

More than half of Canadians want informal learning recognized for credit

Results of national study to be presented

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by Jenny Hall

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Professor David Livingstone, head of the Centre for the Study of Education and Work at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, will present findings on prior learning from the 2004 Canadian Survey on Work and Lifelong Learning on Tuesday, Nov. 24 at the Annual General Meeting and Public Workshop of the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA).

The national survey, conducted in partnership with CAPLA, found that more than half of adults and more than 60 per cent of employed respondents would be interested in enrolling in further education if past informal learning and work experiences were recognized. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is a process through which already developed knowledge and skills are documented and assessed for recognition by educational institutions, workplaces, credentialing organizations and regulatory bodies.

The study also showed that racial minorities, recent immigrants and high school dropouts are among those most interested in PLAR and that these groups are already devoting substantial time to informal learning.

Conducted as part of a research network funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the study's results suggest that while Canadians generally have high levels of formal education, many have significant unmet needs when it comes to continuing adult education and training.

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