

## Basic Findings of the 2004 Canadian Learning and Work Survey

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The WALL Survey was conducted in 2004 with a large representative national sample of the adult (18+) Canadian population (N=9,063) to provide unprecedented quantitative detail on learning and work activities and their inter-relations. This survey is part of the research network on “The Changing Nature of Work and Lifelong Learning” (WALL) funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) as a Collaborative Research Initiative on the New Economy (Project No. 512-2002-1011). The survey was administered by the Institute for Social Research at York University. The network also includes 12 related case studies. For further information see our website: [www.wallnetwork.ca](http://www.wallnetwork.ca). A previous research network, New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL), completed a smaller (N=1,562) related national survey in 1998 (see [www.nall.ca](http://www.nall.ca)). (Over 70 related survey and case study papers are now posted on the NALL site and numerous WALL papers will be posted on the WALL site over the coming few years.)

### Expanded Definitions of Learning and Work

“*Learning*” involves the gaining of knowledge and skill or achieving understanding anytime and anywhere through individual and group processes. It includes *formal schooling*, and *further or continuing adult education*, as well as *informal education or training* and *non-taught self-directed or collective informal learning*. No account of “lifelong learning” can be complete without considering peoples’ informal learning activities.

“*Work*” is any activity directed toward making or doing something, including *paid employment*, *unpaid housework* and *community volunteer work*. No account of work can be complete without considering unpaid work.

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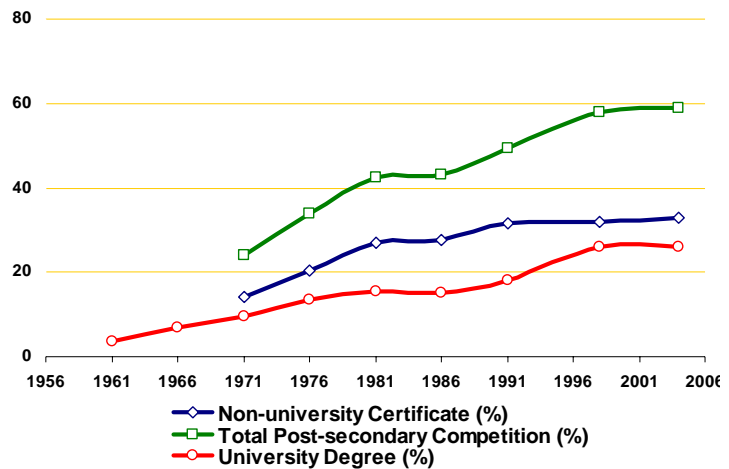
## Findings on Learning

Statistics Canada surveys have documented the exceptional growth of *post-secondary education* completion in this country since the 1960s. Canada now leads the world in the proportion of adults with post-secondary (college and university) certification, although the US and Finland have higher levels of university graduates. This table for the 25-29 age cohort reflects the general trends.

Participation levels in *adult education courses and workshops* showed similar exceptional growth from the 1960s to the 1990s. There are no fully comparable surveys since 1997. The NALL and WALL surveys, with a somewhat more inclusive measure than prior Statistics Canada surveys, have found little increase since 1998. Canada's general provision of adult education programs still lags behind several other countries.

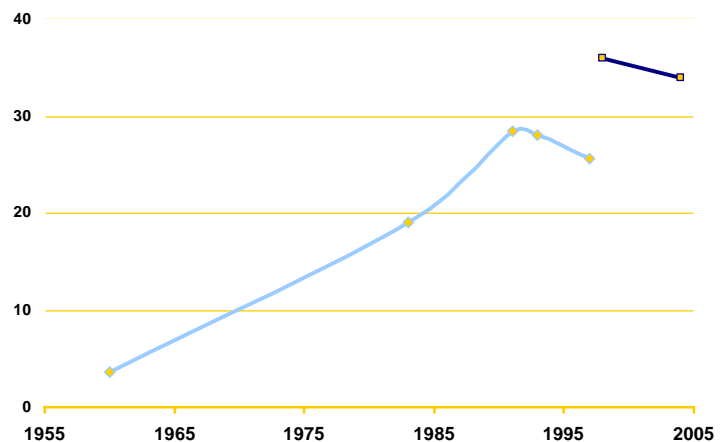
Participation in *informal learning outside of formal educational settings* is very extensive both in terms of the proportions who report participating in it and the amount of time they devote to various learning activities related to paid work, housework, volunteer work and their general interests. Most prior studies of adults' informal learning have found majority participation in self-reported informal learning and averages of over 10 hours a week. So have the first Canadian national surveys by NALL and WALL. There may have been some

**Table 1 Post-Secondary Education Completion (%)  
25-29 Age Group, Canada 1961-2004**



**Sources:** 1961: Census of Canada (1963) Table 102; 1966: Lagace (1968) Table C3; 1971-2001: Special tabulations from census data files. UT Data Library; 1998: Council of Ministers of Education (2000); WALL 2004: Special tabulations.

**Table 2 Adult Education Course Participation\*,  
Canada, 1960-2004**



\*Excludes students registered in degree/diploma programs  
**Sources:** Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1963; Statistics Canada, 1995; Statistics Canada, 1997; Statistics Canada, 2001; NALL, 1998; WALL, 2004.

decline in reported incidence of informal learning from 1998 to 2004 but the estimates are indicative of very substantial continuing engagement in such learning activities.

Participation in adult education courses and future plans to do so are closely related to level of formal schooling. The incidence of informal learning is *not* very closely related to these formal educational activities. School dropouts, the retired and otherwise marginalized people continue to be very active informal learners.

**Table 3 Work Related and General Interest Informal Learning (Average Hours per Week), Canadian Adults, 1998-2004 \***



\*Excludes students registered in degree/diploma programs  
Sources: NALL Survey, 1998; WALL Survey, 2004.

**Table 4 Formal Educational Attainment, Adult Education Courses, Course Plans and Informal Learning, Canada, 1998-2004\***

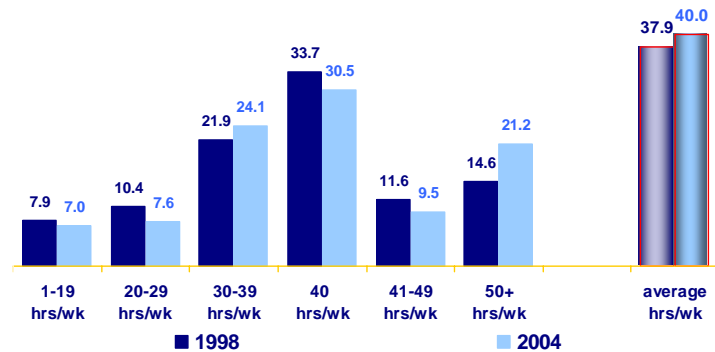
	Taken adult education course or workshop past year (%)		Plan to take course (%)		Informal learning (%)		Informal learning (Hrs/week)	
	1998	2004	1998	2004	1998	2004	1998	2004
<b>No diploma</b>	15	18	24	17	78	68	18	15
<b>High school diploma</b>	40	33	49	35	95	83	17	15
<b>Community college</b>	55	42	59	44	95	88	15	13
<b>University degree</b>	64	53	64	50	99	98	14	12
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>

\*Excludes students registered in degree/diploma programs  
Sources: NALL Survey, 1998; WALL Survey, 2004

## Findings on Work

There was an increase in time devoted to *paid employment* during 1998-2004, from an average of 38 to 40 hours per week. The proportion of the active labour force employed for more than 50 hours a week rose from around 15% to around 20%. The participation rate in paid employment reached about 68 percent of the working age population, the highest rate on record (compare Statistics Canada, 2004).

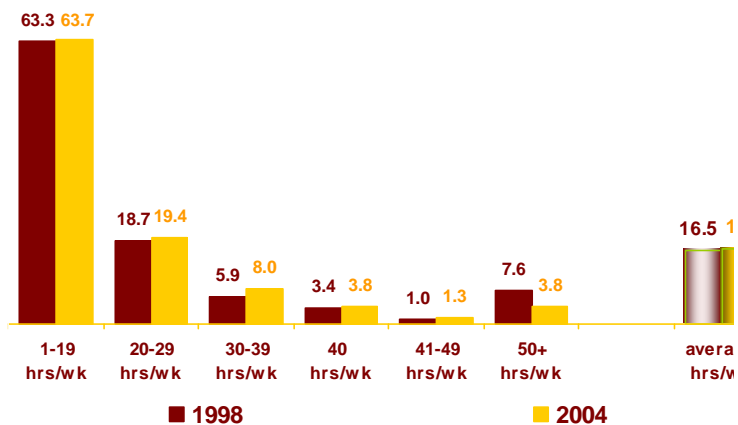
**Table 5 Distribution of Paid Work Hours, Employed Labour Force (%), Canada, 1998-2004**



Sources: NALL, 1998, WALL, 2004.

*Unpaid housework* (cooking, cleaning shopping, home budgeting, yard work, home maintenance) is reported by over 90 percent of Canadian adults who indicate they spent around 17 hours a week doing it in both 1998 and 2004. (For homemakers who devote themselves primarily to housework, the average is now around 40 hours per week and appears to have increased over this period). Even ignoring other essential labours of childcare and eldercare, unpaid housework is a very substantial portion of the work that most of us do and it deserves to be consistently recognized on its own merits and skill demands.

**Table 6 Distribution of Unpaid Housework Hours, Canada, 1998-2004**

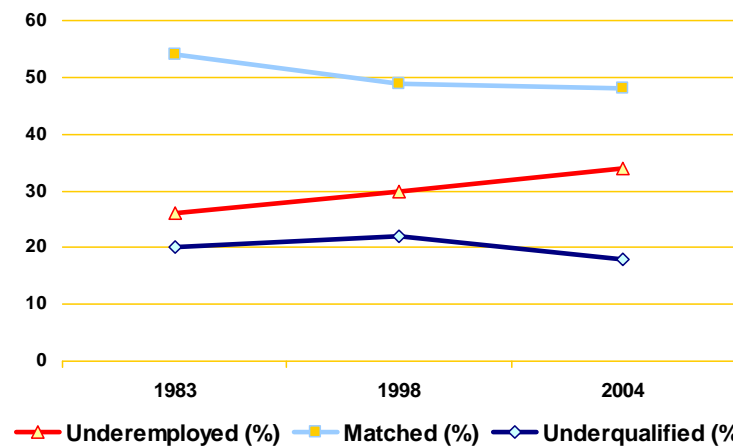


Sources: NALL, 1998, WALL, 2004.

## Education-Job Matching

At least three national surveys over the past 20 years have asked employed respondents about the levels of formal educational attainment required for their job and compared these with their actual educational attainments. For about half, the requirements and attainments roughly correspond. There is no general indication of increasing under-qualification but there is some evidence of growing underemployment as educational completion rates increasingly outpace the education required for jobs in the Canadian economy.

**Table 7A Correspondence of Formal Educational Attainment and Job Entry Qualification, Employed Labour Force, Canada 1983-2004**



Sources: Wright, 1983; NALL, 1998; WALL, 2004.

**Table 7 Correspondence of Formal Educational Attainment and Job Entry Qualification, Employed Labour Force, Canada 1983-2004**

Year	Underemployed (%)	Matched (%)	Underqualified (%)	N
1983	26	54	20	1726
1998	30	49	22	893
2004	34	48	18	5098

Sources: Wright, 1983; NALL, 1998; WALL, 2004.

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