

**What the Results of the IALSS
(International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey)
tell us about Literacy and Work**

**Work and Learning Network Conference
October 21, 2006**

Adapted from

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Literacy
Alberta

How do we define literacy?

- **Literacy is a tool that one uses to respond to new and unfamiliar reading (and numeracy) tasks**
- **Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.**
- **Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, develop his or her knowledge and potentials, and participate fully in the community and wider society**

Literacy proficiency: the ability to *understand* and *employ* printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in the community. It is not about whether or not one can read but how well one reads.

4 Domains, measure skills at five levels :

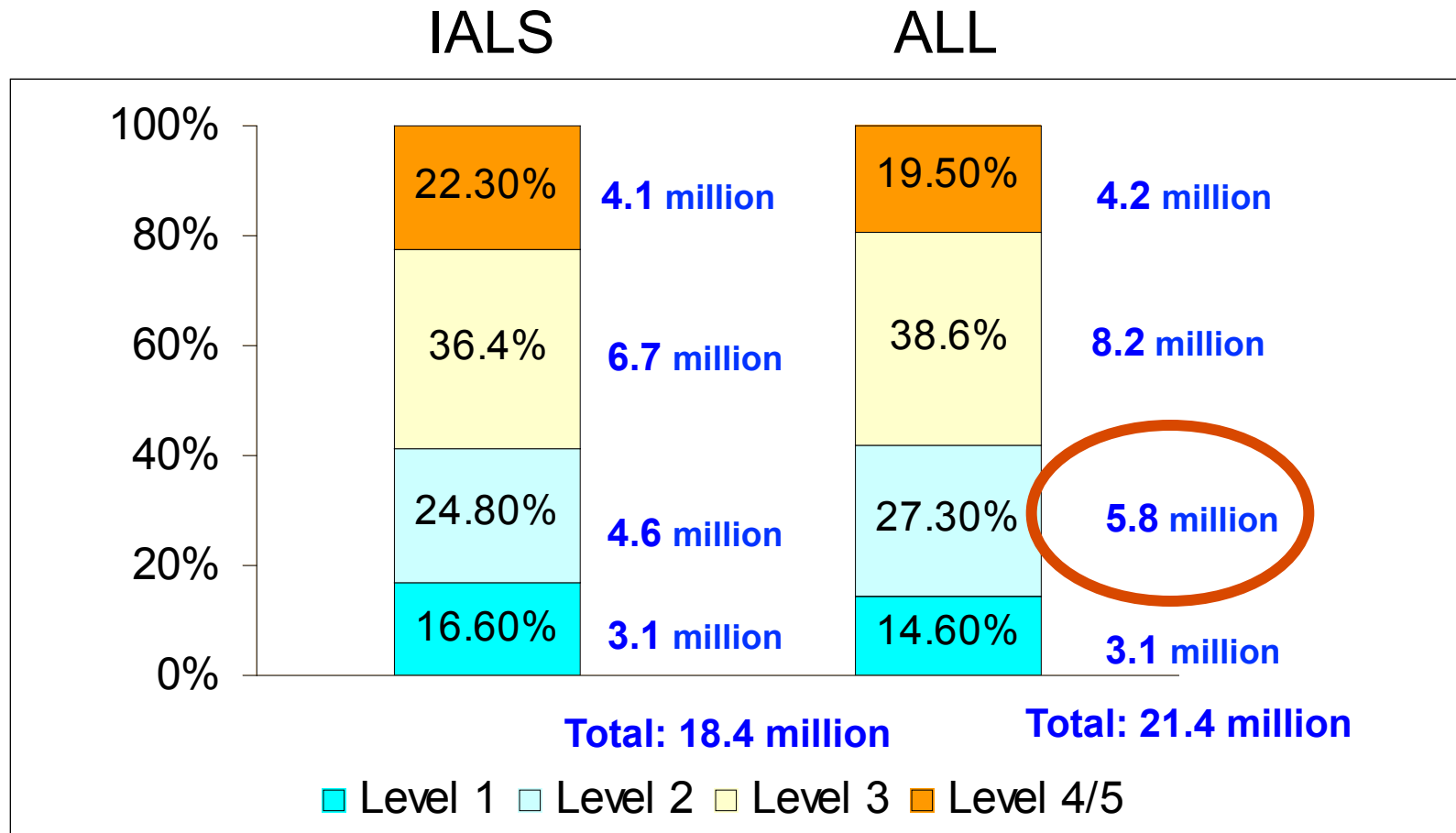
- **Prose:** The knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts including editorials, news stories, brochures and instruction manuals.
- **Document:** The knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables, and charts.
- **Numeracy:** The knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing an account, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement .
- **Problem Solving:** Involves goal-directed thinking and action in situations for which no routine solution procedure is available. The understanding of the problem situation and its step-by-step transformation, based on planning and reasoning constitute the process of problem solving. (Only four proficiency levels)

•Level 1	0 - 225 points
•Level 2	226 -275 points
•Level 3	276-325 points*
•Level 4	326 -375 points
•Level 5	376 -500 points

* Proficiency level for modern economy and knowledge-based society



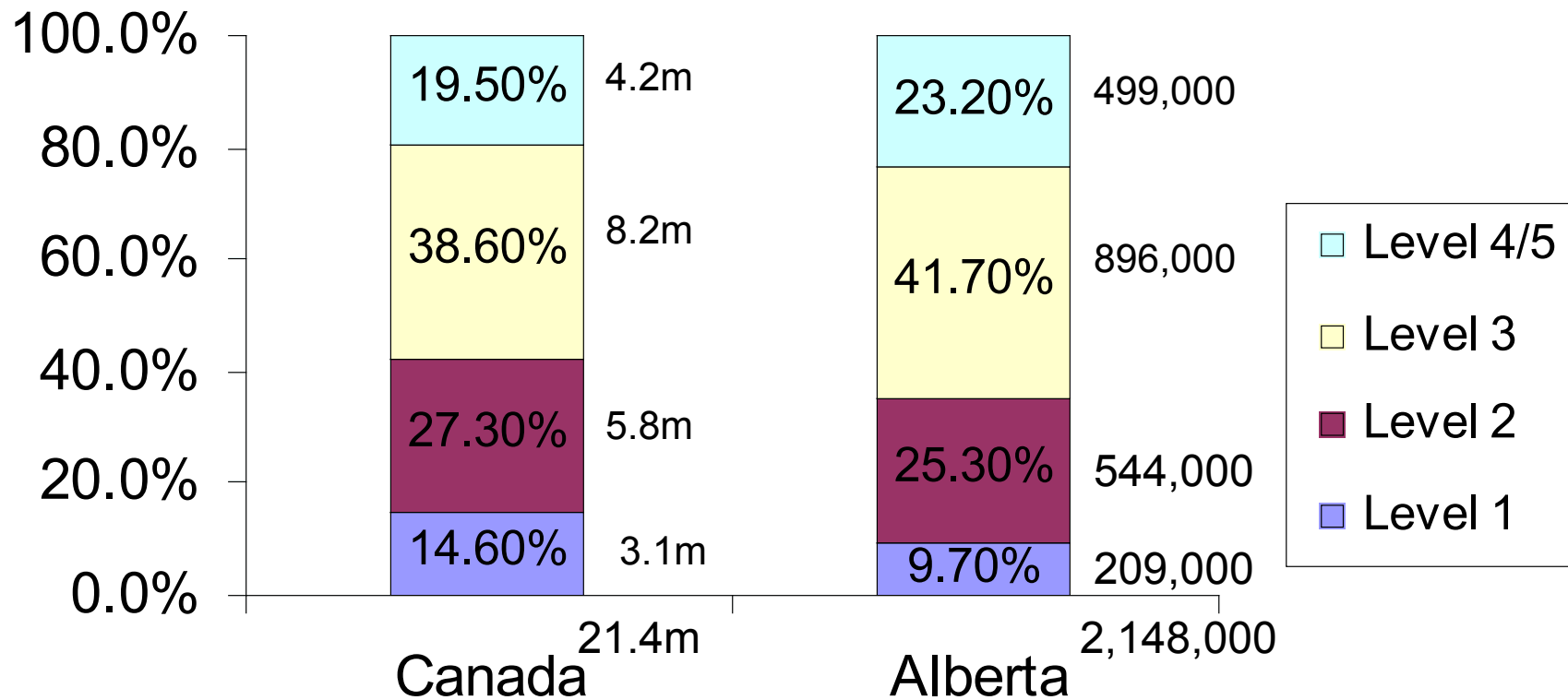
Percent of Canadian population (16 to 65) at each prose literacy level, in IALS and ALL



* Differences at each level between IALS and ALL are not statistically significant

About 753,000 residents of Alberta had prose literacy scores below level 3.

Population distribution of proficiency, 16-65, Canada and Alberta, 2003



Main characteristics of people at level 1 and 2 in prose IALSS in Alberta (population 16-65).

Level 1

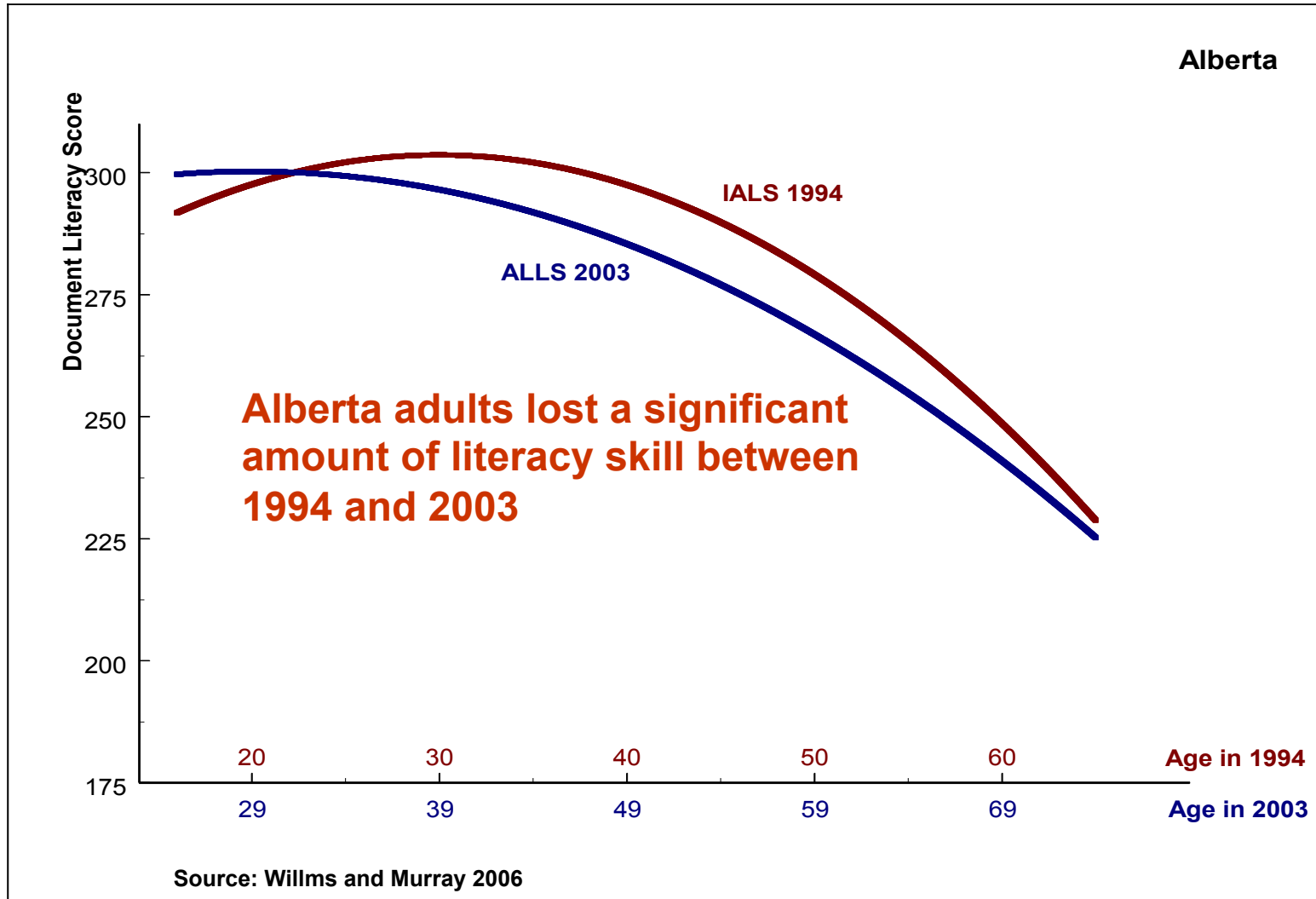
- 209,000
- 103,000 were immigrants
- 59 % were male and 41% female
- **67% were employed**
- 9% were unemployed
- Education:
 - **56% less than high school**
 - 24% had completed high school
 - 20% had post-secondary education

Level 2

- 544,000
- 106,000 were immigrants
- 55% were male and 45% female
- **79% were employed**
- 4% were unemployed
- Education:
 - **25% less than high school**
 - 41% had completed high school
 - 34% had post-secondary education



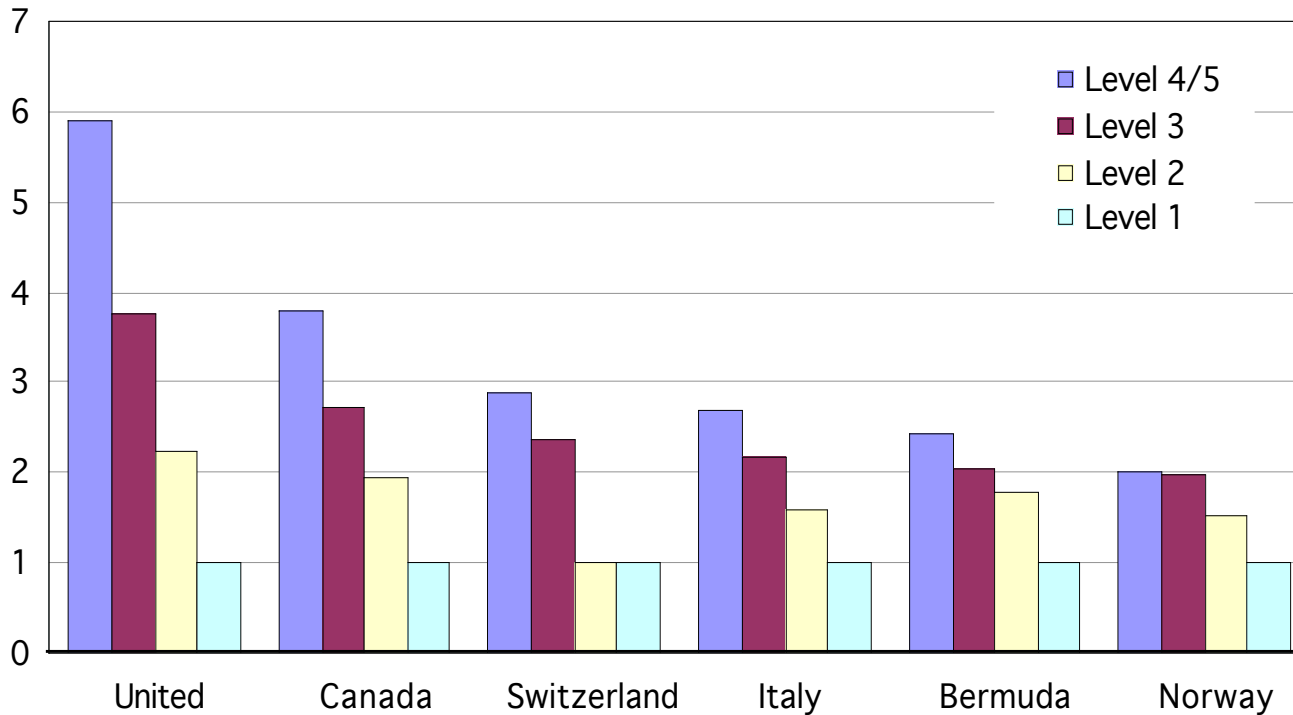
Skill loss in adult hood:



Equity and skill flows from adult learning: Likelihood of participation by literacy levels

Adjusted odds ratios showing the likelihood of adults aged 16 to 65 receiving adult education and training during the year preceding the interview, by document literacy levels, 2003

Odds (x time)

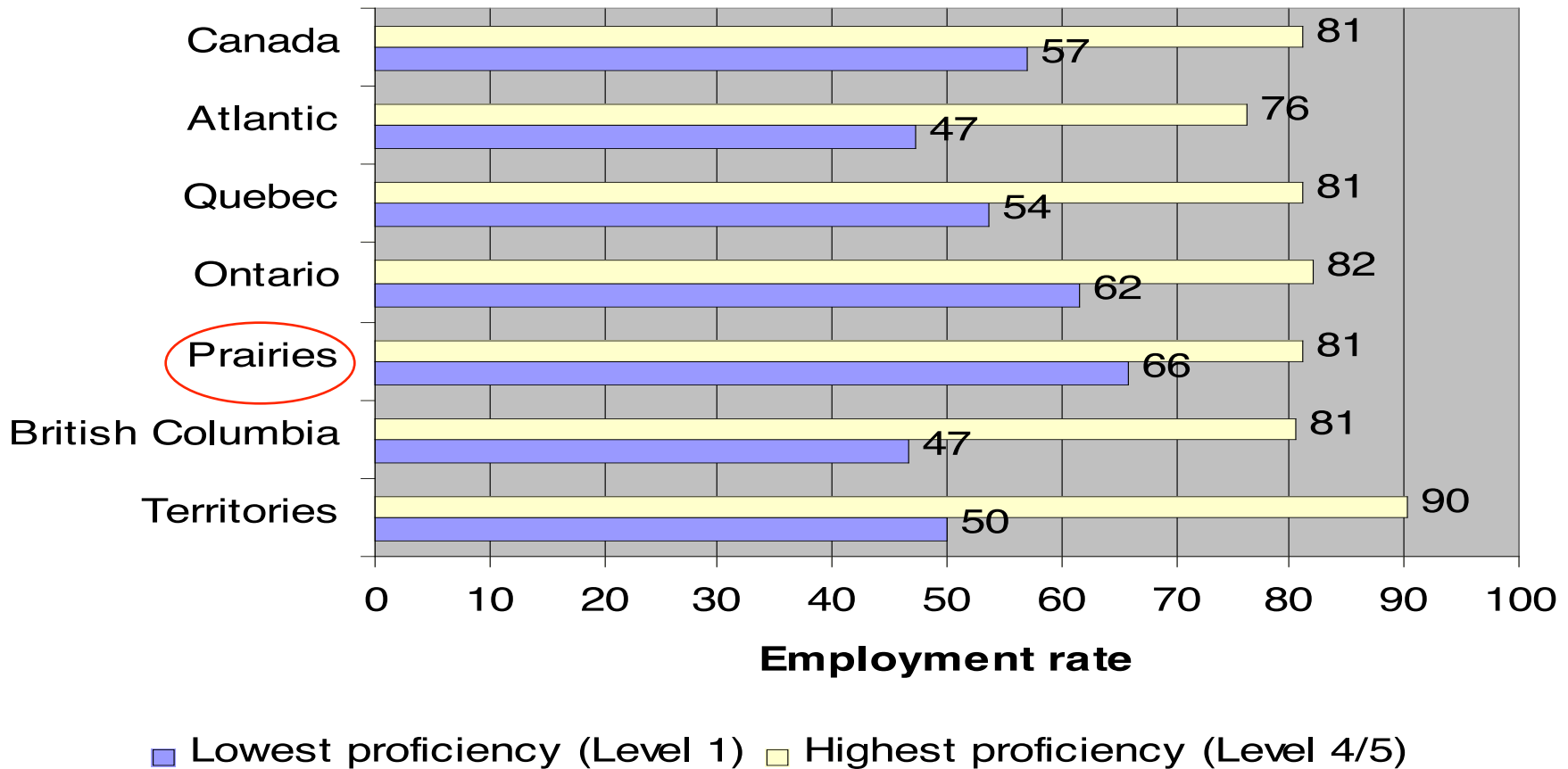


Countries are ranked according to the odds of persons who score at Level 4/5.

1. Odds estimates that are not statistically different from one at conventional levels of significance are reported as one in the figure. For the actual estimate and its corresponding significance, see Table 4.4 in the annex to this chapter.
2. *Source* Adult Literacy and Life skills survey, 2003.

Those with higher literacy proficiency had a higher employment rate than those with low literacy.

Employment rate among respondents at the highest and lowest levels of document proficiency, 2003



People with low prose literacy were concentrated among certain industries, Canada and Alberta.

(Population 16-65)

Canada		
Industries	Level 1	Level 2
Manufacturing	445,000	696,000
Trade, finance, Insurance, real estate and Leasing	325,000	951,000
Accommodation and Food Services	189,000	323,000
Construction	158,000	287,000
Health care and social assistance	140,000	409,000

Total: 1,257,000 2,666,000

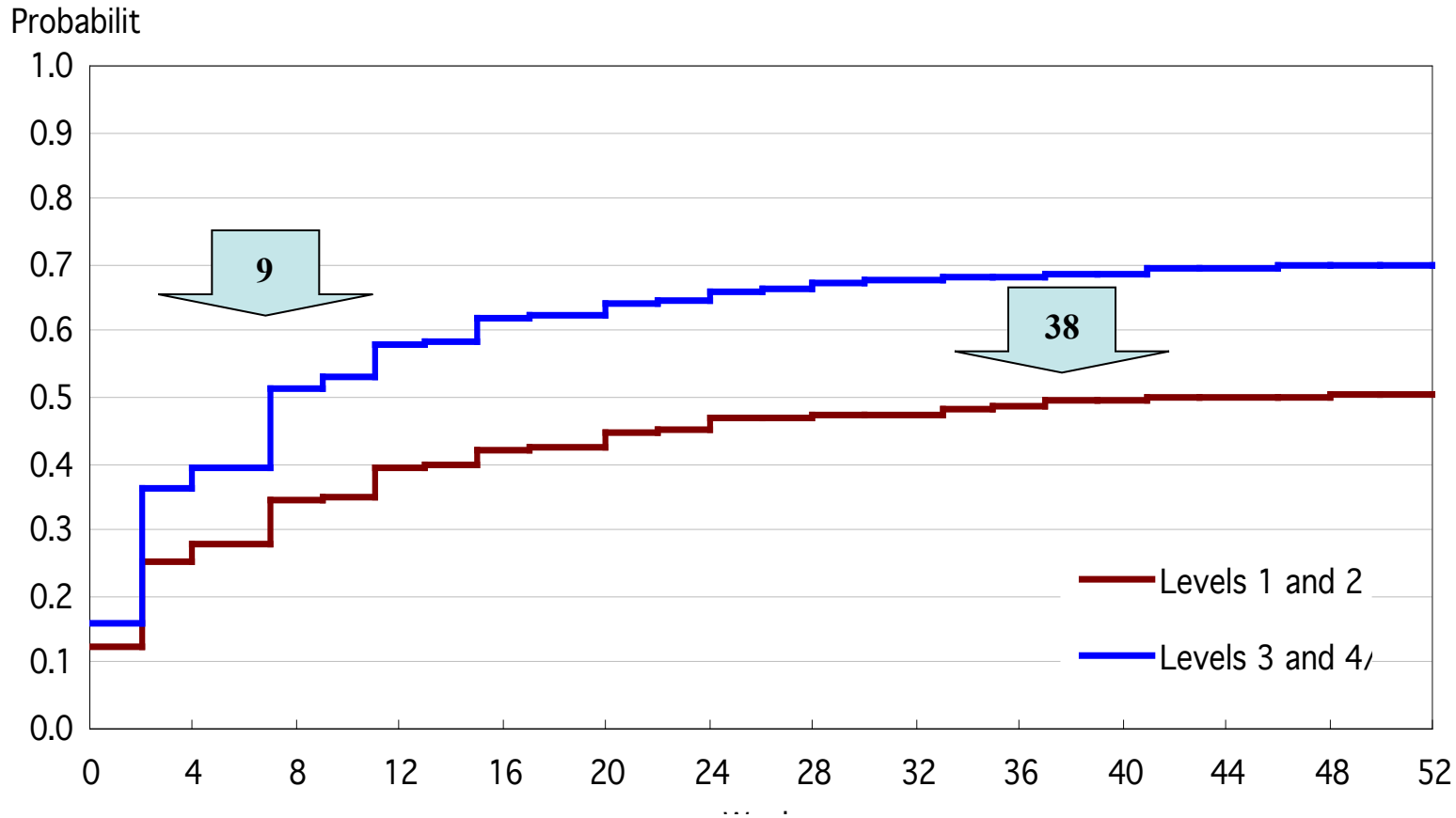
Alberta
Industries
Trade, finance, Insurance, real estate and leasing
Manufacturing
Construction
Public Health Care and Social Assistance
Accommodation and Food Services

*Roughly half people in levels 1 and 2 could be in these industries



Labour market outcomes and skill: Probability of exiting unemployment by skills levels

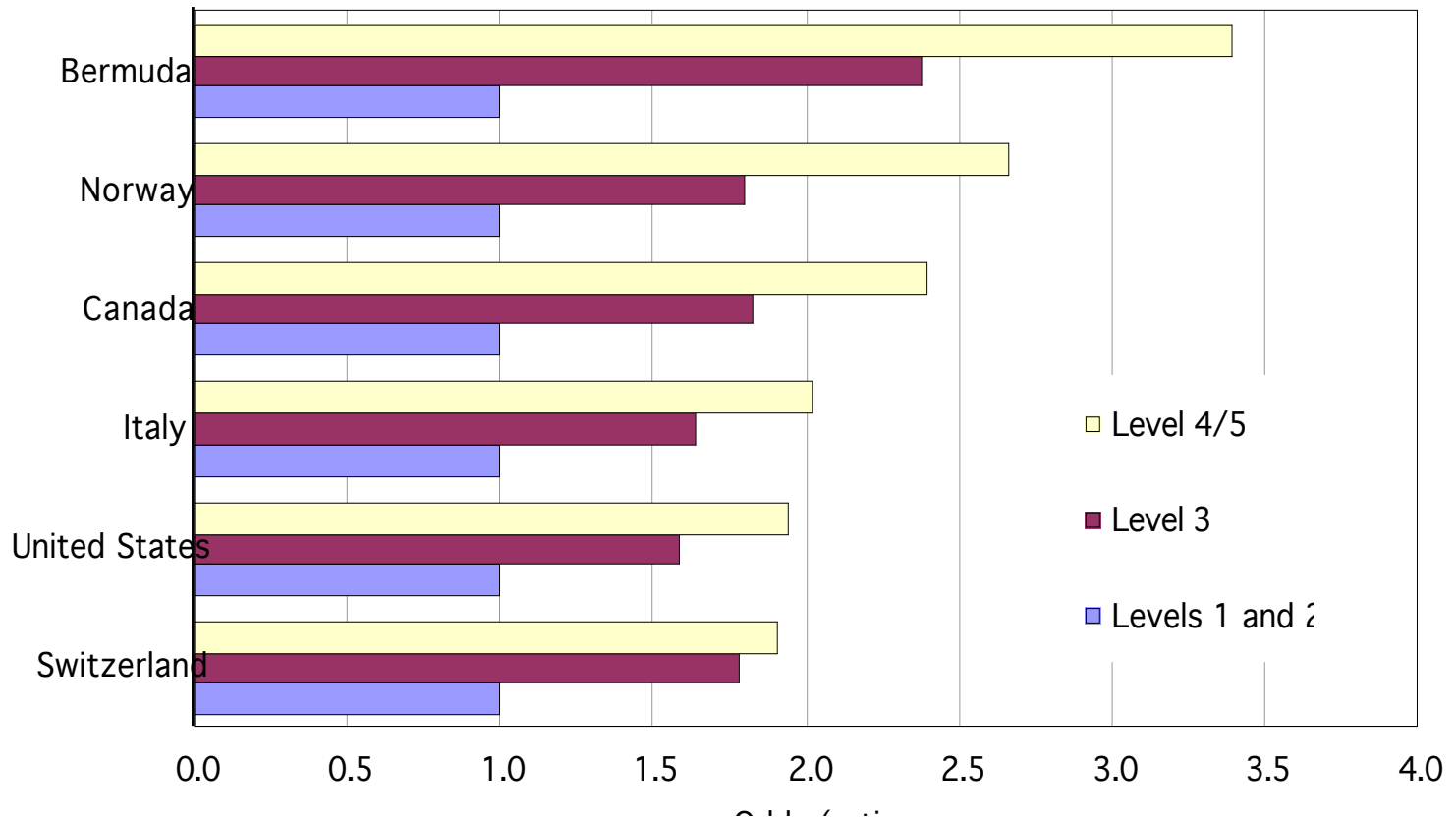
The probabilities of unemployed adults aged 16 to 65 to exit unemployment over a 52 week period, by low (Levels 1 and 2) and medium to high (Levels 3 and 4/5) skills, document scale, 2003



Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2003.

Labour Market outcomes and skill: Likelihood of being a high-intensity computer user by literacy skill levels

Adjusted odds ratios showing the likelihood of adults aged 16 to 65 of being high-intensity computer users, by prose literacy levels, 2003

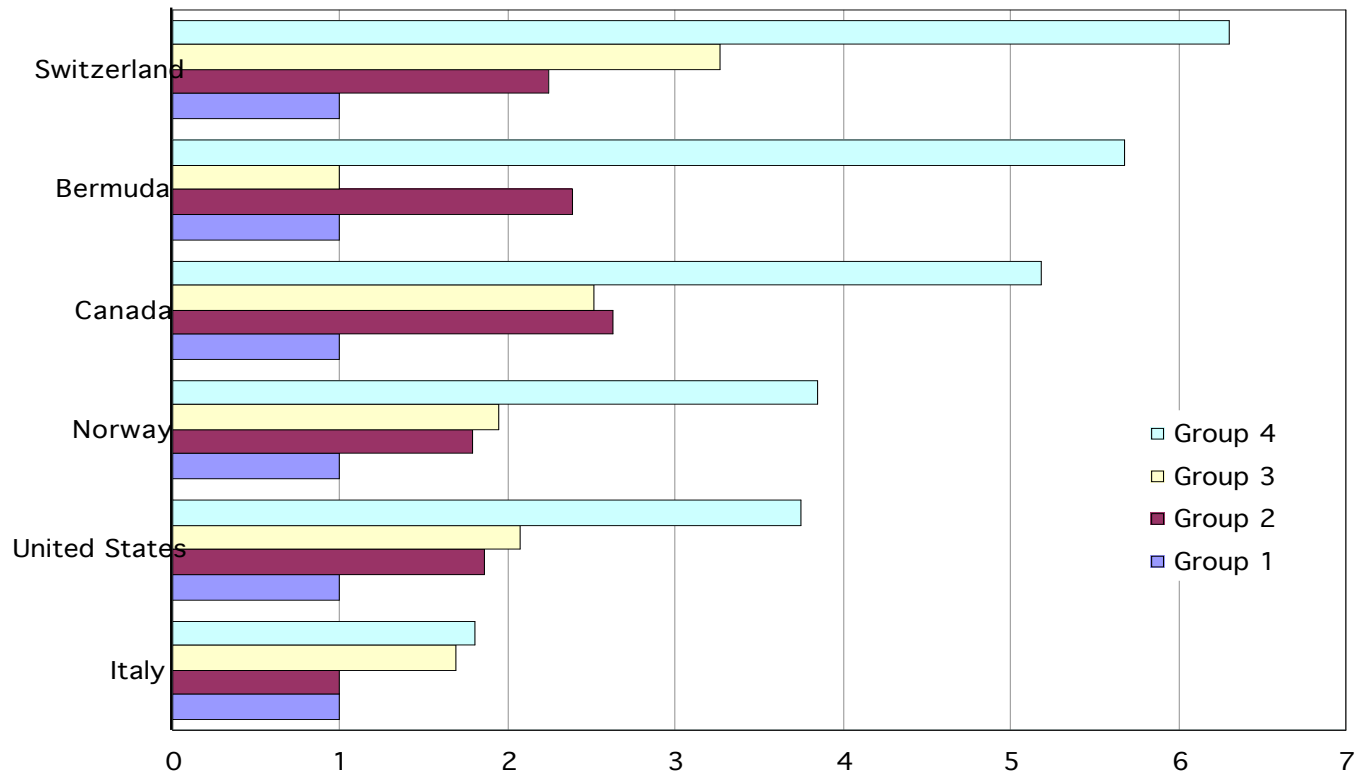


Countries are ranked by the odds of those who score at Level 4/5.

Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2003.

Labour market outcomes and skill: Likelihood of being a top income quartile earner by combined skill and user profiles

Adjusted odds ratios¹ showing the likelihood of adults aged 16 to 65 of being a top income quartile earner, by combined literacy and computer user profiles, 2003



Countries are ranked by the odds of those in Group 4.

1. Odds estimates that are not statistically different from one at conventional levels of significance are reported as one in the figure.

For the actual estimate and its corresponding significance, see Table 8.12 in the annex to this chapter.

Source: Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, 2003.

Those with higher average scores earned more

		Prose	Document	Numeracy	Problem Solving
Male	Less than 20,000	270	274	271	267
	20,000 to 40,000	266	270	267	262
	40,000 to 60,000	289	294	290	284
	60,000 and more	303	309	308	297
		Prose	Document	Numeracy	Problem Solving
Female	Less than 20,000	274	269	255	266
	20,000 to 40,000	286	280	266	275
	40,000 to 60,000	309	305	290	297
	60,000 and more	323	319	307	309

Source: IALSS, 2003



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