

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 465

CE 073 117

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 TITLE Building Knowledge in the Workplace and Beyond. Curriculum Adaptation Project.
 INSTITUTION Lake County Coll., Grayslake, Ill.
 SPONS AGENCY Office of Vocational and Adult Education (ED), Washington, DC. National Workplace Literacy Program.
 PUB DATE [96]
 NOTE 19p.; For related documents, see CE 073 116-120.
 PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Communication Skills; *Course Content; *Curriculum Development; Education Work Relationship; English (Second Language); Lesson Plans; *Literacy Education; Mathematics Instruction; Problem Solving; Program Development; *School Business Relationship; *Teaching Methods; *Workplace Literacy

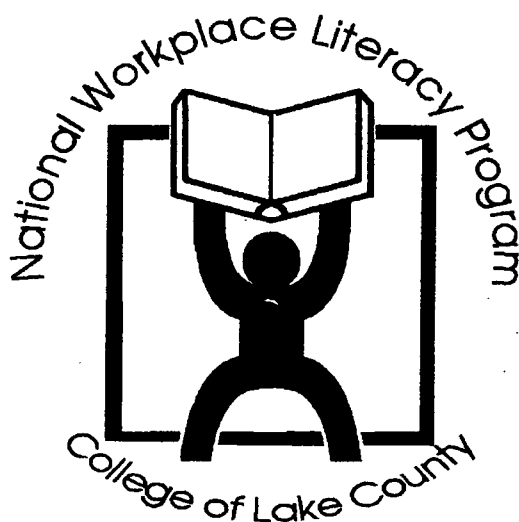
ABSTRACT

A project was conducted to adapt and modify the four-part workplace literacy curriculum previously created by the College of Lake County (Illinois) and six industries in the county in order to improve the usefulness and application of the information in the original curriculum. Information for the adaptation project was generated by instructors piloting the original curriculum in their workplace classrooms. The following procedures were followed: (1) an instructor questionnaire was created and administered to instructors asking for their feedback and suggestions for improvement; (2) interviews were conducted with the participating instructors to elicit information regarding curriculum usage and effectiveness; (3) a roundtable of instruction was conducted with instructors participating in the project after 48 hours of instruction; and (4) suggestions for improvement were summarized and implemented. As a result of the adaptation project, revisions were incorporated into the curriculum, including the following: a completely revised course in English as a second language, a learning style inventory, a sample lesson plan, more ideas for workplace activities, examples of possible assessments, more cross-cultural communication suggestions, a list of characteristics of adult workplace learners, and a basic blueprint reading instructional guide. (KC)

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CURRICULUM ADAPTATION PROJECT

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORKPLACE AND BEYOND



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National Workplace Literacy Program

CURRICULUM ADAPTATION PROJECT

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The curriculum adaptation project is designed to modify the workplace curriculum in order to improve the usefulness and application of information in the original curriculum. The grant staff believes instructors teaching in the workplace can provide the most valuable input for the curriculum adaptation. Teacher involvement in the process is a main goal of this project as well as that of the National Workplace Literacy Program. Instructors are invited to participate in the twelve week project as they simultaneously take a workplace literacy class.

The instructors are requested to use the curriculum as their main classroom text. There is a total of ten instructors for the project.

This project was facilitated and implemented by:

Ronda Ballinger
Curriculum Developer and Writer

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL: To modify the original workplace curriculum in order to improve the usefulness and application of information.

OBJECTIVES:

- To create an effective method of eliciting information on current curriculum usage in workplace classes
- To consult with designated workplace instructors regarding usefulness of the theory and application of information in the curriculum
- To evaluate workplace instructors' suggestions and comments on curriculum
- To modify curriculum as needed

FOCUS:

- Revision of ESL courses to create more appropriate objectives, sequencing, and levels
- Customization of course goals and objectives
- Additional information as suggested by instructors
- Measurability of goals and objectives

METHOD:

- Checklists, questionnaires, journals
- Interviews and meetings
- Round table discussion

INSTRUCTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be an active participant in the curriculum adaptation process
- Reflect on the process of using the curriculum
- Document adjustments to the curriculum
- Record successes and/or problems with the original curriculum
- Complete questionnaires and meet with the curriculum adaptation team as scheduled

REQUIREMENTS

Session I and II

- Complete initial questionnaire
- Participate in two required meetings with the curriculum adaptation team
- Complete one journal entry per week, noting success, problems, and suggestions for improvement
- Reference location and curriculum component addressed
- Read, reflect, and record views on The Introduction
- Read, reflect, and record comments on the usefulness of the theory and application of information in The Guide
- Record items 3, 4, and 5 above in the notebook provided

Session III

- Complete initial questionnaire
- Participate in one required meeting with the curriculum adaptation team
- Complete reflection questionnaire
- Reference location and curriculum component addressed in questionnaire
- Read, reflect, and record comments on the usefulness of the theory and application of information in the curriculum

SCHEDULE

- 2 hours for completion of initial questionnaire
- 6 hours for completion of detailed journal entries (½ hour per week)
- ½ hour for on-site mid-point meeting
- ½ hour for recording reflections on The Introduction
- 2 hours for recording reflections on The Guide
- 2 hours for round table discussion at CLC

13 hours total

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

I, _____, agree to adhere to the requirements, responsibilities, and schedule of the Curriculum Adaptation Project as defined by the College of Lake County's National Workplace Literacy Program.

signature

date

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE IN THE WORKPLACE AND BEYOND

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please carefully consider the following questions and answer accordingly. If you prefer to type your responses, please attach the sheet to this questionnaire.

1. Is the curriculum useful in planning initial preparations for your class?
If yes, what sections are helpful? If no, please explain.

2. How easy are the goals and objectives to customize?
If easy, how much time does it take? If not easy, please explain.

3. Briefly explain the process you use to customize the goals and objectives for your class.

How does the section on customizing courses assist you in adapting the objectives to your specific class?

4. Does the curriculum assist you in planning your lessons?
If yes, which sections do you use and how do they help you?

If no, please explain.

5. How often in the lesson planning process do you use the sections in *The Guide*?
What sections do you use?

6. Are any sections in *The Guide* difficult to understand?
If yes, please identify the sections and explain.

7. Do you have any initial impressions that would be helpful in modifying the curriculum to make it easier to use or understand? Please explain.

SUMMARY OF TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is a summary of responses to the questionnaire given to the teachers during the beginning of their classes along with their suggestions for improvements to the curriculum.

Sections of the curriculum that were helpful in initial preparations for class.

For the new workplace instructor:

- ▶ Preparation for a Workplace Course
- ▶ Differences between Workplace Education and Adult Education
- ▶ The Workplace Instructor's Roles
- ▶ Instructional Methods and Approaches
- ▶ Multilevel Classes
- ▶ Customizing Courses

For the experienced workplace instructor:

- ▶ The Guide - in general
- ▶ Learning Styles and Strategies - the charts
- ▶ Instructional Methods and Approaches - What is it about?
- ▶ Learning Objectives in the course outlines
- ▶ Appendix - cross-reference chart/correlation chart

Ease of customizing course objectives

- ▶ relatively easy
- ▶ workshops helped new instructors
- ▶ many of the goals and objectives can be used in other courses

Process used to customize the goals and objectives

- ▶ interviewed management and students
- ▶ reviewed curriculum to find a match
- ▶ observed class for existing skills
- ▶ selected and/or revised objectives that matched class/company needs

SUGGESTION: *Classes have demonstrated needs for objectives focused on learning skills. (Learning how to learn?)*

Lesson planning using the curriculum

- ▶ as a guide in choosing objectives and initial course planning
- ▶ Instructional Methods and Multilevel Classes for ideas on how to present a lesson
- ▶ Student Assessment for customizing assessment
- ▶ Cross-cultural communication for workplace conversations involving employees and supervisors
- ▶ all sections of *The Guide* are needed and useful

SUGGESTION: *A lesson planning section to *The Guide* that shows a sample lesson plan and lists areas in the guide to find ideas and/or material to use in each part of the lesson plan.*

General impressions that would be helpful in modifying the curriculum to make it easier to use or understand.

SUGGESTIONS:

- ▶ an example of a learning styles inventory
- ▶ examples of ways to incorporate each learning style into a variety of workplace-based class activities
- ▶ In the ESL section put all of the speaking goals together, all of the listening goals together, etc. A level distinction could be noted by each goal, but it would be easy to see all of the speaking goals, for example, together with their accompanying objectives and activities.
- ▶ color paper coding for different sections or tabs

MID-POINT INTERVIEW

Instructor:

Site:

1. Please explain how the curriculum is being used during lesson planning.

Are any sections or parts of the curriculum that you use difficult to understand? If yes, please explain.

2. What strategies have proven to be effective in the classroom? What suggestions do not work? Why?

3. Is the curriculum used as a primary or supplementary teaching tool?
Please explain.

4. Do the goals and objectives represent the students' interactions in the workplace? If not, please explain.

5. Do you have any suggestions at a midpoint in your class that would be helpful in modifying the curriculum to make it easier to use or understand? Please explain.

For our round table discussion at the end of Session I, please bring a description of *two* new activities that were successful in your class. Be sure that they are workplace specific. You may use this page, or if you prefer to type your descriptions, please attach the typed sheet to this page. Thanks!

MID-POINT SUMMARY

1. Generally, the curriculum at a midpoint is being used as a springboard for lesson planning and teaching ideas. Several ideas for activities and/or customizing objectives have come from examining other courses and sections in the curriculum. There are no sections that are difficult to use or understand.
2. The instructors use a variety of strategies suggested in the curriculum to find the ones that work best with their students. Some do not work only because of the make up of the class.
3. Due to the extensive use of the curriculum as the primary teaching tool at the beginning of the course, the instructors feel familiar with its content and use it as a supplementary teaching tool at this point. They refer to the curriculum when needed.
4. Generally, the goals and objectives represent the students' interactions in the workplace. Customization is necessary for each specific workplace. The instructors gather information by asking questions and being observant of the work environment.

Suggestions:

- ▶ ***Strategies on ways to incorporate learning styles into classroom instruction***
- ▶ ***Objectives in the courses or in the Guide that focus on learning skills***
- ▶ ***Examples of different types of assessments***
- ▶ ***A chart with objectives that focus on the American workplace culture***
- ▶ ***More ideas for activities***

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

The following is a summary of suggestions offered during Session I and II of the curriculum adaptation. Please rank each suggestion according to most important (#1), somewhat important (#2), or not important (#3). If you have any additional suggestions, please include them in the list. Extra space is provided.

| | |
|--|---|
| | ▶ An example of a learning styles inventory that can be used in class |
| | ▶ Examples of ways to incorporate learning styles into classroom instruction |
| | ▶ An ESL introduction that puts all of the speaking goals together, all of the listening goals together, etc. A level distinction could be noted by each goal |
| | ▶ Color paper coding for different sections or tabs of the curriculum |
| | ▶ A lesson planning section to <i>The Guide</i> that shows a sample lesson plan and lists areas in <i>The Guide</i> to find ideas and/or materials to use in each part of the lesson plan |
| | ▶ Objectives (or a section in <i>The Guide</i>) that focuses on learning how to learn |
| | ▶ Examples of assessments |
| | ▶ More ideas for activities |
| | ▶ A chart with objectives that focus on the American workplace culture (cross-cultural section does not offer enough) |
| | |
| | |
| | |

2. Please list any additional topics, goals, or objectives that you think would be valid in a workplace class.

3. Describe any activities or strategies not given in the curriculum that were especially helpful in teaching an objective.

4. Any final suggestions or impressions that would be helpful in modifying the curriculum to make it easier to use or understand?

SUMMARY OF SESSION I - III

The instructors' weekly journal entries and recorded reflections on *The Introduction* and *The Guide* were well written and insightful. Generally, all sections seem easy to understand and are extremely useful for a new workplace instructor as well as an experienced workplace instructor. In addition to identifying unclear statements or editing errors, successes and suggestions for improvement in the original curriculum were recorded.

The following is a summary of the suggestions offered during Session I of the curriculum adaptation. They are ranked by the instructors in order of importance from most important to least important.

| | |
|----|---|
| #1 | Include a lesson planning section to <i>The Guide</i> that shows a sample lesson plan and lists sections in <i>The Guide</i> find ideas and/or materials to use in each part of the lesson plan. |
| #2 | List more ideas for activities |
| #3 | Include examples of ways to incorporate learning styles into classroom instruction |
| #4 | Include examples of possible assessments |
| #5 | Include a learning style inventory that can be used in class |
| #6 | In the introduction to the ESL section, list all of the speaking goals, listening goals, writing goals, and reading goals with a level distinction noted by each goal. Condense and clarify the levels. |
| #7 | Insert a section on learning how to learn |
| #8 | Provide a chart with objectives that focus on the American workplace culture |
| #9 | Code the different sections of the curriculum with different color paper |

In addition to the editing revisions, please identify the suggestions that are to be implemented. A brief discussion of these revisions will assist in proper placement in the curriculum. Thank you!

Note: Number 7 was not implemented in the revised edition of the curriculum due to the immensity of the topic and time restraints in a workplace classroom. Number 9 was not implemented due to cost.

REFLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions on *The Guide*. You can complete your answers on this sheet or write them on a separate sheet, if you prefer.

1. How did you address the individual learning styles of your students?
2. What instructional methods and approaches did you find the most successful? Why?
3. Did you use authentic materials for instruction? If so, how?
4. How did you address the multi-level nature of your classroom?
5. Were you able to document the transfer of skills to the workplace and/or community?
If yes, what skills were transferred?
6. What kinds of assessments tools did you use to measure learning?

SUMMARY OF REFLECTIONS

The following is a summary of the Reflection Questionnaire used in Session III.

1. A varied approach must be used incorporating different learning strategies in an assortment of activities. Videos, hands-on measuring, writing on board by students, reading aloud, listening skill development, dialogue, group work with assigned roles are some of the more successful strategies to use in a workplace classroom.
2. Combination of whole class instruction with time for independent work is usually successful. Pair work and groups work is effective only if the size of the class allows it and if the student mix is appropriate.
3. Authentic material is used whenever possible in all of the courses. This list in the curriculum is extensive and very helpful.
4. By allowing time for independent, supervised work in the classroom, students seemed to develop individually. Whole class instruction generally addressed workplace specific skills as well as basic skills. Higher level students usually assisted the lower level students.
5. Student comments indicate use of skills in writing notes to teachers, writing letters, etc. Workplace transfer is less clearly defined but students appear more willing to express themselves verbally and in writing. Measurement skills in math seem to transfer readily to workplace measurement tasks.
6. A variety of instructor-made assessments were used including writing samples, role plays, pen and paper tests, demonstrations, presentations, flow charts, quizzes, and summaries

Curriculum Adaptation Project - A Summary

This curriculum adaptation was created for the purpose of adapting and modifying the previously created four-part curriculum in order to improve the usefulness and application of the information. Input for this adaptation project was generated by instructors piloting the original curriculum in their workplace classrooms.

The objectives of this adaptation project were as follows:

- create an effective method of eliciting information on current curriculum usage in workplace classes
- consult with designated workplace instructors as to the usefulness of the theory and application of information in the curriculum
- evaluate workplace instructors' suggestions and comments on curriculum usage
- modify the curriculum as needed

The process used for this project was as follows:

- create an instructor questionnaire which would identify areas of difficulty in curriculum application and understanding
- contact instructors, monitor completion of the instructors' responsibilities, tabulate instructors' responses, and write a summary of suggestions for curriculum adaptation
- conduct interviews with the participating instructors to elicit information regarding curriculum usage and effectiveness
- facilitate a round table discussion for instructors participating in the adaptation project at the end of 48 hours of instruction
- evaluate and present to the National Workplace Literacy staff suggestions for adaptation in summary form.
- implement approved revisions

As a result of this adaptation project, the following revisions are incorporated into the original curriculum:

- completely revised ESL courses to create more appropriate sequencing and levels
- a learning style inventory that can be used in the workplace classroom along with suggested learning strategies for each type of learner
- a sample lesson plan that lists additional sections in the curriculum to find ideas, materials, and/or activities
- more ideas for workplace activities
- examples of possible assessments
- more cross-cultural communication suggestions
- characteristics of adult workplace learners
- minor editing revisions
- a basic blueprint reading instructional guide



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