



*The Work and Learning Network
for Research and Policy*

**ANNUAL REPORT
2005**

The Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

INTRODUCTION.....	2
WEBSITE.....	2
SEMINAR SERIES.....	3
CONFERENCE.....	4
RESEARCH:.....	4
INFRASTRUCTURE.....	7
PARTNERSHIPS.....	7

INTRODUCTION

The *Work and Learning Network for Research and Policy*, from January to December 2005, in its third full year of operation, engaged in a full slate of activities which were designed to support the three main areas of focus defining the Network:

1. Identify, support and disseminate findings of research projects of various issues integrating work and learning.
2. Give visible presence to research integrating work and learning issues within the University of Alberta and among collaborating individuals, organizations and institutions.
3. Encourage collaboration and partnerships among researchers, practitioners and policy workers engaged in work and learning issues.

WEBSITE

Launched in 2003, the Work and Learning Network website (www.wln.ualberta.ca) continued in 2005 to undergo changes in the design and function of the site, an initiative led by Val Mayes. In the fall of 2005 Clayton Kropp developed and created a new design theme and logo for the Work and Learning Network.

The site includes:

- Information about the Work and Learning Network – mandate, activities, Board members.
- Upcoming events and archives of seminars and conferences.
- A resource center (abstracts and full text versions of relevant papers, links to other resources).
- A members list which includes their practice and research interests.

SEMINAR SERIES

This was an active year for the WLN seminar series. The following six seminars were offered:

April 1, 2005: The Take – a film viewing and discussion

The film depicts the 2001 workers' uprising in Argentina that triggered a national resistance. Discussion after the film was led by labour studies professors and activists, **Winston Gereluk and Bruce Spencer**.

April 26, 2005: Essential Skills and Workforce Development

Facilitator: David Thornton, Workplace Skills Innovation Director, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. He spoke about the Essential Skills Research Project (ESRP), which has identified nine Essential Skills as common to all Canadian occupational groups and he gave an overview of the Essential Skills Initiative from a policy context, rationale (e.g. why these skills and not others), philosophy, and discussion of how decisions were made.

May 20, 2005: English in the Workplace

A Reader's Theatre presentation "Learning on the Line" based on a study of immigrant women's learning in a garment factory from the 1940's until its shutdown in 2004 (**Tara Fenwick, Ev Hamdon, Joan Schiebelbein, Judy Sillito, Xiu Fung**). The seminar also featured **Dr. Virginia Sauvé**, a leading teacher of English in the workplace, and writer on issues of workplace adult basic education. She is author of *Voices and Visions: an Introduction to Teaching Adult ESL*. For many years she initiated and led the English-learning program for garment workers at the historic Edmonton GWG – Levi's plant.

October 4, 2005: Work and Learning Issues in the Non-Profit Sector - "It's not about the money!"

Facilitators: Val Mayes (Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations) and **Wendy MacDonald** (Grant MacEwan College - Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit sector program)

Supporting Documents:

- Transforming the Voluntary Sector Through Leading and Learning (www.wln.ualberta.ca/seminar_resources/mayes_macdonald/transform_voluntary_sec.pdf)
- Strengthening the Capacity of Executive Directors: Highlights (www.wln.ualberta.ca/seminar_resources/mayes_macdonald/strengthening_ex_dirs.pdf)
- First Steps Toward a Skills Strategy for the Voluntary/Non-Profit Sector
- (www.wln.ualberta.ca/seminar_resources/mayes_macdonald/skills_strat_non-profit.pdf)

October 25, 2005: High School Apprenticeship Promoting Successful Transitions

- Panel Presentation with **Jason Gladue** (CAREERS the Next Generation), **Everitt Martin** (RAP apprentice), **Anne Taylor** (RAP high school coordinator), **Gary Fulmore** (EPCOR), **Len Bryden** (Carpenters' Union), **Murray Scharfenberg** (Youth Apprenticeship Project)

December 2, 2005: Film Presentation - Slavery: A Global Investigation

Facilitator: Lynette Shultz. A film about the continuing practices of slavery and forced labour in India, Ivory Coast, the United States, and Great Britain

CONFERENCE

June 21, 2005: WLN Conference: Precarious Work and Lifelong Learning

Papers and panels explored issues of work and learning in precarious employment (temporary, self-employed and part-time) and looked at how we can meet the challenges of work related learning for growing numbers of at-risk workers. Three sessions were web cast live from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE).

They were:

- A keynote address by Leah Vosko, Canada Research Chair in Feminist Political Economy at York University and
- Two panel presentations on lifelong learning.

The conference ended with the performance of “Working the Line, People in My Heart”, a Reader’s Theatre performance about workers in Edmonton’s garment industry, and songs by Notre Dames de Bananes, Edmonton’s labour choir.

RESEARCH:

Research projects initiated in the previous two years were continued or concluded in 2005.

1. Inclusion and Participation of Persons with Disabilities through Workplace Learning Communities

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2005-2007.

Janice Wallace, Tara Fenwick, Dick Sobsey, Katy Campbell

Objectives are to develop new research questions towards collaborative action research to help transform current thinking around employability and training of persons with disabilities. The focus is building inclusive learning communities in the workplace. Four community agencies serving persons with disabilities are participating in the project.

2. Developing Essential Skills: Changing Contexts and Perspectives: A Workshop on Essential Skills Research

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2004-2005.

Tara Fenwick, Katy Campbell, Shibao Guo plus partner-collaborators (University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan)

The purpose of this workshop is to enhance the quantity and quality of policy-relevant research in essential skills by bringing together researchers and key stakeholders from across Canada for discussion, information sharing and network building. *WLN* hosted this event in April 2005.

Participants included representatives from seven SSHRC- funded research projects from across the country, as well as community groups, government representatives and students.

Outcomes to date:

- Three-day Workshop Symposium, attended by all grantholders across Canada (45 participants) held April 25-27, 2005
<http://www.wln.ualberta.ca/nineessentialskills/PDF%20and%20WORD%20files/Schedule-REVISED%20Wkshop%20V2.pdf>

3. Learning Social Responsibility in Micro-Enterprise: A Collaborative Exploration of Expansive Learning in Practice-Based Networks

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2004-2007.

Tara Fenwick, Lynette Shultz, Sarah Pocklington (U of A), **Beth Lange** (Concordia University-College), **Lee-Anne Ragan** (Community Works, Vancouver). Research is in progress.

This study uses a collaborative action research approach to study corporate social responsibility practices that develop among small business owners. One group has been meeting in Vancouver since November 2004. Another group is about to start in Edmonton. The project purposes are: (1) to create a network of self-employed people to develop and experiment with practices of corporate social responsibility tailored to micro-enterprise; (2) to identify effects (economic, personal, social and ecological) of CSR practices in micro-enterprise; and (3) to examine the learning processes by which self-employed Canadians develop and implement practices of CSR.

Outcomes to date:

- Presentation to the Academy of Human Resource Development, February 2005
- Presentation and paper to the Adult Education Research Conference, June 2005

4. Negotiating Transitions: Immigrant Women's Work and Learning in the Garment Industry

Humanities, Social Sciences, and Fine Arts Research Grants, 2004-2005.

Tara Fenwick, Joan Schiebelbein, along with partners Ground Zero Productions, Alberta Labour History Institute, Edmonton: A City Called Home, Catherine Cole Associates Research has been completed.

Through interviews with over 35 women working in the Edmonton garment plant, this research explored their learning processes in various work-based transitions which they have experienced, in identity, knowledge, sense of place and sense of vocation. The project is part of a large multi-partner network exploring the labour history of this plant.

Outcomes to date:

- Two large displays. One was shown at May Week 2005, at The Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Ontario May 29-31, 2005, and at venues in Edmonton throughout the summer-fall 2005. The other was displayed at May Week 2004 and at Research Day, Department of Educational Policy Studies, April 2005.
- One play with multi-media which included historic pictures, factory sounds, and a folksong commissioned from Maria Dunne was presented to Congress in Ontario, May 2005.
- A performance - Reader's Theatre presentation "Learning on the Line" based on this study for a WLN seminar, May 20, 2005.
- One paper (Tara Fenwick and Joan Schiebelbein) was published in the Proceedings of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, 2005.
<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/cnf2005/2005onlineProceedings/CAS2005Pro-Fenwick.pdf>
- One visual museum of historic GWG artifacts (in negotiation, seeking other sources of funding)

5. Knowledge Networks of Portfolio Workers

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: Strategic Initiatives. 2002-2005.

Tara Fenwick with Jean Walrond Patterson, Lee Ellis (U of A), Kiran Mirchandani with Michelle Fortin (OISE/University of Toronto). Research is complete. See write up at <http://www.ualberta.ca/~tfenwick/knpw/overview.htm>

This study interviewed 42 self-employed people in BC, Alberta and Ontario to understand their development and use of knowledge networks, and the relation of these networks to workers' overall business development and conditions of work. The nature of these networks was further explored through online group dialogues. Issues of race and gender were examined in particular.

Outcomes to date:

- Three articles published in: Studies in Continuing Education, Adult Education Quarterly, Journal of Education and Work.
- Website posting research methods, results and publications:
<http://www.ualberta.ca/~tfenwick/knpw/knpw.htm>
- Two more articles submitted: Mind, Activity and Culture; Career Development International

6. "School-Work Youth Transition" sub-grant of "The Changing Nature of Work and Lifelong Learning in the New Economy: National and Case Study Perspectives"

Sciences and Humanities Research Council. 2003-2007.

Alison Taylor, Project Leader for “School-Work Youth Transition”. - SSHRC Initiative on the New Economy, Collaborative Research. Principal Investigator: David W. Livingstone.

Details at: <http://www.wallnetwork.ca/research/taylor5pager.pdf>

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Advisory Board Terms of Reference was developed in 2005 and included: purpose and operational process, appointment system, quorum requirements, meeting requisites and specification of the Advisory Board composition.

The Advisory Board consisted of 10 members in 2005.

The *WLN* Board met three times in 2005 to oversee *WLN* activities, provide advice and approve major expenditures and decisions. The Director was empowered to make everyday operational decisions without consulting the Board. Additional work was conducted in sub-committees as required.

Tara Fenwick, director of *WLN*, was on sabbatical leave from July 2005 until July 2006. During her absence Alison Taylor became director and she and Janice Wallace alternated chairing the Board meetings.

During 2005, the paid administrative officer changed three times. Judy Sillito held the position from January 1 to June 30, 2005; Brett Bergie, in September and October; and Sherry Seymour was the administrator through to the end of the 2005 until Feb 28, 2006.

PARTNERSHIPS

WLN continued its relationships which were initiated in 2004 with the following organizations to implement two conferences in 2005.

- A. Partnership with Center for Studies in Education and Work (CSEW) at OISE/University of Toronto to jointly deliver a conference, *The Future of Lifelong Learning in Work*, in June of 2005.
- B. Partnership with University of Regina (Marion Jones, John Graham) and University of Saskatchewan (Adrian Blunt, Carol Henry) to plan and host the Essential Skills Research Workshop Symposium at the University of Alberta in April 2005.