



CANADIAN COUNCIL  
ON **LEARNING**

CONSEIL CANADIEN  
SUR **L'APPRENTISSAGE**

Literacy Issues among Special Populations:  
Rural Students,  
Students with Disabilities,  
Minority Francophone Students

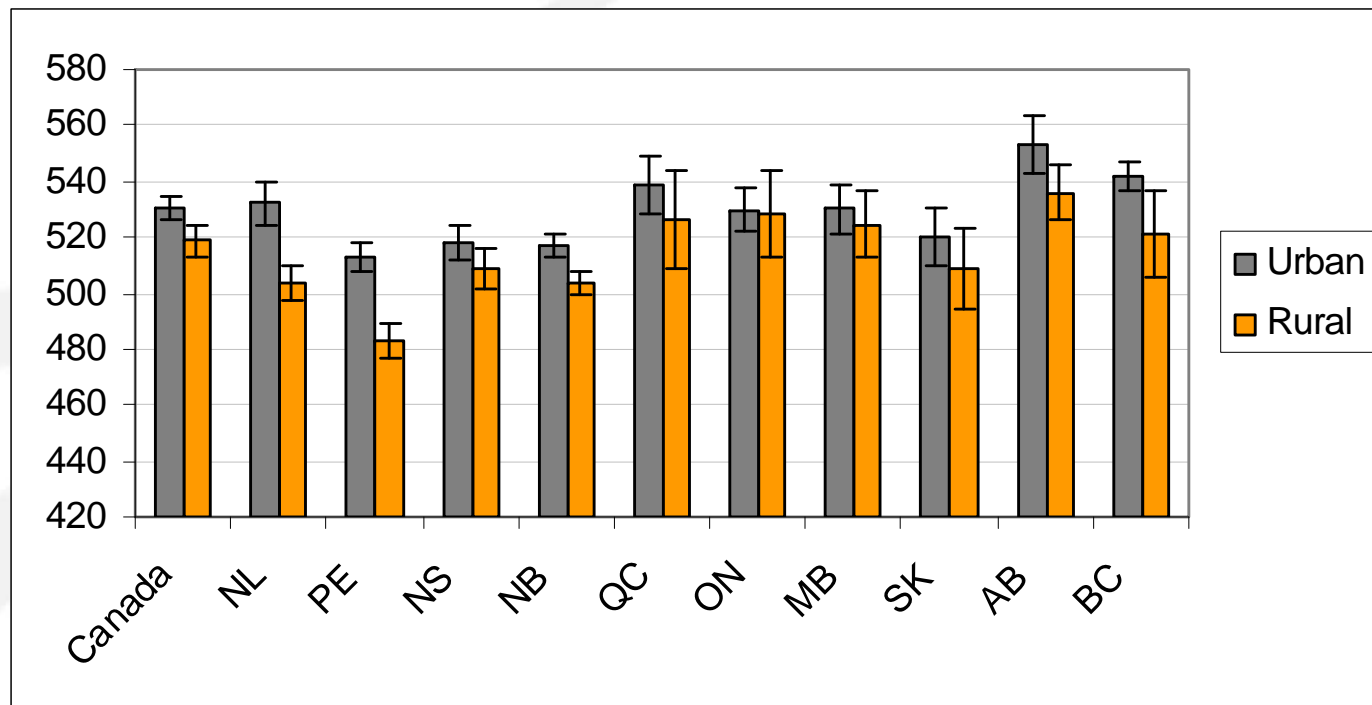
# Overview

- Populations
  - Rural students
  - Students with disabilities
  - Minority Francophone students
- Issues
  - Data
  - Key factors
  - Interventions

## Rural Students

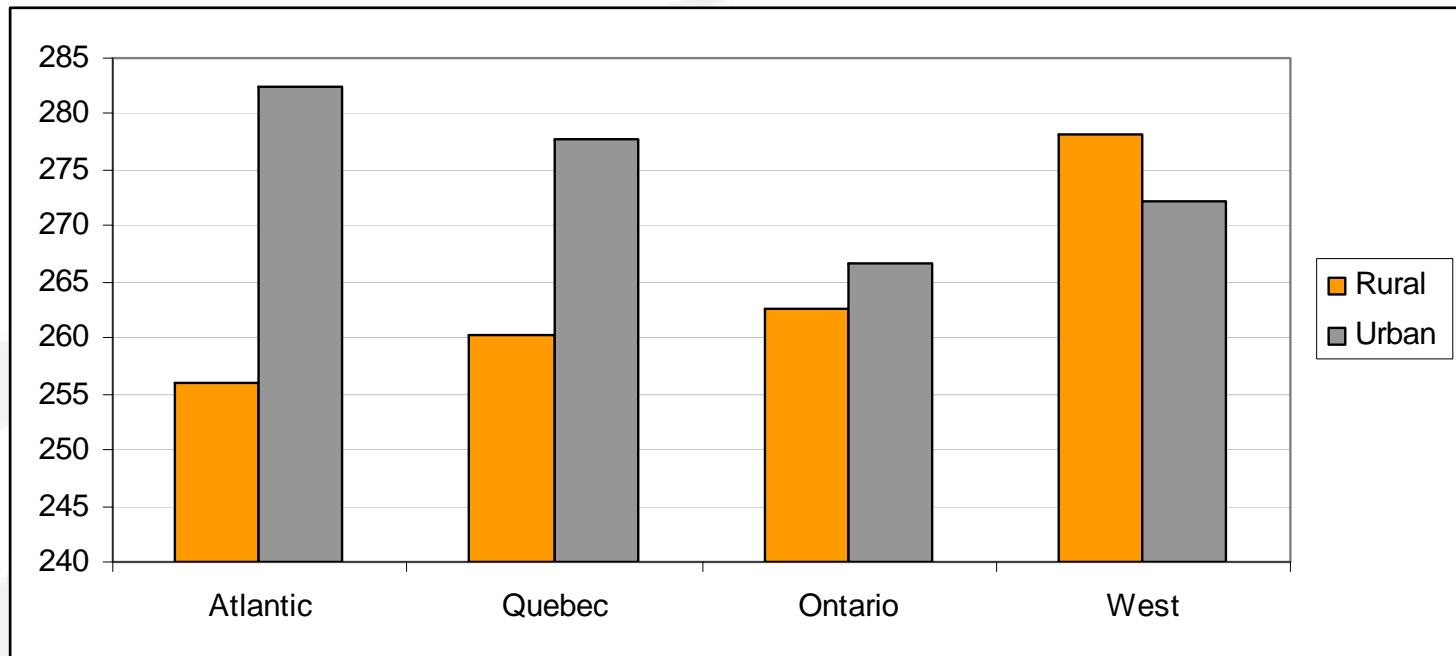
- Literacy achievement is lower among rural students than among their urban counterparts

## Reading achievement among 15 year olds



Source: Statistics Canada – PISA 2003

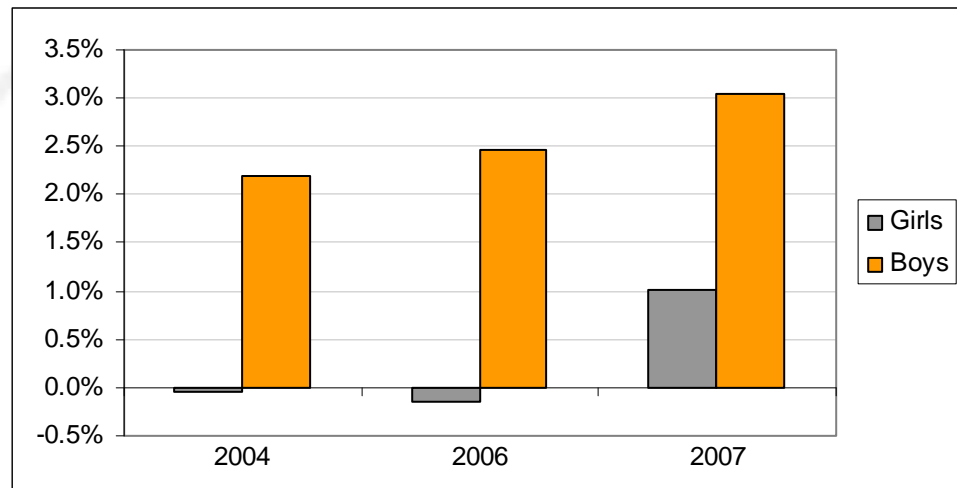
## Prose literacy among adults



Source: Statistics Canada – IALSS 2003

## Key Factors

- Home/family experiences
- Community economic factors
- School conditions
- Gender



Source: EQAO – OSSLT.

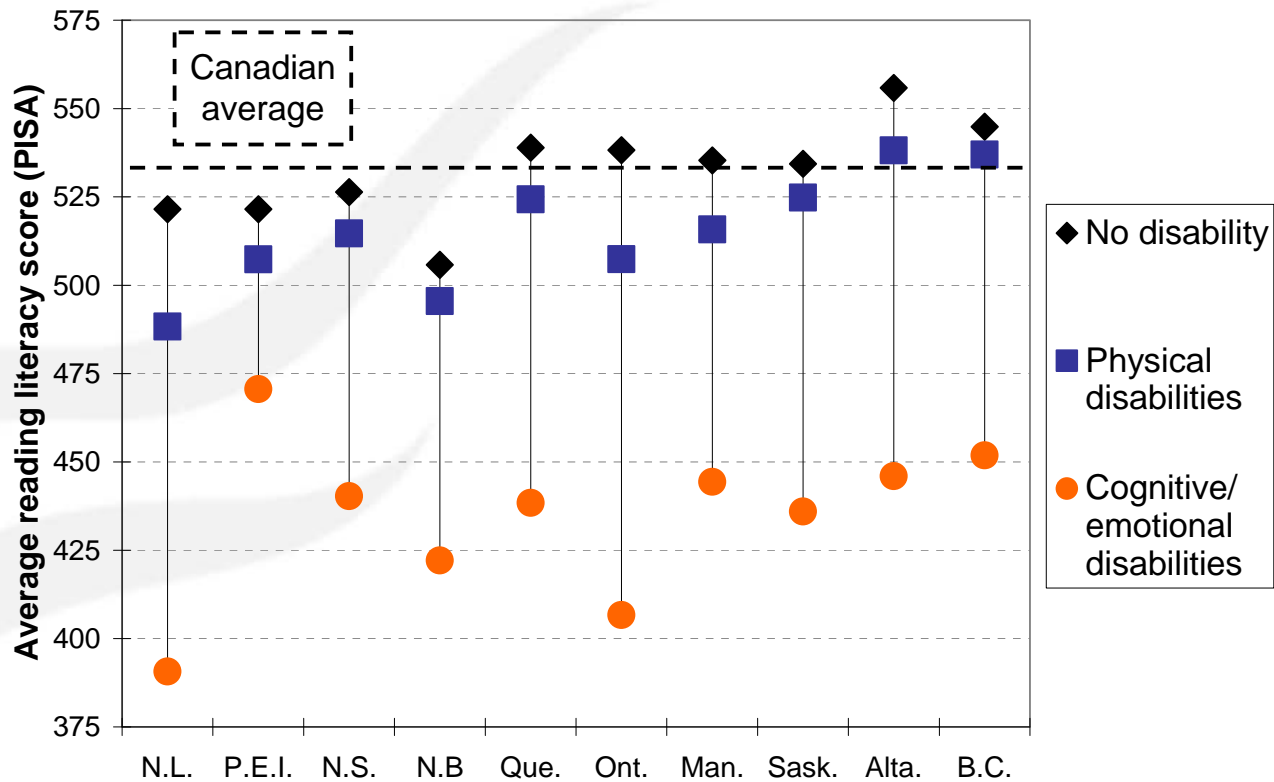
## Effective Interventions

- Family literacy programs
  - Literacy resources
  - Audio tapes
  - Role of fathers
- School-to-work programs
- Improving rural schools
  - Professional induction
  - School leadership

## Students with Disabilities

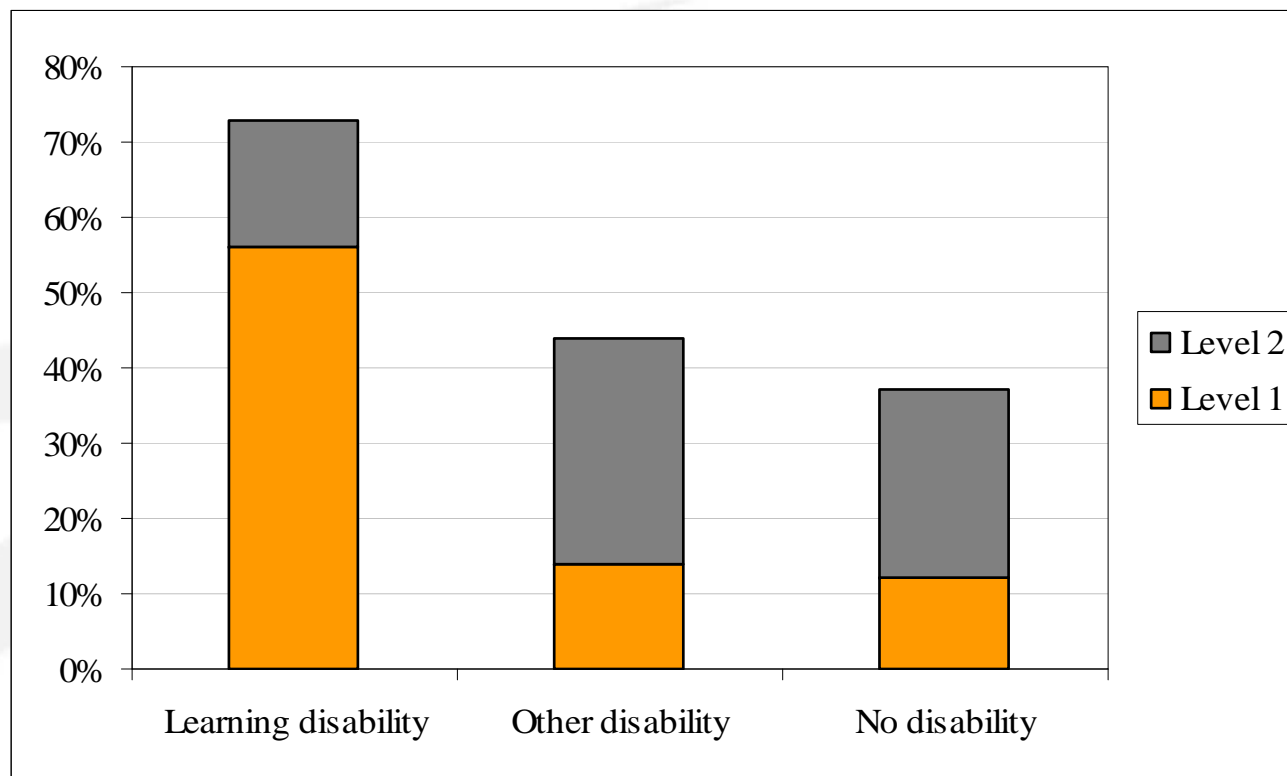
- 4.6% of children aged 5 – 14 have some kind of disability
- Students with disabilities encounter significant difficulties with literacy

# Literacy Scores among 15 year olds



Source: YITS/PISA 2000. Adapted from Kohen, Uppal, Guevremont & Cartwright, 2007.

## Proportion of Adults Falling Below Benchmark



Source: IALS 1994. Adapted from Kapsalis, 1999.

## Key Factors

- Complex relationships between literacy, education and disability.
- Prevention is more effective than remediation

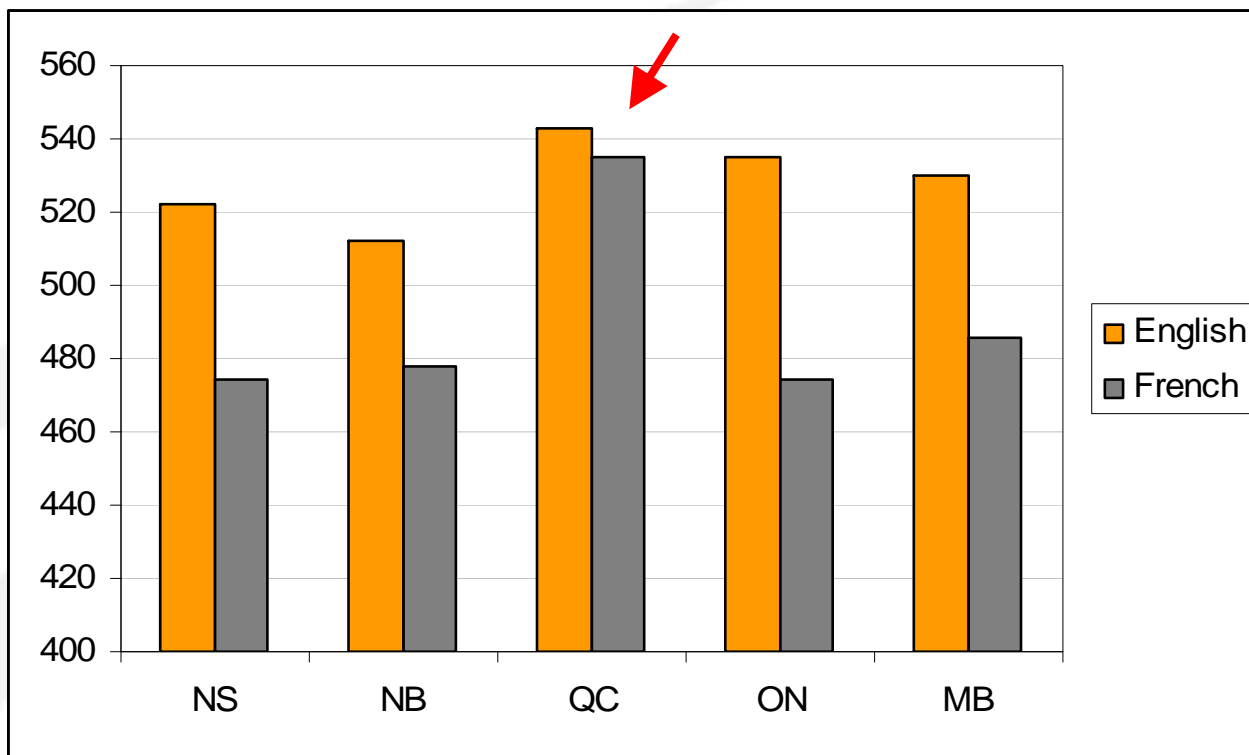
## Effective Interventions

- Learning Disabilities
  - Phonological awareness
  - Response to Intervention framework
- Emotional/Behavioural Disorders
  - Direct instruction
- Psychiatric Disorders
  - High co-morbidity with learning disability
- Physical Disabilities
  - Appropriate expectations
  - Trained instructors
  - Intensive phonological awareness

## Minority Francophone Students

- Literacy achievement is lower among students in French school systems outside of Quebec compared with
  - Students in French school systems in Quebec
  - Students in English school systems outside of Quebec

## Reading achievement among 15 year olds



Source: Statistics Canada – PISA 2000. Adapted from Allen & Cartwright, 2004.

## Key Factors

- Bilingualism
- Reading readiness
  - Lack of French language ECE
  - Home language
- Achievement motivation
- French language resources
- Ethnolinguistic vitality

## Effective Interventions

- Family literacy programs
  - Resource kits
- Community based programs
  - Community school centres
- French language ECE
- Pedagogical Approaches
  - Increase literacy-related achievement motivation
  - Improve use of cognitive reading strategies
  - Minority language pedagogy
  - Pre-service and in-service training specific to minority language contexts