In this month's scan:

Resource Lists

Social Finance and Innovation

Human Resource and Skills Development Canada. (2012). HRSDC Commissioned Knowledge Products. Retrieved August 24, 2012, from
http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/KnowledgeProductSummaryList.pdf

> This list of resources on social finance and enterprise was prepared by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Community Development and Partnerships Directorate. Most of the documents were originally commissioned by HRSDC and Department staff wrote the summaries; the works themselves are the property of the authors. The list has been adapted by The Centre for Literacy to include links to those papers that are available online.

Keywords: Canada; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Social Enterprise; Social Finance; Social Innovation

Current Projects

Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network Labour Market Study of Literacy and Essential Skills Workers
http://www.literacy.ca/research-and-resources/les-workers-study/

> In 2012-13, Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN) is surveying literacy and essential skills (LES) workers in every province and territory to provide a comprehensive picture of the Canadian LES labour force. CLLN will start conducting interviews in the fall of 2012 and to release a report in the summer of 2013.

See also: *Occupational Task Profiles: A Pan-Canadian Snapshot of the Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Workforce [think paper] – Chris Harwood, Canadian Literacy and Learning Network* http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/CLLN_Thinkpapr_July2012.pdf, presented at Summer Institute 2012, Workplace Literacy & Essential Skills: Shaping a New Learning Culture**.**

Keywords: Canada; Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN); Labour market studies; LES workers; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Table of contents

The Centre for Literacy
Le centre d'alphabétisation

New Series of Research Briefs from Essential Skills Ontario

Essential Skills Ontario, formerly the Ontario Literacy Coalition, is currently working on a series of research briefs, entitled *Becoming State of the Art*, that carries on the conversation opened in their report *Menial No More* (reviewed in our March 2012 scan), to the briefs examine the challenges and opportunities in training adults without a high school diploma. The first in the series, *Industry Shared Approaches: Aligning Literacy and Essential Skills with Economic Development*, is reviewed below.

Keywords: Becoming State of the Art; Canada; Essential Skills Ontario; Ontario; Research briefs; Workforce education; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Table of contents

Official Language Minorities

COCo Researches Anglophone Community Groups in Quebec
http://www.coco-net.org/en/node/237

In the Know is a community-based action research project of the Centre for Community Organizations (COCo) to develop a portrait of English-speaking, ethno-cultural and bilingual community groups in Quebec and of their relationship with the Government of Quebec and the broader francophone community sector. The research project, described on their web site, is being completed; a report of the findings will be available online.

Keywords: Action research; Centre for Community Organizations (COCo); Community literacy; Quebec Anglophones; Quebec ethno-cultural groups

Table of contents

Reports and Articles

Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Clymer, Carol. (2011). *Strengthening Workplace Education Program Policies to Enable Low-Wage Workers' Advancement*. Retrieved August 10, 2012, from
http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/pdfs/WPFP_PolicyBrief_Fall2011.pdf

> This policy brief by the Working Poor Families Project focuses on the need to build up the literacy skills of lower-wage workers in the United States and makes a case for states to support workplace education to this end. Recommendations to promote statewide workplace education programs include: improving data collection systems, promoting coordination among stakeholders, marketing programs more aggressively, and providing incentives for employers and employees to participate.

Keywords: Low-wage workers; Policy; United States; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES) programs

Essential Skills Ontario. (2012). *Becoming State of the Art: Research Brief No.1: Industry Shared Approaches Aligning Literacy and Essential Skills with Economic Development.* Retrieved August 8, 2012, from
http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/content/becoming-state-art-industry-shared-approaches

> This research brief examines the concept and practice of "Industry Shared" workforce initiatives, which directly involve employers and service providers in the co-design and delivery of training to leverage employment opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers, such as those without high school diplomas. It looks at research reports and case studies in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and New Zealand, and concludes that industry shared workforce development programs are effective at boosting the employment prospects for non-high school graduates. It looks at some conditions for the success of this approach, and how it might be adopted in Ontario. The brief is the first in the *Becoming State of the Art* series.

Keywords: Becoming State of the Art; Canada; Essential Skills Ontario; Industry-shared approaches to training; New Zealand; Ontario; Research briefs; United Kingdom; United States; Workforce education; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) (2011). *Learning while working: Success stories on workplace learning in Europe*. Retrieved July 17, 2012, from
http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/cedefop/europe/europe.pdf

> This document, prepared by the European Union's reference centre for vocational education and training (CEDEFOP), presents an overview of key trends in adult learning in the workplace in the EU. The authors identify four driving forces: public strategies to widen access and increase adult participation in education and training; the contributions of social partners such as unions in developing and expanding workplace provision; business-led sectoral initiatives and

partnerships; and the professional development of in-company trainers. They conclude that "Widening learning opportunities in the workplace does not require only that continuing training opportunities are increased and better tailored to the needs of both employees and employers, but also that working practices in enterprises are transformed in a way that stimulates learning." Since employers may not be able to do this on their own, there is a need for integrated policies that bring together training, employment and innovation agendas. Chambers of commerce and trade and employers associations need to publicize the benefits of training. Public authorities, employers, unions and workers need to share responsibility for skill development.

Keywords: Employers; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop); European Union (EU); Policy; Unions; Workplace education; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Howard, A, Edge, J, Watt, D. (2012). *Understanding the Value, Challenges, and Opportunities of Engaging Métis, Inuit, and First Nations Workers.* Conference Board of Canada. Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-Library/abstract.aspx?did=4886&utm_source=notification&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=july16 2012

> Our March 2012 scan noted that the Conference Board of Canada was surveying employers to identify challenges in recruiting and retaining Métis, Inuit and First Nations workers. This report presents the results of the survey, which found that relatively low educational attainment, negative stereotypes and racism as well as cultural misunderstandings can hinder Aboriginal workers in their efforts to find and keep quality jobs. Recommended strategies to improve recruitment, retention and work performance include improving educational outcomes, increasing information and best practice sharing among agreement holders of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), simplifying points of contact between employers and aboriginal organizations, and raising awareness of aboriginal culture.

Keywords: Aboriginal peoples; Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS); Barriers to training; Canada; Conference Board of Canada; Employers; Labour market outcomes; Surveys; Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Karmel, T., & Roberts, D. (2012). *The role of "culture" in apprenticeship completions.* NCVER, Adelaide. Retrieved August 6, 2012, from http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/2498.html

> The researchers looked at the role of culture of both the employer and the apprentice in completion rates of apprenticeships in Australia. "Culture" includes employer size, type (government, private or group training) and population density of trades workers in the apprentice's home municipality. The authors find that all these factors have an effect on apprenticeship completion rates, although the size and type of employer had more impact than the background of the apprentice. A possible policy response would be to increase support for small employers with apprentices, but this could be expensive since most employers with apprentices are small.

Keywords: Apprenticeships; Australia; Barriers to training; Culture; Employers; Policy; Small and medium enterprises (SME's); Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Ageing

Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2012). *Ageing and skills: a review and analysis of skill gain and skill loss over the lifespan and over time.* Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/

> This is an OECD review and analysis of research on the relationship between cognitive skills and ageing. The authors note the importance of ageing as policy issue, and expect that data from the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) will add to our understanding of the relationship between ageing and essential skills, especially as it is compared to data from earlier surveys. They refer to studies of changes in cognitive ability over the life course. Among the findings: while underlying cognitive abilities tend to peak in early adulthood and decline thereafter, accumulated knowledge and experience can make up for this loss. Furthermore, some seniors suffer only minimal loss in cognitive ability. The authors provide an overview of what is known about age-skill profiles, the factors behind skill gain and loss, and how skill gain and skill loss over the lifespan can be estimated.

Keywords: Ageing; Age-skill profiles; Cognitive skills; International literacy surveys; Literature reviews; Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC); Skill retention

Digital Technology

AlphaPlus. (2012). *Learning Together with Digital Technologies: Illustrative Case Studies.* Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://alphaplus.ca/en/web-tools/online-publications-a-reportsgroup1/learning-together-with-technologies-2012.html

> The province of Ontario has introduced the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) which requires programs to teach six competencies, including the use of digital technology. This report provides case studies of four community-based adult literacy programs in Toronto using digital technologies for teaching and learning. These case studies explore how programs are integrating digital technology and e-learning in adult literacy programming, and the opportunities and challenges that programs face in doing this. The researchers found that each organization's integration of digital technology was aligned with its values and vision. Challenges included: developing and maintaining technology infrastructure, lack of technical support for instructors, and limited resources in terms of money and staff time.

Keywords: Adult basic education (ABE); Case studies; Community literacy; Digital technology; Literature reviews; Ontario; Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF); Toronto

Smythe, Suzanne. (2012). *Incorporating Digital Technologies in Adult Basic Education: Concepts, Practices and Recommendations.* Retrieved August 7, 2012, from http://alphaplus.ca/en/web-tools/online-publications-a-reportsgroup1/incorporating-technologies-in-abe-2012.html

> This report aims to develop a conceptual framework around digital technologies and their impact on teaching and learning in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, and to document current practices of incorporating digital technologies into the ABE field. The report focuses on the use of digital technologies by adult learners with low literacy skill levels and looks at why practitioners choose or choose not to incorporate digital technology in their practice. The research included a literature review, interviews and vignettes. One limitation of the study the authors acknowledge is that their attention to depth rather than breadth left out many stories and contexts.

Keywords: Adult basic education (ABE); Adult literacy; Case studies; Conceptual framework; Digital technology; Literature reviews

Table of contents

Family Literacy

Essential Skills Ontario. (2012). *Stronger Together: Toward More Literate Communities.* Retrieved August 7, 2012, from
http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/content/essential-skills-ontario-releases-report-%E2%80%9Cstronger-together-building-more-literate-communiti

> This report presents the research findings of an Essential Skills Ontario-led project that aimed to identify gaps in current family literacy programming and policy frameworks in Ontario and promising approaches to an integrated family literacy system. The research included an environmental scan of existing family programs, consultations with experts including early childhood program providers, and a literature review on the effectiveness of early and family literacy programs. The researchers found gaps in coordination between family literacy programs and adult literacy and early learning programs. The scan revealed that family literacy programs in Ontario tend to focus mostly on early childhood literacy development and do not do enough to address parent/caregiver needs. The authors find that there is a need to better coordinate programs and services in Ontario.

Keywords: Adult basic education (ABE); Adult literacy; Children's literacy; Early childhood development; Environmental scans; Essential Skills Ontario; Family literacy; Literature reviews; Ontario; Policy

Table of contents

Health Literacy

Rootman, I., & Mitic, W. (2012). *An Inter-sectoral Approach for Improving Health Literacy for Canadians - A Discussion Paper*. Public Health Agency of British Columbia. Retrieved August 8, 2012, from
http://www.nald.ca/library/research/phab/discussion/discussion.pdf

> This discussion paper developed for the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) proposes a framework for improving health literacy of Canadians, recommending actions which could be taken to increase health literacy of Canadians and attempting to facilitate conversations about health literacy between practitioners, researchers, and policy makers. It briefly reviews the state of research in the field of health literacy.

Keywords: Canada; Health Literacy; Policy; Public Health Agency of British Columbia; Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)

Table of contents

Keywords

Aboriginal peoples
Action research
Adult basic education (ABE)
Adult literacy
Ageing
Age-skill profiles
Apprenticeships
Case studies
Children's literacy
Cognitive skills
Community literacy
Conceptual framework
Culture
Digital Technology
Early childhood development
Employers
Environmental scans
Family Literacy
Health Literacy
International literacy surveys
Labour market outcomes
Labour market studies
LES workers
Literature reviews
Low-wage workers
Official Language Minorities
Ontario
Policy
Quebec Anglophones
Quebec ethno-cultural groups
Research briefs
Skill retention
Small and medium enterprises (SME's)
Social Enterprise
Social Finance
Social Innovation

Surveys
Workforce education
Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)
Workplace Literacy and Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES) programs

Name Keywords

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)
Australia
Becoming State of the Art
Canada
Canadian Literacy and Learning Network (CLLN)
Centre for Community Organizations (COCo)
Conference Board of Canada
Employers
Essential Skills Ontario
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)
European Union (EU)
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
New Zealand
Ontario
Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)
Public Health Agency of British Columbia
Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)
United Kingdom
United States

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