

DESIGNED TO WORK



An integrated approach to skills development

Abbreviated Guide

Introduction

The approach recommended by RESDAC in the research/action project entitled Designed to Work is based on four components. These components are described in the document [Towards an Integrated Model To Support the Literacy Development of Francophones in Canada](#).

In the present document, however, we propose four steps to facilitate the implementation of the project:

- Analyzing the environment
- Designing the intervention
- Developing and delivering the intervention
- Evaluating the intervention

Even though these four steps are presented in the above sequence in this document, they should not really be perceived in a linear fashion. All of them are carried out in an inter-related way; each of them influences the others in a continuous intervention-development dynamic. This means that one step does not necessarily end where another begins and that there are areas where all of them overlap and are interdependent. This integrated approach should therefore always present analyses and adult-education interventions that move and evolve within an environment or community.

Step 1: Analyzing the environment

If the intervention is to better meet the needs of job-seekers with lower literacy skills, then it is essential to consider the socio-economic, cultural, and educational conditions in the target community. The purpose of this first component, too often neglected or taken for granted, is to encourage the expression of the demand for training by adults with lower literacy skills in a specific community context.

What:

- Understand the community's learning and skills profile: what needs do job-seekers with lower literacy skills have?
- Identify the needs for workers that are not being met in the various job sectors in the community and that job seekers with lower literacy skills might be able to meet by participating in integrated programs lasting less than one year.
- Identify the main barriers that are preventing the target clientele from returning to training or employment (examples of barriers: transportation problems, problems with accessibility of programs, lack of confidence, challenges in adapting).

Who:

- Identify and mobilize potential partners.
- Identify and mobilize educational resources that could contribute (college programs, literacy programs, and other training programs for adults).
- Identify other resources in the local community (employability services, social services, municipalities, etc.).
- Identify and mobilize local employers.

How:

- Conduct surveys of employers.
- Conduct focus groups or formal or informal interviews with potential partners to establish a steering committee for the intervention (short term) and recruit partners to develop and deliver the intervention (medium term).
- Review written materials: socio-economic profiles, press reviews

Step 2: Designing the intervention

The proposed approach involves designing interventions that will build effective linkages between the needs of job-seekers with lower literacy skills in a given community and the adult-education and employability resources available in that same community. To do this, we propose creating new alliances between direct and indirect actors to offer integrated adult-education initiatives that are more relevant to and more consistent with the needs of job-seekers with lower literacy skills.

What:

- Identify the skills to be developed, according to the job sector targeted; the profiles of skills to be developed should emphasize job-related tasks, which can be supported by technical skills, essential skills, generic skills, and second-language skills that are required to perform the tasks in the targeted occupations.
- Design an intervention that incorporates all of the identified skills while taking into account the literacy levels of the target clientele.
- Develop an intervention that comprises various components (professional, personal, and academic development) and uses multiple resources in the community (such as literacy programs, occupational training programs, basic skills and skills upgrading programs, and employability support programs) to train job seekers for specific occupations in which there are job openings in the community.
- Enable learners to apply what they learn in practical situations.
- Enable learners to comply with the participation policies associated with the income-maintenance programs of various referral agencies (social assistance, employment insurance, etc.) by providing an intervention that:
 - lasts a predetermined time (less than one year);
 - includes one or more forms of certification recognized by employers;
 - leads quickly to employment;
 - costs very little to participate in;
 - includes internships with employers.

- Provide work times and spaces for the development and adjustment of the intervention by the training team.
- Develop a framework for evaluating the learners that is consistent with the skills-based approach and the targeted profiles.
- Develop a mechanism for evaluating the intervention that is consistent with the skills-based approach and that will determine whether or not the desired results have been achieved.

WHO:

- Include the partners' many teaching and community resources.
- The lead organization for the intervention, in collaboration with the partners identified.

HOW:

- The lead organization develops an adult-education package that is specifically adapted to its reality according to the environment analysis conducted in step 1 and that is validated by the partners.
- The lead organization takes ownership of the skills-based approach and the various types of skills.
- The lead organization understands and plans the use of the various resources at its disposal in its community for an integrated intervention.

Step 3: Developing and delivering the intervention

The dialogue established among the partners can lead to the creation of new training initiatives or the adaptation of existing training initiatives that meet the skills-development needs of job-seekers with lower literacy skills, employers, and the community while respecting the mandates of the various community partners involved. Organizing an integrated offering of services in this way will make it easier to access various human and financial resources that will make it possible to give more training services to job seekers (for example, adapted training and evaluation methods, targeted training, etc.).

What:

- Hire and coach the training team that will be responsible for developing and delivering the content.

- Recruit the learners; develop a common mechanism for learner guidance, referral, and evaluation (such as a single window for all three services).
- Develop courses and learning activities that combine several types of skills and apply them in realistic situations.
- Establish a mechanism for following up with employers/internship settings.
- Develop evaluation and grading methods that get around the requirements and difficulties of the written word and require the learners to perform applied tasks.

Who:

- Partners
- Trainers and designers
- Lead organization
- Employers
- HOW:
- Steering committee
- Training team (trainers and designer)
- Co-ordinate and lead working groups (steering committee and training team)
- Ensure that internships apply the skills that the learners have acquired.
- Inventory and use appropriate tools, such as the Camera assessment system.
- Negotiate with the partners to establish passing levels that are suitable for the kind of clients targeted and for the targeted skills profiles for the targeted occupations.

Step 4: Evaluating the intervention

Step 4 consists in conducting a post mortem evaluation of the intervention delivered to the job-seekers with lower literacy skills. It should be remembered that evaluating the intervention is both an ongoing and a final process. Hence it must be carried out not only at the end of the project, but also while it is still in progress, so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

What:

- Put a process in place that encourages reflective review while the intervention is still in progress.
- Evaluate the quality of the partnership (steering committee, employers, etc.).
- Evaluate the quality of the intervention delivered to the learners.

With whom:

- Institutional and community partners
- Employer partners
- Steering committee
- Training team
- Learners

How:

- Evaluation meetings and focus groups
- Evaluation questionnaires

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