



## **A Message from the Chair**

Steady progress from our dedicated team of staff and volunteers at LDA-Canada. Many of our projects have reached a point where we can use more people with different skill sets, access to new networks and fresh perspectives in order to move to the next level (could that be you?). As we work together to build a stronger LDA network in Canada, we thank the P/T network for your feedback and ideas. For those who participated – either in person or via teleconference – we especially appreciated your input at our recent Roundtable in Montreal.

Thealzel Lee  
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

The Canadian 2016 Census will soon be distributed. There will also be a follow-up survey, using information from the Census, that will focus on Canadians with disabilities. In order for individuals with learning disabilities to be well-represented in the Census and the follow up survey, please help us by encouraging individuals you know of with learning disabilities to complete the surveys and answering question 11 d) of the long-form Census correctly. This will be very important for gathering accurate data on learning disabilities in Canada. The remainder of my report provides further details on the Census. Question 11 d) will not be in the short-form Census.

### The True Impact of the 2016 Census of the Canadian Population

In May 2016, the next Census of the Canadian Population will take place. Every household in Canada is included, as well as Canadians and their families who are working abroad for the federal and provincial governments, Canadian embassies or the Canadian Armed Forces. According to the *Statistics Act*, all residents of Canada are legally required to complete either the short- or long-form census questionnaire.

#### Why is the census important?

The census collects demographic information on every man, woman and child living in Canada.

All levels of governments, private and public organizations throughout the country, at all levels, use these census data to develop policies, programs and services in the administration of programs and in planning pensions, healthcare, employment programs, new schools, public transit, hospitals, daycare centres, etc.

In order to have complete data, it is vital that everyone filling out the long census questionnaire on Census Day be as accurate as possible when answering all the census questions.



The Census will consist of two surveys – the short and long form census. Four out of five households will receive a short census that contains seven questions and requires about 10 minutes to complete. The remaining households in Canada will receive the long-form census, formerly called the National Household Survey, (NHS).

The questions asked on the long-form questionnaire remain basically the same as those on the NHS in 2011 and will take about 30 to 35 minutes to complete. This questionnaire contains the seven questions from the short form as well as 52 additional questions on topics such as ethnicity, mobility, income, employment and activity limitations. In the long-form Census it is the questions on difficulties a person may have doing certain activities of daily living that will be of particular interest to Canadians with learning disabilities. They are as follows:

Activities of Daily Living

Only difficulties or long-term conditions that have lasted or are expected to last for six months or more should be considered.

11. Does this person have any:

- a) difficulty seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses)?
  - o 1: No
  - o 2: Sometimes
  - o 3: Often
  - o 4: Always
- b) difficulty hearing (even when using a hearing aid)?
  - o 1: No
  - o 2: Sometimes
  - o 3: Often
  - o 4: Always
- c) difficulty walking, using stairs, using his/her hands or fingers or doing other physical activities?
  - o 1: No
  - o 2: Sometimes
  - o 3: Often
  - o 4: Always
- d) difficulty **LEARNING**, remembering or concentrating?
  - o 1: No
  - o 2: Sometimes
  - o 3: Often
  - o 4: Always
- e) emotional, psychological or mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, anorexia, etc.)?
  - o 1: No
  - o 2: Sometimes
  - o 3: Often
  - o 4: Always



f) other health problem or long-term condition that has lasted or is expected to last for six months or more?

Exclude: any health problems previously reported above.

- 1: No
- 2: Sometimes
- 3: Often
- 4: Always

The data from the filter questions above will be used to identify a sample of individuals to find out more about the impact of living with their limitation in daily activities. But – you have to answer other than “no” to the activity limitation questions to be selected for this follow-up survey called the Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD).

According to the CSD, respondents are considered to have a disability not only if they report a difficulty or impairment due to a long-term condition or health problem, but also if they report that they are limited in their daily activities as a result of their condition.

Starting on May 2, 2016, Statistics Canada will send census letters and packages to all Canadian households. You can complete your census questionnaire online or on paper.

So remember to help us reach Canadians with learning disabilities in order to put a true Canadian face on learning disabilities.

Claudette Larocque

Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

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## **Committee Reports**

### Strategic Planning Team

The activities of the Strategic Planning Team are focused on the development of the Business and Operating Plan and the Rally Project Teams that will create a responsive and financially sustainable LDA network. Recruitment and leadership development for our Rally Projects and LDAC committees remain a high priority. The recent Roundtable in Montreal on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016 generated good feedback and some actionable items that we intend to implement over the coming weeks.

Thealzel Lee – Chair, Strategic Planning Team

Members: Bob Cram (SK), Colette Charest (QC), Claudette Larocque (staff) and Ben Kadel (Emotus Operandi)



### Research Portal Rally Project

The Research Portal Rally Project welcomed Lynne Wawryk-Epp as this project expanded its data collection to Saskatchewan. The BC and AB Project Teams are focusing more of their work on database management systems with the goal of having research information easily accessible from the LDAC website. We are looking for additional volunteers from other parts of Canada to join this Rally Project. Individuals with research experience, familiarity with databases or knowledge relevant to this project interested in contributing or joining our team, please contact Lorrie Goegan: [lgoegan@shaw.ca](mailto:lgoegan@shaw.ca)

Thealzel Lee – Interim Chair, Research Portal Rally Project

### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee has been continuing to meet regularly and ensure that this newsletter gets prepared and distributed quarterly. Now that the newsletter is back as a regular communications vehicle, we are starting to turn our attention to social media, initially Facebook. In the very near future, you should start to notice that LDAC becomes much more active on Facebook again. We are also revising LDAC's social media policies, which have become a bit dated.

The Communications Committee is also re-evaluating where the Communications Rally Project should fit. Our committee may take on responsibility for it. That still needs to be discussed further and approved, but we are eager to get going on it. However, it would be very helpful if our small committee had some additional volunteers. If you or someone you know would like to help us to improve communications within the Canadian learning disabilities network, please let Claudette know. She can be reached at [claudette@ldac-acta.ca](mailto:claudette@ldac-acta.ca)

Bob Cram – Interim Chair

Members: Lorrie Goegan, Brendan O'Neill, Claudette Larocque

### **Provincial/Territorial Updates**

#### Alberta

Catching Children Before They Fail... The Right to Read program is growing! The program has been adapted for French Immersion (grades 1 & 2) with the first workshops taking place in Edmonton and Calgary in April.

The on-line course was launched January 23, in collaboration with Foothills Academy. This interactive workshop is designed for K-1 teachers to help them to screen all their students. It gives them a simple-to-use tool to screen for 20 foundational skills for reading and provides corresponding interventions for



teachers and activities for parents. If children with difficulties can be identified by this early intervention, they can be flagged for a full LD assessment much earlier than would typically happen.

Teachers who want to use the Reading Readiness Screening Tool can sign up through [www.RightToRead.ca](http://www.RightToRead.ca) and take the course at their own pace. Please spread the word through your communities! There is a cost for the training workshops, which can be taken online or in-person, but subsequent use of the tools is free.

Ellie Shuster, Executive Director  
Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

### New Brunswick

I've always been a firm believer that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing right. I also believe that this is the collective mindset at LDANB and what has kept this organisation growing in significance over the last many years. As such, I must say that now seems busier than ever with larger service initiatives, larger education based initiatives and still new proposals for fiscal 2016-2017.

#### 1) Screening for Success (SFS):

In 2015-2016, LDANB delivered 16 Screening for Success (SFS) training sessions throughout the province of New Brunswick in order to certify Post-secondary Education Training and Labour (PETL) specialists in the administration of this instrument. All sessions were between two and two and half days in length, all received very good reviews and culminated in over 200 post-secondary practitioners being certified.

#### 2) PETL-Specific Psycho-educational Assessments:

In 2015, LDANB undertook an initiative specifically aimed at establishing common standards for the psycho-educational assessment of PETL case-managed clients at-risk for Learning Disabilities. LDANB proposed to achieve this through a focused approach, effectively addressing the five most challenging issues currently associated with PETL-specific psycho-educational assessments. More specifically, in collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) and with representation from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), selected experienced NB licensed psychologists and PETL specialists, LDANB has been working diligently to help establish clear, consistent and uniform diagnostic criteria, diagnostic measures and a reporting format to be adopted by all psychologists contracted by PETL to perform psycho-educational assessments.

As part of this initiative LDANB is also helping to establish the method by which contracted psychologists handle PETL client career plans and is helping to



develop the framework for the timely management of psycho-educational assessments. In order to help collect the data required to complete this work, LDANB is currently managing over 200 psycho-educational assessment requests. This work has been very challenging but also very rewarding especially that both psychologists and PETL case managers recognize the need for change with an active management approach that is evidence based and client focused. An overview of the results of this initiative will be presented by LDANB as part of a focus group session at the LDANB Atlantic Symposium on Learning Disabilities.

### 3) Atlantic Symposium on Learning Disabilities:

On April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016 and in collaboration with EECD, LDANB will be hosting the 2016 Biennial Atlantic Symposium on Learning Disabilities at the Wu Conference Centre in Fredericton (UNB Campus). The theme for this bilingual symposium is "*Literacy, Learning Disabilities and Cognitive Strategies: Facilitating the Learning Process for All*". I encourage you to go to our website at [LDANB-TAANB.ca](http://LDANB-TAANB.ca) to get an overview of the program for this full day of learning and sharing with teachers and school specialists, post-secondary practitioners, academics, psychologists, managers and parents. LDANB is again offering this full day symposium for the minimal registration fee of \$100.00.

4) In collaboration with PETL, LDANB hopes to move ahead in 2016 with 2 new initiatives: first, the completion of the final version of the SFS instrument and manual; and, second, focusing on the next phase of the psycho-educational assessment initiative according to new and established assessment standards.

5) In collaboration with EECD, LDANB hopes to move ahead in 2016 to help introduce the SFS instrument in high schools and to be administered by student services specialist (e.g. guidance counsellors). As many of you know, screening and documentation for high school students at-risk for learning disabilities is essential and will facilitate their requests for diagnosis and specialized student services as they transition into post-secondary institutions. LDANB also plans to move ahead in 2016 with the Barton Specialised Literacy Service in select schools and to be offered within the school day.

Hope to see you at the Symposium!

André Deschênes, Executive Director

### Saskatchewan

LDA Saskatchewan was incorporated in 1971 and has been steadily growing over the years. We are so pleased to continue with the expansion of direct services for children, adults, families and professionals. We take every opportunity to educate the public about Learning Disabilities, ADHD and other co-morbidities. We provide workshops to post-secondary institutions, teachers'



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conventions, employers and many others around our province. LDAS has three Branch Offices (Regina, Prince Albert, Saskatoon) with approximately 50 staff members.

We offer many different programs and services, and you can visit [www.ldas.org](http://www.ldas.org) for further information. I will highlight a couple of those programs here. In Saskatchewan we embrace the concept of neuroplasticity and offer cognitive programs such as Arrowsmith and Neurofeedback where we are witnessing life-changing results.

Neurofeedback is direct training of brain function, by which the brain learns to function more efficiently. Through the use of an EEG, we observe the brain in action. That information is shown back to the person, and the brain is rewarded for changing its own activity to more appropriate patterns. Neurofeedback is training in self-regulation and allows the central nervous system to function better. At LDAS we use neurofeedback to address problems of brain dysregulation such as: anxiety, depression, attention deficits, behavior disorders, sleep disturbance, headaches, and chronic pain. Staff members are receiving ongoing training and mentorship through the Institute for Applied Neuroscience.

We have delivered the Arrowsmith Program in Saskatoon for eight years and for two years in Regina. The Arrowsmith Program is based on neuroscience research demonstrating that it is possible to address learning disabilities by identifying and strengthening weak cognitive capacities. This program was developed by Barbara Arrowsmith Young and has been used successfully since 1978. The goal is to help students strengthen the weak cognitive capacities underlying their learning dysfunctions and to enable them to become effective, confident and self-directed learners for life.

The Arrowsmith Program deals with the root causes of the learning disability rather than managing its symptoms. Students become effective learners without having to compensate for their learning disabilities. Their ability to perform complex tasks is improved when the weak cognitive areas are strengthened.

Students return to a full academic program at their appropriate grade level without the need for further resource support or curriculum modification following completion of a three or four year program. In Saskatchewan we have classrooms in both Regina and Saskatoon. For more information please visit [www.arrowsmithschool.org](http://www.arrowsmithschool.org) or [www.ldas.org](http://www.ldas.org).

We are also pleased that we have two representatives who are working with and for the success of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Bob Cram has served on the National Board for approximately three years and now Lynne Warwyk-Epp, our current President, has also joined the Board of LDAC.

*The right to learn, the power to achieve!*