

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 28 people representing 18 agencies joined Calgary Learns staff at our annual community consultation. The goals of the day were to share information about some of the upcoming changes in our funding, get input about some current practices in measurement/tracking and learn from the incredible expertise in the room.

### Changes to Calgary Learns Funding

Starting in July 2015, Calgary Learns will have new provincial guidelines for the Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) funding that we grant to programs in Calgary. The ultimate outcomes of the provincial Community Adult Learning Program are:

- ▶ Adult learners are proficient in foundational skills
- ▶ Adult learners participate in further learning opportunities
- ▶ Adult learners navigate the learning system
- ▶ Adult learners benefit from learning opportunities within their communities

In the Calgary community our funded programs have been true to these outcomes and the overall mandate of CALP funding for years. Therefore, the shifts resulting from these provincial changes will be minimized. Highlighted below are some of the upcoming changes that will be reflected in our new application and funding agreements.

### Funding Categories

Our four funding categories will be changed to two: Literacy and Foundational Learning and Community Capacity Building. Calgary Learns must give priority to programs in Literacy and Foundational Learning. Programs in this category are **intentionally designed with learning objectives to enhance foundational level skills**.

#### Current Categories

- ▶ Basic Literacy
- ▶ English Language Learning
- ▶ Employability Enhancement
- ▶ Community Issues

#### Categories Moving Forward

- ▶ Literacy and Foundational Learning  
(adult literacy, English language learning, basic computer skills, numeracy and other essential skill development)
- ▶ Community Capacity Building  
(community and family development, employability enhancement)

### Tracking and Measurement

The new guidelines will require programs to increase their data-reporting to Calgary Learns. Currently, we are in discussions with the province to determine the best information for Calgary Learns and other Community Adult Learning Granting Councils to gather (note: of the 80 councils across Alberta most are programming councils that work with learners directly and thus, data tracking happens in house). Prior to this consultation, we asked people to share their current tracking and measurement practices for their program in a survey questionnaire. This gave us a baseline of data collection as Calgary Learns currently only asks programs to report statistics about the number of: learners, programs, instructional hours and learners who achieve their goals. A huge thanks to all of you who completed the survey on the data that you collect beyond these basics. The information will help Calgary Learns work more effectively with the Province in negotiating relevant indicators for our funded programs.

The survey results from our currently funded programs were as follows:

<p><b><u>Most Everyone tracks (90-100%)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ # of participants (100%)</li> <li>▶ # of instructional hours (95%)</li> <li>▶ # of courses (100%)</li> <li>▶ # of learners with economic barriers (100%)</li> <li>▶ Age range demographics (94%)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Many track (70--89%)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Completion rates (89%, additionally 39% track whether achieved learning goals and 44% track drop outs and reasons where possible)</li> <li>▶ Gender demographics (75%)</li> <li>▶ # of learners who demonstrate increased self-confidence (85% by self-report, 20% evidence based, 45% by teacher observation)</li> <li>▶ # of volunteer hours contributed to your funded program (78%)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Some track (40-69%)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ # of learners who practised or applied the foundational skills they are learning (63% by self-report, 58% by teacher report, 32% through self-report at post-program follow-up)</li> <li>▶ # of learners who set new goals or registered for further learning opportunities (65% self-reported at end of session, 18% self-reported during post-program follow up)</li> <li>▶ # of participants who express interest in further learning (42%)</li> <li>▶ # of learners referred into your organization for another organization (44%)</li> <li>▶ # of First Nation/Metis/Inuit (63%)</li> <li>▶ # of learners who were placed on a wait list as the result of your funded program being full. (41%)</li> <li>▶ Breakdown of learners by highest level of previous schooling (56.25%)</li> <li>▶ # of Permanent/Temporary Residents/Refugees (50%)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Few track (0-39%)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ # of learners who you refer to other learning or support organizations. (32%)</li> <li>▶ # of learners who reported receiving value from the organizations to whom they were referred (11% by the end of the program, 5% during post-program follow up)</li> </ul>

### The Value of Data

Small Group discussions delved deeper into three new data reporting areas: self-confidence, the application of learning and demographics collection. As always, there was some valuable learning between programs and requests to have opportunities to work together on evaluation again. Some of the themes from these discussions are summarized below:

## Self Confidence

Many people in our field did the dance of joy when increased self-confidence was actually recognized as an indicator for proficiency in foundational skills in the guidelines. Nada Jerkovic from CanLearn was part of the government's community consultation process when the outcomes measurement framework was being developed. She was part of our small group discussion about self-confidence and stressed that the measure of self-confidence did not have to be complicated.

Current methods Calgary programs are measuring self-confidence:

- ▶ Pre/Post questionnaire with 1-10 Likert scale
- ▶ Qualitative stories
- ▶ Through art—comparison of pictures of themselves at the first and end of a course
- ▶ Asking questions like “What do you do now that you didn't/couldn't do before?”
- ▶ Observation checklists for the facilitators to help them assess confidence in an easy but structured way

Some wisdom shared by the group:

- ▶ Many programs expressed that they had learners self-report only at the end of the programs as their learners found it intimidating to be asked at the beginning.
- ▶ We need to address issues of cultural diversity around assessing self-confidence. In many cultures asking someone to report their self-confidence is not appropriate outside of very close relationships. It was recommended to focus on ‘facts’, not ‘feelings’.
- ▶ Self-confidence is behavioural, so asking questions like “How comfortable are you at doing...?”
- ▶ CanLearn's observation checklist was informed by a confidence assessment resource for adult learners from the UK called “Catching Confidence”

## Application of Learning

[Stephen Reder](#) in his longitudinal studies on literacy development stressed that to understand and support adult literacy development, we need research that examines changes in literacy in multiple contexts and over significant periods of time. He talks about measuring literacy practices through “the measurement of engagement in everyday reading, writing and math activities that were constructed from interview questions about how often respondents performed each of a set of specific reading, writing, numeracy and computer activities in various everyday contexts (home, community, work).” These literacy practices can be a reflection of how the learner is applying his learning from programs. Calgary Learns recognizes that long term follow-up is not a reality for most community programs. However, tracking what new learning a learner has been able to apply by the end of a course will provide valuable information about learning (e.g. in a computer class, learner reports sending an email independently outside of class). Calgary Learns—Community Consultation Report, May 26, 2015

Current methods Calgary programs are measuring application of learning

- ▶ Field trips to utilize skills/knowledge
- ▶ Pre/post tests
- ▶ Quizzes

- ▶ Self-assessments/self-reports
- ▶ Presentations
- ▶ Mentorships by previous participants
- ▶ 3rd party follow up after 6 months

Some wisdom shared by the group:

- ▶ Helpful to break down broad goals to mini-units
- ▶ Works to have consistent assessments points that are checked regularly
- ▶ If contacting learners after program, permission would needed
- ▶ Define success in a variety of ways

### Demographics

There is a variety of demographic information about learners that will be asked to be collected. Statistics will be rolled up so there will no identifying personal information about learners. Some of the group did express a concern about privacy issues in collecting information and questioned why this information was necessary. Others talked about how they gather and how this information is useful to their programming.

Some wisdom shared by the group:

- ▶ Easy to get age ranges from birth year on intake form
- ▶ Gathering information in an intake interview not only allows you to collect demographic information but allows the opportunity to build relationship with your learners
- ▶ Learning the higher demographic of First Nations/Metis/Inuit students in a class resulted in instructors enhancing the culturally relevant material used in programming

### Other helpful information that Calgary organizations gather

- ▶ Student one-on-one assessment comments
- ▶ Finding out individual interests to pick and choose materials for learners
- ▶ Orientation for students=learning for the facilitator
- ▶ Setting personal learner goals raises their level of performance (guiding people to realistic goals)
- ▶ Sharing success stories
- ▶ Learn a lot through opening and closing circles

### **Calgary Learns Impact**

Our final group discussion asked for input about how Calgary Learns, as a granting council, can best measure its impact. We greatly appreciated the input from the group and will use these suggestions as we work with the government to develop ways to measure granting council impact.

### **Suggestions/Questions**

- ▶ Measure the process for accessing funding and survey re: how did you feel about the process?
- ▶ Measure impact not only as a funder but also contributor to the literacy and foundational learning community. This would include measuring how the community consultations, networking and PD events impact:

- ▶ learning and cross-learning
- ▶ community networking
- ▶ Map how partner agencies work together because of Calgary Learns
- ▶ Measure whether funding creates a learning opportunity that otherwise would not be available
- ▶ Measure whether input from community consultations is collected and used
- ▶ How could Calgary Learns utilize the opportunity as a high level knowledge holder to share and direct recommendations for much needed initiatives?
- ▶ How can Calgary Learns make meaning from all of these statistics in a way that front-line services often don't have the time to do?

### **Calgary Learns' Next Steps**

Calgary Learns greatly appreciated the insight and ideas that were offered from our community partners. We are already considering the input as we design our new Request for Proposals for program funding. This will be released in July 2015 (proposals are due October 1, 2015). Please note that Calgary Learns has new program funding for Literacy and Foundational Learning designed specifically for Aboriginal learners.

The input regarding measurement/tracking practices is invaluable to us as we work to negotiate the provincial requirements for granting councils. We heard the request to have more opportunities to network as a community to discuss and share ideas about measurement and other areas in the adult learning field. Watch for opportunities in the upcoming year.