

Exploring PIAAC Data: Enriching research, supporting practice

JUNE 25-27, 2014 • MONTREAL, CANADA

This event is the third in a series of bilingual institutes to explore the meaning and uses of international adult literacy and skills surveys, from IALS to PIAAC. In June 2014, we turn our attention to broadening and defining a research agenda using data from PIAAC and related surveys. We want to create space for more dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and providers that allows researchers to draw questions from experience in the field, practitioners to translate research findings into meaningful interventions, and both to inform more responsive policy. We will engage researchers from Canada and abroad, in fields that have not previously used skills surveys to inform their studies. We are honoured to have the collaboration of four international research centres, from the US, UK, NZ, and Australia for this event.

Following the results from PIAAC in October 2013, results were released from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA tests the ability of 15-year olds in almost 70 countries “to apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas and to analyze, reason and communicate effectively as they examine, interpret and solve problems”. It focuses on reading, mathematics (numeracy) and science, and is intended to help evaluate school systems.

Until now, agencies and researchers have not generally made connections between PISA and PIAAC. However, the OECD’s October 8 PIAAC report explicitly suggested that the results of the two surveys should be examined together as they link to a broader skill strategy.

If we envisage a future when lifelong learning is an accepted model, then schools will lay foundations for the continuous learning that will define our lives.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), an Institute partner, will hold a national conference in May 2014 on “what the evidence from international assessments tell us about improving work and life skills”. We will integrate some of their presentations and papers into the Summer Institute as we continue to build and increase international exchange on questions related to adult literacy, learning and assessment.

The Institute program will be developed over the coming months, but we have selected some questions and themes from the past two Institutes and from suggestions by our partners.

Tentative questions and themes

“Evidence from PISA and PIAAC: Making connections for life-long learning”

“Interpreting data from international population surveys appropriately”

“Aging and Skills Loss: What does it mean? Is it inevitable?”

“Youth and skills: What skills are measured in school? What skills transfer to work?”

“Skills and gender: Can evidence from large-scale skills surveys help explain the position of women?”

“Technology and Learning: PS-TRE in specific population groups and age groups”

“International assessments and aboriginal populations”

“International assessments and immigrants”

“Are we inadvertently applying profiles from population samples to individuals?”

Who will be there?

We had a large number of Canadian provincial and territorial government representatives at the Fall Institute, and expect to increase the participation from policy people. The involvement of major research centres will bring many academic researchers to the table; we are inviting participants from universities and research consortia, including the writing teams for the PIAAC theme reports in 2014-2015. We have the continuing engagement of Canadian providers and practitioners and hope through the international partners to see people who work on the ground in other countries.

We have confirmed participation from **Tom Schuller** (UK), **Art Graesser** (US) and **William Thorn** (OECD).

Acclaimed for his thinking and writing on adult and lifelong learning, social capital and democracy, **Tom Schuller** will share his perspective on how evidence from assessments such as PIAAC and PISA may fit with, differ from, or distort evidence from other sources. He will also draw on his most recent work, *The Paula Principle: how and why women work below their level of competence*.

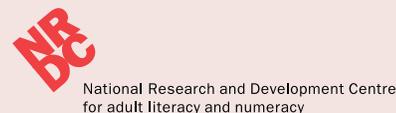
Art Graesser, Professor, Department of Psychology and the Institute for Intelligent Systems at the University of Memphis and Honorary Research Fellow at Oxford, has research interests that include question asking and answering, tutoring, text comprehension, reading, education, memory, artificial intelligence, and human-computer interaction. He has helped design, develop, and test software in learning, language, and discourse technologies such as AutoTutor. Art is a member of the PIAAC expert group on PS-TRE as well as the expert group of PISA 2012 in Problem Solving and chair of the expert group of PISA 2015 in Collaborative Problem Solving. He is a co-Principal Investigator at the Center for the Study of Adult Literacy (CSAL-US). He will discuss the evidence from large-scale surveys and his diverse research projects, highlighting those that are focused on developing and improving instruction.

William Thorn, a Senior Analyst in the Education Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development at OECD since 2007, manages their Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). William previously held senior positions in the Departments of Education and Employment in the Australian federal public service. He has managed units responsible for research into education and the labour market, programme evaluation, statistical collections and analysis, tertiary education funding policy and the Commonwealth government’s role in the testing and monitoring of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy in Australian schools.

Literacy for the 21st century: A guiding definition

Literacy involves a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development. The need and demand for these abilities vary in different societies. In a technological society, the concept is expanding to include the media and electronic text in addition to alphabets and numbers. Individuals must be given life-long learning opportunities to move along a continuum that includes reading, writing, and the critical understanding and decision-making abilities they need in their communities.

Source: *The Centre for Literacy*



A UNIQUE FORMAT

The Institute offers a unique opportunity to share and create knowledge in a collaborative environment with a limited number of participants. We create the program around the experience and expertise of those who register. If you register before February 28, you may ask to be a presenter. Participants stay together for the full two and half days.

If you simply prefer to listen, we still invite you to identify relevant topics or themes from your own experience to be woven into our discussions. Time is allotted each day to talk, reflect and debate with colleagues. You will leave with a deeper understanding of the ways that PIAAC data can be used in international contexts, across languages and cultures, to inform new research questions and to contribute to improved adult learning interventions. You will learn about current and proposed research from Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, England, and other countries. You will also connect to new resources, people, practices, and ideas about how PIAAC can be relevant in your own milieu.

You can share information and post displays on free tables, and use breakfast, lunch, breaks, and discussion segments to network.

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
June 25, 26: 7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
June 27: 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Daily schedule will be finalized two weeks before the Institute.

FEE

Includes materials, continental breakfasts, lunches and refreshments

Early-bird registration

Until May 1, 2014\$645
After May 1, 2014.....\$695

All amounts must be paid in Canadian dollars (CDN).

REFUND POLICY

Until June 10 we will issue a refund, minus a 15% administrative fee. After June 10, a 50% refund will be issued only with valid documentation, e.g. medical certificate.

REGISTRATION

Online registration is available from our website:
<http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca>

ACCOMMODATIONS

A block of rooms has been reserved at Ruby Foo's Hotel within easy access of the Gelber Conference Centre where the Institute will take place and close to restaurants, shopping and attractions. The hotel is offering a special rate of \$135/single or double occupancy. They will hold the rooms until May 25, 2014. After that, reservations will be based on availability.

For reservations, contact the hotel directly:

Ruby Foo's Hotel
7655 Decarie Boulevard
Montreal, Quebec H4P 2H2
Tel.: 1.514.731.7701 or
1.800.361.5419
Fax: 1.514.731.7158

Ask for The Centre for Literacy Summer Institute 2014



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PARTICIPATING EXPERTS

Tom Schuller, Director of Longview, UK, and author of *Learning Through Life: Inquiry into the Future of Lifelong Learning* (with David Watson, NIACE 2009) – confirmed

Art Graesser, Professor, Department of Psychology and the Institute for Intelligent Systems, University of Memphis – confirmed

William Thorn, Senior Analyst, Education Directorate, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – confirmed

The Centre for Literacy is a national centre of expertise that supports best practices and informed policy development in literacy and essential skills, by creating bridges between research, policy and practice. The Centre regularly organizes acclaimed learning events that bring together program providers, policy-makers and researchers to explore and debate important issues on literacy and skills. Its bilingual 2013 Summer and Fall Institutes on PIAAC have contributed to the international discussion on interpretation of the results.
www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca

Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine (CDÉACF)

The Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine collects, disseminates and makes knowledge and know-how in French accessible to all involved in education, from adult literacy and training to the advancement of women's issues, in Québec and in all francophone communities across Canada.

www.cdeacf.ca

Le Réseau pour le développement de l'alphabétisme et des compétences (RESDAC)

works with its members and partners to develop strategies to improve the Literacy and Essential Skills of French speaking adults in Canada. RESDAC activities are based on a shared vision of lifelong learning as an essential instrument that enables all Francophones to be fully engaged in the civic, economic, social and cultural activities of their community.

www.resdac.net

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is an independent educational institution known for its high quality, evidence-based research, services and materials to support educational policymaking, assessment and improvements in professional practice. ACER's mission is to create and promote research-based knowledge, products and services to improve learning across the lifespan. For over 80 years, ACER has served the education community, with a current staff of over 300 in Australia and internationally.
www.acer.edu.au/vawe

Education (Grant R305C120001). It is committed to understanding the reading-related characteristics critical to helping adult learners who read between the 3rd and 8th grade levels reach their reading goals and to developing face-to-face and web-based instructional approaches that are tailored to their needs and interests.

www.csal.gsu.edu

The National Centre of Literacy and Numeracy for Adults is a New Zealand specialist centre of expertise in literacy and numeracy education for adults and youth. The Centre undertakes research-informed professional development, research and critical engagement with policy and practice at a national and international level.
www.literacyandnumeracyforadults.com

The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) is England's national independent centre for research and development in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL. It was initially established in 2002 by the UK government as part of its Skills for Life strategy to improve the literacy, numeracy and language skills of adults in England. NRDC benefits from dynamic partnerships with a wide range of professional organizations, research centres and national agencies. Widely recognized for its expertise within England, the centre also has an international reputation and works across the UK and worldwide.
www.nrdc.org.uk

The Center for the Study of Adult Literacy (CSAL) is a five-year federally funded national research center through the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of