



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“IMPROVING TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT FOR ADULT FOUNDATION SKILL LEARNERS”

13 - 15 FEBRUARY 2008

OECD HEADQUARTERS, NEW CONFERENCE CENTRE, PARIS
19, Rue de Franqueville, 75016, Paris

CONFERENCE AGENDA

*The overall aim of the conference is to extend and deepen international understanding of strategies to improve teaching, learning and assessment for adult foundation skill learners. This conference will launch a new report on adult foundation skill learners, entitled **Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills**. This study brings a much-needed focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within adult foundation skill programmes.*

Specifically the Conference will:

- *Examine and share the main findings of the “What Works” study on teaching, learning and assessment in adult foundation skill programmes.*
- *Extend the focus to practices and experiences in OECD countries as a whole.*
- *Bring together policymakers and officials, researchers, and programme leaders and practitioners in order to consider the potential for implementing effective practices and how this might be achieved.*
- *Set the agenda for further policy debate and programme improvement in the youth and adult language, literacy and numeracy sectors.*
- *Set priorities for further research and development in this area.*





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DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2008

14:00 - 14:45 Conference Opens: Welcome and Introductions by the OECD Secretariat

- *The priorities for education in the OECD and in CERI*
- *The CERI study on Teaching, Learning and Assessment for Adults: Improving Foundation Skills*
- *Conference aims and arrangements*

14:45 - 16:00 Setting the Context: Challenges and Opportunities for Adult Foundation Skill Learning

Secretariat presentations of international evidence on adult skill levels, the challenge of low foundation skills, and the social and economic benefits of lifelong learning.

- *What do international surveys reveal about skill levels in populations, and challenges for individuals and communities?*
- *What are the wider social and economic benefits of lifelong learning?*
- *What are the implications for the adult foundation skill sector?*
- *Plenary discussion*

16:00 - 16:30 Coffee/Tea Break





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16:30 - 18:00 Country Strategies

A plenary discussion on policy strategies for improving the quality of provision in adult foundation skill programmes.

- *What have been the primary policy strategies to improve the quality of provision in adult foundation skill programmes?*
- *What theories of change are embedded in these strategies? In regard to changing practice? In regard to improving learner progression and outcomes?*
- *What role for programme evaluation and learner assessment?*

18:00 Cocktail Reception



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DAY 2: THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2008

09:00 -10:15 **OECD Presentation: Improving Teaching and Assessment for Adult Foundation Skill Learners**

Introduction of the OECD synthesis report findings on high-quality teaching, learning and assessment processes for adults with foundation skill needs, and the role of policy in improving the quality of provision.

- *Secretariat presentation*
- *Questions and discussion*

10:15 - 10:45 *Coffee/ Tea Break*

10:45 - 12:30 **Workshop Sessions 1: Changing Practice**

Practitioners and programme leaders from the initiatives featured in the OECD study share their experiences on the process of change, and in implementing and adapting initiatives. Open workshop discussions.

Questions include:

- *Motivations for introducing the initiatives?*
- *Does the OECD 5-step model of teaching, learning and assessment processes reflect the experiences of the individual initiatives featured?*
- *Strategies for adapting models to local contexts and individual learner needs?*
- *Successes and failures in the implementation process?*

12:30 - 14:00 *Lunch Break*



14:00 - 15:30 *Poster Session: Tools and Guidelines to Support Teaching, Learning and Assessment*

Participants will gather for a brief plenary briefing regarding the aims and organisation of the poster sessions. Practitioners and programme leaders from the initiatives featured in the OECD study will discuss and demonstrate different tools and guidelines developed to support assessment and teaching practices. The poster sessions will conclude with a 15 minute plenary discussion of the different approaches and materials.

15:30 - 16:00 *Coffee/Tea Break*

16:00 -18:00 *Panel and Plenary Discussion: Reflections on Research and Practice*

Authors of the international reviews of literature developed for the OECD report will be invited to discuss the theoretical foundations shaping adult foundation skill learning, and evidence on the impact of different approaches.

- *Insights from the workshops on putting research into practice, and vice versa*
- *Key findings from international reviews of literature*
- *Building the knowledge base and improving policy and practice*
- *Plenary discussion*

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DAY 3: FRIDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2008

09:00 - 09:45 OECD Presentation: Improving Policy, Practice and Research – A Framework for Debate

Introduction of the OECD study conclusions and their relevance to different country contexts. Participants are invited to critique and/or amplify the conclusions, and to raise questions for further discussion within the workshops.

- *Secretariat presentation*
- *Questions and discussion*

09:45 - 11:15 Workshop Sessions 2: Carrying Forward the Policy Debate

Participants break into working groups to discuss the OECD study conclusions, challenges for policy, practice and research.

- *Promoting authentic learning: setting out broad principles for provision and supporting them in practice (OECD Policy Conclusions 1 and 3)*
 - What kind of policy leadership is needed to promote productive debate and changes in the culture of teaching, learning and assessment?
 - Formative assessment is an important approach for promoting learning. It also demands high-level instructional skills. Is this a feasible approach in most systems?
- *Balancing learner-centred approaches with demands for programme accountability (OECD Policy Conclusions 4 and 5)*
 - To whom and for what should programmes be held accountable?
 - Given how little is known about adult learner progression, how can systems set appropriate benchmarks for learner achievement?



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- *Strengthening the resource base (human and financial) (OECD Policy Conclusions 2 and 6)*
 - How to convince policy-makers (public and private) to dedicate the needed funding?
 - Might current resources be used more effectively?
 - What can be done to further professionalise the instructional workforce, given current resource levels? What are the priorities?

11:15 – 11:45 *Coffee Break*

11:45 – 13:00 **Plenary Discussion: Carrying Forward the Policy Debate – Conclusions**

Participants will come together for a discussion of the key challenges and priorities for improving provision and outcomes in adult foundation skill sector, and ideas on how to move the agenda for adult foundation skill learning forward in countries.

