

# Need, Demand and Scale: Delivery of Adult Literacy Programs

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# Big Numbers

- Nine million Canadians age 16-65 at literacy levels below the minimum needed to perform competently in the knowledge economy
- Even more below the minimum level on numeracy
- Little change from 1994 to 2003  
(Source: IALSS)

# Small Response

- local, small scale initiatives
- Haphazard funding
- Low intensity
- More people entering the adult world with low literacy each year than are being served
- Low literacy not a result of lack of schooling

# Need and Demand

- High need demonstrated by the big numbers
- Not so clear that this translates into high demand for programs; few systematic analyses of demand
- Some programs in NL have had difficulty filling spaces
- No systematic means of entry to programs

# Need to Scale Up

- If the school system operated the way adult literacy operates few children would be in school

## Requirements

- systematic recruitment
- a system available to all
- a system of incentives/sanctions
- Closer links to employers/social service agencies

# Obstacles

- Most adults with low literacy have had at least 10 years of schooling with little success
- Adults are expected to reach in a year or less levels of competence that it takes adolescents several years to acquire
- Not sure that we have sufficient knowledge or that we can translate what we know into viable programs
- Adult literacy programs typically lack range of expertise needed to deal with learning disabilities and other obstacles to adult learning

# Delivery Models

- Local initiatives/leadership with government funding
- College system
- School system

# How to Scale Up

- Commitment to funding an obvious requirement
- Need for institutional response
- The school system is the only institution with sufficient reach to fully respond
- Despite view that school is the last place adults want to go, survey reveals that school is the preferred venue