



# **Reception Services for Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills**

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## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
CHAPTER 1: Main Characteristics of Individuals With Limited Literacy skills in Québec.....	4
1.1 Who are the individuals with limited literacy skills?.....	4
1.2 Characteristics of individuals with limited literacy skills .....	5
1.3 The needs and motives of individuals with limited literacy skills who go back to school .....	7
CHAPTER 2: Suggested Approaches for Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills in Reception Centres .....	9
2.1 Suggested approaches for the initial level of reception .....	9
2.2 Suggested interventions for the second level of reception.....	11
2.3 Some examples of interventions .....	13
CHAPTER 3: Resources and Documents That Could Help Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills to Strengthen Their Knowledge Base.....	17
3.1 Online documents .....	17
3.2 Other documentary references.....	17
3.3 Useful information .....	18
CONCLUSION .....	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	20



## INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training<sup>1</sup> and the General Framework for SARCA services, it is essential to look at the various requests that adults make to the school boards in their areas. Reception services often have a decisive influence on the quality of the education adults receive. Their initial contact with a staff member of an adult general education centre or a vocational training centre can have a major impact on their future.

This guide is intended for support staff and other professionals who guide adults through the first two levels of reception. It presents methods and strategies for working with individuals with limited literacy skills who are enrolled in adult general education centres or vocational training centres in Québec.

The objectives of this guide are:

- to make reception staff more aware of the specific characteristics of individuals with limited literacy skills
- to provide reception staff with the tools they need to work effectively with individuals with limited literacy skills
- to make all SARCA staff aware of the needs and specific characteristics of individuals with limited literacy skills

This guide begins with an overview of the characteristics, needs and motivations of individuals with limited literacy skills who avail themselves of reception services. Subsequent chapters suggest methods of intervention and provide some examples. The guide concludes by listing documents and other resources that can be useful for obtaining a better understanding of this clientele.

This guide was developed and validated by a committee made up of school board staff who work with individuals with limited literacy skills, and one representative of the Table des responsables de l'éducation des adultes et de la formation professionnelle des commissions scolaires du Québec (TRÉAQFP). The document was produced with funding provided by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). The data and proposals presented herein were established in a climate of respect for people with limited literacy skills, and are meant mainly to improve the reception services available to them while acknowledging the work that has been accomplished so far.

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<sup>1</sup> Québec, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002), 3.

## CHAPTER 1: Main Characteristics of Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills in Québec

### 1.1 Who are the individuals with limited literacy skills?

According to the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (ALSS) conducted in 2003, literacy is defined as “the ability to understand and use written information in daily life, at home, at work and in the community, in order to attain personal goals and to expand . . . knowledge and capacities.”<sup>2</sup>

In this survey, four domains of literacy were measured based on a sample of individuals between the ages of 16 and 65:

- prose literacy
- document literacy
- numeracy
- problem solving<sup>3</sup>

The findings were interpreted using a five-tiered scale of competencies.<sup>4</sup> Level 1 referred to very limited competencies, while Level 2 represented limited competencies. Level 3 was considered to be the competency level required to function easily in contemporary society. Finally, levels 4 and 5 attested to high degrees of competency development.

In this survey, individuals with very limited and limited competency levels in literacy were at levels 1 and 2 respectively.

These individuals had knowledge and competency levels below what is deemed necessary (Level 3) to function with ease in a knowledge-based society.

More precisely:

- Individuals with limited literacy skills have varying degrees of difficulty with reading, writing and numeracy.

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<sup>2</sup>Renald Legendre, *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*, 3rd ed. (Montréal: Guérin Éditeur Ltée, 2005), 841 [translation].

<sup>3</sup> For additional information on the definitions of the domains of competency evaluated within the framework of the ALSS, see Francine Bernèche and Bertrand Perron, *Développer nos compétences en littératie: un défi porteur d'avenir, Rapport québécois de l'Enquête internationale sur l'alphabétisation et les compétences des adultes (EIACA)*, 2003 (Québec: Institut de la statistique, 2006), 28, inset 1.3. In subsequent references, this document will be cited as Bernèche and Perron.

<sup>4</sup> Bernèche and Perron, 32.

- They do not have the basic competencies required to function comfortably in daily life, i.e. to read (newspapers, articles on social issues, instructions or various other forms of written information), to understand and follow directions, and to develop self-confidence.
- They do not have the competencies (e.g. learning strategies) required to develop the most basic competencies.

In addition to the most recent surveys on adult literacy,<sup>5</sup> research into literacy and basic education along with educational initiatives by literacy specialists give us a better idea of the situation of individuals with limited literacy skills in Québec. From the standpoint of accommodating requests, the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (May 2002) states that, before selecting means to motivate people to acquire training and embark on a training path, it is important to know the characteristics and needs of individuals with limited literacy skills. The following profile is presented with this idea in mind.

## 1.2 Characteristics of individuals with limited literacy skills

First, from a sociological standpoint, individuals with limited literacy skills are found in all age groups, and often come from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, the strengths and qualities these people have developed and the competencies they have acquired in various contexts outside school can sometimes compensate for the difficulties they experience.<sup>6</sup>

ALSS estimates that, among the 16-to-25-year-old Quebeckers who rated 1 on the scale of literacy competencies:

- 797 000 people, or 16% of the population, had difficulty with prose literacy
- 907 000 people, or 18% of the population, had difficulty with document literacy
- 1 024 000 people, or 20% of the population, had difficulty with numeracy

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<sup>5</sup> *Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* (ALSS, 2003) and *International Adult Literacy Survey* (IALS, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Margot Désilets and Jean Patry, *La formation des enseignantes et des enseignants en alphabétisation*, Direction de la formation du personnel scolaire (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 1993).

Even if the problem is much more widespread and complex than levels of schooling might suggest, this factor still has a major impact. According to the 2006 Canadian Census,<sup>7</sup> 725 120 people between the ages of 25 and 64 did not hold any certificate, diploma or degree. According to the Institut de la statistique du Québec<sup>8</sup> (ISQ), by combining the two indicators (schooling and literacy competencies), about a quarter (24%) of Quebecers between the ages of 16 and 65 could require basic training due to a lack of education or insufficient literacy competencies.

The precarious situations and poverty experienced by many individuals with limited literacy skills is due to reduced access to the labour market and lower salaries.

On a personal level, individuals with limited literacy skills can experience difficulties in many areas. For example:

- They do not have the minimum competencies required to function adequately in daily life situations, such as reading newspapers, instructions or prescription labels, filling out forms and understanding and following directions.
- For a variety of reasons, they have not completed secondary school. Their learning problems have not been adequately addressed and they have repeatedly experienced failure in school.
- They often have to deal with stress, anxiety and low self-esteem, all of which hamper their relationships and make it hard for them to function in society.
- They may perceive themselves as unproductive, which influences their contribution to society and lowers their confidence in their abilities.

As a result, most individuals with limited literacy skills have trouble developing and completing projects that lead to training or remunerative employment.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population, Product no. 97-560-XCB2006007 in the Statistics Canada catalogue (Québec City: Québec, Code 24).

<sup>8</sup> Bernèche and Perron, 98.

<sup>9</sup> Margot Désilets and Jean Patry, *La formation des enseignantes et des enseignants en alphabétisation*, Direction de la formation du personnel scolaire (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 1993).



A study<sup>10</sup> conducted by the Literacy Foundation in 2005-2006, and involving 180 people who drew upon its services, corroborated these findings and added the following observations:

- They rarely admit to having problems with reading and writing (they are ashamed of this situation and believe themselves to be alone in it).
- They tend to feel vulnerable in the presence of people they consider more educated than themselves (they can sometimes adopt a submissive attitude, or become aggressive when faced with a situation they do not understand well).
- They have learned to rely on numerous strategies to hide their difficulties.
- They often have pronunciation problems since they do not have the knowledge required to distinguish between syllables (they often say words the way they hear them).
- They do not have the vocabulary required to express the finer points they would like to make.
- They often experience problems relating to their perception of time and space.

Individuals with limited literacy skills can find themselves in problematic situations related to their health. They may find it hard, for example, to: describe their health problems accurately; understand the information and instructions they receive from health care practitioners; understand prescriptions; and fill out forms that are often necessary to obtain certain types of care and in many other situations related to their health.

### 1.3 The needs and motives of individuals with limited literacy skills who go back to school

These clients should not be treated as if they were all the same, or defined in a cursory manner as just so many individuals with limited literacy skills. It is essential, rather, to consider the diversity of clients served along with the range of competencies and skills each possesses. Individuals with limited literacy skills include young dropouts, company employees, young single mothers, immigrants, people in both rural and urban areas, the elderly, parents of preschool and school-aged children, people with illnesses, and so on.

The needs of individuals with limited literacy skills are therefore rooted in their realities and situations, and are what motivate them to approach SARCA services. It is therefore important to consider this state of affairs when receiving these clients, and to take their characteristics into account. For example, individuals with limited literacy skills may want to become literate so that

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<sup>10</sup> Pierre Simard, *Mieux connaître le parcours des apprenants potentiels en lien avec la formation et l'emploi. Analyse du portrait des adultes faisant appel au Service de référence de la Fondation pour l'alphabétisation* (Québec: Fondation pour l'alphabétisation, 2007).

they can find a better job and improve their socioeconomic status. The parents of school-age children often wish to be more literate in order to help their children with their homework and to ensure that they do not repeat the painful cycle of illiteracy. Young dropouts who return to school may wish to complete their secondary studies in order to find a job. The elderly, for their part, may wish to exercise greater control over their environment, while people with illnesses may wish to understand the instructions of health care professionals and how to take their medications, which can often be numerous. Mothers may wish to learn how to read and follow recipes in order to improve their families' diet.

Researchers Paul Bélanger and Brigitte Voyer have devoted a segment of their research to training requests<sup>11</sup> and the characteristics and motivations of adults who enroll in training programs.<sup>12</sup> This decision does not always stem from personal motivation or in-depth reflection on one's situation and prospects for the future. Rather, it often follows a significant life change or is prompted by the example or influence of people who have successfully completed training programs. The influence of a person's entourage (family, friends, work colleagues, social network) can be decisive in terms of discouragement or support.

To ensure that clients express their needs, one must bring to the situation a thorough understanding of groups and individuals who have limited literacy skills. While the usual reluctance of the target group must be taken into account, one must also avoid hasty generalizations and be able to recognize the characteristics of a population that is, after all, very diverse.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Bélanger and Brigitte Voyer, *L'aide à l'expression de la demande éducative en formation générale et l'accueil de cette demande dans les commissions scolaires du Québec* (Montréal: CIRDEP-UQAM, 2004), 17.

<sup>12</sup> The study was conducted with adult learners enrolled at an adult education centre (AEC). We can presume that those who do not foresee taking training, or who do not decide to do so, encounter even greater problems than those encountered by individuals who are already enrolled in training programs.

## CHAPTER 2: Suggested Approaches for Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills in Reception Centres

This chapter proposes various approaches that can be used at the initial and second levels of reception with people who show signs of illiteracy. The table on the following page pairs situations with appropriate actions.<sup>13</sup> These actions must show the utmost respect for individuals with limited literacy skills. As many people working in reception services in adult education centres are already quite aware of this reality, they need only take into account those proposals that provide additional support. When considering when these approaches could be most useful, it is important to keep in mind that they can often be relevant at more than one level of reception and that situations may fluctuate. In other words, any suggestions brought forward must always be adapted to the actual situation at hand.

### 2.1 Suggested approaches for the initial level of reception

During the initial level of reception, it is important to help adults clarify the reasons for their visit and to provide them with general information on the services or resources that might meet best their needs. One must also specify the procedures to be followed, give the names of the people to be contacted and obtain the client's contact information in order to open a file. Front-line staff therefore have a key role to play since their actions can encourage adults to pursue their training, or discourage them from doing so. One must keep in mind that individuals with limited literacy skills often associate school with negative experiences and this colours their perception of training, which can be perceived as potentially demeaning by people who feel they have trouble learning.

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<sup>13</sup> Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, and Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, *Sessions de perfectionnement sur l'accueil des adultes peu scolarisés*, October 2004.

Jean Patry with Margot Désilets, *A Practical Guide for Teaching Adults with Learning Difficulties: Literacy, Presecondary and Secondary Education* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2004).

Comité Alpha Beauce-Etchemin, *Fiers d'apprendre: Guide d'accompagnement*, Québec, 2006.

Margot Désilets, *L'analphabetisme au Québec: Journée de formation des juges de la Cour du Québec*, PowerPoint document, 2007.

SITUATION	ACTION
<p>The person is apprehensive and stressed, and has difficulty concentrating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be reassuring; tell the person that he/she is not alone in finding it hard to read, write and do calculations.</li> <li>• Tell the person that the interview will last as long as it takes to understand and assimilate the information.</li> <li>• Do not overload the person with too much information or too many instructions at the same time.</li> <li>• Create a calm atmosphere by eliminating sources of noise; listen attentively.</li> <li>• Lead the interview and be clear about your intentions, the content to be covered and your expectations.</li> <li>• Give the person and his/her questions and comments your undivided attention.</li> </ul>
<p>The person does not understand, and cannot retain, the information imparted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that the person is not hearing impaired.</li> <li>• Verify the person's understanding of the information provided and have him/her repeat it.</li> <li>• Make the information provided as concrete as possible by connecting it to things the person is already familiar with.</li> <li>• Refer to mental images that are meaningful for the person.</li> <li>• Evoke shapes, colours and landscapes that are familiar to the person.</li> <li>• Make sure that you do not give too much information at the same time (keep to one message or instruction at a time, emphasizing the key words).</li> <li>• Speak at a slow, even pace and in short sentences.</li> <li>• Never assume that the person has understood what you have said, and be attentive to any signs that he/she has not (furtive looks, apparent lack of interest, etc.).</li> <li>• Adopt the reinforcement method if an instruction has been complied with and the information understood.</li> </ul>
<p>The person shows signs of fatigue (following an effort to understand information and instructions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to help the person identify the causes of his/her fatigue (medication, sleep or health problems, visual or hearing problems, etc.)</li> <li>• Incorporate time for breaks into the interview.</li> <li>• Always create the calmest possible atmosphere for the person.</li> </ul>

SITUATION	ACTION
The person finds it difficult to pronounce words or articulate ideas, or conveys an incoherent message.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the person to express his/her ideas (such problems may occur only in stressful situations).</li> <li>• Ask questions to help the person clarify his/her ideas.</li> <li>• Ask the person to use a visual aid (a sheet of paper, a graph, etc.).</li> <li>• Give the person enough time (taking the required time applies to all reception situations).</li> </ul>
The person has short-term memory problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use illustrations or mnemonic aids (these can be either funny or nonsensical).</li> <li>• Spark interest by reminding the person why he/she approached the reception service in the first place.</li> <li>• Ask the person if anything about the interview surprised him/her and help him/her to remember the key words.</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Suggested interventions for the second level of reception

At the second level of reception, the counselor helps the adult to specify personal goals and determine a course of action that will help him/her implement their project. The counselor might, for instance, recommend that the person look at prior extracurricular or work-related learning. It might also be helpful to try to obtain additional information on the reasons that led the client to turn to the reception service. The habits of listening and attentiveness stressed during the initial level of reception are no less important during the second level, when the emphasis is on the type of assistance to be offered so that the client can take stock of all his/her competencies and experiences and explain as concretely and thoroughly as possible the reasons that led him/her to go back to school.

SITUATION	INTERVENTIONS
The person has a limited vocabulary for speaking about personal matters and accomplishments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the person to speak openly and to ask questions</li> <li>• Use clear, simple language to communicate. Instead of <i>considering that</i>, say: <i>because of</i>. Instead of <i>for the purpose of</i>, say: <i>in order to</i>. Instead of <i>prior to</i>, say: <i>before</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Consistently avoid complicated words, yet without making the person feel that you are being condescending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use synonyms that correspond to the person's reality.</li> <li>• In presenting or reading a text, identify the key words.</li> <li>• Help the person to find the right words and expressions to say what he/she means.</li> </ul>
In exploring information that concerns him/her, the person may mix up or leave out dates, place names and so on. This could be due to a learning problem such as dyslexia, which is not related to intelligence but to a deficiency in information processing that may lead to drawbacks in the following areas.	
Time perception and management (before, after, hour, week, month, year, enough time, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that any instructions regarding meetings or deadlines always include a reference point familiar to the person.</li> <li>• Help the person to locate significant clues that could help him/her remember important information.</li> </ul>
Hyperactivity or hypoactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak slowly, take your time, keep the person's attention, ensure that the atmosphere remains calm, maintain a feeling of trust, etc.</li> </ul>
Impulsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the person to wait until you have finished asking a question before replying, or to take a few minutes to reflect before coming to a conclusion.</li> </ul>
The addition, switching, omission, substitution or repetition of sounds, syllables, words, sentences, figures and numbers (in the person's way of speaking and in his/her impression of what is being expressed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take your time, use visual reference points and help the person if he/she has to read a document. Also, when giving examples, use situations familiar to the client, repeat words that he/she seems to find difficult, and always use simple words and short sentences.</li> </ul>
Spatial orientation (left, right, in front of, behind)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that a reference point or an address is always accompanied by a drawing or map (help the person find his/her way around).</li> </ul>
The person does not believe there is anything to be gained by following a literacy or basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the client to see that learning to read, write and calculate can be beneficial and that he/she is capable of learning since he/she already</li> </ul>

SITUATION	INTERVENTIONS
education program, and even thinks that he/she must accept the current situation as permanent.	knows many things. Help the person envision the many things that will become possible once he/she has learned how to read, write and count.

During the reception interviews, whether at the initial or subsequent level, one must: put situations in perspective; be welcoming and attentive; refrain from treating the adult like a child; show empathy; take whatever time is needed; be straightforward, clear and direct; verify that everything has been understood; be respectful of the client; and show tact by speaking of the person's difficulties in reading, writing and calculating, instead of talking about illiteracy.

## 2.3 Some examples of interventions

### First example: First visit to a SARCA office

Julie goes to a SARCA office with the intention of registering for the courses she needs to complete her secondary school education. She appears nervous and apprehensive and has problems explaining her background, what she has done in life and what she wishes to do. The more questions she is asked, the more agitated she becomes. Her answers, moreover, are vague. She appears disconcerted by the information she receives, and horrified at the idea of a meeting with a counsellor. She is clearly impatient and eager to leave.

### Suggestions

- Take the client to a quiet place, such as a corner of the reception area or another room, and gently encourage her to relax.
- Speak in a concise manner, using simple words. Give the client sufficient time to express herself as well, and encourage her to do so slowly and finish her sentences.
- Do not ask the client too many questions at the same time. Take the time to record her answers one by one and do not give her too much information or too many instructions at the same time. Combine information with examples or images that are likely to be familiar to her.
- When suggesting a meeting with a counsellor, give the day and time, referencing them to time markers familiar to the client, such as the day following the weekend or the hour following her child's return from school. Also explain to the client how to get to the appointment, using a map; if a map isn't available, a drawing with directions could be made.
- Ask the client to repeat some of the information or instructions she received to ensure that she has thoroughly understood them. If she hasn't, explain them again more clearly, using examples or associations with expressions or situations that are familiar to her.

- Ensure that the client feels secure by telling her that many people do not understand information or instructions the first time around. It might also be a good idea to relate a similar situation that you experienced at a hospital or a grocery store, for example.

### **Second example: Aggression**

Martin visits a SARCA office. He is aggressive because the people he speaks to do not understand him. He loudly accuses them of deliberately failing to understand him and of not paying attention to him. The more he repeats himself, the more confused he seems.

### **Suggestions**

Individuals with limited literacy skills who turn to SARCA services tend to exhibit two types of attitudes: either they are embarrassed, speak little and barely react to the questions put to them; or they are aggressive because they are under stress and try to make the reception service staff responsible for their situation. This is the case with Martin.

- Find a way to reduce Martin's stress by taking him aside and speaking to him in a calm voice, using simple sentences.
- Determine whether his behaviour is influenced by medication or street drugs, either of which could make a person passive or aggressive.
- Gently ask him to repeat what he said when he arrived. You could also ask him to use drawings or examples if he is afraid he won't be understood.
- You could suggest using games in the form of tests, drawings or pictograms.
- You might also want to ask if he would like you to ask him more questions to help him explain what is on his mind.
- It is important to create an atmosphere of trust by showing Martin that you accept him just as he is and by listening respectfully to him.

### **Third example: A person reluctant to turn to SARCA services**

For the past two years, Francine has been taking part in community kitchen activities in her neighbourhood. Her recipes often do not turn out well and it has gradually become clear that she has problems with reading and numeracy. The community centre director has suggested that Francine enroll in a literacy workshop at a nearby adult education centre but she is reluctant to do so. The director has informed the person responsible for reception services at the adult education centre of the situation, in the hope that she can convince Francine to enroll in a literacy program provided by a local school board.



## Suggestions

- The professional reception staff at the adult education centre could suggest that the director of the community centre acquaint the participants in the community kitchen with the local school board's training services.
- The reception staff could also plan specific activities (relating to the community kitchen's participants' requests for information) with their director, who could suggest that participants visit the training centre.
- The reception staff could speak informally with Francine in order to build a climate of trust. The staff could inform her of the advantages of going back to school and back this up with concrete examples. This might eventually change the way Francine feels about training.



## CHAPTER 3: Resources and Documents That Could Help Individuals With Limited Literacy Skills to Strengthen Their Knowledge Base

### 3.1 Online documents

Most relevant online documents are accessible on the Web site of the Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine (CDEACF). From the home page, users can access *Espace Alpha*,<sup>14</sup> and from there can view articles on various topics such as current trends in literacy, in addition to a full range of documents dealing with the subject, including:

- pedagogical material pertaining to reading, research and virtual toolkits
- documentary services such as pedagogical material toolkits and long-distance loan services
- literacy documents produced through the Federal-Provincial Literacy Initiatives Program (FPLIP)
- documents classified by subject, under the following themes: functional literacy, community literacy, literacy and social and occupational integration, literacy for the visually and hearing impaired, literacy and information and communication technologies (ICT), competencies and basic training in the workplace, parenting skills and early literacy, international surveys on adult literacy, francization and alpha-francization, training materials and current periodicals.

*Espace Alpha* also provides access to literacy projects and research, electronic resources and profiles of various literacy practices.

### 3.2 Other documentary references

Canada Information Office. *Issues and Challenges in Communicating With Less Literate Canadians*, Final Report. September 2000.<sup>15</sup>

Clerc, Isabelle. *Les recommandations liées à la rédaction en langue claire et simple : entre lisibilité et intelligibilité*. Université Laval, 2003. Along with other works edited by Isabelle Clerc.

Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation générale des adultes. *Coffret de matériel andragogique pour la formation des personnes ayant des problèmes d'apprentissage : alphabétisation, présecondaire, secondaire*. Compiled by Jean Patry in conjunction with Margot Désilets. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, June 2004.

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<sup>14</sup> Go to: <http://alpha.cdeacf.ca/> (July 17, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Online: <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/issueche/cover.htm> (July 17, 2012).

### Awareness videos

*À la merci des mots* (produced by the Carrefour d'éducation populaire de Pointe-Saint-Charles). Testimonials by individuals with limited literacy skills regarding health-related situations.

*À mots découverts* (distributed by Vidéo-Femmes). The content, duration and cost of the video, as well as the contact information for ordering it, can all be found on the Web site.<sup>16</sup>

*Mosquito Strategy* (distributed by Vidéo-Femmes). The content, duration and cost of the video, as well as the contact information for ordering it, can all be found on the Web site.<sup>17</sup>

*Nou les écrivins*. This video can be viewed on the Télé-Québec Web site,<sup>18</sup> or borrowed from the Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et de la condition féminine (CDEACF).

## 3.3 Useful information

### Info-Alpha Line

The Literacy Foundation offers listening, referral and guidance services. It has a toll-free telephone line for all those wishing to begin literacy training. The number is: 1-800-361-9142.

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<sup>16</sup> Online: <http://www.videofemmes.org/index.php?id=13&fid=197> (July 17, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Online: <http://www.videofemmes.org/index.php?id=13&fid=231> (July 17, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Online: <http://video.telequebec.tv/nou-les-ecrivins-une-histoire-d-ecrivains%20analphabetes> (March 14, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

This guide provides information on the needs and characteristics of individuals with limited literacy skills as well as tools that reception centre staff can use to intervene in an appropriate manner.

By having a better knowledge of the statistics, characteristics, needs and motivations associated with individuals with limited literacy skills who wish to begin literacy training, reception centre staff will be better equipped to meet their needs.

SARCA services personnel will also be in a better position to select appropriate interventions and practices as they receive clients and guide them through the process of remedying their situation. The suggested resources and documents can stimulate reflection; they can also be used to prepare training sessions and to establish frameworks for intervention by SARCA services personnel.

Awareness of the various realities of individuals with limited literacy skills is important when providing services adapted to the expression of their requests for assistance.

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