

NEWS RELEASE -- February 23, 2011

NEW CAAL REPORT ISSUED



[CLOSING THE GAP: The Challenge of Certification and Credentialing in Adult Education](#) is the final report from CAAL's project on this topic. Written by project director, Forrest Chisman, it summarizes a Roundtable discussion of experts in June 2010 and sets forth findings from that meeting and other CAAL research. An Executive Summary gives 11 major findings and recommendations, including the following:

- The gap between the knowledge and skills adult education teachers have and the knowledge and skills they need limits the ability of the adult education and workforce skills system to offer the kind and quality of service required by low-skilled adults and the nation's economy. Too little attention has been paid to this gap.
- To close the gap, clear comprehensive standards need to be established for the knowledge and skills teachers should have to teach adults, and related systems are needed to assess if these standards are met and to help teachers improve their abilities.
- Most states and programs have rudimentary credentialing systems. A few have introduced more substantial systems. But none assess the specialized knowledge and skills teachers need and, because most programs are voluntary, few teachers obtain the more substantial credentials.
- Numerous barriers prevent adult education teachers from increasing their knowledge and skills, meeting standards, and earning credentials. Significant funding and time are required to upgrade their abilities--whether through academic study or participation in extensive in-service professional development. Moreover, there are no career ladders in adult education, too few full-time job opportunities exist, and pay is inadequate. Major federal and state investments are needed to bring about improvements in all of these areas, although this can be done incrementally.
- Improving teacher credentialing systems should be part of comprehensive adult education reform and strategic planning (involving multiple stakeholders) because resources devoted to such activities depend on decisions about the future directions of adult education.
- New leadership should customize degree programs and in-service professional development to meet teacher performance standards. An abundance of instructional and in-service material already exists to draw on. The primary challenges are alignment with teacher standards and mustering financial resources to provide incentives for teachers to participate.

--Efforts to improve credentialing will benefit from more extensive and rigorous research. For example, research is needed to gain a more precise understanding of the professional backgrounds and employment arrangements of teachers, and the experiences and outcomes of innovative credentialing systems in some of the states should be evaluated.

For the full report, go to <http://www.caalusa.org/Closing.pdf>. Hard copies may be purchased directly from CAAL (contact bheitner@caalusa.org).

Other reports in CAAL's Roundtable series to date are: [Certifying Adult Education Staff and Faculty](#), prepared as a background information paper for CAAL's Roundtable (January 2011); [DOING BUSINESS TOGETHER: Adult Education and Business Partnering to Build A Qualified Workforce](#) (February 2011); [Local Perspectives on WIA Reauthorization](#) (March 2010); and [EXPANDING HORIZONS: Pacesetters in Adult Education for Work](#) (June 2009).

As a result of its February 2011 Roundtable on Adult Numeracy, two reports on that topic will be issued by CAAL in the coming months.

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