Changing the Odds: Informing Policy with Research on How Adult Learners Succeed

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CALPRO Webinar
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Reflection Questions

If you could change one policy that impacts low-skilled adults, what would it be and why?

Type your answer into the chat window on the left.
Changing the Odds

- The idea was born during Steve Reder’s Senate testimony earlier in 2009 which he concluded with a comment about “changing the odds” for adult learners.
- He and I had both been reading Malcolm Gladwell’s Outliers and we began to discuss what we could do.
Symposium was held Sept 16, 2009 with approx 75 people to share research and inform policy positions by advocacy groups.
Symposium Participants’ Responses

- Integration of services across agencies
- Coordination of transitions between agencies and institutions
- Leveraging technology to scale up, reach out, and innovate delivery
- Revisions and updates to accountability systems and mechanisms
- Facilitating access to education, including building awareness, providing support services, and increasing financial aid
Questions to Consider Today

- What is your vision for adult ed by the year 2015? What would it take to achieve that?
- What other entities should be caring about and involved in these issues?
- How will we know that we’ve changed the odds?
Paper written following the Symposium to capture major findings and create a compelling policy argument. See www.air.org.
Literacy and the Ladder of Opportunity

Rebuilding our “common good”

- The combination of things that make the great promise of America widely accessible
- A ladder of opportunity
Literacy *is* a Policy Lever

As literacy rates rise, improvements are seen in:

- Employment & earnings
- Poverty
- Health care (health status, cost of care)
- Civic engagement (volunteerism, voting)
- Parenting (school involvement, care)
- Burden on society (crime, welfare)
Employment Varies with Education and Literacy 1992

Changes in individuals’ employment and earnings are associated with changes in their literacy.
Employment Varies with Literacy in 2003

More than 50% of US population experiences poverty before age 65.
Employment Varies with Literacy in 2003

Percentage of adults in each income range, by document literacy level in 2003.
Voting Varies with Ed and Literacy 1992

Literacy Level

Highest Credential

Post-Sec.
Secondary
None

% Voted in Past 5 Years

0-225
226-275
276-325
326-375
376-500

0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Voting Varies with Literacy in 2003

Literacy and Health Status

- About 30% of Medicare & Medicaid recipients have “below basic” health literacy
- Health care costs are substantially higher for low-skilled adults
- Lower health status and higher mortality rates for older adults with poor literacy skills
Literacy Problems Are Not Going Away

- 3 sources of adults with basic skills needs
  - Continuing high rates of HS dropouts
  - Continuing immigration
  - Ageing Baby Boomers

- Changing economy and skill demands
Underprepared Adults and Youth

- Those w/o a HS diploma
  - Fully ¼ of U.S. youth do not finish HS

- Those w/o college-ready skills
  - 40% of all enrollees test into dev ed
  - Over 50% do not receive a degree

- Those w/o job-ready skills
  - Lack work experience
  - Lack strong literacy, numeracy, problem-solving skills and habits
Immigration Trends

- Immigration reform could add **6.4 million** language learners to adult ed ESL waiting lists

- Important sub-groups:
  - Limited native literacy
  - Higher education degrees
  - Youth and “generation 1.5”
    - Enrolling in postsec but not completing
  - Countries and alphabets of origin
New Approaches Suggested by Research & Experimentation

From NCSALL’s *Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning & Persistence Study*

- Build persistence in adult learners
- Build accountability around longer-term outcomes
- Develop learning support systems
- Utilize technology to increase system capacity
Workforce Development Models

New ways to combine language, literacy and job skills training

- Differentiated instruction
- Contextualized instruction
- Long-term basic skills support, not just a pipeline “handoff” from adult ed programs
- Flexible career pathways models
- Private/public partnerships
Transition to Postsecondary

Extend postsecondary effectively to adult literacy students

- Bridge programs
- Dual enrollment programs
- Minimize need for remedial courses
- More flexible delivery models
  - Contextualization
  - Chunking & compressing
  - Blended learning
Innovative Models and Systems

- Learner-centered delivery
- Reaching low-skilled adults
- Case management
- Waivers and demonstration projects
- Professional development and professionalization
- Revising the NRS
Important Papers Pub’d in 2010

- College Access for the Working Poor: Overcoming Burdens to Succeed in Higher Education
- HELP WANTED PROJECTIONS of JOBS and EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS Through 2018

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Discussion

- What is your vision for adult ed by the year 2015? What would it take to achieve?
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- **What other entities should be caring about and involved in these issues?**
Discussion

- What is your vision for adult ed by the year 2015? What would it take to achieve?

- What other entities should be caring about and involved in these issues?
  - How will we know that we’ve changed the odds?
How to Keep Up with Policy?

Participate in prof. organizations:
- National Coalition for Literacy
- National Council of Teacher of English
- Commission on Adult Basic Education
- CA Council for Adult Education
Category » Legislative Updates

Public Policy and Advocacy Update, September 2010

By Jackie Taylor

**Appropriations**

Members of the Senate voted 69-30 on Tuesday evening, September 28, to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep government operating until Dec. 3.

The House passed a CR on Wednesday and Congress is on recess until after the November 2 elections. They are expected to be back the week of November 15, then on recess for the week of November 22, and return the week of November 29 until the 111th Congress is done.

Congress passes a CR when appropriations bills are not passed by October 1,...

[Read More →]

Tags: action alert, Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, AEFL Week, appropriations, NCL Update, reauthorization, WIA

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Adult Literacy Caucus: Update and Alert!

**Date:** September 21, 2010

The following Members have joined the House Adult Literacy Caucus to date:

- Dan Maffei (D-NY), Co-Chair and Sponsor
- Phil Roe (R-TN), Co-Chair
- Elijah Cummings (D-MD)
- Donna Edwards (D-MD)
- Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ)
- Alan Grayson (D-FL)
- Raul Grijalva (D-AZ)
- Bobby Hullar (D-TX)
- Niki Tsongas (D-MA)
- Robin Vos (R-WI)
- Steve Womack (R-AR)
- Bill Foster (D-IL)
- Adam Smith (D-WA)
- Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
- John Yarmuth (D-KY)
- Jim Himes (D-CT)
- G. K. Butterfield (D-NC)
- John Carney (D-DE)
- Iraqi McTavish (D-CA)
- Brian Higgins (D-NY)
- John Delaney (D-MD)
- Scott Tipton (R-CO)
- Scott Tipton (R-CO)
- Noah Baldwin (D-UT)
- Bill Keating (D-MA)
- Kara Eastman (D-NE)
- Jerry Nadler (D-NY)
- Steve Israel (D-NY)
- Brad Schneider (D-IL)
- Don Beyer (D-VA)
- James McGovern (D-MA)
- David Cicilline (D-RI)
- Judy Chu (D-CA)
-謂江道 (D-CA)
- Dan Kildee (D-MI)
- Dave Trott (R-MI)
- Robert Ruga (D-MI)
- Robert Dold (R-IL)
- Terri Sewell (D-AL)
- Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
- Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM)
- Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)
- John Larson (D-CT)
- Steve Israel (D-NY)
- Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Sara Gideon (D-ME)
- Jim Himes (D-CT)
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Policy Forum on the Economics of Literacy for Women

A Dec. 1st event in Washington, D.C. is what’s next, being co-sponsored by the National Coalition for Literacy and the Institute for Women’s Policy Research to continue the dialogue, share data, and promote advocacy.