

Issue No. 43, May 20, 2014

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CAPITOL HILL BRIEFING ON ADULT EDUCATION

A CAAL panel of top professionals presented adult education research findings from PIAAC and other sources to about 50 Senate and House legislative aides and other invited guests on Thursday, May 15th. CAAL planned the nonpartisan event in cooperation with Senator Jack Reed's Senior Policy Advisor, Moira Lenehan. The broad goal was to help build understanding of and a higher profile for Adult Education in Congress. The presentations provided sobering evidence of the urgent need to expand services and investments in Adult Education.

Adults' Learning Strategies, Uses, and Literacy Proficiencies (M. Cecil Smith, Thomas Smith, Amy Rose, and Jovita Ross-Gordon from West Virginia, Northern Illinois, and Texas State Universities).

Gender and Numerical Skill Use: Cross-National Revelations from PIAAC (Danielle Lindermann, Rutgers University).

Revisiting the effects of skills on inequality: within- and cross-country comparisons using PIAAC (Anita Alves Pena, Colorado State University).

A Comparative Study of Immigrant and Native Employees in the United States and Canada (William Smith & Frank Fernandez, Penn State University)

Cognitive and non-cognitive factors that affect how people seek health information (Iris Feinberg and Daphne Greenberg, Georgia State University)

Literacy, numeracy, ICT skills, post-initial education, and health status (Shannon Monnat, Esther Prins, Carol Clymer, Blaire Toso, Penn State University)

An Analysis of Adult Education and Training of Older Age Adults (Phyllis Cummins and Ryan Walker, Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University)

For more abstracts and other information, go to www.piaacgateway.com.



NEWS IN BRIEF

▶ Last week, the **Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education** (OCTAE) of the U.S. Department of Education sponsored its 2014 National Meeting for Adult Education State Directors in Washington. The day's various sessions dealt mostly with the Department's plans to transform its adult learning work as a result of the PIAAC data. The overall framework was ***Making Skills Everyone's Business--A Call to Transform Adult Learning in the U.S.*** Among the themes discussed were expanding opportunity, healthcare workforce needs, incumbent workers, the role of libraries, achieving equity and access through collaboration, reforms in the NRS, and possibilities for collaborating with developmental education. In August, OCTAE will release a detailed report on its specific plans and strategies. A 6-page [interim brief from Skylab Learning](#) outlines the main program elements and strategies.

▶ [The OCTAE Blog](#) is an informative, interactive resource with interesting and timely information about webinars, activities, and current developments. Blog postings are written by Office officials and staffers.



Out of Inventory: Skills Shortage Threatens Growth for U.S. Manufacturing is a new study from Accenture and the Manufacturing Institute of the National Association of Manufacturers. Based on a survey of more than 300 company executives, the report calls on U.S. manufacturers to take the lead in upgrading the basic educational and job skills of their current and potential workers. In phase 2 of the study, the initial survey findings were explored with a subset of companies, economists, and industry specialists. A major finding is that U.S. manufacturers may be losing up to 11 percent annually of their earnings as a result of the skills gap. Get [more information and a copy of the 16-page publication](#) from the NAM website.



In ***Engaging the Patient***, a current discussion series on the health literacy listserv of the [Institute for Healthcare Advancement](#), Jessie Gruman, President and Founder of the [Center for Advancing Health](#), wrote about the "potholes" that older patients experience in accessing and using healthcare services. She describes the growing phenomenon of the lack of "online functionality and content organization that works best for older people." Her specific concern is that Web designers and app developers are lagging in implementing professional guidelines that have been given regarding choices in color, contrast, fonts, language use, and organization. She asserts that "this pothole stands to grow" in size because of the low basic skills of so many older adults, those most likely to need healthcare, and because recent research shows that the "digital divide" is largest among older people, about half of whom are not internet users.



College for America, a unit of Southern New Hampshire University, was founded by Julian L. Alssid, head of the predecessor Workforce Strategy Center. The College is dedicated to more than just offering associate degrees; it has a major labor market research program to explore and advance workforce strategies that make sure its programs and degrees are meeting employers needs. It also aims to help guide others in pursuit of this goal. It's website offers an array of [archived publications](#) that will interest adult education and workforce skills planners everywhere. Publications are currently available through the end of 2013. A report on its *2014 Workforce Strategies Survey* of 400 senior business leaders will be listed at the site soon.

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