

STATE OF THE FIELD REVIEWS

In July, CCL issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of state of the field reviews for: Early Childhood Learning; Elementary and Secondary School Learning; Post-secondary Learning; Adult Learning; Work and Learning; and Health and Learning. Each review will :

1. Identify and verify through research the most effective best practices and procedures to promote learning in the field;
2. Identify major gaps in our knowledge and understanding of learning in the field; and
3. Identify the most promising lines of inquiry for addressing those gaps.

In early September 2005, CCL entered into agreements for the production of a number of reviews. Below is a description of the projects and the lead investigators.

1 WORK AND LEARNING

Principal Investigator: Lynn Johnston, CAE, Executive Director

Lead Organization: Canadian Society for Training and Development (CSTD)

The CSTD, in conjunction with Athabasca University and Concordia University will produce a state of the field review on Workplace Learning and Performance (WLP) that will address three particular areas of interest within the discipline: e-learning, diversity (which, in this field, encompasses gender, culture, and French as a minority language), and core competencies (which, in this field, encompasses literacy).

The CSTD will serve as the lead applicant on the project. The CSTD is a not-for-profit, membership-based association dedicated to the profession of training, workplace learning and human resources development. With 1,900 current members, CSTD is the largest association in Canada dedicated to the profession of workplace learning and performance.

2 PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT & RECOGNITION

Principal Investigator: Dr. Christine Wihak, Assistant Professor

Lead Organization: Graduate Division of Educational Research, Faculty of Education, University of Calgary

This state of the field review will focus on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). PLAR is the practice of reviewing, evaluating, and acknowledging the information, skills, and understanding that adult learners have gained through experiential or self-directed (informal) and/or non-credit courses and workshops (non-formal) learning, rather than through formal education. During a time of rapid and continuing change, PLAR has a vital contribution to make in supporting lifelong learning. The

process of PLAR translates personal and workplace learning into a transportable format suitable for public recognition in many different venues.

Dr. Wihak is an assistant professor in Workplace & Adult Learning at the University of Calgary (<http://external.educ.ucalgary.ca/gder/distance/dadult.html>). A chartered psychologist, Dr. Wihak served as the first tutor for Athabasca University's ground-breaking portfolio development course.

3 FRENCH LANGUAGE LITERACY

Principal Investigator: Dr. Monique A. Nadeau, PhD, Directrice

Lead Organization: Cognition+

Cognition+ will provide a state of the field review in the area of French language literacy in areas where French speakers are in the minority. Specifically, this review will investigate best practices in promoting literacy among students from grade 1 to grade 12.

Cognition+ is a research and learning support centre founded in 2000 by Monique A. Nadeau and has particular expertise in French language learning in Ontario.

4 E-LEARNING

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jamie Rossiter, Principal

Lead Organization: Rossiter Consulting

This project will conduct a review of the cross-cutting theme of e-learning, and, in particular, will map the state of e-learning against CCL's major themes of: adult learning, early childhood learning, elementary and secondary learning, health and learning, and post-secondary learning, and provide a baseline of knowledge of the state of e-learning in Canada. It will provide CCL with information on where the knowledge and implementation of e-learning are weakest and what areas of inquiry are likely to be most fruitful.

This project will be lead by Dr. Jamie Rossiter, Principal of Rossiter Consulting. Dr. Rossiter has been involved in guiding the development of e-learning across Canada over the past decade, first as President of Knowledge Connection Corporation, and subsequently as Director of the CANARIE E-learning Program.

5 E-LEARNING

Principal Investigator: Dr. Philip C. Abrami, Professor

Lead Organization: Concordia University

This review will address the following theme areas: adult learning, early childhood learning, elementary and secondary learning, health and learning, and post-secondary learning. By reviewing five theme areas, the project will be able to draw conclusions within and across areas. This will add important breadth to the findings and the potential

for general conclusions and recommendations as well as pinpointing special concerns and gaps within areas.

This review will be led by the Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP) at Concordia University and specifically by the Canadian Network for Knowledge Utilization (CanKnow), a recently-established network with a mission to collect and disseminate the best evidence in the social sciences to inform and improve Canadian policy-making and practice.

6 POST-SECONDARY

Principal Investigator: Alex Usher, Vice President

Lead Organization: Educational Policy Institute (EPI)

This review will investigate Canadian post-secondary education in terms of key issues such as access, retention, learning, the professoriate, distance learning, research, governance, quality measurement, and outcomes. Where applicable, it will complement this research with data from other countries.

EPI is a non-partisan organization dedicated to policy-based research and initiatives on educational opportunity for all students. Established in 2002, EPI has done work on behalf of clients throughout Canada and the United States. EPI has experience in the field of education consulting and particular experience with research and analysis in the post-secondary sector.

7 ADULT LEARNING

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jim Sharpe, Dean

Lead Organization: Mount St. Vincent University

This review will address the cross-cutting themes of gender, culture, French as a minority language, e-learning and literacy as well as three additional themes critical to the adult learning focus area: learning communities, social movements and barriers/access to learning.

This project proposal originates with researchers associated with the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre situated at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, but will be coordinated and administered at Mount Saint Vincent University, under the direction of Dr. Jim Sharpe, Dean of the Faculty of Education.

8 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Principal Investigator: Dr. Gordon Cleveland, Associate Chair

Lead Organization: Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto

This review will focus on a specific aspect of Early Childhood Learning – the learning that occurs when preschool children are participating in early learning and child care programs including child care centres, nursery school programs, kindergartens, and in

related support programs. Specifically it will summarize what is known and what is not known about early childhood learning in these programs.

This proposal is jointly made by the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development and the Institute of Child Study at University of Toronto.

9 HEALTH & LEARNING K-12

Principal Investigator: Dr. Maryanne Doherty

Lead Organization: Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

The School Health Research Network (SHRN) will develop a series of 13 research reviews to be undertaken under the guidance of its members that will build on current Canadian and international initiatives to form a comprehensive knowledge base for guiding future research.

These reviews address specific health/social problems, specific sub-populations and specific aspects of a comprehensive approach to school health promotion. They will include: mental health (including stress, suicide, and depression); injury prevention; gender equity (including both female and male concerns); emergency preparedness (including infectious disease prevention, and security concerns as well as natural disasters such as fires and floods); tobacco use; personal/social development (including social/emotional learning, citizenship and family life education, bullying, and violence); environmental health concerns (including allergies, sun safety and the physical condition of schools); aboriginal students (in public and band schools); promoting health in schools serving ethno-cultural or linguistic minority communities; school climate (including school organization, discipline, and practices); health education and health literacy (including minimum and optimum learning outcomes); school-based and school-linked health services including immunization; and systems capacity, systems change and staff development.

The School Health Research Network (SHRN) is a network of researchers and organizations concerned with school-based and school-linked health promotion.

10 CANADIAN ADVANCED SIMULATION IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Principal Investigator: Mike Magee

Lead Organization: Alberta Online Consortium

This project will conduct a review of current practices of the use of computer-based simulation as a tool for education in a number of adult education contexts. The review will cover current approaches in both research and practice in Canada as well as other areas in the world. The information will be used to inform future innovation and research in the area of advanced simulation for adult learning, learning in the workplace, health and learning and aboriginal learning. The motivation for investigating these areas is the demand from industry to create educational content related to the experiential way most adult workforce participants currently build knowledge.

Mike Magee has several years experience on a number of educational technology projects. These include several virtual environments built using commercial computer game technology. The Alberta Online Consortium enables the growth of technology enhanced learning environments by providing its members and others with programs and services aimed at building their capacity and increasing the level of success experienced by their learners.