



# The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy

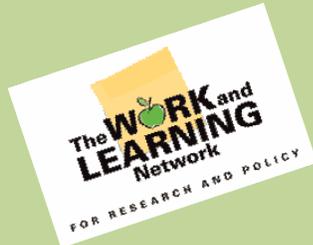
## ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010

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WLN Administrator

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## The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy

### ANNUAL REPORT

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#### Introduction

The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy, from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010, continued to undertake and initiate relevant work and learning activities in its seventh year of operation. Activities were intended to support the three main areas of focus that define the WLN. They are:

1. Identify, support and disseminate findings of research projects on various issues related to work and learning.
2. Give visible presence to research integrating work and learning issues through seminar series and conferences.
3. Encourage collaboration and partnerships among researchers, practitioners and policy workers involved in the network.

#### Membership

The membership increased by 50 members this year to make a total of approximately 400 individuals. Membership declines through undeliverable e-mails or emails asking to be removed but are gained when:

1. They sign up using the [subscribe](#) feature on the WLN website home page
2. They email asking to subscribe.
3. They attend WLN events (seminars and symposia) and use the sign-up sheets.

#### Activities

##### Monthly Broadcasts

The WLN broadcast, initiated in June 2007, is emailed monthly to the WLN membership list and Faculty of Education based list serves (Faculty, Graduate Student and Educational Policy Events). The purpose of the broadcast is to share information about upcoming events (conferences, symposia, and seminars) and inform the listserv of publications (books, articles, reports) related to work and learning. An archive of all the broadcasts is posted to the WLN website. The WLN administrator develops the broadcast.

##### Website



The Work and Learning Network website ([www.wln.ualberta.ca](http://www.wln.ualberta.ca)) site includes: Information about the Network – mandate, research interests, activities, a list of advisory board members.

- Upcoming events and archives of seminars, symposia and conferences.
- PowerPoint presentations and audio files from seminar presenters.
- A resource section, which includes electronic links to abstracts and full text versions of relevant research papers and other resources.
- Members' profile page which contains members' practice, affiliation and research interests.
- An archive of monthly broadcasts and annual reports.

### **New**

An archive of Elluminate Live recordings of seminar presentations from January 2010 - March 2010 were posted on the website.

### **Proposed Revisions to the Web site**

To follow up on ideas in the members' survey, the administrator initiated a review of the website. A sub-committee met in December 2009 to discuss changes and give feedback and advice about the site. The Education Tech/PD area informed us that the Faculty is in the process of reconstructing faculty websites using a new Content Management System, a form based application that does not require specific web design software. Changes to the WLN site, however, will likely not happen until late fall or winter 2010. In the interim, AKM Shafiuddin, recruited by Mildred Klassen, will re-design the template as discussed at the sub-committee level.

### *Poster presentation*

An updated tri-fold poster was exhibited at all seminars sponsored by the WLN and was displayed at 5th Annual Educational Policy Studies (EPS) Research Day on April 23, 2009. The poster showcased the Network and the research work and educational activities undertaken to that point. A re-design of the poster board, which was created electronically and plotted by the Academic Information and Communication Technologies (AICT) will be displayed at the April 2010 EPS Research Day.

### *WLN Survey Report*



A **member survey** was conducted in March 2009 by graduate assistant Nickela Anderson. Results were compiled, analyzed and reported to the board in spring of 2009. The purpose of the survey was to gather information about the WLN members, their areas of interest, what aspects of the network they accessed, future events and research interests. This information will be used to ensure that the WLN continues to meet the interests of its diverse membership. The survey was sent out to 343 members plus three list serves. A total of 120 surveys were started and 100 were completed. Based on 120 surveys and 343 members the response rate is 35%. [Report link.](#)

### **Member Profile**

Just over two thirds of the members are employed (66.7%). The remaining third is comprised of students, self-employed, retired, and unemployed. The vast majority work as either manager/administrators (47.6%) or professor/instructors (34.9%). Three quarters (75%) of the members are female. Just over 80% of the members live in Alberta, 15% are from other provinces, and the remainder live outside of Canada.

### **Results**

Three quarters (75%) of the respondents selected **seminars** as the type of WLN event they would like to attend in the future. 60% would like to attend **conferences**, 50% selected **symposia**, and 23% were interested in attending an open house.

The **top five themes** that respondents would like addressed were:  
critical perspectives on work and learning  
lifelong learning  
policy development  
career development and  
equity issues.

**Areas of interest** distilled from the survey include: worker/ workplace, New Canadians or Temporary Foreign Workers, minority issues,

apprenticeship and unions, aging and generations and the current economic situation.

The **top five sectors** respondents would like to hear from were: researchers, educators, employers, government, and non profit/voluntary sector.

The three most valuable **web pages** to respondents who accessed the website were the research page, events page, and resources page. The three most valuable aspects of the **broadcast** to respondents were the conferences, online publications, and event notifications. The **event** that was ranked very or extremely valuable by the most respondents was the Temporary Foreign Workers Symposium.

**Five potential research areas** emerged from the responses:  
Examining the workplace – communication and on-the-job training – and employees' perspectives;  
Issues pertaining to new Canadians entering the workforce, having their skills/training recognized and best human resource practices;  
Examining workplace and learning equity issues;  
Exploring the aging workforce and generational issues, particularly mentoring;  
Investigating the impact of the current economic situation on work and learning.  
Several other research suggestions not easily grouped into themes were: issues dealing with distance online learners, community organizations, and work-life balance.



## Events

### SEMINARS



March 24, 2010 seminar

The Network provides an educational and networking function through planned events such as seminars, symposia, workshops and conferences. In the past fiscal year (April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010), six seminars were hosted.

#### NEW - Blended Seminars

For the four seminars organized in 2010, Elluminate Live, a collaboration tool, using audio and a slide show with the capacity to text-in questions, was used to connect participants remotely and in real time to the presentation via their computers. While the presentation was delivered to a live audience, others could access the same presentation online.

One member responded to this availability by saying, "We are so excited that you now have this capacity for rural learners - we look forward to joining in on some of your forums" (email: Sent: Friday, January 22, 2010 3:11 PM). We look forward to an increase in the seminar attendance via Elluminate (webinar participants) as awareness of this option grows.

#### Seminar 1, April 9, 2009

##### **Alberta Initiatives to Support the Settlement and Integration of Newcomers**

**Presenter:** Margaret Overland, Director, Integration Programs, Immigration Policy and Programs, Alberta Employment and Immigration

**Description:** The presentation described the initiatives that the Government of Alberta currently has underway to support the settlement and integration of newcomers. Twenty-five participants attended.

### Seminar 2, October 21, 2009

***Through hard work and determination, anything's possible!  
Educational Pathways of Canadian Youth: Findings from the Youth in Transition Survey***

**Presenter:** Julie Hudson, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta

**Description:** This presentation presented findings about the mechanisms which limit or encourage educational mobility among at-risk youth through a quantitative study of data from Statistics Canada's Youth in Transition Survey (YITS). Four people were present.

### Seminar 3, January 27, 2010

***Teacher Workforce Planning in the Changing Economy***

**Presenter:** Randy Clarke, Director, Workforce Planning, Alberta Education

**Description:** With the changes to Alberta's economic climate, adjustments have been made to reflect the changing workforce landscape. Some updates on the work of the committee were presented and questions that beginning teachers may have with respect to future employment opportunities were discussed. Roughly twenty were in attendance; four online.

### Seminar 4, February 9, 2010

***Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA):  
Implications for Alberta Teacher Certification***

**Presenters:**

- Marc Prefontaine, Alberta Education, Teacher Development and Certification
- Mark Yurick, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development, Alberta Teachers' Association

**Description:** The Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) was signed by Alberta and British Columbia governments with full implementation by April 2009. Questions about the short- and long-term implications for Alberta's teacher development and certification were addressed. The speakers presented their ideas in relation to the agreement and provided the audience, which included pre-service teachers, with information about how it may shape Alberta teachers' labour mobility and future employment possibilities. Approximately forty people were in attendance; one online.

### Seminar 5, March 17, 2010

***The Changing Health Workforce***

**Presenter:** Linda Mattern, Executive Director, Workforce Policy and Planning, Alberta Health and Wellness

**Description:** This presentation addressed the strategies, approaches and challenges facing the health workforce, as well as the Government of Alberta's long term plan for ensuring that Alberta has the workforce it needs to deliver health services now and into the future. Eighteen were in attendance; one online.

### Seminar 6, March 24, 2010

***Dual Accreditation Pilot Project***

**Presenters:**

- Mike Dumanski, Alberta Education
- Pat Bidart, Olds College
- Lissa Steele, Chinook's Edge School Division, Director, Curriculum &

Instruction

- Barb Mulholland, Chinook's Edge School Division, Curriculum and Instruction Coordinator

**Description:** In 2009, Chinook's Edge School Division began to introduce dual accreditation programming, allowing high school students to earn credit toward both college and secondary school diploma/certificate requirements at the same time. By the end of the project in 2011 a model for dual accreditation will be developed based on learner pathways for Alberta high schools and post-secondary institutions. This model will include recommendations for funding, program structure and delivery, instructional models, infrastructure considerations, and governance. Approximately twenty people were present; one online.

### Seminar Feedback

**Email received after the January 27, 2010 Teacher Workforce Planning in the Changing Economy seminar.**

**Date:** January 28, 2010 3:33:00 PM MST (CA)

**Subject:** Following up on the WLN Seminar of January 27, 2010

*Hello Jorge and Alison,*

*Thank you for hosting the WLN Seminar yesterday afternoon.*

*It was good to hear a reasonable and coherent presentation.*

*I believe that Randy Clark did a fine job outlining the dynamics behind teacher demand in Alberta.*

*Keep up the good work organizing such learning sessions.*

*(The snacks are a fine touch.)*

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**Email received after the Changing Health Workforce, March 17, 2010 seminar**

**Sent: Thursday, March 18, 2010 11:36 AM**

*This was a great presentation. Lots of complex issues, which Linda presented clearly, but most of all I appreciated her directness, enthusiasm, and authenticity with which she engaged our questions. Really informative and enjoyable. I wish more policy conversations went like this!*

**Sent: March 18, 2010 10:09:16 AM MDT (CA)**

*Hello Alison,*

*Thank you for sponsoring the presentation yesterday on planning for Alberta's health workforce. I found it informative and worthwhile.*

*Ms. Mattern's presentation left the positive impression that the province still has planning capacity despite the ravages of the past.*

*Overall, her information offered a glimmer of hope and rationality for health care in Alberta. It is good to know as well that the capable Ms. Klassen is involved in the process.*

## Research

### Current Research Projects of Board Members Related to Work and Learning

#### WLN sponsored Research

##### 1. Temporary Foreign Workers Research Project

**Investigators:** Alison Taylor, Joan Schiebelbein, Jason Foster, Winston Gereluk, **Graduate students:** Terrie-Lynn Thompson, Elizabeth Vergis.



2010-11. Prairie Metropolis Centre. \$28,995.

- This research seeks to address the question: “How does the TFW program in Alberta work for two occupational groups in high demand—trades workers and nurses?” Related questions address issues around credential assessment, education and training, and opportunities for mobility and permanent residence

### Board Members' Research Projects relevant to work and learning

#### **2. Career and Technology Studies (CTS): Teacher recruitment, retention, education.**

**Bonnie Watt-Malcolm**, University of Alberta. Funded by Alberta Education, University of Alberta Faculty of Education Killam Research Fund and Roger S. Smith Undergraduate Student Award, and Alberta Teachers' Association AACES grant. 2009 to 2011

- The research project consists of three key areas of study. These are to: a) examine CTS teacher recruitment, retention and education practices, b) distinguish the needs of Alberta's CTS teachers (e.g., education, training and resources), and c) explore what it is that attracts individuals to the CTS teaching area (e.g., participants' ideas and experiences can inform recruitment, retention and education).

#### **3. Tracking High School Apprentices: Expectations, experiences, and outcomes**

**Alison Taylor**, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. Co-investigator: **Wolfgang Lehmann**, University of Western Ontario. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2008 – 2010. \$160,245.

- The purpose of this research is to provide a better understanding of the impact of participation in a high school apprenticeship on young people's subsequent education and employment decisions. Questions to guide the research are: 1) do youth apprenticeships create meaningful post-secondary alternatives that result in positive experiences and outcomes? 2) what are the organizational and institutional contexts that support or create barriers to positive transition experiences and outcomes for youth?

#### **4. Alberta's off-campus education programs**

**Bonnie Watt-Malcolm**, Secondary Education, University of Alberta, The Faculty of Education, SAS (Support for the Advancement of Scholarship) grant. 2008-2010.

- The purpose of this research is to investigate how Alberta's secondary schools currently coordinate work preparation programs and how they might improve the school to work transitions for non-college bound youth if non-traditional partners are invited to participate. It considers alternative ways to organize these programs.

#### **5. CAREERS Health internship evaluation**

**Co-investigators:** Laura Servage and Alison Taylor, University of Alberta, 2009-2010. \$7,000

- The purpose of this research was to evaluate a high school internship program designed to attract youth to health care occupations in four centres across Alberta. Our research questions were: 1) how does the

program work and how do different groups view its goals? 2) how do youth talk about the learning that occurred in this program and how did it impact their future education and career plans? 3) do different players have recommendations about how the program can be improved? To address these questions, 48 face-to-face or telephone interviews were conducted with students, workplace mentors, and K-12 educators.

#### **6. 2010 Diana International Conference on Women's Entrepreneurship.**

**Karen Hughes**, School of Business & Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta  
**Co-organizer.** August 3-4, 2010

- Building on recent calls for 'new directions' in the field of women's entrepreneurship research, the program will include papers that build creatively on key debates, puzzles, and questions in existing scholarship to generate a richer understanding in the domain of women's entrepreneurship research.

#### **7. Occupational Health and Safety Promotion and Education Campaigns in Alberta.**

**Co-investigators: Bob Barnetson and Jason Foster**, Athabasca University. 2010

- This research examines the approaches taken by the Alberta government in OH&S promotion campaigns designed to increase safety awareness. A particular focus is on the recent "Bloody Lucky" campaign aimed at young workers, which is analyzed for the messages it provides to young workers on the causes of workplace accidents and injury.

#### **8. Female Enterprise in Canada**

**Karen D. Hughes**, School of Business & Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2005 - 2009.

- Women's self-employment and small business ownership (SE/SBO) has increased dramatically in Canada and other countries in recent years, sparking a great deal of debate. What are the social, economic and personal consequences of this trend? Are women gaining economically, or are they simply moving into new forms of risky, precarious work in the 'new economy'? This research uses interview and survey research to address the following questions: How are women faring economically in SE/SBO? What factors underlie their success or failure? To what extent is SE/SBO being used by Canadian women to create workplaces more congruent with their desire for work-family balance, meaningful work, job and personal satisfaction.

#### **9. The Land of Milk and Honey? After the Live-In Caregiver Program**

Denise Spitzer, (Principal Investigator), University of Ottawa; **Co-Investigators: Karen D. Hughes**, U of A; Jacqueline Oxman-Martinez, Université de Montréal; Jill Hanley, McGill University; Sara Torres, University of Ottawa. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2005-2009.

- This research focuses on the long-term employment experiences of women who have participated in the Canadian Live-In Caregiver Program, migrating to Canada to work as nannies, elder- and child-care providers. Using interview, survey, and focus group approaches,

it examines the long-term outcomes for past participants of the LCP in terms of their employment, educational, familial, and health status. It also examines their satisfaction with their decision to participate in the LCP, and the impact of factors such as country of origin, professional and educational background, social support and geographical location on informants' experiences.

### **10. Examining Community-Based School Feeding and Nutrition Programs in Alberta**

**Jorge Sousa**, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. 2009.

- The purpose of this study is to explore two key facets of school feeding and nutrition programs. First, to understand the circumstances and impact of the food programs. Second, to explore the community-based partnership model to providing school feeding and nutrition programs. The goal of this project is to investigate the different facets (individual user impact, educational practices, community partnerships, and best practices for individual organizations) of school nutrition programs, with a focus on the partnership model used to deliver these programs. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether child nutrition and feeding programs are achieving the objective of ensuring students have access to nutritious food as a contributor to their learning and whether these programs are forging a stronger relationship between community-based agencies and local schools.

### **7. CED and Social Economy Policy Inventory in B.C. and Alberta (1)**

**Jorge Sousa**, Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta.

Social Economy Research Cluster (SERC) 2008-2009. \$12,000.

- The purpose of this study is to design a classification framework to guide the planning of the policy inventory and the analysis of the results. The intention is to use the framework to design the inventory of federal and provincial legislation, policies, programs and initiatives in B.C. and Alberta that are directly relevant to CED (Community Economic Development) and the social economy.

### **8. Alberta Health Research and Innovation Strategy**

**Mildred Klassen**, Manager, Health Research and Policy, Alberta Health and Wellness. 2010

- AHW and AAET are co-leading the development of a provincial health research and innovation strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a long-term, high level framework that will improve health outcomes for Albertans, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the health system and create economic benefits for the province. The strategy is expected to be developed by the summer of 2010.
- Advanced Education and Technology has realigned provincially funded research and innovation organizations into a cohesive system under the name "Alberta Innovates." Four new corporations will focus on areas where Alberta has a competitive advantage. (see [www.albertainnovates.ca](http://www.albertainnovates.ca) for more information)
  - Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions
  - Alberta Innovates - Bio Solutions
  - Alberta Innovates - Energy and Environment Solutions
  - Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures

## *In-kind Contributions*



We are beginning to track “in-kind” contributions for the WLN Board’s professional time spent on WLN related activities which include board tasks, research work and event organization. Recorded in-kind contributions indicate the Board members’ active role and significant contributions to the overall sustainability of the WLN. Estimations can be useful for future funding requests to indicate to funders the full value of the work of the network. Approximately **476 hours** were recorded for the board’s work with the WLN in 2009-10.

## *Infrastructure*

### *Infrastructure*



### *BOARD IN 2009-10*

The WLN Board met four times in 2009-10 to oversee WLN activities, provide suggestions and make decisions for WLN sponsored events: seminars, symposia and conferences.

#### **New Board director for 2009-10**

- Mandie Abrams, Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations

#### **Board member departures**

- Janice Bell, Volunteer Edmonton
- Winston Gereluk, Athabasca University

### *GRADUATE STUDENT INVOLVEMENT*

#### **Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs)**

An assigned GRA is an important component in the operation of a non-profit organization such as the WLN. As well, this is an excellent opportunity to give graduate students some experience by having them help the board with research projects, literature reviews; data collection, report writing, and implementing WLN hosted events.

This year, the WLN was applied for and was granted two GRAs by Educational Policy Studies for one term each (Terrie-Lynn Thompson and Elizabeth Vergis). GRAs assisted the WLN in carrying out their mandate as follows:

- Nickela Anderson, (Winter/Spring 2009), conducted a WLN membership interest survey. She designed a survey on Survey Monkey, collected and analyzed the data and reported the findings to the Board.
- Terrie-Lynn Thompson (Winter 2009) assisted with the application for a research project on Temporary Foreign Workers and began work on this project.
- Elizabeth Vergis (Winter 2010), assisted with coordinating the April 27, 2010 social economy symposium, worked on a literature review for the Temporary Foreign Worker project, and began the process of designing a new and updated WLN poster for the Research Day.

#### ***Nickela’s account on her experience:***

*“Through my employment with the Work & Learning Network, I was*

*able to expand on existing skills and develop new skills. In my role as conference coordinator for the network's 2008 conference I learned how to organize a successful conference. I expanded my organizational skills and grant writing skills, as well as had the importance of cooperative organization reinforced and importantly learned valuable skills in budget estimation and management. In my role as research assistant I was able to expand my survey skills by assisting in the design, implementation, and analysis of the WLN on-line members' survey. I have drawn on my WLN experiences in my subsequent employment with Legal Aid Alberta and the School to Work Transition project under Dr. Harvey Krahn."*

### **Graduate Student Representative on the Board**

The composition of the WLN Advisory Board, since its inception has included a graduate student representative from the Faculty of Education. Laura Servage filled that role in the past two years. She was active with the Fall 2008 Conference and regularly attends board meetings and seminars. Laura also worked with Dr. Alison Taylor on a project to evaluate a high school internship program designed to attract youth to health care occupations in four centres across Alberta.

### *Fundraising*



- In this term, the WLN received funding support from the Faculty of Education for the amount of slightly less than half the salary of the administrator which was roughly \$7000.
- Funding support for the BALTA conference in the *next fiscal year* was applied for in the winter 2010. This was part of a larger application to Alberta Employment and Immigration's Attraction and Retention Partnerships program; however the application was only partially funded for the April 27 symposium (\$3,280).
- The Department of Educational Policy Studies continues support with a GRA as well as in-kind donations of office staff, office space, office supplies and access to internet/printer.
- We continue to discuss possible fundraising strategies to cover the cost of our administrator, recognizing her crucial role in our operations.

### *Partnerships*

- Ursule Critoph, liaison with the Centre for the Study of Education and Work, Toronto.
- Prairie Metropolis Centre, partners for the TFW research project
- Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI) ([www.labourhistory.ca/](http://www.labourhistory.ca/)) through Joan Schiebelbein's connection.
- Alberta Employment and Immigration

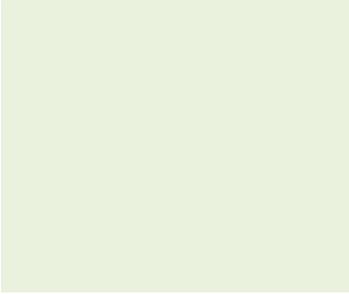
### *Plans for 2010/11*

We will apply for a START grant to help support the integration of technology in the activities of WLN.

Several sessions are also in the process of being organized for the fall 2010.

#### **Seminars**

- September: D. Chovanec, Associate Professor in Educational Policy Studies, "Determining the Needs, Gaps, Barriers and Best Practices for Developing Learning Opportunities for Low Income Adults in the City of Edmonton".
- October: Adolescent Workers in Alberta (B. Barnetson and J. Foster)

- 
- November: Options for Older Workers and The Economy (Kurt Schreiner);  
Changes in post-secondary education. What policies are guiding these developments? (D. Wood)

**Symposium**

- October: Temporary Foreign Workers symposium with presenters from Alberta and Manitoba to speak about health care workers.