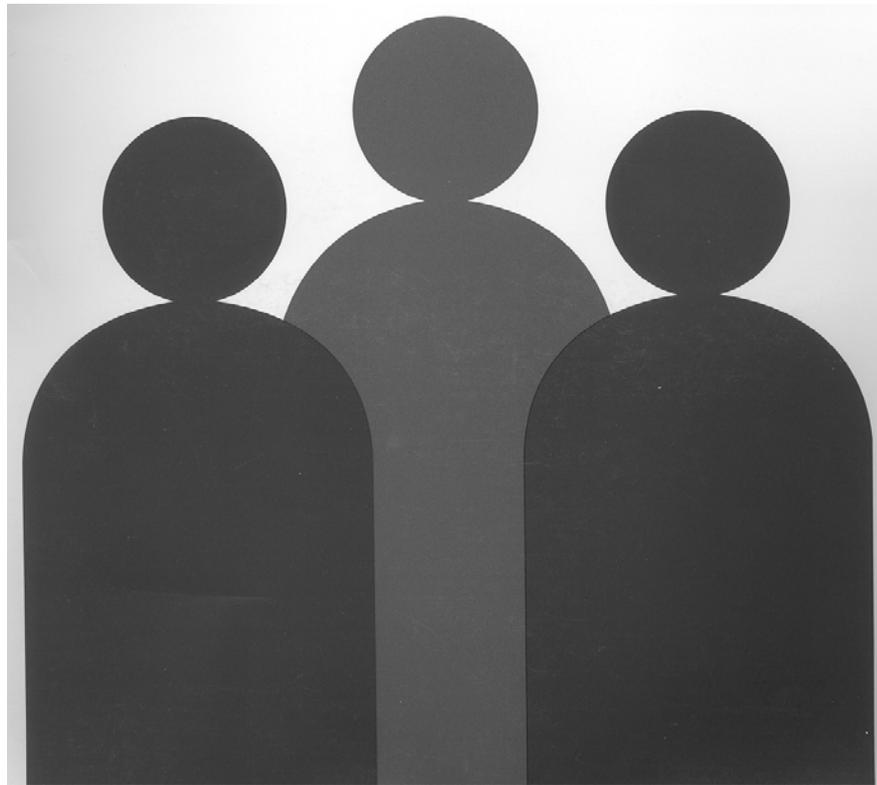




Saskatchewan Labour Force  
Development Board

# GUIDE TO ESSENTIAL WORKPLACE SKILLS

*The Learning at Work Project*





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*The Learning at Work Project*

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FUNDED BY

The [National Literacy Secretariat](#) &  
[Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training](#) &  
[Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board](#)

JANUARY 2001

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## **HOW DOES THIS GUIDE HELP BUSY WORKING PEOPLE?**

By checking to see if there is an essential skills gap in the workplace, you put yourself in position to make improvements that are fundamental to success.

This guide is a tool to use for your own benefit, so use it in a way that suits you. Pick it up when you have time or when you need it. It is meant to be flexible.

This guide describes a process for examining your workplace (or your own job) to see if there is an essential skills gap and what you might be able to do about that gap. The process is:

1. Learn why essential skills are important
2. Describe the workplace in general terms
3. Describe the duties of each position in the workplace
4. Establish the expectations/standards for performance for job duties
5. Determine the essential skills that support the performance of job duties
6. Note mismatches between performance and expectations (essential skills gap)
7. Find appropriate training
8. Support practice of essential skills in the workplace
9. Maximize your own resources

**Essential workplace skills are the effective and functional use of:**

**reading, writing, computers, numeracy, oral communication and the 'soft skills' of leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.**

So, start thinking about your workplace, your job, and the other positions in the workplace, and how these essential skills are used. Think about the forms you have to fill out, the documents you have to read, the situations where you talk to customers, the times you disagree with co-workers, the calculations you have to do to make a sale, or the reports you have to write.

Now, as you work your way through this guide, you may find that the following quotes from Saskatchewan workplaces are similar to ones you will be making yourself.

“We train out of necessity ... Our managers needed help with grammar for report writing, so we hired a teacher.”

“Everyone needs to be familiar with documentation of some sort.”

“Staff needs to know how to figure out special deals for certain customers, like the ones who stay long-term.”

“In a small business like ours, everyone has to be able to take telephone orders, find supplies for clients, put together orders, and ship them out.”

## **I. *The Importance of Essential Workplace Skills***

John left school after Grade 10. He works for a flour mill which has recently required its workers to have Grade 12 equivalency.

Donna's co-workers want her to be their union representative. She has refused because she is not confident her reading and writing skills are strong enough. She finds understanding and explaining collective agreements or filing health and safety reports very difficult.

Susan was promoted from the manufacturing shop floor to a position as customer service representative. This means having excellent communication skills and interpersonal skills in areas such as conflict resolution.

Jake has just become a supervisor. He now has to train others, write reports, run safety meetings and keep minutes of these meetings, and check time cards.

Ann has decided to open her own business. She must be able to market her product, develop a budget and keep accounts, write letters to customers and suppliers, and train employees.

What do these people have in common? They are all faced with improving their essential workplace skills, sometimes called basic or foundation skills. Essential workplace skills are keys to personal development and economic opportunity. They allow both individuals and businesses to take part in society and remain competitive as workplaces change and as people change workplaces.

### **WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL WORKPLACE SKILLS?**

They are the **effective** and **functional** use of reading, writing, computers, numeracy, oral communication and the 'soft skills' of leadership, problem-solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.

*An example...*

An operating engineer dispatcher

- Receives telephone requests from contractors for experienced people for a variety of jobs
- Records job orders on the computer for the daily log and weekly dispatch record
- Checks availability and priority on computer database and records whether jobs accepted or rejected
- Calculates wages by checking tables for rate scales and working conditions and by current contract agreement
- Completes job dispatch slip for worker with job description, pay, address, and contractor
- Produces daily log and weekly dispatch summary for posting

**As you can see, the person who occupies this position needs good essential workplace skills in order to do the work effectively.**

There are some interesting facts about essential workplace skills:

- Essential skills are not 'fixed'; use them or lose them! Who hasn't forgotten some math point or writing rule after being away from school for some time?
- Education is not always a reliable predictor of essential skills proficiency. The formal training a person gets may not focus on certain essential skills such as oral communication.
- The job may emphasize some essential skills over others. A customer service representative in the agricultural sector may need to have excellent math skills, but not written skills.

- Those workers with good essential skills get more opportunities for training. So, what is happening to those workers who may struggle with essential skills? How do they cope with the changing workplaces of today?
- People with poor essential skills may not recognize that they have poor skills or their importance to the job.

Organizations such as the Conference Board of Canada and the Canadian Labour Congress agree that there are both direct and indirect economic benefits from essential workplace skills training. **The bottom-line is directly affected by increased profits and better customer retention.**

Employers and employees most often mention the benefit of an increased ability to handle on-the-job training, but there are other benefits:

- Better team performance
- Increased quality
- Improved labour-management relations
- Reduced error rates and time per task
- Better health and safety record
- Increased output of products and services
- More participation by workers in their jobs, families, and communities

Essential Skills Profiles are being developed for the National Occupational Classification (NOC). These profiles describe how each essential skill is actually used by workers in an occupational group. The profiles also describe how often these skills are used and how difficult the tasks.

These profiles are very detailed because when you really think about what a person does, all the tasks done in a day to get the job done, you realize how important essential skills are.

*Take a sales clerk as an example...*

Here is just a **sample** of how essential skills may be used in this position:

- Read product labels for information on the care of products and for instructions on the use of products
- Read bulletins and guidelines about health and safety and loss prevention
- Read cashier manuals with information about various machine functions such as how to reduce prices
- Refer to tables showing the criteria for size selection of various products
- Read vendor catalogues to find information on products
- Complete purchase orders for suppliers and inventory replenishment
- Prepare invoices
- Write reminder notes for themselves and co-workers about unfinished tasks
- Write feedback reports for head office
- Handle cash, credit card and debit card transactions and provide change
- Calculate quantities of product required by customer
- Estimate size of product needed by customer
- Convert between centimeters and inches when explaining sizes to a customer
- Interact with customers to explain features of a product

- Negotiate with co-workers to resolve misunderstandings about territory or the sharing of responsibilities
- Have to find alternate sources of a product if a supplier is late
- Decide whether to accept returns or make exchanges
- Accomplish a variety of tasks such as inventory and displays while waiting on customers
- Remember the vendor codes for a wide variety of items
- Orient new employees
- Use a computer database
- Keep learning about new products

## **IMPACT**

**GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICE AND INDIVIDUAL SEL-IMPROVEMENT SHOULD INCLUDE BEING ABLE TO UNDERSTAND HOW ESSENTIAL SKILLS OPERATE IN THE WORKPLACE IN RELATION TO THE DUTIES OF THE JOB.**

## **II. *Looking at the Workplace* - Generally**

Thinking about what you have just read, look now at your workplace. What does your workplace look like? Can you answer these questions?

### **QUESTIONS**

How many people work here?

Does everyone have to know how to do all tasks to get the work done?

Does one position have to cover for another?

What kind of technological change have you undergone or are expecting to take on?

What is the educational background of the people who work here?

What type of training do you already do?

What do you see as future needs for this workplace (eg. becoming more competitive, having better quality control, improving customer service)?

## IMPACT

IF YOU WANT TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE, YOU MIGHT HAVE TO WORK ON TEAM-BUILDING OR ACHIEVE ISO-9000 STANDARDS.

IF YOU ARE DOING TRAINING WITH INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO HAVE ANY WRITTEN MATERIALS CHECKED FOR CLEAR LANGUAGE AND/OR INFORMATION GIVEN IN OTHER WAYS (EG. PICTURE SIGNS).

IF EVERYONE HAS TO BE ABLE TO DO ALL TASKS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO HAVE A STAFF WORKSHOP FOR EVERYONE ON, FOR EXAMPLE, CUSTOMER SERVICE OR TAKING MINUTES AT HEALTH AND SAFETY MEETINGS.

OTHER...

*notes*

### III. *Looking at the Workplace* – Specific Jobs

#### QUESTIONS

What are the jobs/positions in this workplace?

What are the **duties/areas of responsibility** for each position?

Which main duties and which are additional duties?

Which of the duties do you think are most critical?

How often are these duties performed?

For example, a supervisor in the apparel industry has to:

- Maintain work flow and balance

- Regularly check operations
- Recommend corrective action
- Train employees
- Report to co-workers and managers

Additionally, the supervisor may have to:

- Schedule work activities
- Order materials and supplies
- Use computers

(from Manitoba Fashion Institute, 1996, Non-technical Essential Skills Handbook for Apparel Industry Supervisors)

### **What does a person actually do to accomplish the duties of a particular job?**

*For example...*

One duty of a draftsman is to conduct field work and make preliminary presentations.

BUT to accomplish this duty, the draftsman must:

- Take measurements,
- Determine site orientation
- Make site inspections of work being done
- Use surveying techniques,
- Develop working sketches

One duty of a truck driver is to conduct a vehicle inspection

BUT the person must:

- Perform a cold check
- Perform a running check - walk around
- Perform a running check - inside cabin
- Fill out Vehicle Check List Form
- Act on results of check

A person has to follow many steps or do many tasks in order to accomplish the duties of a position. This is the **action** required in performing a job duty.

Think back to the many sample tasks listed for a sales clerk in order to accomplish the duties of selling goods, maintaining displays, ordering products, etc.

## **IMPACT**

IF YOU ARE NOT CLEAR ABOUT THE TASKS/ACTIONS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH THE VARIOUS DUTIES, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO FOCUS ON AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT.

**IT IS COMMON FOR EACH POSITION IN A WORKPLACE TO HAVE SIX TO EIGHT AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY/DUTIES WHICH EACH NEED SEVERAL ACTIONS TAKEN/TASKS PERFORMED.**

A chart can be a helpful way to organize information ... here's how to begin!

POSITION:

---

DUTY #1:

---

● TASKS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH DUTY

1.

---

2.

---

3.

---

4.

---

5.

---

DUTY #2:

---

● TASKS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH DUTY

1.

---

2.

---

3.

---

4.

---

5.

---

## ***notes***

**You might also want to make notes about:**

- how critical each duty/task is
- how often each duty/task is performed
- who else in the workplace is expected to perform these duties

## IV. *Expectations/Standards*

How do you know when a duty has been performed well? What are your expectations?

*For example ...*

The truck driver's vehicle inspection ...

- Done consistently before each trip
- Vehicle inspection form clearly filled out and handed in
- All steps performed
- All relevant staff informed as to problem areas (eg. garage staff)

By adding your expectations to the **DUTIES** and **TASKS CHART**, you may begin to see trends for areas needing training. You may add your expectations beside the duties/tasks if that helps you organize your thoughts better or below as shown in this chart:

POSITION:

---

DUTY #1:

---

- **TASKS NEEDED TO ACCOMPLISH DUTY**

1.

---

2.

---

3.

---

4.

---

5.

---

EXPECTATIONS:

1.

2.

3.

4.

**IMPACT**

IF THERE ARE NO STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES OR IF STAFF DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE EXPECTATIONS ARE, TIME, EFFORT, AND MONEY CAN BE LOST.

## **V.** *Essential Skills and Job Duties*

Essential workplace skills are:

**the effective and functional use of:**

**reading**

**problem-solving**

**writing**

**decision-making**

**numeracy**

**critical thinking**

**computers**

**conflict resolution**

**oral communication**

In other words, essential workplace skills allow job tasks to be performed well.

*For example...*

For a machinist to order parts, it is necessary, to read the parts catalogue.

For an electrical technician to repair a transformer, it is necessary to apply the theory of electrical power transmission.

For a sales manager to record average monthly sales for the year, it is necessary to calculate an arithmetic mean.

**So, what are the essential skills needed in your workplace to support the effective accomplishment of job tasks?**

*An example...*

The apparel industry supervisor needs:

- interpersonal communication
- decision-making and problem-solving
- reading
- writing
- calculating

Specifically ... interpersonal communication

- listen carefully for information
- speak persuasively to motivate, coach, and negotiate
- provide clear and precise explanations, descriptions, and instructions to co-workers and employees
- clarify that instructions have been understood correctly
- speak tactfully, but persuasively, to correct and recommend
- participate in small group meetings
- resolve misunderstandings, differences, and conflict in an appropriate way
- participate in casual social conversations
- promote group communication and teamwork

Or, the truck driver. . .

One of the tasks needed to accomplish the duty of vehicle inspection is *fill out Vehicle Check List Form*

What are the essential skills needed to perform that task?

- Reading skills (eg. comprehension, word recognition)
- Knowledge of technical vocabulary
- Chart reading - skimming/scanning for headlines
- Entering information accurately onto a form (eg translation to format; locating areas on a form)
- Writing summary statements

## **Bringing it together...**

Think about the list of duties/tasks/expectations for each position in your workplace and then ... think about how the essential skills are used for each duty.

Keep in mind:

- The different documents used
- The different types of reading, writing, and numeracy
- The different occasions when oral communication is required
- The times when conflict arises
- The foreseeable changes in your workplace

*An example...*

One of the duties of a supervisor in the apparel industry is to schedule and coordinate work activities

After checking out the tasks or steps involved in carrying out that duty, list the essential skills needed to do it well.

For example, what kind of problem-solving and decision-making is involved?

- Set realistic goals
- Identify causes and consequences of problems or variances
- Select appropriate corrective actions
- Establish problem-avoidance strategies

- Use decision-making and problem-solving techniques characteristics
- Identify characteristics of high- quality, high-efficiency product or process
- Prioritize tasks and information according to appropriate criteria
- Identify and address obstacles to training or communication
- Identify consequences of decisions

*Another example...*

the sales clerk ...

If you think about all the duties and related tasks done by this person and the type of reading required, you might get a list like this:

- Reads labels, forms, notes, memos, letters, manuals, specifications, regulations, reports, books, journals
- Reads documents such as charts, schedules, tables, catalogues, diagrams, assembly drawings, invoices, scale drawings

Again, a chart can be useful for organizing information in summary form. It is useful to go through all the duties/tasks for at least one position in order to become comfortable with analyzing where and how essential skills are used in your workplace. You can also pinpoint the exact areas which may require training.

POSITION:

---

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

(list where worker does skill  
eg. machine operation)

EXPECTATION

(give rating of importance,  
frequency)

EXAMPLES/COMMENTS

(from duties/tasks chart, give  
examples of actual use for skill)

---

Oral communication

Computers

Numeracy

Writing

Reading

POSITION:

---

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

(list where worker does skill  
eg. machine operation)

EXPECTATION

(give rating of importance,  
frequency)

EXAMPLES/COMMENTS

(from duties/tasks chart, give  
examples of actual use for skill)

---

Problem solving

Decision-making

Critical thinking

Conflict resolution

Once you are comfortable using the chart and seeing your workplace or your job in detail, you can try just making a general list of how the essential skills are used in your workplace or in your job, especially if everyone has to be able to perform all tasks.

*For example,*

## COMPUTERS

- Word processing
- Database for customer information
- Communications software such as email
- Computerized cash registers
- Laser radio terminals (LRTs) for inventory

## NUMERACY

- Money math such as managing a float of petty cash
- Scheduling staff
- Measurement and calculation math such as wage expenditures
- Data analysis such as comparison of budget variances from month to month

The danger is you might overlook something important, but if you keep your list of duties, tasks, and expectations handy, this quick listing of essential skills will be very helpful.

## IMPACT

BY COMPARING .THE DUTIES/TASKS FOR EACH POSITION WITH THE TYPES OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO PERFORM THE DUTIES EFFECTIVELY, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO DETERMINE **WHERE** ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING WOULD BE MOST BENEFICIAL AS WELL AS **WHAT KIND** OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING IS REQUIRED.

Start your own list here:

POSITION:

---

ESSENTIAL SKILLS USED:

## **VI. *Indicators* (Mismatches)**

Now that you have the **DUTIES, TASKS** and **NEEDED ESSENTIAL SKILLS** listed for each position in the workplace, a comparison can be made with the **STANDARDS/EXPECTATIONS** for the performance of the job duties. If standards/expectations are not being met, then you may need to take a closer look at the essential skills required to fulfill job duties.

There are two approaches that could be beneficial:

1. the employer identifies areas for training
2. the employees identify areas for training

In the first approach, the employer may notice from the charts that there is a consistently poor use of certain documents such as blueprints or that oral communication is a problem, specifically instructions are not given clearly enough. The employer, then, can organize targeted training for people needing to improve particular skills. There will also be times when the employer must inform employees that they need a particular kind of essential skills training because the employee may not recognize there is a gap between his/her performance and workplace standards.

In the second approach, every person in the workplace uses this guide to learn about the relationship between his/her duties and the essential skills needed to perform them well. By comparing this to the standards/expectations of the workplace, the employee can determine what training would be most beneficial, and either seek help from the employer or co-workers. If confidentiality is an issue, the employee can seek training from an outside source.

To return to the apparel industry supervisor...

One of the **duties** is to *maintain work flow and balance* and one of the **essential skills** related to that duty is the *ability to provide clear and precise instructions* (oral communication)

The **standards/expectations** are that instructions seldom have to be repeated and are usually carried out correctly.

If the employer notices a mismatch (a gap), then perhaps some training in giving instructions is required.

If the supervisor thinks there is a mismatch, then the supervisor can seek out the appropriate training.

**APPROACH #1** - EMPLOYER LISTS GAPS (MISMATCHES) BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

**APPROACH #2** - EMPLOYEE LISTS MISMATCHES BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND EXPECTATIONS

Each person in the workplace should be encouraged to have a **PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**.

After doing the comparison between the **DUTIES/ESSENTIAL SKILLS** and **STANDARDS/EXPECTATIONS**, each person should identify the areas he/she feels need improving as well as the areas of strength.

Points to ponder:

- what's on the horizon in changes to the workplace?
- what are the career goals of the person and which essential skills support those goals?
- what improvements in the workplace are desired?

# PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

AREAS TO IMPROVE

AREAS OF STUDY

---

Numeracy

(eg type of numeracy/  
for which duty)

Writing

Reading

Oral Communication

Computers

Problem-solving

Decision-making

Critical Thinking

Conflict Resolution

One other method for a **PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN...**

Each person lists which of the essential skills required for each duty he/she likes doing best/least and why. This should help pinpoint areas of concern or needing training.

*For example...*

The retail sales associate dislikes writing invitation notes and thank you cards to customers or letters to customers following up on their requests for more information on a product line. He/she is not certain about the formality for such communication.

This person would benefit from training in how to write various forms of letters depending on the purpose of the communication.

## **IMPACT**

EACH PERSON IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE WORKPLACE COLLECTIVELY CAN FOCUS ON THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS NEEDED TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF JOB-RELATED DUTIES. IN ADDITION, TRAINING CAN BE MADE MORE SPECIFIC WHICH REDUCES TIME AND EFFORT SPENT ON MORE GENERAL TRAINING. INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS CAN ALSO BE SUPPORTED, MEANING THAT THE STRENGTHS OF AN EMPLOYEE OR EMPLOYER CAN BE IMPROVED TO THE BENEFIT OF EVERYONE IN THE WORKPLACE. FINALLY, THESE ESSENTIAL SKILLS (EG. TYPES OF LETTER WRITING) ARE TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER AREAS OF A PERSON'S LIFE.

*notes for your plan*

## **VII. Resources**

Once training needs have been identified, finding the appropriate training can be a challenge. It is helpful to think broadly because a variety, of training options is available depending on local circumstances and client needs.

While the suggestions here should get you started, they are by no means an exhaustive list. Inquiries can lead to other suggestions, so keep your own list in the space provided.

### **1. Regional colleges, SLAST campuses, universities, high schools**

Try calling the community liaison person, the Adult Basic Education office, the principal.

### **2. Chambers of Commerce, Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs), Community Regional Economic Development Offices (CREDOs), Community Futures, other economic development personnel**

### **3. CanSask Career and Employment Services Centres**

Many services are available to employers and employees.

### **4. Libraries**

Many libraries have a tutor program for essential skills as well as many other resources.

### **5. Professional associations related to your business**

### **6. First Nations and Metis organizations**

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), Metis Nation, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SITC), Dumont Technical Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), local Tribal Councils and Friendship

Centres, Band offices.

**7. Organizations working with people with disabilities**

Contact the appropriate provincial organization or phone one in your area and ask for assistance.

**8. Agricultural organizations**

**9. Women's organizations**

Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technology, Women's Institute, local women's centres.

**10. Unions and Labour Councils**

**11. Multicultural Associations**

**12. Volunteer agencies**

**13. Saskatchewan literacy Network**

**14. Human Resources Development Canada offices**

**START YOUR OWN LOCAL LIST OF TRAINING PROVIDERS!**

## **VIII.** *Supporting Training in the Workplace*

(adapted from *Partners in the Transfer of Learning*, Maurice Taylor, 1998)

If someone makes the effort to take training, it would be a shame to lose all that initiative because the person cannot practice what he/she has learned in the workplace. The learning needs to be transferred to the workplace, and everyone in the workplace is responsible for helping that happen. Research shows that people acquire skills through practice, and people lose skills because they have no chance to practice. A supportive, encouraging environment helps people keep skills and build more skills.

This transfer of learning needs support in the workplace. Who are the key people responsible for the transfer of learning?

- The instructor/trainer
- The learner/client
- The supervisor/co-workers

When are the key times to support the transfer of learning?

- Before,
- During, and
- After training

Following are lists of key strategies to support the transfer of learning:

### THE INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER

#### **Before the training**

- Involve the learner and supervisor in planning the program

- Conduct a site visit of the workplace
- Develop transfer objectives
- Include information on transfer of learning in information session
- Involve the supervisor in the administration of the training
- Observe employees performing their jobs
- Prepare buddy system

### **During the training**

- Link program content to real work tasks
- Use various types of feedback sessions that focus on application of new information
- Check with supervisor
- Use training time to relate learning to the job
- Use a problem solving approach around using new skills
- Take time to help learners think about past and current skills
- Develop creative teaching aids that learners can use back on the job

### **After the training**

- Provide follow-up assistance to learners
- Link learners with peers
- Use training evaluation results in future training planning
- Check with supervisors and learners to see how changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes have occurred
- Provide refresher sessions
- Recognize learner completion

## THE LEARNER/CLIENT

### **Before the training**

- Attend a pretraining event
- Talk to your supervisor

- Provide input into training
- Recognize the overall goals of the business
- Participate in advance activities

### **During the training**

- Maintain an ideas and application notebook
- Plan to apply the new information
- Plan to review the new information
- Link with a buddy

### **After the training**

- Review training materials
- Develop a mentoring relationship
- Maintain contact with training buddies

## THE SUPERVISOR/CO-WORKERS

### **Before the training**

- Involve supervisors in needs assessment
- Provide orientations for the supervisors
- Inform supervisors of how to use coaching skills
- Help provide a positive training environment
- Make the goal of the training clear to learners
- Let learners know of the investment in them

### **During the training**

- Prevent interruptions
- Spread out work assignments to others
- Participate in transfer of action planning
- Recognize learner participation

- Create opportunities to use new skills

### **After the training**

- Provide opportunities to practice skills
- Debrief the trainees
- Be a role model
- Give positive reinforcement
- Celebrate small wins
- Be a mentor

Obviously, these strategies may or may not be applicable in your workplace. The size of the workplace and the needs of training skill have an impact. For example, in a small workplace with fewer than five employees, support from everyone in the workplace will be needed. In addition, if confidentiality is an issue for training, then the client and the trainer will have to develop their own strategies to ensure transfer of learning occurs.

## **IMPACT**

PEOPLE ACQUIRE SKILLS THROUGH PRACTICE; RESEARCH SHOWS US THAT IT IS VERY MUCH A 'USE IT OR LOSE IT' SITUATION WITH SKILLS. DON'T LET TIME, MONEY AND EFFORT GO TO WASTE BECAUSE TIME IS NOT SPENT IN DETERMINING HOW TO ENSURE TRANSFER OF LEARNING!

*Make your own plan....*

ROLE

TIME PERIODS

BEFORE

AFTER

DURING

---

Instructor/

Trainer

Learner/

Client

Supervisor/

Co-workers

## **IX. *Maximizing your Human Resources***

What do you think is the most common training model in the workplace? **It is the one-on-one, peer/coaching/mentoring model.** Think about what happens when someone new comes into the workplace ... that person is usually put with another worker to learn the ropes.

Peer coaching is a very effective way of training ... it is on-the-job, specific, targeted, accessible training, and it allows for the gradual development, through practice, of the necessary skills. This is not rocket science! People learn best in the workplace from each other!

The workplace needs to support and encourage peer coaching. The workplace also needs to recognize the importance of this kind of training. Why not have the best peer coach in essential skills training recognized each month?

Job coaching is ...

- Instilling fundamentals
- Building teamwork
- Evaluating and adjusting
- Reinforcing and motivating

To do this, a coach must...

- Gather data
- Provide feedback
- Question
- Inform and instruct by breaking down tasks into parts
- Provide positive reinforcement

Most coaches receive training in team-building, problem-solving, managing conflict, listening, giving feedback, and other interpersonal skills.

As always, the principles of adult education apply:

- Valuing experience
- Using materials that are appropriate to adults and the workplace
- Building on the knowledge of learners
- Treating learners as adults and with respect
- Recognizing that people learn from each other, using ongoing evaluation
- Recognizing different learning styles
- Recognizing that adults have a variety of responsibilities and time commitments

So, look around your workplace and think about who might be a good coach for essential skills training. Who might benefit from taking some of the training just mentioned so that you would have an in-house coach in your workplace? Perhaps different people would like to be coaches in different areas such as numeracy or oral communication.

## **IMPACT**

**THE BUSINESS WITH THE BEST SKILLED WORKFORCE WILL BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL!**

*notes for peer coaching*

*notes*

# SLFDB REPORT LIST

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