



Prior Learning Assessment: Linking Learning with Economic Success



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CAEL

The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning



Today's Discussion

1. CAEL's Experience with PLA

2. PLA and the Innovation Agenda

3. Implications of the Impending Skills Shortage

4. New HR Strategies for Older Workers, and the Role of PLA



What is CAEL?

- **CAEL** is the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
- Non-profit, international organization; 32 years of experience
- Nearly 700 college & university members; corporate HR membership growing

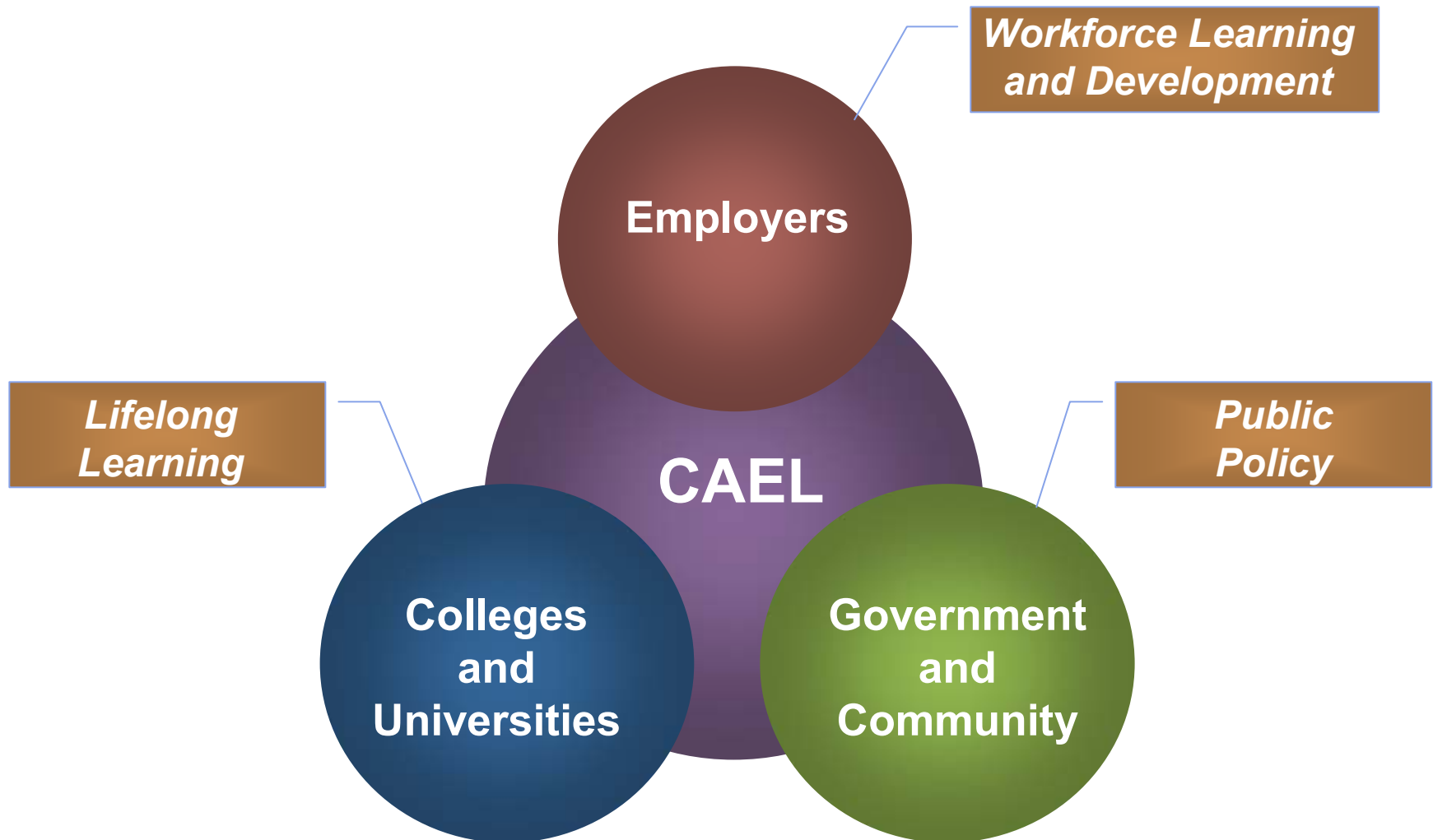


CAEL's Mission

- CAEL works to expand lifelong learning opportunities for adults
- CAEL partners with community colleges and universities, employers, labor organizations and government



CAEL's Unique Intermediary Role





CAEL's Work on Behalf of Adults

- 1970s – 1980s focused on **educational institutions** and Prior Learning Assessment
- 1980s – 1990s *added* services to **employers**
- 1990s - present *added* **public policy** efforts

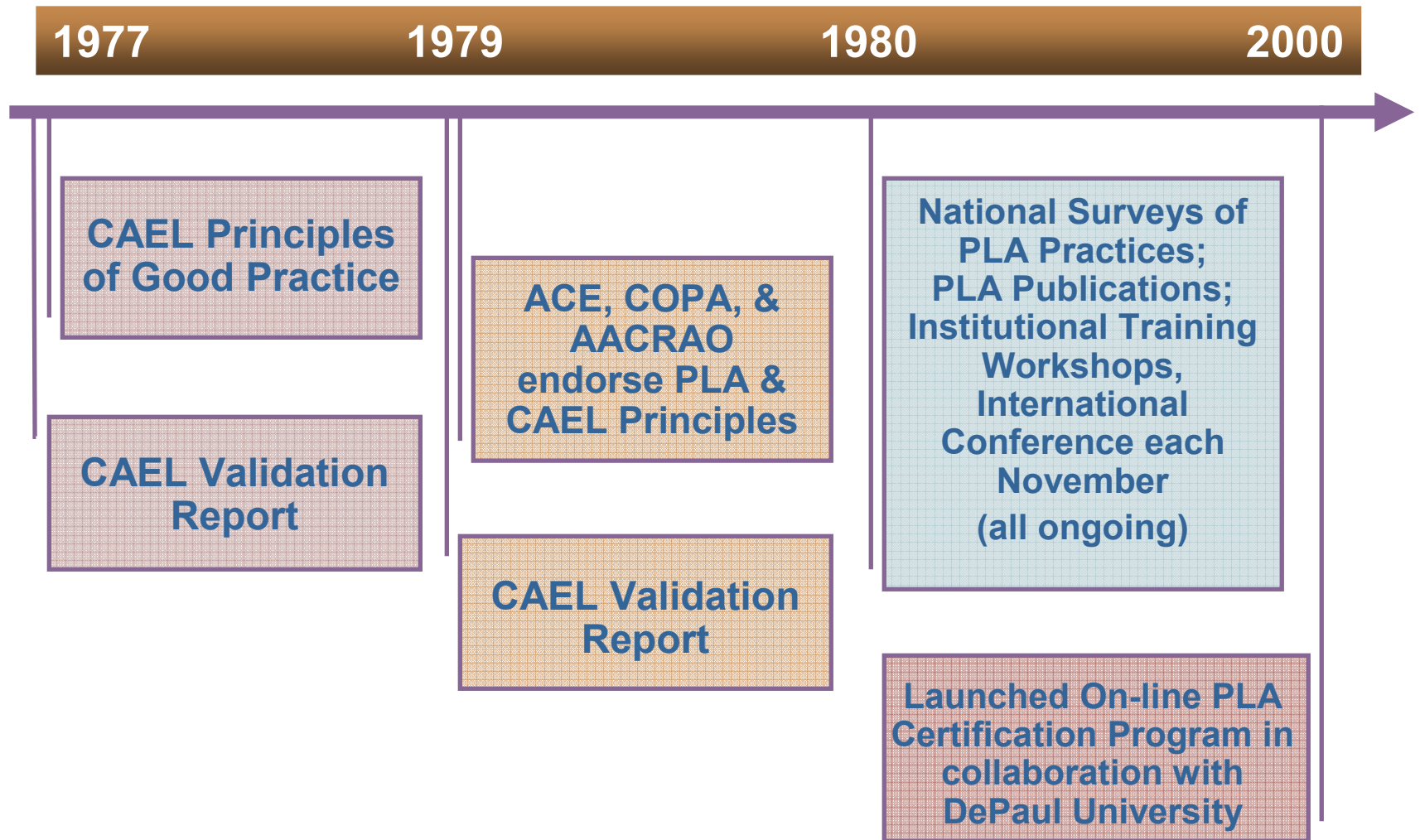


CAEL's Role In Prior Learning Assessment

- Pioneer in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- PLA work begun 32 years ago
- Thousands of PLA assessors trained



CAEL's Role In Prior Learning Assessment





Recent CAEL PLA Publications

- Earn College Credit for What You Know, Fourth Edition (new for 2006)
- Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles & Procedures, Second Edition (new for 2006)





CAEL Online PLA Certification

- Only program of its kind
- Four online workshops
- **New series begins
January 2007**





2006 CAEL International Conference

- November 9 - 11, 2006; Boston
- Networking; speakers; sessions; workshop tracks (include PLA)
- **PLA training workshop:
November 7- 8, 2006**





Innovation: The Key to Success

- Innovation determines success in 21st century
- New U.S. initiatives to stimulate regional innovation – i.e. USDOL “WIRED”

Source: “Innovate America: Thriving in a World of Challenge and Change” (2005-2006) The Council on Competitiveness



Innovation: The Key to Success

Canada: 5 years ahead of U.S.

- Recognized link between innovation and education/skill attainment
- January 2001: *Speech from the Throne*
- February 2002: Federal Innovation Strategy



Innovation: The Key to Success

“In the new, global knowledge economy of the 21st century prosperity depends on innovation, which, in turn, depends on the investments that we make in the creativity and talents of our people. We must invest not only in technology and innovation but also, in the Canadian way, to create an environment of inclusion, in which all Canadians can take advantage of their talents, their skills and their ideas; in which imagination, skills and innovative capacity combine for maximum effect.”

**Jean Chrétien, 2002
Prime Minister of Canada**



Canada's Innovation Strategy

- “Goal is to create a culture of lifelong learning”
- Equip Canadians with skills needed in workplace

Canada Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) issued report, *Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians* (2002)



PLA and The Innovation Agenda

Thomas Friedman, “The World is Flat”

- Workforce needs “muscles,” – portable benefits and lifelong learning opportunities
- When workers feels mobile, they move into new industries/job niches

Friedman, Thomas. (2005). “The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century.” Farrar, Straus and Giroux.



PLA and The Innovation Agenda

- PLA helps make workers mobile and adaptable — in line within Friedman
- PLA builds upon what employees already know and can do



PLA and the Innovation Agenda

- PLAR + Innovation – link recognized by Canada's National Summit on Innovation and Learning
- Use PLAR in occupation-based collaborations
- PLA process opens individual's mind to new life choices & ideas



The Impending Skills Shortage

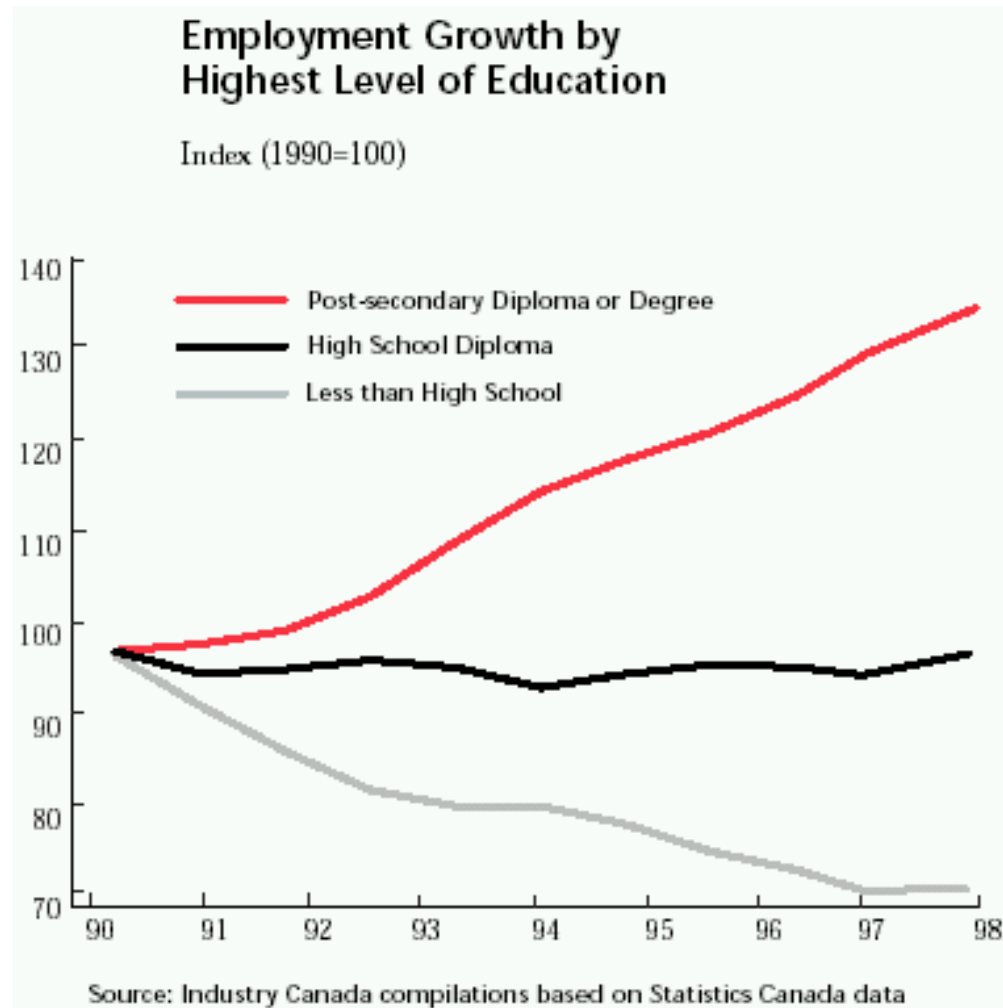
- Canadian & U.S. companies face skills shortages in next decade
- Departing baby boomers & fewer middle-age workers
- Employers need to upskill workforce

Source: “Too Few People, Too Little Time: The Employer Challenge of an Aging Workforce” (July 2006) The Conference Board of Canada



The Impending Skills Shortage

Jobs with the highest projected growth rate will require postsecondary education





The Impending Skills Shortage

U.S. statistics parallel Canada's experience

- 81% of companies currently face moderate to severe skilled worker shortage (*National*