioners. We have a growing circle of capacity and knowledge to which we can all contribute and share; it is changing this field.

Paraphrased from *The World of Literacy Education is Shaped Like a Triangle, But We are Starting to Change It*, by B. Allan Quigley, St. Francis Xavier University. You can find the full article at www.ns.literacy.ca/nsarmove/resrchmv.htm.