

Adult Learning and PLE

The session on adult learning was intentionally run as a fairly unstructured affair. The members of the group were a diverse bunch who, apart from Diane, had little direct experience of adult learning. I had to spend a little time, therefore, providing some "alternative orientation" for a world where adults are passionate about the success of their children and invariably word-associate "education" with "children". So excuse me for an unashamed plug for the importance of adult learning in general because we know that, for example:

- Learning makes and keeps adults healthy
- Children will struggle to see the importance of learning if the significant adults round them are not themselves engaged in learning
- Focusing solely on our children is not going to provide a solution to the skills needs of the future. Unfortunately, we are producing fewer of these children and 75% of the workforce of the year 2020 have already left school.

Adults are more complicated in their learning journeys if only because they are not all corralled into schools all day. (All sensible people know that children's learning is not confined to school but policy makers frequently behave as though that were the case!) So, if public legal education is to succeed among the adult population, it has to make an identifiable place for itself in the complex adult learning landscape (workplace, families, Further Education, museums, clubs and societies, voluntary work etc) but also learn how to identify the links with other learning initiatives as well and integrate with them.

We discussed the work we had done on mapping the Seven Steps resource to the adult literacy curriculum and I suggested that this sort of process had to be engaged in many other areas of learning as well.

We were fortunate in having Diane in the group and we unashamedly drew on her experience of adult learning in Canada also.

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