

Taking Stock of Lifelong Learning in Canada: Progress or Complacency? 2005-2010

THE WAY FORWARD

L'essentiel de mon propos

- Canada has much going for it in learning—and equally much to be concerned about (as illustrated in our paradoxes).
- As in the financial industry, so too in learning: “Past performance is no guarantee of future returns.”
- Looking to the future, the question is: “Is Canada setting conditions for success—or for failure to compete successfully?”
- Canada needs a coherent approach to lifelong learning—a “Learning Architecture.”
- It is not too late to get things right. But time presses. If we in Canada are not prompt and effective, better organised and determined international competitors will “eat our lunch.”

Early Childhood Education and Learning

- Develop common, shared, national indicators of progress. At present, there is no way to know how well our children are progressing.
- Set goals/benchmarks/objectives for the country, with provincial and regional determination of mode of provision of service.
- More financial support for early childhood development and learning, flexibly deployed, so that parents themselves can decide on which model they prefer.

K-12

- Given current demographics, the school must become the hub for community learning through integration of needs of children for formal education and needs of adults for informal or non-formal learning opportunities.
- Canada should develop common learning outcomes, using carefully determined international criteria, for K-12 for all key subjects. This is harmonisation, not standardisation, nor a national curriculum.
- The human capital dilemma in male education must be tackled creatively and without fear of “political correctness” in the early years of schooling.
- Canada should develop school-industry partnerships that make apprenticeship training in high school a possible avenue.
- Canada needs a national French-language teacher training college in order to preserve and advance bilingual education at all levels, including PSE.
- Canada needs to improve career prospects for teachers by offering options that combine both teaching to children and to adults.
- The improvement of Aboriginal learning outcomes requires a greater understanding of Aboriginal Peoples’ perspectives on learning and a culturally appropriate framework for measuring it.

Post-secondary Education (PSE)

Making the sector more intelligent: convergence and harmonisation

- A national post-secondary strategy should possess three essential characteristics: clearly stated objectives, both general and for specific periods of time; measures to assess achievement of objectives; and a systematic goal of cohesion and coherence among all the facets—as is the case in the European Union (EU) and other developed countries.

- Emulate the EU in converging all forms of education and training across jurisdictions, thereby promoting mobility and quality. This implies harmonisation across jurisdictions—not standardisation.
- Create systems of accountability through agreement on national indicators for success in PSE, learning from EU, Australia and other political entities.
- Create a pan-Canadian PSE data and information strategy which acts as the basis for indicator development and policy decisions.
- Establish goals and measurable objectives for Canadian PSE for both the short and the long term.
- Create and maintain a national forum on PSE, including both governments and NGOs, that would: establish national goals, indicators, and data and would agree on mechanisms to monitor and report annually to Canadians on progress with respect to agreed goals.
- Construct a pan-Canadian framework for quality assurance.
- Establish a Canadian qualifications framework.

Adult Learning and Skills Development

Implement the recommendations of the 2002 OECD report, *Thematic Review on Adult Learning, Canada*:

- Set national benchmarks or targets for participation and outcomes as measured by adult literacy and other essential skills.
- Ensure appropriate levels of participation in adult learning.
- Develop coherent national system of Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR).
- Develop coherent and effective policies targeted to the specific learning needs of adults.
- Improve the literacy levels of adults.
- Enhance labour-market information.
- Respond to groups with particular learning needs (working poor, Aboriginal people and immigrants).
- Increase research efforts on the effectiveness of adult education.
- Develop a pan-Canadian forum on adult education.

Improve government support for skills development in the workplace in alignment with CCL's 5 key principles:

- A comprehensive approach: a tool box or kit of validated and proven practices;
- Co-financing and co-responsibility;
- A coalescence of partners;
- A focus on demonstrating value for money and effort;
- Validation/affirmation of individual achievement through certification and recognition.

