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 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.

“...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

CLLN Welcome
Lindsay Kennedy, President and Chief Executive Officer, welcomed participants on behalf of CLLN. 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 CLLN 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 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 their specific regions.

“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

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.

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.

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.

“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

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

- Maria Wilson, ITK
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 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.

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.

“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
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, 2nd Floor, The Blue Room

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annie Smith St Georges</td>
<td>Elder <a href="mailto:arstgeorges@hotmail.com">arstgeorges@hotmail.com</a> 819-770-6243</td>
<td>Attended in person, w. Natasha Bertrand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Kennedy</td>
<td>President &amp; CEO – Canadian Literacy and Learning Network <a href="mailto:lkenney@literacy.ca">lkenney@literacy.ca</a> 613-563-2464 ext 222</td>
<td>Attended in person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kory Wilson</td>
<td>Director, Aboriginal Education &amp; Community Engagement – Vancouver Community College <a href="mailto:kowilson@vcc.ca">kowilson@vcc.ca</a> 604-307-5478</td>
<td>Regrets – but please keep in the loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleen Yamamoto</td>
<td>Project Coordinator - Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team <a href="mailto:Essentialsskills.guidingteam@gmail.com">Essentialsskills.guidingteam@gmail.com</a> 250-681-1855</td>
<td>Attended via videoconference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francesca Debastiani</td>
<td>Service Canada – Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team <a href="mailto:Francesca.debastiani@servicecanada.gc.ca">Francesca.debastiani@servicecanada.gc.ca</a> 604-666-2267</td>
<td>Regrets – but please keep in the loop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brandon Stiles</td>
<td>First Nations Employment Society <a href="mailto:brandons@fnes.ca">brandons@fnes.ca</a> 604-605-8901 ext 13</td>
<td>Attended via teleconference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cori Thunderchild</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leanne Joe</td>
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<td>Regrets – but please keep in the loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Phang</td>
<td>AGTC Manager – Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment &amp; Training Association (PGNAETA) <a href="mailto:williamp@pgnaeta.bc.ca">williamp@pgnaeta.bc.ca</a> 250-561-1199</td>
<td>Unable to attend – but please keep in the loop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha Moise</td>
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<td>Unable to attend – but please keep in the loop</td>
</tr>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jimmy Arnold</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Contact Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ted Norris</td>
<td>Meeting Facilitator – Norris Consultants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jodi Bruhn</td>
<td>Meeting Scribe – Stratéjuste Consulting</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jbruhn@stratejuste.ca">jbruhn@stratejuste.ca</a></td>
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Appendix D: Participant Biographies

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>BIOGRAPHY</th>
<th>PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lindsay Kennedy, President &amp; CEO, CLLN</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.literacy.ca">www.literacy.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Colleen Yamamoto Project Coordinator - Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team (on behalf of the AESGT) | **OUR PRIMARY GOAL:** 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.  

**WHO WE ARE:** 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.  

**OUR MANDATE:** To increase over all awareness around the concept of Essential Skills. | AESGT BACKGROUND:  
In 2006, prior to the restructuring of Aboriginal Skills & Employment Programs in the BC/Yukon region formed the Aboriginal Skills Guiding team (ESGT) with representation from each of the Human Resource Development Human Resource Development at the time.  

The current members of the Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team (AESGT) are... |

Creating a National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills  
Meeting hosted by the CLLN, May 27, 2014
OUR VISION: To work with all like-minded individuals and organizations who seek to support Essential Skills building for all.

OUR VALUES: Collaboration, sharing, honest conversation, willingness to support each other, participation, communication to the wider circle, openness.

WHO WE REPORT TO: our Managers, fellow co-workers, communities and clients.

Brandon Stiles, Project Manager, FNES

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 passion about Literacy and workplace training. The team share ideas freely, program more resources, best practices and strategies of communities, and to look into current employment and training. The team works together to provide services within and outside of BC/Yukon and longer-term training sessions and/or presenting at conferences. The others are doing, and by supporting individual ASET programs.

The AESGT has served as an ad hoc projects such as the DVD series, Investigation – ESI’, and the 2 day introduction workshop called ‘Skills Journey; Planting the Seed’ as its French companion called en compétences essentielles: La croissance’. Indirectly, the ASET capacity of individual ASET organizations and their clients through enhanced training, and sharing of information across organizations and regions.

Participation with the CLLN as Table for Aboriginal Literacy & Essential Skills (NTALES) supports our vision and we are thrilled to be invited to participate.

Creating a National Table for Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills
Meeting hosted by the CLLN, May 27, 2014
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 for Aboriginal job seekers with job readiness. The program helps Aboriginal job seekers acquire the nine essential skills (Reading, Numeracy, Writing, Computer, Critical Thinking, Others, Oral Communication, Continuous Learning).

This six week program helps clients bridge into more advanced opportunities in employment. Clients identify their employment goals and are assessed for their ES levels compared to ES occupational requirements for their job target. This is used as the Learning Plan. Individual upgrading are tailored to each client's skill level and identified job target.

The program uses authentic industry-based tasks to help clients practice and embed essential skills related to an industry's job requirements. Employment resources development, cover letter development, cold calls, networking, interview development and essential skills related to their job target. Other employment maintenance centers include Portfolio and PLATO Learning license.

During the program, clients attend weekly workshops, receive coaching and programs, and job search opportunities through assisted job placement, free phone, online resources, and community announcements.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Position</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Phang, AGTC Manager</td>
<td>Aboriginal Gateway Training Centre Manager.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pgnaeta.bc.ca">www.pgnaeta.bc.ca</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>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. Furthermore the AGTC develops curriculum and teaches adult education programs that are in preparation of entrance exams for post-secondary referrals to agencies that meet the individual. The program option to participate in a four volunteer placement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samantha Moise, Team Lead, Customer Care Program</td>
<td>As Team Lead, Samantha coordinates the Customer Care Program, and teaches Lifeskills and Essential Skills, along with Trish Naziel, Team Lead for Trades.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pgnaeta.bc.ca">www.pgnaeta.bc.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leanne Joe, Community Engagement Specialist, ISETS</td>
<td>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. For 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.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.isets.ca">www.isets.ca</a></td>
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Website: www.fnes.ca
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<tr>
<th>Sue Phillips, Co-Executive Director, FESA</th>
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| 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.

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. |

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<tr>
<th>Elaine Cairns, Co-Executive Director, FESA</th>
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<td>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 Learning. As above – what Sue said!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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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.

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.

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.

Priscilla Settee, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, U of Saskatchewan

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. 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
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<tr>
<th>Jennifer Rattray, Associate V-P, Indigenous, Government and Community Affairs, U of Winnipeg</th>
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<tr>
<td>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. 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. 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.</td>
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www.indigenous.uwinnipeg.ca
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 *Manitoba Motion Picture Blizzard Award* and two *Gracie Allen Awards* 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. 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.

In 2012, Jennifer was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work in education and the community.

Sylvia Maracle is a Mohawk from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territories 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.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Wilson, Senior Policy Advisor, ITK</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Kerr, Executive Director, Kivalliq Mine Training Society</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrad Saulis, Policy Director, NAFC</td>
<td>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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Hendry, Senior Policy Advisor, AFN</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Kerr, Executive Director, Kivalliq Mine Training Society</td>
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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.

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 prototype 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.

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<tr>
<th>Chris Harwood, Manager Research and Field Development, CLLN</th>
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<tr>
<td>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 State of the Literacy and Essential Skills Field which can be found on the CLLN website.</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.literacy.ca">www.literacy.ca</a></td>
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| Nilambri Ghai, Liaison Coordinator, CLLN | 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. | www.literacy.ca

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

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>NAME / ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>Question: “Why do you think NTALES is important?”</th>
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| Colleen Yamamoto – on behalf of the Aboriginal Essential Skills Guiding Team | The AESGT sees the NTALES approach as a reflection of what we are ready for and believe in. It can be attributed to compassion.  

The Essential Skills Guiding Team came together in 2006 at a time where there was no formal delivery of Essential Skills programming. In a sense, this was a good thing as the team came together because they have a passion for literacy and learning. The BC/Yukon Aboriginal Program of Service Canada at this time as well as the subsequent BC/Alberta/Territories Region saw value in 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.  

The AESGT has continued to support each other and maintain a cohesive tight-knit group of individuals tenaciously advancing the awareness of Essential Skills and the positive effect of embedding Essential Skills in employment programming. We believe that successful programs have emerged because of this.  

Just like our team here in BC, the NTALES is important to provide a face for Aboriginal Essential Skills. We see our community, the AESGT, participating and sharing with other community institutions, indigenous learning centers, and good intentioned leaders co-creating with an Aboriginal Essential Skills national practice together in environments of interaction and learning with the idea of advancing the LES society and technology for the benefit of all.  

As you will note from the keen participation of our team members, our enthusiasm has been a result of individual team members have specialized knowledge of the communities we serve as well as being in a position to respond to needs such as skill enhancement and employment development. Aboriginal leadership share this knowledge nationally. |

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<tr>
<td>Leanne Joe</td>
<td>As a representative of both rural and remote First Nations communities throughout the country (many of which are small), resources and capacity at all levels can be limiting. Thus, Literacy and Essential Skills (ES) development cannot meet its full potential without the support and guidance of an entity like the NTALES. Having a specific entity dedicated to Aboriginal specific literacy and ES needs would be very beneficial to organizations such as ISETS who represent these small FN communities. It would work collaboratively with them to design, deliver and increase capacities for members in NTALES. NTALES will provide us the opportunity to benefit from many successful programs and services we would not know about them otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia Maracle</td>
<td>In terms of a few thoughts on why I think that the NTALES is important I would offer that literacy and ES are important and often lacking skill set in our community. We need our children to be able to dream and read and write. Reading sets the stage for that mental and emotional “flight”. As the fastest growing sector of our population, it is in everyone’s best interest to ensure that literacy and basic skills are provided as a foundation for learning, living, and employment. It is also important to recognize that the majority of us live in urban and suburban areas, and it is easy to overlook the needs of the rural and remote First Nations. This unique situation is often not addressed in program design and outreach. Having said this, I would also offer that I am not sure that the best approach is to partner with one specific Aboriginal organization. My experience is a two streams approach - one is we become more focused and define our needs from a cultural perspective and work with organizations that focus on growth and development or that we languish off to the side without the approach resources. The other is to focus on defining and addressing our needs from a cultural perspective. I am open to discussion and making sure there is a planned process to ensure that neither stream is the other, and the relationship is very transitory in my mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conrad Saulis</td>
<td>As stated in the overview the need for national unified efforts and voice for Aboriginal literacy and ES is critical. There have been various national or regional efforts made up of people who worked very hard to make projects successful. This means that there is a base of reasonably knowledgeable people in this area for a long period of time. Bringing these people together is a worthwhile endeavor. One of the keys to success in either obtaining higher levels of education or acquiring skills for employment requires good literacy levels. Unfortunately and as we know literacy rates for First Nations throughout Canada remain low and coordinated national and regional efforts are needed to improve literacy rates and to improve opportunities for Aboriginal peoples. The efforts under NTALES are critical, and the commitments for it are essential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Hendry</td>
<td>The AFN – specifically the First Nation Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy – advocates for more recognition and more support for essential skills and literacy programs. It participated in the establishment of a First Nations, Inuit and Métis Essential Skills Inventory (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 Employment Programs, 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 youth. The AFN also partnered several years ago with the Mining Industry Human Resource (MHR) Council, developing a <em>Mining Essentials</em> training program which focuses on the essential skills required for employment in the mining industry. There is currently a Mining Essentials Steering Committee which meets at each of 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 Program Committee in recent months that there is a critical need for more essential skills and literacy initiatives. This past December, the TWG held a workshop on ASETS Program Renewal in 2015. More essential skills and literacy was identified as a top priority. Any advancements offered by the <em>Aboriginal Literacy &amp; Essential Skills</em> would be greatly appreciated.</td>
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Responses as of May 26, 2014