Ontario Learns: Strengthening our Adult Education System

(see the full report at www.edu.gov.on.ca/adultedreview/report.html)

At the November 15 LCAE meeting, Donna Ellis took us through a discussion of the 15 recommendations that were included in Kathleen Wynne's Adult Education Review. Small groups came up with the implications of each recommendation. Those implications and the original recommendation follow.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendation 1:
Create an appropriate entity within government (such as a secretariat, a steering committee, a cross-ministry working group or unit) to co-ordinate the further development and implementation of the proposed adult education policy framework and definition. The entity could look at the possibility of, or need for, legislation that would acknowledge the place of adult education within the education continuum, leading to post-secondary and other options. This entity would oversee the effectiveness of government-funded adult education programs and services and provide information to support management planning and decision making.
Local Implications
- ✓ Already have structures in place. Will they be replaced? Will prog/orgs be told to shut down?
- ✓ Coordination is helpful, but how far reaching will it be?

Recommendation 2:
Adopt the following as the Ontario definition of adult education:
"Adult education" involves planned and intentional learning opportunities that enable adults to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to participate fully in the economic and social life of their community. Adult education empowers adults to successfully perform their roles in the workplace, in the family, and as citizens and community members.
Adult education takes place in both formal and informal settings in a wide range of locations-in the community, the workplace, formal institutional environments, and the home.
Education programming for adults is designed to achieve the learner's goals, whether they are economic, social, or for personal development, and the programming considers the life circumstances and unique learning styles of adults.
Adult education provides clear pathways for prospective learners to achieve their personal goals, and the courses and programs may be formal or informal in nature, that is, some are designed for achieving academic credit, others are non-credit or for general interest.

Local Implications

- ✓ Broad definition. Does not see adult education only as it relates to employment, but as personal, allowing people to grow

Recommendation 3:
Implement an ongoing, province-wide outreach strategy on adult education to engage stakeholders and learners.
Local Implications

- ✓ Importance of marketing/community awareness
- ✓ Gov. support would be helpful
- ✓ Communications are a challenge
- ✓ How do we reach adult learners on a broad range of needs?
- ✓ Info overload!

Recommendation 4:
Integrate adult education programs offered by the provincial and federal governments, specifically by: (a) negotiating a fair Canada/Ontario labour market development agreement to provide the Ontario government with new resources to invest in adult education; (b) negotiating a Canada/Ontario immigration agreement that will allow the federal government to invest new resources in job-specific language training to support the integration of new Canadians; and (c) improving the integration of services funded by governments.
Local Implications
- ✓ see number 5

Recommendation 5:
Support and facilitate partnerships and co-ordination of programming among deliverers through information sharing and incentives.
Local Implications
- ✓ Join with ESCM or others to partner to support this

Recommendation 6:
Work with the agencies and institutions delivering adult education programming to devise clear pathways for learners to achieve their learning goals, including, but not limited to:
- • access to assessment and referral services to adult education programs
- • access to prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR)
- • access to varied opportunities and options

for completion of secondary school credits
• recognition and promotion of the range of
credentials that provide access to further
education, training, employment
• clearer articulation among such programs as
literacy and basic skills programs, English
and French as a second language credit and
non-credit programs, and apprenticeship
training and postsecondary programs
• improved linkages with the workplace
through co-operative and supportive work
placements

Local Implications
- ✓ There is no wrong doorway
- ✓ Identifying gaps and overlaps in pathways
- ✓ Need to look at relationships between social assistance and adult ed policies
- ✓ O.W. policy barriers
- ✓ Need for broader range of skills for Soc. Assistance recipients

Recommendation 7:
Guide adult education deliverers to work with social assistance delivery agencies to
ensure that adult education programming meets learners' goals, including development of
employability and essential skills and life skills to ensure success in
the workforce and independent living.

Local Implications
- ✓ There is no formal process to act as a referral service which includes-employment
  and education
- ✓ There is awareness but a knowledge

Recommendation 8:
Examine the following factors in program funding models:
• the relationship to government priorities
• the relationship to program goals and results
• the consistency of funding models among
and within programs
• maximizing use of public funds
through partnerships
• incentives to ensure delivery agencies are
efficient and effective
• ways of measuring the return on investment
in adult education programs

Local Implications
- ✓ Planning impact of inconsistent funding

Recommendation 9:
In consultation with providers, design and implement appropriate accountability measures for all adult education programs that include economic, social, and personal development measures, and streamline reporting requirements.
Local Implications
- ✓ Different expertise required to adapt to regularly changing measurements and methods of program evaluation

Recommendation 10:
Explore the possibility of using a single student identifier to track adult learners, with appropriate provisions for privacy and security, to assist with results-based planning and evaluation of programs
Local Implications
- ✓ Staff maintenance/program quality

Recommendation 11:
Conduct outreach to persons with special needs and provide culturally specific programming for varied communities — francophones, Aboriginal people, and the deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deaf-blind communities
Local Implications
- ✓ Outreach is important, valuable, needs to be respectful, be welcoming
- ✓ We need more groups like LCAE
- ✓ Use word community to describe

Recommendation 12:
Ensure that agencies and providers are fully aware of their obligations under governing legislation, specifically the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and work with them to devise plans and tools to comply with this Act and the French Language Services Act.
Local Implications
- ✓ Formal education needs a shift in attitude towards informal provisions in communities

Recommendation 13:
Explore the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) to support program delivery and to improve access in classrooms, correctional facilities, libraries, and community agencies and to enable self-study at home, where appropriate.
Local Implications
- ✓ Remove anxiety over information ICT
- ✓ Foster widespread access to ICT

Recommendation 14:
Foster and encourage innovation and local creativity in keeping with adult education principles, and ensure that a range of programs (including general interest programs) is in place according to community demographics.
Local Implications
- ✓ In London there is no limit to the opportunities that can be made available because of our diverse population
- ✓ Accessible locations=convenience (malls, churches, homes)
- ✓ Being engaged with family matters and local issues (politics)
- ✓ Giving learners the opportunity to share wisdom/life experiences

Recommendation 15:
Foster a culture of excellence in the delivery of adult education through improvements in practice, through professional development, and through the creation of a website for sharing resources, best practices, and the results of adult education research
Local Implications
- ✓ Professional development (awareness of academic/social pressures)
- ✓ Counteract a culture of fear of learning
- ✓ Share results of discussions and programs in a central place, at least twice a year (bringing students and teachers together)