PHASE TWO: CAPACITY BUILDING AFFIRMING, LEARNING, AND YEARNING:

Sharing and Developing Innovative Best Practices Within and Outside of the ERPAE Region

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" Adult learning impacts so many areas of a person's life. It can build your skills to find work, improve your health and wellbeing, and provide the get-up-and-go you need to make a contribution in today's fast-paced world. "

(WEA, 2017)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the activities undertaken during the Phase Two of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (ERPAE) Strategic Plan, *Capacity Building*, part of the ERPAE's response to the Ministry of Education's Adult Education three year strategy. During this phase, researchers collected data to provide a documented record of the developmental processes undertaken by the ERPAE as it built capacity over the 2017-2018 academic year. Data collection and analysis helped us monitor and evaluate the progress we made toward the previously identified key areas of the ERPAE strategic plan.

The following research questions guided this investigation:

(1) What capacity was developed in Adult and Continuing Education staff during *Phase Two* of the ERPAE project?

(2) How was capacity developed in Adult and Continuing Education staff during *Phase Two* of the ERPAE project?

In order to respond to these questions, the research team collected data from the following sources;

- **Field Notes:** The two researchers kept two types of field notes throughout the Phase Two (2017-2018) stage of the ERPAE project, (a) initial interpretations of the responses to the planned capacity building events and activities, and (b) reflective notes on the research process and methodological issues as they arose.

- **Generative Products:** These provided a visual testimony of the processes the ERPAE members undertook during the capacity building developmental sessions.

- **Photographs:** These provided a visual testimony of the ERPAE members engaging in a variety of activities, discussions, and generative product creation during the capacity building developmental sessions.

- **ERPAE Participant Interviews:** The research team conducted 22 interviews with members of the ERPAE collaborative group during the last session held during March 2018. The interviews sought to ascertain the ERPAE participants' views on their experiences throughout the *Phase Two: Capacity Building* process.

- **ERPAE Participant Surveys:** Electronic surveys were distributed to all ERPAE participants at the end of each of the four capacity building sessions. Data from the electronic surveys collected during the first three sessions was used to inform planning and activities in subsequent sessions. Data collected from the final survey was analyzed by the research team and the findings are included in this report.

The 2017-2018 ERPAE Capacity Building sessions (CBSs) were intended to build capacity in Adult Education staff in the Eastern region by helping them learn about Adult and Continuing Education from within the region and from outside the region. The ultimate goal of the CBSs was to prepare ERPAE members to develop and implement innovative pilot projects in their respective school boards. Interviews and survey responses from participating ERPAE members provided valuable insights about the effectiveness and outcomes of the Phase Two: Capacity Building sessions. In analyzing the range of data collected throughout the Phase Two: Capacity Building process, we identified key components of a Collaborative Coalition Model for Professional Development (CCMfPD) and how it can be used as an effective means of professional development in Adult Education. ERPAE members reported numerous benefits of the CCMfPD.

Key Component One: Process of PD

- The capacity building sessions were unique in that they provided structured and purposeful opportunities for continuous learning that most school board professional development does not

- Professional conversations were an important part of the learning

- It might be helpful to have participants develop a professional learning plan at the beginning and reflect upon their progress at the end so they can self-regulate and re-set goals as needed

- Collaborative structure was a key component of the PD – they learned about Adult and Continuing Education from each other; this allowed them to reflect on their own board's practices and region's practices to identify gaps/challenges and start to think about innovative practices

- Culture of Care/Rapport is important as it affirms that individual contributions matter and helps to create an atmosphere of trust and collegiality

Key Component Two: Understandings of Adult Education

- Affirming, Learning, Yearning framework is helpful for having participants reflect on their understandings. ERPAE members' understandings were affirmed in relation to findings from the region's Environmental Scan (Youmans, Godden, & Hummell, 2017) and members' professional experiences, they identified learnings that arose during the collaborative structure of CBSs, and they reported a yearning for continuous learning about different aspects of Adult Education

- The framework was applied in relation to the five areas of Adult Education

- Additional questions raised outside of the five areas that are important to address – it will be important to make time to address these questions

Key Component Three: Personal Growth Resulting from PD

- Capacity was built in relation to practices, knowledge of the field, and role performance in Adult Education

- Desire to continue collaborating – participants learned from each other and wanted this to continue

- Members recognized a need for change in Adult Education and outlined potential changes

- Ministry funding facilitated this opportunity for PD and the next phase involves the piloting of innovative practices

- Experts need opportunities for growth too

VALUE TO PARTICIPANTS: THE BENEFITS OF THE CCMfPD FOR ERPAE MEMBERS

ERPAE members reported benefitting from the CCMfPD implemented through Capacity Building sessions in multiple ways. They valued the opportunity to:

- learn about the key Adult Education practices of other district school boards in the region

- explore innovative practices in a collaborative setting network with colleagues in other district school boards

- work with their school board team to improve the quality of their program(s)

- experience support from colleagues during sessions and when they returned to their workplace

- establish a collective voice to advocate for Adult Education

"Adult Education can help change lives and transform societies – it is a human right and a common good."

(European Adult Education Manifesto for the 21st Century)

THE CASE FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Throughout the 2017-2018 ERPAE Phase Two: Capacity Building sessions, the ERPAE members consistently revealed examples of the difference their work made to the outcomes for adult learners who accessed their programs. This is consistent with many reports that outline the wide-ranging benefits to adults that can be obtained through participating in A & CE programs. For example, the economic and social costs of not providing basic skills, and the significant gains for society when access to achieving them is provided have been discussed (e.g., Field, 2012; Jenkins, 2006; Jenkins, Vignoles, Wolf, & Galindo-Rueda, 2003; Zhang & Palameta, 2006). Furthermore, adult education has been shown to make a positive impact in: activating citizens to volunteer, vote, and take functional roles in society (Preston, 2004; OECD, 2007); lead healthier lifestyles, create fairer societies, and create economic growth (European Association for the Education of Adults, 2015); create established route to and links with positive employment outcomes, and prepare newcomers for successful integration into their new homes (Hughes, Adriaanse, & Barnes, 2016). The ERPAE members were able to provide numerous first-hand accounts of such successes, and the collaborative environment reinforced the power of their work across the ERPAE region.

> " The provision and quality of adult learning remains patchy, and those who need it most currently get the least of it. More work is needed to support adult learning in local communities – this should be a key ingredient in adult education developments in the 21st century. "

(Andreas Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD as cited in Hughes, Adriaanse, & Barns, 2016)

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education*, the Ontario Ministry of Education included the commitment to "ensure that the adult education system better supports adult learners in their efforts to finish high school and successfully transition to postsecondary education, training or the workplace." This strategy provides an opportunity to explore innovative ways to reengage adult learners and build school board capacity to better assist adult learners in achieving their goals. The three overarching objectives of the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy were as follows:

(1) Promote a regional and more collaborative approach among school boards to foster a shared responsibility for adult learning that will improve accountability for learner outcomes.

(2) Ensure availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports that are responsive to adult learner needs.

(3) Improve the transitions for learners between Ministry of Education adult credit programs and programs funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (previously called the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development) and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

The seven Regional Partnerships for Adult Education (RPAEs), which include six regional, English-language partnerships and one province-wide, French-language partnership, were to promote a regional and more collaborative approach among school boards and foster a shared responsibility for adult learning that will improve accountability for learner outcomes. Each partnership received provisional funds from the Province to support their regional strategic program objectives, pending the terms and conditions set out under Ontario Transfer Payment RPAE Agreements.

The four key areas in scope for the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy were as follows:

(1) Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services (e.g., e-learning or hybrid delivery programs) that best meet adult learner needs.

(2) Access to coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referrals at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.

(3) Regionally coordinated access to consistent Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students working towards a high school diploma.

(4) Regional guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards a high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for postsecondary education.

Based on the results of the Environmental Scan (Youmans, Godden, & Hummell, 2017), as well as feedback received from Board representatives and stakeholders who participated in planning group sessions and interviews, a **fifth area of scope** was added to the ERPAE Strategic Plan. The fifth area of scope would focus on **enhanced positioning** of adult education by building **community and region wide awareness** of Adult and Continuing Education programs.

THE EASTERN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATION (ERPAE)

V Image 1.
V The ERPAE Phase Two Capacity Building Participants

As articulated in the Terms of Reference for the ERPAE, the following guiding principles underpinned the regional partnership's focus on developing a culture of collegiality and shared responsibility:

- the regional partnership would advance the Ministry's goal for Adult Education in Ontario through existing authority and accountability structures;

- this effort did not stipulate changes to service delivery models;

- member school boards within the partnership strived to identify, acknowledge, and apply the partnership's full range of capabilities within the region to improve their productivity and value to adult learners;

- member school boards would not engage in activities that would disenfranchise another school board's adult education program; and

- disputes pertaining to adult education would be resolved through documented consensus of member school boards.

The role of the Eastern RPAE was to provide leadership to promote a regional and more collaborative approach among member school boards to the provision of Ministry of Education adult education programs and services, that:

- fostered a shared responsibility for adult learning;
- improved accountability for learner outcomes;
- identified and addressed gaps and opportunities; and

- ensured availability of a wide range of accessible program delivery options and supports that addressed the needs of adult learners.

As it responded to the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy, the ERPAE defined its mission, vision, and established a set of core values which were felt to provide an essential guiding framework for its collaborative activities.

Our Mission: To empower and support adult learners in obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and/or successfully transitioning to a chosen pathway; post-secondary education, training, or the workplace.

Our Vision: To be recognized as a local, provincial and global leader in the coordination and provision of flexible, innovative and responsive adult education programs and services.

The ERPAE values the following:
(1) A culture of care, rooted within a holistic approach to learning.
(2) Diverse learners, with unique qualities.
(3) Flexible approaches, to support learning.
(4) Provision of service, within local communities.
(5) Community partnerships, that enhance service.
(6) Pathway planning to support the acquisition of an OSSD and/or successful transitions.
(7) Innovation and creativity, that facilitate continuous improvement.

THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY PROJECT DELIVERABLES

During the first year of this three-year project (2016-2017), the ERPAE completed the following deliverables;

1. Established a **collaborative network** of school boards within the region that acted to coordinate member activities related to the EDU Adult Education Strategy.

2. Conducted an **environmental scan** to identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration and identify program and service gaps.

3. Developed a **multi-year strategic plan** based on outcomes of the scan, to direct activities that will promote progress in the four key EDU areas.

The multi-year strategic plan is referred to as ACE and has three distinct phases;

Phase One (2016-2017): Awareness - Creation of a regional partnership, completion of an environmental scan report and development of a multi-year strategic plan.

Phase Two (2017-2018): Capacity Building - Continuation of learning from within and outside our region. Sharing and developing innovative best practices.

Phase Three (2018-2019): Execution - Implementation of innovative best practices. Monitoring the impact of implementation.

2017-18 School Year Plan – *Capacity Building

Continuation of learning from within and outside our region. Sharing and developing innovative best practices.

Key areas as identified by the Ministry of Education and ERPAE.	What we will do to support progress in the identified key areas.	What milestones will be associated with progress.	How our progress will be monitored and evaluated.
1. Regionally coordinated access to flexible delivery of EDU Adult and Continuing Education programs and/or services that best meet adult learner needs.	• A region wide study group will help promote the mobilization of knowledge associated with the flexible delivery of EDU programs and services. • Professional development (PD) for administrators, finance personnel and other identified staff. • PD will focus on sharing, learning and training related to the various adult education programs, funding sources, delivery methods and learner profiles best served by each program. • The RPAE table will commit funding to Boards who implement a new or enhance delivery of an adult education program in 2018-19 that is characterized by flexible delivery – eLearning, hybrid, course bundling, diploma, skill based courses, dual credit, cooperative education, experiential learning etc.	• Sessions will be in October, November, March and April. • RPAE table update and consultations – September, early December, early April and mid-May. • Confirmation of 2018-19 implementation Boards and associated budget by end of May. • Target: two implementation Boards from the ERPAE. (Boards will self-select an area for implementation/ improvement planning that aligns with their adult education goals and priorities).	• PD evaluations. • Participant surveys. • Study group reports. • Implementation proposals, reviews and reports.
2. Coordinated information, intake, assessment, and referral, provided at school boards to ensure learners are directed to the program or service that best meets their needs.	• A region wide study group will examine current best practice related to intake, assessment and referral. • The study group will examine and develop innovative intake, assessment and referral approach(es) that best meet the needs of our learners. • The RPAE table will commit funding to Boards who implement innovative intake, assessment and referral approaches in 2018-19.	• Sessions will be held in October, November, March and April. • RPAE table update and consultations – September, early December, early April and mid-May. • Confirmation of 2018-19 implementation Boards and associated budget by end of May. • Target: two implementation Boards from the ERPAE. (Boards will self-select an area for implementation/ improvement planning that aligns with their adult education goals and priorities).	• Participant surveys. • Study group reports. • Implementation proposals, reviews and reports.

Key areas as identified by the Ministry of Education and ERPAE.	What we will do to support progress in the identified key areas.	What milestones will be associated with progress.	How our progress will be monitored and evaluated.
3. Regionally available and consistently applied PLAR for mature students working towards a high school diploma.	• A region wide PLAR study group will help create and offer a series of PLAR focus group sessions. • A series of PLAR focus group sessions will be held in the region. Participants will include staff from each Board responsible for PLAR and/or who deliver PLAR. • The sessions will focus on identifying: How PLAR is administered in each Board? What is working with PLAR? What are the inconsistencies with PLAR? What are the barriers to consistently applying PLAR? • What innovative PLAR practice(s) will enhance the consistent application of PLAR? • The RPAE table will commit funding to Boards who implement innovative PLAR practice(s) in 2018-19.	• Sessions will be held in October, November, March and April. • RPAE table update and consultations – September, early December, early April and mid-May. • Confirmation of 2018-19 implementation Boards and associated budget by end of May. • Target: two implementation Boards from the ERPAE. (Boards will self-select an area for implementation/ improvement planning that aligns with their adult education goals and priorities).	• Participant surveys. • Study group reports. • Implementation proposals, reviews and reports.
4. Regionally available guidance, career counselling and pathway planning for mature students working towards high school diploma or seeking prerequisites for postsecondary education.	• A region wide study group including stakeholder representatives will examine current best practice related to guidance, career counselling, pathway planning and development of an innovative approach(es) that best meet the needs of our learners. • The RPAE table will commit funding to Boards who implement innovative approach(es) related to guidance, career counselling and/ or pathway planning in 2018-19.	• Sessions will be held in October, November, March and April. • RPAE table update and consultations – September, early December, early April and mid-May. • Confirmation of 2018-19 implementation Boards and associated budget by end of May. • Target: two implementation Boards from the ERPAE. (Boards will self-select an area for implementation/ improvement planning that aligns with their adult education goals and priorities.)	• Participant surveys. • Study group reports. • Implementation proposals, reviews and reports.

Key areas as identified by the Ministry of Education and ERPAE.	What we will do to support progress in the identified key areas.	What milestones will be associated with progress.	How our progress will be monitored and evaluated.
5. Enhanced positioning of adult education by building community and region wide awareness of Adult and Continuing Education programs.	• A region wide study group including stakeholder representatives will examine ways to enhance the positioning of Adult and Continuing Education programs by building community and region wide awareness of those programs. • The study group will focus on identifying: How are Adult and Continuing Education programs promoted internally and externally in each Board? How are Adult and Continuing Education programs promoted in other regions of the province/country? • What promotional or other practices within our region and outside our region yield the highest community awareness? • What innovative promotional/awareness practice(s) should our region adapt? • The RPAE table will commit funding in 2018-19 to implement innovate region wide strategies that enhance the positioning of Adult and Continuing Education programs by building community and region wide awareness of those programs.	• Sessions will be held in October, November, March and April. • RPAE table update and consultations – September, early December, early April and mid-May. • Confirmation of 2018-19 implementation funding and associated budget by end of May. • Target: two implementation Boards from the ERPAE and/or region wide promotion of programs of services. • (Boards will self-select an area for implementation/improvement planning that aligns with their adult education goals and priorities).	• Participant surveys. • Study group reports. • Implementation proposals, reviews and reports.

Notes:
*In the capacity building year, the ERPAE will draw on the expertise and resources from within and outside our region, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA) and other association organizations, such as, Employment Ontario and local training boards.

ERPAE – refers to the nine District School Boards who are members of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education.

RPAE table – refers to the appointed representatives (one from each District School Board of the ERPAE) who provide governance to the adult education project.

OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This report details the activities undertaken during the Phase Two of the project, the Capacity Building phase. During this phase, researchers collected data to provide a documented record of the developmental processes undertaken by the ERPAE as it built capacity over this period. Data collection and analysis helped us monitor and evaluate the progress we made toward the identified key areas of the ERPAE strategic plan.

The following research questions guided this investigation:

(1) What capacity was developed in Adult and Continuing Education staff during Phase Two of the ERPAE project?

(2) How was capacity developed in Adult and Continuing Education staff during Phase Two of the ERPAE project?

FRAMING THE PROJECT

The *Phase Two (2017-2018): Capacity Building* stage of the EDU Adult Education Strategy was purposefully structured to build upon the collaboration that had been built in Phase One (2016-2017) of the project. The overarching goal of Phase Two was to provide a structure and series of facilitative processes and activities that would support the ERPAE group members to build their capacity in preparation for the Phase Three (2018-2019): Execution of the project, the final implementation of a series of innovative best practices. In order to achieve this, it was important to provide a setting that facilitated both capacity building and professional development activities for all of the ERPAE group members. The Working Table on Teacher Development (2007) in Ontario identified five characteristics of effective educator professional development, namely that it must be: coherent; attentive to adult learning styles; goal-oriented; sustainable; and evidence-informed. We endeavoured to embed these principles into the planning and structure of the capacity building sessions throughout the year long phase.

Subsequently, the *Phase Two: Capacity Building* of the ERPAE project was purposefully undertaken as a strategy for encouraging the continuation of learning from within and outside the ERPAE region, through a process of sharing and developing best practices through the ERPAE collaborative network. Forming a collaborative network to promote and enact some kind of change remains a popular chosen strategy for many organizations (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, & Allen, 2001). The focus on building capacity was useful, as it reminded us that the collaborative network's primary asset was its members and their capacity to perform needed tasks and work collaboratively together as a team (Knoke & Wood, 1981). Capacity building among a team of organizational members occurs through many developmental processes, including leadership development and other forms of learning (London, 2013).

Organizations often rely on the work of teams to execute complex tasks that require a range of expertise and experiences. Subsequently team learning becomes important because organizations need teams that are flexible, dynamic, and responsive to changes and pressures from the environment in which they operate (Decuyper, Dochy, & Van den Bossche, 2010). Team learning has been defined as "the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and performance capabilities of an independent set of individuals through interaction and experience" (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, p. 86). London identified the following processes that are essential for effective team learning:

- sharing ideas and information;
- co-construction of shared knowledge;
- strategies to resolve conflict;
- discussions about team progress;
- undertaking and completing the tasks and work;
- crossing team boundaries; and
- the storage and retrieval of team capabilities and information.

Consequently, it was essential to provide not only a structured approach to the execution of Phase Two of the ERPAE strategic plan in order for capacity building to occur, but to also support the ERPAE members to form a collective coalition committed to working together to build capacity. In line with the work of Wolf (2001) on coalitions, the ERPAE incorporated a number of successful coalition practices to promote its success. These practices included: having a paid experienced Coordinator who was an advocate of Adult and Continuing Education, developing mission and vision statements for the coalition collectively, and being focused on the grassroots goal of improving the quality of Adult and Continuing Education in individual school boards and across the region.
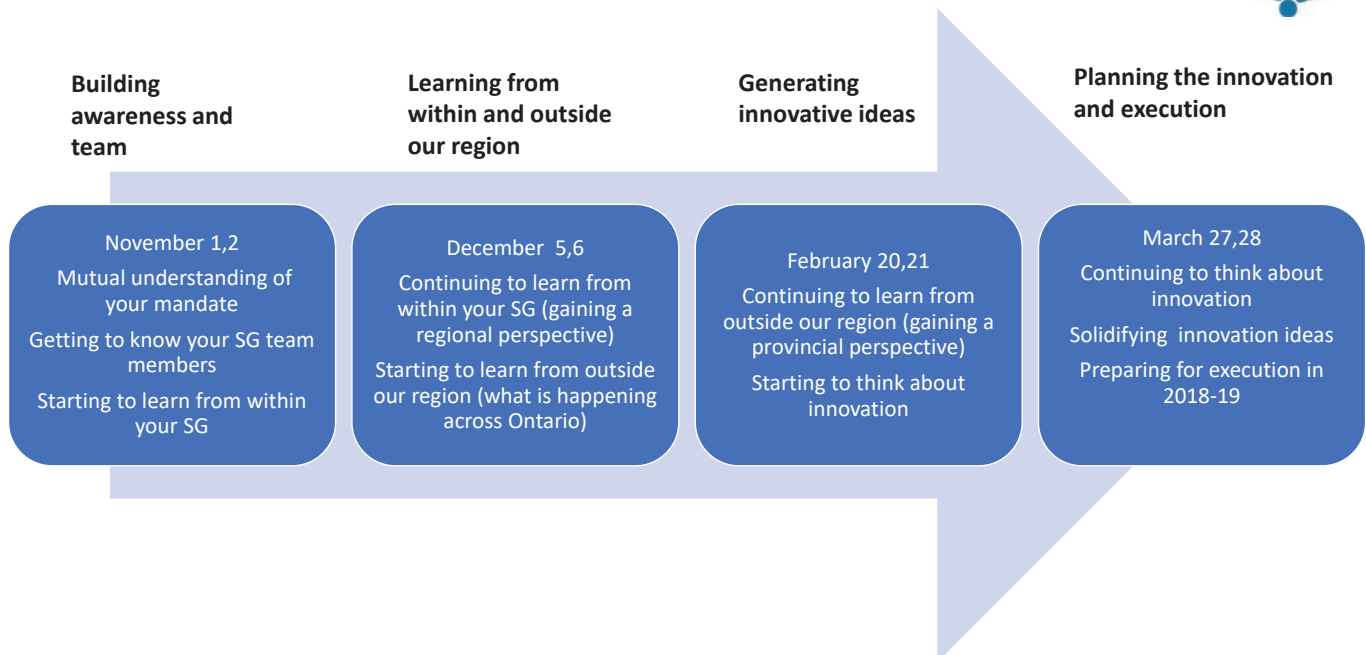
STRUCTURING OF PHASE TWO: CAPACITY BUILDING

Phase Two: Capacity Building was intentionally organized to bring the ERPAE collaborative network together to undertake a series of professional development and networking activities that facilitated the overall goal achievement of this project. The ERPAE coordinator and research team planned four separate two-day meetings for the ERPAE collaborative network that were held in November 2017 (Kanata, session one), December 2017 (Kingston, session two), February 2018 (Kanata, session three), and March 2018 (Kingston, session four). Each meeting was structured to allow capacity building to grow and develop.
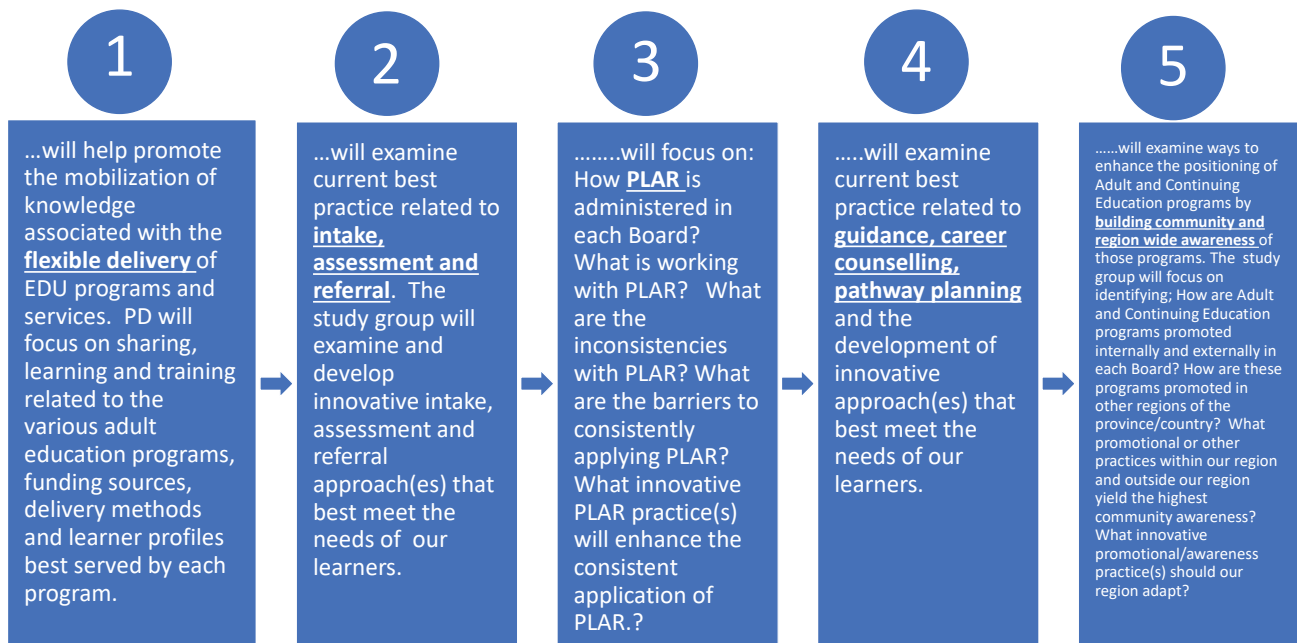
Figure 1. The Study Groups' Learning Journey

Our Study Group Journey in 2017-18

Building awareness and team	Learning from within and outside our region	Generating innovative ideas	Planning the innovation and execution
November 1,2	December 5,6	February 20,21	March 27,28
Mutual understanding of your mandate	Continuing to learn from within your SG (gaining a regional perspective)	Continuing to learn from outside our region (gaining a provincial perspective)	Continuing to think about innovation
Getting to know your SG team members	Starting to learn from outside our region (what is happening across Ontario)	Starting to think about innovation	Solidifying innovation ideas
Starting to learn from within your SG			Preparing for execution in 2018-19

The ERPAE collaborative network was divided into five sub-groups, referred to as study groups, based upon their existing skills and expertise, current job roles and responsibilities, and expressed area of interest within the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy. These five study groups were aligned with the five mandates identified in the ERPAE strategic plan formulated during Phase One of the project.

Figure 2. The Study Groups' Individual Mandates

Study Group Mandates ……

1

…will help promote the mobilization of knowledge associated with the **flexible delivery** of EDU programs and services. PD will focus on sharing, learning and training related to the various adult education programs, funding sources, delivery methods and learner profiles best served by each program.

2

…will examine current best practice related to **intake, assessment and referral**. The study group will examine and develop innovative intake, assessment and referral approach(es) that best meet the needs of our learners.

3

……...will focus on: How **PLAR** is administered in each Board? What is working with PLAR? What are the inconsistencies with PLAR? What are the barriers to consistently applying PLAR? What innovative PLAR practice(s) will enhance the consistent application of PLAR.?

4

…..will examine current best practice related to **guidance, career counselling, pathway planning** and the development of innovative approach(es) that best meet the needs of our learners.

5

……will examine ways to enhance the positioning of Adult and Continuing Education programs by **building community and region wide awareness** of those programs. The study group will focus on identifying; How are Adult and Continuing Education programs promoted internally and externally in each Board? How are these programs promoted in other regions of the province/country? What promotional or other practices within our region and outside our region yield the highest community awareness? What innovative promotional/awareness practice(s) should our region adapt?

Team members were allocated prior to the commencement of the first session, and prior to each of the four sessions all attendees were provided with an agenda and memorandum outlining content, expected participation, and overall goals for the entire two-day gathering. Providing clarity about the expectations and goals for each session was as a vital component for ensuring all participants were prepared and informed of all processes undertaken during Phase Two of project.

The Coordinator and Research team drew upon the work of Robinson Hickman (2016) who highlighted that for effective team learning to occur, team members benefitted from sharing ideas and information, and discussion of team processes and expectations. At each of the four two-day sessions, the ERPAE collaborative network Coordinator acted as facilitator, and the participants were led through a series of presentations and structured activities purposefully intended to support equitable participation and achievement of designated outcomes.

SESSION ONE:
BUILDING AWARENESS AND TEAM

The ERPAE collaborative network met for the first time during Phase Two (2017-2018) of the project in Kanata during November 2017. The overarching goals for this meeting were as follows:

- to remind the participants of the processes and successes of Phase One of the project;

- to provide an overview of the ERPAE collaborative network's Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Plan;

- define capacity building for Phase Two of this project;

- examine theoretical underpinnings of effectively working as a group/team;

- remind the participants of the five study group mandates;

- identify each of the five study group's participants;

- provide time and space for each study group to get to know each other and review their specific mandate;

- detail the expected study group journeys for Phase Two of the project;

- set roles and norms within each study group; and

- explain the data collection methods employed by the RPAE collaborative network coordinator and research team.

Two definitions of capacity building were considered by the ERPAE collaborative network coordinator and researchers. First, the Business Dictionary definition of capacity building, which was described as, *the planned development of knowledge, output rate, management, skills, and other*

capabilities of an organization through acquisition, incentives, technology, and/or training. A second definition from the United Nations described capacity building as, *the process by which individuals, organizations, institutions and societies develop abilities to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives.* After consideration of both definitions, the coordinator and researchers agreed upon the following definition "The planned continuation of learning from within and outside our region. The sharing and developing of innovative best practices."

The participants were introduced to TeachOntario (https://www.teachontario.ca/) an online community for Ontario's educators that would be used to create a shared space to support each study group as they undertook their individual mandate. Each study group was provided with an area where they could share and work on their planning documents. Each study group was also asked to think about their individual roles within their study group and create a set of group norms that would guide their study group's working practices and processes throughout Phase Two of the project. The participants were encouraged to consider which of them might take on study group roles including; facilitator, timekeeper, note-taker, encourager, participant, and others as they felt appropriate. The study group were also provided with guides to prompt their thinking about norms at both individual and group levels. A summary of their final set of norms per study group is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Each Study Group's Set of Agreed Norms

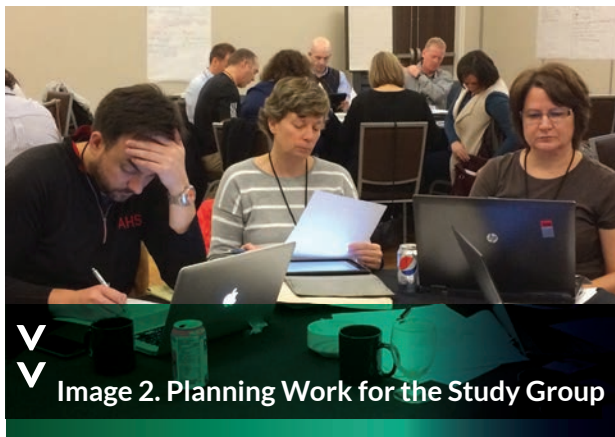| Study Group	Agreed Norms	
Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning	Our group commits to: • Creating and maintaining a culture of care • Productively staying on task, keeping the end goal in mind • Demonstrating accountability by working towards specific expectations • Our group commits to learning together by listening and freely sharing thoughts	
Intake, Assessment and Referral	• Good listener • Respect everyone's opinion • Active participation • Organization	• Spirit of inquiry • Caring Culture • Sense of humour • Reliability
PLAR	• Different communication styles are respected • Observe meeting etiquette • Interactions are inclusive and respectful • We laugh together, work and achieve together • Pacing of meetings allows for different learning styles to maximize participation • Meeting content and discussion is well-documented • All questions are valued and seen as learning opportunities	
Flexible Delivery	• Be positive and open-minded • Be encouraging, welcome new ideas • Engage in respectful sharing and debate • Actively listen, one person at a time • Accept responsibility for the study group success • Engage in respectful sharing • Respect our own and each other's ideas	
Community and Region Wide Awareness	**Soft/interpersonal skills** • Actively listen • Be heard • Be present in the meeting • Be passionate and care • Be focused • Be reliable • No interruptions • Be creative and open to ideas • Understand that others may need to leave • Respect others • Agree to disagree respectfully	**Hard skills/performing** • Be prepared when we meet • Commit to next steps • Relaxed exchange of ideas • Stay informed if you can't attend • Be curious, not defensive • Leave work hat at the door and be equal participants • Check in with others when exploring options • Focus on outcomes • Share responsibilities

The meeting concluded with each study group being set the task of creating a short presentation of how their individual school board currently addresses their mandate to be shared with each other at Session Two.

SESSION TWO:
LEARNING FROM WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OUR REGION

The ERPAE collaborative network met for the second time during Phase Two (2017-2018) of the project in Kingston during December 2017. The overarching goals for this meeting were to:

- review what had been accomplished to date; including:

    - clarification and sharing of study group norms;

    - a reminder of the Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy;

    - clarification of support required from ERPAE collaborative network coordinator and research team;

- present the individual school board presentations about the study group mandates;

- share anticipated successes and challenges that study groups might experience;

- undertake a regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunties, and threats (SWOT) analysis for each mandate;

- provide time for study group members to give feedback to their individual school board colleagues regarding study group learning; and

- review overall plan for Phase Two of the project (see figure 3).

At this relatively early stage of Phase Two, participants highlighted their need for the ERPAE collaborative network coordinator and research team to provide the following support:

(1) Clarify the ultimate goal/final outcome of the project

(2) Provide more time for discussion and work in the study groups

(3) Continue to be available to respond to questions, provide guidance, and keep participants on track

(4) Provide information of what and how all study groups were doing and progressing, and

(5) Keep running well-organized days with a balance of small and large group activities and tasks.

Participants revealed that they were looking forward to the learning, sharing, collaborating, having fun, and digging deeper to discover why programs were operating in the way they were within different participating district school boards.

Image 2. Planning Work for the Study Group

Image 3. Thinking About Planning for Study Groups

Anticipated challenges were revealed as being able to keep study group membership consistent over the Phase Two period, making sense of the inherent differences between large urban and small rural district school boards that populate the ERPAE region, and incorporating administrators' viewpoints together with front-line workers' viewpoints.

Figure 3. Overall Plan for Phase Two of the ERPAE Project

Each study group produced a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis relevant to their mandate, and samples of these can be seen in images. Each study group was encouraged to identify what they felt were strengths of their study group and any opportunities that would be available to them through the study group work, both for the benefit of the group and for individuals to each take back to their district school boards. In addition, the study groups were each asked to consider what they felt would be weaknesses in regard to their completing their mandates, and threats that might provide challenges to overcome as they worked together in their study groups.

V Image 4. Guidance, Career Counselling,
V and Pathway Planning SWOT
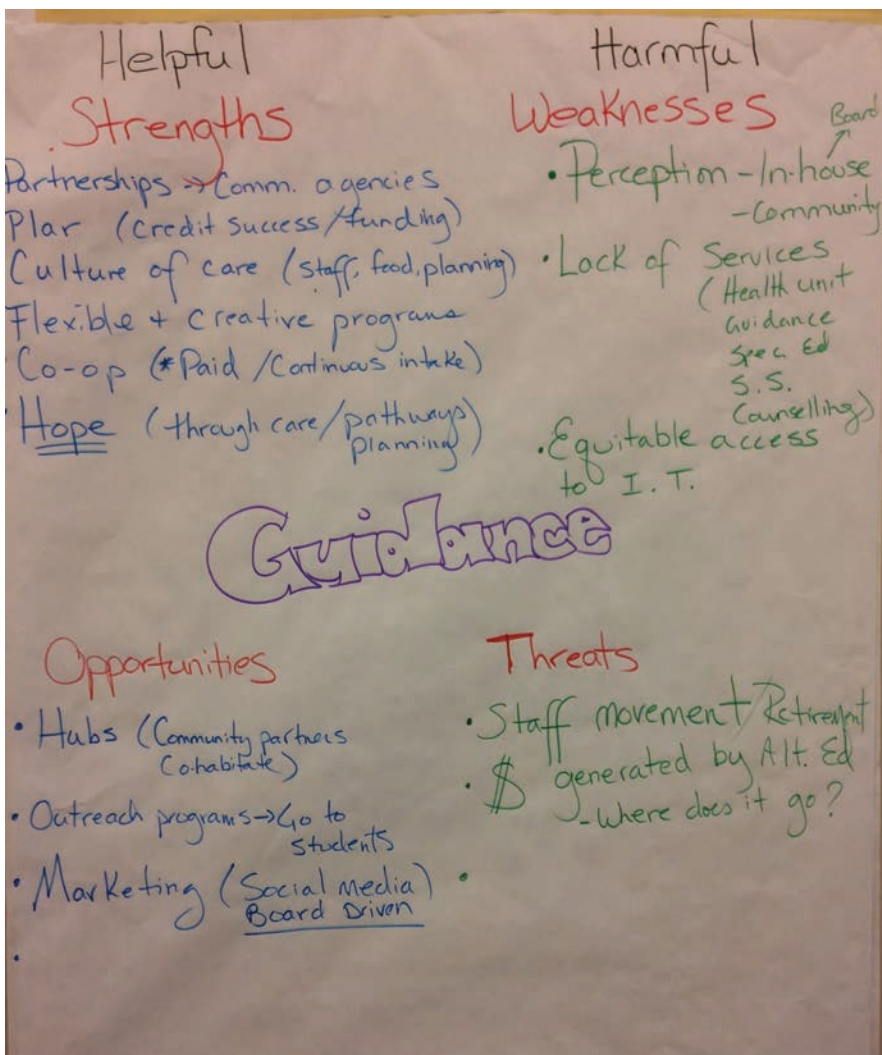
Image 5. Intake, Assessment and Referral SWOT
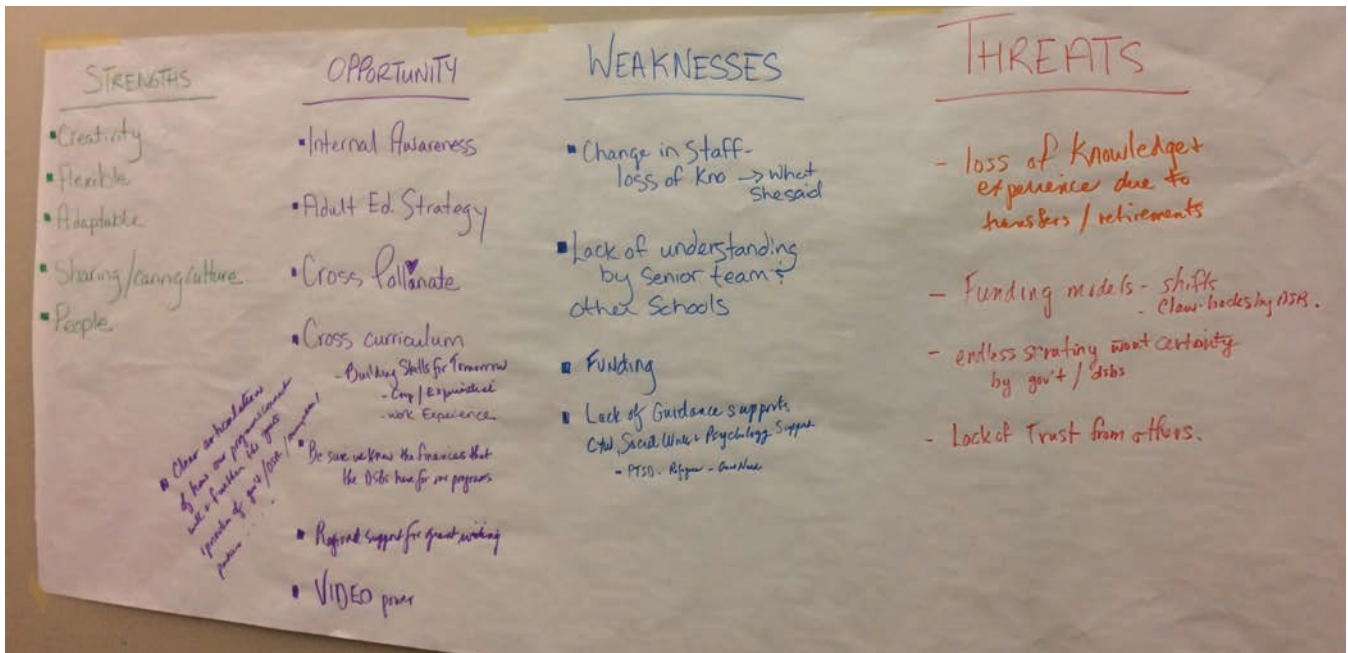
Image 6. PLAR SWOT
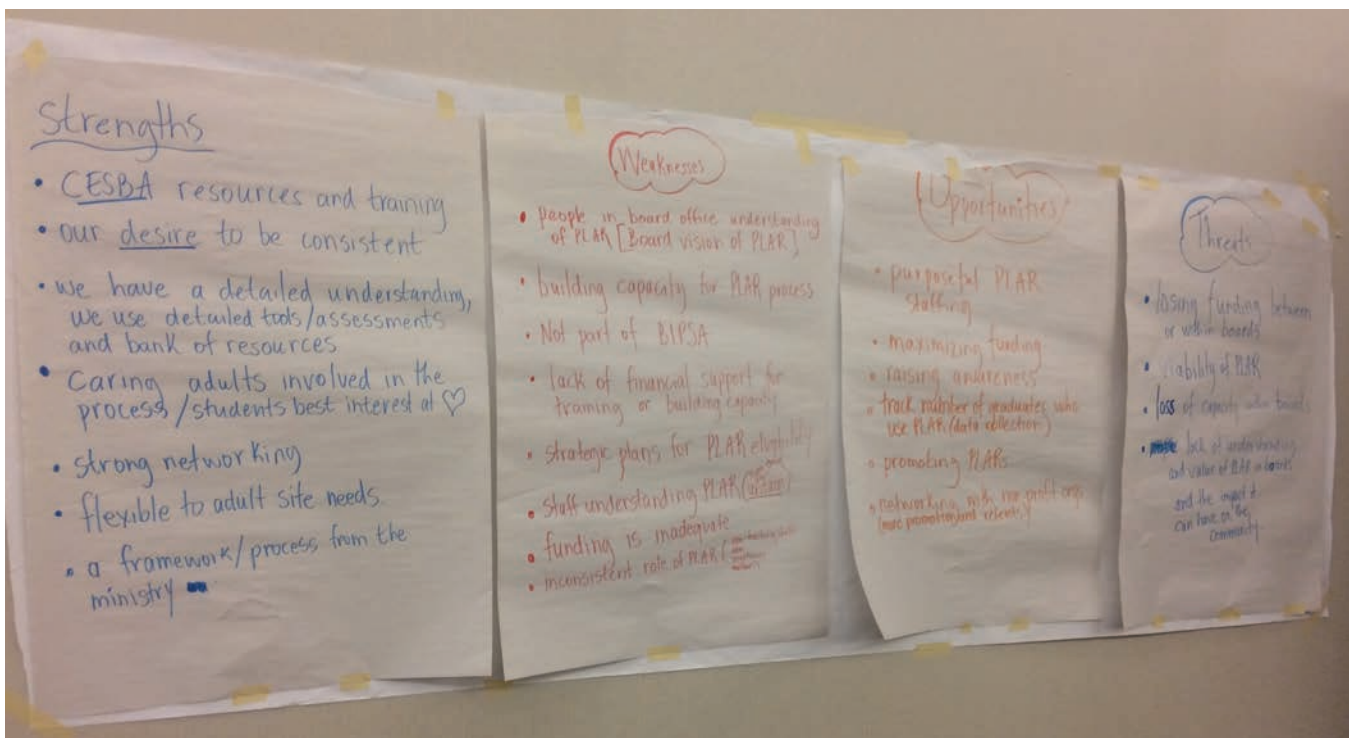
∨ **Image 7. Flexible Delivery SWOT**
∨

∨ **Image 8. Community Awareness SWOT**
∨

SESSION THREE:
GENERATING INNOVATIVE IDEAS

The ERPAE collaborative network met for the third time during Phase Two (2017-2018) of the project in Kanata during February 2018. The overarching goals for this meeting were to:

- have the opportunity to learn more about issues relevant to study group mandates from presenters external to the nine district school boards that form the ERPAE collaborative network;

- PLAR was presented by James Michaud, Coordinator of NERPAE collaborative network;

- Adult Education Programs and Flexible Delivery was presented by Simcoe County DSB;

- CESBA and CESBA resources were presented by Bernadette Beaupre, the Executive Director of CESBA;

- Adult Education Marketing was presented by Shelley Mayer, President of RAMP; and

- championing and positioning your district school board was presented by the Executive Director of EOSDN and the Coordinator of RPAE.

In addition to the five different presentations, participants had the opportunity to reflect upon how their individual district school board's strategic plan, mission, vision, and goal statements, and the key messages of adult and continuing education aligned with the four overarching Ministry of Education goals outlined in *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Ontario (2014)*.

Figure 4. Reflecting on Individual District School Board Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, and Goal

School District: _____

Ministry Goals: Achieving Excellence	Board Statements: Mission/Vision/Goals/SP	Adult/Con. Ed Key Messages	What is common among all columns?
Ensuring Equity			
Promoting Well-Being			
Enhancing Public Confidence			
Achieving Excellence			

In your group, create a chart like this on mural paper...

Finally, participants were introduced to the *Ideas, Connections, and Extensions* (ICE) model (Fostaty Young & Wilson, 2000) of learning that represents three different levels of learning growth from novice, through competence, to expert. *Ideas* are the fundamental building blocks of learning. *Connections* are made at two levels, the individual and the content level. At the *Extensions* level, new learning builds upon existing knowledge, students are then able to the new learning in novel and creative ways that can be far removed from their original learning context. Participants were invited to self-reflect using the ICE model at individual level and in their district school board groups.

Figure 5. Introducing the Ideas, Connections, and Extensions (ICE) Model (Fostaty Young & Wilson, 2000)
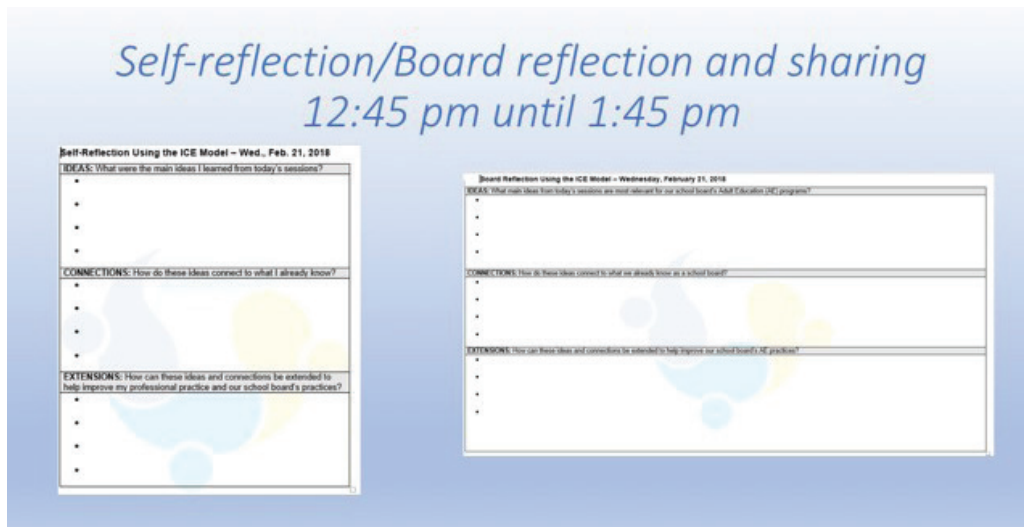
Figure 6. Sample Presentation Slide

SESSION FOUR:
PLANNING THE INNOVATION AND EXECUTION

The ERPAE collaborative network met for the fourth time during Phase Two (2017-2018) of the project in Kanata during March 2018. The overarching goals for this meeting were to:

- continue the learning from experts outside of the eastern region; and

- commence discussions and planning for the implementation of innovative practices during 2018/2019.

V Figure 7. Helping the EPRAE group to
V Affirm, Learn, and Yearn

Large Group Debrief and Wrap Up
2:00 to 2:30 pm

- SG – carousel
- Rotation to each mural
- Learn about each SG's 2017-18 - "Affirming, Learning and Yearning"

The two-day session began with a presentation from Bonnie Kennedy, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment, an organization dedicated to adult learning, recognition, and assessment. This was followed with a presentation led by Eleanor Newman of the Eastern Ontario Staff Development Network (EOSDN) and Frank Hummell, the ERPAE project Coordinator, where participants were directed to take stock of the ERPAE's progress to date and upcoming commitments for year three.

**V Figure 8. Planning Document Shared by Eleanor Newman**
V

| ERPAE Context for our Work	EASTERN REGION PARTNERSHIP FOR ADULT EDUCATIONMISSION VISION VALUES				
	ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN Culture of Care, Positioning of Adult Education, Refining and Enhancing Practice				
ERPAE Focus of our Learning	ADULT STUDENT JOURNEY Acquiring Skills and Credentials, OSSD Graduation, Improved Life Opportunities				
	Community Awareness of Adult and Continuing Education	Intake, Assessment and Referral to Programs	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	Guidance, Career Counselling, Pathway Planning	Flexible Program and Service Delivery
ERPAE Year Three Focus for our Action	IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE BEST PRACTICE – MONITORING THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION Regional Collaboration – Area Cooperation – Local Innovation				
Local/Board Innovation					
Area/multi-Board Cooperation					
Regional/All Boards Collaboration					
Foundation of our Decisions	STUDY GROUP Learnings from within and outside the region	STUDY GROUP Learnings from within and outside the region	STUDY GROUP Learnings from within and outside the region	STUDY GROUP Learnings from within and outside the region	STUDY GROUP Learnings from within and outside the region

Subsequently, the groups were able to consolidate their study group learnings, and documented this process through completion of a pre-prepared work sheet. Samples of these worksheets can be seen in images 9,10, &11.

∨ Image 9. Affirming statements from the Guidance
∨ study group.

∨ Image 10. Learning Statements from the Intake,
∨ Assessment, and Referral Study Group
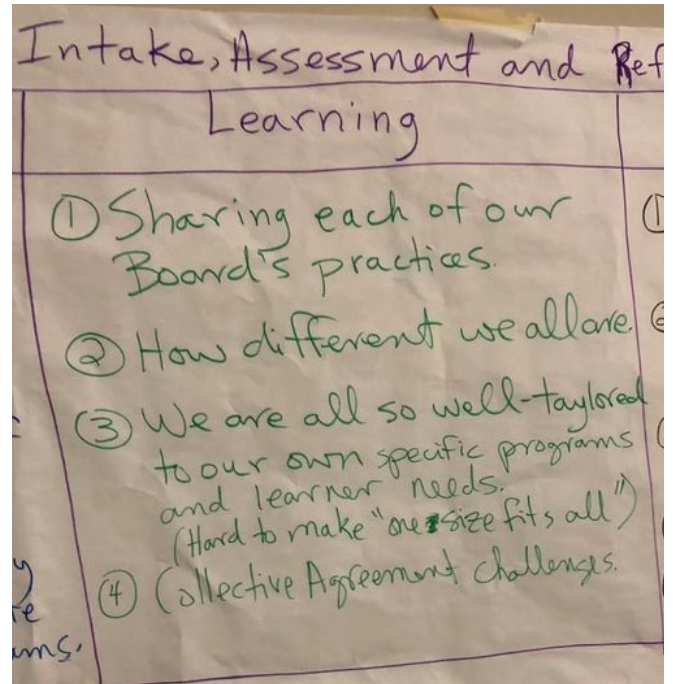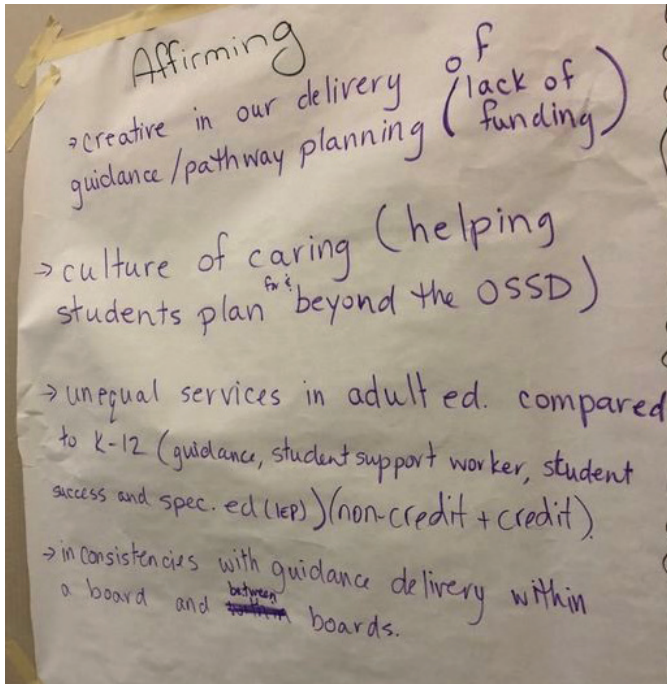
∨ Image 11. Yearning Statements from the PLAR Study Group
∨
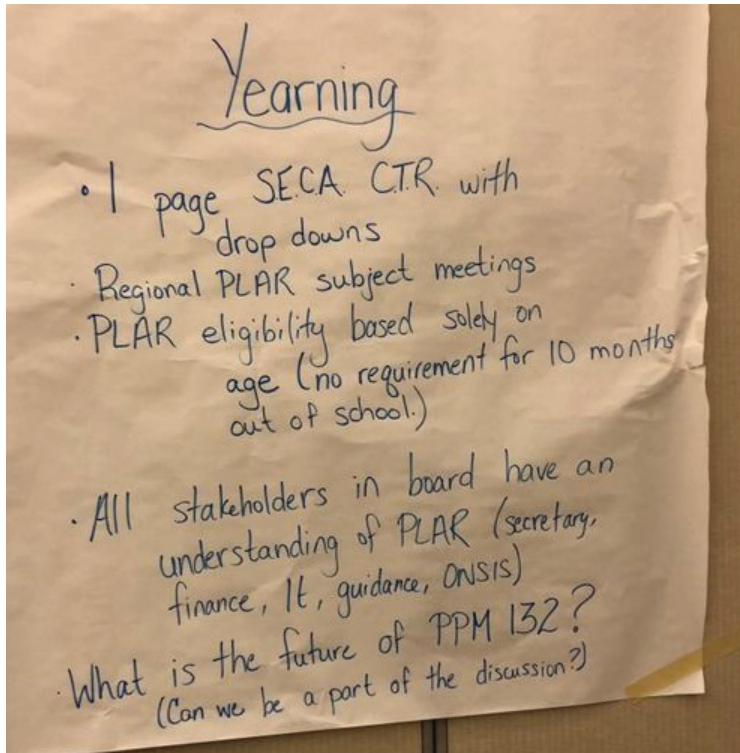
At this stage, the ERPAE group were sub-divided into their district school board groupings and guided toward completion of best practice "What We're Thinking" worksheets through responses to questions targeted to their specific district school board.

∨ Figure 9. Helping the EPRAE Group with Thinking About Innovative Practices
∨

What innovative practices are you considering?

- An adult reception centre
- Improved marketing practices
- Assessment and intake processes
- Expanding experiential learning
- Updated website that is easy to access
- Online PLAR
- Work experience project

The capacity building session culminated with each participating district school board drafting a tentative 2018/2019 Innovative Best Practice Proposal to share with their district school board senior administrators for further refinement and approval.

V
Figure 10. Worksheet for Facilitating Innovative Practice Proposal Development
V

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

METHOD

The eight participating Eastern RPAE district school boards were each invited to participate in the series of capacity building meetings during the academic year 2017-2018. The research team attended each of these meetings, and data was collected from the following sources:

- pre-prepared generative worksheets intended to prompt thinking of all participants;

- researchers field notes kept throughout the capacity building process;

- electronic surveys were distributed to all participants at the end of each of the four capacity building sessions; and

- 22 interviews conducted by researchers with members of the EPRAE project team, including staff in educator, guidance counsellor, office administrator, and school leadership roles.

DATA COLLECTION

The research team collected the mixed-method data throughout the capacity building phase of the ERPAE project November 1st 2017 and March 28th 2018. In total, the research team attended eight days of capacity building sessions, collecting data at each of these sessions. Table 2 provides a breakdown of data that was collected from the eight school boards throughout this period.

Table 2. Breakdown of Data Collected from ERPAE Project Phase Two Capacity Building phase

	DATA TYPE				
	FIELD NOTES	GENERATIVE PRODUCTS	PHOTOGRAPHS	PARTICIPANT SURVEYS	PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS
SESSION 1	●	●	●	●	
SESSION 2	●	●	●	●	
SESSION 3	●	●	●	●	
SESSION 4	●	●	●	●	●

The research team also used the field notes to keep track of the activities and ensure that the generative products and photographs were able to be accurately aligned to each activity and date of completion. A representative selection of generative products and photographs have been included throughout this report as visual testimony of the processes the ERPAE members undertook during of the capacity building developmental sessions, a sample of which can be seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Learning About the Study Group Affirming, Learning, and Yearning Processes

March 27, 2018
Study Group(SG) Consolidation
Affirming, Learning and Yearning Handout – 1:00 until 2:00 pm

As we wrap up the 2017-2018 Capacity Building sessions, we are interested in knowing about your SG learnings related to your assigned topic/mandate.

Instructions:

1. Working as a SG, please re-create the chart below on the provided mural paper.

2. As you work together to complete the chart please reflect on your SG's mandate (attached) and the learnings from our 4 Capacity Building Sessions held this year: November 1, 2 (Kanata), December 5, 6 (Kingston), February 20, 21 (Kanata), March 27, 28 (Kingston)

Affirming – what did we initially know about the state of our topic/mandate in the Eastern Region?	**Learning** – what did we learn in relation to our topic/mandate?	**Yearning** – what do we still want to know about our topic/mandate?

3. Please return to the main ballroom for 2 pm. Post your completed mural paper chart on the wall of the main ballroom.

4. Please select a spokesperson from your SG who will explain the content of your chart to the large group.

In addition, the research team conducted 22 interviews with members of the ERPAE collaborative group and distributed electronic surveys to all ERPAE participants at the end of each of the four capacity building sessions. Data from the electronic surveys collected during the first three sessions was used to inform planning and activities in subsequent sessions. Data collected from the final survey was analyzed by the research team and the findings are included in this report.

DATA ANALYSIS

Our data analysis began with sorting by date the generative products and photographs that provided the visual testimony of this report. A selection of these have been woven into the *Structuring of Phase 2: Capacity Building* section of this report.

The findings from the data collected through the participant interviews and surveys are presented in the following two sections of this report. We used the overarching themes of (a) the process of professional development (PD), (b) understandings from professional development, and (c) professional growth resulting from PD to develop sub-themes, through a process of deductive and inductive analysis, that were reflected in the interview data. These sub-themes are detailed in the Findings section of this report. Finally, the research team conducted an analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative data collected through the ERPAE group's completion of an online survey generated at the end of the Phase Two: Capacity Building process.

The Phase Two: Capacity Building series of meetings undertaken over the 2017-2018 academic year were purposefully planned to include a number of events and activities that intended to allow the ERPAE group to share their best practices, learn from each other, and identify areas where they might need to continue to develop ongoing skills, expertise and knowledge as they worked to implement Phase Three of the project in the academic year 2018-2019. Subsequently, the researchers created the following conceptual framework to collect and analyze the data generated throughout the *Phase Two: Capacity Building* process. A sample of generative product that was used to facilitate this data collection process can be seen in Figure 11.

- **Affirming (A)** – Defined as the skills, knowledge, and expertise that ERPAE members felt had been affirmed though their participation in the Phase Two: Capacity Building process.

- **Learning** (L) – Defined as the learning that EPRAE members felt they had achieved through the Phase Two: Capacity Building process, and

- **Yearning** (Y) – Defined as the yearning for learning that EPRAE members felt they still wanted to achieve, the pieces of knowledge they still wished to expand upon, or news expertise they wished to develop through the Phase Two: Capacity Building process or through other PF opportunities.

Consequently, this framework of ALY was employed to organize the capacity building efforts of the 2017/2018 *Phase Two: Capacity Building* period, and subsequently as a framework to analyze the interview and survey data featured in this report. In the following sections of this report we present first our analysis of the interview data, and second, our analysis of the survey data.

FINDINGS FROM PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

PROCESS OF PD: CONTINUOUS LEARNING, COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE, AND CULTURE OF CARE/RAPPORT

Interviews were conducted with 22 members of the ERPAE who participated in Capacity Building sessions. Participants' responses are presented in relation to: (a) the process of PD, (b) understandings from PD, and (c) professional growth resulting from PD. These findings were used to establish the key components of the Collaborative Coalition Model for Professional Development (CCBMfPD), which is presented in the Discussion section.

Each participant response is followed by a simplified interview code, which includes the interview number (I#) and the type of respondent as either being an administrator (A) or educator (e). People who oversaw an Adult Education program(s) were classified as administrators. The term educator was used to refer to instructors, teachers, and guidance counsellors.

Continuous Learning

- Embedded into practice
- Forced the professional and learning conversations
- Productive "we get stuff done"
- Breadth and depth in knowledge
- Increased confidence
- Rich and extensive learning

Collaborative Structure

- Opportunity to talk
- Supportive environment – promotes ideas and growth
- Network of support and ideas
- Knowledge of what's happening across our region
- Learning through dialogue
- The sharing and celebrating of best practices

Culture of Care

- Recognizing the importance of culture of care – not just to learners but to each other as colleagues
- Positive conditions for learning
- Feeling "embraced by a region"
- Developing "professional capital with colleagues across the region"

"I think capacity is a very key word in all of this because until we've developed the capacity for improvement and involvement and participation we're going to stay where we are."

- Interview 3, Administrator

Continuous Learning: The Eastern Regional Partnership of Adult Education (ERPAE) facilitated capacity building sessions (CBSs) that enabled continuous learning through two-day sessions four times during the 2017/2018 school year. Three administrators commented on how valuable the ongoing nature of the CBSs had been to their personal professional development (PD). For example, one administrator stated the process was more effective than one time opportunities for PD (e.g., a site visit, a conference) because it was *"actually embedded in practice and it's forced ongoing conversations through the regular meetings that we've had...this is the best PD I've done since I did my Master's"* (I5A). A second administrator described the experience as *"probably the best PD that I have ever had. We are productive, we get stuff done, and I feel when I leave that I have learned something...it is a gradual building of knowledge"* (I11A). Significant professional development and growth was reported by a third administrator who asserted, *"I could be in this job for 10 years and I would never get what I got through this"* (I20). Two ERPAE members commented on how their learning from capacity building sessions helped them develop confidence in their new roles. An educator described how the sessions helped her develop *"more breadth and depth to my knowledge...I feel like I am coming back to my setting being able to talk about the wider, more provincial issues in Adult Education...so wonderful for my confidence in the new division of education"* (I16E). Similarly, an administrator new to Adult Education stated, *"I feel like I know what I am talking about a little bit now... professionally I am able to talk with more confidence about what the Ministry mandates are"* (I8A). CBSs helped three ERPAE members

recognize their need for continuous professional learning. One administrator stated, *"I need to learn more...I have only got the tip of the iceberg right...There is a vast amount of Adult Education that I don't understand yet and I still have a lot of learning to do"* (I12A). For another administrator, CBSs were instrumental in helping her *"[realize] where I need to grow in my professional development, what I need to continue to learn, who I need to reach out to, how much more involved I need to be"* (I13A). Participating in CBSs motived one educator to pursue additional PD opportunities: *"I feel motivated to do more [professional learning] on my own. I applied for a TLLP just to research Adult Education...I [went] to Guidance Camp through CESBA"* (I2E). Five ERPAE members identified conversation during CBSs as beneficial for professional learning (I1E; I5A; I9A; I11A; I15A). One educator explained how the sessions got ERPAE members *"talking about this [Adult Education]...what are the things we are doing well? What are the things that we can improve?... conversation facilitated by this actual capacity building experience has been very, very meaningful in that regard"* (I1E). An administrator communicated her appreciation for and the benefit of conversation stimulated during CBSs: *"I love this process. I love the conversations. I'm learning so much...I love that type of brainstorming and problem solving and coming up with a strong forward momentum, despite challenges"* (I9A).

Collaborative Structure: Capacity building sessions facilitated by the ERPAE during the 2017/2018 school year included both opportunities for individual school boards to work with colleagues within their own board and those from other school boards. Three ERPAE members reported an appreciation for dedicated time to work with colleagues within their own school boards during CBSs. One administrator explained, *"The opportunity to talk, it doesn't happen a whole lot even within home boards that you can get together as a team...you have time set aside for that piece"* (I8A). In one school board, staff built upon their time spent together at CBSs through a debrief afterwards: *"Our principal is extremely supportive of new ideas for growth...we go back as a group and do a debrief and do brainstorming...pulling out ideas that we could use for growth"* (I3A). On the other hand, another administrator indicated that time spent with her school board colleagues did not result in action: *"I have liked the opportunity to sit and work as a [board] group, however, I feel that within our board there's no follow-up"* (I7A). Eleven ERPAE members described benefitting from learning about the practice of other school boards (I1E; I2E; I3A; I5A; I10; I12A; I13A; I15A; I16E; I17A; I18E). For example, one administrator affirmed, *"It's been a good opportunity to get to know other people, but also what other districts are doing...there are some phenomenal ideas and programs running out there...[to] better serve the clients who are coming through the doors"* (I5A).

Similarly, another administrator asserted that *"having that network of support as a source of different ideas and suggestions is really excellent"* (I3A). Time spent working with colleagues from other school boards was described by one educator as "super helpful". She explained, *"If you talked about any weakness in your board they were...quick to come up with ideas on how you could fix it and what worked for them"* (I2E). Another educator appreciated *"the opportunity to get to know and have dialogue with other principals in other boards"* because *"there was so much learning through that"* which would not be possible without the CBSs (I16E). Ultimately, an administrator stated the value of *"bringing together school boards and practitioners from across eastern Ontario"* was that it *"allows us to share best practices and really understand how other boards are doing certain things"* (I17A). Three suggestions for improving time spent learning from other school boards were communicated by participants. The first recommendation was to have similar size school boards with comparable mandates work together so that the learning was applicable (I1E). Given the amount of dialogue that occurred during group meetings, the second suggestion was to have *"one little action item every time we leave so maybe we can start with the consistency"* (I4A). The third suggestion was to have group members contribute to a collaborative document, like OneNote (I3A).

To be in a room where people get the 12+ to Adult [system] and the importance of learning and what that looks like is a blessing to be quite honest

- Interview 5, Administrator

Culture of Care/Rapport: Many adult learners are on personal transition journeys and have complex lives, which may include family responsibilities, learning disabilities, mental health issues, addiction problems, and being made redundant in the workplace. As such, receiving an education in a setting that understands and supports adult learners ensures their best chance of successful completion and graduation. Helping newcomers transition to Canada can also be aided through a supportive and caring environment where new skills and abilities flourish and lead to positive learning and employment outcomes (Youmans, Godden, & Hummell, 2017). As more newcomers in Canada arrive with varied backgrounds and a wider range of educational needs, the path to cultural integration becomes crucial for social and economic settlement. There are plenty of reasons – economic, social, and moral – to help adults reconnect effectively with education, and research suggests an increased chance of successful learning and employment outcomes when education takes place within a culture of care (e.g., Cassidy & Bates, 2005; Noddings, 1992, 2002; Rauner, 2000). To promote collaboration, the ERPAE Coordinator modelled a culture of care during CBSs and provided opportunities for members to do the same. Two administrators described the culture of care they experienced during the ERPAE capacity building sessions. One administrator commented on how the culture of care that is unique to Adult Education was extended collegially during the CBSs: *"Everyone in that room is a caring adult and we care for each other we care for everybody. That is Adult Education"* (I15A). Another administrator who was reluctant to have her Adult Education team participate in the sessions because of the amount of time it required (i.e., eight days total) described her willingness to take part once she experienced a culture of care: *"Setting those conditions that it was really welcoming…just really created that culture of… caring and trust so that it made you feel good…really set up the conditions for learning so with that I want to come back"* (I4A). Three administrators described the benefits they experienced from the ERPAE's culture of care. An administrator of a school board with a newer Adult Education team appreciated being *"embraced by a region" and indicated that "everyone has been so willing to share experiences and resources"* (I8A). For an administrator who was a "severe introvert", CBSs gave him the opportunity to "know people" so that *"it is much easier to call upon them, whereas before I might not have done so"* (I12A). Lastly, an administrator indicated that *"we've all gotten to know each other here" which helped him develop "professional capital with my colleagues across the region" that resulted in "connections and openings"* to work together and learn from each other (I5A).

"Our focus within the province isn't Kindergarten (K) to Adult. It's K to 12 and then Adult as an afterthought."

– Interview 8, Administrator

Understandings from PD: Affirming, Learning, and Yearning

Five main areas of Adult Education were the focus of the ERPAE's capacity building sessions during the 2017/2018 school year. These areas were as follows: Community Awareness; Flexible Delivery; PLAR; Intake, Assessment, and Referral; and Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning. During interviews, participants spoke about their learning in these different areas in terms of what had been affirmed for them, what they had learned, and what they yearned to learn more about or changes they would like to see happen. Table 3 outlines the understandings of interview participants in regards to the five areas of Adult Education.

"What I've really enjoyed the most about these [capacity building] sessions is feeling as if our voices matter, that they're contributing to something that's very important, and that we're all being heard"

- Interview 3, Administrator

Table 3 - Interview Participants Understandings of the Five Areas of the Adult Education Strategy

Area of Adult Education	Affirming	Learning	Yearning
Community Awareness	- AE is undervalued (I2E, I8A, I6E, & I20A) - Marketing is needed (I3A) - Partnerships with agencies to raise - AE awareness (I3A)	Different ways to raise community awareness (e.g., quarterly newsletter, outreach worker; I3A)	- Looking for the perfect message about AE and how to market the message (I3A) - Building understanding of the importance of AE (I2E, I9A, & I11A)
Flexible Delivery	- Adult learners need support and flexible programming (I18E) - Transportation issues in rural areas (I20A) - Some boards lack flexible programs (I2E; I3A) - Support in all programs (I7A)	- Larger boards are able to offer more flexible programs (I18E) - The importance of non-credit programs and how they work (I18E) - Similar programs should not be replicated, but offered by coterminous boards (I11A)	- Understanding of eLearning (I16E) - Smaller boards need more flexible programs (I9A) - Use of visiting instructors at community hubs (I3A) - Site visits to other programs to see how things are working and what's working well (I8A)
PLAR	- The importance of PLAR (I13A) - The need for consistent and correct PLAR processes (I4A, I5A, I8A, I9A, & I12A)	- Inconsistencies in how PLAR is administered (I8A) - Missing out on PLAR funds (I2E) - How to do PLAR, including best practices, from other boards (I13A, I15A, & I17A) - A database to track students, including PLAR processes (I8A)	- PLAR for new Canadians (I13A) - Understanding PLAR (I8A & I16E) - Understanding proposed PLAR changes (I14E & I4A) - Use of PLAR upon registration (I4A) - Central Board PLAR staff (I7A) - PLAR PD (I7A)
Intake, Assessment, and Referral	- Intake should be done by guidance counsellors (I16E) - The benefit of a one-stop shop for AE (I1E)	- Learning about other programs (I1E) - The use of intake days by some boards (I2E) - How to refer people to other programs (I15A)	- Partner with agencies to support adult learners (I13A) - Value of a one-stop shop for adults (I1E) - Need for common intake and assessments/practices in AE (I3A & I9A) - Mandated language levels for AE credit programs (I9A)
Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning	- Adult learners need a culture of care to support their learning (I1E, I2E, I16E, I4A, & I17A) - Lack of guidance staff in some boards (I4A, I5A, & I16E)	- The importance of guidance and career counselling in Adult Ed (I4A, I5A, & I11A) - Different guidance programs (I16E) - Guidance best practices (I2E)	- Consistent guidance and career support available for all adult learners by qualified staff (I4A & I9A) - Guidance PD (I9A)

In addition to the five areas of Adult Education that were the focus of the capacity building sessions, members of the ERPAE raised some important issues related to Adult Education, in general. These issues are presented here in the form of questions:

- What is AE like in areas similar to ours? (I16E)

- How can we better understand AE funding registers? (I2E, I4A, & I22A)

- How do we collaborate as a region when the funding stops? (I12A)

- How can we optimize the expertise we have in Adult Ed in our region? (I9A)

- How can we work on succession planning in Adult Ed to make sure that expertise isn't lost? (I5A, I8A, & I9A)

- How can we meet impending labour market shortages? (I9A)

"It takes time…our students, you know, have challenges and they're overgoing hurdles. They each have their story. They will get there with our support and it doesn't have to be a quick fix."

– Interview 4, Administrator

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH RESULTING FROM PD: CAPACITY, COLLABORATION, AND CHANGE

Members of the ERPAE reported professional growth that resulted from the 2017/2018 capacity building sessions in terms of their capacity, collaboration, and change.

Capacity: CBS participants reported the development of capacity in three main areas of Adult Education: AE practices, knowledge of AE, and AE roles. The type of capacity being developed in each of these areas is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Type of Capacity Development in Adult Education Reported by Participants

Adult Education Area	Type of Capacity Being Developed
Adult Education Practices	• Consistent and correct application of PLAR (I13A, I17A, I16E) • Guidance best practices (I2E, I19A) • Understanding of funding registers (I4A & I9A) • Experiential learning (I9A) • Opportunity to develop the board's AE program (I3A)
Knowledge of Adult Education	• Greater understanding of AE programs in the region (I1E, I10A, I12A, & I17A) • Greater understanding of AE Ministry initiatives and directives (I2E & I14E) • Understanding of the urban/rural differences in our region (I5A & I17A) • Greater understanding of AE as a field (I10A & I19E)
Adult Education Roles	• Confidence to perform role to share about AE with others, collaborate, and meet the needs of adult learners (I16E) • Understanding of own role in AE (I10A) • Confidence in the work of our AE team (I9A & I12A)

> "Every session I come to, it's about trying to increase my understanding…the more I understand about it [PLAR], the more I can properly support the adult"

> – Interview 16, Educator

Similarly, ERPAE members identified the same three Adult Education areas that required capacity development in either themselves, their school boards, or their colleagues. The type of capacity requiring development in each of these areas is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Type of Capacity Requiring Development in Adult Education Reported by Participants

Adult Education Area	Type of Capacity Being Developed
Adult Education Practices	• The inclusion of guidance and career counselling and pathway planning in a school board (I2E) • Support teachers in awareness of the value of PLAR and providing them with PD opportunities (I1E) • Understanding funding registers better (I2E & I4A) • The need to work collaboratively to pool resources and systematize AE practices in the region (e.g., PLAR; I5A) and work towards innovative practices (I12A)
Knowledge of Adult Education	• Making Directors of Education and upper management in school boards aware of the importance of AE (I2E, I9A & I11A)
Adult Education Roles	• The need for succession planning in AE so that there is greater capacity for AE roles (I5A, I7A, & I8A) • Re-thinking the rotation of principals in AE so capacity is developed and maintained in a school board (I9A) • AE training and education opportunities are needed to equip AE staff for their roles (I3A) • Supporting expert growth in more than one area to help staff develop greater capacity (I7A)

"I have so much knowledge and it's going to be lost when I go because there's nobody else who has the big picture... it's hard to mentor someone because they'd have to actually release somebody and they're not."

– Interview 8, Administrator

Collaboration: ERPAE members reported valuing collaboration developed during CBSs because it allowed them to learn from others, establish supportive working relationships, and work together to advance the field of Adult Education. Three administrators stated that they valued learning from other boards (I2A, I10A & I13A). For example, one administrator stated, *"There is so much to learn from others…there is so much to learn from outside our area"* (I13A). Three ERPAE members described the importance of establishing positive relationships with colleagues to support their own work (I2E, I14E, I4A). One administrator explained, *"It's helped me to connect and network with others…so that even when I am at work and something comes up or someone says something…I know who to reach out to"* (I4A). In regard to advancing the field of Adult Education, one administrator noted that the ERPAE's response to the discussion paper, 'Strengthening Ontario's Adult Education System', was an important contribution (I11A). Another administrator commented on the work of the ERPAE since its formation: *"Not only are we forging relationships here, but we're getting [AE] work done, so we're doing it together"* (I4A).

Given the benefit of ERPAE collaboration, it is not surprising that four members communicated a desire to continue collaborating (I5A, I8A, I12A, & I16E). One educator described it this way: *"I would love more opportunities to discuss and share the burning issues…there is so much that we can tap into, so much knowledge that helps when it is shared"* (I16 E). While one administrator hoped that future collaboration would include *"an Eastern region project"* (I5A), another administrator hoped it would consist of *"regional celebration or sharing at the end like we've done…it holds people accountable…and it* becomes that celebration of this is where we are and this is what we've been able to do with this"* (I8A).

> *"I've really enjoyed the blue sky thinking aspects of this: what could we do if the sky was the limit and what needs to be done?"* **(Interview 3, Administrator)**

Change: ERPAE members reported being appreciative of Ministry funding in AE that facilitated their learning and they identified changes they were either implementing or hoping to implement in the near future. Two administrators commented on their appreciation of Ministry funding in AE (I3A & I5A). For example, one administrator remarked, *"I think it's really exciting that the government invested enough that they're willing to direct money to examine all of it [Adult Ed]"* (I3A). It was surmised by another administrator that AE was receiving funding because of much needed change: *"You don't fund things that are already going well, typically…you fund things to find out where the gaps are and where are the missteps and learning how can we be better at this"* (I5A).

On the topic of change, an AE administrator confirmed that there was a need for change in her board: *"In my board, there's lots of opportunity for change…change doesn't happen overnight. We are going to pick one focus [and] work on that to try to effectively improve and then continuously work on another opportunity"* (I4A). Given that the final year of ERPAE Ministry funding involves an implementation phase of piloting innovative practices in AE, another administrator was hopeful that such change would

be self-directed and enable boards to learn from one another: *"I am really hoping that in the implementation phase that we really get to make that work in our boards the way we would like to....[with] all kinds of great ideas...everybody will benefit from the sharing of that"* (I3A).

ERPAE members identified the following areas in which they experienced change or would like to see change:

- The use of a well-developed student management database developed by one of the region's school boards (I9A and 15A)

- PD that will benefit educators who are in Adult Education – one school board was looking at organizing their own Adult Ed learning conference (I1E)

- Addressing local labour market needs through a regional portal with labour market information and pathway planning information (I9A)

- Developing a "one stop shop" community hub to meet the needs of adult learners (I1E)

- A credentials assessment centre within the board/province where a plan is developed for each adult learner and they are referred to an appropriate program(s) and their success is monitored and supported (I3A & I9A)

- Putting a guidance program in place (I2E)

- The standardization of PLAR (I9A)

- A PLAR hotline where people can get information and have their process reviewed (I7A)

- PLAR PD (I7A)

- The development and piloting of an e-newsletter [quarterly] that goes to partners and agencies (I3A)

- Hiring an outreach worker to liaise with places, community health units and libraries (I3A)

AFFIRMING, LEARNING, AND YEARNING BY JOB ROLE AND STUDY GROUP

In addition to analyzing interview data, the researchers sought to establish whether affirming, learning, and yearning had occurred consistently across the range of job roles of the ERPAE group members. A summary of our analysis can be seen in Table 6. Interestingly, across the five different job roles of educator, guidance counsellor, principal, office administrator, and program manager/head of student services that were represented in the ERPAE group members, all felt they had achieved new learnings through their participation in the year-long capacity building sessions. Moreover, all five job roles also identified yearning for more knowledge, with the highest levels coming from principals and program manager/head of student service roles.
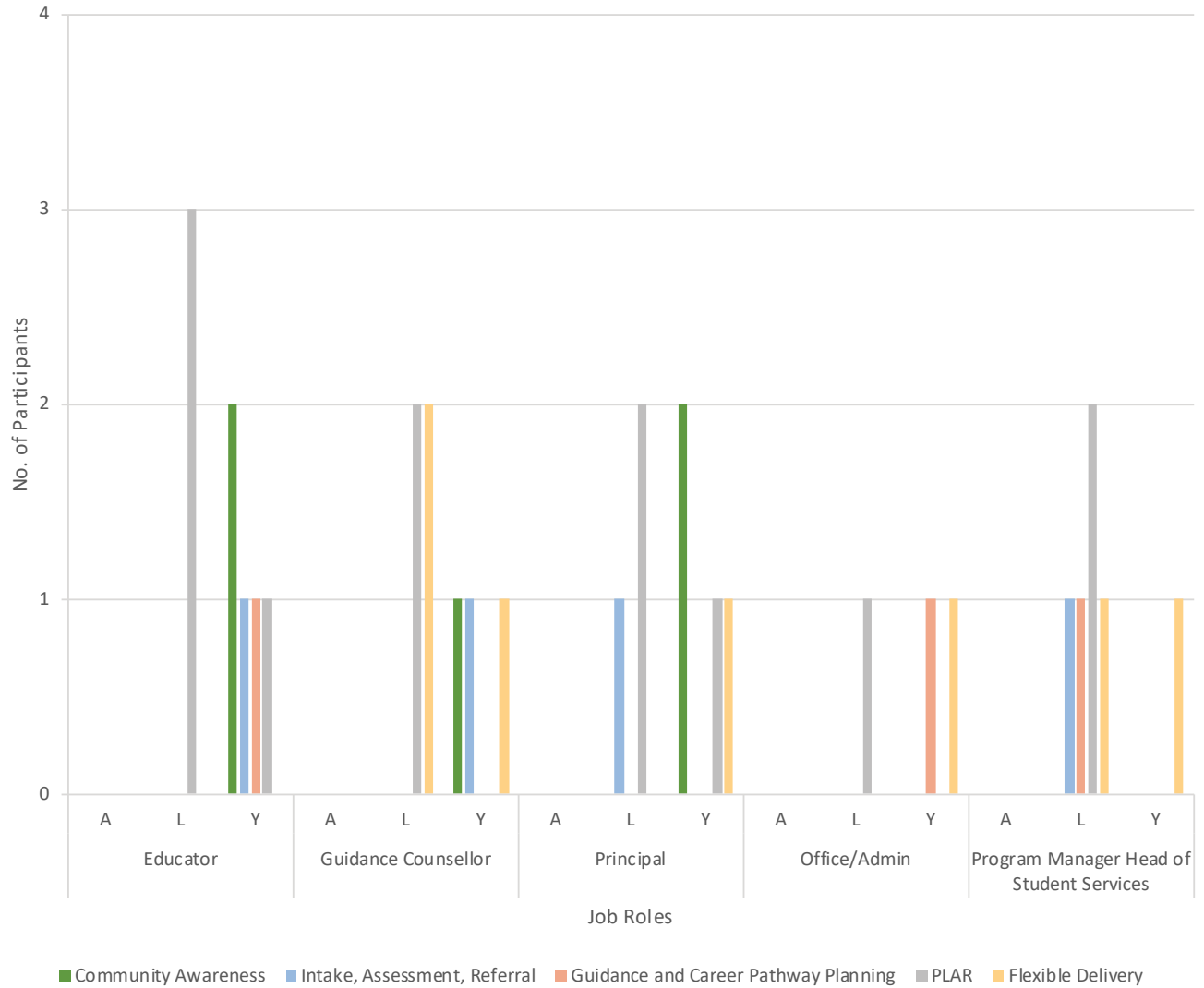
Table 6: Job Role and Study Group Thematic Analysis (A = Affirming; L = Learning; Y = Yearning): Allocated by study group mandates
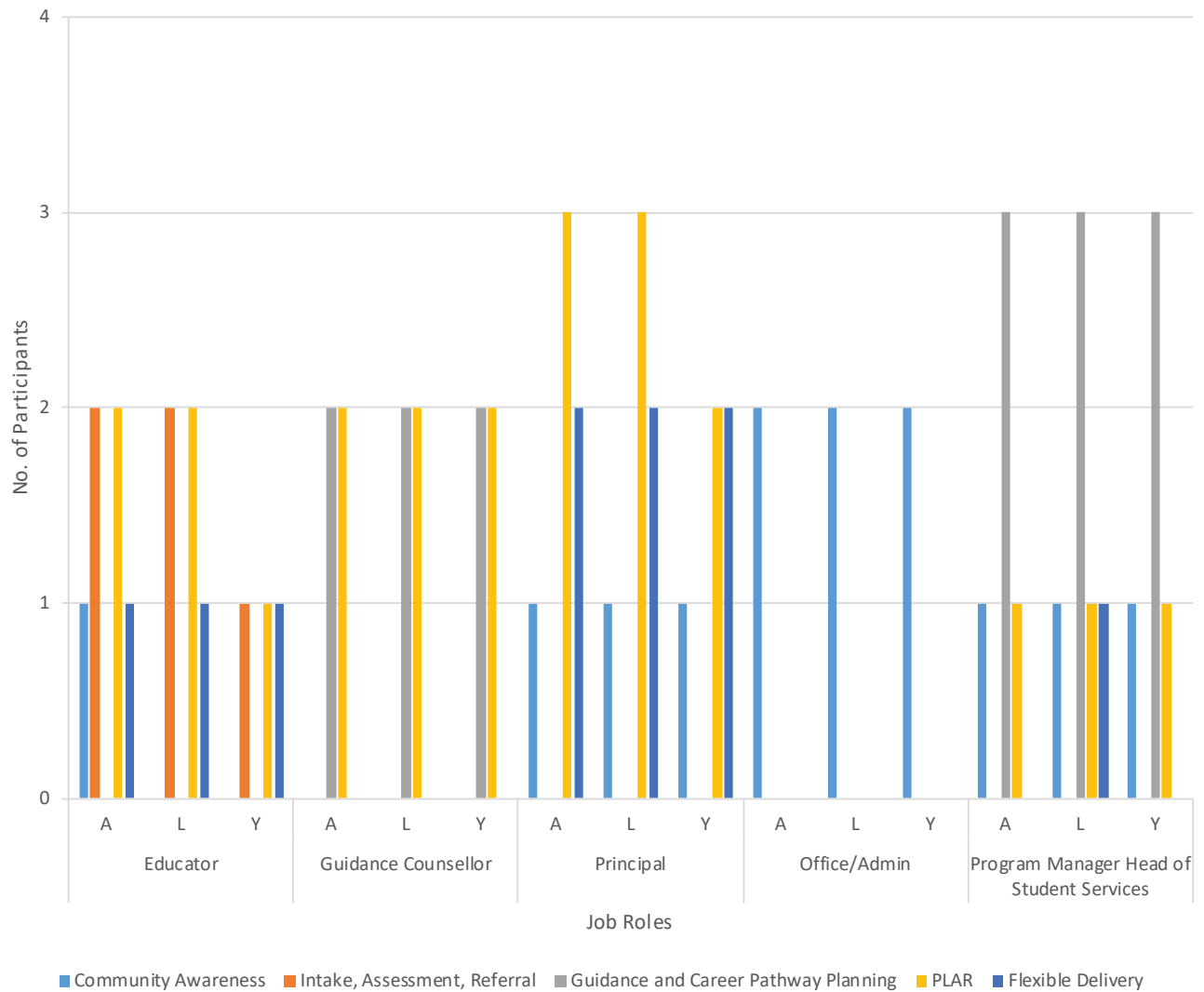
Table 7: Job Role and Study Group Thematic Analysis (A = Affirming; L = Learning; Y = Yearning): Learning and yearning beyond their study group mandates

FINDINGS FROM PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

This section includes a series of charts that provide an overview of the demographics of the ERPAE survey participants. Quantitative and qualitative survey responses are presented about the effectiveness of the ERPAE Capacity Building sessions in promoting professional development. The survey results were taken from the final ERPAE session held during March 2018. Following this initial section, we present the findings from the remainder of surveys taken throughout the EPRAE Capacity building process. Chart 1 highlights that all eight district school boards that were active in the EPAE Capacity Building were represented in the overall group that came together for this stage of the project. In total, 37 adult education staff members contributed to this final survey from phase 2 of the Adult Education Initiative, with Ottawa Carleton and Upper Canada District School boards each having eight survey respondents, Limestone five survey respondents, Algonquin Lakeshore and Ottawa Catholic both having five survey respondents, the Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario and Renfrew County having three survey respondents and Hastings and Prince Edward having two survey respondents.
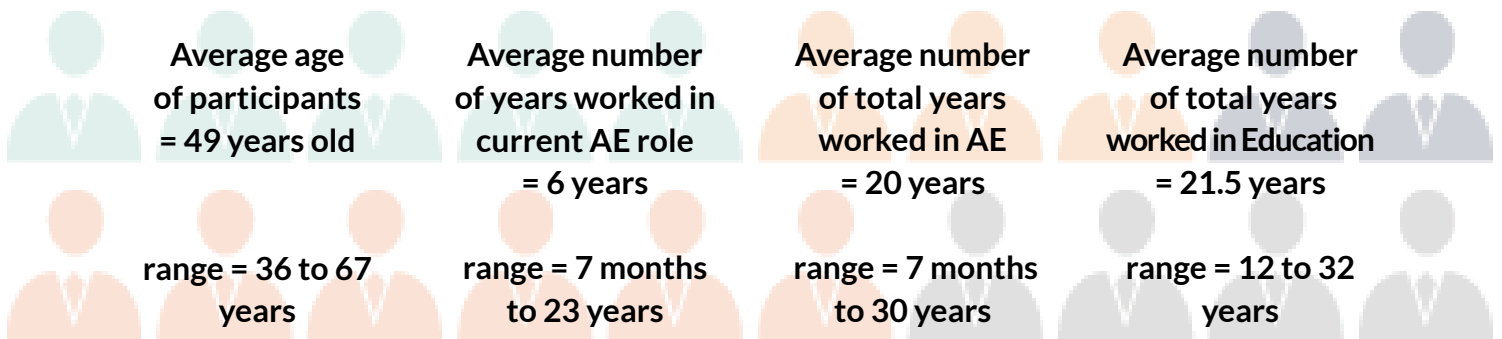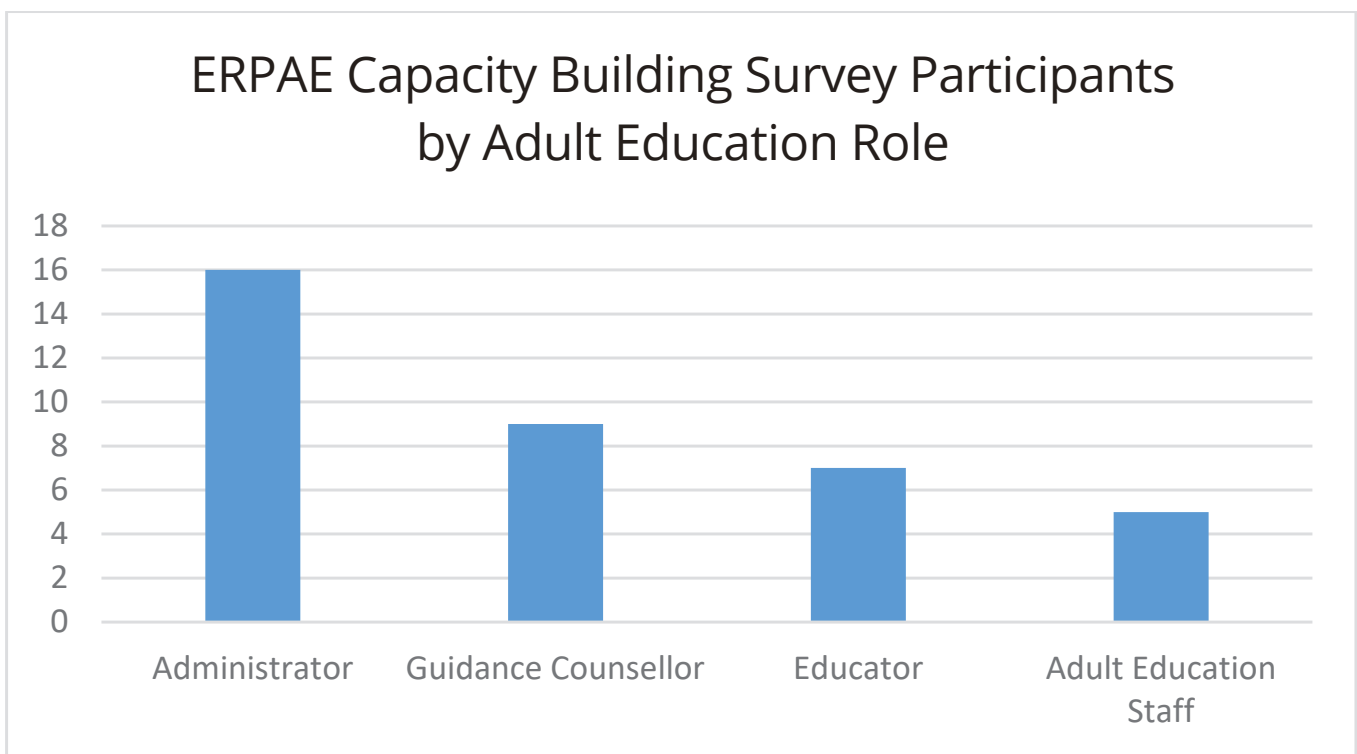
CHART 1.	DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD SURVEY PARTICIPANTS IN PHASE 2 OF THE ERPAE PROJECT

ERPAE Capacity Building Survey Participants by School Board
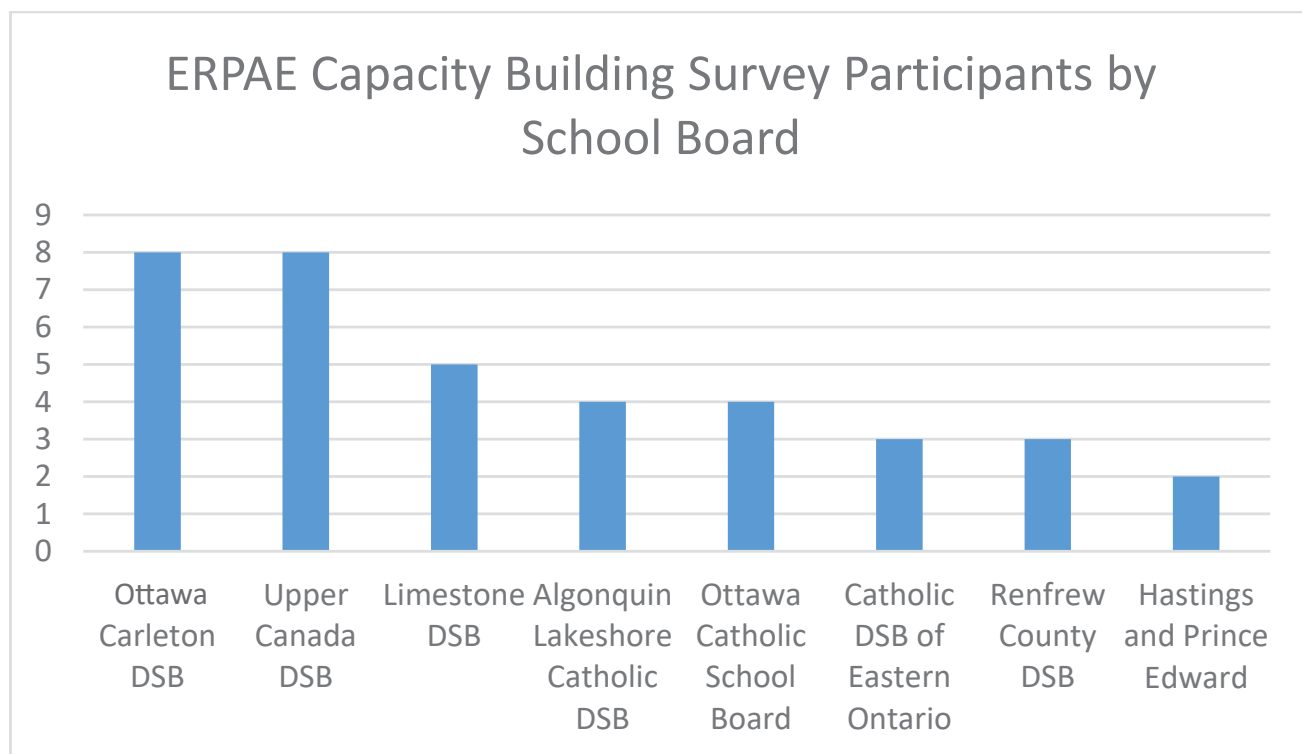
From the 37 staff participants who completed the survey, a variety of working roles within Adult Education were represented. These are outlined in Chart 2 and include 16 administrators, nine guidance counsellors, seven educators, and five adult education staff. From the demographic data collected through participants' completion of the survey we know the following about our participant sample;

ERPAE Capacity Building Survey Participants by Adult Education Role

	Average age of participants = 49 years old	Average number of years worked in current AE role = 6 years	Average number of total years worked in AE = 20 years	Average number of total years worked in Education = 21.5 years
	range = 36 to 67 years	range = 7 months to 23 years	range = 7 months to 30 years	range = 12 to 32 years

In addition to establishing the job roles of the survey participants, we collected data on how many survey participants were members of each of the five study groups. Study groups were each following one of the Ministry of Education identified mandates of: (a) flexible delivery, (b) PLAR, (c) guidance career counselling and pathway planning, (d) intake, assessment, referral, and (e) community awareness, a regionally identified priority. The results of this analysis are presented in Chart 3 and show that both Flexible Delivery and PLAR study groups had nine survey respondents; Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning had eight survey respondents; Intake, Assessment, and Referral had six survey respondents; and Community Awareness had five respondents.
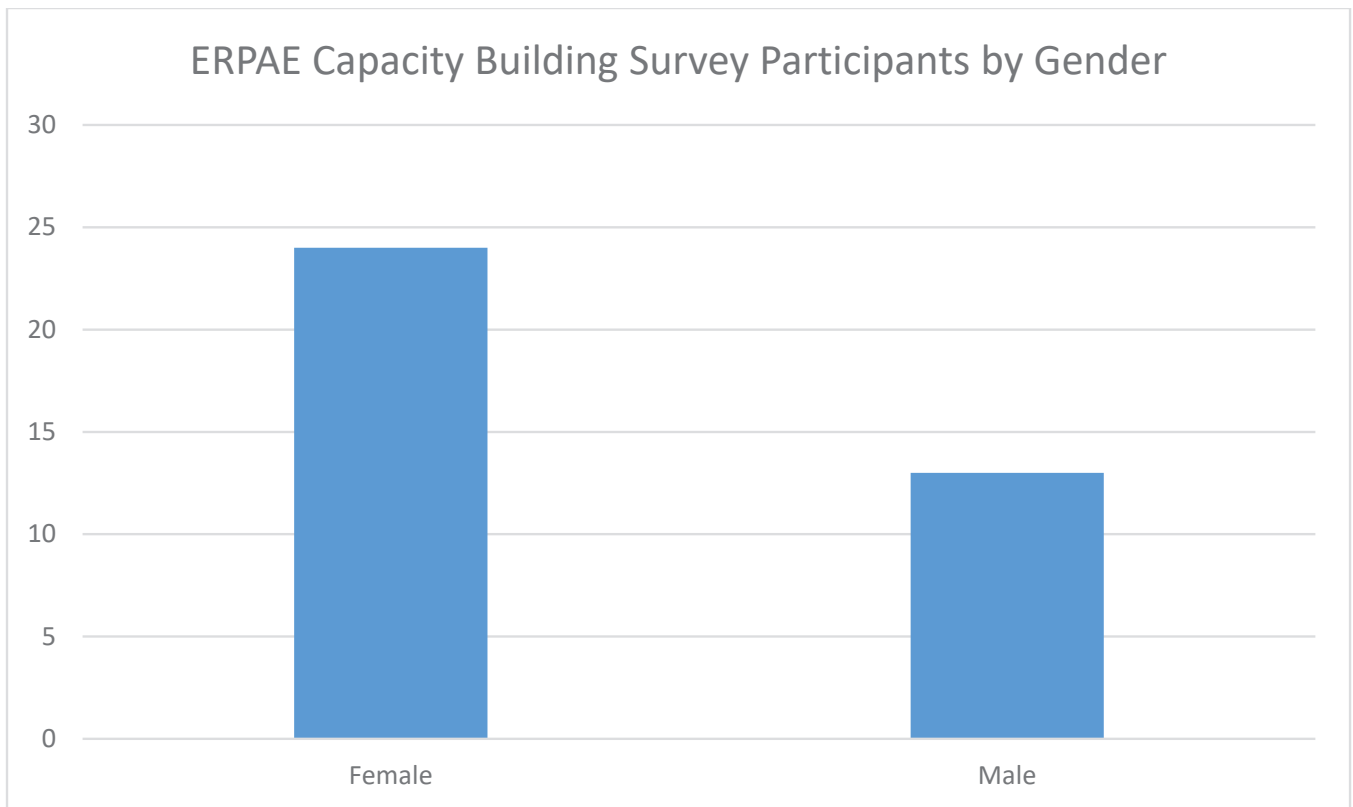
CHART 3.   SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY CAPACITY BUILDING STUDY GROUP
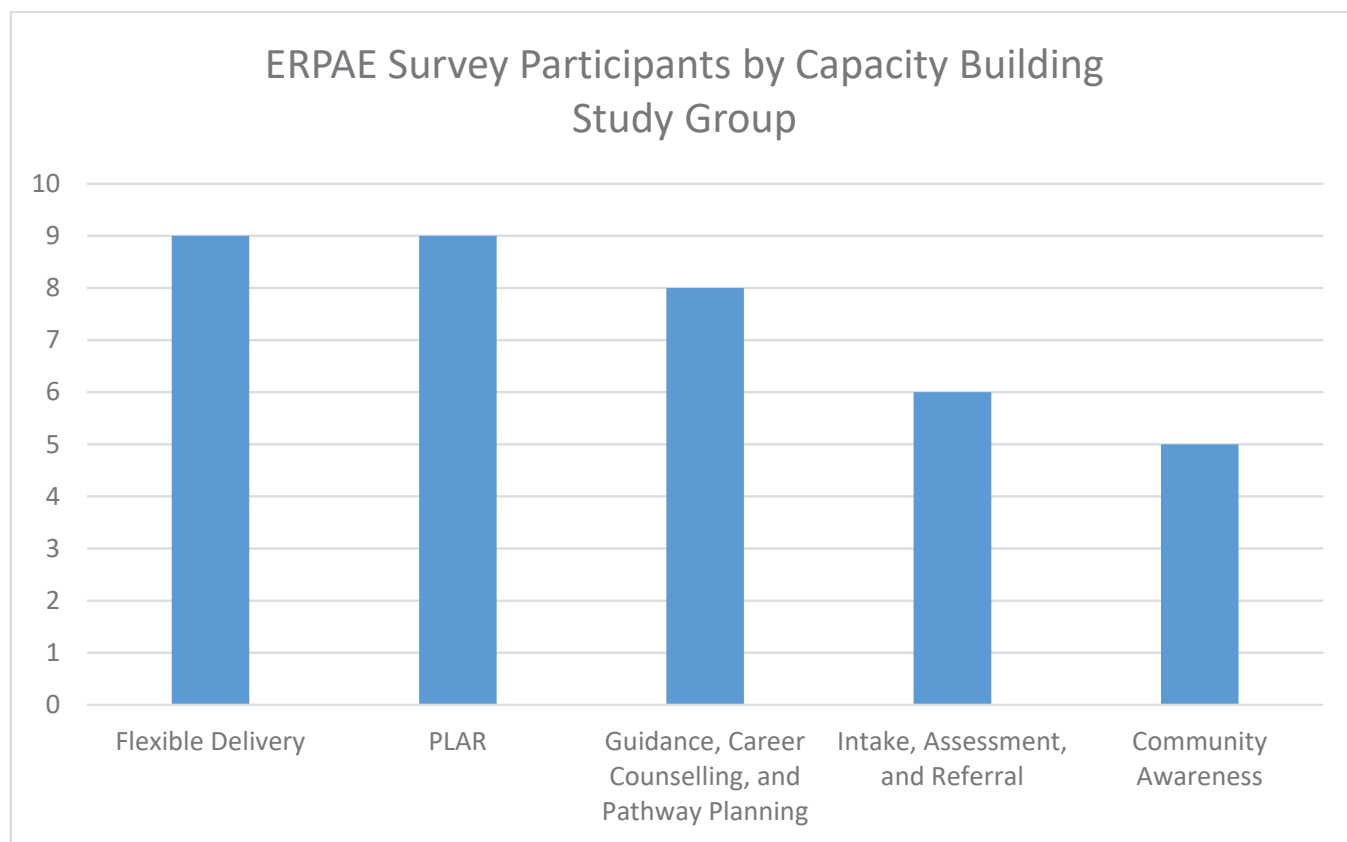
We collected data on the identified gender representation of the participants. The findings are illustrated in Chart 4 and show a higher representation of female respondents with than males which is reflective of the ERPAE membership.

CHART 4.   SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER

ERPAE Capacity Building Survey Participants by Gender

In addition to collecting demographic data, we asked the ERPAE survey respondents about the usefulness of the of the Capacity Building Sessions in regard to contributing to their overall areas of professional growth. The results are detailed in Chart 5 and show that overwhelmingly all 37 survey respondents found the sessions either extremely useful or moderately useful. In particular, learning from within the eastern region was seen as extremely useful by 30 of the survey respondents, and all 37 of the survey respondents found developing a collaborative network valuable.

CHART 5.   THE USEFULNESS OF THE ERPAE CAPACITY BUILDING SESSIONS IN CONTRIBUTING TO AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The Usefulness of the ERPAE Capacity Building Sessions in Contributing to Areas of Professional Growth
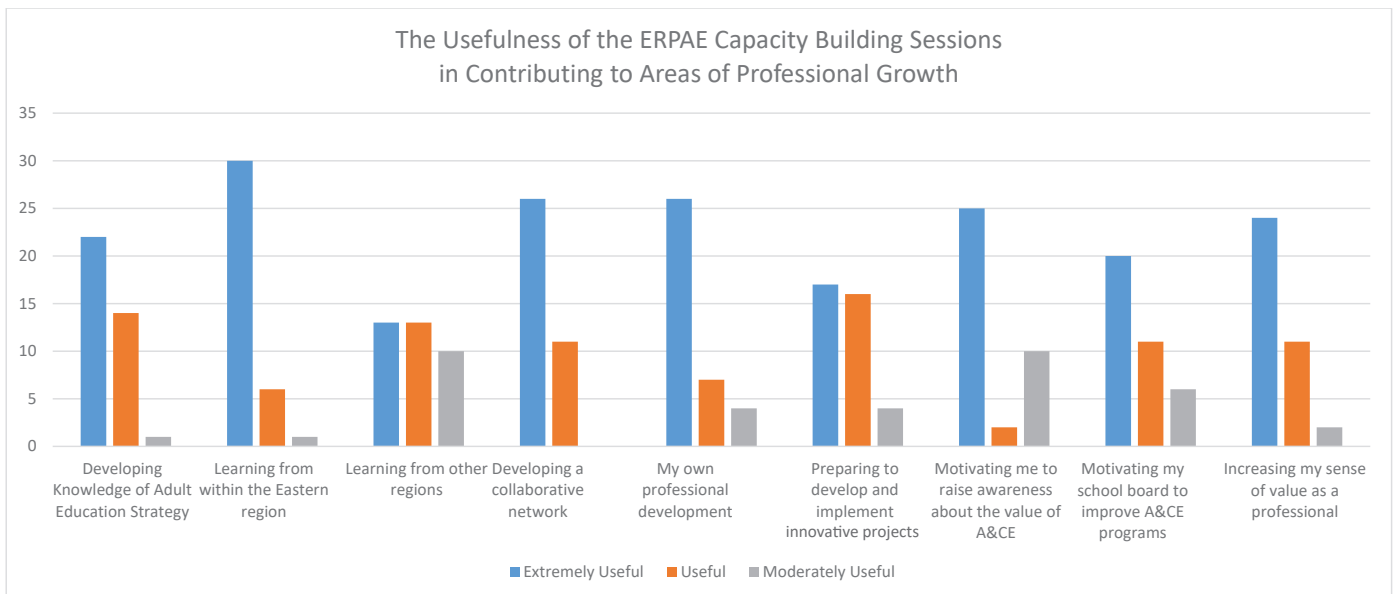
We surveyed participants to establish which areas of professional growth they felt had been developed through their participation in study groups. Chart 6 outlines that almost all 37 respondents felt that the participation in study groups had either effectively promoted or moderately promoted their professional knowledge of adult and continuing education, their confidence, professional practice, sense of professional community, willingness to examine innovative practices, and willingness to communicate the value of adult and continuing education.

CHART 6.   PARTICIPATION IN STUDY GROUPS
   AND AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
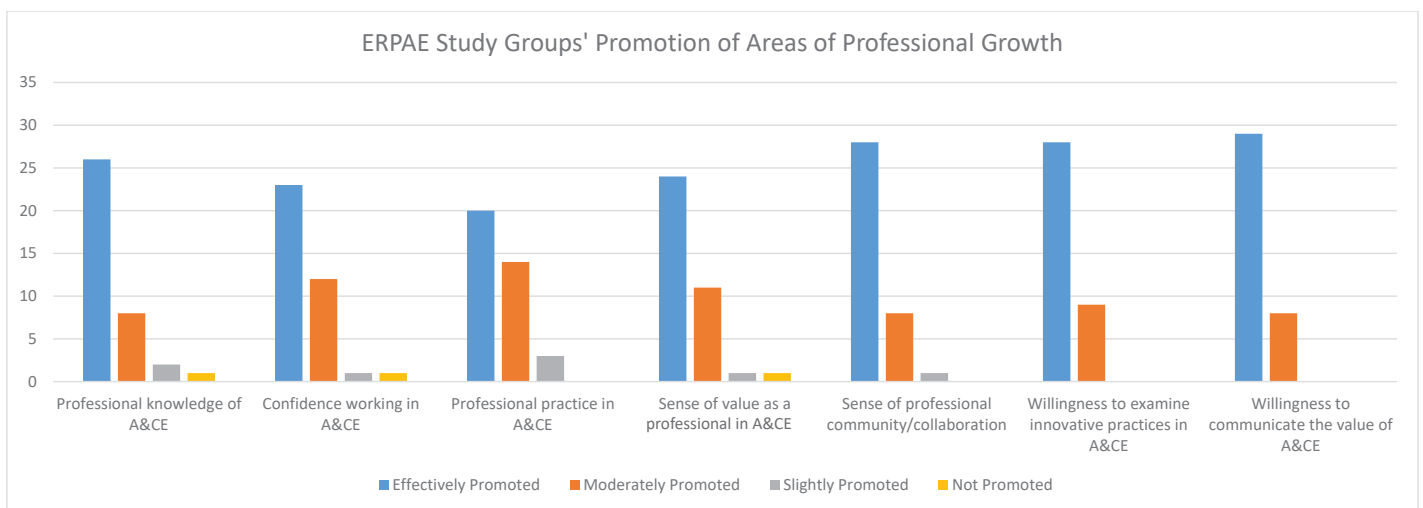
ERPAE Study Groups' Promotion of Areas of Professional Growth

Finally, through the survey data we investigated how participants rated their study group's performance on five different variables. 36 survey respondents felt that they had high achievement in respecting each member's thinking and contributions, 27 survey respondents reported high achievement in working productively and efficiently, 28 participants reported high achievement in reaching a consensus that was supported by the group, and 26 respondents reported high achievement with fulfilling their study group's mandate. Across all five variables, almost all respondents identified a sense of high or moderate achievement. Details of the results are provided in Chart 7.

CHART 7. ERPAE STUDY GROUPS' PERFORMANCE
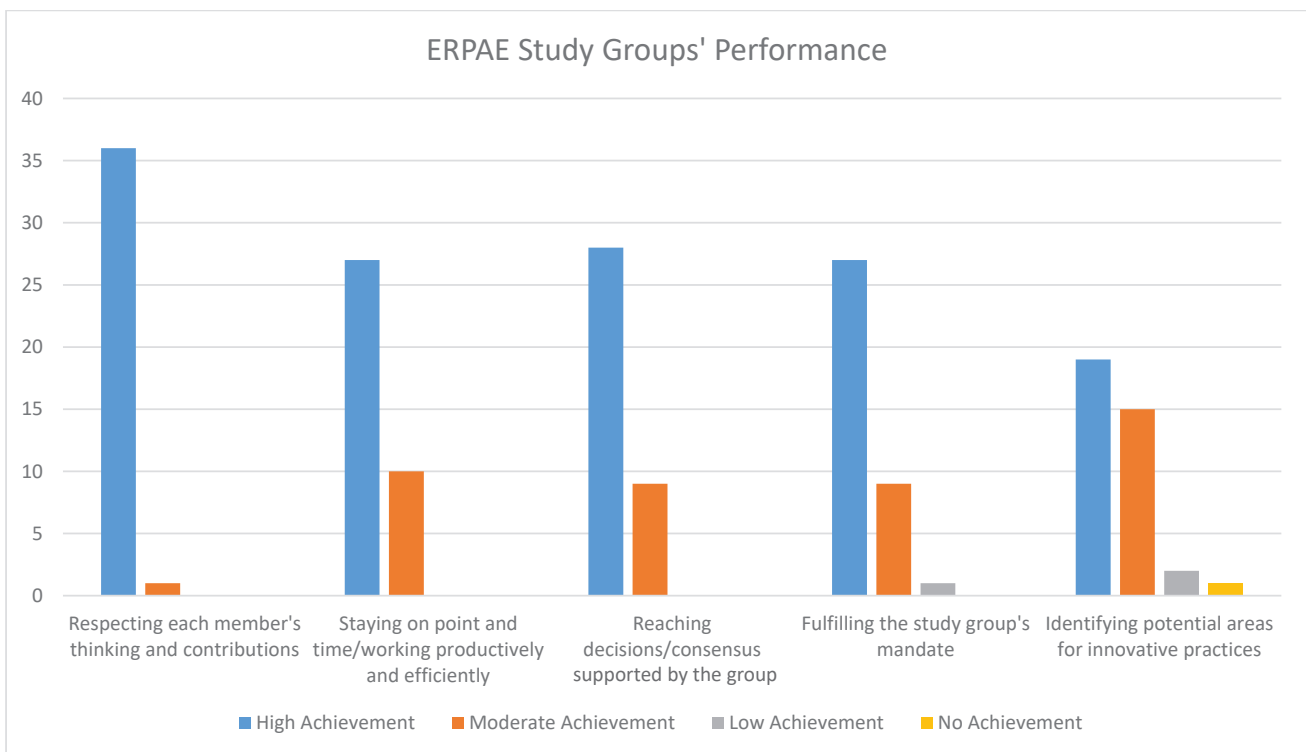
FINDINGS FROM QUALITATIVE SURVEY DATA

In addition to the statistical data that was collected through the survey, we asked participants to share some of their learnings through personalized comments. Qualitative comments were analyzed and organized into the overarching themes of resources and tools, knowledge of adult education, adult education practices, and adult education roles. Evidence of learning was consistent across three of these themes, with more limited evidence seen of learning about adult education roles. Table 8 provides a summary of the personalized comments categorized by overarching themes.

Table 8. Personal learning(s) related to participation in Study Groups by area of Adult Education

Area of Adult Education	Examples
Resources and Tools	• Awareness of a student management database (1) • Monographs developed by the ERPAE were helpful for developing AE awareness (1) • Given guidance and pathway planning tools to take back to the board(1)
Knowledge of Adult Education	• Greater understanding of the variety of AE programs offered in the region (6) • Understanding challenges faced by different boards (e.g., clientele, geography, funding, staffing) (3) • Learned more about guidance (2) • Funding registers (2) • Similar programs are being offered in some boards (1) • Increased knowledge about AE in Ontario and program ideas (1) • Rural/urban issues in AE (1) • Bringing the non-credit programming into the credit conversation (1)
Adult Education Practices	• Understand and improve PLAR processes and documentation (6) • Work together to develop capacity and enact change (3) • AE staff provide a culture of care and are greatly invested in their work (2) • There is variation in the supports provided in AE (e.g., some programs have guidance and special education and others do not (1) • The importance of marketing and creating a positive brand for AE (1) • Greater understanding of where the gaps are in our board and strategies to overcome them (1)
Adult Education Roles	• Greater understanding of the multiple roles in AE and the importance of taking multiple perspective into account (1)

Our analysis of the qualitative comments in the survey data revealed some of the innovative thinking ideas being shared by the participants as they planned for the rollout of phase three of the Adult Education Strategic Plan, the Execution Phase. In Table 9, these are shown under the headings of each of the study group mandates: intake assessment, and referral; flexible delivery; guidance, career counselling, and pathway planning; PLAR; and community awareness. As data was analyzed, all five study groups disclosed a variety of strategies that they were strongly considering to move forward to their respective district school boards.

Table 9. Innovative AE Practices Considered by Eastern Region School Boards for the 2018/2019 School Year by Adult Education Strategy Focus

Adult Education Strategy Focus	Proposed Innovative Practices
Intake, Assessment, and Referral	• Online registrations • A more centralized intake process tool that encompasses A & CE and coterminous boards • A more coordinated and continuous intake process to better meet the needs of adult learners • A more streamlined intake, assessment, and referral process • Development of a common "intake/assessment/pathway-planning" tool • Creation of an Adult Reception Centre, with multiple agencies to meet the various needs of adult learners • Credentials assessment centre • Closer partnership between credit and non-credit programs
Flexible Delivery	• Creation of community hubs in remote areas and provision of transportation through local providers • Outreach programs, especially to smaller communities • More research into entry, attrition, and success rates and causes for these • Itinerant service delivery programs
Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning	• More career planning • Career planning training PD • Better processes and coordination of pathway planning • Increased support of guidance program, including student success, to better meet the needs of adult learners
PLAR	• Consolidation of PLAR processes across programs (e.g., credit and non-credit) • Revising the PLAR process • Starting to PLAR ESL students earlier • PLAR through an online model
Community Awareness*	• Marketing for programs • Establishing community partners to help make referrals • Developing a greater understanding of A & CE within the Board (e.g., senior administrators, principals, teachers, staff)

*Note: Community Awareness was not identified as an Adult Education Strategy focus, but it is being included because it was identified as a priority for the Eastern region.

Our analysis also identified how participating in the ERPAE capacity building sessions had shaped the study participants thinking about their work within adult education and about adult and continuing education more broadly. We landed on three overarching themes in regard to the insights shared by survey participants; (1) adult education practices, (2) adult education roles, and (3) knowledge of adult education. The insights shared within adult education practices acknowledged the particular needs of the adult learners themselves. For example, the need for wrap around services, a

culture of care, and flexible approaches to program delivery. Within adult education roles, the need to advocate for learners, provide guidance and counselling, and the realities of compassion fatigue were identified. Interestingly, survey participants reported feeling that the importance of and need for adult education had been reinforced to them, however there was still a need to convey that usefulness to the broader community. The participants acknowledged that a larger voice may be needed to achieve this. A full summary of our findings can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10. How ERPAE Capacity Building Involvement Shaped Participants' Thinking About Adult and Continuing Education by Area of Adult Education

Area of Adult Education	Thinking About Adult and Continuing Education
AE Practices	• Value of collaboration across boards (6) • The need to support adult learners- it's more about meeting the needs of adult learners than just running programs; provision of wrap around services (3) • Importance of Culture of Care for learners and staff (2) • Need for quality programs (2) • Identified gaps in programs in the region and innovative practices to address gaps • Funding does not align with the mandate for flexible delivery • More flexible delivery is needed in A & CE • Need to streamline the process for adults to obtain their OSSD • Helped align A & CE board vision with provincial vision and set direction for the board
AE Roles	• The need to advocate for the rights of adult learners (5) • Strengthened belief and confidence as an educator in A & CE/confirmed the value of AE educators (4) • Guidance is a distinct and important role in A & CE • Compassion fatigue is a reality in C & AE
Knowledge of Adult Education	• Need to raise community awareness, and promote understanding of the value of A&CE among mainstream school staff and district leaders about the value of A & CE (6) • Confirmed the importance of and need for A & CE (3) • A larger voice is needed to increase capacity and promote change (2) • AE is a work in progress

The ERPAE survey participants conveyed that on the whole, they greatly benefited from participating in the Phase Two Capacity Building activities and events. Our analysis found that qualitative comments shared by the survey participants fell into three overarching themes: (1) continuous learning, (2) collaborative structure, and (3) culture of care/rapport. Table 11 provides an overview of the participants' contributions that collectively formed these two themes. Of particular note is the level of commitment shown by the entire group to continue their individual and shared learning and development, and the strengths they felt were present through the collaborative structure of the ERPAE capacity building sessions.

Table 11. What Participants Valued Most About ERPAE Capacity Building Sessions by PD Component

Area of Adult Education	Examples
Continuous Learning	• Exploring new and innovative programs/practices* (4) • Learning about Adult Education in the Eastern region (3) • Well facilitated meetings (3) • Opportunity to reflect on own board practices (2) • Shared reality about the needs of Adult Education • Multiple days to work with own board • Learning about other program delivery options • Ability to ask questions • Learning about the Adult Education Strategy • Professional development • Informative sessions • Opportunity to develop an action plan
Collaborative Structure	• Networking (16) • Working in board groups (7) • Collaborating (6) • Sharing knowledge and ideas (6) • Learning from other boards/colleagues (5) • Working in study groups (4) • Sharing best practices (4) • Sharing resources • Discussions (4) • Developing collaboration across credit and non-credit programs
Culture of Care/Rapport	• Shared voice to advocate for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning (3) • Support from colleagues

*New and innovative programs and practices were often associated with solutions for overcoming challenges faced by A & CE

When asked about what future topics might be of value to further develop and support the work of the ERPAE group, the survey participants' responses were structured into three overarching themes of; (1) practices to continue, (2) practices to include, and (3) future topics, as detailed in Table 12. Clearly there was an appreciation for the benefits of being part of a collective region in regard to implementing the Adult Education Strategy, and survey participants were keen to continue with and build upon this collaborative way of working. Equally poignant was the breadth and depth of ideas for future practices and topics that survey participants would like to see considered as the ERPAE moves into *Phase Three of the Strategic Plan*. Undoubtedly there remains a strong commitment to the work of the ERPAE group and its implementation and execution of the *Ministry of Education Adult Education Strategy Initiative.*

Table 12. Suggested changes or topics for future ERPAE Capacity Building Sessions by type of suggestion

Type of Suggestion	Examples
Practices to Continue	• Share the vision and mission statements for the region • Ongoing support of the region • A carousel for sharing ideas • More time with home board and study groups • Meet as a region
Practices to Include	• Hands-on training in relation to best practices • Help Senior Admin understand the value of A & CE and the needed changes • Opportunities to visit other sites to observe their operations and best practices • Review pilot projects from different boards • Focus on what can be done at the local and regional level to improve programs • Training and information about any new Ministry initiatives
Future Topics	• Funding Registers (2) • PLAR (2) • Labour Market Needs (2) • Career Planning • Restorative Practices • How to Engage Community Partners • Work Hope • Essential Skills Ontario • Articulation Agreements • Verification of Credentials – World Education Skills • Resource People Who Can Support Guidance and Career and Pathway Planning • Success Planning in A & CE • AE Staffing • Learn about A & CE from other provinces

With regard to the ERPAE study groups learning in relation to their study group mandate, survey participants described a variety of learnings that the researchers analyzed and arranged into four overarching themes of; (1) adult education practices, (2) knowledge of adult education, (3) adult education roles, and (4) adult education tools and resources. These themes, highlighted in Table 13, reflected the participants' assertions in regard to the tangible and intangible differences between adult education and K-12 education. For example, in adult education practices, it was widely accepted that adults require specific types and forms of guidance and pathway planning. There was also widespread concern at the lack of knowledge in regard to the role and scope of adult education, with suggestions that increased understandings throughout all staff in district school boards and the broader community would be welcomed. As a further example, the development of a provincial level database that could efficiently track all learners was seen to be an invaluable adult education tool and resource.

Table 13. Study Groups' Learning(s) in Relation to their Mandate by Area of Adult Education

Type	Learning(s)
Adult Education Practices	• Best practices and approaches (4) • Guidance and pathway planning is needed for Adult Ed (3) • Adults require extra supports to be successful (e.g., guidance, special education, etc.) (2) • Should focus on developing community hubs • More cohesive approach to PLAR and an update is needed on PPM132 • Implementing consistent practices
Knowledge of Adult Education	• Would like to change Kto12 to K2A [Kindergarten to Adult] to be more inclusive (2) • Need to inform senior administration about Adult Education and its importance to get their support • Need to educate staff within boards about A & CE • Boards share similar concerns and challenges • There are a variety of pathways and community resources available to adult learners • Understanding of what is required to promote A & CE in Eastern Ontario
Adult Education Roles	• AE Staff strive to do their best to help their students achieve their goals
Adult Education Tools and Resources	• There should be a provincial database to track all adult learners • Participants felt empowered with tools to move forward and had a network of colleagues to support them

The researchers felt it important to collect data on the challenges that unfolded for the ERPAE study group members as they worked together to implement their mandates. The survey participants shared a number of perceived challenges which the researchers analyzed as falling into three overarching themes of; (1) group dynamics, (2) group tasks, and (3) group outcomes. Though the issues identified were not widely reported, there were still some significant factors within all three of the themes that had the potential to impact upon groups' abilities to successfully complete their mandates. The full range of challenges identified can be seen in Table 14.

Table 14. Challenges Experienced by Participants in ERPAE Study Groups by Type of Challenge

Type of Challenge	Examples
Group Dynamics	• Differing opinions on topics (e.g., credit equivalency, subjectivity of PLAR) (2) • A colleague who was unwilling to share expertise • A colleague who consistently challenged others and the collective voice • Internal board challenges • Some group members are more talkative than others
Group Tasks	• Not enough time to complete tasks (3) • Staying on task (2)
Group Outcomes	• Challenging to come up with an innovative idea • Prioritizing what is important • Identifying best practices • Limited infrastructure and resources to develop and implement innovative practices • Challenging to develop a proposal without senior management's awareness and support • Performing a skit in front of the group

The final area of data that was collected through the comments shared by the survey participants was focused on their ideas for how the study groups might be improved. Analysis of this section of the survey data included a range of ideas that the researchers grouped into four overarching themes of; (1) format, (2) members, (3) activities, and (4) extensions. The range of suggestions can be seen in Table 15.

Table 15. Suggestions for Improving ERPAE Study Groups by Type of Suggestion

Type of Suggestion	Examples
Format	- One day sessions spaced over time as two days together is a long time to be away from office/schools - Use the EdCamp format (the group sets its own agenda) - More time in study groups
Members	- Having two members from each board in a study group - CESBA attendance – continued dialogue
Activities	- Have opportunity to visit each other's sites - Discuss scenarios and ask individuals to comment on how their board would serve the student - Learn more about what we do - More in-depth training from key members that had shared innovative practices they are already using (e.g., student information system, outreach to remote areas, career pathway tools they are using, online resources and tools) - Having speakers address the region's PD needs - Develop action items in meetings
Extensions	- More regional subject councils - Use of collaborative tools and separate meetings beyond the sessions - Help groups to know if their goal was met

" Adult Education can help change lives and transform societies – it is a human right and a common good. "

European Adult Education Manifesto for the 21st Century

DISCUSSION

The 2017-2018 ERPAE Phase Two: Capacity Building sessions (CBSs) were intended to build capacity in Adult Education staff in the Eastern region by helping members learn about Adult and Continuing Education from within the region and from outside the region. The ultimate goal of the CBSs was to prepare ERPAE members to develop and implement innovative pilot projects in their respective school boards. Interviews and survey responses from participating ERPAE members provided valuable insights about the effectiveness and outcomes of the Capacity Building sessions. This section of the report discusses how ERPAE Capacity Building sessions led to the development of the Collaborative Coalition Model for Professional Development (CCBMfPD), its key components, and its effectiveness as a PD model.

WHAT IS THE COLLABORATIVE COALITION MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CCMfPD)?

The Collaborative Coalition Model for Professional Development (CCMfPD) is a model rooted in the professional development of a coalition working together to enact change in a field. It was developed by the Coordinator and Research team of the Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (ERPAE) to help its members build capacity in Adult Education in preparation for piloting innovative practices. While some of the main components of the model were identified prior to Capacity Building sessions, other aspects were revealed through data collected during sessions and the model was refined accordingly.

The CCMfPD identifies three foundational components for the process of capacity building: a collaborative structure, continuous learning, and a culture of care. During the process of capacity building, participants communicate their professional understandings using the "Affirming, Learning, Yearning" framework. The professional growth outcomes associated with this model include: capacity, collaboration, and change (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12. COLLABORATIVE COALITION MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CCMfPD)

CAPACITY

LEARNING

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

CULTURE OF CARE

COLLABORATION

CHANGE

PROFESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING

YEARNING

AFFIRMING

PROCESS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

CONTINUOUS LEARNING
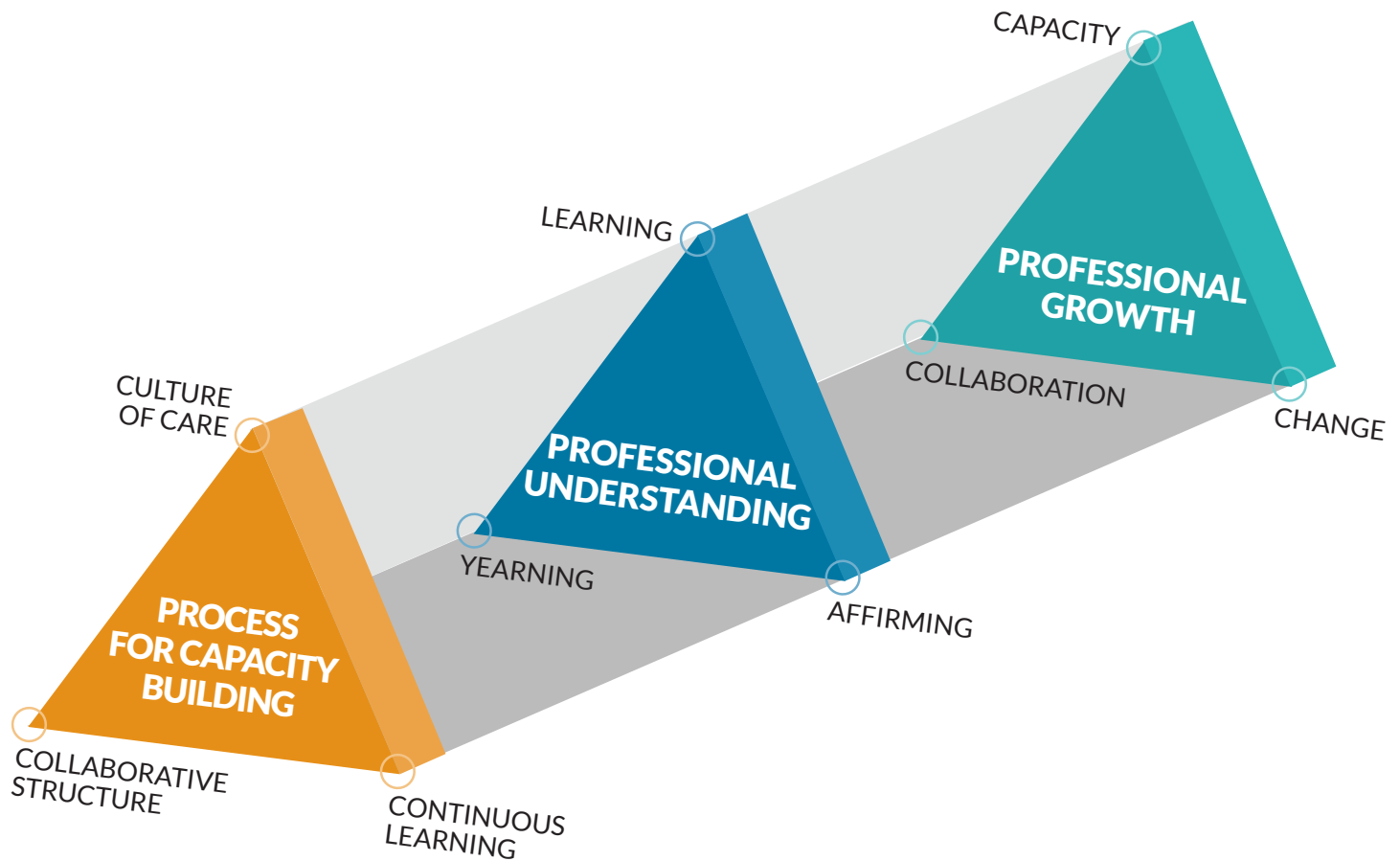
PROCESS OF PD: CONTINUOUS LEARNING, COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE, CULTURE OF CARE

The ERPAE facilitated four two-day sessions throughout the year to help its members build capacity in Adult and Continuing Education. This approach to continuous learning is consistent with recent shifts in professional development (PD) that emphasize the need for ongoing and supported PD (Learning Forward, 2017; Working Table on Teacher Development, 2007). Overall, members rated the quality of PD they received very positively and, for some, it was the best PD they had ever experienced. Members also appreciated the collaborative structure of the sessions and emphasized the importance of discussion with colleagues in promoting their learning. Such discussions are referred to as professional conversations and sessions were structured to include the following enablers: sharing knowledge of Adult and Continuing Education (A & CE) practices, a strong desire to improve the outcomes of adult learners and taking collective responsibility for doing so, expertise from colleagues to identify best practices in A & CE, and the development of positive working relationships (Timperley, 2015). Professional conversations allowed ERPAE members to reflect on

their individual and collective Adult Education practices, identify gaps in service, and begin proposing solutions and innovative practices to address the gaps. A Culture of Care was modelled by the facilitator during sessions and study groups were given time to discuss and establish group norms and roles. Developing a Culture of Care helped members feel like their contributions mattered and enabled them to connect with colleagues for support outside of PD sessions. In future similar-type PD, it may be beneficial to have participants develop a professional learning plan at the beginning so they can articulate their personal goals and reflect on their progress towards their goals during the process of PD. This may help participants take more ownership of the learning and document their professional growth.

UNDERSTANDINGS FROM PD: AFFIRMING, LEARNING, AND YEARNING

The framework of "Affirming, Learning, and Yearning" was created to help ERPAE members reflect on their understandings of Adult Education in a manner that reinforced the notion of continuous learning. With the framework, participants were affirming their understandings of Adult Education (from their professional experiences and the regional environmental scan of Adult and Continuing Education in 2017), identifying their learning during the capacity building sessions, and outlining their yearning in terms of what they would like to continue to learn about. This framework was applied to the five areas of regional priority: Community Awareness; Flexible Delivery; Intake, Assessment, and Referral; PLAR; and Guidance, Career Counselling, and Pathway Planning. While it was helpful to focus on the five areas of regional priority

during the Capacity Building sessions, members reported additional questions/yearnings in relation to Adult and Continuing Education. It will be important for the ERPAE to consider how they may want to incorporate these additional questions/yearnings into their future mandate.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH RESULTING FROM PD: CAPACITY, COLLABORATION, AND CHANGE

During the ERPAE CBSs, capacity was built in ERPAE members in relation to the field of Adult and Continuing Education, including knowledge of the field, practices, roles, and tools and resources. The Eastern region has a number of experts that helped develop capacity during CBSs. One thing to consider for future ERPAE PD is how additional capacity can be built in these experts. Participants reported that collaboration helped them learn from others, establish supportive collegial relationships, and advance the field of A & CE collectively. A desire for continued collaboration was communicated by ERPAE members. During the sharing of board practices and related discussions, participants identified gaps in A & CE services and recognized the need for change, including innovative practices, to address gaps. ERPAE members were appreciative of Ministry funding that facilitated this PD and looked forward to the opportunity to pilot innovative board practices in the 2018/2019 school year.

"*"The provision and quality of adult learning remains patchy, and those who need it most currently get the least of it. More work is needed to support adult learning in local communities – this should be a key ingredient in adult education developments in the 21st century.*"

Andreas Schleicher, Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills, OECD as cited in Hughes, Adriaanse, & Barns, 2016

CONCLUSION

This research identified that the effectiveness of the PD within Phase Two: Capacity Building was driven by the successful coalition of the ERPAE in combination with the effectiveness of the PD model that was purposefully created and implemented for this project. Overall, the members of the ERPAE that participated in Phase Two: Capacity Building were positive in regard to their individual and collective experiences and all of them reported substantial personal growth. Importantly, this growth was accredited to improvements in practice and increased confidence and efficiency within working tasks and roles.

The scope of the Collaborative Coalition Model for Professional Development (CCMfPD) model means it could be adapted and applied to different contexts of professional development in education. We suggest that the first step in applying the model would be that a successful coalition should be formed prior to large-scale PD. We encourage further application of this model to build capacity in other educational contexts.

The researchers would like to conclude with some personal words of gratitude to the ERPAE members who so willingly gave their time, expertise, and shared passion for adult education throughout the Phase Two: Capacity Building 2017-2018 period. Dr. Lorraine and Dr. Sandy remain in awe of the extremely valuable work you do. We close this report with a shared call for continued efforts in ensuring that adult education is able to sustain and grow its successful record in transforming adult learners lives.

To this end, we strongly reiterate the need for the Ontario Adult Education Strategy and the collaborative work of the seven Regional Partnerships for Adult Education (RPAEs) to continue beyond the 2018-2019 terms of reference. The Province's continued support of RPAEs will strengthen the infrastructure for adult education and lead to more effective training of adult learners from diverse backgrounds. Having more highly-skilled adults contributing to the workforce will, in turn, promote economic growth, innovation, and productivity. Cross-sector partnerships are an important means of developing a strong adult education system. The Eastern Regional Partnership for Adult Education (ERPAE) has begun such work and a report of their initial work is available at https://www.eosdn.on.ca/sites/eosdn.on.ca/files/strategic%20plan%20FINAL_0.pdf

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