Up-skilling and re-skilling: What do we do?

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Meeting skills needs of the future

Is publicly-supported training an appropriate response?

- What does the evidence tell us?
- What are the implications for policymakers?
What does evidence tell us?
Navigating the evidence

**Yesterday**
Does skills training work?
Evidence is mixed; limited by narrow focus

**Today**
How do we make skills training work?
Bottom-up innovation yields insights about what works

**Tomorrow**
How can training meet future skills needs?
Career pathways provides model for system-wide approach
Does skills training work?

Last 30 years have yielded mixed results

- Evaluations of U.S. dislocated worker pilots in 1980s showed no impacts of training (Leigh, 1990)
- Larger-scale evaluation of JTPA in the 1980s and the WIA in the 2000s mirrored these results for federal programs (Bloom et al, 1997; Decker, 2009)

While this give us reason to be pessimistic, other studies contradict these findings
Does skills training work? (cont’d)

- Washington State studies show strong impacts of community college for displaced workers (Jacobson, Lalonde & Sullivan, 2005)
- Canadian research shows substantial returns to adult skills training, though most evidence is for the employed (see review in Ci et al, 2015)
- Canadian LMDA skills development results are also positive (ESDC, 2017)

Suggests a more nuanced conclusion: training is effective sometimes
Does skills training work? (cont’d)

Unpacking these findings –

• Negative results often occur in programs where training choice is limited and/or misaligned with participant needs, leading to low uptake (Leigh, 1990)

• When positive results occur, impacts depend on level of uptake and type of training offered (Jacobson et al., 2005; Heckman et al., 1998)

Takeaway: Not all training is created equal – individual choice, employer demand, quality, and context matter.
How do we make skills training work?

How can we make it easier to attain skills and credentials needed for family-supporting jobs?

In early 2000s, practitioner-led experimentation with new models to help…

- Dislocated workers switch to new occupations
- Under-represented groups enter the labour force
- Lower-skilled workers advance to better paying jobs
How do we make training work? (cont’d)

• In early 2000s, Career Pathways emerged as a promising approach

• At each level of training, participants gain skills and credentials to prepare for in-demand jobs

Series of connected education and training strategies that enable individuals to secure industry-relevant certifications
Three Career Pathway features of note

1. Multiple entry points – Individuals begin career path at most appropriate skill level

2. Multiple exit points – Individuals exit at various points qualified for specific jobs and can easily return to school when ready

3. Career guidance and supports – Seamless and accelerated educational pathways with support services to facilitate progress to the next level
Career Pathways innovation in Ontario:
Health care career pathway

Career prospects

- Supportive Care Provider (entry level)
- Personal Support Worker (certificate)
- Registered Practical Nurse (diploma)
- Registered Nurse (degree)

Gains in skills and credentials

- Advanced standing
- Bridging
Other Ontario Career Pathways examples

- Warehousing and logistics
- Early learning and child care
- Information technology
Can the Career Pathways model meet future skills needs?

- Applicable to wide range of occupations
- Responsive to changing industry skills needs
- Accelerates learning and enables individuals to combine learning with work
- Provides counselling and supports to ensure success
- Education offered alongside workforce preparation

Provides a framework for formally aligning education, workforce, and support services
Testing, adapting, and scaling

Two U.S. national demonstrations are underway

**PACE** – Nine Career Pathways in different sectors being tested in 18 locations

**HPOG** – 32 organizations testing Career Pathways in health care

Final results will be available later this year
Moving towards system-wide approach

- Beyond demonstrations, Career Pathways has been implemented both federally and state-wide.
- Promising local results have encouraged several states to launch system-wide Career Pathways initiatives (e.g., Oregon, California, NY, Massachusetts).
- Support across multiple federal departments led to Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act including framework and funding strategies for Career Pathways.
Ontario: Moving beyond local innovation

- Ontario examples are in ‘pilot phase’ using workforce innovation funds
- Ontario colleges are well positioned to adopt Career Pathways approach
- But, the province’s operating funding for colleges is restricted to traditional programs leading to certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, etc.
- Amending funding framework is necessary
Policy implications
1. Third pillar: Support working adults

**EDUCATION**
(K-12 and post-secondary)

Builds skills of youth and young adults before they enter the workforce

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**
(employment and training services)

Builds skills of adults who are unemployed to help them re-enter the workforce

**SUPPORTING WORKING ADULTS?**

Labour market shifts will deeply impact adults who are currently working
2. Bridge policy silos of workforce development and postsecondary

• Currently little collaboration between workforce development and postsecondary policy
• Career Pathways sits at intersection of these systems
• Need to explore adjustments to the college funding framework to allow program development and support sustainable delivery at the college level
3. Adapt, replicate, and scale
4. Situate skills development as part of a broader toolkit

Skills development is not a panacea – it needs to be supported by a broader skills strategy

- **Competency frameworks** – Ways to map needed skills that go beyond credentials
- **Assessment tools** – Approaches to identify and communicate these skills to employers
- **Career navigation supports** – Better information for workers to plan career changes
- **And more**...
Conclusions: Up-skilling and re-skilling – What do we do?

- Earlier evidence is mixed, but ‘practitioner-driven’ innovation has yielded insights about what works

- Career Pathways model provides framework for a system-wide approach to combining work and learning

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Develop models that support working adults
- Foster integration between postsecondary and workforce development systems
- Commit to adapting, replicating, and scaling what works
- Situate skills development in a broader toolkit