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Reports and Articles

Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Benseman, John. (2012). Literacy Workplace Change: Evaluation Findings from Eighteen Workplace Literacy Programs. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education* 1 (2): 91-106.

This article reports on the outcomes of an assessment of eighteen workplace Language Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) programs in New Zealand that took place in fifteen companies, in different locations and industries. They also varied in approach and length based on needs assessment by the providers. An evaluation program was carried out between 2007 and 2010. Over half of participants reported that the courses had improved their attitudes towards their jobs, and reported small increases in job satisfaction and job confidence, although it had little effect on their future job ambitions or interest in future training. Most improved their reading and writing skills. There was little numeracy content in the courses so the findings are limited in this area. Employees generally felt their job performance had improved because of the course. Employers also felt there had been improvement although providers tended to report more positive outcomes than did employers. The most effective courses had broad support within the company and were integrated into long-term training and company planning. In these courses, providers offered strong support to tutors, who had a high level of experience doing workplace LES training, a high level of commitment, and were flexible in their teaching schedules.

Keywords: New Zealand; Program outcomes; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Essential Skills Ontario. (2012). *Literacy and Essential Skills in Ontario, 2012*. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from

http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/sites/www.essentialskillsontario.ca/files/Literacy%20and%20Essential%20Skills%20in%20Ontario_Final2_0.pdf

This report is a follow up to the 2009 report *Literacy in Ontario*. It first presents the 2003 IALS statistics on literacy and essential skills (LES) from an Ontario perspective. It notes the effects of the recent recession on job prospects for Ontarians with little education. It also provides an overview of the different services available in Ontario as well as statistics on the use of these services and the people using them. These statistics come from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' (MTCU) Information Management System (IMS). They show an increase in participation in Literacy and Basic Skills/Academic Upgrading programming, from 45,876 in 2005/2006 to 60,055 in 2009/2010. However, the percentage of learners in lower levels has declined. The programs are offered in four streams: the Anglophone stream accounts for 88% of learners compared to 7% in the Francophone stream, 5% in the Native stream and 1% in the Deaf and Deaf-Blind stream.

Keywords: Essential Skills Ontario; LES Programs; LES trends; Ontario; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Park, Jungwee. (2012). *Job-related training of older workers*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved September 26, 2012, from

http://www.nald.ca/library/research/stats/job_train_older_workers/job_train_older_workers.pdf, also available at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2012002/article/11652-eng.htm>.

This study looks into the extent to which older workers (aged 55-64) in Canada have less job-related training than "core-age" (25 to 54) employees, and examines how this has changed over time and what factors make older workers more likely to participate in training. The most recent (2008) data comes from the Access and Support to Education and Training Survey (ASETS) and data from 1992 to 2003 comes from cycles of the Adult Education and Training Survey (AETS). The study found that older workers participated less in job-related training as measured by number of hours, although this gap had narrowed since the early 1990's. Although older workers participated in about the same number of courses and programs as younger workers, the programs and courses taken by older workers tended to be of shorter duration. Older workers' participation increased between 1992 and 2008; this seemed to be mainly due to the fact that the educational attainment of those workers had increased. For instance, 56% held a postsecondary diploma in 2008 compared to 30% in 1991.

Keywords: Access and Support to Education and Training Survey (ASETS); Adult Education and Training Survey (AETS); Canada; Older workers; Statistics Canada; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Pringle, Jillian. (2011). *Deaf Workforce: National Research Project*. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from <http://essentialskills.deafliteracy.ca/research-deaf-workforce-reality>

This research project attempted to find out why the unemployment rate for Deaf Canadians is much higher than that of the general population. The study examined five research groups: Deaf Canadians; Deaf Adult Literacy Programs; Employment Service Providers; Employers; and Learning Centres. These groups were studied using surveys, interviews and focus groups. Five factors influencing the employment of Deaf Canadians were identified, including the attitudes of Deaf employees, the attitudes of employers, communication, accommodation, and interpreters. Low literacy skill was identified as one obstacle facing many Deaf Canadians seeking employment. 203 literacy agencies were surveyed by telephone, and the researchers found that few Deaf and Deafblind Canadians have been in programs and few programs are designed for them. Most centres had never had a Deaf or Deafblind learner, although just over half felt they could accommodate one. The report recommends the creation of Deaf-lead non-government organization (NGO) which would engage in research on public education in order to boost the literacy, essential skills and employment prospects of Deaf Canadians.

Keywords: Canada; Deaf people; Discrimination; Literacy and Essential Skills (LES); LES programs; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Workforce Development

Cameron, Roslyn, & Harrison, Jennifer L. (2012). The interrelatedness of formal, non-formal and informal learning: Evidence from labour market program participants. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 52 (2): 277-307.

The article reviews literature on informal, non-formal and formal learning and presents findings from the Learning Survey of labour market participants in Australia. Formal learning is defined as learning through a program in an educational institution, training centre or workplace that is recognized in a qualification or certificate. Some studies show the difficulties in trying to define different types of learning, particularly informal learning, and some note that informal learning is often treated as inferior to more formal learning. However, there is growing interest in Australia, and internationally, in recognizing non-formal and informal learning. Surveys have found that most learning takes place informally. The present study sought to find out whether skills were gained by one form of learning or by a combination of forms, and what factors could explain the percentages of skills gained from different forms of learning. The study used data from a Learning Survey administered to 247 unemployed labour market program (LMP) participants in two Australian states. LMP's are government programs that provide training and other support to unemployed people. Due to the composition of the original sample, the findings in this study are limited to unemployed adults.

Respondents were asked to list up to three of their skills and to indicate (by percentages) how much of their learning of each skill came through life experience, work experience, and formal training or study. These categories do not necessarily map perfectly onto the formal/non-formal/informal categories. Only 16% of reported skills were learned through only one form of learning, 42% through a combination of

two forms, and 42% through a mix of all three. The article concludes that these results show the importance of non-formal and informal learning in learning skills that may be helpful for obtaining employment.

Keywords: Australia; Labour Market Programs (LMP's); Formal learning; Informal Learning; Non-formal learning; Workforce Development; Unemployed

Essential Skills Ontario (2012). *Clearer Sightlines to Employment: What Works for Job-Seekers with Low Educational Attainment*. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from

http://www.nald.ca/library/research/eso/clearer_sightlines/clearer_sightlines.pdf

For Ontario job-seekers with low educational attainment, particularly those without a high-school diploma, employment prospects have not recovered from the last recession. What models for workforce development work for these workers? This research brief recommends an integrated approach that blends adult learning with clearly defined and immediate employment opportunities, which incorporates a direct relationship with employers and focuses on providing hands-on technology skills that employers value. The brief presents a case study from Los Angeles, California.

Keywords: Case studies; Essential Skills Ontario; High school dropouts; Ontario; Research briefs; United States; Workforce Development

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Fujiwara, Daniel. (2012). *Valuing the Impact of Adult Learning: An analysis of the effect of adult learning on different domains in life*. Leicester, UK: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

Retrieved October 26, 2012, from

http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/v/a/valuing_the_impact_web_final.pdf

This brief report attempts to put a monetary value on some impacts of adult learning in the lives of learners. It focuses on four domains: health, employment, social relationships, and voluntary work. Using data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), the author finds that taking adult education courses has a positive impact in all four domains. He uses the Well-Being Valuation (WV) approach, which values the impact of a good or service in monetary terms by estimating the amount of money required to compensate for the impact on a person's happiness or life-satisfaction of the loss or lack of that particular good. For example, the health impacts are estimated to average £148 per part-time course. The largest benefit is in social relationships, which is worth £658.

Keywords: Adult Education; British Household Panel Survey (BHPS); Impacts of adult learning; Social Return on Investment (SROI); United Kingdom

Adult Basic Education

Whatman, J, Potter, H & Boyd, S. (2011). Literacy, language and numeracy: connecting research to practice in the tertiary sector. *New Zealand Council for Education Research*. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from <http://akoatearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-4/literacy-language-and-numeracy-research-summary.pdf>

A summary of research reports published between July 2009 and July 2010 relating to nine literacy, language and numeracy projects funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. The reports are grouped under three themes “Optimizing Maori learner success”, “E-learning for adult literacy, language and numeracy” and “Embedding literacy, language and numeracy”. Among the findings of this review are: that by improving their Literacy and Essential Skills (LES), learners gain greater confidence at work and in other parts of their lives; that there is no one “best way” of improving LES but most people benefit from multiple approaches; that embedding is an effective way of improving LES; that e-learning can offer greater flexibility to learners and reach underserved populations but works best in combination with face-to-face training or if they have someone to help them at home; that Maori respond favourably to culturally-specific materials; and that those with low literacy and numeracy skills also tend to have less experience with computers and are likely to need support to use computers for learning.

Keywords: Aboriginal peoples; Adult Basic Education; Digital technologies; E-learning; Embedding LES; Maori; Literacy and Essential Skills (LES); Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN); New Zealand

Digital Technologies

Greig, Christopher, & Hughes, Janette. (2012). Adult Learners and Digital Media: Exploring the usage of digital media with adult literacy learners. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from <http://www.alphaplus.ca/en/web-tools/online-publications-a-reportsgroup1/adult-learners-and-digital-media-2012.html>

This report sets out the findings of a study in which the researchers used small group and one-on-one interviews to explore attitudes towards, and experiences with, digital media of twelve adult literacy learners in adult education programs in Windsor and Oshawa, Ontario. After gathering data from these interviews, the researchers conducted small group sessions on the use of digital media, then carried out follow-up interviews to find out whether learners’ perceptions of digital media had changed. Initial interviews found that the adult learners were not using digital technologies much – however, when participants were shown how to create things using these technologies, this increased their confidence and interest. Nevertheless, working class adults in particular face both socioeconomic and psychological barriers in using these technologies. One limitation of the study may be the very small sample size.

Keywords: Adult learners; Digital technologies; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT); Qualitative research; Ontario

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Riggs, E., et. al. (2012). Flexible models for learning English are needed for refugee mothers. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 52 (2): 397-403.

New migrants to Australia with less than functional English are eligible for 510 hours of English-language instruction. This article reports on the unsolicited findings about barriers to women's' participation in English language courses that emerged during a qualitative study of refugee mothers' experiences of using maternal and child health services in Melbourne, Australia. Focus groups were conducted with 87 mothers from diverse backgrounds who had lived in Australia for an average of 4.7 years and with service providers. One major barrier for women to attending English-language classes was that they were responsible for rearing children and culturally appropriate child-care options were not available. Some mothers were discouraged from attending mixed-gender classes by their husbands or other family members. Those who did attend courses found that 510 hours were not enough to significantly improve their skills, especially since many had no previous experience of classroom-based education. Lack of English-skills compromised the mothers' autonomy in daily living and their ability to communicate with their children's teachers. Flexible ad hoc models were identified that embedded English-language learning into local programs such as cooking classes, culturally-specific or multicultural playgroups and bilingual storytimes. The authors conclude that rigorous evaluation of these models is needed to identify successful strategies for supporting refugee integration.

Keywords: Access to education; Australia; English as an Additional Language (EAL); ESOL; Immigrants; Parenting; Qualitative research; Refugees; Women

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). (2012). *English language for all*. Greater London Authority. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from <http://www.london.gov.uk/publication/english-language-all>

The study looked at the feasibility of models of English language learning and innovative financing for English-language instruction to learners unable to access provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) after funding changes in 2011/12. Groups of learners excluded by the cuts included low income workers and people with very low levels of language and literacy who were receiving certain types of social benefit. Research included questionnaires, focus groups, individual interviews, a literature review and examination of key documents. Interviews, focus groups and a questionnaire were used to obtain data on groups of people excluded from SFA-funded provision. They obtained information on existing provision for these groups and alternative funding sources. Based on this research, the report suggests three possible models of provision that could fill the gaps and provides case studies where innovative approaches are already being used to do this.

Keywords: Access to education; English as an Additional Language (EAL); ESOL; Feasibility studies; Funding; Greater London Authority; London; National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE); Policy; United Kingdom

Reading Instruction

Huang, Jiujuan, & Newbern, Claudia. (2012). The Effects of Meta-cognitive Reading Strategy Instruction on Reading Performance of Adult ESL Learners with Limited English and Literacy Skills. *Journal of Research and Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary, and Basic Education* 1 (2): 66-77.

This article reports on the outcomes of an experimental study examining the effects of meta-cognitive reading strategy instruction on the reading performance of adult ESL learners with limited literacy skills. The instruction took place over a four-month period during the 2010-11 school year with a group of eighteen learners enrolled in a high-beginning literacy course. Their reading gains over this period were compared with those of a comparison group whose instruction had taken place a year earlier with the same teacher. Meta-cognitive reading strategy instruction involves teaching readers to use strategies for reading more effectively. Strategies were taught using the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) model. The experimental group had higher reading gains across all skill levels. Limitations of the study identified included the possibility that since the experimental group was taught a year after the comparison group, the difference in results could be possibly explained by the teacher's greater experience. The small sample size was another limitation.

Keywords: English as an Additional Language (EAL); ESL literacy; Meta-cognitive Reading Strategy; Reading Instruction; United States

Keywords

Aboriginal peoples
Adult basic education
Adult education
Adult learners
Access to education
Case studies
Deaf people
Digital technologies
Discrimination
E-learning
Embedding LES
English as an Additional Language (EAL)
ESL literacy
ESOL
Feasibility studies
Formal learning
Funding
High school dropouts
Immigrants
Impacts of adult learning
Informal Learning
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
LES programs
Literacy and Essential Skills (LES)
Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN)
Meta-cognitive Reading Strategy
Non-formal learning
Older workers
Parenting
Policy
Program outcomes
Qualitative research
Reading instruction
Refugees
Research briefs
Social Return on Investment (SROI)
Unemployed

Name Keywords

Access and Support to Education and Training Survey (ASETS)
Adult Education and Training Survey (AETS)
Australia
British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
Canada
Essential Skills Ontario
Greater London Authority
Labour Market Programs (LMP's)
London
Maori
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)
New Zealand
Ontario
Statistics Canada
United Kingdom
United States