

Context Statement

Social Context

Yukon has a total land area of 483,450 square kilometres and a population of 30,418. The population of Whitehorse, the capital city, is 22,545, and the remaining population is divided among the 19 rural communities.

Organization of School System

There are 28 schools with a total enrolment from kindergarten to grade 12 of 5,526 at the time of writing. One-half of the schools (14) are designated as rural schools. These schools typically have low student populations, several multi-level classes, and low pupil/teacher ratios. Many rural schools do not offer grades 11 and 12 and may offer fewer optional programs in the secondary grades.

Unlike most jurisdictions in Canada, there are no school taxes in the Yukon and only one school board, that being for École Émilie-Tremblay, the territory's only French school. School superintendents work for the Department of Education, which is responsible for most aspects of school operations. Almost every school has a school council, a body which has some but not all the powers of a school board, including the responsibility for schools rules, school plans, and dispute resolution, to name a few.

Yukon follows the British Columbia curriculum in all subject areas. This curriculum is sometimes modified — with departmental approval — to reflect local needs and conditions. As well, up to 20% of a student's educational program may be locally developed. Schools are organized in two segments: elementary (K to 7), and secondary (8 to 12). There are three Catholic schools within the Yukon public school system. Instructional time allotments for each subject vary in the elementary grades but are standardized to 120 hours per course for grades 8 to 12.

Approximately 25% of Yukon students are of First Nations ancestry. These students often participate in Native Language programs and/or in various locally developed courses aimed at developing awareness, appreciation, and knowledge of First Nations culture and traditions. The remainder of the student population is predominantly of European or British ancestry. Approximately 6% of Yukon students are enrolled in a French Immersion program, while 2.3% attend the francophone school.

Language Arts Teaching

Yukon curriculum for Language Arts is based on the Integrated Resource Packages produced by British Columbia. From kindergarten to grade 12, curriculum is organized into three learning outcomes: to comprehend and respond, to communicate information and ideas, and to understand self and society. Students are required to communicate their ideas through print and non-print media and to think and respond critically to information and literature.

Language Arts Testing

Various assessment strategies are used to measure student progress. Yukon utilizes an achievement test or departmental exam at the grade 9 level for English. This assessment consists of two major sections, the first being Reading Comprehension and the second a Narrative and Functional component.

Link with SAIP Reading and Writing Assessment

All Yukon 13- and 16-year-old students participated in the 1998 SAIP Reading and Writing test representing the territory. The sample size was relatively large because of the small population size (i.e., the sample was in fact the entire population of Yukon 13- and 16-year-olds, half of whom wrote the Reading component and half of whom wrote the Writing component in each age group).

Results for Yukon

The performance of 13-year-olds is similar to the Canadian English performance at levels 1 and 5, but there are significant differences at levels 2, 3, and 4. Almost 70% of this age group demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and convey a simple meaning (level 2). Over 30% demonstrate higher levels of writing including control of the elements and integration with a clear perspective (level 3).

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 16-year-olds at all levels except level 5. Approximately 50% of this age group demonstrates, at a minimum, control of the elements of writing appropriate to the purpose. The writing is generally integrated, functional, and maintained with a clear perspective (level 3).

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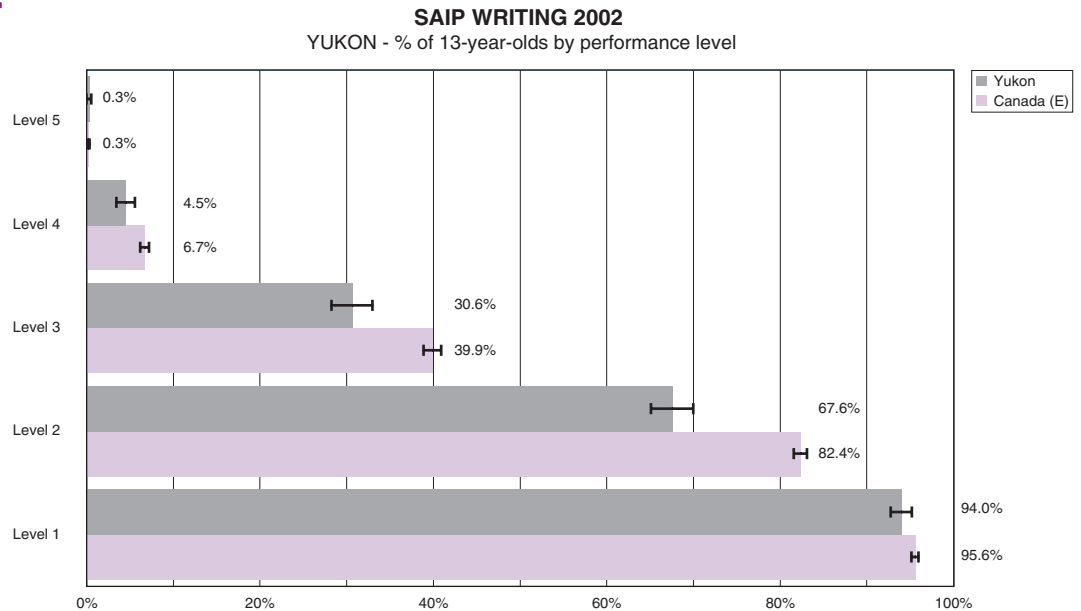
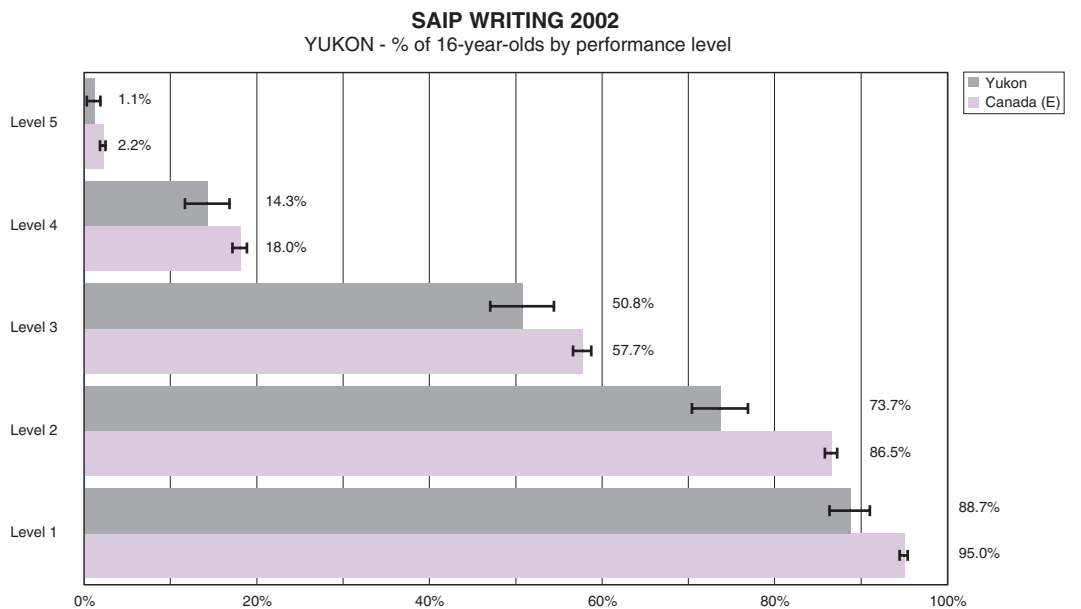


CHART YT2



Context Statement

Social Context

The Northwest Territories has a land mass of 1,171,918 square kilometres. The total population is about 43,000, approximately half of whom are Aboriginal. An estimated 2% of the total population is francophone. There are 33 communities, ranging in size from 18,500 people to a population of 36.

Most non-Aboriginal people live in the larger communities. In Yellowknife, 77% of residents are non-Aboriginal. In smaller communities, Dene, Métis, and Inuit constitute 84% of the population. Official languages spoken in the Northwest Territories are Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuinnaqtun, Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun, North Slavey, and South Slavey. About half of the Aboriginal people in the NWT speak an Aboriginal language. While English is primarily the language of instruction in schools, Aboriginal languages and cultures are integral to the culture-based education system of the NWT.

Organization of the School System

In 2001–02, the Northwest Territories enrolled 9,720 students in kindergarten through grade 12 and employed 665 teachers in 49 public schools. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides policy and curriculum direction to eight education jurisdictions. These jurisdictions implement and adapt curriculum and develop programs in order to meet the needs of all students in their district.

In recent years, the territories have implemented grade extensions in small schools. In 1990, only 73% of students could complete their high school education in their home community. That proportion had increased to 92% by 1998–99. As a result, more students are staying in school, and more young people who left school before earning a grade 12 diploma are returning to school. The challenge is to provide a choice of quality programs in schools where as few as 1 or 2 students may be enrolled in a grade. Innovative program development, use of computer technology, and distance education support many courses offered in small communities.

English Language Arts Teaching

In the Northwest Territories, culture, heritage, and language form the foundations for learning. Each community in the Northwest Territories has its own cultural needs and priorities, and each must determine the programs and services that will respond to these priorities. Currently, English is usually the language of instruction, and Aboriginal languages are taught as a second language. The Northwest Territories, as a member of the Western and Northern Canada Protocol (WNCP), played a key role in the development of *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs: Kindergarten to Grade 12*. Initial in-service commenced in January 2001.

The Northwest Territories uses *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. Manitoba's *Foundation for Implementation* documents and Alberta Learning's *Guide to Implementation: Grade 10* are recommended as key resources for teachers in support of the Curriculum Framework. Implementation of Alberta Learning's new *Program of Studies for Senior High English Language Arts: Interim 2001* commenced with grade 10 in August 2001. Full implementation is anticipated for June 2004. Work is currently under way to develop an NWT English Language Arts Curriculum based on *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12*.

Depending on the school, English is introduced to French-first-language and French immersion students in either grade 3 or grade 4. Manitoba's *Grades 1 to 4 English LA—Immersion: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Grade 3 Standards* and *Grades 3 to 8 Anglais: Manitoba*

Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Grade 6 Standards are recommended resources. Students in grades 9 to 12 use *The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12*.

English Language Arts Assessment

There is currently no territorial-wide assessment done, other than grade 12 diploma examinations and SAIP. Six of eight jurisdictions conduct board-wide assessments in ELA annually. As of June 2003, five of those six jurisdictions will be using the same assessment instrument — the Alberta Achievement Tests. An NWT-produced *Student Evaluation Handbook* is available to assist teachers in developing a variety of assessment approaches and instruments.

The *Departmental Directive: Student Assessment, Evaluation & Reporting* was completed in February 2001. The directive applies to the assessment and evaluation of students in kindergarten to grade 12 for the purposes of

- determining individual student performance
- determining the performance of the education system

Initial implementation commenced in September 2001, with full implementation targeted for June 2003. A team with representatives from the department and each regional district education council/district education authority is responsible for guiding and supporting the two-year implementation process and for ensuring that plans are sustainable. In-services on classroom-based assessment was scheduled to commence in September 2002.

Results for Northwest Territories

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 13-year-olds at levels 1, 2, 3, and 4. The differences at levels 2, 3, and 4 are considerably less in 2002 than the differences in 1998. Almost 60% of this age group demonstrate at least some control of the elements of writing and the integration of some of these elements. The writing conveys a simple meaning (level 2).

There are significant differences between this jurisdiction's performance and the Canadian English performance for 16-year-olds at all levels except level 5. The differences at levels 2, 3, and 4 are considerably less in 2002 than in 1998. More than 40% of this age group performs at level 3 or better, demonstrating control, integration, and clear perspective in writing.

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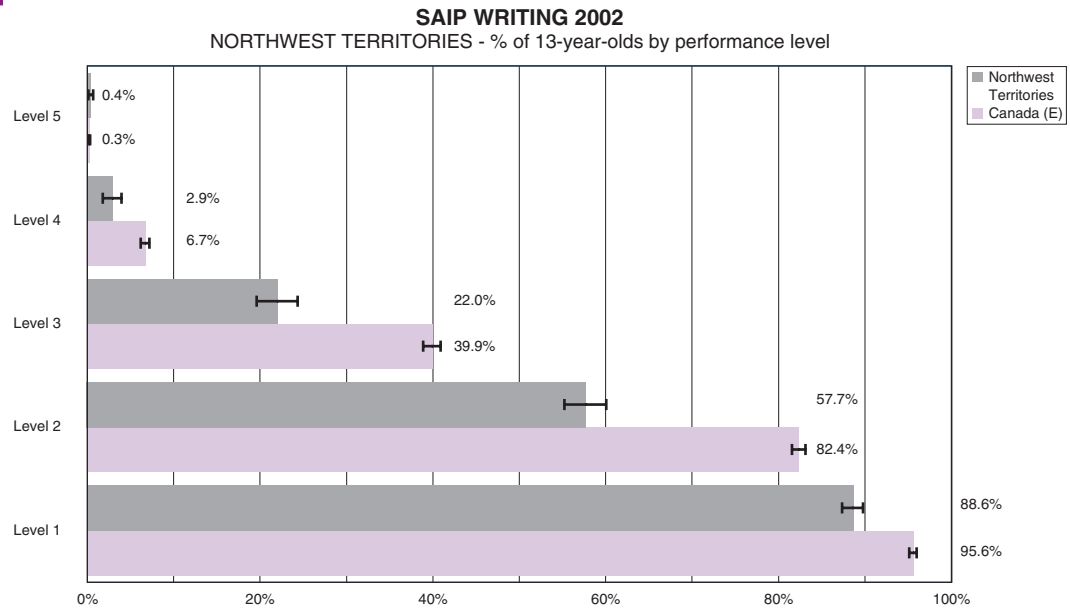


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