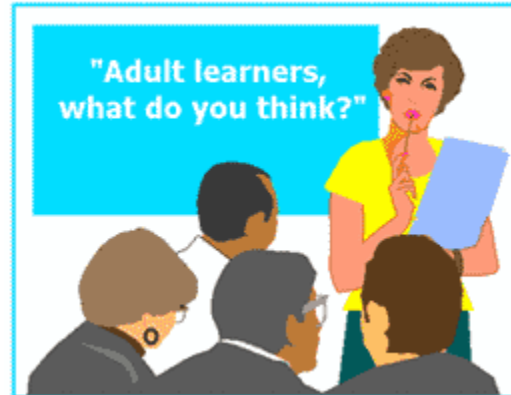




What learners had to say to the government!

Hello Learners!

Our thanks to the many learners who took the time to answer our survey. We have received over 150 responses in 2001-2002. We at MCL are grateful for the thoughtful and honest answers you gave.



As well, we appreciate the work of the tutors and teachers who helped some of you get your thoughts down on paper.

Most important are the quotes that add reality to every question.

The report was very well received at the government's Roundtable meeting where it was presented by MCL's Executive Director, Wendy DesBrisay. In April, 2003, this report accompanied a MCL submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

These are the voices of your fellow learners so we encourage you to read the report in your classroom or with your tutor.

Here is a summary of the report: **Adult learners, what do you think?**

Learner Survey Results

Over 100 learners from 10 regions of Canada responded to our questions. We hope that what they say can help the federal government design an effective learning agenda.

1. Why did you return to school / training?

Although 15% of the learners who answered just wanted to focus on basic reading and writing. The other 85% gave different answers: 33% said they wanted an education (high school diploma) and a career, 25% wanted to improve their literacy for family and personal reasons, 18% wanted to get a better job and 16% wanted a higher education for a better choice of job and more secure future. 8% of the learners were in programs to learn English.

2. Has anything made it hard for you to go to school or stay in school?

Most learners mention problems with money that made it hard for them to start school or stay in school. Many have to take on jobs while going to school to pay for school costs: childcare, transportation, supplies and so on. Others talked about family responsibilities such as children's health / child care costs affecting their attendance (especially for women). Other problems learners listed were with transportation, the location of the program and waiting lists to get in. Often learners said their own health, the stress of their lives and negative learning experiences in the past has made it harder for them to succeed.

3. What has helped you to go to school?

Most learners recognized their family and friends as the support system they need to succeed in school. Next they acknowledge the work of patient and committed tutors and teachers, who are sensitive to the real learning needs of adults. Successful literacy programs were most often described as safe places that treated the learner as a unique person and respected both their learning style and learning speed. Most felt they learned most in small groups with some one to one tutoring. As well, many listed fellow students as supporters. Learners who had financial support for their studies said this was the main reason they could attend school.

4. How has your life changed since you have been going to school?

We wanted to find out what changes the learners noticed in themselves since going to school. Although they mention improved reading and writing levels or computer and other skills; many of the changes cannot be measured by tests. Learners described their increased self-esteem, confidence, hope and the ability to speak out for themselves. They often talked of gains in independence and the desire to help others.

5. What are your future literacy and life goals?

The answers that learners gave to this question about their future goals were as varied and unique as the learners themselves. Many beginning learners recognize a long road ahead and want to take things step by step. Other learners have dreams of their life's work, as professionals, life-long learners, role models for their family and working for others.

6. What would you say are the most important points to include in a national plan for adult literacy?

Learners made the following suggestions for a national learning plan. Although some of these points may not be under federal jurisdiction, they do reflect the challenges that must be taken into consideration in a comprehensive national plan.

Learners called for:

- ✓ **funding for new and existing literacy programs**
 - ✓ **voluntary attendance in programs, and allowing learners to attend for a variety of learning goals (i.e., not just employment goals)**
 - ✓ **access to literacy programs for all in need of literacy training**
 - ✓ **supports while attending school: books/supplies, childcare, living allowances and transportation**
 - ✓ **talking with learners and including them in decision-making on issues affecting their learning**
 - ✓ **learners valued and respected for the life experience and skills they already have**
 - ✓ **recognize that literacy is a right of all Canadians (should be written into the Charter of Rights)**
 - ✓ **encourage effective literacy programs and well-trained teachers**
 - ✓ **promote learning and literacy as a value to society**
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